

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

COIMBATORE | SUNDAY 8 | NOVEMBER 2020

## WEATHER



**Max:** 31°C  
**Min:** 21°C  
**Rainfall:** 1 mm

## ASTROGUIDE

**Sarvari:** Aippasi 23  
**Tithi:** Ashtami  
**Star:** Ayilyam  
**Rahukalam:** 4.30 pm to 6 pm  
**Yamagandam:** 12 noon to 1.30 pm

### PRAYERS

**Fajar:** 4.52 am  
**Zohar:** 11.58 am  
**Asar:** 3.12 pm  
**Maghrib:** 5.41 pm  
**Isha:** 6.54 pm

## CORONA CUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+34,697)	(+489)
84,95,748	1,26,094

covid19india.org

### STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+ 2,341 )  
**TN:** 741,488    11,324

### WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

4,99,91,929

### DEATHS

12,53,443

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES  
216

worldometers.info

## TN wins best state award for water management

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI, NOV. 7

Tamil Nadu has won the 'National Water Award' for being one of the best states for water security and management in 2019, Chief Minister K. Palaniswami said on Saturday. It gives great pleasure to the government of Tamil Nadu receiving the National Award of the Ministry of Jal Shakti as the Best State for Water Management 2019, the chief minister said. Vellore and Karur districts have been ranked first and second respectively, under the 'Revival of River' sub-category while Perambalur district came second in the Water Conservation category, he said in a tweet. Tamil Nadu has bagged the first place under the 'Best State' category under the National Water Awards (NWAs) 2019, presented by the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti, Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation. ■ **P3**

## COUNTER POINT



Let's celebrate Diwali now, we may not get the chance after the results!

# PSLV puts Earth Observation Satellite in orbit

**PATHRI RAJASEKHAR | DC**  
NELLORE, NOV. 7

In its first launch this year, India's workhorse rocket, the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, placed the Earth Observation Satellite (EOS-01) and nine foreign satellites into their designated orbits after a textbook-perfect blast-off from the spaceport at Sriharikota near Nellore on Saturday. Minutes before the launch, heavy downpour and lightning at the Sriharikota range (SHAR) caused some concern at the mission control in the Satish Dhawan Space

Centre (SDSC). The countdown was halted 18 minutes before launch.

After hectic deliberations, the scientists led by Dr K. Sivan, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman and senior scientists S. Somanath and P. Kunhikrishnan decided to postpone the launch by nine minutes. The countdown resumed, and the rocket, designated PSLV-C49, blasted off at 3.11 pm instead of the scheduled 3.02 pm.

After 15 minutes and 20 seconds, EOS-01 was injected into its orbit.



PSLVC-49 carrying all weather Earth Imaging Satellite EOS-01 and nine other foreign satellites launches from Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota on Saturday.

Subsequently, nine commercial satellites were released into their intended orbits.

After separation, the two solar arrays of EOS-01 were deployed automatically and the ISRO Telemetry Tracking and Command Network at Bengaluru assumed control of the satellite. In the coming days, the satellite will be brought to its final operational configuration.

"PSLV-C49 successfully placed all ten satellites precisely into their 575-km orbit," Dr Sivan declared and congratulated the launch vehicle and satellite

teams for rising to the occasion amidst the Covid-19 restrictions.

EOS-01, earlier known as RISAT-2BR2, is an earth observation satellite intended for applications in agriculture, forestry and disaster management support. The international satellites — one from Lithuania, four each from Luxembourg and the USA — were launched under commercial agreement with NewSpace India Limited (NSIL), department of space.

The Lithuania satellite, R2, is a technology demonstrator while the

Luxembourg satellites, Kleos (KSM-1A/1B/1C/1D), are designed for maritime applications. The USA satellites, named Lemur (Lemur-1/2/3/4), are meant for multi-mission remote sensing. ISRO used the PSLV-DL variant, which has two strap-on boosters with 12 tonnes of propellant, for the mission. This variant was first used to launch a Microsat-R satellite on January 24, 2019.

This was the 51st launch of the PSLV, the 76th launch vehicle mission from the SDSC and the 38th launch from the first launch pad at SHAR.



## STATE | 3

**Kamal's birthday celebrated with a political twist**



## WORLD | 5

**WH chief of staff tests virus +ve**

## SPORT | 8

**Holder praises his bowlers for 'using skills and brains'**



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## RJD LARGEST PARTY

# It's exit NDA, say Bihar exit polls

**New Delhi, Nov. 7:** Several exit polls on Saturday gave the RJD-led opposition alliance in Bihar an edge over the ruling NDA while at least three of them predicted a clear majority for the Mahagathbandhan, which has projected Tejashwi Yadav as its chief ministerial face.

Most of the exit polls also predicted the RJD to again emerge as the single largest party in the 243-member assembly along with a clear dip in the seat tally of Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar-led JD(U).

Counting of votes for the three-phase Bihar assembly polls, which ended on Saturday, will be held on November 10. Exit polls are typically based on feedback from a limited number of voters in select areas and none of them have a 100 per cent accuracy record.

Today's Chanakya-CNN News18 projected 180 seats for the RJD-led grand alliance, 55 for the NDA and eight for others. The majority mark is 122.

India Today-Axis My India poll showed the RJD-led block winning 139-161 seats, as against 69-91 for the NDA. It predicted 3-5 seats for LJP and also 3-5 for others.

The ABP-CVoter exit poll predicted NDA to get 104-128 seats and 108-131 seats for the opposition grand alliance. It projected Chirag Paswan-led LJP to get 1-3 seats.

A similar trend was predicted by Times Now-CVoter, which projected 116 seats for the NDA, 120 for the opposition alliance and a single seat for the LJP. It predicted six seats for others.

■ **P4**

## The winner is...

EXIT-POLL		BIHAR ASSEMBLY	
	MAHA GADDBANDHAN	NDA	MAJORITY MARK
TODAY'S CHANAKYA CNN NEWS18	180	55	122
INDIA TODAY-AXIS MY INDIA	139-161	69-91	TOTAL SEATS 243
ABP-CVOTER	108-131	104-128	
TIMES NOW-CVOTER	120	116	

# I-T digs out ₹1K cr fraud in TN firm

**New Delhi, Nov. 7:** The Income Tax department has conducted searches against a Chennai-based IT infrastructure group and detected ₹1,000 crore alleged black money and possible instances of holding of benami assets, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) said on Saturday.

It said the raids were carried out on November 4 at five locations in Chennai and Madurai in Tamil Nadu.

"The searches had led to the detection of unaccounted income of around ₹1,000 crore out of which disclosure of additional income of ₹337 crore has already been made by the assessee, besides actionable issues under the Benami and Black Money Acts," the Board said in a statement.

The CBDT is the administrative authority for the Income Tax department. Sources said the raids were on IG3 Infra Limited, which owns Chennai One IT Special Economic Zone (SEZ). It was incorporated in 2004 as Indian Green Grid Group Limited.

The raids led to "unearthing" of evidence relating to investments in

● **Sources said the raids were on IG3 Infra Limited, which owns Chennai One IT Special Economic Zone. It was incorporated in 2004 as Indian Green Grid Group Limited**

a Singapore registered company, it said.

"The shareholding of this company is held by two companies, one owned by the group searched while the other company is a subsidiary of a major infrastructure development and financing group," the CBDT said.

"It has been found that the company belonging to the searched group has invested a very nominal amount, although it has 72 per cent shareholding, while the other company having 28 per cent shareholding only has invested almost the entire money," it said.

This has resulted into a "benefit or gain" of almost seven crore Singapore Dollars, which is about ₹200 crore, in the hands of the company of the searched group.

■ **Turn to P4**

# Karnataka allows only green crackers

**Bengaluru, Nov. 7:** The sale and bursting of 'green crackers', as per Supreme Court guidelines, will be allowed during Deepawali, the Karnataka government said on Saturday, as it stressed on restrictions to contain the coronavirus infection.

Hours after indicating that the state would ban fireworks due to the pandemic, Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa had appealed to the people on Friday to celebrate the festival in a simple way by using only green crackers.

In view of the prevailing Covid-19 pandemic, chief secretary T.M. Vijay Bhaskar said more stringent measures are needed to be initiated to check the spread of the disease.

"Keeping in mind the existing situation, there is a need to celebrate the fes-

tival in a simple, meaningful and devotional way," the chief secretary said in his order.

He said only green crackers will be sold from Saturday to November 16 in an open space where social distancing can be maintained.

The Chief Minister had said on Friday that there will be restrictions on bursting of crackers. mr Yediyurappa had earlier said the state government will issue an order banning the use of firecrackers during the festival in view of the pandemic situation. Several states, including Rajasthan, Odisha and Delhi, have already decided to ban firecrackers.

The surroundings of the cracker shops should be sanitised, the chief secretary said. *PTI*

# RSS-affiliate SJM opposes ban on fire crackers

**New Delhi, Nov. 7:** RSS-affiliate Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) on Saturday said illegally imported firecrackers from China primarily cause pollution and urged state governments to avoid banning "less polluting" green crackers made in India.

Underlining that the livelihood of nearly one million people depends on the firecracker industry, SJM co-convenor Ashwani Mahajan in a statement said, "Throughout the year, these people wait for Deepawali to sell their firecrackers. In such a situation, it is not prudent to ban domestically made green firecrackers which

are less polluting." For some time, without any factual information, state governments have been taking action like banning all types of firecrackers on Diwali, which is completely inappropriate. "It has to be understood that till now the pollution caused by firecrackers was primarily due to illegally imported firecrackers from China," he said. The SJM pleads to the governments of Delhi, Rajasthan, Odisha, West Bengal, Karnataka and all other state governments, which have imposed a complete ban on firecrackers, to repeal the same, Mahajan said. *— PTI*



## TNCC against release of Rajiv case convicts

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI, NOV. 7

TNCC president K. S. Alagiri raised a lone voice of dissent taking a stand diametrically opposite to that of the popular narrative on setting at liberty the seven persons convicted in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case. Despite all political parties, including their ally DMK, in the state rooting for the release of the seven convicts and the Supreme Court also asking the Governor, before whom a state government recommendation was pending on the issue, Alagiri queered the pitch by playing the discordant note.

When asked about it, DMK MP R. S. Bharathi said principles and alliances were different. The TNCC president remonstrated against describing the seven convicts as Tamils.

## Give details of yatra to govt, Madras High Court tells BJP

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI, NOV. 7

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has informed the Madras High Court that it will give an additional representation to the state government, giving particulars about the number of participants and the number of vehicles likely to participate in its Vel Yatra in the State, besides number of participants above the age of 65.

The party made the submission before the High Court at a special sitting on Saturday while seeking restraining the police from

interfering with its Yatra. In his petition, state general secretary K. Nagarajan also sought to quash Part-II, Clause VII of the G.O dated October 31, 2020 (which stated that religious congregations, with a maximum ceiling of 100 people, would be permitted in the state from November 16), in so far it relates to persons going for the Vel-Yatra and to direct the government to issue order to all the district police officers to facilitate free movement of Vel-Yatra conducted by the petitioner between November 8, 2020 and December 6, 2020. ■ **P3**



## OTHER STORY

## DGP shifts custody death case to CB-CID

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, NOV. 7

Tamil Nadu Director General of Police J.K. Tripathi has transferred the recent alleged Cuddalore custodial death case of a 40-year-old man to the Crime Branch-CID (CB-CID) on Friday. The case pertains to the death of Selvamurugan, who died in judicial custody at Virudhachalam jail on November 4.

As per police sources, Selvamurugan of Panruti was taken into custody by the Neyveli township police on October 28 in Neyveli in connection with a theft and was remanded at Virudhachalam sub-jail. His wife Prema went to meet him on November 2 at Virudhachalam sub-jail, when he looked weak and his throat was swollen. He was unable to eat and talk properly.

Prema returned home and on Wednesday night, she received a call informing her that her husband had been taken to the hospital. When she rushed to the Virudhachalam government hospital along with her children, she was told that Selvamurugan had suffered seizures and had died.

Prema and her relatives immediately started to protest. They refused to receive the body and alleged that he died of custodial torture. Prema alleged that her husband's body had several wounds on the neck and back and that he had been tortured to death. The wife and kin of the deceased man continued to protest on Saturday and sought the intervention of Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami.

## Pushback: AI serves showcause to 2 staff

T. SUDHEESH | DC  
CHENNAI, NOV. 7

Two ground staff of Air India have been issued show-cause notice in connection with the 'pushback' incident of Chennai-Madurai flight at Chennai airport on Wednesday. The airline swung into action after DC published an exclusive report titled "Pushback: Airport seeks report from AI" on Saturday.

