

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

COIMBATORE | WEDNESDAY 18 | NOVEMBER 2020

## WEATHER



**Max:** 28°C  
**Min:** 22°C  
**Rainfall:** 3 mm

## ASTROGUIDE

**Sarvari:** Karthigai 3  
**Tithi:** Chaturthi  
**Star:** Moolam  
**Rahukalam:**  
12 noon to 1.30 pm  
**Yamagandam:**  
7.30 am to 9 am

### PRAYERS

**Fajar:** 4.54 am  
**Zohar:** 11.58 am  
**Asar:** 3.12 pm  
**Maghrib:** 5.39 pm  
**Isha:** 6.53 pm

**SUNSET TODAY** 5.40 PM

**SUNRISE TOMORROW** 6.09 AM

**MOONRISE TODAY** 9.13 AM

**MOONSET TOMORROW** 8.51 PM

## CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+35,430)	(+409)
89,09, 656	1,30,969

covid19india.org

### STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+ 1,652 )  
TN: 7,61,568 11,513

### WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

5,56,71,441

### DEATHS

13,37,982

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES  
217

worldometers.info

## Man who sustained injury in firing incident in TN dies

**Dindigul:** A 55 year-old man succumbed to injuries on Tuesday, a day after he was allegedly shot at by a septuagenarian during a quarrel over a land dispute in Palani town in the district, police said. Subramani, who was admitted to the Government Rajaji Hospital in Madurai, about 120 km from Palani, died on Tuesday, police said

## Five of family drown in MP waterfall; one rescued

**Sagar (MP):** A family's picnic to a waterfall turned tragic here in Madhya Pradesh when its five members, including a man and his two daughters, drowned on Tuesday, a police official said. The incident occurred in the Bina river waterfall in Rahatgarh police station area in Sagar district, he said. "Nine people from Sagar had gone for a picnic. Six of them went for a bath in the waterfall, which is a restricted area. They got trapped in deep waters," the official said.

## Kejriwal seeks to shut down markets emerging as Covid hotspots

**New Delhi:** Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday sought the Centre's approval for shutting down markets which could be COVID-19 hotspots, as authorities spelled out a fortified strategy including increasing ICU beds, doubling testing capacity to 1 to 1.2 lakh and deploying 7000-8000 surveillance teams in vulnerable pockets in the wake of the recent spike in cases.

## COUNTER POINT



Where were all your one million followers? You got only 100 votes in the elections!

## STATE | 3

**CM to lay stone for river linking scheme in January**



## WORLD | 5

**More virus deaths if Trump impedes transition: Biden**

## SPORT | 8

**Medvedev masters Zverev on Day 2**



## RESERVOIRS BRIMMING, BUT NOTHING TO WORRY

Chennai's four reservoirs meeting its drinking water supply — **Poondi, Cholavaram, Chembarambakkam and Red Hills** — are witnessing an upsurge in water levels due to copious rains.



■ The combined storage of four lakes stood a little over **6 tmcft** on Tuesday as against the full capacity of **11 tmcft**.

■ Krishna water released from Andhra Pradesh has boosted the levels in the lakes.

■ Veeranam lake, a source of drinking water supply to Chennai, has **45.6 ft** water against its total capacity of **47.5 ft**.

# Rain impact: TN govt keeps tabs on dams filling up fast

**DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs**  
CHENNAI, NOV. 17

The state government on Tuesday said the official machinery is fully prepared to cope up with any challenges arising due to heavy rains and that dams were being closely monitored in the wake of their increasing levels.

Revenue and disaster management minister R. B. Udhayakumar said all emergency services and personnel were ready to handle problems arising due to rising water levels. Mettur dam on river Cauvery and the four lakes catering to Chennai have seen sharp increase in the recent days following intermittent rains and dis-

● **Revenue and disaster management minister R. B. Udhayakumar said all emergency services and personnel were ready to handle problems arising due to rising water levels**

charges from Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. A PWD official said the water level at the Mettur dam in Salem stood at 94.83 ft against a total scale of 120 ft. Water in the Papanasam dam, with a full reservoir level of 143 feet, swelled by 9.7 ft on a single day due to heavy rains to reach 111.2 ft in the southern Tirunelveli district.

Tuticorin received heavy downpour resulting in inundation in several residential areas. The Servaiar dam, also in Tirunelveli district, with a water level of 156 ft capacity, realised 18.5 ft in one day, pushing the water level to 118 ft.

Officials from the dam safety directorate surveyed the Chembarambakkam lake Tuesday morning and said things were under control. "We will take a call on releasing water based on the rainfall status and the condition of surrounding water bodies. As of now, rains have reduced and we are not planning to open the reservoir," S. Asokan, Chief Engineer (operations and maintenance), said.

## PANDEMIC STATUS

## Perambalur records zero cases for 2nd day

**DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs**  
CHENNAI, NOV. 17

In a sign of hope, Perambalur, for the second consecutive day, reported 'zero' infections. Also, six districts recorded fresh infections in single digits — Virudhunagar and Ramanathapuram 4 each, Sivagangai 6, Tuticorin 5, Theni 8 and Pudukottai 9.

Tamil Nadu added 1,652 new Covid cases on Tuesday, pushing its tally to 7,61,568, while 18 people succumbed to the virus taking the death toll to 11,513, the health department said. The state's daily tally of fresh infections fell below the 2,000 mark on November 13 which saw 1,939 new cases.

Since then, it has been steadily declining. Meanwhile, recoveries

● **Six districts record fresh cases in single digits**

continued to outnumber the fresh infections as 2,314 people walked out of various health care institutions, aggregating to 7,34,970 till date.

As many as 62,415 samples were tested Tuesday with 1,11,99,077 specimens getting examined till date. Coimbatore reported 170, Chengalpet 112 cases. Of the 7.61 lakh Covid-19 cases in Tamil Nadu, Chennai accounted for 2,09,646. Among the 18 deaths reported, 12 died in private hospitals while six in government. All those who succumbed were with co-morbidities. Active cases in the state stood at 15,085, the department bulletin said.

## One year since first case of Covid detected in Wuhan

**Wuhan, Nov. 17:** The dangerous coronavirus pandemic has changed the complete situation of the world. People are facing different problems till date due to Covid-19 pandemic. SARS-CoV-2 causes Covid-19 infection. A total of 1.33 M people died due to Covid-19 infection in the world with cases surpassing 50 million in 190 countries. Exactly a year ago on November 17, 2019, the first case of coronavirus was reported in Wuhan.

According to the South China Morning Post, it was a 55-year-old person from China's Hubei province who first contracted the virus and the case dates back to November 17th, 2019.

According to the reports, the Chinese doctors realised that they have been dealing with a new disease in December and the initial reports suggested that the virus responsible for the pandemic has stemmed from a live market. — *Agencies*

# Shah: Gupkar's unholy global gathbandhan

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 17

Union home minister Amit Shah on Tuesday alleged that certain political leaders, particularly those in Jammu and Kashmir, want "foreign forces to intervene" on the contentious issue of the scrapping of Article 370. The home minister, in a series of tweets, also asked the Congress Party, which has signed the Gupkar Declaration, to clarify its position on the issue.

"Congress and the Gupkar Gang want to take J&K back to the era of terror and turmoil. They want to take away the rights of dalits, women and tribals that we have ensured by removing Article 370. This is why they're being rejected by the people everywhere," the home minister said in his tweet.

"The Gupkar Gang is going global! They want foreign forces to intervene in



Jammu and Kashmir. The Gupkar Gang also insults India's Tricolour. Do Sonia Ji and Rahul Ji support such moves of the Gupkar Gang? They should make their stand crystal clear to the people of India," Mr Shah further added in his tweets.

"Jammu and Kashmir has been, is and will always remain an integral part of India. Indian people will no longer tolerate an unholy 'global gathbandhan' against our national interest. Either the Gupkar Gang swims along with the national mood or else the people will sink it," Mr

## Central bank caps withdrawals at ₹25,000, proposes merger with DBS Bank

## RBI places Lakshmi Vilas Bank under moratorium

**FALAKNAAZ SYED | DC**  
MUMBAI, NOV. 17

Minutes after placing beleaguered Lakshmi Vilas Bank (LVB) under moratorium and superseding its Board of directors, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Tuesday announced a draft scheme of amalgamation to merge the ailing lender with DBS Bank India Ltd (DBIL).

RBI has placed the Tamil Nadu based LVB under moratorium for 30 days that would end on December 16, 2020, according to statements from theregulator and the government on Tuesday.

As part of this, the regulator has capped deposit withdrawals by customers

to ₹25,000.

Borrowers can withdraw above ₹25,000 only for unforeseen expenses including medical treatment and education, the Central Government said in a statement.

This is the third such instance in the banking sector as the RBI had placed Yes Bank under moratorium for two weeks on March 5 which was later rescued by SBI led consortium while PMC Bank was also placed under moratorium.

Proposing the scheme of amalgamation, the central bank said that DBIL is well capitalized and will bring in additional capital of ₹2500 crore upfront, to support the credit growth of the merged entity. ■ **P3**



Indian Navy's Vikramaditya Carrier Battle Group exercising with US Navy's Nimitz Carrier Strike Group, Australian Navy ship HMAS Ballarat and JMSDF ship JS Murasame during Malabar 2020 phase 2 on Tuesday.

— DC



## PM Modi raises terrorism at Brics summit

**New Delhi, Nov. 17:** The five-nation grouping Brics on Tuesday adopted a new counter-terrorism strategy to effectively deal with the menace, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserted that there is a need to ensure that countries supporting terrorists are held guilty, a call backed by Russian president Vladimir Putin, who dubbed such nations "black sheep of the family". Modi, while addressing the 12th Brics (Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa) summit, held virtually, said terrorism is the "biggest problem" the world is facing, and needed to be dealt with in an organised manner.

