

SHORT TAKES

CM TO MEET GOVERNOR TODAY AT 11 AM

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 12

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to meet Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan amidst increased political enthusiasm in the state. The CM has got Governor's appointment and is scheduled to meet him at 11 am on Friday at Raj Bhavan. State Election Commissioner Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar is preparing to conduct local body elections and has recently conducted a meeting with all political parties. The nexus between the SEC and state government is continuing as the YSRC is unwilling to conduct the elections citing spreading of Coronavirus.

The CM's meeting with the Governor has turned interesting at a time when issues like conducting local body polls, his letter to the Chief Justice of India, mass suicide of a Muslim family in Nandyal had generated enough political heat in the state.

According to sources, the CM is likely to explain about the stand of the government towards local body elections and other issues.

PCC FORMS PANEL FOR PROTECTION OF AMARAVATI

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 12

The PCC has formed Amaravati Parirakshana Congress Committee to fight for the protection of Amaravati as only capital of AP state. APCC president Dr Sake Sailajanath appointed APCC working president Sk Mastan Vali as president of the committee. Kommineni Suresh of Amaravati Capital region is appointed as convenor of the committee.

Former MLA Lingamsetti Eswara Rao and APCC coordination committee member Sunkara Padmasri got place in the committee as special invitees.

APCC general secretaries Chilaka Vijay Kumar and M. Jagannathan Reddy, APCC secretary Notalapati Ravikanth, Congress Vijayawada city incharge Naraharsetti Narasimha Rao, Sk Saleem and Borra Kiran were appointed as members of the committee.

Dr Sailajanath said the Congress Amaravati Committee will work for the continuation of Amaravati as the only capital of the state.

DUBBAK RESULT WILL REPEAT IN TIRUPATI: SOMU

AVINASH P SUBRAMANYAM |
DC
TIRUPATI, NOV. 12

AP BJP president Somu Veerajulu exuded confidence that the party's victory in Dubbak bypoll will be repeated in the upcoming Tirupati Lok Sabha byelection. The BJP chief took part in a party meeting, organised to prepare the local cadre for the ensuing Lok Sabha byelection, on Thursday.

Addressing the party workers, Veerajulu said the party's victory in Bihar Assembly elections and by-elections in other states is the foundation for the success of the party in both Telugu states, where the BJP will form the government in 2024 elections.

Exuding confidence of the party victory in the Tirupati parliamentary byelection, Veerajulu mentioned that the BJP-led Centre has been providing 60 per cent funds for the development of Andhra Pradesh. Also, the majority of funds were given for the Tirupati smart city development. He asked the cadre to take this to the public and make them understand the efforts of the BJP in developing the state.

He said AP has got immense natural resources and the state government should utilise them with a proper intention for the development of the state and the people.

Meanwhile, addressing the media at Tirumala after having darshan of Lord Venkateswara this morning, Veerajulu alleged that the properties and resources of Tirumala temple were under threat from the governments.

Stressing the need for spending every single rupee donated by the devotees for the devotional and spiritual programmes, Veerajulu asked the government to take necessary steps for safeguarding the properties of Tirumala temple and ensure transparency in spending the temple funds.

Krishnayapalem villagers out on bail



Krishnayapalem villagers hail Amaravati protection JAC while coming out of Guntur district sub-jail after receiving bail on Thursday. The farmers who were released on bail were garlanded by the JAC leaders and their supporters. — TEJO ROY ELETI

Political activity gains momentum in state

Parties are trying to woo people and keep them happy

MD ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 12

Hectic political activity and scenes across the 13 districts, almost on a day-to-day basis, are seemingly similar to what one witnesses ahead of elections.

Although there are no elections in sight, rallies by YSRC leaders and protests by opposition parties have become the order of the day.

The YSRC is taking out rallies as part of awareness programmes under "Prajalalo Nadu-Prajala Kosam Nedu". Interestingly, the locals are happy with the padayatras as it is giving them a chance to bring problems to the notice of the ruling party.

On its part, Telugu Desam is protesting with "Naa Illu-Naa Swantham" demanding allotment of constructed houses to the

● Senior political analysts stated that the ruling YSRC has an upper hand as a majority of the people have benefitted from one welfare scheme or the other.

The TD and other opposition parties are trying to provoke masses in the name of houses allocation, attacks on Dalits, minorities and BC communities and the corrupt practices of the incumbent government.

beneficiaries.

Ruling party MLAs are interacting with influential people and locals while exhorting about the welfare activities of YSRC government despite the financial crisis.

Senior political analysts stated that the ruling and opposition parties are trying to woo people and keep them happy. They stated that the YSRC has an upper hand as a majority of the people have benefitted from one welfare scheme or the other.

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provoke masses in the name of houses allocation, attacks on Dalits, minorities and BC communities and the corrupt practices of the incumbent government.

YSRC MLAs Alla Ramakrishna Reddy, G. Srinivas Reddy, Malladi Vishnu, M. Jagannathan Rao, S. Udayabhanu and others claimed that Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has created history by implementing poll promises immediately after assuming power and providing welfare schemes directly to the

beneficiaries.

He has also resolved the sand problems by relaxing norms that are helping the people and the construction sector.

The TD, which appointed new committees to rejuvenate the party, started Naa Illu-Naa Swantham agitations and warned the government about forcible occupation of houses on Sankranti if the government failed to allocate them to beneficiaries before that.

Former minister D. Umamaheswara Rao said that the attacks on Dalits, BCs and minorities were creating unrest among the people.

Meanwhile, Communist parties also staged protests and CPI state secretary K. Ramakrishna warned about occupying houses if the government fails to allot houses after Diwali.

CM seeks comprehensive report on CPS

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 12

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has directed the officials to prepare a comprehensive report (table) on Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS), including 52,000 Road Transportation Corporation (RTC) employees in the list of CPS employees.

The officials told the Chief Minister that they have examined the reports of Cabinet Sub-Committee, Working Committee with the secretaries of the departments headed by the Chief Secretary and Thakkar Committee on Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS).

The officials said the state has 1,98,221 employees in government, grant-in-aid, universities and educational institutions under Contributory Pension Scheme, of whom 1,78,705 are directly government employees, while 3,295 are working under

● The officials said the state has 1,98,221 employees in government, grant-in-aid, universities and educational institutions under Contributory Pension Scheme, of whom 1,78,705 are directly government employees, while 3,295 are working under Grant-in-Aid and the remaining 16,221 are working in universities and educational institutions. The officials gave details of the expenditure to implement different types of pension systems to the employees.

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During a review meeting held on contract employees, the Chief Minister said the previous govern-

ment had released GOs and none of them were implemented. "We have implemented them besides Minimum Time Scale (MTS) for Contract employees."

As regularisation of contract employees is linked with legal issues, the Chief Minister directed the officials to formulate guidelines to provide financial benefits to them without raising any problems.

Chief Secretary Nilam Sawhney, finance special chief secretary S.S. Rawat, transportation principal secretary M.T. Krishnababu, General Administration (Services) secretary Sashi Bhushan Kumar, General Administration (Services), Rural Development, Panchayat Raj commissioner M. Girijashankar, municipal administration commissioner Vijayakumar and officials from various departments were present.

Rising suicidal tendencies pose a challenge to police

D. SIVA RAMI REDDY | DC
KURNOOL, NOV. 12

MASS SUICIDE IN NANDYAL

Victims' kin given ₹25 lakh ex gratia

DC CORRESPONDENT
KURNOOL NOV. 12

The hearing of the bail cancellation petition filed by Kurnool police on behalf of the state government was again adjourned to November 16 at Nandyal Judicial First Magistrate Court. After the withdrawal of the first defense council V. Ramachandra Rao, the accused cops engaged a new advocate to handle their case.

The new advocate is the brother of Ramachandra Rao who had withdrawn his appearance memo from the JFMC Nandyal on Wednesday. Legal circles felt that Rao should not have withdrawn his appearance as it was his legal right to seek briefs and defend the clients before courts of law.

Meanwhile, district collector G. Veera Pandian handed over ₹25 lakh ex gratia cheque to Mabunneesha, mother-in-law of Abdul Salam on Thursday. Nandyal One Town police circle inspector Soma Sekhar Reddy and head constable Gangadhar had allegedly targeted the family of Salam on the charge of theft in a gold shop.

Unable to bear the harassment by cops, he along with his wife Noor, daughter Salma, and his son Kalandar recorded a selfie

video and ended their life on November 3 by throwing themselves before a running train. A high-level team of three senior police officers is investigating the case.

Meanwhile, the district collector along with Nandyal sub-collector Kalpana visited the bereaved family member of Mabunneesha in Mulasagaram, Nandyal town, and handed over the ex gratia cheque. He said the government will stand by the family and will extend all support.

He said Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy was personally monitoring the issue. The district collector urged the family members to contact Nandyal sub-collector or tahsildar if they faced any problem. Nandyal MP Pochu Bramananda Reddy, MLA Silpa Ravichandra Kishor Reddy, and others were present.

However, when the police tried to contact Mabunneesha on the night of Wednesday, rumors spread across Nandyal town that the police were trying to influence her to divert the case. But investigation officer and Allagadda DSP J. Pothuraju clarified that they went there to collect bank account, Aadhaar number, and mobile number details.

Naidu demands dismissal of policemen, CBI probe

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 12

NAIDU POLITICISING NANDYAL ISSUE: PARTHASARATHY

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 12

The Telugu Desam claimed that 'Jagan Jungle Raj' and police torture drove Abdul Salam family to the suicide pact.

TD chief N. Chandrababu Naidu on Thursday demanded a CBI probe, dismissal of circle inspector, head constable and suspension of DSP with immediate effect.

Naidu held the AP Police and the YSRC government's 'Jungle Raj' responsible for the heart-rending family suicide in Nandyal. He said that the suicide was culmination of the series of non-stop atrocities being committed against the BCs, SCs, STs and Muslims. He alleged that it was only after the Nandyal police terrorised and mentally tortured Salam that he lost all hope of living peacefully any longer. He deplored that their deaths seemed like an 'animal sacrifice' by the 'diabolical' government.

Terming it as murder, he demanded that the government order CBI probe

YSR Congress MLA Kolusu Parthasarathy slammed opposition Telugu Desam for trying to politicise the Nandyal family suicide incident though the government has swiftly and sternly taken action.

Addressing a press conference here on Thursday, the MLA criticised Chandrababu Naidu for politicising the Nandyal issue and reiterated that Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy responded quickly and initiated arrests of the accused police officials.

to bring out the facts, demanded the dismissal of the circle inspector and the head constable directly responsible for abetting the family suicide and the DSP's suspension.