Airlines sources told DC that the staff members had been issued notice after prima facie finding lapse on their part in the incident. As part of the procedure, they will be given a 7-day timeframe to present their case. If their reply is unconvincing, then suspension

order will be issued, said the sources.

It was on Wednesday evening the aircraft was pushed back after a Madurai-bound passenger failed to get on board though his luggage was loaded in the flight. Pushback is an airport procedure to push an aircraft backwards away from an airport gate by external power; that is pushback tractors or aviation tugs.

When the passenger reached the departure gate, he saw the flight moving from the bay. The panicked passenger alerted the ground staff. As a result, the flight was pushed back to the bay so that the passenger could get onboard. DC has learnt that the flight was

called back after the passenger questioned the ground staff's lapse and exchanged war of words. An airport official said a flight being pushed back once it started moving is quite unusual. The passenger reported at the airport very late. It wouldn't have been pushed back if the passenger had not created a mess with the ground staff, the official said.

However, the official admitted lapse on the part of the ground staff. It was the duty of ground staff to make sure the head count of onboard passengers before providing a signal for taking off. Meanwhile, the airport authorities had also asked the airline for a report on Thursday in this incident.

## Chennai metro revises train timings

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, NOV. 7

The Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) has rescheduled its train services from Sunday for making the timings convenient for all passengers.

Metro services will be in operation from 5.30 am to 11 pm from Monday to Saturday with a peak hour headway of 7 minutes and non-peak hour headway of 10 minutes. Currently, the services are from 7 am to 9 pm.

On Sundays and public holidays metro trains will run from 7am to 10 pm without any peak hour headway. CMRL requested all passengers to maintain social distancing norms by wearing face masks to prevent the spread of Covid-19.



TN food safety officials warn people against adulteration in sweets and savouries ahead of Deepavali at T Nagar.

— DC

## Orange alert in certain places of Tamil Nadu

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, NOV. 7

Various places in Chennai experienced scanty rainfall on Saturday. The Met department forecast cloudy skies and moderate rain in Chennai on Sunday. An orange alert has also been issued in certain parts of the state.

Several parts of Tamil Nadu is expected to receive mild to moderate rains for the next 48 hours starting from Saturday, as a result of a change in wind directions, forecast the Regional Meteorological Centre (RMC) in Chennai.

According to the bulletin, Puviarasan, Director of the RMC, Chennai, said, "In the next 72 hours, many parts of the state will experience dry weather. Some of the coastal areas are likely to receive mild to moderate rainfall."

In the case of Chennai and its outskirts, the RMC predicted cloudy skies for the next 24 hours. Some parts of the city will receive rains with thunderstorms. The maximum

**According to the bulletin, Puviarasan, Director of the RMC, Chennai, said, "In the next 72 hours, many parts of the state will experience dry weather. Some of the coastal areas are likely to receive mild to moderate rainfall"**

temperature is predicted to be 32°, with a minimum temperature of 25°.

For the next 48 hours, Puviarasan said, "The places will be cloudy with some parts of the city experiencing mild showers with thunderstorms. The maximum temperature will be 33° and the minimum temperature will be 25°."

Parts of Thanjavur, Tiruvarur, Nagapattinam, Pudukottai and Ramanathapuram are likely to experience heavy rainfall, coupled with wind and thunderstorms in the next 48 hours.

In the last 24 hours,

Chennai received light to moderate rains in some areas. The highest rainfall in the state was recorded in parts of Madurai, Virudhunagar and Sivagangai.

Chennai-based weather blogger Pradeep John also said the city will witness short, intense spells of rains till late Saturday night. However, the rains will start to reduce from November 8.

On Saturday morning, he posted that there were good rains in Anna Nagar West and many parts of Chennai for the last 30 minutes. Meenambakkam has recorded 21 mm so far. More pop up is forming in the northeast of Chennai and likely to move towards Chennai in the coming hours and many parts of the city will get rains. With the fading easterly wave, there are chances of short intense spells on Saturday morning and Saturday late night in parts of Chennai city. "Then we head for a break of rains from November 8 as dry air moves into the city," he said.

## Man reunited with family from Bengal after 12 years

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, NOV. 7

A 40-year-old mentally challenged man from Cooch Behar district in West Bengal was reunited with his family on Saturday by social workers here at 'Udavam Karangal' in Thiruverkadu.

The man, Makbul Hossain, was spotted by a social worker of Udavam Karangal in Janua-

ry 2019 in Vadapalani in a highly deranged condition. Dressed up in rags with unkempt matted hair he kept muttering to himself. Jacob, a social worker, says, "I saw him in a very pitiable condition and when asked if he was willing to come with me to Udavam Karangal home, where he would be taken care well, he immediately got into the ambulance."

Vidyakar, founder of Udavam

Karangal, said, "when he was brought to our home at Thiruverkadu, he seemed to be mentally ill and also anaemic. We immediately referred him to a psychiatrist, who diagnosed him as a psychotic patient. He was also anaemic and was given 4 units of blood in the hospital.

After receiving medication and psychiatric treatment for a few months, he gave the details of his family. He divulged that he

belonged to Chhodaatharakotha village, Moamari panchayat, Cooh Behar district, West Bengal.

The Udavam Karangal team contacted the family and the relatives were happy to hear about Makbul who was said to be missing for 12 years. His brother immediately rushed to Udavam Karangal on Saturday morning and was filled with joy to see his brother hale and healthy.

## PLEA SEEKS RESERVATION FOR GOVT-AIDED SCHOOL STUDENTS

R. VALAYAPATHY | DC  
TIRUCHY, NOV. 7

The Tamil Nadu Elementary School Teachers Federation, while thanking the government's efforts to provide internal reservation of 7.5 percent in medical courses to students of government schools, urged the government to also earmark 2.5 percent similar reservation for the students of government-aided schools. Association state general secretary, N Rengarajan, president Sudhakaran and vice-president Neelakandan, told newsmen soon after their state executive held here on Saturday, that a resolution to this effect was adopted at the meeting.

They said the meeting also wanted salary for middle class teachers at par with Central government teachers, and to re-introduce the old pension scheme, to continue the incentive pay hike to the teachers which was given since 1969, after revoking Government Order (GO 116).

The meeting also expressed concern over the government's decision not to give teachers posts to those who have crossed 40 years. The decision is totally anti-democratic, they said and requested the government to revoke GO 12 and declare that there should not be an age limit for teachers' posts. The meeting also requested the government to disburse travelling allowance to differently-abled teachers, which has been stopped at present. Federation treasurer, Kathiravan, proposed a vote of thanks.

## Rowdy murdered

DC CORRESPONDENT  
TIRUCHY, NOV. 7

An 18-year-old rowdy was murdered by a six-member gang due to rivalry at Vamadam area in the city, on Saturday. Police said the deceased, Vijay, facing several criminal cases, came out on bail recently, and on Saturday noon the deceased was chatting with his friends near his house, when the gang fatally attacked him with deadly weapons and fled.

Thillainagar police went to the spot and shifted the body to the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial government hospital here for post mortem.



Traffic moves at snail's pace on Kamarajar Salai on a rainy Saturday.

— DC

## Salem: Library opened in Kichipalayam police station

ZAKEER HUSSAIN | DC  
SALEM, NOV. 7

A library was inaugurated at the Kichipalayam police station here on Saturday by Assistant Commissioner A. Manikandan. The library also houses general knowledge books and newspapers. Hundreds of books are currently available for public reading.

The initiative will expose the public visiting the police station to some good reading material as

they wait there to meet officials and get their issues redressed.

Kichipalayam inspector A. Sivakumar, said, "There are situations when the public who usually come to police stations sometimes have to wait for a long time to meet the officials, and get their problems solved. In such a situation, we have tried to create an environment where the public can read books in the library during the waiting period."

Books on general knowledge, books on justice and law, and newspapers will be made available for public reading. A first aid kit, drinking water facility and fan facilities, have also been provided. The library has a seating capacity of 10 persons.

A portrait of former Late President Abdul Kalam, beautiful landscapes and village scenes have been painted on the wall in front of the police station, adding charm to the place.

## 40 villages to have veterinary hosps

DC CORRESPONDENT  
ARIYALUR, NOV. 7

The government has allocated a sum of Rs 1.60 crore for establishing 40 veterinary hospitals in 40 remote villages during the current year, to ensure regular treatment for cattle of the particular

village and its surroundings, said government Chief Whip, Thamarai S Rajendran.

Inaugurating a veterinary hospital at Sembiyakkudi village near here in the presence of Collector T Rathna and others, on Saturday, Rajendran said, the veterinary hospital at

Sembiyakkudi will take care of 5,000 cattle of Kulamanickam, Kandiraathitham, Kovil Esanai and Pudukkottai villages, and called upon the people of these villages to utilise the facility. Later, Rajendran also distributed various welfare measures to the needy.

## Tamil Nadu reports 2,341 new cases

Chennai, Nov. 7: Tamil Nadu on Saturday saw thenumber of active COVID-19 cases declining further to 18,966 while 2,341 new COVID-19 infections pushed the tally to 7,41,488.

As many as 25 people succumbed to the virus, taking the toll to 11,324, a health department bulletin said. The number of recoveries stood at 2,352 on Saturday, pushing the total number of those cured to 7,11,198 so far, the bulletin said.

Active cases, including those in isolation, stood at 18,966. To the State's 7.41 lakh cases, Chennai accounted for 2,04,258 with 603 new infections.

Of the 11,324 death toll, the State capital's share was 3,711 the bulletin said. As many as 80,112 samples were tested and in total 1,04,86,338 specimens have been examined till date. Coimbatore recorded 213 new cases followed by Thiruvallur 137, Tiruppur 114, Chengalpatt 112, Erode

108, Salem 106.

Tenkasi recorded the least with six new infections. Of the dead, three were without comorbidities which include a 35-year-old woman from Chengalpatt who succumbed due to 'respiratory failure'.

A 30-year-old man from Villupuram died due to 'COVID-19 pneumonia' while a 101-year-old man from Chennai died due to 'acute respiratory distress syndrome'.

— PTI



A worker arranges new crackers for Deepavali sale at a shop in Broadway.

— DC

## Students called to turn 'leaders of change'

R. VALAYAPATHY | DC  
TIRUCHY, NOV. 7

Delivering the convocation address at the 16th e-convocation of the National Institute of Tiruchirappalli (NIT-T) here on Saturday, founder, Wipro Limited, and chairperson, Azim Premji Foundation, Azim Premji, on Saturday said, "Education and Learning is a life-long process and young graduates must take charge of their education."

He also shared his experience and gave five significant tips as lessons to the

**He called upon the graduates to become 'Leaders of Change' for this country, so that the change would truly enable a just, equitable, and humane society**

new graduates. Listing out the tips, Azim Premji urged students to hone their ability to think critically, to ask questions and be open-minded about it, make no substitute for

hard work, work with commitment and tenacity, which eventually makes the most difference in life. Each of us must understand and recognize that we live with fellow human beings, and the most important lesson of life is that truth and integrity are the foundation of everything. The pandemic crisis has showcased the stark inequality and injustice that millions of our fellow citizens face and live in our country. But it has also shown us that millions have the courage and generosity of spirit to battle the toughest of cir-

cumstances. So, the challenge lies in the hands of this younger generation, to mobilise courage and spirit collectively and ameliorate injustice and inequality, and truly change our country, he stressed.

He called upon the graduates to become 'Leaders of Change' for this country, so that the change would truly enable a just, equitable, and humane society.

Chairperson, Board of Governors, NIT-T, Bhaskar Bhat inaugurated the convocation by welcoming chief guest Azim

Premji and complimenting NIT-T Director, Mini Thomas, for her inspiring long-term plans.

In her annual report, Dr Mini Shaji Thomas, said the institute had improved on all the NIRF parameters in the last three years, and the institute is part of the National Supercomputing Mission (NSM) and a Supercomputer is installed at an investment of Rs 19 crore. NIT-T is appointed the National MOOCs coordinator for UG and PG engineering programmes by the Ministry of Education.



## OTHER STORY

## 500 more cops to manage festive crowds

From P1

He also said 500 police personnel would additionally be deployed since more shoppers are likely to visit over the weekends. As many as 10 beat constables have been given smart jackets with body cameras and deployed for round-the-clock patrolling in 15 sectors.

Police watchtowers have been set up at vantage points. The police have also opened mini-control rooms and police assistance booths under the Mambalam and Soundarapandianar Angadi police station limits.