At the summit, also attended by Chinese President Xi Jinping, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, the Prime Minister talked about the 'crisis' facing multilateralism, and highlighted the need for reform of the United Nations Security Council as well as various other key global bodies. "Terrorism is the biggest problem the world is facing. We have to ensure that the countries that support and assist the terrorists are also held guilty and the problem is dealt with in an organised manner," the Prime Minister said. — *PTI*

## MP govt to bring law against 'love jihad'

**RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC**  
BHOPAL, NOV. 17

No case of alleged "love jihad" has so far been reported in Madhya Pradesh and yet the BJP-led government in the state is all set to bring a legislation in the ensuing winter session of the Assembly making "love jihad", a term coined by rightwing politicians to attack interfaith marriages, a cognizable and non-bailable offence.

The Bharatiya Janata Party and several rightwing, Hindutva outfits have been targeting young couples and interfaith marriages, alleging that they are done with the intention to convert Hindu girls. No leader or organisation has till now offered any statistics to prove their charge.

The proposed legislation in Madhya Pradesh provides rigorous imprisonment of up to five years for "forcible marriage, seduction and forced conversions".

and Hamirpur, they said.

The junior engineer is understood to have given details of his activities during preliminary questioning by CBI investigators.

He is believed to have told that he was silently operating in the adjoining districts of Hamirpur, Banda and Chitrakoot for last 10 years preying upon poor children between 5-16 years of age, the officials said. — *PTI*

## UP govt engineer arrested for sexual abuse of 50 kids

**New Delhi, Nov. 17:** The CBI has arrested a junior engineer of Uttar Pradesh irrigation department for alleged sexual exploitation of children for last 10 years and selling videos and photographs of his nefarious acts on dark web to other paedophiles across the globe, officials said Tuesday.

He is alleged to have victimised about 50 children in the age group of 5-16 years in the districts of Chitrakoot, Banda

not file a proper affidavit and then you filed an affidavit which did not deal with the two important questions. We had asked you to specify how Cable TV Network Act can be used to control the content of cable TV network. Your affidavit is silent on it. The other issue is what steps you can take to deal with such complaints. Your affidavit is silent on it."

CJI Bobde told Mr Mehta to put all these in the amended affidavit and adjourned the matter for further hearing after three weeks.

will get the issue raised by the Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind and others examined by News Broadcasting Standards Authority (NBSA) - a body set-up by some news channels and is currently headed by a former top court judge Justice A.K. Sikri.

At the outset of the hearing today, in its disapproval of the second affidavit filed by the Information and Broadcasting Ministry, CJI Bobde said, "Mr. solicitor-general we are not satisfied with your affidavit. First you did

section of Cable TV Networks Regulation Act the government has acted on such complaints in the past and sought to know the government did it and why the matter currently before the court cannot be sent to it.

The court said this in the course of the hearing of petitions by Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind and others seeking action against the news channels for giving a communal twist to Nizamuddin Markaz congregation and the spread of pandemic Covid-19.

The court in an earlier hearing had said that it



bench also comprising Justice A.S. Bopanna and Justice V. Ramasubramanian told solicitor-general Tushar Mehta.

As Mr Mehta appearing for the Centre told the court that they had taken action against the channels in the past, CJI Bobde asked under which

The Supreme Court on Tuesday told the Centre to evolve a mechanism to address the grievances against the media — particularly the visual media — for airing allegedly fake news or news with a slant that may be detrimental to a section of people or a community.

"If it (mechanism) does not exist, you create one, otherwise we will hand over the complaints to a private agency," Chief Justice Sharad A. Bobde heading a three-judge



## OTHER STORIES

## Pondy logs 72 new coronavirus cases, no fresh fatality reported

Puducherry, Nov. 17: With 72 fresh cases of Covid-19 being recorded on Tuesday the total infection count in the union territory rose to 36,409.

However, no deaths were reported from any of the four regions off Puducherry, Karaikal, Mahe and Yanam.

A release from Director of Health and Family Welfare S Mohan Kumar said the new cases were identified after the examination of 3,393 samples during the last 24 hours.

Puducherry had witnessed a drop in number of daily infections during the last few days.

But, the number shot up to 72 today. The Director said 131 patients were discharged from hospitals today. The positivity and recovery rates were 1.67 percent and 96.01 percent respectively.

Puducherry region accounted for 39 new cases out of the total 72 while Karaikal had 13, Yanam 4 and Mahe 16. The health department has so far tested 3.63 lakh samples and found 3.21 lakh out of them to be negative.

Of the total 36,409 COVID-19 cases 843 were active, 34,358 patients recovered and were discharged. The toll remained 608.

— PTI

## Bedi directs govt depts to ensure benefits reached only eligible people

Puducherry, Nov. 17: Puducherry Lt Governor Kiran Bedi directed government departments here to ensure that the benefits of welfare schemes reached only eligible persons and not those making fake claims, by way of regular surveys.

In a whatsapp message on Monday night, Bedi said she had received complaints from a 'whistle blower' alleging that some women in a village here were receiving pension meant for the destitute, without being eligible for the monthly assistance.

Women living with their spouses were getting the pension from the government department.

The Lt Governor said she had asked the Secretary to Social Welfare Department to go into the complaints and verify whether the benefit of monthly pension meant for destitute women was being enjoyed by ineligible persons.

At the end of verification it was found that 60 per cent of households were getting pension without being eligible for a long time.

"Payment of pension for these ineligible persons has been stopped forthwith and steps were also under way to recover the amount they had received.

The verification of records would also confirm for how long they were getting the pension, which is ₹2,000 a month for each destitute woman," she said.

According to the Lt Governor, the deception was going on for long under the protection of some 'influential persons'.

"The Secretary to Social Welfare Department would soon devise a method by which regular surveys would be conducted by official teams on random basis to save government funds so that really needy persons could be helped," Bedi said.

— PTI

## ₹22 L worth gold seized by Chennai air customs

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, NOV. 17

The Chennai customs officials on Tuesday detected two cases of smuggling of gold and seized 420 grams of gold worth ₹22 lakh.

According to airport sources, Syed Abthahir (34), of Ramanathapuram who arrived by Emirates Airlines flight EK542 was intercepted at the exit of the customs arrival hall. On search of his person, two bundles of gold paste weighing 260 grams were recovered from rectum from which extraction 221 grams of gold of 24K purity valued at ₹11.7 lakh was recovered.

In another case, Raj Mohamed (37) who arrived from Dubai by subsequent Emirates flight EK544 intercepted at the exit. On search, four bundles of gold paste weighing 224 grams were recovered from rectum from which 199 grams of gold valued at ₹10.3 lakh was recovered after extraction.

Total 420 grams of gold of 24K purity valued at ₹ 22 lakh was seized under the Customs Act. Further investigation is under process.

## Monsoon preparedness



Revenue and disaster management minister R.B. Udhayakumar addresses the media and releases 'Compendium of circulars for preparedness during northeast monsoon season 2020' in the city on Tuesday.

— DC

## Disaster management plan chalked out: Min

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, NOV. 17

There have been speculations of opening up of the sluice gates following increasing water levels, bringing back memories of the 2015 deluge when water release from here was blamed as a key reason for flooding in many parts of the city.

Deepening and desilting of Adyar river has already been executed and hence people need not be afraid of water release from Chembarambakkam, Asokan, Chief Engineer (operations and maintenance), said, adding,

**"We have mapped 4,133 places vulnerable for inundation and the officials are all geared up to launch rescue and relief operations"**

water release will be done if the level touches the 22 ft mark.

Meanwhile, minister Udayakumar said a disaster management plan had been chalked out by the

government taking into consideration the data of damage due to rain in the state in the last 10 years and the extent of destruction in the last three decades.

"We have mapped 4,133 places vulnerable for inundation and the officials are all geared up to launch rescue and relief operations," he said.

Keeping in the mind the pandemic, the government has formed 4,880 shelters to ensure social distancing norms, in addition to 4,713 that have been readied, the minister said.

## HC seeks action on land made 'eri poromboke'

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, NOV. 17

The Madras high court has directed the public works department, Chengalpattu district, to consider and take action within four weeks on the representations sent by 154 persons, pursuant to the showcause notices issued by it, alleging that they are in possession of certain extent of land, which is classified as 'eri poromboke' (water body poromboke) in Chitlapakkam village, Tambaram taluk, Chengalpattu district.

A division bench comprising Justices M. Sathyanarayanan and R. Hemalatha also directed the assistant engineer, overseer of water resources organisation, public works department, Chengalpattu district, to communicate the decision taken to the petitioners and till such time, defer further decision in terms of impugned notices.

Disposing of the petitions filed by one Damodhan and 153 others, the bench made it clear that the petitioners, till the disposal of the representations, shall not create any third party in respect of the respective lands and superstructures in question.

Claiming to be in possession of land and superstructures in S.No.256/1, Chitlapakkam village for more than 60 years, the petitioners submitted that they have put up superstructures which were also subjected to statutory levies. While so, to their shock and surprise, they have been issued with individual show cause notices alleging that they were in possession of certain extent of land, which was classified as 'eri poromboke'. Some of them had also submitted their response to the showcause notice with documents. However, without considering the same, steps were being taken to evict them from the land and superstructures and hence, they have filed the present petitions.

The bench said a perusal of the materials would



prima facie disclose that the claim made by the petitioners was based upon their long possession of the respective pieces of land in question and construction of superstructure, which were also subjected to statutory levies. The counsel for the petitioners would submit that in the light of the fact that the superstructures put up by the petitioners were also subjected to statutory levies, it can be termed as authorized one. In the considered opinion of this court, the said submission lacks merit and substance and it was relevant to take into consideration the decision rendered by the Full Bench of Madurai Bench of this court in Ramaraju's case and the said judgment deals with the removal of encroachments from road. In paragraph 38 a clarification was issued that 'payment of property tax, provisions of water connection or electricity by themselves cannot be construed as conferring any independent right, if the encroachment is otherwise unauthorized'. Therefore, it was open to the Chengalpattu district collector to take necessary steps to find out whether the superstructures put up by the petitioners herein were authorized/unauthorized/deviated and if the result of the same discloses any unauthorized/deviated/illegal construction, immediate and necessary steps will be taken in accordance with law to demolish the same, by also adhering to the principles of natural justice, in response to the impugned show cause notices issued by the PWD, the bench added.