Ministers Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy and Botasa Satyanarayana release YSR Cheyutha Phase-2 at Tadepalli office near Vijayawada on Thursday. DECCAN CHRONICLE

OFFICIAL | APATHY

Poor server connectivity, double biometric authentication turned bane

FP shops hit by server problems, biometric blues

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 12

The new norm of two-time biometric to get ration and slow server connection is forcing people to stand in long queues at fair price shops across the state and is causing heartburn.

According to reports, there are 1.50 crore ration cards spread over the 13 districts. Earlier, the ration card holders used to give their fingerprint through biometric devices only once to collect their purchases. But the government changed the norms and now the ration card holder should undergo the biometric authentication

process twice-one for rice and the other for commodities like dal.

The ration shops would work from 8 am to 12 noon and 4 pm to 7 pm. According to fair price shops dealers, earlier each shop used to give ration to nearly 250 ration card holders every day.

Poor server connectivity and the process of biometric has slowed down the ration distribution process and only 50 to 60 ration card holders are getting commodities per day in the last one week.

Ration card holders B Ramuliah and K Ravi recalled that earlier they used to get ration in 15 to



People wait in a queue at a ration shop in Vijayawada as the server was down.

20 minutes or a maximum of 30 minutes but now it is taking three hours. They

lamented that they were coming to ration shops for the past three days but the

server problem was still troubling them. They sought the government to

increase the capacity of biometric servers for speedy process and continuation of single biometric.

Meanwhile, ration shop dealers fear the spread of Covid-19 as many people were standing in queues outside ration shops.

The FP shop dealers lamenting that many of them had been infected with corona are demanding that the server problem be addressed soon and easing of biometric norms to ensure swift distribution of ration. Minister for civil supplies K. Venkateswara Rao said the officials would resolve the difficulties and ensure hassle free distribution.

OTHER STORIES

Plaint lodged over circulation of fake audio, videos

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 12

Tadikonda MLA of YSR Congress Dr Vundavalli Sridevi lodged complaint with the police over circulation of fake audio and videos in the social media against her and alleged Telugu Desam behind the malicious campaign.

Earlier audio and video clips about Dr Sridevi abusing YSRC leaders and alleging suppression of Dalit communities by Reddy community largely circulated in various social media platforms.

Addressing a press meet here on Thursday, Dr Sridevi said, "How can a channel play morphed films of a woman (her) without even verifying the authenticity of the same. Abstaining to even make an attempt to seek a response from me shows the intent."

Dr Sridevi said that she herself had filed a report with the local police and that the investigation should reveal things as they are or were. Questioning vernacular TV channels on being selective with playing audios or videos, she said "How many times did the channels play the audio clip of Chandrababu Naidu who got caught in a 5 crore vote for note scam? . Can they answer that?."

3 arrested, 46 stolen bikes recovered

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 12

The Guntur urban police seized 46 stolen bikes by arresting three bike lifters in Tadikonda on Thursday. Guntur urban SP R.N. Ammi Reddy said that the trio used to steal bikes from various places mainly near farmers lands when the farmers were busy in farming works and would sell those bikes for cheap.

Mr Ammi Reddy said that V. Durga Rao from Muppalla of Guntur district, V. Ankaiah of Swarnabharatinagar of Guntur city and B. Balakrishna of Prakasam district were arrested by the Tadikonda CI Ch. Rajasekhar and recovered 46 stolen bikes worth of ₹18 lakh.

He said that the trio used to steal parked bikes near the farmlands when farmers were engaged in agriculture works. He said that the trio accused had stolen bikes in Tadikonda, Narasaraopet, Muppalla, Pedakurapadu, Gurazala, Amaravati, Nekarikallu, Durgi and in Prakasam district.

Relief to AP as Covid-19 daily death toll dips

Recovery rate improving among the infected patients

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 12

AP registered the lowest ever daily death toll of Covid-19 infected patients at nine giving much relief to the state government.

Though the state has been registering a two-digit death toll of more than ten every day in the last few days, it has come down to single-digit indicating that the rate of recovery has been improving among the Covid-19 infected patients of late. With the death of nine patients, the cumulative death toll has gone up to 6,837 in the state so far.

The state health authorities released Covid-19 bulletin on Thursday, reporting that out of 77,148 samples tested, 1,728 persons were found infected with Covid-19. With this, the cumulative cases of Covid-19 have gone up to 8,49,705. Out of 89,40,488 samples tested for Covid-19 in the state so far, 8,22,011 patients infected with Covid-19 were recovered while 20,857 patients are still active with the virus.

Among the daily Covid-19 cases, East Godavari registered 290 followed by 239 in West Godavari, 212 in Guntur, 206 in Chittoor, 99 in Anantapur, 91 in Nellore, 88 in Prakasam, 85 in Kadapa, 74 in Visakhapatnam, 43 in Srikakulam, 42 in



An old woman sits on the floor, waiting to give swab sample for Covid-19 test at IGMSC Stadium in Vijayawada on Thursday.

— DC

Vizianagaram and 36 in Kurnool.

With regard to the cumulative Covid-19 infections, East Godavari recorded 1,19,791 followed by 89,667 in West Godavari, 81,566 in Chittoor, 70,394 in Guntur, 60,699 in Nellore, 60,777 in Prakasam, 59,851 in Kurnool, 57,063 in Visakhapatnam, 53,454 in Kadapa, 44,863 in Srikakulam, 42,617 in Krishna, 40,150 in Vizianagaram, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

The rate of recovery among Covid-19 infected patients has been steady in East Godavari with 1,14,221 followed by 86,592 in West Godavari, 79,227 in Chittoor, 67,297 in Guntur, 64,453 in Anantapur, 59,390 in

Prakasam, 59,348 in Nellore, 59,083 in Kurnool, 55,019 in Visakhapatnam, 52,283 in Kadapa, 43,741 in Srikakulam, 39,574 in Vizianagaram, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

Among the daily death cases of Covid-19 patients, Chittoor recorded three followed by two in Krishna and one each in Anantapur, East Godavari, Guntur and West Godavari.

Chittoor recorded the highest number of cumulative death of Covid-19 infected patients at 804 followed by 635 in Guntur, 623 in East Godavari, 602 in Krishna, 577 in Anantapur, 575 in Prakasam, 521 in Visakhapatnam.

STATE REDUCES RATE FOR COVID TEST IN PVT LABS

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 12

State government revised the rates downward for the conduct of Covid-19 tests in private NABL and ICMR approved labs. The government issued GO RT No. 699 here on Thursday reducing the rate for the conduct of Covid-19 test.

Accordingly, it costs ₹800 for a sample sent by the state government and ₹1,000 for a sample from an individual.

Earlier, it used to cost ₹1,600 for a sample referred by the state government and ₹1,900 for a sample from an individual for the conduct of Covid-19 test.

The government said that the rate for Covid-19 test was reduced because of increased availability of kits and reduction in the cost of both RNA extraction and RT-PCR kits.

The government instructed all private NABL and ICMR approved labs to follow the reduced rates for the conduct of Covid-19 test as per guidelines issued and directed them to display the rates prominently.

Bangladesh likely to abandon ship

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 12

The Bangladesh management seems to have decided to abandon their merchant vessel *MV Maa* which ran aground near Tenneti Park on October 14, sources dealing with the salvage operations told this correspondent on Thursday evening.

The management took the decision after the Visakhapatnam Port Trust authorities refused permission to the vessel to enter the channel with-

out a survey conducted by the Indian Registrar of Shipping.

The management earlier requested the Hindustan Shipyard for dry-docking and repairs if required to which the yard authorities agreed and reserved the slot for November 15. The salvage operations were to be completed on November 14 evening during a high tide.

Denying receipt of any letter, VPT chairman K. Rama Mohan Rao said he had not received any letter of abandoning the ship.

Festival special trains from today

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 12

Indian Railways to run one way festival special trains between various destinations from November 12 onwards for the benefit of passengers.

According to a release from SCR issued here on Thursday, train no. 05676 Silchar-Bengaluru Cantonment will depart Silchar at 22.00 hrs on November 12 and will arrive at Bengaluru

Cantonment at 14.00 hrs on the third day.

Train no. 05678 New Tinsukia-Hubballi will depart New Tinsukia at 07.00 hrs on November 12 and will arrive at Hubballi at 01.30 hrs on the third day. Train no. 05679 Rangapara North-Secunderabad will depart Rangapara North at 13.15 hrs on November 13 and will arrive at Secunderabad at 15.00 hrs on the second day. Diwali festival will be celebrated on November 14.

APSSDC inks 4 MoUs for skill programmes

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 12

The Andhra Pradesh State Skill Development Corporation (APSSDC) entered into MoUs with four reputed companies to offer skill development programmes in skill development colleges.

Dr Arja Srikanth, MD and CEO of APSSDC signed the MOUs in the presence of G. Anantha Ramu, Special Chief Secretary, Skill Development & Training, Challa Madhusudhan Reddy, APSSDC Chairman with industry/academic partners, IBM India, Singapore Polytechnic International, India Tourism Development Corporation and LV Prasad Film and TV Academy (LVPA) on Thursday.

Mr Reddy said that the MoUs would help to offer world-class skill development programmes to students which would further help to grab good jobs in the future.

The IBM has partnered with AP government and to setup a Centre of Excellence (CoE) in IT. IBM India will assist in activities that include developing course and curriculum, Training of the Trainers programmes, Industrial exposure, Guest lectures and execution of high-end training in emerging technologies including Coding, Cloud Computing, Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, Blockchain, Data Science and Analytics, Cybersecurity, Quantum Computing, Big Data and Full Stack.

Singapore Polytechnic International (SPI) has partnered with APSSDC for enabling international level industry-led courses in the

ITDC has partnered with the AP to set up and operate a Centre of Excellence in the hospitality sector, design courses and curriculum and offer courses in hospitality trades, event management, front office operations, house-keeping, food and beverage operations and entrepreneurship programmes.

advance manufacturing, food innovation and food processing and entrepreneurship to be offered in skill colleges. They will provide technical assistance and handholding support in establishing the industry-specific labs, develop courses & curriculum, design and deliver the Training of Trainer programme, offer joint certification and accreditation for the proposed courses, design and develop a quality assurance framework for the standardisation of teaching and learning modules.