Similar bandobast arrangements would be in place in shopping areas in other parts of the city as well. The commissioner said meetings were already conducted with the office-bearers of traders associations in the city to ensure they follow the Covid-19 protocols.

## Thoothukudi bags 1st place in water conservation

From P1

Under the 'Water Conservation' category for South, Sasthavinathur village panchayat, Thoothukudi, bagged the first place. Madurai Municipal Corporation was awarded the first place in the 'Best Urban Local Body' category.

Under the Best Research/Innovation/Adaptation of New Technology for Water Conservation category, Hari Kuppaswamy, ICAR-Sugarcane Breeding Institute, Coimbatore, T Pradeep, IIT Madras and Va Tech Wabag Ltd bagged the first three spots respectively. Manikandan, co-ordinator, Kovai Kulangal Pathukappu Amaippu, Coimbatore and Prof Sakthinathan Ganapathy Pandian, CWG Campus, Anna University bagged the top two places under the Best Water Warrior for South Zone.

Indira Gandhi Government High School, Katterikkuppam, Puducherry, was awarded the first place in the Best School category. The awards distribution ceremony will take place on November 11 and 12, virtually.

The National Water Awards 2019 are presented in 16 categories including Best State, Best District, Best Village Panchayat, Best Urban Local Body, Best Research/ Innovation/ New Technology and Best Education among others, and each of the categories has sub-categories in different zones of the country. Tamil Nadu was followed by Maharashtra and Rajasthan as the best states under the normal category.

**Indira Gandhi Government High School, Katterikkuppam, Puducherry, was awarded the first place in the Best School category. The awards distribution ceremony will take place on November 11 and 12, virtually.**

## Vel yatra will resume, says TN BJP

Chennai, Nov. 7: The BJP's Tamil Nadu unit chief L Murugan on Saturday said the 'Vel Yatra' would resume from tomorrow and go on as per the schedule. A day after police stopped the 'Vel' or 'Vetrivel' Yatra at Tiruttani near here since the government had banned it in view of the COVID-19 pandemic, the BJP top state leader expressed confidence that the statewide campaign shall restart on Sunday from here.

"The yatra will start at 10 am from Vadivudayamman temple, Tiruvottiyur," he told reporters here. The yatra, according to the BJP, was to 'expose' the DMK and other forces that had hurt the sentiments of people by denigrating the Kanda Sashti Kavacham, a spiritual hymn in praise of Lord Muruga. The Saffron party also has approached the Madras High Court seeking a nod for holding the yatra. On Friday, the police did not allow the BJP leaders including Murugan to commence the yatra from Tiruttani and detained all of them. They were released later. The party had announced that the yatra would commence on November 6 at Tiruttani and culminate on December 6 at Tiruchendur covering all the six abodes, 'Padai Veedu' of Lord Muruga in Tamil Nadu.

— PTI



Police Commissioner Mahesh Kumar Aggarwal inspecting the drone to be used as part of security measures in shopping hub T Nagar.

— DC

## DMK raises questions of law in conduct of gram sabha case

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, NOV. 7

Challenging the action of the Tamil Nadu government in cancelling the gram sabha meetings at village panchayats, scheduled on October 2, 2020, the DMK party has raised four questions of law, which assumes Constitutional importance, before the Madras high court.

Senior counsel N.R.Elango, assisted by advocate V.Arun raised the four questions of law before a division bench comprising Justices M.Sathyanarayanan and R.Hemalatha when a PIL filed by DMK MLA K.N.Nehru came up for hearing on Thursday.

In his petition, Nehru, sought a direction to the state government to abstain from interfering with the administration and conduct of gram sabha meetings by the village panchayat presidents and people of gram sabha under the provisions of the Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act, 1994, and Tamil Nadu Grama Sabha (quorum and procedure for convening and conducting meetings) Rules 1998 to exercise their constitutional rights conferred on the gram sabha as per Article 243G and eleventh schedule of the Constitution of India. The bench said senior counsel invited the attention of this court to paragraph 4 of the affidavit and submitted that the following questions of law also assumes Constitutional impor-

## DMK meet: Cases against 2K cadre

DC CORRESPONDENT THOOTHUKUDI, NOV. 7

Police here registered cases against 2,036 DMK men including MP Kanimozhi Karunanidhi and three sitting MLAs on Saturday, for organising and participating in DMK president MK Stalin's virtual meeting titled 'Tamilagam Meetpom' ('Retrieve Tamil Nadu) in the district on November 5.

MK Stalin had held the virtual meeting in 147 places to address party functionaries in the district, in violation of Covid-19 norms. Hence, Thoothukudi police on Saturday regis-

tered cases against 2,036 DMK functionaries, including DMK MP Kanimozhi, sitting MLAs P Geetha Jeevan, Anitha Radhakrishnan and Shanmugaiah under sections 147, 269, 270, 271 and 189 of Indian penal code (IPC), for holding public meeting in violation of public order, negligent and malicious act likely to spread infections dangerous to lives, for knowingly disobeying the rule promulgated by the government, and for threatening a public servant. The police also invoked the 'epidemic diseases act' against the functionaries.

still it was open to the inspector of panchayats or the delegated official to take preventive measures and prayed for accommodation to file a comprehensive counter affidavit with supporting documents, the bench added and posted to January 22, 2021, further hearing of the case. Similarly, the bench also ordered notice, returnable by January 22, 2021, to the state government, on another PIL filed by A.G.Mourya, general secretary, Makkal Needhi Maiam party, through advocate Vijayan Subramanian, which sought to conduct gram sabha meetings all over Tamil Nadu state.

## Was sure of Kamala's win: Uncle Twin villages in state get ready for early Deepavali

B. VIJAYALAKSHMI | DC CHENNAI, NOV. 7

With Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden and his running mate Senator Kamala Harris winning the US' election, Kamala's uncle Dr G. Balachandran said their win was on expected lines.

Speaking to DC from New Delhi, Dr Balachandran said, "I am glad the suspense is over. I was confident that Biden-Kamala would emerge victorious in the election. It is not a surprise to me."

When asked about any change in India-US bilateral relationship with the change of guard there, Dr Balachandran, who has specialised on issues related to technology and economics, said a strong foundation has already been laid for India-US ties.

"There is no outstanding issue between the two countries. I think the new US regime will continue to strengthen its relationship with India." It may be recalled that Biden, in his address to a virtual fundraiser for Indian

Nagapattinam, Nov. 7: With Democratic candidate for the Vice President of the United States, Kamala Harris confident of her victory, the people of two villages in Tamil Nadu, which are native to her maternal grandparents, are also equally convinced that she would emerge victorious and eager to celebrate her win, an early Deepavali. The mood is upbeat at Thulasenthirapuram and Painganadu, tucked away in a corner of Tiruvallur district, a part of the fertile Cauvery delta region, and people are waiting only for a formal declaration that Kamala has won

Americans, had said the US and India share a strong interest in a rules-based Indo-Pacific region.

On Kamala's strong views on Kashmir,

Balachandran said, "Yes, she always stands up for human rights."

Balachandran, who had spoken to his niece twice in the last few days, said

from the party on the entire tour. They were saying that they were being denied permission to visit a temple but actually they were bringing a huge crowd, he added.

Pointing out that the petitioner cannot choose the route, the bench said the petitioner has to state the number of people and the vehicles accompanying him as well as the

The authorities had indeed sought particulars

## Kamal's birthday celebrated with a political twist

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, NOV. 7

The 66th birthday of Makkal Needhi Maiam founder Kamal Haasan was celebrated on Saturday by his fans and followers with a clear political twist as for the first time he was openly hailed as the future Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu.

Wall posters appeared all over Chennai, in which his followers declared that their vote would be for Kamal Haasan only, thus reaffirming their support for his political move.

Though Haasan's film fans have been calling on him on his birthdays and have even put up wall posters greeting him in the past, this is perhaps the first time he is hailed



as the future Chief Minister. Besides, the MNM party flag was hoisted on the occasion, presenting him as a full-fledged politician to all.

Kamal met his followers who turned up at his office to greet him and accepted their wishes personally on Saturday and also spoke to many well-wishers who called him over phone.

Among the prominent personalities who greeted him on the occasion was Congress leader Rahul

Gandhi, who described him, in a tweet, as 'A strong voice that has contributed to modern Tamil culture.'

Kerala Chief Minister Pinayari Vijayan, DMK president M. K. Stalin and MDMK founder Vaiko were among the prominent politicians who conveyed their wishes to Haasan. Stalin, who greeted him over the phone, also wished him a long life in his Facebook post.

Among those in the film fraternity who greeted him were actor Rajinikanth and actress Khushboo.

This was the first birthday in which his followers pledged their electoral support to him through posters as is came close on the heels of a series of

meetings that he had with his party functionaries and leaders, who had urged him to contest the election from his home town of Paramakudi and also from Mylapore in Chennai.

It is said that Haasan and also his supporters are a bit upbeat about their electoral prospects, particularly in the context of Rajinikanth opting out of the political race. The followers believe that Kamal's prospects have increased and also expect Rajinikanth to support him.

They believe that the MNM has emerged as an alternative to the two major Dravidian parties, DMK and AIADMK, as the party founder himself had said.

## HC extends parole to corona affected life convict

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, NOV. 7

The Madras high court has extended by 15 days, the parole granted to a 27-year-old life convict, who was convicted and sentenced to life in a murder case, as he is also affected with corona while attending his father, who was affected due to corona, during his earlier parole period.

A division bench comprising Justices M.Sathyanarayanan and R.Hemalatha granted extension of parole for 15 days while disposing of a petition filed by Abisri, which sought to extend the parole granted earlier to her husband Gunasekaran for 30 more days.

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Workers spray disinfectant in Government Egmore museum which is to be reopened on November 10. — DC



## Students from private schools joining state-run schools a heartening trend, says minister

Tirunelveli, Nov. 7: State-run schools have scripted history by attracting 5.18 lakh students from several private schools across Tamil Nadu, and this reverse exodus is a heartening trend, School Education Minister K. A. Sengottaiyan said on Saturday. The scenario of exodus from state government schools in the past has completely changed and a large number of students are flocking to state-run schools, he said.

"From a migration of about 20,000 to 50,000 students to private schools in the past, there has been a steep enrollment in our schools. About 5.18 lakh students who opted out of several private schools have joined government schools"

schools," the minister told reporters here. Claiming that state government schools have scripted "history in Tamil Nadu," Sengottaiyan said, the reverse exodus on a massive scale took place during the tenure of chief minister K. Palaniswami. "This is something that gives happiness," he added. The minister also claimed that several sec-

tions appreciated the curriculum of government schools, saying it was better than the curriculum of CBSE schools. Sengottaiyan, who earlier participated in a programme organised to grant recognition to private schools in Tirunelveli, Tenkasi, Thoothukudi and Kanyakumari districts, said the state government was willing to issue orders granting permanent recognition status to private schools. About 2,515 private schools across the state would soon be provided recognition, he added. The recognition which was extended year-on-year basis till last year, will be issued for two years from this year, he said.

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## PONDY WITNESSES DROP IN DAILY CORONA CASES, 3 MORE DIE

Puducherry, Nov. 7: Puducherry recorded a dip in the daily count of coronavirus cases with 73 fresh infections on Saturday, taking the overall tally to 35,744.

Three people, including a 55 year old woman from Yanam died due to the virus, pushing the toll to 601.

A release from Director of Health and Family Welfare S Mohan Kumar said 73 new cases were identified at the end of examination of 3,981 samples during last 24 hours ending 10 am on Saturday.

While Puducherry accounted for 58 cases, Karaikal and Yanam regions had two fresh cases each while Mahe had 11.

The deceased had complaints of co-morbidities like diabetes and hypertension.

— PTI



IN BRIEF

STAN SWAMY SEEKS COURT NOD TO USE SIPPER

DC CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, NOV. 7

Father Stan Swamy, the 83-year-old tribal rights activist arrested in the Elgar Parishad-alleged Maoist links case, has moved a special court in Mumbai for permission to use a straw and sipper in Talaja jail in Navi Mumbai, where he is currently lodged.

Swamy, through his lawyer Kritika Agarwal, moved the plea before the special NIA court on Friday seeking straw and sipper in jail citing health issues. “I cannot hold a glass as my hands are unsteady due to Parkinson’s,” Swamy said in his application.

The special court judge D.E. Kothalikar has asked the national probe agency to file its reply on the matter on November 26.

Swamy was arrested from his home in Ranchi last month in connection with the violence in Bhima Koregaon near Pune in January 2018.

Last month, the NIA had filed a charge-sheet in the matter against eight people, including Swamy. The investigating agency has alleged that Swamy was actively involved in the activities of the CPI (Maoist).