## No HC relief for candidates who obtained medical degrees from foreign varsities

J. STALIN | DC  
CHENNAI, NOV. 17

Pointing out that the authorities are intentionally keeping the standard of examination at a very high level to ensure that only meritorious candidates, who have completed medicine in a foreign university, practise medicine in India, the Madras high court has dismissed a batch of petitions from 17 candidates, which sought a direction to the authorities to constitute an independent expert committee to evaluate the question papers of both part I and part II papers of the Foreign Medical Graduates Examination (FMGE) conducted on August 31, 2020 and to allot grace marks to them.

Justice N. Anand Venkatesh dismissed the petitions filed by Dr. Lokanand Teeka Raman and 16 others.

According to the petitioners, they obtained medical degrees from various foreign medical universities. They will have to qualify a screening test to register themselves with the State Medical Council in order to practise medicine in India. This year due to the pandemic, the exams got postponed and it was ultimately conducted on August 31, 2020. The petitioners wrote the examinations but could not secure 150 marks (50 percent) and as a result, they became ineligible to register before the medical council and practise medicine in India. Therefore, they filed the present petition to direct the authorities to constitute an independent expert committee to evaluate the question papers of both part-I and part-II papers of the FMGE for finding out erroneous questions and to allot

## SHRC asks HM to pay ₹50K for assaulting student

A. ARUL PALANI | DC  
CHENNAI, NOV. 17

The State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) has directed the headmistress of Panchayat Union Elementary School, Maduranthagam taluk to pay a compensation of ₹50,000 to a person for assaulting his minor daughter for losing the key of the school. Based on a report in *Deccan Chronicle* on August 2019, the SHRC initiated suo motu proceedings and passed the order.

As many as 30 students from Puliyanankottai and Thennampattu villages were enrolled in the school. Normally class-five students would reach the campus around 8 am

DC IMPACT

**As many as 30 students from Puliyanankottai and Thennampattu villages were enrolled in the school. Normally class-five students would reach the campus around 8 am and clean the campus before other students reach the school**

and clean the campus before other students reach the school.

A class-five student, E. Lathika, a resident of Thennampattu village, collected the campus key from a non-teaching staff, who resided near the

school, and reached the school to clean the campus along with her classmates. On the way to school, Lathika lost the key and the efforts of the students to find it failed.

This angered headmistress Devi, who beat, abused and scolded Lathika. When Lathika fell down, the headmistress also kicked the child.

On being informed by fellow students, the villagers came to Lathika's rescue and took her to the Maduranthagam government hospital for treatment.

Based on a written complaint filed by her father, Elangovan, the Chithamur police registered a case and conduct-

ed investigation. The DEO also inquired the matter. The DEO submitted a report stating that the charges against the headmistress were true and she was suspended from service. In the reply, Devi denied the allegations against her.

SHRC acting chairperson D Jayachandran said that considering the oral and documentary evidences this commission holds that Devi had violated the human rights of Lathika. The father of the victim is entitled to receive compensation of ₹50,000 from Devi. The commission also recommended the government to initiate disciplinary action against her.

## Drunk man tries to enter actor Gautami's house

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, NOV. 17

Neelankarai police on Monday night arrested a man for allegedly trespassing into the house of actor Gautami in Kottivakkam.

According to the sources, the man identified as Pandian, a painter by profession, jumped into the house of actor Gauthami Tadimalla located in Venkateswara Nagar in Kottivakkam last on Monday night.

Based on the alert, Neelankarai police rushed to the spot and arrested him. Police said the man was drunk at the time of the incident. Further investigations are on.

**'Man identified as Pandian, a painter by profession, jumped into the house of actor Gauthami Tadimalla located in Venkateswara Nagar in Kottivakkam last on Monday night'**

T. SUDHEESH | DC  
CHENNAI, NOV. 17

In a first of its kind in the country, Indian Council of Agricultural Research-Central Institute of Brackishwater Aquaculture (ICAR-CIBA), Chennai, has developed a ready-made inoculum, a mixture of beneficial bacteria called 'Cibafloc', in order to make biofloc fish farming easier.

Developed as a farmer-friendly step adhering to scientific principles, 'Cibafloc' is expected to popularise the biofloc practice in brackish water across the country. The technology of the product has now been transferred to industrial production.

Dr K. K. Vijayan, Director, ICAR-CIBA, said that the product was developed to help farmers understand the science behind this technology first.

"Biofloc farming requires more control over the rearing system

**Developed as a farmer-friendly step adhering to scientific principles, 'Cibafloc' is expected to popularise the biofloc practice in brackish water across the country. The technology of the product has now been transferred to industrial production**

with a cautious effort to keep a range of components including adequate carbon-nitrogen ratio, aeration, power back-up, microbes and planktons among many others on a biological balance. Even narrow deviations from its protocols to make immediate profits will harm farmer's ventures. 'Cibafloc' will help farmers avoid risks," said Dr Vijayan.

The biofloc technology is a scientific solution for the fish farmers who lack adequate water resources like ponds, rivers and backwaters. This technology makes fish farming possible in a water tank in every household.

"The technology has immense potential in Indian aquaculture sector not only in brackish water shrimp farming, but also in fresh water culture", said Dr Joykrushna Jena, Deputy Director General (Fisheries), ICAR, New Delhi. He stressed the need for scientific understanding and approach on this novel technology to suitably customise to the Indian techno-economic conditions.

"It is the responsibility of the scientific community to explore both the positive and negative aspects of this highly sought technology with adequate scientific backup," Dr Jena said.

## Temporary bridge damaged in Chengalpattu's Keelampur

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, NOV. 17

Transport facility for 30 villages in Chengalpattu district was disrupted, after a temporary bridge between Chengalpattu's Ramapuram and L. Endathur was damaged in the wake of heavy rains in the district.

The temporary road bridge between Ramapuram and L. Endathur connecting at least 30 villages, including Endathur, Keelampur, Sempoondi was damaged

due to the heavy rains. Kiliyaru, a river that passes through these villages has been overflowing with floodwaters.

The temporary bridge was constructed in 2019. While the construction of a new bridge is ongoing, the temporary bridge provided the only transportation for the villagers.

Villagers allege that they are now subjected to take an 8 km long alternate route and requested the officials to look into the matter.

## Trujet plane makes emergency landing at airport; passengers safe

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, NOV. 17

A Mysuru-bound Trujet flight, carrying 47 passengers from Belgaum airport in Karnataka, developed a technical snag while landing at the Chennai airport on Monday night. The wheel of the aircraft was damaged.

The flight that took off from Belgaum Airport on Monday night, headed to Mysuru, was diverted to Chennai airport, due to adverse weather in Mysuru.

Chennai airport authorities were alerted and the flight was readied for landing, however, the private flight developed a technical snag.

The pilot of the aircraft detected a technical snag after which he alerted the Chennai Air Traffic control for emergency arrangements and safe landing of the aircraft. Airport authorities said the aircraft landed on runway after one of its tyres burst while landing. However, all 47 passengers and five-cabin crew were reported safe. Forty seven passengers were

**The flight that took off from Belgaum airport on Monday night, headed to Mysuru, was diverted to Chennai airport, due to adverse weather in Mysuru**

evacuated, and the plane was towed to the parking bay.

As the aircraft got stuck on the main runway, it was closed for an hour and the flights used the second runway in the airport.

Sources said that passengers waited on the Chennai airport before the aircraft made alternative arrangements for their onward journey. The Trujet management on Tuesday morning made arrangements for Mysore-bound passengers.

The incident has been reported to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), India's regulatory body. DGCA has ordered a probe into the incident.



## OTHER STORIES

## Govt concession for folk artistes

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, NOV. 17

Minister for Tamil Official Language and Tamil Culture, K Pandiarajan, in a release on Tuesday said that the government had always been patronising traditional art forms and Tamil folk artistes by way of introducing several welfare measures for them, of which travel concessions in trains and government buses formed a part.

They had been facing hurdles carrying their music instruments while traveling, and hence, based on their plea to the state transport minister, the government had accepted their demands and has now granted facility to travel without paying for luggage in government buses. Earlier, they had to pay 50 percent of travel ticket as luggage. Some of the items excluded from luggage fee include decorative items, stage attire for drama artistes, musical instruments, the harmonium, table, dolak, mridangam and other small instruments.



One of the convicts in the former PM Rajiv Gandhi assassination case, Nalini, being taken to the Adukkampara government hospital, Vellore, on Tuesday, for medical examination. Nalini had earlier petitioned the home secretary through the prison authorities, seeking three months' parole for medical treatment. After the examination, Vellore women police took Nalini back to jail.

—K. Senthil Nathan

## ‘LVB underwent decline with continuous losses’

From P1

In a statement the central bank said, “LVB has undergone a steady decline with the bank incurring continuous losses over the last three years, eroding its net-worth. In absence of any viable strategic plan, declining advances and mounting non-performing assets (NPAs), the losses are expected to continue. The bank has not been able to raise adequate capital to address issues around its negative net-worth and continuing losses. Further, the bank is also experiencing continuous withdrawal of deposits and low levels of liquidity. It has also experienced serious governance issues and practices in the recent years which have led to deterioration in its performance.”

Proposing the scheme of amalgamation, the central bank said that DBIL is well capitalized and will bring in additional capital of ₹2,500 crore upfront, to support the credit growth of the merged entity.