LVPA has partnered with APSSDC to set up and operate a Centre of Excellence (CoE) in Media and Entertainment sector in Visakhapatnam district. They will design and develop courses and curriculum, design and deliver the Training of Trainer Programme, offer courses in Basics of 2D animation, Digital Photography, Basics of editing, Basics of VFX and Digital Restoration, Industrial exposure, guest lectures and also provide apprenticeship support under National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS).

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COVID HOSPITALS REDUCED TO HALF

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 12

Going by the decline in the Covid positive cases, the district medical and health authorities have reduced the number of Covid hospitals by half. The DMHO P.S. Suryanarayana said that initially 20 hospitals both in government and private sector were designated as Covid hospitals and during the last few days only eight were designated as Covid hospitals and 21 hospitals for both Covid and non-Covid diseases.

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SHORT TAKES

YES BANK SCAM
ACCUSED ROSHNI
KAPOOR GETS BAIL

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC
MUMBAI, NOV. 12

A magistrate court here on Thursday granted bail to Yes Bank founder Rana Kapoor's daughter Roshni Kapoor, an accused in the Yes Bank fraud case linked to DHFL, after she appeared before the court in response to summons issued to her.

A non-bailable warrant could have been issued had she not appeared before the court on the summons issued to her. The court had issued summons to her last month at the time of taking cognisance of the charge sheet filed by the Central probe agency CBI. The agency has named her as one of the eight accused.

The CBI had filed charge sheet against Rana Kapoor and others under the provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act and IPC. However, the charges of corruption were dropped by the special CBI court because the prosecution did not obtain the sanction needed to prosecute under the PC Act. As a result the case was transferred to the magistrate court for trial.

SCORPENE CLASS
SUBMARINE
LAUNCHED

PAWAN BALI | DC
NEW DELHI, NOV. 12

The fifth Scorpene class submarine Vagrir for the Indian Navy was launched in Mumbai on Thursday.

The submarine will now undergo comprehensive and rigorous tests and trials for more than a year to ensure delivery of a combat worthy submarine, capable of operation in all modes and regimes of deployment.

The crew will also, at some point of time, sail the submarine for "sea acceptance trials" after which the submarine will be delivered to the Navy. The addition of the submarine will be critical for the Indian Navy which is operating at a less than ideal strength given India's vast coastline.

The Vagrir submarine has the ability to launch a crippling attack on an enemy with torpedoes as well as tube-launched anti-ship missiles whilst underwater or on surface.

Vagrir has the ability to carry out multifarious missions typically undertaken by any modern submarine, which include anti-surface warfare, anti-submarine warfare, intelligence gathering, mine laying and area surveillance. Six Scorpene submarines were to be manufactured by Mazagon Dock Limited, Mumbai, under programme Project-75 with a \$3 billion contract.

Flouting Covid-19 norms



A view of crowd at Sadar Bazar due to Diwali shopping in New Delhi on Thursday. Single-day increase of 47,905 infections took the country's Covid-19 caseload to 86,83,916, while the number of people who have recuperated from the disease have surged to 80,66,501. The coronavirus death toll climbed to 1,28,121 with 550 new fatalities.

— PTI

Have made no claim
to CM's post: Nitish

Nitish likely to meet Guv soon after meeting with NDA partners

NAYEAR AZAD | DC
PATNA, NOV. 12

After the victory of NDA in Bihar polls, Nitish Kumar is all set to take oath as Bihar Chief Minister for the next term.

On Thursday, he visited JD(U) office to greet party workers and said that the NDA was currently assessing the poll results and the dates for oath ceremony has not been finalised yet. Reports suggest that he is expected to meet Bihar governor after meeting with all four NDA partners soon.

While interacting with the media at the JD(U) office he said, "I have made no claim for the Chief Minister's post, the decision will be taken by NDA. It has not been decided yet when the oath ceremony is going to take place, whether after Diwali or Chhath Puja. At the moment we are assessing the poll results and all four NDA partners will also meet soon".

The NDA led by Nitish Kumar's JD(U) has won 125 seats, three more than the number required to form the government in Bihar. Reports suggest that Nitish Kumar has been upset over the performance of his party in the polls.

- **THE NDA** led by Nitish Kumar's JD(U) has won 125 seats, three more than the number required to form the government in Bihar.
- **THE JD(U)** has been holding Chirag Paswan responsible for the low tally and has been accusing him of 'cutting votes' on most of the seats fielded by the party.

This is the first time in 15 years that the JD(U) has slipped to number three position in the state after the RJD and NDA partner BJP.

The RJD with 75 seats has emerged as the single largest party followed by the BJP which has won 74 seats. The JD(U) got only 43 seats and two smaller partners Hindustani Awam Morcha and Vikasheel Insan Party won four seats each.

The JD(U) has been holding Chirag Paswan responsible for the low tally and has been accusing him of "cutting votes" on most of the seats fielded by the party.

On Wednesday, while talking about his party's performance in the Assembly elections Chirag Paswan had said that it was his party's goal to cause a dent to the JD(U) and make the BJP stronger. Sources said that the

JD(U) leadership has urged the BJP to initiate action against Chirag Paswan and his party for aggressively campaigning against Nitish Kumar and fielding candidates on most of the seats where JD(U) had fielded its candidates.

As per an assessment, the LJP harmed the JD(U) on 20-30 seats during the polls.

"It's the BJP which has to decide whether any action is to be taken against him (Chirag Paswan) or his party. It's for the BJP to decide whether or the LJP should remain in the NDA", Nitish Kumar said.

Meanwhile, RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav in his first remark after the Assembly election raised doubts over the electoral process in the state.

He also alleged discrepancies in postal ballot count and demanded recounting in more than 20 seats where the grand alliance candidates lost by a thin margin.

Talking to the media after being declared as the legislative party leader of the Grand Alliance on Thursday, Tejashwi Yadav said, "They have hijacked the people's mandate once again. In 2015 also people's mandate was in favour of the Grand Alliance but it was the BJP which made backdoor entry to gain power".

Chief Electoral Officer H.R. Srinivas, meanwhile, submitted the list of winning candidates in the Assembly elections to Governor Phagu Chauhan at Raj Bhavan.

Tejashwi Yadav also announced that he would soon take out a "Dhanyawad Yatra" to thank the people of the state for voting in favour of the grand alliance.

He said that "The verdict was in our favour but the results were declared in their favour. I am confident that the grand alliance would have won at least 130 seats if the counting was done in a free and fair manner. We have also decided to demand video footage of the counting process. The grand alliance also wants to know that under whose pressure postal ballots were cancelled".

‘Paatal Lok’ actor
Asif Basra ends life

Dharamshala (HP), Nov. 12: Actor Asif Basra, a familiar face in several movies and TV shows including "Jab We Met", "Kai Po Che!" and "Paatal Lok", was found hanging in a private residential complex here on Thursday, police said. He was 53. He hanged himself around 12-12.30 pm on Thursday. We are investigating the matter. We have sent the body for post-mortem... Prima

facie it is a case of suicide," Kangra Senior Superintendent of Police Vimukt Ranjan told reporters here. The actor's body was recovered by police officials, he said. Further details are awaited, Ranjan added. Basra had reportedly leased a property in McLeodganj, Upper Dharamshala, about five-six years ago and visited the place regularly. The news of the sud-

den death of the character actor, which comes months after Bollywood star Sushant Singh Rajput was found hanging at his residence in Mumbai on June 14, led to shock in the industry with several of his colleagues expressing their grief.

"What? This is too shocking!! Shot with him just before Lockdown!!! Oh My God!!!!" tweeted actor Manoj Bajpayee. —PTI

ASEAN KEY TO
INDIA'S ACT EAST
POLICY: MODI

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 12

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday participated in the 17th Asean-India virtual summit at the invitation of the Prime Minister of Vietnam Nguyen Xuan Phuc. Vietnam is the current chair of Asean.

"ASEAN-India engagement has evolved over the years into a deep, robust and multi-faceted partnership. Asean and India became summit-level partners in 2002, and strategic partners in 2012. The breadth of our partnership is covered by several dialogue mechanisms cutting across various sectors like defense, cyber security, counter terrorism, commerce, telecommunications, agriculture, energy, environmental issues, tourism, etc," said Riva Ganguly Das, secretary (East) in ministry of external affairs.

The annual Asean-India summits provide the opportunity for India and Asean to engage at the highest level.

The 17th ASEAN-India Summit is the eighth summit attended by Prime Minister. He attended the 16th ASEAN-India Summit in Bangkok in November last year.

Speaking at the summit, Modi underlined the centrality of Asean in India's Act East Policy and noted that a cohesive, responsive and prosperous Aseans is central to India's Indo-Pacific vision and contributes to security and growth for all in the region.

The Prime Minister underscored the importance of strengthening convergence between India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative and ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific to ensure a free, open, inclusive and rules-based Indo-Pacific region.

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC
MUMBAI, NOV. 12

A special PMLA court on Thursday rejected the bail plea filed by Deepak Kochhar, husband of former ICICI Bank CEO Chanda Kochhar, in a money laundering case. Kochhar had sought default bail on the ground that the probe agency failed to file chargesheet against him within a stipulated time frame.

He had filed the bail application on merits too and his bail plea on merits is yet to be decided.

The Directorate of Enforcement (ED), while investigating the ICICI-Videcon money laundering case, had arrested Deepak Kochhar in September and since then he is behind bars.

Even though special judge Prashant Rajvaidya rejected the default bail application filed by Kochhar, he asked the ED to file its reply on the plea filed on merits and deferred hearing on it till November 23.

In its reply to Kochhar's claim that the charge sheet has not been filed in time, the ED claimed that the same was filed on November 3, but it is pending scrutiny by the concerned department, as there are five trunks full of documents that needed to

● **THE PROSECUTION** has claimed that the Kochhars and their business entities illegally sanctioned loans amounting to ₹1,875 crore to the Videocon Group of companies.

be verified. Hence, the court is yet to take the cognisance of the prosecution's complaint.

Accepting this contention the court rejected his bail plea.

The prosecution has claimed that the Kochhars and their business entities illegally sanctioned loans amounting to ₹1,875 crore to the Videocon Group of companies. Based on these allegations, the central probe agency slapped money laundering charges against the accused.

The ED had earlier said an amount of ₹64 crore, out of the ₹300 crore loan sanctioned by a committee headed by Chanda Kochhar to Videocon International Electronics Ltd, was transferred to Nupower Renewables Pvt Ltd (NRPL) by Videocon Industries Ltd on September 8, 2009, just a day after disbursement of the loan by ICICI Bank.

NRPL was earlier known as Nupower Renewables Ltd (NRL) and is a company of Deepak Kochhar.