ACTIVE COVID CASES STAY BELOW 6 LAKH

New Delhi, Nov. 7: India's Covid-19 caseload mounted to 84,62,080 with 50,356 infections being reported in a day, while the number of people who have recuperated from the disease crossed 78 lakh pushing the national recovery rate to 92.41 per cent, according to data updated by the Union Health Ministry on Saturday.

The coronavirus death toll climbed to 1,25,562 with 577 new fatalities, the data updated at 8 am showed.

A total of 78,19,886 people have recuperated from Covid-19 so far pushing the national recovery rate to 92.41 per cent, while the case fatality rate has further declined to 1.48 per cent.

The number of active cases of Covid-19 remained below 6 lakh for the ninth consecutive day.

There are 5,16,632 active cases of coronavirus infection in the country as on date which comprises 6.11 per cent of the total caseload, the data stated.

India's Covid-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh on August 23 and 40 lakh on September 5. It went past 50 lakh on September 16, 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11 and crossed 80 lakh on October 29.

According to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), a cumulative total of 11,65,42,304 samples have been tested up to November 6 with 11,13,209samples being tested on Friday. The 577 new fatalities include 161 from Maharashtra.

BIDEN-KAMALA TRUMPS DON

From Page 1

of national unity to confront raging health and economic crises, and making Donald J. Trump a one-term president after four years of tumult in the White House, *The New York Times* said.

Mr Biden's victory amounted to a repudiation of Mr Trump by millions of voters exhausted with his divisive conduct and chaotic administration, and was delivered by an unlikely alliance of women, people of colour, old and young voters and a sliver of disaffected Republicans. *PTI*

SHIVRAJ SAYS NATH WOOING BJP MLAS

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, NOV. 7

Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Congress veteran Kamal Nath on Saturday traded charges against each other of poaching MLAs from the rival camps even as ruling BJP and Opposition Congress waited for the outcome of the November 3 by-elections to 28 assembly constituencies.

Talking to reporters here, Mr Chouhan said he was informed by some BJP MLAs that the former chief minister Mr Nath was wooing them to join Congress. But, the BJP legislators have spurned the offer, Mr Chouhan claimed.

“It is Mr Nath who brought the culture of luring MLAs of the rival party to Congress in Madhya Pradesh. We have never approached the Congress MLAs who resigned from their party and joined BJP. They (Congress legislators) volunteered to join BJP”, Mr Chouhan said.

As many as 22 Congress lawmakers resigned from the assembly and subsequently from their party in March to pull down the Nath government.

Shivraj said Mr Nath first took the step to woo 2 BJP MLAs into his party after Congress came to power in the state in 2018. “Mr Nath has introduced the culture of horse trading in MP by wooing 2 BJP MLAs. He is now accusing BJP of trading MLAs”, he added.

Earlier, Mr Nath has accused BJP of trying to ‘purchase’ Congress MLAs. “I have been informed by some Congress MLAs that they were getting offers from BJP to join the party”, Mr Nath said.

‘Valley has less than 200 militants now’

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 7

Security forces in Jammu and Kashmir are extremely optimistic that overall security scenario in the Valley would improve considerably during the winter season as they have been able to successfully thwart major infiltration attempts from terror outfits in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir.

This, sources claim, would have a direct impact on the security situation as militant groups were facing a severe crunch of both men and material.

Intelligence inputs had revealed that 250-300 militants were waiting at the various launchpads close to the Line of Control and International Border along with Pakistan. Following this security forces had further strengthen their three-tier anti-infiltration grid.

Senior security officials claimed successfully checking infiltration will have a direct impact on the Kashmir security situation as militants here were facing sever shortage of both men and material. “The total number of active militants in

the Kashmir Valley is now less than 200. We are confident now that no reinforcements are coming from across the border we will launch a fresh operation to eliminate the remaining active militants in the region,” the official added.

Top security sources have confirmed that in the past two months despite more than 20 infiltration attempts not a single attempt was successful. “Any attempt to push militants into India from across the border have failed completely due to the pro-active surveillance undertaken by the Army along with BSF, CRPF and the local police,” a senior security official said.

What is even more significant is that despite Pakistan Army deploying its Border Action teams (BAT) which helps facilitate infiltration by militants has also failed completely in its attempts this winter season. This is largely on account of the new surveillance and patrolling strategies adopted. In the past Pak Army's BAT has been involved in targeted attacks on Indian security personnel.

J&K ALLIANCE TO CONTEST LOCAL POLLS

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, NOV. 7

The recently formed alliance of Jammu and Kashmir's regional opposition parties and their allies from the national Left parties has decided to contest the elections for the District Development Councils and vacant seats of Panchayats in the Union Territory (UT) unitedly.

After holding day-long deliberations at the residence of its president and former chief minister Farooq Abdullah in Jammu on Saturday, the ‘People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD)’ spokesman Sajad Gani Lone said that all seven member parties will unitedly fight these elections.

He said, “The PAGD has unanimously decided to fight the DDC elections unitedly. Despite the abruptness of the DDC elections in terms of timing it is important that this sacred space in democracy is not allowed to be invaded and marauded by divisive forces”.

The J&K administration had announced to hold the first ever DDC elections in eight phases from last week of November.

55% vote in Bihar’s crucial final phase, results on 10th

Voting held for 78 seats in 15 districts of north Bihar and Seemanchal

NAYEAR AZAD | DC with agency inputs PATNA, NOV. 7

Bihar on Saturday recorded a voter turnout of around 55 per cent during the third and final phase of polls. Voting in this phase was held in 78 constituencies spread across 15 districts of north Bihar; Seemanchal and Kosi region of the state.

Like the previous two phases, the final phase too is considered crucial for the ruling NDA led by the JD(U) and for the Grand Alliance comprising the RJD, Congress and Left parties. However, the entry of parties like LJP, Asaduddin Owaisi's AIMIM and Pappu Yadav's JAP made the fight triangular in most seats.

Chirag Paswan, who had pulled out of the NDA citing ideological differences with chief minister Nitish Kumar ahead of seat-sharing, emerged as the third force and fielded candidates on 42 seats, mostly against the JD(U) and Hindustani Awam Morcha (HAM) during the third phase of polls.

Political analysts believe that the NDA as well as the Grand Alliance are set to witness a tough fight in the Muslim-dominated Seemanchal region where AIMIM has a visible influence and has fielded 15 candidates.

“Asaduddin Owaisi's party AIMIM has a visible influence in some of the seats in the Seemanchal region. The party may cut votes and cause a major dent in the NDA as well as the Grand Alliance in this phase of polls,” a political observer said.

Similarly, Pappu Yadav's JAP is also likely to make the contest tough for NDA and the Grand Alliance in



Security personnel escort a man with physical disability as he arrives to cast his vote at a polling station for the third phase of Bihar elections at Raxaul in East Champaran district on Saturday. - PTI

the Kosi region where Yadavs and Backwards are the deciding factors. Pappu Yadav contested from Madhepura.

A total of 1,204 candidates are in the fray for the 78 Assembly seats out of which the RJD had fielded the maximum (46 candidates), followed by LJP's 42, JD(U)'s 37, BJP's 35, Congress' 25, the RLSP's 25, BSP's 20, AIMIM's 16, VIP's 5, CPI-ML's 5, CPI's 2 and HAM's one candidate.

Casting of votes began at 7 am at all 33,782 polling stations where as many EVM sets and VVPAT machines were installed and paramilitary forces deployed to maintain order, officials said.

In 2015 polls, the JD(U) as part of the Grand Alliance

had won 23 out of 78 seats in the third phase of polls followed by BJP's 20, RJD's 20, Congress' 11 and others four seats. In the previous two phases, the voter turnout was 54.26 and 54.05 per cent. The results will be declared on November 10.

During all the three phases, the BJP campaigned aggressively for NDA candidates. Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed 12 rallies across the state. Besides, UP CM Yogi Adityanath also held rallies across the state to campaign for the NDA.

Other Central leaders of the BJP who toured Bihar for campaigning were party's national president J.P. Nadda, defence minister Rajnath Singh, MOS

home Nityanand Rai, Union ministers Giriraj Singh and Ashwini Choubey.

In all the three phases the BJP took the campaign beyond local issues by speaking about the abrogation of Article 370 and Pakistan-backed terror. Mr Adityanath took up Ram Temple in Ayodhya and triple talaq and while addressing rallies. He had created a flutter by bringing up the CAA and NRC issue while campaigning in Seemanchal ahead of the third phase of polls.

Meanwhile, the younger brother of jailed criminal Bittu Singh, wanted in more than a dozen murder and extortion cases, was shot dead on Saturday near a polling booth in the

district when he was going to cast the ballot, police said.

The 30-year-old Beni Singh was shot dead at Sarsi village in Dhamdaha assembly constituency by a bike-borne assailant, Superintendent of Police Vishal Sharma said.

He said the assailant pumped eight bullets in Beni Singh's body and fled from the spot.

Beni Singh was killed barely 100 meters of a polling booth near his home when he was going to cast his vote, the police said.

Locals and Singhs relative created a ruckus after the incident following which the SP and other officials reached the spot to pacify them.

Bombay HC issues notices to Maha, Mumbai CP in TRP scan case

DC CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, NOV. 7

The Bombay High Court on Saturday asked the state government and Mumbai Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh to reply a plea filed by Hansa Research Group Pvt Ltd, the complainant in the television rating points (TRP) scam, alleging harassment by the police.

The petition filed by the company and three of its senior officials alleged that the city police was conducting the probe in an illegal and highly objectionable manner.

The petition claimed that the company's officials were being harassed and coerced into making false statements against a particular news channel and sought for the probe to be transferred to the CBI.

The petition has named assistant police inspector Sachin Waze and assistant commissioner of police Shashank Sandbhor as the ones who were harassing them.

On Saturday, advocate Devadutt Kamat, appearing for the government, Param Bir Singh and the two police officers, refuted the allegations and said the petitioners are being called for questioning only when required.

He further told the court that investigation in the case is still on and certain material has also come to

● Hansa Research Group had lodged a complaint against its employee Vishal Bhandari on October 6 after he was found allegedly accepting payments illegally to make certain households watch specific TV channels, allegedly to fudge TV TRP ratings.

● Ten arrests have been made so far, including those of former employees of the company.

● The police, after preliminary inquiry, had claimed that two local regional channels and Republic TV was also involved in the scam.

the fore against the petitioners.

The bench, however, noted that since the petitioners are complainant in the case, they should not be called to the police station without any reason.

“They are the complainant and not the accused in the case. We are not saying stop the investigation, but call them only when required and on specific days and for reasonable time,” Justice Shinde said.

Mr Kamat agreed and told the court that the petitioners would be called for questioning twice a week for a reasonable time.

HC reserves order on Arnab’s bail plea

DC CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, NOV. 7

The Bombay High Court on Saturday reserved its order on *Republic TV* Editor-in-Chief Arnab Goswami's interim bail plea.

When his lawyer Harish Salve insisted that an ad-interim relief be granted, the court said it will reserve orders and will pronounce them some day in the coming week.

The division bench assured that the court will pronounce the order as early as possible.

Meanwhile, the HC said Mr Goswami can move the sessions court for regular bail in the meantime.

The bench clarified that the pendency of the case in the High Court will not be an impediment for the petitioners to seek regular bail under Section 439 of the Code of Criminal Procedure before the concerned court. If such an application is made, the court ordered, the same should be decided by the concerned court within four days of the filing.

After hearing arguments from all sides for more than six hours, the division

SOVAN TO PLAY ACTIVE ROLE IN BJP AHEAD OF WB ELECTIONS

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, NOV. 7

In what appears to be a major takeover for union home minister Amit Shah from his West Bengal visit, BJP leader Sovan Chatterjee has asserted within two days of meeting him that he never quit the party.

The former Kolkata mayor, who was once chief minister Mamata Banerjee's close aide and also her cabinet colleague with three portfolios, maintained distance from the BJP for over a year following a spat with its state leadership soon after his defection from the Trinamul Congress.

To get back its Narada sting scam accused Behala East MLA, the TMC meanwhile renewed efforts which saw Mr Chatterjee meeting the CM in person and also getting security cover from the state government. But his meeting, in presence of his close friend Baishakhi Banerjee, with Mr Shah on November 5 dashed all hopes of the TMC for his return to the party.

On Saturday Mr Chatterjee said, “I took the BJP membership 18 months ago. But did I take any other party's membership since then? Or has there been my severance from the BJP? Did I ever say anything like that? So where does such a scope arise from?” He also hinted to become active for the first time in the party ahead of the Assembly Elections.