Owing to comfortable level of capital, the combined balance sheet of DBIL would remain healthy after the proposed amalgamation, with capital to Risk weighted assets ratio (CRAR) at 12.51 per cent and Common Equity Tier 1 (CET-1) capital at 9.61 per cent, without taking into account the infusion of additional capital. DBIL is a wholly owned subsidiary of DBS Bank Ltd, Singapore (DBS), which in turn is a subsidiary of Asia's leading financial services group, DBS Group Holdings Limited and has the advantage of a strong parentage. It had been issued a banking license on October 4, 2018. LVB has incurred a net loss of ₹836 crore and ₹112 crore for the FY 2019-20 and quarter ending June 30, 2020 respectively. The losses are expected to continue for other quarters of the FY 2020-21 also, as estimated by the Reserve Bank of India. The banking company has serious governance and management issues said the RBI.

**Proposing the scheme of amalgamation, the central bank said that DBIL is well capitalized and will bring in additional capital of ₹2,500 crore upfront, to support the credit growth of the merged entity**

## TN BJP desperate to take out yatra

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, NOV. 17

The state BJP, whose ‘Vetrivel Yatra’ covering the six famous abodes of Lord Murugan, known popularly as ‘Arupadi Veedu,’ in the state had to be called off on the first day when it was launched from Thiruthani as the government cracked down on it, is desperate to resume it.

While party state president L. Murugan was

**The latest route would cover two more Murugan temples in Chennimalai and Marudhamalai, apart from the five abodes in Palani, Swamimalai, Thiruparankundram, Palamudhir Solai and Tiruchendur**

arrested at Tiruvannamalai and detained in a hall along

with supporters when he tried to take out the yatra, the party had drawn up a new tour schedule, which would start from Dharmapuri on November 17.

The latest route would cover two more Murugan temples in Chennimalai and Marudhamalai, apart from the five abodes in Palani, Swamimalai, Thiruparankundram, Palamudhir Solai and Tiruchendur.

Also the yatra would now

conclude on December 7 and not December 6, which would have events organized by Dalit organisations to commemorate B R Ambedkar's death anniversary and Muslim groups as the Babri Masjid demolition day.

It was also said that the custom-built van, painted in saffron, in which BJP State President L. Murugan travelled in the first leg by standing on top of it from Chennai to Tiruchendur and then

tried to take out the ‘yatra,’ would not be used again.

The Toyota vehicle was taken out on the road with just a temporary registration issued by an RTO in Maharashtra (No MH/46/TMP/2019/1523), which was not allowed under the MV Act. So fearing seizure of the vehicle, a new vehicle with a proper registration in Tamil Nadu has been modified for Murugan to ride it during the rest of the yatra.

## All set for medical counselling



All arrangements made following Covid protocols at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium at Periyamet, Chennai, for MBBS and BDS counselling beginning on Wednesday. A press release said counselling under special category will be held this Saturday. The merit list for the special category will be uploaded on the official website. SMSes will also be sent to eligible candidates prior to the date of counselling.

— DC

## No special diet for corona patients as govt claimed: RTI

ARULOLI M | DC  
TIRUNELVELI, NOV. 17

Contrary to the government claim that special allocation was made to meet food expenses for covid-19 patients since March 2020, the Tirunelveli medical college hospital administration in its reply to an RTI petition has stated that it was not sanctioned any special funds to provide food for corona patients.

According to the reply of the public information officer, Tirunelveli government medical college hospital (TVMCH) on November 10, the annual allocation of Rs 1,42,55,000 was made to meet the food

expenses for all types of in-patients at TVMCH, during the last fiscal year between April 2019 and March 2020, before the Covid outbreak, and also for the current fiscal (2020-2021) without any hike.

The public information officer, however, denied answering a question about the number of Corona in-patients at the TVMCH between March 2020 to October 2020, but has disclosed that Covid-19 patients at the hospital who were inpatients, were not provided any special diet.

"This information contradicts the government's claim on the issue," said RTI activist advocate Brahmma, who pointed

out at a previous reply he received for his RTI enquiry on August 7, in which the same officer of TVMCH had answered that Covid-19 patients at the hospital were given special immunity boosting diets like boiled eggs twice a day, pepper and turmeric powder mixed milk twice a day, chicken and vegetable soup and variety rice.

Brahmma also complained of misappropriation of funds at a massive level of Rs 6.69 crore, said to have been allotted for quarantining government doctors and nurses, who selflessly served the covid patients in the two districts of Tirunelveli and Tenkasi.

## Neet is irrelevant now, says Stalin

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, NOV. 17

Now that the Centre had given exemption to 11 medical colleges from Neet, why should Tamil Nadu follow the entrance exam method for admission to its medical colleges, asked DMK president M. K. Stalin, demanding the scrapping of Neet completely.

Referring to controversy over medical aspirants from Tamil Nadu being allotted centres in faraway places like Madanapalle and Nellore in Andhra



Pradesh to take the Institutes of National Importance Combined Entrance Test (INI-CET), Stalin also alleged that OBC candidates had to pay Rs 2000 as application fee when those applying

under the newly introduced Economically Weaker Section quota had to pay only Rs 1500.

Though the Centre had argued even in court that Neet would be followed for even AIIMS, they had now given exemption to 11 Institutes of National Importance from it and allowed them to conduct an exclusive entrance examination, he said in a statement.

The Centre had also dumped the Bills passed by the Tamil Nadu Assembly seeking exemption from Neet, Stalin

pointed out and wanted the Centre to do away with Neet.

The INI-CET is held for admission into Post Graduate courses [MD, MS, DM (6yrs), MCh (6 Yrs)] at eight All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS), including the one at New Delhi, Jawaharlal Institute of Post Graduate Medical Education and Research (JIPMER) at Puducherry, Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research at Chandigarh and NIMHANS at Bengaluru.

## Amit Shah to attend state function

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, NOV. 17

Union home minister Amit Shah, would be the chief guest at a State government function to be held on November 21 to dedicate the Thervoy Kandigai reservoir for people's use and to lay the foundation for a slew of infrastructure projects, including phase II of the Chennai Metro Rail.

According to a government press release, the reservoir project has been built at a cost of ₹380 crore and the infrastructure projects would cost ₹67,378 crore. The metro rail project alone would cost ₹61,843 crore.

Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami would preside over the function in Chennai and the Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam would deliver a special address.

Other Ministers, bureaucrats and VIPs would also take part in the event.

## CM offers prayers at Lord Venkateswara temple



Chief Minister K. Palaniswami on Tuesday offered prayers at the famous hill shrine of Lord Venkateswara at nearby Tirumala. An ardent devotee of Lord Venkateswara, Palaniswami and his wife offered prayers to the presiding deity this morning after an overnight stay, temple officials said. He left for Chennai immediately after offering prayers, they added. (In pic) TTD executive officers K. S. Jawahar Reddy honoured the CM with a shawl and offered prasadam.

— DC

## CM to lay stone for river linking scheme in January

R. VALAYAPATHY | DC  
PUDUKKOTTAI, NOV. 17

Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami will lay the foundation stone for the ₹7,500 crore Cauvery - Vaigai - Gundar river linking scheme during January next, said Health Minister Dr C Vijayabaskar, soon after reviewing the progress of this proposed scheme with Pudukkottai Collector B Uma Maheswari and other officials here, on Tuesday.

Dr Vijayabaskar said the government has allocated Rs 700 crore for the first phase to acquire land for the scheme, and now, land acquisition is going on. This apart, ₹331 crore tender was floated for installing a canal between Mayanur in Karur district and Pudukkottai.

Rs 700 crore for the first phase to acquire land for the scheme, and now, land acquisition is going on. This apart, ₹331 crore tender was floated for installing a canal between Mayanur in Karur district

and Pudukkottai. To a question, the minister said, though the impact of Covid-19 is increasing three to four times not only abroad, but also in our neighbouring states, the impact is considerably reducing in Tamil Nadu due to the tireless efforts of the government.

Despite this, 70,000 RT PCR tests are conducted every day across the state, he added. The government's aim is to bring down the death rate to one percent due to Covid-19, he added.

## Mystery crop disease upsets Nilgiris farmers

B. RAVICHANDRAN | DC  
OOTY, NOV. 17

While the world is still struggling to bail itself out from the Corona impact, for the hundreds and thousands of farmers at Naduvattam belt in Gudalur taluk here in the Nilgiris, it is now a sort of untold misery as a mystery disease has affected vegetable crops here, especially potatoes, causing serious concern.

Farmers in Naduvattam, TR Bazaar, Anumapuram, Pykara, and Prospect Estate Colony limits, took to sowing hill vegetables like potatoes, peas, carrots and beetroot, a couple of months back. Things looked promising but all of a sudden, crops in the Naduvattam belt began withering, much to the shock of the farming community here.



Farmers here have raised these crops in thousands of acres in Naduvattam belt and are

clueless about what the happening. A few farmers noticed some worms under the leaves of the

crops, which they suspect could be the cause of crop damage. Some farmers are of the view that changes

Standing potato crops have begun to wither in the Naduvattam area near Ooty.

—DC

in rain pattern in the later half of the SW monsoon during August-September could have caused some pests attack leading to the damage.

While it looks for sure that the farmers would burn their fingers due to this calamity, farmers in Naduvattam area have urged horticulture officials to inspect the area and explore the reasons for this disease, and take immediate corrective measures to stop the spread and also suggest a cure of the disease. They also wanted the district administration to provide proper compensation for the loss.

## Chrysalis signs MoU with Cambridge

DC CORRESPONDENT  
TIRUCHY, NOV. 17

Cambridge Assessment English (part of the University of Cambridge) has signed an MoU with 'Chrysalis', a learning transformation organisation in India.

In a release here on Tuesday, TK Arunachalam, regional director, South Asia, Cambridge Assessment English, said, "Through this partnership, Chrysalis will offer an English language learning and assessment program for all their partner schools, with the assessment powered by Cambridge English."

As part of the program, students can take an online assessment that has a baseline and end-of-year test in two important

skills of English language - Listening and Reading, and will receive a detailed personalised assessment report. The report will highlight areas of improvement in sub-skills of listening and reading for every student. As part of this program, teachers also get a comprehensive and individual view of their students' performance, support to interpret the reports and device ways to improve the English language skills of students. The program will initially be available online."