Shivraj rules
out expansion
of his ministry

RABINDRA NATH
CHOUHURY | DC
BHOPAL, NOV. 12

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Thursday ruled out expansion of his ministry in near future indicating that he was in no hurry to accommodate the 2 former ministers who resigned from his cabinet on October 21 when their 6-month mandatory period to continue in their position as non-MLAs ended.

Former ministers Tulsi Silawat and Govind Singh Rajput were among 22 ex-Congress MLAs who had resigned from the Assembly and subsequently from their party in March to pull down the 15-month-old Kamal Nath government.

All the 22 former MLAs later joined BJP. 14 of them including Silawat and Rajput were later inducted in the Shivraj ministry.

As per the constitutional provision, a non-MLA can join a state ministry, but he or she needs to be elected to the House within 6 months of being inducted in the ministry.

Accordingly, Silawat and Rajput, who were inducted in the Shivraj cabinet on April 2, resigned from the Shivraj

● **SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN** indicates that he is in no hurry to accommodate the 2 ex-ministers who resigned from his cabinet on October 21 when their 6-month mandatory period to continue in their position as non-MLAs ended.

cabinet on October 21. Both of them were however elected to the Assembly in the November 3 by-elections in the state.

"Ministry expansion is not in my agenda right now", Chouhan told reporters here.

He also refused to commit as to when he was planning to expand his ministry.

Meanwhile, out of the 12 non-MLA ministers in the Shivraj ministry, three have lost the elections, while the rest nine have won the polls.

The three ministers who lost the polls are Imarti Devi, Anand Singh Kansana and Giriraj Dandotia.

Meanwhile, Kansana announced his resignation from the ministry immediately after he lost the polls.

The other two ministers who lost the polls were yet to announce their resignation from the ministry.

BJP SAYS DIDI
IS PLAYING
‘KHOONI RAJNITI’

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 12

A day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi slammed the killing of BJP workers and supporters in TMC-ruled West Bengal and advised the state's ruling party that the "dance of death" will not help in winning a mandate, the BJP on Thursday accused the TMC supreme and chief minister Mamata Banerjee of playing "khooni rajniti."

On a day BJP's state unit and MP Dilip Ghosh's convoy was attacked in Alipurduar allegedly by TMC workers and one of its workers Gokul Jana was "murdered" in East Medinipur, the party claimed that these incidents are a proof that Bihar poll verdict has unsettled Banerjee.

High on the BJP's radar, West Bengal has crucial Assembly polls lined up early next year and former BJP president and Union home minister Amit Shah had recently visited the state to take stock of the party's poll preparedness.

West Bengal is one of the few states where the BJP has never been in power and has been aggressively expanding its organisational and support base.

BJP's performance in the Lok Sabha polls, when it won 18 out of 42 parliamentary seats, had charged the party cadre and also helped it in expanding its support base significantly.

PM2.5 levels in Delhi will be lowest
if no crackers burnt, says SAFAR

New Delhi, Nov. 12: The PM2.5 concentration in Delhi on Diwali is likely to be the "lowest" in the last four years if no firecrackers are burnt, a central government agency said on Thursday.

The ministry of earth sciences' air quality monitor, SAFAR, said pollution levels in Delhi during the Diwali period are likely to

remain in the higher end of the "very poor" category in the absence of emissions due to fireworks.

"Under 'zero-firecracker' scenario, the level of PM2.5 is likely to be the lowest in the past four years as not so calm surface winds in Delhi will help in dispersion (of pollutants)," it said.

PM2.5 is particulate matter which is about three per cent the diameter of a human hair and can lead to premature deaths from heart and lung diseases.

An AQI between zero and 50 is considered "good", 51 and 100 "satisfactory", 101 and 200 "moderate", 201 and 300 "poor", 301 and 400 "very

poor", and 401 and 500 "severe". SAFAR said stubble burning-induced impact on AQI is expected to increase from negligible to moderate in the next two days. A spike in PM2.5 in the early hours of November 15 is likely in case of fire-related emissions, it said. —PTI

10 students selected to participate
in NASA's human rover challenge

AKSHAYA KUMAR
SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, NOV. 12

As many as 10 students from Odisha's Navonmeh Prasar Student Astronomy Team (NaPSAT) have been selected to participate in National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) Human Rover Challenge scheduled to be held next year.

This is for the first time when a school team will be representing India at the international-level event. The team formed by the Bhubaneswar-based Navonmeh Prasar Foundation comprises schoolchildren and some Industrial Training Institute (ITI) students from across the state.

According to sources, the

Human Exploration Rover Challenge scheduled in April 2021 will witness the participation of various teams from across the globe. For this challenge, the teams will develop human rovers that can move on the surface of Mars.

Excited over the selection, Anil Pradhan, founder of Navonmeh Prasar Foundation said, "It is for the first time that a school team from India has been selected for the NASA Human Exploration Rover Challenge. We have identified 10 students from the state, and the team was formed during the pandemic."

"Initially we imparted training to the students and then applied for the international event. The team is now sweating it out to make

a rover that can move on Mars' surface," Pradhan informed, adding that they are also raising funds for the competition.

The team from Odisha is quite optimistic of giving a tough fight and aims to develop the rover in 4-5 months. The students are quite ecstatic after their selection. "I knew about NaPSAT. I decided to try out for this and got selected as well. We have been selected for the NASA Human Exploration Rover Challenge 2021. We are the first team from Odisha to get selected and the first high school student team from India. We are going to Alabama in April 2021 and will represent India in this competition."

Ankan Mondal, another student, said that their

rover can handle the weight of two people while moving on terrains of Mars and moon. "We will be making a human-powered rover for Mars and the moon. We have to ensure that the rover can handle the weight of two people. 100 teams are participating in the event," he said.

The NaPSAT is a project taken up by Navonmeh Prasar Foundation to create curiosity among school, skill development & university students in the field of Space and Astronomy. We are an interdisciplinary team of Space enthusiasts across disciplines, who are engaged in projects ranging from the design of space systems, rovers, rockets, satellites and astronomy to participate in various international events.

₹5L COMPENSATION
TO TWO 'WRONGLY'
ACCUSED OF MURDER

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC
BARGARH, NOV. 12

The Odisha Human Rights Commission (OHRC) has ordered compensation of ₹2.5 lakh each to two persons of Bargarh district who were 'wrongfully' arrested on charges of killing a boy in 2016 who was later found alive following his return to home after two years.

The panel has recommended that the compensation amount of ₹5 lakh be recovered from the salary of Prakash Kumar Karana, former inspector of Paikamal police station, who had arrested the two.

As per reports, one Jitu Dandasena of Piplipali village in Bargarh district went missing on Dec. 7, 2016. During the course of investigation, police arrested Halu Gurla and Raghab Naik of Bargarh town on December 24, 2016 on the charges of murder and destruction of evidence.

The two were later sent to jail. However, Dandasena returned home in 2018 and the two wrongly accused had moved the OHRC seeking justice after their release from jail.

As questions were raised over the carelessness of police in investigating the case, human rights activist Biswapriya Kanungo had moved the OHRC seeking justice for the arrestees.

Speaking to reporters, Jitu said he had fled his village after he lost his memory following an attack by miscreants.

"In 2016, I was attacked by some miscreants who hit my head and looted my mobile and money. I could not return home as I lost my memory and moved here and there. I returned home after regained my memory," he said.

IN BRIEF

Shots fired at Saudi embassy in Dutch

The Hague: Several shots were fired early Thursday at Saudi Arabia's embassy in The Hague, Dutch police said.

Nobody was injured and police were investigating.

Spokesman Steven van Santen said police were alerted around 6 am (local time) to shots being fired at the building on a stately avenue in the Dutch city. Officers found several bullet casings outside the building and local media showed images of bullet holes in windows. The motive for the shooting was unclear. Police appealed for witnesses. Calls to the embassy went unanswered early Thursday.

CARDI B SORRY FOR GODDESS DURGA LOOK

Los Angeles, Nov. 12: American rapper Cardi B has apologised for appropriating Goddess Durga's image for a magazine cover shoot. The 28-year-old musician recently appeared on the cover of Footwear News magazine, posing as Goddess Durga with shoes in her hands, while promoting her first line of sneakers with Reebok.

In the magazine's cover photo, Cardi B is seen holding a shoe while multiple arms stretched out around her from her shoulders.

The singer was then slammed on social media with many Indian users claiming that she has insulted the Hindu goddess, while others took offence to her outfit. On Wednesday, Cardi B took to her Instagram story and apologised to her Indian fans.

In a video message, the musician said, "When I did the shoot, the creatives told me I was going to represent a Goddess; that she represents strength, femininity and liberation, and that's something I love and I'm all about."

"And though it was dope, if people think I'm offending their culture or their religion I want to say that was not my intent. I do not like offending anyone's religion; I wouldn't like it if someone did it to my religion," she added.

Cardi B maintained that her intention was not to disrespect anyone's god. "When people dress as Virgin Mary and Jesus, as long as they do it in a beautiful, graceful way it is ok". But I wasn't trying to be disrespectful, maybe I should have done my research. I'm sorry. I can't change the past but I will do more research for the future," she added.

Typhoon Vamco strikes Philippines



Rescuers pull a rubber boat carrying residents through a flooded street after Typhoon Vamco hit in Marikina City, suburban Manila on Thursday. — AFP

Biden transition picks up, Klain chief of staff

Long road ahead for duo to fight Covid, heal divided nation

Washington, Nov. 12: US President-elect Joe Biden pressed ahead with his transition on Wednesday despite Donald Trump's refusal to acknowledge defeat, naming a seasoned Democratic operative as chief of staff in his first public White House personnel choice.

Biden tapped longtime aide Ron Klain, who previously served as his first chief of staff while vice president, acknowledging the two had a long road ahead in fighting the Coronavirus pandemic as well as healing a deeply divided nation.

"His deep, varied experience and capacity to work with people all across the political spectrum is precisely what I need in a White House chief of staff as we confront this moment of crisis and bring our country together again," Biden said.

He made the announcement after visiting the Korean War Memorial in

US military won't be used as political pawn, says Gen Mark

Washington, Nov. 12: The words spoken by America's top military officer carried a familiar ring, but in the midst of a chaotic week at the Pentagon, they were particularly poignant.

"We are unique among militaries," said Gen. Mark Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. "We do not take an oath to a king or a queen, a tyrant or a dictator. We do not take an oath to an individual."