On Mr Shah he said, “He wanted to know the situation. I tried to explain the issues to him. He tried to understand them during our exchange of opinion.”

bench of Justices S.S. Shinde and M.S. Karnik said, “We will pass the order at the earliest. The pendency of this matter does not preclude you (Goswami) or the other accused from approaching the concerned lower court seeking regular bail.”

The high court was hearing petitions filed by Goswami, a high-profile TV journalist, and two other accused — Feroze Shaikh and Nitish Sarda — seeking interim bail and challenging their “illegal arrest”.

The trio were arrested by Alibaug police in Maharashtra's Raigad district on November 4 in connection with the suicide of architect-interior designer Anvay Naik and his mother in 2018 over alleged non-payment of dues by the accused's respective firms. The petitions also sought a stay to the investigation and quashing of the FIR.

The HC, meanwhile, also sought response from the state government on a petition filed by Anvay Naik's daughter Adnya Naik seeking a fresh probe by an independent agency.

It will be heard on December 8.

TOUGH | TALK

Abdullah wants J&K’s special status restored

Raut tells Farooq to go to Pak

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC MUMBAI, NOV. 7

Shiv Sena on Saturday slammed former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Farooq Abdullah saying Article 370 has no place in India and he can go to Pakistan and implement it there. “If Farooq Abdullah wants, he can go to Pakistan and implement Article 370 there. In India, there is no place for Article 370 and 35A,” Sanjay Raut said.

Mr Abdullah, speaking in a rally on November 6, had

● Mr Abdullah, also the president of the NC, was recently appointed as the chairman of the just floated Peoples Alliance for the Gupkar Declaration.

vowed to restore the special status of Jammu and Kashmir. “I will not die until the constitutional rights of my people are given back.... I am here to do something for the people and the day I will finish my work, I will leave this world,” he said.

Article 370 had granted a

special status to Jammu and Kashmir. However, the Narendra Modi-led BJP government had abrogated law in August 2019 and bifurcated the state into two union territories.

Mr Abdullah, also the president of the National Conference, was recently appointed as the chairman of the just floated Peoples Alliance for the Gupkar Declaration.

PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti is his deputy. The alliance's objective is to restore the special status of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Sena few days back had also opposed the BJP over the recent decision of permitting people across the country to buy land in Jammu and Kashmir.

Mr Raut, in his weekly column in party's mouthpiece *Saamna*, said that some days ago, the police stopped the youths who had gone to Srinagar's Lal Chowk to hoist tricolor. “If we can't hoist our national flag on that land, then what is the fun to invite countrymen for buying land in Jammu and Kashmir,” he asked.

From Page 1

This was not disclosed by it in its return of income and also in the foreign assets schedule, the CBDT alleged.

“Thus, there is suppression of foreign income received in the form of share subscription equivalent to Rs 200 crore, which is taxable in India in the hands of the shareholder,” it said.

The statement said that action “will be initiated” against the group under the

Black Money Act, 2015, for not disclosing foreign assets and beneficial interest in the I-T return.

It added that the present value of this investment exceeds Rs 354 crore.

Raids found that the group had “acquired five shell (dummy) companies recently, which were used to siphon off as much as Rs 337 crore from the main group company by raising bogus bills and without doing any real business in these companies,” it said.

“The siphoned off money

was transferred abroad and utilised for purchase of shares in the name of the son of the main assessee,” the CBDT alleged.

One of the directors, it said, has admitted that they have “diverted” funds through these companies.

“Evidence has also been found regarding allotment of preference shares worth Rs 150 crore in 2009 in the group company by passing accounting entries only to project inflated capital before banks and financial institutions to obtain

finances,” the board said.

“Allotment of another Rs 150 crore worth preference shares in 2015 from funds from group companies, who in turn took loans/entries, is being examined,” it said.

The CBDT claimed the group had borrowed funds from banks on interest and diverted to other group companies free of interest for investments in properties. “The total interest disallowance on this count works out to about Rs 423 crore. *Agencies*



## IN BRIEF

### WH CHIEF OF STAFF TESTS VIRUS +VE

Washington, Nov. 7: White House chief of staff Mark Meadows has tested positive for Covid-19, becoming the latest Trump administration official to contract the disease, which has killed over 2,36,000 Americans.

It was not immediately clear how 61-year-old Meadows — who has often appeared at public events without a face mask — was infected. A White House official told Fox News that Meadows was “doing well.”

Meadows' positive test comes weeks after President Trump and first lady Melania Trump contracted the Coronavirus and recovered.

## BORIS HAILS DIWALI SPIRIT OF VICTORY

London, Nov. 7: UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson hailed the Diwali spirit of the victory of light over darkness and good over evil as he delivered a message of optimism about overcoming the Coronavirus pandemic for a first-of-its-kind virtual Diwali festival this week-end. Johnson appealed for a “huge collective effort” as England entered its second stay-at-home lockdown earlier this week, to last at least until December 2, in order to curb a surge in coronavirus infections across the country.

“While undoubtedly there are huge challenges ahead, I have every confidence in the resilience and resolve and good sense of people across the country and that together we will overcome this virus, just as Diwali teaches us that light triumphs over darkness, good over evil, knowledge over ignorance,” said Johnson.

## RAPPER KING VON KILLED IN ATLANTA

Atlanta, Nov. 7: Chicago rapper King Von was among three people shot and killed in a shooting early Friday outside a nightclub in Atlanta that also left three people wounded, state investigators said.

“The preliminary investigation indicates that Dayvon Bennett, aka King Von, and a group of men left the Opium Nightclub and went to the Monaco Hookah Lounge,” the Georgia Bureau of Investigation said in a statement. “Once there, two men approached the group in the parking lot, and the two groups of men started to argue with each other. The argument quickly escalated to gunfire between the two groups.” The GBI said on- and off-duty Atlanta police officers responded and one of each fired shots. “During the shooting incident, six men were shot during the group altercation and officer encounter.”

## INDIAN ELECTED TO UN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

United Nations, Nov. 7: In a significant victory for India at the United Nations, Indian diplomat Vidisha Maitra was elected to the UN Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly. In the Group of Asia-Pacific States, Maitra, First Secretary in India's Permanent Mission to the UN, obtained 126 votes. The 193-member General Assembly appoints members of the Advisory Committee. Members are selected on the basis of broad geographical representation, personal qualifications and experience.

In the group, Ali Mohammed Faeq Al-Dabag of Iraq drew 64 votes. The Fifth Committee of the General Assembly, which deals with administrative and budgetary issues, recommended Maitra to the Assembly for a three-year term beginning January 1, 2021.

The victory comes as India gets ready to sit in the UN Security Council as a non-permanent member for a two-year term beginning January 2021.

India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador T.S. Tirumurti said that Maitra was elected on Friday to the UN ACABQ “in a strong display of support by UN member states”.

He expressed confidence that Maitra “will bring an independent, objective and much-needed gender-balanced perspective to the functioning of ACABQ”.

# Is Murdoch dumping Trump?

## Media magnate Murdoch-owned Fox News helped Don come to power in '16

New York, Nov. 7: Fox News and the New York Post, magnate Rupert Murdoch's main media outlets, have started distancing themselves from Donald Trump as the US election vote counting drama drags on — a first since the president came to power and a potential turning point.

On Thursday night in Phoenix, Arizona, supporters of Trump bluntly shouted “Fox News Sucks” in reference to the news outfit considered fiercely loyal to the president for the past five years. Fox News infuriated Trump and his people on election night by calling Arizona for Democrat Joe Biden.

Jared Kushner, Trump's advisor and son in law, called Murdoch in vain to try to get that call retracted. Other media held off from calling the battleground state for Biden as the tallying of ballots continued.

Since that night, Fox News has stepped very carefully around allegations of massive vote fraud coming from the Trump campaign and the man himself.

“We just haven't seen it. It hasn't been presented to us,” Fox News anchor Brett Baier said on the air Friday.

So people are asking if Fox News, which helped bring Trump to power in 2016, is in the process of dumping him as Biden closes in on the magic number of 270 electoral votes that would win him the White House.

DePauw University com-

munications professor Jeffrey McCall said Fox News has always had a twin identity — on one hand, star anchors who are more editorialists than journalists and on the other a newsroom that is much more measured. Some Fox journalists, such as Chris Wallace, who was the moderator at the first Trump-Biden debate, are very well respected professionals.

On the in-your-face editorial side stands Fox star Sean Hannity, who is very close to Trump and said on Thursday evening, “Americans have every right to be suspicious ... to distrust the legitimacy of the results.” McCall said that the way Fox News has treated Trump since the election and its early calling of Arizona for Biden show the more serious side of the network is trying to “operate as independently as possible from the opinion section and even from the ownership.”

“These people have their own journalistic standards that they want to uphold.”

But Reece Peck, who wrote a book about Fox News called “Fox Populism”, said this distancing could alienate some viewers and prompt them to switch to another news source, such as OAN, a small new outfit, ultra conservative and extremely pro-

Trump. Behind Fox News, which chalked up 14.1 million viewers on US election night, is, of course, Murdoch. The 89-year old media mogul is known for his conservative views but over the past few months has come to grips with the idea of a Biden win.

— AFP



**AMERICA, I'M** honoured that you have chosen me to lead our great country. The work ahead will be hard, but I promise: I will be a President for all Americans — whether you voted for me or not. I will keep the faith that you placed in me

JOE BIDEN, *President-elect*

**I WON THIS ELECTION, BY A LOT!** Bad things took place during those hours where LEGAL TRANSPARENCY was viciously & crudely not allowed. Windows were covered with thick cardboard so observers could not see into the count rooms.

DONALD TRUMP, *outgoing Prez*

## Don rages at ‘bad things’ inside counting rooms

Washington, Nov. 7: Donald Trump on Saturday declared himself as the winner of the November 3 presidential election, even as major American media outlets projected his Democratic rival Joe Biden as next president of the United States. “I WON THIS ELECTION, BY A LOT!”

Trump as major American media outlets declared that he has lost the election and Biden would be the 46th president of the United States. Twitter immediately flagged Trump's tweet

saying that “official sources may not have called the race when this was tweeted. Trump also repeated his allegations of electoral fraud by claiming without evidence that “bad things happened” inside the counting rooms and tens of thousands of votes were illegally received in the key battleground state of Pennsylvania.

The president has repeatedly attempted to question the validity of vote counts in key swing states and made unfounded claims that the election is being “stolen” from him. “Bad things took place during those hours where LEGAL TRANSPARENCY was viciously & crudely not allowed. Tractors blocked doors & windows were covered with thick cardboard so that observers could not see into the count rooms. BAD THINGS HAPPENED INSIDE. BIG CHANGES TOOK PLACE!” he said in a tweet.

Four days after the November 3 presidential election, votes were still being counted in several key battleground states. “This would ALSO change the Election result in numerous States, including Pennsylvania, which everyone thought was easily won on

Election Night, only to see a massive lead disappear. — PTI

## Bannon lawyer quits fraud case

New York, Nov. 7: A lawyer for President Donald Trump's former chief strategist, Steve Bannon, quit defending him in a federal fraud case a day after Bannon made inflammatory comments about Dr. Anthony Fauci and FBI Director Christopher Wray.

In a letter dated Friday, defence attorney William Burck told a federal court judge in New York City that he was withdrawing from the case. He did not give a reason why. Reached by email, Burck declined to discuss the decision. The lawyer quit after Bannon suggested on an online broadcast that Fauci and Wray should be beheaded for being disloyal to the president. The remarks prompted Twitter to permanently suspend Bannon's account.

“I'd put the heads on pikes” as a warning to federal bureaucrats, Bannon said on video. “You

● **IN A** letter dated Friday, defence attorney William Burck told a federal court judge in New York City that he was withdrawing from the case.

either get with the programme or you are gone.” Bannon, 66, is facing charges he ripped off Trump supporters as an organiser of a group called “We Build The Wall” that portrayed itself as eager to help the president build a barrier along the US-Mexico border. He has pleaded not guilty.

Prosecutors have accused Bannon and co-defendants of misappropriating money from the group, which raised \$25 million from thousands of donors who thought their cash would be used to build the wall. Prosecutors declined comment on Friday.

— AP

## Protesters crying foul over vote counts simmer safety concerns

Washington, Nov. 7: Pro-Trump protesters — some of them openly carrying rifles and handguns — rallied outside vote-tabulation centres in a few cities around the country Friday, responding to groundless accusations from President Donald Trump that the Democrats were trying to steal the White House.