Arunachalam further said, "Cambridge has been keenly focussing on India-centric solutions for the last few years, and as part of this endeavour, we have partnered with Chrysalis."



SHORT TAKES

VEHICLE OWNERS  
AWAIT PAYMENT  
FOR COVID DUTY

GURURAJ A. PANIYADI | DC  
MANGALURU, NOV. 17

Owners who had provided their vehicles for Covid-19 duty are waiting for the payment of their bills.

“The district administration had asked our vehicle for Covid duty in July. They wanted about 10 vehicles to take patients and officials. When we demanded ₹2,000 per day, the district administration asked us to reduce it and finally we agreed for ₹1,800,” Harish Putran, owner of a car, told *Deccan Chronicle*.

“For three months we worked round the clock. There were days when our vehicles covered about 200 km per day. As I am the driver, I have personally taken many patients. In case of death, we helped the ambulance driver to take the body. There were cases where family members hesitated but we worked on. Despite this, we have not got our payments,” he said. “The district administration assured us of ₹1,800 per day. They did not agree to pay for fuel. We had to manage everything in the money, which was difficult. But we have failed to get this money too,” he said.

Harish knows about 10 vehicles which have not received payment in Mangaluru Taluk.

PATNAIK DECLARES  
₹100CR RELIEF TO  
MAOIST-HIT DIST.

AKSHAYA  
KUMAR SAHOO | DC  
BHUBANESHWAR, NOV. 17

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Tuesday announced ₹100 crore package for the development of Swabhiman Anchal in Malkangiri district. The Chief Minister made the announcement after an interaction with the residents of Swabhiman Anchal via video conferencing from Lok Seva Bhawan here. He said, “The amount will be spent for construction of roads for better connectivity and electrification in the remote area. Besides, steps will be taken to improve irrigation through bore-wells.” The CM made an appeal to the Maoist cadres to give up violence and join the social mainstream.

Patnaik also announced that the Odisha government will provide free smartphones to all families in the Swabhiman Anchal.

While launching the mobile phone distribution programme, the CM said, “I am very happy to start the distribution of the mobile phones in the area from today as it would help people of the area to connect to other areas and would also help children study online, especially during pandemic times.”

The CM said three mobile phone towers would be installed in the area for seamless connectivity and internet access. He said every household will be provided with smart phones. On the occasion, Patnaik urged the Left-wing extremists to shun violence and return to the mainstream.

CIRCUS: HC  
SHOCKED BY  
AWBI NUMBERS

**New Delhi, Nov. 17:** The Delhi High Court on Tuesday termed as “serious” and “shocking” that there was a huge gap in the number of animals found by the Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI), as against those registered with it, when it inspected circuses across the country.

The high court also asked AWBI and the Central Zoo Authority (CZA) to find out what happened to the missing animals. A bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Rajnishi Bhatnagar directed the AWBI and CZA to file an affidavit disclosing the status of the circus animals registered with the Board and listed the matter for further hearing in January 2021.

The direction was issued after the court was informed by the Federation of Indian Animals Protection Organisation (FIAPO) that according to the survey report filed by AWBI, around 740 circus animals were registered with it, but in the survey only 28 were found. “It is a serious issue. Out of 740 registered with you (AWBI), you have only 28 to answer for. What happened to the rest of them,” the high court asked AWBI during the hearing.

It further said, in its order, that “One shocking state that has been revealed is that of the 740 animals registered with AWBI, information is available only available with regard to 28, leaving a massive gap.”



Students attend a class at a college after authorities allowed reopening of colleges, in Chikmagalur, on Tuesday. The colleges in Karnataka, which reopened after a gap of seven months have invoked lukewarm response from the students, whose parents are yet to come out of Covid-19 phobia.

# Kejriwal seeks power from Centre to impose lockdown

Delhi records 6,396 new cases of Covid after 2 days of fewer +ve reporting

VINEETA PANDEY | DC  
with agency inputs  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 17

In view of rising cases of Coronavirus in the National capital, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has sought special powers from the central government to impose localised “lockdown” in specific areas which may emerge as hotspots and shut down those markets that may be aiding to the spread of virus in the city through crowding.

The Delhi government has also decided to withdraw its previous order allowing 200 guests to attend wedding functions and in this regard Kejriwal has sent a proposal to Lt Governor Anil Bajjal to allow only 50 people to attend wedding ceremonies against the earlier limit of 200.

Delhi on Tuesday had 6,396 new cases of Covid-19 after two days of fewer positive reporting. Delhi CM said that such lower numbers in the last two days can be due to a

## WHO praises UP govt for Covid-19 management

**Lucknow, Nov. 17:** The World Health Organisation (WHO) has praised the Uttar Pradesh government for its Covid-19 management strategy terming it as a good example for other states to follow, an official statement said here on Tuesday.

“The UP government’s strategic response to Covid-19 by stepping up contact tracing efforts is exemplary and can serve as a good example for other states,” Roderico Ofrin, WHO Country Representative, said in a statement issued here by the state government.

The global health body

decrease in testing due to holidays. He added that the state and other central health agencies are dou-

bling efforts to control the situation in the city. On Tuesday, 49,031 tests were conducted – almost double

of last days – due to which positivity rate was 13.04% and fatality rate 1.39% with 99 new deaths.

trained health workforce to implement the surveillance activities.

The WHO team provided technical support to the state government to boost contact tracing efforts and strengthen the capacity of field teams through training.

Field monitors assessed the quality of contact tracing of 58,000 Covid-19 positive cases in 75 districts and found that 93 per cent of the high-risk contacts were traced and tested, said Madhup Bajpai, Regional Team Leader, Uttar Pradesh Region, WHO-NPSP (National Police Surveillance Project). — *PTI*

## Nitish retains home ministry; BJP’s deputy CM gets finance

NAYEAR AZAD | DC  
PATNA, NOV. 17

A day after taking the oath as Bihar Chief Minister for the fourth straight term, Nitish Kumar on Tuesday allocated portfolios to his 14-member team.

While he kept the home, vigilance, general administration and cabinet affairs portfolios, BJP leader Tarkeshwar Prasad, who replaced Sushil Kumar Modi as one of two deputy chief ministers, was allotted important departments like finance, commercial taxes, environment and forest, information and technology, disaster man-

agement and urban development.

Prasad, who hails from the Seemanchal region, won the Katihar seat for the fourth time.

He has his roots in the RSS and is seen as a strong Vaishya face.

Similarly, Renu Devi, the other deputy chief minister, was allotted panchayat raj, backward caste upliftment and economically backward classes welfare and industry.

This is the first time in Bihar’s history that two deputy chief ministers have been named on the lines of Uttar Pradesh.

Political analysts said, “By creating two deputy

chief ministers and allotting important departments to them, the saffron party in the state is trying to win the Vaishya and EBC communities. Most of the departments allotted to the new deputy chief ministers were earlier handled by a veteran leader like Sushil Kumar Modi”.

The health department was allotted to the BJP’s Mangal Pandey. In 2019 Pandey, as health minister, had faced criticism from the Opposition for his failure to handle the encephalitis outbreak, also known as AES.

More than 100 children had died in the state due to the disease.

## Deodhar to head BJP’s prep for next year’s WB Assembly polls

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC  
KOLKATA, NOV. 17

In yet another major organisational step, the BJP has entrusted Sunil Deodhar, the architect of its electoral success in Tripura, for the party’s preparations for next year’s Assembly polls in West Bengal to utilise his connection with Bengali life.

The Bengali-speaking BJP national secretary, who also eats fish, is in charge of the party in Tripura and Andhra Pradesh at present.

He arrived in Kolkata on Monday night. At a BJP meeting in the city on

Tuesday, the former RSS functionary was given the charge of Midnapore, one of the five zones in the state party organisation, sources said.

Midnapore zone covers four key districts: Howrah, Hooghly, East and West Midnapore, which are also the stronghold of the ruling Trinamul Congress, which has a majority of MLAs there. The zone came under Union home minister Amit Shah’s review and scrutiny during his visit to the state recently.

Mr Deodhar, sources said, will work in tandem with key strategist Mukul

## Six-year-old girl gangraped, lungs taken out

**Kanpur (UP), Nov. 17:** A six-year-old girl, who was found dead in a forested area in this Uttar Pradesh district on Sunday, was gangraped, killed and her lungs were then taken out of the corpse by the killers, police said on Monday.

The lungs were removed to perform black magic, believing that it will help a woman give birth to a child, they said.

The girl had gone missing on the night of Diwali from the Ghatampur area. The killers — Ankul Kuril (20) and Beeran (31) — who were arrested on Sunday, had removed her lungs and delivered those to key conspirator Parshuram Kuril to perform black magic, ASP (Rural) Brajesh Srivastava said.

Parshuram was arrested on Monday and his wife was also detained due to the apprehension that she knew about the incident, but did not talk about it to anyone, the officer added.

Parshuram initially tried to mislead the police, but facing intensive interrogation, broke down and confessed to his crime, the ASP said.

Parshuram told the police that he got married in 1999 but not had a child so far, he said.

He persuaded his nephew, Ankul, and his friend Beeran, to kidnap the girl and remove her lungs, the ASP said.

Ankul and Beeran, who were heavily drunk, abducted the girl while she had gone out of her home in Bhadras village on Saturday night to buy

● **THE LUNGS** were removed to perform black magic, believing that it will help a woman give birth to a child.

firecrackers, he added. They took her to a nearby jungle, where they raped the girl before killing her.

The accused have been charged under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

Kanpur’s Deputy Inspector of General of Police Preetinder Singh had said forensic experts and sniffer dogs were pressed into service to gather scientific evidence to confirm if the girl was killed in an act of black magic.

The girl had gone missing on Saturday evening while her family was preparing for Diwali prayers.

The family looked for her in the nearby areas, including the jungle, using flashlights, but failed to locate her during the night, Singh had said, adding that her body was found by some villagers passing through the jungle on Sunday morning, the DIG said.