Milley was speaking Wednesday at the dedication of an Army muse-

um in a week that saw President Donald Trump fire Defense Secretary Mark Esper and install three staunch loyalists to senior Pentagon policy positions.

The abrupt changes have raised fears about what Trump may try to do in his final two months of office — and whether the military's long held apolitical nature could be upended.

Milley's comments, made as he stood alongside Esper's successor, acting defense chief

Christopher Miller, reflected a view he has long been passionate about: the military's unequivocal duty to protect and defend the Constitution — what he called the "moral north star" for everyone in uniform.

But his message in a time of turmoil — Trump has refused to concede his election loss — was unmistakable: The military exists to defend democracy and is not to be used as a political pawn.

— PTI

Asian leaders to sign huge China-backed trade pact

Hanoi, Vietnam, Nov. 12: Fifteen Asia-Pacific nations are set to sign an enormous free trade deal at an online summit that started on Thursday, with the pact seen as a coup for China in extending its influence across the region.

Once signed, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) will be the world's largest trade pact in terms of GDP, according to analysts. The pact, which was first proposed in 2012 and viewed as a Chinese-led rival to a now-defunct US trade initiative, loops in 10 Southeast Asian economies along with China, Japan, South Korea, New

Zealand and Australia. "After eight years of negotiating with blood, sweat and tears, we have finally come to the moment where we will seal the RCEP Agreement this Sunday," said Malaysia's trade minister Mohamed Azmin Ali, ahead of the virtual meeting.

Vietnam's Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc also confirmed the pact would be signed this week during opening remarks at the online summit. India had been due to sign the pact but pulled out last year over concerns about cheap Chinese goods entering the country, though it can join at a

later date if it reverses its position.

The RCEP — whose members account for around 30 percent of global GDP — would be a "major positive step forward for trade and investment liberalisation" in the region, said Rajiv Biswas, Asia Pacific chief economist at global business consultancy IHS Markit. "RCEP will be the world's biggest free trade area measured in terms of GDP," he said.

The pact's expected signing comes as the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) fight to mitigate the crippling cost of the Covid-19.

— AFP

China lays out tech roadmap to catch up with US

Beijing, Nov. 12: China must apply cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence if it wants to transform its military into a modern fighting force on a par with those of other leading powers, according to new guidelines and comments from President Xi Jinping and other officials.

The statements come from a booklet published this month by the state-run People's Publishing House, in which senior officials, including President Xi, outlined the latest five-year plan for the country's development.

The military modernisation is being pushed by 67-year-old Xi, who besides heading the ruling Communist Party (CPC) and the Presidency is also the Chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC), which is the overall high command for China's 2-million strong military.

China this year approved about \$179 billion defence budget, the second-highest after United States defence spending of \$732 billion. According to Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) military expenditure figures.

— PTI

\$500 mn to be pledged at Paris forum for cure

Paris, Nov. 12: Several countries and foundations are set to pledge more than \$500 million on Thursday for a global pool aimed at ensuring equitable access to coronavirus tests, treatment and vaccines for all nations, organisers of a French forum said.

The third edition of the Paris Peace Forum, which seeks to address governance issues with concrete projects, takes place Thursday and Friday in the French capital and is dedicated to finding ways to ease and get out of the Covid-19 pandemic.

It takes place as the number of cases is rising rapidly across Europe and beyond.

It also comes just days after American pharmaceutical giant Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech reported highly promising results for their vaccine candidate, raising hopes globally.

During the forum, several countries are expected to announce funding for the so-called ACT-Accelerator, a mechanism led by the World Health Organisation that aims to ensure access to tests, treatments and vaccines for all. According to a statement by organisers, France will be announcing a commitment of 100 million euros, Spain 50 million and the European Commission 100 million specifically for the vaccines part of ACT-A.

The British government is also set to declare a contribution of one additional pound for each four dollars announced.

Organisers added that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation was also due to "announce an important commitment during the discussion." WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, French President Emmanuel Macron, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez and Ursula von der Leyen, president of the European Commission, will take part in an online discussion due to be streamed online.

In September, the United Nations estimated that the ACT-Accelerator had only received around \$3 billion of the \$38 billion needed to meet the goal of producing and delivering two billion vaccine doses, 245 million treatments and 500 million diagnostic tests over the next year.

— AFP

UK crosses 50,000 Covid-19 deaths

London, Nov. 12: The UK has become the first country in Europe to cross the grim milestone of 50,000 Covid-19 related deaths as Prime Minister Boris Johnson said, "we mourn everybody who's gone". As per the official figures released by the government, 1,256,725 people have tested positive for the virus after 22,950 new cases were recorded this week.

A further 595 fatalities due to the deadly viral infection on Wednesday took the death toll to 50,365, making the UK the fifth country in the world to cross the 50,000-mark after the US, Brazil, India and Mexico. "We're not out of the woods yet. Every death is a tragedy, we mourn everybody who's gone and our feelings are with their families and friends," Johnson said. "It is a global pandemic whose effects, whose treatments, whose implications for the economy, all those have been becoming clearer as the

CREATIVE TROLLS SLAM W.H.O. ON FB FOR TAIWAN CENSOR

Taipei, Nov. 12: Alleged censorship of Taiwan on the World Health Organisation's Facebook page inspired some creative trolling on Thursday, with special characters and foreign scripts used to bypass filters that also censored Winnie the Pooh, a character used to poke fun at Chinese President Xi Jinping.

The deluge came after Taiwan politicians and social media users shared screenshots showing messages containing "Taiwan" or "Taiwan can help" failing to upload underneath a banner advertising a WHO livestreamed event on the Coronavirus.

— AFP

months have gone on," he said.

— PTI

Turkey prohibits smoking in public

Istanbul, Nov. 12: Turkey's interior ministry has banned smoking in public places across the country to curb the spread of Covid-19.

In a statement late Wednesday, the ministry said smoking would be banned in busy streets, bus stops and public squares when necessary. It said the nationwide mask mandate in public spaces, which has been in effect for several months, must be followed at all times and smokers were routinely violating the mask rule.

The ministry also said provinces can decide to impose curfews on senior citizens above the age of 65 if they are seeing increases in the number of critical patients. The governors of Istanbul and Ankara have already reintroduced measures this week, allowing senior citizens to leave their homes only between 10 am and 4 pm.

— AP

'JERUSALEMA' BECOMES GLOBAL LOCKDOWN HIT

Johannesburg, Nov. 12: When Coronavirus placed the world in lockdown, a gospel-influenced anthem with Zulu lyrics brought people together through social media, lifting spirits and instantly becoming a global phenomenon.

Today, "Jerusalem" has clocked more than 230 million YouTube views in less than a year — and lured an army of people into mimicking its dance moves.

"The feedback was crazy," says 24-year-old South African artist Master KG, who co-wrote and performs the disco-house track with Nomcebo Zikode.

— AFP

ITALIAN HOSPITALS NEAR BREAKING POINT AS VIRUS SURGE

Milan, Nov. 12: Dr Luca Cabrini was certain his hospital was in the heart of Lombardy's lake district would reach its breaking point caring for 300 Covid-19 patients. So far, virus patients fill 500 beds and counting.

Italy, which shocked the world and itself when hospitals in the wealthy north were overwhelmed with

Coronavirus cases last spring, is again facing a systemic crisis, as confirmed positives pass the symbolic threshold of 1 million. "We are very close to not keeping up. I cannot say when we will reach the limit, but that day is not far off," said Cabrini, who runs the intensive care ward at Varese's Circolo hospital, the largest

in the province of 1 million people northwest of Milan.

The hospital expanded its 20-bed ICU ward to 45 beds during Italy's deadly spring peak. It had 38 patients last weekend, and Cabrini was preparing to set up beds in an operating theater this week, "something we would have preferred to avoid."

— AP

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(Department of Science & Technology)
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Invite applications for NATIONAL AWARDS

FOR SUCCESSFUL COMMERCIALIZATION OF INDIGENOUS TECHNOLOGY

The National Awards will be presented on the Technology Day on 11th May 2021

Cash Award of Rs.25 lakh

To an industrial concern which has successfully developed & commercialized an indigenous technology on or after April 2016. In case, the technology developer / provider and technology commercializer are two different organizations, each one would be eligible for award of Rs. 25 lakh and a trophy.

No. of Awards: One*

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Cash Award of Rs.15 lakh

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No. of Awards: One*

* Committee may change the number of Awards to be given or may defer if the entries are not found suitable.

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DECCAN
Chronicle

13 NOVEMBER 2020

Digital oversight: Don't try to regulate, censor

The Central government's move to bring the digital space under the purview of the information and broadcasting ministry, with President Ram Nath Kovind approving the Government of India (Allocation of Business) 357th Amendment Rules, 2020, gives it the power to regulate policies and rules for online content, including news and creative material broadcast through over-the-top platforms. This comes soon after the Supreme Court expressed concern over the lack of oversight on OTT content and seeking the government's views on the subject.

At present, most content in India is regulated by statutory or autonomous bodies. The Press Council of India and the Central Board of Film Certification, both statutory bodies, monitor the print media and films respectively, while the News Broadcasters Association represents television news channels and the Advertising Standards Council of India regulates advertising. However, there is no law or body that governs online content, or OTT platforms. The attempt by a group of video streaming services to formulate a self-regulatory code that laid down a set of guiding principles for content on these platforms had failed to take off. In this background, the new rules fill in a lacuna, and thus welcome.

It is learnt that the programme code that governs content on TV and which found an outlet in the Cable Television Network Regulation Act, 1995 may serve as the template for guidelines, and the code lists several don'ts.

While it is necessary that there is a regulatory body which can oversee the content, there are too many apprehensions and challenges that such a body will face. This is basically because of two factors. One, it should work within the limits of Article 19 (1) of the Constitution, which guarantees the right to speech and expression. Any attempt to muscle information or opinion expressed online will fall foul of the Constitution, and hence untenable. The media is best left to regulate itself, and a statutory regulator should not take on the role of a censor or do the bidding of the government in power. There are laws in our statute book to punish those who break them; and thus it must function solely as an overseer and not as a regulator, in the strict sense of the term. Second is the role that technology plays while trying to regulate online platforms. In the case of the press, television, advertisements or films, the products are made and/or distributed physically within the territory of India but when it comes to online, none of this is applicable, thanks to technology. One can produce content sitting anywhere in the world and make it available in the country, and imposing restrictions on them would be a tough, if not impossible, task. At the same time, those from within the country are easy to be brought under control. It is incumbent on a regulator to ensure that every player gets a level-playing field.