Election officials in several states where Democrat Joe Biden was ahead said the anger outside their doors made them fear for the safety of their employees. Roughly 100 Trump supporters gathered for a third straight day in front of the elections centre in Phoenix, where hundreds of workers were processing and counting ballots.

“Arrest the poll workers!” the crowd chanted, demanding four more years in office for Trump. Sheriff's deputies kept protesters in a “free speech” zone away from the entrance to the building. “When we start auditing some of these voter rolls, their fraud may actually be exposed,” conservative activist Charlie Kirk told the crowd, eliciting cheers.

In Detroit, dozens of Trump supporters returned to the streets outside the city's convention centre, where election workers counted ballots. “Stop the steal!” the protesters chanted. Some carried signs that read, “Make Elections Fair Again” and “We Love Trump”.

— AP



A police officer directs as demonstrators march during a protest after the elections in Los Angeles on Friday. — AP

### MAIL BALLOTS

## 1942

Congress passed the first law that guaranteed the right to vote in federal elections to members of the Armed Forces who were away during wartime

## 2016

North Carolina received nearly 11,000 ballots from uniformed service members; Georgia received more than 5,600 ballots; Pennsylvania received nearly 7,800 and Nevada about 2,700

1 **2009:** Congress passed a bill requiring states to set up a system to transmit absentee ballots to military and civilian voters who were overseas during federal elections

1 **28 states** and the District of Columbia accept and count ballots that arrive from overseas after election day

1 **3 days** after polls, mail ballots accepted in Georgia as long as they are postmarked by Election Day. North Carolina accepts them until November 12; and Nevada and Pennsylvania until November 10

1 **8,900** ballots that have been transmitted to military and overseas voters could still arrive by close of business Friday in Georgia



## Why Nevada counting dragging?

Carson City (US), Nov. 7: The pace of vote-counting in Nevada is being criticised for taking too long and it's even become fodder for online jokes. But government officials say they are emphasising accuracy over speed in a year when processing an unprecedented flood of mail-in ballots under extended deadlines is taking more time.

“We told everyone early on that results would take

at least ten days,” Secretary of State spokeswoman Jennifer A Russell said in an email. The Legislature passed a bill in August to send all active voters mail-in ballots in hopes of curbing, or at least not fuelling, the spread of the Coronavirus. Those postmarked by Election Day can be counted if they arrive at election offices within seven days, which is Tuesday.

And they continue to

come in, though the number arriving each day is expected to dwindle.

“It's been a different year for us,” said Deanna Spikula, registrar of voters in Washoe County, the state's second-largest county that includes Reno. “The volume is definitely something that we've never seen before in the state as far as receiving and processing mail-in ballots.”

— AP

## Biden: Youngest senator to oldest Prez

Washington, Nov. 7: Third time lucky is an apt phrase to describe the remarkable rise of Joe Biden, a veteran in US politics for around five decades, from being one of the youngest senators in history to the oldest American president.

The 77-year-old six-term Democratic senator, who triumphed over incumbent Republican President Donald Trump in Tuesday's presidential election, ran twice unsuccessfully for president — in 1988 and 2008. The presidential dreams that the veteran leader from Delaware had harboured since child-

hood seemed all but over for a third time until he won South Carolina's Democratic Party primary on February 29, forcing most rivals out of the race and making one of the most dramatic comebacks in American political history. Biden served two terms in the White House as former president Barack Obama's vice president, capitalised on that experience to portray himself as a tested leader and a better alternative to Republican incumbent President Donald Trump.

While accepting the Democratic presidential nomination in August,

Biden pledged to restore the “soul of America”, and be an “ally of the light, not the darkness.” “The current president has cloaked America in darkness for much too long. Too much anger. Too much fear. Too much division. If you entrust me with the presidency, I will draw on the best of us, not the worst. I will be an ally of the light, not of the darkness,” he said.

He has a strong track record of being an ardent advocate of a strong India-US relationship. From playing a key role in the passage of India-US civil nuclear deal during a

Republican administration to setting up the goal of a \$500 billion in bilateral trade, Biden has strong ties with the Indian leadership across the aisle and has a large number of Indian-Americans within his close circuit. At a fundraiser in July, Biden had said that India and the United States were natural partners. “That partnership, a strategic partnership, is necessary and important in our security,” he said when asked whether India is critical to the US' national security.

Referring to his eight years as the vice president, Biden said that he

was proud to have played a role in securing Congressional approval for the US-India Civil Nuclear Agreement, which he said was a “big deal”. “Helping open the door to great progress in our relationship and strengthening our strategic partnership with India was a high priority in the Obama-Biden administration and will be a high priority if I'm elected president,” he had said.

Born in Pennsylvania in 1942, Joe Robinette Biden Jr studied at the University of Delaware and then earned a law degree from Syracuse University in 1968.

— PTI

## TOUGH ROAD FOR DON TO GET SC TO INTERVENE

Washington, Nov. 7: President Donald Trump has repeatedly said there's one place he wants to determine the outcome of the presidential election: the US Supreme Court. But he may have a difficult time ever getting there.

Over the last two days, Trump has leaned in to the idea that the high court should get involved in the election as it did in 2000. Then, the court effectively settled the contested election for President George W. Bush in a 5-4 decision that split the court's liberals and conservatives. Today, six members of the court are conservatives, including three nominated by Trump.

But the outcome of this year's election seemed to be shaping up very differently from 2000, when Florida's electoral votes delivered the presidency to George W. Bush. Then, Bush led in Florida and went to court to stop a recount.

Trump, for his part, has suggested a strategy that would focus on multiple states where the winning margins appear to be slim. But he might have to persuade the Supreme Court to set aside votes in two or more states to prevent Joe Biden from becoming president.

Chief Justice John Roberts, for his part, is not likely to want the election to come down to himself and his colleagues. Roberts, who was not on the court for Bush v Gore in 2000 but was a lawyer for Bush, has often tried to distance the court from the political branches of government and the politics he thinks could hurt the court's reputation.

It's also not clear what legal issues might cause the justices to step in. Trump has made repeated, unsubstantiated claims of election fraud. Lawsuits filed by his campaign so far have been small-scale efforts unlikely to affect many votes, and some already have been dismissed. Still, Trump has focused on the high court.

— AP



## DECCAN Chronicle

8 NOVEMBER 2020



Shashi Warriar

Off the beaten track

## Plotting a son-rise on shifting sands

Lying in bed at night at home by Someshwar beach, it's hard to believe that the economy has slowed down. The quiet is broken by the roar of diesel engines as trucks carry sand away from the beach. It's all illegal, this sand mining, but it goes on through the night and most of the day despite recent headlines in a newspaper claiming that the Mangalore police have cracked down on it.

Complaints to the local police had unexpected consequences. They brought a visitation from a gangster — a minor gangster, but big enough to deter senior citizens — who was recently released from prison after serving a sentence for murder. That was the end of the complaints.

I considered going higher up, to the Deputy Commissioner of the district, but then that's time-consuming and useless. I went to the DC a couple of years ago with a complaint about the local panchayat breaking all sorts of rules for friends and relatives. After a dozen calls, four visits to his office and six hours of waiting, I got three minutes in the presence of the man to explain these troubles. A month later, there was a letter from his office saying that my complaint had been transferred to the local authorities, who would get back to me. They never did: it was like asking a burglar to investigate her own crimes.

At my wits' end, I thought I'd wait for my friend Murthy, the one with the contacts in high places, to visit. Thanks to the lockdown, he's been in these parts for some months, and drops in once in a while to drink my most expensive whiskey. The least he could do in return, I thought, was to get some high-up to stop the sand mining, which is destroying what's left of the beach after the sea is done with it.

Murthy turned up one weekend. My wife, being aware of his habits, went off to watch TV, leaving the two of us to ourselves. I still haven't figured out how he managed to swallow, with no sign of haste, two large pegs of scotch, without giving me a chance to edge a word into the conversation. But then he bit into a samosa that was a little too spicy for him and had to shut up for a moment to let his tongue cool off and I grabbed the opportunity to present my case.

You have to hand it to the man. I gabbed my problems in the thirty seconds or so that it took him to recover, and he grasped it all. "So now you want me to see whether I can persuade some big shot to stop this illegal sand mining, someone with enough clout to avoid interference from local gangsters or officials or both." "Yes," I responded, and sat back to receive the flood of the rest of his monologue.

As he left that night, he paused at the door of his cab, an anonymous white hatchback, very unlike the Mercedes in which he made his first visit to my house. "I'm not sure it'll work," he said. "No one else wants this to stop."

"What do you mean?" I asked. "A few people here, a hundred voters, maybe, want the mining to stop," he replied. "Thousands of others, voters for whom the sand means business, or work, or hope, will want it to continue."

"The whole beach and the township will be gone in twenty years," I said. "Name one leader who looks beyond the next elections," he told me. "Twenty years is long past any politician's horizon. Five years is the absolute maximum."

He dropped in again just three days later. My hopes rose when he walked in, but fell again when he started talking. For the first time in my experience, he seemed chastened, apologetic, and even humble. "What happened?" I asked.

"I blew it," he said, with uncharacteristic directness. "One of these VIPs invited me home a couple of days ago. He told me that his security level had just been upgraded, so he's got an armed guard now. His teenage son wanted to borrow the guard's pistol to shoot at coconuts on a palm, and the bodyguard refused to hand it over. The VIP was chewing out the bodyguard when I got to his place, and eventually the bodyguard had to submit. After the boy went out, weapon in hand, the VIP turned to me, smiled, and said, 'Boys will be boys. I was just like that at his age.' He was in a good mood, for he then asked, 'What can I do for you?'"

"I told him about the sand mining and the beach disappearing and so on, and he seemed to be thinking about it. I should have shut up then but instead I told him you were afraid your township would disappear under the waves in twenty years."

"His face lit up. 'Does that mean that fifteen years from now we'll build a sea wall there?' he asked. I told him yes, and he smiled happily. 'Elections are a part of politics,' he said, 'and you get used to winning about half the time. The important thing is your first election. If you win that, you're doing fine. Building a sea wall there after some years will fund my son's first election. So tell your friend not to worry. We'll build him a sea wall to keep his house safe.'"

I didn't know what to say, so I got up to fetch Murthy a whiskey. He read my mind, for he said, "I can't stay for a drink. I've got to move on."

"Where?" I asked, surprised. "Back to that VIP. It's the son's birthday today, and he's having a party... I'll get my scotch there."

*Shashi Warriar has written fairy tales, thrillers, a semi-fictional biography, satires, and a love story. Besides writing, he teaches strategic communication at a business school.*

Subhani



## Biden takes high road, Trumpism is still alive



K.C. Singh

America's presidential election on November 3 took pollsters, Democrats and the world by surprise when the early results showed President Donald Trump leading in most swing states, including in the so-called Democratic "Blue Wall" states like Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin. Mr Trump had snatched these Rust Belt states from the Democrats in 2016, and their 46 Electoral College votes secured Mr Trump's victory four years ago.

Former vice-president Joe Biden told his party that as someone born in Scranton, Pennsylvania, he could reclaim the wall by bonding with the alienated working class, who had defected to Mr Trump, who in 2016 played on the twin fears of these people. One, deindustrialisation caused by the 1970s' oil price rise, and then globalisation that stretched supply chains worldwide. China's manufacturing prowess after joining the World Trade Organisation in 2001 turned global trade upside down. China built huge trade surpluses, while the US expended money on two costly wars abroad. Mr Trump exploited these fears and xenophobia under his "America First" slogan.

The power of his message is clear despite Mr Biden flipping Pennsylvania, Arizona, Nevada and, more significantly, Georgia after three decades of Republican dominance. Of the 150 million votes cast, the heaviest ever, Mr Trump has under half. It signals a deeply divided nation, with one half wedded to a divisive, racist and exclusionist vision. Recounting looms in Georgia, as the voting

wash as Republicans have done well to keep Senate control and Mr Trump's votes exceed his 2016 tally. Mr Biden simply got more votes, breaking existing records. In a similar situation in 2016, Hillary Clinton was advised by then President Barack Obama to concede to avoid uncertainty. But Mr Trump has no adviser with the gravitas of James Baker, who convinced a cornered Richard Nixon that his only good option was to resign after the Watergate scandal. Mr Trump seems to think he can reel-back Arizona, where he's cutting Mr Biden's lead, see a turnaround in Pennsylvania as more votes are counted and keep Georgia logjammed in recounts or legal challenges. A protracted stand-off, he hopes, can somehow retrieve the situation, maybe by going to the Supreme Court. Unfortunately, even senior Republican leaders fear speaking the truth to Mr Trump as they can see his mesmerising grip on a huge electoral base, which many senators have just enashed.