The girl’s belongings, including her slippers and clothes, were found near a tree. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has taken note of the heinous crime and directed officials to take strict action against the accused. He has also directed the officials to extend a financial help of ₹five lakh to the victim’s family. — *PTI*

## Bodies of 2 Dalit sisters found

**Fatehpur (UP), Nov. 17:** The bodies of two Dalit sisters were found with eye injuries in a pond in a village in Uttar Pradesh’s Fatehpur district, with their families alleging that they were killed after an unsuccessful rape bid, police said.

The bodies of the girls, aged 8 and 12, were retrieved from the pond late Monday evening, ASP Rajesh Kumar said. Both the bodies had

injury marks on the eyes, he said.

The girls had gone to the field in the afternoon to get vegetables but did not return, the police said. The family members of the minors have alleged that the assailants killed the girls after an unsuccessful attempt to rape them, the officer said. The bodies were sent for post-mortem and the report is awaited, police said. — *PTI*

## KERALA | ELECTION Opposition to highlight gold smuggling and money laundering cases involving Chief Minister

# Political slugfest intensifies ahead of local body polls

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, NOV. 17

With less than three weeks left for the crucial local bodies poll, generally considered in Kerala as the semi-finals before the Assembly elections next year, the political slugfest between the ruling CPI(M)-led LDF and the Opposition comprising the Congress-led UDF and BJP has intensified.

The Opposition is highlighting the gold smuggling and money laundering cases involving Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan’s former principal

secretary M. Sivasankar, who is in custody, to target the government. The ED disclosed details of his close links with gold smuggling key accused Swapna Suresh, putting the LDF on the defensive.

The CPI(M) too has had its share of embarrassment. Kodiyyeri Balakrishnan, the powerful state secretary, was forced to leave after his son Bineesh Kodiyyeri was arrested by the ED in a money laundering case linked to the Bengaluru drug racket.

Kodiyyeri Balakrishnan’s exit though has brought some relief to the cadres

## 2015 LOCAL BODIES POLL RESULTS AT A GLANCE

**Grama panchayats:** LDF – 551, UDF – 352, NDA - 14

**Municipalities:** LDF - 45, UDF - 40, NDA - 1

**Corporations:** LDF – 5 , UDF - 1

**District panchayats :** LDF – 7, UDF – 7

who would have otherwise faced hostile questions during the campaign.

The Congress and the BJP are vying with each other to target the LDF government. Opposition leader Ramesh Chennithala and BJP state

president K. Surendran are holding press conferences on a daily basis to hurl allegations at the government.

Almost all Central agencies including the Enforcement Directorate, Customs, Narcotics

Control Bureau, NIA and CBI are probing cases ranging from gold smuggling to violation of FCRA, PMLA, UAPA and NDPS in Kerala.

With these agencies tightening their noose, the CPI(M) and the state government have accused them of playing politics.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan is himself leading the charge against the Central agencies. “They want to derail the state’s development in the name of investigations. Projects like Life Mission to provide homes to the homeless, K-FON for free high-speed internet to poor peo-

ple, e-Mobility project and IT infrastructure development are being selectively targeted,” the Chief Minister alleged.

The CPI(M) leaders say Kerala was recently judged as the best governed state and the BJP wants to show it in a bad light. There is a conspiracy to topple the lone only Left front government in the country.

The state government also revoked permission for CBI to probe cases in Kerala.

On the political front, the LDF has launched a statewide campaign to expose what it calls

‘Congress assisted BJP game plan’ to derail Kerala’s development. “Over 20 lakh people took part in the booth level protest against central agencies’ attempt to block state’s development,” claimed LDF convener and acting CPM state secretary A Vijayaraghavan .

“The Chief Minister is fretting and fuming because he stands exposed. They are accusing the central agencies to hide their wrong doings. People have seen through their game and they will be given a befitting reply in the coming polls,” said Chennithala.



## IN BRIEF

## MCBRIDE AMONG FINALISTS FOR CARNEGIE MEDAL

New York, Nov. 17: James McBride's latest novel and nonfiction by poets Claudia Rankine and Natasha Trethewey are among the finalists for the Andrew Carnegie Medals for fiction and nonfiction.

The American Library Association announced Tuesday that McBride's "Deacon King Kong" was a fiction nominee, along with Ayad Akhtar's novel "Homeland Elegies" and an acclaimed debut novel, Megha Majumdar's "A Burnt Offering." The nonfiction finalists are Trethewey's "Memorial Drive: A Daughter's Memoir," Rankine's "Just Us," which combines poetry, prose and photography, and Rebecca Gigg's "Fathoms: The World in the Whale."

Winners in each category will receive \$5,000, and will be announced Feb. 4, 2021. The awards are supported, in part, by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

## MCCANN SUSPECT HURT IN CUSTODY

Berlin, Nov. 17: A suspect in the disappearance of Madeleine McCann, the British toddler who vanished from a Portuguese resort 13 years ago, suffered two broken ribs in an incident at a German court, authorities said Tuesday.

The incident occurred after Christian Brueckner, who is serving time on a drug conviction, was taken to Braunschweig state court on Monday for a routine hearing on that case. Court spokeswoman Jessica Knab-Henrichs told *The Associated Press* that he was briefly treated in a hospital for two broken ribs, and was then returned to the court where the hearing was carried out. The incident is under investigation and further details on what happened at the court were expected to be released later in the day, she said. Although Brueckner is a suspect in the McCann case, prosecutors have said they do not yet have enough evidence to hold him on the McCann case alone.

In addition to the drug trafficking sentence, which Brueckner will have finished serving in January, he was convicted in 2019 of the 2005 rape of a 72-year-old American woman in Portugal and sentenced to another seven years.

That conviction is under appeal. McCann was 3 at the time of her 2007 disappearance from an apartment while her family vacationed in the seaside town of Praia da Luz.

## CHINA POSITIONS ROCKET FOR LUNAR MISSION

Beijing, Nov. 17: China on Tuesday moved a massive rocket into place in preparation for launching a mission to bring back materials from the moon for the first time in four decades.

The Long March-5 was transported by tractor from its hangar to the nearby launch site at the space base in Wenchang along the coast of the southern island province of Hainan. The Chang'e 5 mission it will carry is scheduled to launch early next week, placing a lander on the moon that will drill 2 meters (almost 7 feet) beneath the surface and scoop up rocks and other debris to be brought to earth.

That would allow scientists to study newly obtained lunar materials for the first time since the American and Russian missions of the 1960s and 1970s.

The mission, named for the Chinese moon goddess, is among China's most ambitious as its space programme continues to build steam since it first put a man in space in 2003, becoming only the third nation to do so after the US and Russia. China currently has a mission on the way to Mars, along with a rover on the moon's far side that is providing the first full measurements of radiation exposure from the lunar surface, information vital for any country that plans to send astronauts to the moon.

China has increasingly engaged with foreign countries on missions, although US law still prevents collaboration with NASA, excluding China from partnering with the International Space Station.

That has prompted China to work on its own space station and launch its own programmes that have put it in a steady competition with Japan and India among Asian nations seeking to notch new achievements in space. The space programme has progressed cautiously, with relatively few setbacks in recent years.

## Chemical-laced water on Thai protesters



Pro-democracy protesters take shelter as police use chemical-laced water cannons to disperse them during an anti-government rally in Bangkok on Tuesday.

— AFP

## More virus deaths if Trump impedes transition: Biden

Trump has not conceded defeat but alleged poll fraud without any evidence

Washington, Nov. 17: President-elect Joe Biden has warned that many more Americans "may die" if incumbent President Donald Trump does not cooperate with the transition process and hamper the incoming administration's ability to tackle the deadly coronavirus pandemic. According to media projections, Democrat Biden has won the November 3 presidential election.

Biden has 306 votes in the electoral college, surpassing the 270 threshold needed to win. However, Trump, a Republican, has not conceded and instead alleged election fraud without presenting any significant evidence. The Trump campaign has also mounted legal fights in a number of battleground states where he lost.

"More people may die if we don't coordinate," Biden said in his home state of Delaware on Monday, responding to a question on President Trump refusing to concede the election and the outgoing administration not co-operating in the transition process.

The US government agency that launches transition process — the General Services Administration (GSA), headed by

a Trump appointee — has yet to recognise Biden and his running mate Kamala Harris as winners. The Trump-appointed administrator of the General Services Administration has so far refused to take the legally necessary step to begin the transition process, which would give Biden's team a budget, intelligence briefings and access to federal agencies.

"A vaccine is important. It's of little use until you're vaccinated. So, how do we get the vaccine, how do we get over 300 million Americans vaccinated? What's the game plan? It's a huge, huge, huge undertaking to get it done, prioritise those greatest in need and working our way through, and also cooperate with the World Health Organization and the rest of the world in dealing with this," he said.

"So they (Trump administration) say they have this 'Warp Speed' programme that not only deal with getting vaccines, but also how to distribute this. The number of Covid-19 infections in the US has reached new heights in recent days, surpassing 160,000 cases in one day for the first time since the outbreak began. More than 247,000 people have died in

## Sputnik V vaccine can be made in India: Putin

Moscow, Nov. 17: President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday called for a joint effort by the BRICS countries on the development of the Coronavirus vaccines as he suggested that Russia's Sputnik V vaccine against Covid-19 could be produced in China and India, which are members of the five-nation bloc.

"We believe it is important to speed up the establishment of the centre for development and research of BRICS vaccines, which we agreed to do two years ago, upon the initiative of our South African friends," Putin said while addressing the 12th BRICS su-

mmmit via videoconferencing. The summit, hosted by President Putin, was attended by PM Narendra Modi, Chinese President Xi Jinping, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa. Putin said that Russia's Sputnik V vaccine that was registered in August could be produced in China and India, both members of the BRICS. Sputniknews reported. "The Russian Direct Investment Fund has reached agreements with its Brazilian and Indian partners on conducting clinical trials of the Sputnik V vaccine," Putin said.