A knowledge society demands an open and free exchange of ideas. Regulators do have a role, but only a very limited one. The government must ensure that the new regulator promotes India's transformation into a knowledge society, and not impedes it.

A fitting finale for IPL

The smiles on the faces of not only the record winners of the Indian Premier League said it all. There was an immense sense of satisfaction to the event having been held as a glorious tribute to the sporting spirit of mankind with the popular multi-billion IPL 2020 season transplanted in the UAE desert and gone through virtually without a hitch. Five-time champions Mumbai Indians may have pulled one more away from the pack but they were just one great part of a wonderfully uninhibited final in which bright cricket of the enterprising T20 variety was served as entertainment in the face of one of humanity's greatest challenges in the form of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The super hero frame may have frozen prematurely on Marcus Stoinis as Delhi Capitals' opening gambit backfired, but denied by one of the great weapons of the 2020 season — pace attack. Even on Asian pitches there was plenty for quicks like Trent Boult to show the way. A methodical thoroughness may have exemplified the extent to which Mumbai Indians have revolutionised the format but they displayed that long after attacking batsmanship saw the likes of Kagiso Rabada being toyed with. This was not a nail-biting final, but an almost clichetic DC captain had realised that setting a target is as much a way of trying to win in this format. The flow of then attacking game was owed primarily to getting on with it rather than complicating it excessively.

The slow bowlers held their own too, so too did athletic fielders who bring excitement in their new gravity-defying, boundary riding ways even as the batsmen went through the vicissitudes, sometimes run ragged by just the thought of winning when near enough to the threshold. Many of the youth of India embellished the competition in unfolding their unique talents while the experienced often left us marvelling at how they reproduce skills as if from muscle memory. The public, drawn even more into interaction with the Dream XI IPL fantasy games, was laughing too as a great IPL edition went by.

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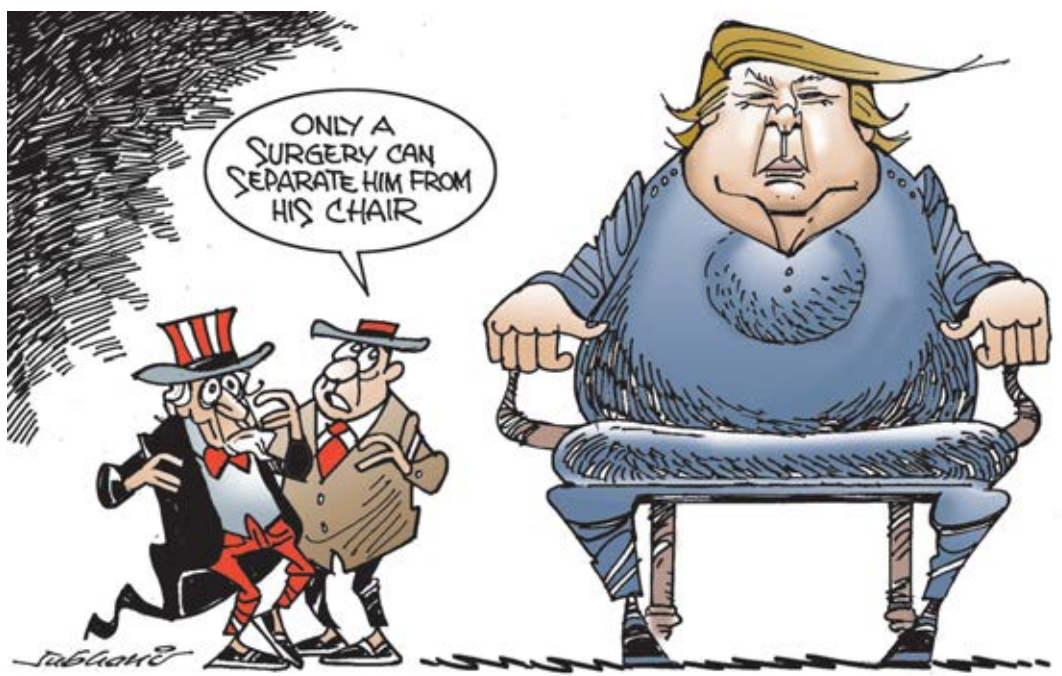
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Subhani



New insights on Rajiv, but questions remain



Karan Thapar

As I See It

Biographies written by friends can be both revelatory and exasperating. Because the author knows the subject intimately there's a lot you can learn from them which otherwise you might never have found out. But, equally, for the same reason the book is likely to ignore or gloss over incidents that could embarrass the subject. Such books are fascinating but not always satisfying.

That is largely true of Wajahat Habibullah's recent book *My Years with Rajiv*. First, however, a word about their relationship. Habibullah and Indira Gandhi's two sons, Rajiv and Sanjay, studied together at Doon School and earlier at Welham. Their families knew each other and Habibullah's mother even served as a Congress MP. Later, the adult Wajahat served in both Rajiv Gandhi's and his mother's office. As he reveals, Habibullah accompanied Mrs Gandhi "on every tour within India, from Kashmir to the Andamans". Consequently, he got to know and, perhaps, understand the Gandhis better than any other civil servant.

Now, let's come to the book. The new bits suggest that a lot happened when he was Prime Minister of which Rajiv Gandhi knew very little. In fact, he was often kept in the dark. By politicians, by generals and even, it seems, by his close friends. If true — and I'm prepared to accept Habibullah's word — it's hardly a flattering portrait of India's youngest Prime Minister.

Habibullah reveals that Rajiv was totally clueless when, in February 1986,

the gates of the Babri Masjid were unlocked. "Was Rajiv Gandhi involved in the decisions leading up to this unlocking?" he asks. This is the answer that Rajiv Gandhi gave him: "I had not been informed of this action and have asked Vir Bahadur Singh (then chief minister of Uttar Pradesh) to explain. I suspect it was Arun (Nehru) and Fotedar (Makhan Lal) who were responsible, but I am having this verified. If it is true, I will have to consider action."

Unfortunately, Habibullah does not explain how a Prime Minister could be ignorant of something as important as this, or what that suggests of his leadership and of his control of events. Yet Habibullah does write of himself that he was "completely taken aback". Therefore, it's a mystery why he doesn't dig deeper to find an explanation for Gandhi's ignorance. Or ask how Rajiv's cousin, Arun Nehru, could have placed the Prime Minister in this predicament.

Even more surprising is what Habibullah has to reveal about Operation Brasstacks. In 1986-87, this operation was viewed as unwarrantedly provocative and many feared that it could spark a conflict with Pakistan. Although Habibullah says that it involved "the entire Indian Army", it emerges that Rajiv Gandhi had no idea of its planning or that it was actually happening. Habibullah reveals he only found out as a result of a casual comment to Lt. Gen. P.N. Hoon, then Western Army commander, at an Army Day reception.

Habibullah's account of Rajiv's conversation with Lt. Gen. Hoon is both

funny and frightening. "When Rajiv saw him, he sauntered up to him and asked cheerfully: 'How is the Western Front?' " Lt. Gen. Hoon then started to speak about Operation Brasstacks. "Rajiv looked taken aback and asked Hoon what he was talking about." As Habibullah adds, it soon become crystal clear that "the Prime Minister of India had in fact no inkling of an exercise that had brought India and Pakistan to the brink of war".

Once again, Habibullah does not bother to ask the obvious questions. What does Rajiv Gandhi's ignorance of Brasstacks reveal of his relationship with the Army Chief and, more importantly, Arun Singh, the minister of state for defence and Rajiv's closest friend? Indeed, what does this sorry state of affairs reveal of Rajiv Gandhi's hold on the government? Habibullah's silence doesn't mean the questions don't exist or that they can conveniently not be answered.

The third revelation is from Rajiv Gandhi's brief term as Leader of the Opposition. During Operation Desert Storm, launched by a 35-nation coalition led by the United States in 1991, to liberate Kuwait from Saddam Husain's control, Rajiv Gandhi "launched a tirade against the USA focused on refuelling permissions given by India to US planes". Gandhi claimed this was a surrender of Indian sovereignty.

However, Habibullah points out that such criticism overlooked the fact "India itself was routinely given such permission by a host of countries".

The author goes a step further to reveal Gandhi's hypocrisy was a lot worse.

Behind closed doors he was in touch with the US embassy to convey a very different message. "Rajiv was at pains to quietly explain to the US embassy in New Delhi the domestic compulsions behind his actions and stressing that he had no desire to

undermine India-US relations that he had himself so caringly wrought". Once again, Habibullah has no comment to make on this distressing two-facedness.

However, where this book falls horribly short is in its discussion of the massacre of Sikhs in Delhi in 1984.

It has very little to say of the killings and almost nothing of the enormity of what happened. There's no attempt to assess the response of the new Prime Minister or the failure of his government to act effectively.

In fact, Habibullah describes the gathering at Teen Murti House, where Presidents and Prime Ministers queued up to pay their last respects to Indira Gandhi, but seems to ignore what was happening outside. Over 3,000 Sikhs were killed but his account suggests Rajiv Gandhi, standing beside his mother's body, was unaware or uninformed of the pogrom taking place in his capital. Habibullah as good as admits this when he writes: "We were later to learn that Sikhs were assaulted on the streets".

Habibullah quotes Rajiv Gandhi's November 2, 1984 broadcast: "As Prime Minister of India, I cannot and will not allow this". But it happened and most people believe he did little to stop it. Yet this is not a subject Habibullah pays any attention to.

I guess when a Dosco writes about another Doon School boy, friendship comes in the way of an honest and objective account.

Between chums that might be understandable, but for a biographer it's less forgivable. But then Habibullah doesn't hide his enormous admiration for his subject. That's apparent from the introduction. Quoting what Marc Antony said of Brutus in *Julius Caesar*, Habibullah says of Rajiv Gandhi: "This was a man".

The writer is a television commentator and anchor

LETTERS

WAKE UP CALL

The author has rightly analysed that the TRS has built an enviable election machinery, good campaign strategy and media dominance (*Dubbaka nail-biter may have changed Telangana politics, DC, Nov. 12*). Even then, it could not make the grade. The defeat is a wake-up call for the TRS and it calls for introspection.

Dr C. Ghanshyam
Visakhapatnam

DIGITAL CONTROL

The government's move to bring OTTs and other digital platforms under purview of Information and broadcast ministry is good. They have become very popular and most of them are telecasting sleazy content and fake news with impunity. They are not shying away from crossing the limits of civility. As the consequences of misuse of such platforms are dangerous to society, they should be made accountable.