After waiting unsuccessfully for the election to be called, Joe Biden finally addressed the nation. He chose the high road, promising to heal divides, promising to deal with the economy, climate change and the pandemic. He recommended patience, and unlike Mr Trump endorsed the integrity of the electoral process. He assumed the posture of de facto winner by promising to again address the nation the following day. Slowly, senior Republicans are moving away from solidly backing Mr Trump in his uncon-

**The basic trajectory of India-US relations will continue, but its momentum will be conditioned by how Mr Biden handles China, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran**

tutional statements and unbecoming conduct. If Mr Biden widens his Pennsylvania lead to where it is seen as irreversible and the election is called, the wind may leak out of Trumpian bravado. A Biden presidency appears inevitable.

All nations are observing silently the high theatre in world's most powerful democracy. A senior BJP leader has written, as head of a party-linked think tank, to indirectly convey the government's thinking. He incorrectly claims no Republican President lost reelection in a century, forgetting George H.W. Bush's loss to Bill Clinton in 1992. Naturally, he ignores the "Abki baar" slogan Prime Minister Narendra Modi raised in Houston, crossing the line between personal friendship and political endorsement of Mr Trump. He now avows permanence of interests and not friends as the guiding principle.

A Biden presidency means both continuity and change. The basic trajectory of India-US relations will continue, but its momentum will be conditioned by how Mr Biden handles China, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran. Trade ties would not be treated as Mr Trump did by seeking make-or-break solutions. Climate change provides a new area of convergence, which Mr Trump contemptuously ignored. But the Democrats would hold India to a higher standard of liberal democracy than the government in New Delhi is used to. Kamala Harris will remember the insulting treatment of her comrade Pramila Jayapal, convincingly re-elected, by external affairs minister S. Jaishankar. India has an outstanding ambassador in Washington, on a third posting there, having relationships with both sides. But then, as the BJP ideologue wrote, interests can outrank kinship or friendship.

*The writer is a former secretary in the external affairs ministry. He tweets at @ambkcsingh.*

## LETTERS

### BORDER ISSUE

Our CDS has come out with a statement that larger conflicts with China cannot be ruled out. It is a cause for concern for the people of both the nations. People are fighting the pandemic. The government is spending a lot of money to arrest the spread of the disease. There are job losses and the economy is in bad shape. At this point a war will have disastrous consequences. More than eight rounds of diplomatic talks have been held so far. Our Prime Minister is to meet Xi in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meet. Both the leaders should have a one-to-one meet to sort out differences for war is no answer to the border issue. It should be resolved bilaterally.

**Sravana Ramachandran, Chennai**

### POLES APART

ACCORDING TO British tabloid *The Daily Mirror*, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson is planning to resign after six months as he finds the salary too low in comparison to his previous occupation. Johnson earns approximately 1,50,400 pounds which is reportedly not sufficient for his survival. He is said to be 'jealous' of his predecessor Theresa May, whose earnings have gone up substantially after she quit as the Prime Minister last year. Have we ever heard of an Indian leader giving up his political career due to poor earnings? In fact, people enter politics purely because it is the most lucrative profession in the country. When there was a report that this is the last election of Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar, his party officials promptly came out with a clarification that there was no retirement for their leader and that he would stay in politics "as long as the public wants".

**P.G. Menon, Chennai**

### COMMENDABLE WIN

**SUNRISERS HYDERABAD** (SRH) did everything right (right from winning the toss and deciding to bowl) on Friday to eliminate Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) from this edition of the Indian Premier League. That they (SRH) restricted the RCB to a paltry total of 131 in 20 overs suggests how much homework they would have done in an eliminator match. Though the RCB tried to compensate its batting lapses with some tight bowling, it could not prevent the Sunrisers from romping home. Full marks to Sunrisers Hyderabad for winning the match by six wickets.

**S. Ramakrishnasayee, Chennai**

### SRH FAVOURITES

**KUDOS TO** David Warner and his team for decimating Kohli's team to enter the qualifier 2 stage to meet Delhi Capitals on Sunday. Like the previous seasons, RCB progressed well till the middle stages and then choked to throw away their chances to lift the IPL trophy. Ironically, this season even the skipper was found wanting, both as a batsman and captain. A.B. de Villiers too was patchy. If only they had played Zampa or even Moeen Ali in place of Finch, things could have gone their way. The way Sunrisers Hyderabad have bounced back, it seems they will topple Delhi Capitals on Sunday and lift the Cup on Tuesday.

**Capt. N. Viswanathan Coimbatore**

Aakar Patel



## Amid new dawn in the US, India may now have to work differently

An American from Chennai won re-election this past week. Her name is Pramila Jayapal and she heads the Congressional Progressive Caucus. A few months ago, India's external affairs minister S. Jaishankar cancelled a meeting with the US House Foreign Affairs Committee, which included its Republican chairman and Democratic members. Mr Jaishankar refused to meet them because the group included Pramila Jayapal, who had pushed a resolution demanding that India end the communications blackout in Kashmir. Mr Jaishankar told the Americans that he would meet them only if they dropped Ms Jayapal from the group. Of course, the Americans refused.

Mr Jaishankar is paid by us to defend India abroad but chose instead to duck the meeting as it would involve a difficult conversation or perhaps he was just afraid of a confrontation. After his running away was widely reported in the American media, Senator Kamala Harris of California had tweeted: "It's wrong for any foreign government to tell Congress what members are allowed in meetings on Capitol Hill."

Mr Jaishankar felt he could afford to

do this as the US administration was headed by Republican Donald Trump, who doesn't care about human rights. It will not be possible for Mr Jaishankar to do what he did in December 2019 again.

The BJP has invested a lot in doing what no other Indian government has done before — meddle in the US elections and try and get Mr Trump elected again. A group called the "Overseas Friends of the BJP" had registered itself officially as a foreign agent in the US in September. After this was discovered, the party instructed these Indian Americans to help Mr Trump in their "personal capacity" and to not use the BJP's name, but it is clear that they are all BJP supporters.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself asked Indians in the US to vote for Mr Trump at the "Howdy Modi" rally in September 2019. Or at least that is one interpretation we can give to his line "Ab ki baar Trump sarkar".

What happens now that Mr Trump is on his way out? The BJP has begun backpedalling from its recklessness. It trotted out in-house intellectual Ram Madhav to write a newspaper article on Saturday that "US-India ties stand on a

bipartisan and strong footing". Mr Madhav wrote: "Some in India believe Biden-Harris would be bad news for US-India relations."

Actually, nobody believes that. Mr Madhav is confusing the BJP with India. There is no question that US India relations run deep and at times there is a civilisational connect between the two nations. This is not such a time, India has taken a turn towards majoritarianism. The Indian State is bullying and harassing its own citizens at a scale which has alarmed the world.

Pramila Jayapal and Kamala Harris did not casually take up the issues they chose to. They will not stop taking them up now as the previously partisan BJP now pleads for bipartisan support.

Events in America have strengthened the hand of those leaders there who wish India well but think of India as being a collection of Indians. If Indians are mistreated, they will object.

The Democratic Party fought this election on a very liberal platform. On the question of human rights, the most powerful message they were aligned with was Black Lives Matter. This part of the Democratic Party (which

includes Ms Jayapal) has become stronger inside because of the success of the human rights messaging.

Most Indians may not know that in April India was earmarked as a "Country of Particular Concern" by the US Commission on International Religious Freedom. Its report said that "India took a sharp downward turn in 2019" because the Modi government "instituted national-level policies violating religious freedom across India, especially for Muslims". It said of the Citizenship Amendment Act that "this law is meant to provide protection for listed non-Muslim religious communities — but not for Muslims — against exclusion from a nationwide National Register of Citizens and the resulting detention, deportation, and potential statelessness". It said India had seen "nationwide campaigns of harassment and violence against religious minorities to continue with impunity, and engaged in and tolerated hate speech and incitement to violence against them".

It names home minister Amit Shah and UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath and reproduces their statements. Most important, it has recommended that

the US administration act and impose "targeted sanctions on Indian government agencies and officials responsible for severe violations of religious freedom by freezing those individuals' assets and/or barring their entry into the United States under human rights-related financial and visa authorities, citing specific religious freedom violations".

India was able to ignore this till now because Mr Trump was running the administration and he was the one who would decide. India put out a statement that said: "We reject the observations on India in the USCIRF annual report. Its biased and tendentious comments against India are not new. But, on this occasion, its misrepresentation has reached new levels."

This was also a form of running away. If you think you are friends with America, you have to convince them that their findings are wrong. Refusing to engage with them is not a solution. It worked when Mr Trump was in charge. It will not work now.

*The writer is a columnist and a senior journalist*



## OUR CRITIC'S RATING

Outstanding ★★★★★ | Great ★★★★ | Good ★★★ | Okay ★★ | Poor ★ | Truly Terrible TT

# Parveen Babi: How a life of glamour ended as Token No. 62 at the morgue



Anirudha Bhattacharjee

**A**B&W centre-spread I grew up with in my childhood featured a prominent cricketer. I do not remember where I saw it. Could be Sportsweek, or one of the film magazines which would be sold on the pavement outside the main road connecting Pirmohani to Kadam Kuan in Patna. The cricketer was Salim Durrani, the hero of young women at that time. The beautiful but little-known young woman in the picture, we were told, was a new actress. Parveen Babi.

In no time the little-known young woman, advertised as the "Hottest Discovery" by director B.R. Ishara soon became a centrespread regular. Her pictures would adorn the walls of hair salons along with another centrespread where the reigning sexy symbol, Zeenat Aman, in her youth icon photograph where she would be swinging from a hammock. The filmy press even gave Parveen a moniker — poor man's Zeenat Aman, though by all standards Parveen was the better actress of the two.

Gradually, the poor man's Zeenat became part of the lives of teens brought up on a diet of Hindi films. However, except for her association with multiple men at various points in time, little was known about the roots

of the lady who, along with Sunil Gavaskar, Amitabh Bachchan, Kishore Kumar, R.D. Burman and a few others, made our lives worth living when we were young. Reports about her were mostly about various glamour, lifestyle, perversion, and schizophrenia.

Thankfully, Karishma Upadhyay's book on Parveen is a godsend. The 290+ page-long impressive compendium serves three purposes. One, it documents Parveen Babi's life in intricate detail. Two, it gives a rationale behind the myths associated with the actress. Myths which have been floating in various forms for the last 30 years. And three, it gives her persona a human face.

Upadhyay starts off with the history of the Babi dynasty. The roots are traced back almost 350 years. We get to know about Parveen's parents, her education in a Gujarati medium school, her rather modest upbringing where aspirations were limited, her college days at St. Xavier's, Ahmedabad, and her modelling spree which started with Calico.

Moving to the world of cinema, Upadhyay narrates how Parveen became part of *Dhuen ki Lakir* and *Charitra* almost simultaneously in detail. Her journey — both personal and professional — is outlined well enough to get a

feel of the changing times, the 1970s which were more about gay abandon, to the dark chambers of the 1980s. The gradual loss of innocence and how we lost the lovely and capable actress to schizophrenia and manic depression is the highpoint of the book. The book ends with Parveen Babi getting registered as "unclaimed body number 16" at Cooper Hospital and later as Token No. 62 at the morgue. Poignant? Yes, it is. Heart-breaking? Surely.

Routine? No. What is distinctly different about this book is the immense effort Upadhyay has pumped into her work. Of late, with the boom of social media, the groundwork in terms of interviews and detailing in biographies has shown a marked increase. Upadhyay, however, takes it to a different level. For someone who did not grow up during the time Parveen was a Page 3 regular for causes other than controversies and hallucinations, the effort is mind-boggling.

The book has a plethora of interviews, with her family members, school/college mates, film and media personalities, her life-long friend-cum-secretary and, of course, the three known men in her life.

While Parveen was perceived to be a Page 3 item, the interview responses are definitely not of the "oh, she was such a beautiful girl" variety. They have depth, and coverage wide enough to trace Parveen's life across a wide span of time. And in quite some detail. Stitched almost seamlessly, with anecdotes and news reports sourced from multiple periodicals/publications, the



**PARVEEN BABI**  
KARISHMA UPADHYAY  
**PARVEEN BABI: A LIFE**  
By **KARISHMA UPADHYAY**  
Published by Hachette India ₹467

chapters create a very visual story. Needless to mention, Upadhyay's standing as a reporter/scribe comes out very strongly in her work. Investigative journalism it is, but sans judgement. The book not only forces the reader to think, it also makes you feel. It takes you back in time, it makes the eyes moist. The helplessness of one of the most beautiful, articulate and modern women in cinema rubs on to the reader as well.