— PTI

the US. Dr Anthony Fauci, the top US infectious diseases expert, has warned that the country faces "a very challenging and ominous situation" as it approaches winter. Calling nationwide vaccine distribution a "huge undertaking", Biden said that if his team had to wait until 20 January — his presiden-

tial inauguration — until they could begin work on the distribution program me, they would be behind by "over a month, month and a half". Biden said coordination is important "now, or as rapidly as we can get that done," and said that "it would make it a lot easier if the President were to participate."—PTI

## France mulls police image ban

Paris, Nov. 17: France's lower house of parliament is opening debate Tuesday on a security bill that would permit the imprisonment of people who publish images of police officers with intent to cause them harm.

Critics, including France's human rights ombudsman, say the measure would hurt press freedoms.

Offenders would face up to one year in prison and a 45,000-euro (\$53,000) fine under the proposed law championed by lawmakers of President Emmanuel Macron's party, which has a majority at the National Assembly.

The bill's most controversial measure would make it a new criminal offense "to disseminate,

by whatever means and on whatever media, with the intent of causing physical or psychological harm, an image of the face or any other element that could identify a police officer."

The measure's backers include Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin. He said it is needed because officers "are constantly threatened". — AP

## Peru: Sagasti is third Prez in a week

Lima, Nov. 17: Peru's political crisis appeared on the verge of resolution Monday as Congress cleared the way for an elder statesman and consensus candidate to become the country's third president in a week. Jubilant people waved the nation's red-and-white flag and blared horns on the streets of

Peru's capital as Francisco Sagasti of the centrist Purple Party was selected as the new president of Congress. The 76-year-old engineer has not yet been sworn into office, but as head of Congress becomes the nation's chief of state by default. Peru currently has no president or vice president, making him

next in line.

It will now fall on Sagasti to heal a nation bruised by a week of upheaval. "What's at stake is taking a step toward rebuilding confidence between the people and the state," said Samuel Rotta, president of the Peruvian chapter of Transparency International. — AP

## Building blocks of life can form long before stars

NEW | STUDY Comets are the most pristine material in our Solar System, find scientists

London, Nov. 17: Scientists have shown that glycine, an important building block of life, can form under the harsh conditions that govern chemistry in space, indicating that the molecule may form in dense interstellar clouds well before they transform into new stars and planets.

The study, published in the journal *Nature Astronomy*, detected glycine in the comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko, and in samples returned to the Earth from NASA's Stardust mission which was the first to return extraterrestrial material from outside the orbit of the Moon

to the Earth. According to the researchers, including those from the Queen Mary University of London in the UK, comets are the most pristine material in our Solar System and reflect the molecular composition present at the time our Sun and planets were just about to form. While until recently, scientists thought that the formation of amino acids like glycine required energy, setting clear constraints to the environment in which it can be formed, the current findings suggest that these protein building blocks can form long before stars. The researchers showed that

it is possible for glycine to form on the surface of icy dust grains of comets, in the absence of energy, through 'dark chemistry'. "Dark chemistry refers to chemistry without the need of energetic radiation," explained Sergio Ioppolo, lead author of the study from Queen Mary University of London. The findings contradicted previous studies which suggested that ultraviolet (UV) radiation was required to produce this molecule.

"In the laboratory we were able to simulate the conditions in dark interstellar clouds where cold dust particles are

covered by thin layers of ice and subsequently processed by impacting atoms causing precursor species to fragment and reactive intermediates to recombine," Ioppolo said.

The researchers first demonstrated that methylamine, the precursor molecule of glycine which was detected in the coma of the comet 67P, could form. Then, using a unique ultra-high vacuum setup, equipped with a series of atomic beam lines and accurate diagnostic tools, the scientists confirmed that glycine could also be formed, and that the presence of water ice was essential in this process. — PTI

## UNSC impaired organ, says India

United Nations, Nov. 17: A handful of countries are using the Inter-Governmental Negotiations (IGN) as a "smoke-screen" and stopping progress on reforming the Security Council, which has become "impaired", India has said, asserting that it is time for a "decisive movement" to achieve the long-delayed reform of the powerful UN body. India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador T.S. Tirumurti, speaking in the UN General Assembly on 'Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council', lamented that nothing has moved for more than a decade in the IGN except hearing passionate statements on the need for reform.

"Today's Security Council is an impaired organ. It has been unable to act with credibility essentially due to its unrepresentative nature. But then, what is happening inside the IGN process, which we seem to be wedded to?" Tirumurti said on Monday. Criticising the absence of even a single negotiating text, Tirumurti said that the IGN has become like a "platform

for debate in a University rather than a serious result-oriented process in the United Nations consisting of sovereign member states".

"And why have we come to this pass? because just a handful of countries don't want us to proceed. They have stopped the IGN from progressing. They are using the IGN as a smoke-screen to stop themselves from being identified by paying lip-service to Security Council reform."

"The conditions they are laying out are impossible to fulfill — which is a full consensus of all member states. Ironically, this is happening at a time when we were in a tearing hurry last week to give ourselves e-voting rights. But for IGN, they want no voting, leave alone e-voting, but only full consensus!" he said.

Asserting that there is a need for a decisive movement this year in the UNSC reform process, Tirumurti said: "Without decisive movement, I feel that those who support real reform and who wish to deliver on the commitment made by our leaders, will be forced to look beyond the IGN."

— PTI

## Pak military, Qaeda had links: Obama

Washington, Nov. 17: Barack Obama has said that he had ruled out involving Pakistan in the raid on Osama bin Laden's hideout because it was an "open secret" that certain elements inside Pakistan's military, and especially its intelligence services, maintained links to the Taliban and perhaps even al-Qaeda, sometimes using them as strategic assets against Afghanistan and India. Giving a blow-by-blow account of the Abbottabad raid by American commandos that killed the world's most wanted terrorist on May 2, 2011 in his latest book "A Promised Land", the former US president said that the top secret operation was opposed by the then defence secretary Robert Gates and his former vice president Joe Biden, who is now the President-elect.

In the book that hit the stands globally on Tuesday, America's first Black president described the various options of killing bin Laden once it became increasingly clear that the elusive al-Qaeda chief was living in a safe hideout on the outskirts of a Pakistani military cantonment in Abbottabad.

— PTI

## SpaceX capsule docks with space station

Cape Canaveral, Nov. 17: SpaceX's newly launched capsule with four astronauts arrived Monday at the International Space Station, their new home until spring. The Dragon capsule pulled up and docked late Monday night, following a 27-hour, completely automated flight from NASA's Kennedy Space Center. The linkup occurred 262 miles (422 kilometers)

above Idaho. "Oh, what a good voice to hear," space station astronaut Kate Rubins called out when the Dragon's commander, Mike Hopkins, first made radio contact.

"We can't wait to have you on board," she added after the two spacecraft were latched together. This is the second astronaut mission for SpaceX. — AP

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GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU <b>PARAMAKUDI MUNICIPALITY</b> (R.E-E-Tendering Notice (2nd Call)) Date: 16.11.2020					
The Government of Tamil Nadu sanctioned Funds under UDM for Municipalities for the year 2020-21. Under this scheme the Municipal Commissioner, Paramakudi Municipality by way of off-line and e-submission also in two cover system up to 04.12.2020, 3.00 PM, Earnest Money Deposit, (10%) of the value of work, should be submitted along with the tender. If a tender, the EMD should be dropped in the tender box before closure time, it is at 3.00 PM on 04.12.2020. Evaluation of bids will be done as per Tender Transparency Act 1998 of Government of Tamil Nadu and rules there us. If the said tender date happens to be a holiday, the tenders will be opened on the next working day. The Municipal Commissioner reserves the rights to accept or reject any bidding document at any time without assigning any reason there of. Eligibility criteria and other details can be had from the Bidding document. For other details contact e-mail address: <a href="mailto:commr.paramakudi@tn.gov.in">commr.paramakudi@tn.gov.in</a> Contact No. 04564-226742 DIPR-4287-TENDER/2020					
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# DECCAN Chronicle

18 NOVEMBER 2020

## Nitish weakened, will his govt survive?

JD(U)'s founder-leader Nitish Kumar was sworn in chief minister of Bihar for the fourth straight term last Monday, courtesy his alliance partner BJP which won 31 seats more than Mr Kumar's relatively meagre 43, but it is far from clear if the NDA alliance, principally a BJP-JD(U) show, can offer stable governance or indeed even cohere with any sense of certainty.

The relationship between the key coalition partners has been prejudiced. There is a widespread feeling in the state and in political circles more broadly that the BJP had tried to undermine JD(U) from the start by propping up LJP's Chirag Paswan, and this was an important consideration for the less than satisfactory showing of Mr Kumar's party. Purportedly, the reason for this move was BJP's own ambition to be in the driver's seat to the extent of seeking to have its own CM instead of Mr Kumar.

The game came unstuck because the saffron party, while improving its performance, could not reach a zone of comfort in number terms that may have enabled it to cobble together a government through the use of unconventional methods. The BJP could not choreograph a situation in which both the JD(U) and the RJD, the main Opposition force led by the very young Tejashwi Yadav, could be pushed down electorally at the same time. In the event, the RJD has done exceedingly well, arriving on the scene yet again as the number one party in the Assembly, ahead of BJP.

Having failed to reach its first objective, the BJP, being the bigger ally, looks to be aiming to call the shots more directly in the governance of the state. This can only be done by pushing down the CM and making him as redundant as possible. Ideally, from the BJP's perspective, the CM should be seen but not heard. In furtherance of this, the saffron party has taken their suave and veteran Bihar leader Sushil Modi, who had been deputy CM with Mr Kumar for 13 years, out of the equation. Mr Modi was known to enjoy a special relationship with Mr Kumar, sometimes to the chagrin of the state BJP.