Dr D.V.G. Sankararao
Vizianagaram

SHOCKING LAPSE

It is shame on TTD's Bhakthi channel (*Hyd devotee gets porn link from TTD channel, DC, Nov. 12*). It has become clear that the administration of TTD has failed miserably as more employees of SVBC were found watching porn. This kind of incidents hurt the sentiments of devotees and spoils the reputation of world famous temple and also reduces its importance.

P. Govardhana Rao
Kankipadu, Krishna district

50 YEARS AGO IN
DECCAN
Chronicle

Man becomes woman

TORONTO, Nov. 12

A 24-year-old Toronto office worker who flew to New York as a man and as a woman said here, "It is like being born again."

The office worker underwent a four-hour operation in New York which changed her sex physically and legally.

"Sometimes I still find myself waiting for a woman to step out of an elevator, opening a door for a woman or getting up when a woman enters the room. I attract a lot of puzzled looks," she said.

She said she would like to marry some day but would tell the man about her history beforehand — because she can never have children.

Sanjiwan Sahni



An idea whose time has come". This was among the responses following my earlier article in these columns, which proposed the creation of a forum comprising the chief ministers and Leaders of the Opposition in states not governed by the ruling party.

The fulcrum would be to reinforce the federal structure, with national issues getting a collective voice, rather than individual efforts. Over time, it was hoped, with more credibility, a potential challenger would emerge.

The second dominant response was over implementation, which is even normally problematic and would be a challenge.

Let us look at the proposed alternative in these contexts.

First, the establishment of a forum, if it finds acceptance by even a few CMs or LOPs, will help to create an enabling structure as a first step. Not having to negotiate alliances to join a larger collective would be an advantage. Its membership will be limited to CMs and LOPs, and participation voluntary. This would extend to issues as well.

In other words, there need not be a consensus on all issues. There could be a consensus on major national

issues, where the forum will allow the CMs' viewpoints to get wider national acceptance than in their areas of influence. Success could be reinforcing.

The point is that this would be a democratic forum as all members would be representatives chosen on the basis of their success in the electoral process in their states. Collectively, the forum would be representative of 60 per cent of the electorate that had not voted for the ruling party. This is a small attempt to address the lacuna in our first-past-the-post system. The majority vote gets divided and permits even a minority to get majoritarian power. A collective forum for the voice of 60 per cent seems worth exploring.

There is enough expertise available in the system to put a structure together that would incentivise and promote collaboration. At the same time, it will leave scope for dissent. Dissent by abstention from issues isn't acceptable to some.

How could the forum's voice be more effectively disseminated?

The CMs and LOP will be supported by experts selected by them in multiple domains including but not limited to economics, law, diplomacy and even politics. Ideally, this forum will

have a fair measure of younger people, who not only have the relevant domain knowledge but are also articulate and have acceptability at an individual level, that will be enhanced by their collective credibility. Some names that come to mind include Mahua Moitra, Kanhaiya Kumar, Prashant Kishore, Sachin Pilot, Chetan Bhagat, Priyanka Chaturvedi and Raghav Chadha.

Another key question: It is all very well to find fault with the government's viewpoint but what is the alternative vision. Currently, different state-level politics brings out the relevant issues, but restrictively. Nobody has the mandate to credibly propagate an all-India national vision. Besides policy, the administrative capabilities of the states are only well known where they are in power.

Many states have demonstrated progress in multiple but limited spheres of activity. If this experience is pooled in the forum, the likelihood of national issues gaining acceptance will probably increase exponentially. The forum could generate shared experience. It could also incentivise a competitive streak. Both of these are positives.

Where the advisory team can be helpful is in focusing and bringing to

the CMs' and LOPs' attention, in a structured way, key issues that should be taken up on a priority basis. Its mandate should be to:

a) Segment — economic, defence/foreign affairs, political, administrative reforms, technology, etc. Identify — key issues in these segments.

b) The effort should be to try and arrive at a consensus on three (illustrative) issues in each segment. This would become the core alternative agenda to propound collectively.

This would be a combination of political, managerial and technological prowess. Segmentation and prioritisation would put the focus on what must be done with immediacy across the country. The powerful team of spokespersons using the best technologies, carrying credibility with the bulk of voters, should make an impact.

For clarity, the team will be required to focus on the positives that need to be done. Political parties will be left to fight their battles independently, as is currently the norm.

The intention is to "cut the clutter" and bring forward issues that pass the test of experiential and intellectual rigour, including multi-disciplinary analysis.

Electorally, in a Utopian world, the 60 per cent of the electorate outside the establishment would be incentivised to vote together. However, in a real world, that is not going to happen. But, it is hoped this proposed forum will enable better communication, understanding on several issues, a collective desire to effectively reinforce the democratic process, the federal structure, as well as formulate policies relevant to alleviate poverty, to ensure India's progress in many respects. To summarise, there is a distinct hope and possibility that at least at the national level, not necessarily at state level, even electoral solidarity will become more visible.

The hope is that we could help create an institution for the voice of 60 per cent of the non-establishment electorate, create a direction for an alternative vision, bring closer multi-party state leaderships and employ multi-media technology to disseminate positive possibilities.

All this will enable an alternative leadership to become more visible across India. From among this leadership, it is hoped a challenger would emerge.

The writer is a management and economic adviser

SHORT TAKES

Mother of tennis star Evert dead

Deerfield Beach (UK): Colette Evert, the matriarch of a tennis family that produced five children who were successful in the age-group and professional ranks, including 18-time Grand Slam champion Chris Evert, has died. She was 92.

She died last Thursday in Deerfield Beach, Florida, according to a tweet by Chris Evert and an online obituary posted by Fred Hunter's Funeral Home in Fort Lauderdale.

Born Jeanne Colette Thompson on June 15, 1928, in New Rochelle, New York, she went by her middle name and was the youngest of 10 children. In 1952, she married Jimmy Evert, a tennis teaching professional in Florida whom she met at the wedding of a mutual friend in New York.

The couple's five children played tennis collegiately or professionally. — AP

Foreign players pull out of PSL

Karachi: The efforts of Pakistan Cricket Board to complete the Pakistan Super League have received setbacks due to the unavailability of some more overseas players ahead of the play-offs matches due to Covid 19 related travel restrictions.

The PCB is holding the four remaining play-off matches and the summit clash this weekend and next week in Karachi. But for the first time since the PSL was launched in 2016, former West Indian captain Darren Sammy, who has one of the leading faces of the league, is not available to play for his franchise. Sammy, who has also captained Zalmi, will not be flying to Karachi because of Covid-19 related travel issues.

New Zealand's Mitchell McClenaghan has also pulled out due to his country's travel guidelines. — PTI

Nizam Club are cricket champs

Hyderabad: Nizam Cricket Club emerged champions of the Winter Premier League junior cricket championship organised by Emerging Cricketers Development Group (ECDG) in collaboration with School Sports & Games Federation (SSGF) at the SKN Cricket Grounds in Buduppall, Hyderabad.

In the final, they beat Legala Cricket Academy by one wicket. Batting first, Legala cashed in on Vasu's 92 to make 191 for 7 in 35 overs even as Sooraj (3/27) and Ansh Gupta (4/30) were among the wickets. Nizam chased down the target with four balls to spare, riding on a 52-run partnership for the eighth wicket between Dharmik (50) and Aryan Saiyed (34).

Brief scores: Legala Cricket Academy 191/7 in 35 overs (Vasu 92, Ashwin Sooraj 3/27, Ansh Gupta 4/30) lost to Nizam Cricket Club 195/9 in 34.2 overs (Dharmik 50, Aryan Saiyed 34, Om Karthik 3/25, Arshdeep 3/29)

Online chess at the weekend

Hyderabad: The Brilliant Chess Academy is conducting the 174th Brilliant Trophy Open online chess tournament on November 14 and 15. A total of Rs 10,000 will be given away to the top 20 finishers in the Open category. The organisers promise special prizes to the top two places in Juniors category (Under 7, 9, 11, 13, 15 age groups) for boys and girls separately. For further details contact J. Subrahmanyam on phone number 9247399717.

Live on TV

- CRICKET
- Women's Big Bash League: Perth Scorchers vs Melbourne Renegades from 6.45 am (Saturday) on Sony Six
- FORMULA ONE
- Turkish Grand Prix: First practice from 1.25 pm, Second practice from 5.25 pm on Star Sports Select 2, HD
- GOLF
- Augusta Masters: From 11.30 pm on Star Sports Select 1, HD
- WWE
- SmackDown: Bouts from 6.30 am (Saturday) on Sony Ten 1

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Finland pip France

Forss, Onni spoil Thuram's party; Portugal rock Andorra

Paris, Nov. 12: Finland spoiled Marcus Thuram's party on Wednesday after beating France 2-0 on the day the Borussia Moenchengladbach attacker emulated his father Lilian Thuram by making his debut for Les Bleus.

Thuram was picked by Didier Deschamps for the friendly at the Stade de France over 22 years after his dad won the World Cup at the same ground, but despite a strong performance on the left wing could not stop the Finns from coming out on top.

The 23-year-old hit the bar with less 15 minutes gone and soon after flashed a difficult volley over as he and Lucas Digne caused continual problems down the left flank for the away side.

However, Marcus Forss stunned the hosts when he collected the ball after a Moussa Sissoko mistake and rammed home at Steve Mandanda's near post.

France barely had any time to react before Onni Valakari doubled the away side's lead with a stunning effort after being left to stroll towards goal.

RONALDO CONTINUES GOAL QUEST

Cristiano Ronaldo continued his quest to snatch the all-time record for most international goals when he struck his 102nd Portugal goal in their in a 7-0 win over Andorra.

Pulinho netted brace as Pedro, Sanches, Felix scored one goal each to get past Andorra.

France's opponents on Saturday in what could be a Nations League 'A', Group 3 decider strolled post their weak opponents in Lisbon despite not starting a single player from the team that beat Sweden 3-0 last month.

Ronaldo missed that match after testing positive for Coronavirus and was introduced at half-time on Wednesday, but had to wait until there were only five minutes remaining to boost his record bid with a close-range header.

Former Iran striker Ali Daei holds the record on 109 goals.

Italy extended their unbeaten streak to 20 games after a second-string line-up comfortably beat Estonia a 4-0. — AFP



Belgium's Michy Batshuayi (left) vies for the ball against Switzerland's Loris Benito during an international friendly football match at the King Power stadium in Leuven, Belgium, on Wednesday. Belgium won 2-1. — AP

Belgians boss over Swiss

Leuven (Belgium), Nov. 12: Striker Michy Batshuayi scored twice to help a makeshift Belgium side come from behind to beat Switzerland 2-1 in a friendly game.