Quibbles? I have a few. The extreme neutral stance taken by Upadhyay implies that she does not question even basic things like a 14-year-old joining college. The subcontinent is infamous for fake birth certificates and records, but in this case Upadhyay accepts what was told to her. Two, Parveen's role as the "other woman" in Marc Zuber's life in *Yeh Nazdeekiyan* is like a slice of her own life, and this could have been discussed in more detail rather than limiting the filmic interpretation of her psyche only to Kavita Sanyal in *Arth*. Three, there

are times when the reader might lose track of timelines as not all events in the book are in strict chronology. In this case, the editors should have been extra careful. A few behind-the-scenes filmmaking stories would have added value as well, for example the inspiration behind Vijay Anand's slick *Bullet* (1976), or how Bhappie Sonie borrowed an idea from Billy Wilder in *Chalta Purza*, the Rajesh-Parveen starrer which was expected to rock but did rather badly. Lastly, the book deserved many more photographs, properly catalogued ones.

However, these are minor issues. The book's major strength is the storytelling which, like good biographies, can be given multiple reads simply to get the feel of the enigma that was Parveen.

The 10-year-old small-town boy, after seeing a few centre-spreads of Parveen, had formed an opinion. She was like a happy girl with very sad, lonely eyes. The idea was cemented after watching *Deewar* (1975). Despite her western outfits and chain-smoking avatar, she seemed to be a simple, trusting and down-to-earth girl next door with an elusive quality which was beyond definition. She was like someone who was so near, and yet so far. After reading Upadhyay's book, those "sad, lonely eyes" linger in my head.

*Anirudha Bhattacharjee, author of the National award-winning book R D Burman, the man the music, is a huge fan of 1970s cinema and a self-confessed fan of the actress.*



## Harnessing horror to showcase female rage

**A**tmospherics play a significant role in setting the tone of any film, more so, in a film that needs to draw you in and make you care. And, if sets out to raise the patriarchal practice of killing female newborns, it'd better be logical too. Not just in its premise but in its storytelling too.

The 90-minute film *Kaali Khuhi* (*The Black Well*) ambitiously tries to comment on an age-old malpractice seen more in North India — the killing of female infants at the very moment of their birth. Its first-time director Terrie Samundra does have his heart

too — being a girl — begins to learn the bitter truth of her being an unwanted child.

To tell such a story, smoky and spooky sound and dim vision are not enough for viewers to get an authentic feel to a plausible story. To be fair, Sejal Shah's muted camerawork uses the right mix of dark lens and natural light to give us shudders in a few scenes, and the technical aspects of the film are laudable. Choosing a subject that is so commonly known in India and yet brushed under the carpet when confronted with it, is itself a very apt choice. Considering such

killings are even justified by some and many of the chauvinists would react to such a story only when prodded, making them matter-of-fact too, we ought to make people aware of such dogmatic nonsensical views. The shameful tradition can be so routine for some that they may not even react. But do we need to accentuate the gory happenings that are, may be, not every day occurrences any more, but nevertheless are

prevalent even today, with haze and uncanny eerie scenes to make it a horror genre film? Agreed the ambience denoting scare and chilling effects of an infant getting killed by self-styled do-gooder women who believed that a girl-child would bring a curse is foreboding. But creating a mysterious atmosphere when everything is familiar and evident is unnecessary.

There are flashes of great analysis when we see nearly an all-woman cast dealing with the subject for which they themselves are equally to blame for perpetuating the unjust social system of patriarchy. That women could jointly take a stand to stop such evil is what one learns about all the women characters involved in the story.

The girl-child as a protagonist represents the new generation who must bring about the desired change and the film is seen through the prism of Shivangi.

That apart, the one and half hour film fails to elicit a thought provoking response from its viewers. The narrative is fairly simplistic and in no way, makes us reason out.

While the idea to scare us by underlining the message that it's scary to know that female infanticide is an ugly reality we cannot escape from. But leaving many of the questions unanswered in a fog that the lens of the camera uses in abundance, leads to an even more miasma of smoke and uncertainty. Why, for instance, the ghost of a girl kill all those who she believes prevented her from living? Or, why does Darshan behave the way he does, and insists on staying back in the village after his mother's demise?

It is also unpalatable to use actors of the calibre of Shabana Azmi in a role that she tries hard to sink her teeth into but in the absence of any credible approach, her efforts are as fleeting as the length of her role itself.

Watch *Kaali Khuhi*, if you must, but don't look for any lessons though the film's writers Terrie Samundra, David Walter Lech and RupinderINDERjit do have a message for you all — the abysmal dark well of superstitions must be done away with!

### Kaali Khuhi Miasma of Smoke!

**CAST:** Shabana Azmi, Sanjeeda Sheikh, Riva Arora, Satyadeep Misra  
**DIRECTOR:** Terrie Samundra  
**RATING:** ★★  
**Streaming on:** Netflix

# Diane Lane and Kevin Costner reunite for some Western warmth

## Let Him Go

**CAST:** Diane Lane, Kevin Costner  
**Direction:** Thomas Bezucha  
**DIRECTOR:** yyy  
**RATING:** ★★★



**S**uperman, that boring lug, has thankfully flown the coop. Writer-director Thomas Bezucha's Western thriller *Let Him Go* reunites Diane Lane and Kevin Costner, who as the Kents were easily the warmest presences in the otherwise dully dour *Man of Steel*.

They are together again in *Let Him Go*, this time front and center but likewise retired and living close to the land. And the pairing is just as good. Both Lane and Costner, direct and earthy performers from the start, have only added depth with age. As long-married Montana ranchers in *Let Him Go*, they're basically the platonic ideal of an old-fashioned, homespun Americana. They could sell you a mountain of jeans if they wanted to.

In Bezucha's film, adapted from Larry Watson's novel, they are Margaret and George Blackledge, and the opening scenes are of ominous harmony. Their son James (Ryan Bruce) returns from the fields for breakfast, turning the radio on

and dancing with his wife, Lorna (Kayli Carter), and their newborn. If there's a trace of discord, it's in a moment where Lorna puts her son under water too hot, leading Margaret to take the child with what probably isn't her first reproachful glance at her daughter-in-law. It's an early sign: *Let Him Go* might be set on familiar, tense Western plains, but it's about mothering.

In a series of fast-moving events, James is killed in a horsing accident. Bezucha cuts immediately to three years later, when Lorna is remarrying in a small, joyless ceremony. Soon after, Margaret sees the new husband Donnie (Will Brittain) striking both mother and son on the

street. Before she's had much time to respond to it, she finds the family has unexpectedly moved out of their new apartment. Margaret starts packing up the Chevy station wagon. She's going to look for them, she says. George, a former lawman, gets in.

At this midway point, *Let Him Go* is good. As two childless, grieving figures traversing a Western landscape, the Blackledges seemed carved out of an elegiac mythology. They are trying to beat back the loss they feel creeping over their lives. "Sometimes that's all life is, Margaret," says George. "A list of what we've lost." It's an impression made more powerful by Lane and Costner, both of whom are return-

ing to a genre they've visited before but from a different standpoint in life. (Costner is more identifiable with Westerns thanks to *Dances With Wolves*, *Wyatt Earp* and others, but don't forget Lane in *Lonesome Dove*.)

Their search takes them into North Dakota where the dark reputation of Donnie's family, the Weboys (pronounced "wee-boys"), begins to surround them before they've even crossed state lines. Finding them at all seems uncertain, but they manage it, and in a menacing dinner, they meet the Weboys. Their clan, too, comes with a formidable matriarch in Blanche (Lesley Manville, bringing dramatic flare to an otherwise restrained film), a much more violent and sinister corollary to Margaret.

But the collision of the two families is managed awkwardly. The Weboys, which include a grinning father (Jeffrey Donovan) and two other brothers, never come through clearly. It's unclear what they're about, except that they're bad news, and their cruelty comes off as strange, extravagant gestures in uncertainly defined roles. What seems set up for a slow-burn showdown between rival grandmas dissipates in blunt shoot-outs that sidelines Lane's Margaret at just the wrong time. It's Margaret who leads the charge, and it's Lane's movie even when the film momentarily forgets it.

# A grand contribution to Hollywood history

## Mank

**CAST:** Gary Oldman, Amanda Seyfried, Lily Collins, Arliss Howard, Tom Pelphrey, Sam Troughton, Ferdinand Kingsley, Tuppence Middleton, Tom Burke  
**DIRECTOR:** Armando Iannucci  
**RATING:** ★★★★★  
**Streaming on:** Netflix

**I**n one history of the movies, *Citizen Kane* screenwriter Herman Mankiewicz might look like a footnote. The former playwright had a hand in many famous pictures, including *The Wizard of Oz*, but most went uncredited. He was the smartest guy in the room, a drunk and a gambler who was dead at 55. And his kid brother, Joe, who directed and wrote *All About Eve*, would go on to be the

better-known Mankiewicz.

But in another version of Hollywood history, the one David Fincher tells in the glorious new film *Mank*, Herman Mankiewicz as portrayed by Gary Oldman was early Hollywood in all its greatness and tragedy. Working off a crackling screenplay by his late father Jack Fincher, David Fincher has made *Mank* into an incisive look at a complex man who was once William Randolph Hearst's favorite dinner companion but by 43 was a Hollywood has-been — washed up and laid up while writing what would become "Citizen Kane" in a bungalow in Victorville in 1940.

Even though it's filmed in black and white with a big band score (from Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross) and made to look and sound like a film of the time, this isn't some dreamy, nostalgic writer-as-hero tale. It

doesn't take a writer to know that there's nothing more deathly boring and uncinematic as the writing process. Nor is it a referendum on the old "who really deserves credit for *Citizen Kane*" debate.

Instead, *Mank* is about the context around *Citizen Kane*, the tarnished realities of Hollywood's Golden Age, the seductive power of filmed imagery and how a man who was once a friend not just to Hearst, but to Marion Davies, too, would decide to write about them against the advice of everyone in his life.

In order to do this, Fincher flashes back to 1934, when Mank is riding high in the studio system, getting invited to all the parties, helping his little brother Joe (Tom Pelphrey) get a foot in the door and hanging around Hearst (an intimidating but warm Charles Dance) and Davies (an outstanding Amanda Seyfried). But outside of the opu-



lence of the movie business there is the Depression going on and worldwide unrest that will soon lead to another war. In one scene Louis B. Mayer (Arliss Howard) walks Mank and Joe through the studio lot while giving a lively speech about the "dream factory," only to end up on a big soundstage where he tells everyone from movie stars to grips that they'll have to take a 50% pay cut so the "family"

can survive the Depression. The hypocrisy of it all is getting too much for Mank to handle with his usual sarcasm. He already believes he's slumming it in his mercenary procession and is unafraid to speak his mind to the suits around him, who tolerate him until they don't.

By 1940, Mank is a Hollywood exile who agrees to write a script for the 24-year-old radio wunderkind Orson Welles (Tom

Burke). Bedridden from a car accident, he dictates dialogue and scribbles notes that his prim British assistant Rita (Lily Collins) puts through a typewriter.

There are more questions than answers when it comes to Mank, including why he seemed so intent on self-sabotage and why his wife Sarah (Tuppence Middleton) stayed around. Although pushing the limits of what a 43-year-old man looked like in 1940, Oldman is naturally terrific at playing the guy who refuses to suffer fools and is always ready with a comeback, but who takes it too far too often (the tragedy of the arrogant drunk).

The film is wry and observant about the movie business and all the things that haven't changed, as well as those that have. That it's a Netflix production is a deafening statement of its own. But it also has a beating heart thanks

in large part to Seyfried's Davies, who beautifully reclaims the life and agency of a woman who history and "Citizen Kane" reduced to Hearst's showgirl mistress. Mank and Davies are kindred spirits and she is the moral compass of the ridiculous world they inhabit. When Mank is eviscerating everyone in a drunken rant, you're looking for her reaction. It makes the question of why he ended up writing what he did ever more vexing toward the end. Was it a paycheck? A bout of moral conscience? An attempt to burn bridges? A combination of all? Or something else altogether?

"Mank" isn't interested in providing the answers, which is just as well. It's simply telling a story about a man behind so many of our movie memories and making a new one in the process. And it is, without a doubt one, of the year's very best.

— AP



balanced, ambitious team led aggressively by captain Warner that is refusing to yield an inch. To beat this team, Delhi have to put up a capital show in every sense of the word.