Batshuayi showed clinical efficiency to convert Belgium's two best chances in the second half after Switzerland deservedly took the lead with an early goal that rewarded its intense pressing. Ahead of upcoming Nations League matches against England and Denmark, Belgium coach Roberto Martinez played mostly his backups and handed debuts to youngsters Dodi Lukebakio, Hannes Delcroix and Charles De Ketelaere.

Regular starters Kevin De Bruyne, Dries Mertens and Romelu Lukaku were

THE RESULTS			
Finland (Forss 28, Onni 31)	2	Netherlands (Van de Beek 47)	1
France	0	Spain (Canales 19)	1
Portugal (Neto 8, Paulinho 29, 61, Sanches 56, Garcia 76-og, Ronaldo 85, Felix 88)	7	Germany (Waldschmidt 13)	1
Andorra	0	Czech Republic	0
Belgium (Batshuayi 49, 70)	2	Turkey (Tosun 23-pen, Turuc 41, Under 58)	3
Switzerland (Mehmedi 12)	1	Croatia (Budimir 32, Pasalic 53, Brekalo 56)	3

rested. FIFA's top-ranked team was also without Real Madrid star Eden Hazard, who remained quarantined in Spain following a positive Covid-19 test. Switzerland pressed high in the early stages and took the lead in the 12th minute following a defensive error from Sebastiaan Bornauw, who failed to control a long ball and headed it back into the path of Admir Mehmedi. — AFP

Dutch draw with Spain

Amsterdam, Nov. 12: Frank de Boer's wait for a first win as Netherlands coach goes on after his team drew 1-1 with Spain in a friendly in Amsterdam on Wednesday. De Boer has now gone four matches without a victory since being appointed in September to succeed Ronald Koeman, who left to take over at Barcelona.

But Donny van de Beek's equaliser shortly after half-time ensured the Dutch at least avoided defeat at the Johan Cruyff Arena after Spain had taken an early lead through Sergio Canales. — AFP

Shreya, Rishab tennis toppers

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, NOV. 12

Rishab Agarwal and T. Shreya emerged winners in the men's and women's categories respectively at the tennis tournament conducted by the ACE Tennis Academy in Hyderabad.

India No.53 Shreya, who had participated in the World Universities event, defeated last year's Under 18 national champion and India No. 15 Shrivalli Rashmika in two tight sets 7-6 (8-6), 7-5.

Rashmika was the top seed in the tournament while Shreya was third.

On the contrary, India No.13 and top seed Rishab proved too good for Ganta Sai Karteek Reddy, beating the second seed and India No.33 in straight sets at 6-3, 6-1.

THE RESULTS

Men's final (number in brackets denotes seeding): Rishab Agarwal (1) bt Ganta Sai Karteek Reddy (2) 6-3, 6-1. **Semifinals:** Rishab Agarwal bt Grahit Muvva 6-3, 6-1. Ganta Sai Karteek Reddy bt Tanishq Malpani 6-1, 6-7(4), 6-3. **Quarterfinals:** Grahit M bt Raj Bagdai 3-6, 6-2, 10-5; GSK Reddy bt M. Vineeth 6-1, 6-1. **Second round:** Rishab A bt Aayush B 9-5; Aaditya V bt M. Manveer 9-4; Raj Bagdai bt Rishi B 9-3; Grahit M bt

Nitin K 9-4; Hitesh Y bt T. Siddharth 9-6; T. Malpani bt L. Suhith R 9-5; M. Vineeth bt Karthik G 9-3; GSK Reddy bt M. Yeshwanth 9-0. **First round:** Aayush. B bt G. Raghunandan 9-1; M. Manveer bt Sahana 9-5; Aaditya V bt Dhanush V w/o; Raj Bagdai bt Siva S 9-3; Rishi B bt Showrya S 9-4; Nitin K bt Naishik R 9-2; Grahit M bt Sahadev S 9-2; Hitesh Y bt M. Kalyan 9-5; T. Siddharth bt Sai Harshit 9-1; T. Malpani bt Abhinav M 9-2; L. Suhith R bt Rawal K 9-2; Karthik G bt K. V. Ramana 6-2; M. Vineeth bt Deepak V 9-8; M. Yeshwanth bt Siddharth R w/o.

Women's final (number in brackets denotes seeding): T. Shreya (3) bt Shrivalli Rashmika (1) 7-6 (8-6), 7-5. **Semifinals:** Shrivalli Rashmika bt Bala Snigdha 6-2, 6-1; T. Shreya bt Avishka Gupta (2) 6-3, 6-1. **Quarterfinals:** Srivalli R bt Sanjana S 6-0, 6-2; Snigdha bt Veda Raju 7-6, 5-7, 10-5; T. Shreya bt Sahitya 6-4, 6-0; Avishka bt Aarni Reddy 7-5, 3-6, 12-10. **Second round:** Srivalli R bt S. Kaavya 9-1; Sanjana S bt V. Vaishnavi 9-4; Veda Raju bt Vanshika 9-6; Snigdha bt Kum Kum 9-3; Sahitya bt Renee S 9-8; T. Shreya bt Bipasha 9-2; Aarni Reddy bt Ashwita 9-3; Avishka bt V. Apoorva 9-3. **First round:** Srivalli R bt Sameeksha w/o; S. Kaavya bt Tribhuvani C 9-2; V. Vaishnavi bt Gaddam S 9-5; Sanjana S bt Tanisha R 9-1; Vanshika bt S. S. Aneesha 9-2; Veda Raju bt Abhaya V 9-9; Kum Kum bt Neharika D 9-8; Snigdha bt Thanya S 9-3; Renee S bt M. Srivalli 9-9; Sahitya R bt Nikita Tiwari 9-0; Bipasha bt Nikita 9-7; T. Shreya bt J. Jeebu 9-0; Ashwita B bt Divija 9-3; Aarni Reddy bt Ika Raju 9-0; V. Apoorva bt Rahin 9-0; Avishka G bt Rishita 9-2.



Winners and runners-up are all smiles after the tourney.

Team India reach Sydney for series

Sydney, Nov. 12: A 25-strong Indian squad, led by its star skipper Virat Kohli, reached here on Thursday for a gruelling two-month Australia tour that starts with a 14-day quarantine-cum-training period on the outskirts of the city.

The Indian contingent along with Australian stars such as David Warner, Steve Smith, Pat Cummins arrived late in the afternoon and were whisked away to the Sydney Olympic Park.

With New South Wales government allowing the Indian team to train during the two-week quarantine period, their sessions will conducted at the Blacktown International Sports Park, which has also been turned into a bio-secure venue.

Captain Kohli, who will return home after the opening Day/Night Test in Adelaide (from December 17 - December 21) for the birth of his first child in early January, is set to get a special treatment during quarantine period, according a report in *Daily Telegraph*.

The Pullman Hotel where the Indian team would put up for next two weeks was also the base for rugby side New South Wales Blues, who have now shifted to another hotel.

According to *Telegraph*, the hotel authorities will provide the Indian captain a special penthouse suite where Australian rugby legend Brad Fittler normally puts up. — PTI

YOUNG GUNS IN AUSTRALIAN TEST SIDE vs INDIA

Melbourne, Nov. 12: The prodigiously talented pair of Will Pucovski and Cameron Green were among five uncapped players picked in a 17-member Australian Test squad for the big-ticket four-match series against India, starting on December 17.

The other uncapped Test players in the Tim Paine-led side are fast bowler Sean Abbott — whose bouncer had accidentally hit Phil Hughes during a Sheffield Shield game in 2014, leading to his tragic death — leg-spinner Mitchell Swepson and all-rounder Michael Neser.

Each of these players, though, has represented Australia in other formats.

Up against a strong Indian line-up and seeking to regain the Border-Gavaskar Trophy they lost for the first time in 2018-19, the fresh faces in the Australian Test squad will join the seasoned stars. — PTI

The Team: Tim Paine (captain), Sean Abbott, Joe Burns, Pat Cummins, Cameron Green, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Marnus Labuschagne, Nathan Lyon, Michael Neser, James Pattinson, Will Pucovski, Steve Smith, Mitchell Starc, Mitchell Swepson, Matthew Wade, David Warner.

Recovered Kapil turns up for golf

New Delhi, Nov. 12: Two weeks after undergoing an angioplasty, World Cup-winning former India captain Kapil Dev was back to playing golf, a sport he took up passionately after bidding adieu to cricket.

The 61-year-old had said that he would like to get back to playing golf as soon as the doctors allowed him and on Thursday he was seen teeing off at the Delhi Golf Club.

"You can't express in words what fun it is to be back on the golf course or a cricket ground. It is beautiful to be back at the golf course, having fun and playing with friends. That's what life is all about," Kapil posted a video message on his *Twitter* handle.

Kapil has been an avid amateur golfer since his retirement from international cricket back in 1994 and also taken part in many events over the years.

Last month, he suffered a heart attack and was



In this screengrab Kapil Dev is seen posing with the golf club after recovering from a heart-attack.

rushed to a hospital where he underwent an emergency angioplasty.

He was back home in a couple of days and since then has kept his fans posted and updated about his health status and also started his job as TV analyst for a reputed channel. — PTI



This handout photo released by the press officer shows Argentine football legend Diego Maradona (right) shaking hands with his doctor Leopoldo Luque in Olivos, Buenos Aires province, Argentina, on Wednesday. — AFP

Maradona out of hospital

Olivos (Argentina), Nov. 12: Argentine football legend Diego Maradona left hospital on Wednesday followed by a convoy of supporters, eight days after undergoing surgery to remove a blood clot on his brain.

Maradona did not speak to the crowd of journalists and chanting fans gathered outside in masks as he left the Olivos clinic in Buenos Aires by ambulance shortly after his doctor Leopoldo Luque told reporters he could go home.

Private security personnel held up dividers to screen the ambulance before it left. A convoy of Maradona's supporters fol-

lowed the ambulance after dozens had waited outside the clinic for days, holding photos of him and chanting their encouragement.

Maradona is expected to continue his rehabilitation in Tigre, 30 kilometres from Buenos Aires, near his daughter Giannina's home.

"Diego has gone through perhaps the hardest time of his life," his lawyer Matias Morla said on Wednesday, adding it was a "miracle" that the clot which could have taken his life, was detected. "What is needed now is family togetherness and being surrounded by health professionals," said Morla. — AFP

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