Upon Mr Modi's removal, two new deputy CMs have been foisted on the CM by the BJP. These are politicians not known to possess their own personality. Consequently, it is a strong likelihood that Patna will be run from Delhi, possibly in tandem with Nagpur, the RSS headquarters. The NDA parties had not advanced any particular agenda for the state in their election campaign, which was centred on attacking RJD and Congress and not on defending its poor record or projecting a viable future. It does look as if they have run out of ideas. Getting investment rolling in the state, the need of the hour, is a tall order.

Mahagathbandhan, the NDA's principal opponent led by Mr Yadav, has secured only 12,000 votes fewer than the ruling side. Seats have been won or lost by double-digit margins, leading the Opposition to cry foul. The Opposition boycotted the government's swearing-in and could be in attack mode from the start. There could be unsettling times ahead in a key Hindi-belt state.

## Two cheers for Suu Kyi

It was a vote for continuity. In winning what was only the second election in Myanmar since the end of five decades of military rule in the country, convincingly, the crafty National League for Democracy (NLD) head and incumbent state counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi has effectively consolidated her people's democratic ambitions. However, in trying to avoid 'criticism' that she is favouring Rohingyas from the military-backed Opposition Union of Solidarity and Development Party, she delayed decision-making vis-à-vis the crisis. Over 40,000 Rohingyas are stranded in India and eight lakh in Bangladesh awaiting repatriation. The estimated six lakh who remain in the conflict-rife Rakhine state are severely persecuted and were disenfranchised in these elections.

Alarmingly, the Islamophobic and anti-Rohingya Arakan National Party has won the largest bloc of seats in the regional parliament, even flipping a few previously held by the NLD. The NLD has reached out to them, so a prolonging of the crisis is on the cards. Reforming the 2008 military drafted constitution in which the Army had written in a role for itself in government and politics is another less urgent, but equally important, challenge before Ms Suu Kyi.

For India, Ms Suu Kyi's win spells both diplomatic comfort and continuity. Aside from trying to thwart China's expansionist and encirclement moves around India, New Delhi must be on good terms with all neighbours to maximise trade, market and investment opportunities as well as to bolster our strategic ingredients. Besides, Myanmar is important for its own sake - it is India's gateway to Southeast Asia. Facing charges of Rohingya genocide at the International Court of Justice and chastened, thereafter, by the world community, Ms Suu Kyi has been seen leaning towards China lately. But India has not been idle. Foreign secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla and Chief of Army Staff Gen. M.M. Naravane met the leader recently to discuss Covid cooperation and review progress of India-assisted projects in Myanmar. New Delhi needs to further strengthen its relationship with Yangon, possibly by identifying more areas of mutual cooperation as well as brainstorming solutions to Myanmar's problems, so that it is effectively weaned off its Beijing dependencies.

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Subhani



## Beyond Covid: Towards a 'new normal' at work



Shashidhar Nanjundaiah

Last month Microsoft joined the new-age league — Facebook, Twitter, Google and Salesforce — in bringing forth an extended work-from-home policy. But the Redmond-based tech giant went further and announced that Microsoft employees all over the world can now opt to work from home permanently, embedding the concept of the hybrid workplace in the system. When a company's product is virtual, the processes can also be virtual, it would seem. No doubt there is the inevitable fine print about approvals and proportions. Still, is it a feasible proposition?

Microsoft's communiqué is compelling and competitive, and the narrative is bold — rather than making it about lockdowns and Covid-19 compliances, it indicates to us what it has learnt from and developed during the pandemic, to that extent embodying the concept of "the new normal". But more important, could this be the beginning of a new era of trust and partnership between employer and employee? That's the question managers are struggling with. Undoubtedly, the transition to that virtual partnership will be less arduous for the technology and consulting companies. The tech industry has been responsible for systematising work flow and work processes in new ways. The "water-fall" process in management of software development process, for example, entailed a process from brainstorming to delivery that depended on long periods of low communication and reporting. But the new "agile" systems stipulate more rapid dipstick project management sequences such as regular meetings and frequent stock-taking to ensure that processes don't go askew

and that projects are completed within defined timelines with measurable assessments. The deliverables in such cases are data-driven and immediately measurable, potentially eliminating the need for human evaluation.

Because virtuality entails the use of networks, security is an anxiety to overcome. In several industries, virtual private networks (VPNs) or other security systems are par for the course. Those at management levels of the tech industry point out that these kinds of systems make their development projects more failsafe and more or less agnostic of geography. It reduces the anxiety of silence while providing a solution for regular communication and stocktaking, enabling any course correction when needed. Assessment of a project could happen every two weeks, for example, feeding into a quantified framework of sprints (the period of assessment) and velocities (points awarded during each sprint). But cybersecurity applications also often serve as surveillance or monitoring systems. So, several of these measures are more than changes solely related to coronavirus compliance.

Managers in American tech companies say these points per period have shown a consistent and significant upward trend after a work-from-home mandate. This means productivity has gone up, at least in that industry. Does this mean employees are happier, or more efficient, as a result of sharper processes? That's a good question. For the employee, it allows a better work-life balance. The employer enjoys a wider and deeper hiring catchment area because a Microsoft-like policy unlocks opportunities for talented people who are reluctant or unable to relocate for work. On the other hand,

even in the United States, remote locations come with bandwidth issues, and most tech companies pay employees an incentive each month so that the employee can afford a reliable network connection.

That problem is compounded in an Indian environment, where there is far more caution in extending the work-from-home arrangement beyond the least possible period. Tech clusters like those in Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Gurgaon attract a diverse workforce. Many employees come to these hubs from smaller towns. In a lockdown work-from-home scenario, a significant proportion of them choose to work from their native towns, where the necessary infrastructure — including power supply, connectivity and bandwidth — is often suspect. This unreliable infrastructure has compelled many employers to dissuade employees from travelling or to provide portable connectivity devices such as dongles.

That is why it does not come as a surprise that the heads of even technology companies in India do not believe that virtual working — even for non-administrative functions — can be a permanent arrangement. Most of them hanker to go back to the old normal. Employers have calibrated their processes to better quantify the output, but in the absence of qualitative evaluation, they may not be entirely comfortable with an artificial adjustment. On the other hand, strict quantification of processes and output also sets up an alluring case for using artificial intelligence (AI). Already, there have been layoffs and consolidation or restructuring of processes. While the ongoing cutting-edge research on AI as a sup-

plement to human tasks is well-documented, techies worry — thanks to the pandemic — about the enhanced possibility that automation could replace some human processes.

Work-from-home policies are essentially policies of space and time. Employers are having a hard time grappling with them because what was meant to be a temporary fix has unearthed more challenges than they had bargained for. Most technology employers allow employees to work at their own pace, although filling out time sheets is still the norm among Indian companies. So, for many human resources (HR) managers, the new issue is as much about the process as about the theory. On one hand, HR managers are now grappling with effective ways of monitoring. Without it, they find it difficult to fit the existing matrix of periodic assessments and suchlike. On the other, should they continue the surveillance-like monitoring, or should they simply trust the employee more?

Psychological impacts of a protracted work-from-home situation have been well-documented, but Indian companies face additional challenges. The more traditional HR systems among them are accustomed to ways of monitoring their employees' time and space. The work-from-home situation's best and worst feature may be the flexibility of time and space. Redefined office space is a major reason many youngsters hanker to work at the New Age "cool" technology companies. Yet the Covid-19 pandemic is forcing these very companies to redefine their offices as post-Covid workplaces. Home is the best place to work from, some employers seem to be saying. For now, the space to watch over the next few months will be whether systems manage to build on their current success, or the compulsion of human communication and physicality render them unviable.

*The writer is a communications expert and has launched and headed a number of reputed institutes of higher education*

**Could this be the beginning of a new era of trust and partnership between employer and employee? That's the question managers are struggling with.**

### LETTERS

#### RCEP REPERCUSSIONS

Apropos the editorial *As RCEP is born, India must tread cautiously* (Nov.17), it sagaciously balances the pros and cons of India walking off the deal and its repercussions, which would turn regressive in the event of not joining, citing an apprehension of Chinese products flooding Indian market. Meanwhile, as feared, unless there is assurance and unless India promotes the local strength in the dairy products learning the tricks of the trade to compete globally, sure, it would be a humongous dumping yard for the rest of the nations. Come what may, as envisioned by the former president Dr Kalam, India should be self-reliant if need be, despite signing multi-treaties along the strategic partnership.

**E.S.Chandrasekaran**  
Chennai

#### NTISH ON CLOUD NINE

NTISH KUMAR has come to stay in Bihar politics for the next 5 years. If Nitish Kumar completes this term, he will become the longest-serving Chief Minister of Bihar, breaking the record set by the 18-year tenure of Bihar's first chief minister S.K. Sinha. Then it will be a remarkable feat indeed. Nitish Kumar must use the mandate to bring the state back on the development path. BJP has attempted to balance the boat with the new deputy CM. BJP's ploy of offering free Covid-19 vaccine proved a turning point and in the minds of people it proved as a life saver and so they saved the face of Nitish Kumar also. Nitish Kumar is on cloud 9 with BJP supporting him even after getting maximum number of seats in the state assembly.

**Jayanthi C.K. Maniam**, via e-mail

#### GOOD NEWS FROM MODERNA

IT IS really good news that US based biotechnology giant Moderna has claimed that its Covid-19 vaccine has 94.5 per cent efficacy. Let us all hope that there will be equitable distribution throughout the world. The news is more sweet for India as this vaccine has a shelf life of up to 6 months at minus 4 degree Fahrenheit and could be stored at temperatures between 36 to 48 degrees Fahrenheit for 30 days unlike the other two vaccines (developed by Pfizer and Biontech) which has to be stored at minus 94 degree Fahrenheit temperature. This vaccine developed by Moderna could be used by countries (including India) which do not have the required freezer storing facilities.

**M.C.Vijay Shankar**, Chennai

Andrew Sullivan



## Donald Trump may have lost, but his agenda is here to stay

Donald Trump is now showing exactly why he had to be defeated. Well after the votes have been counted, with no evidence of anything but the usual minor glitches — none of which is sufficient to dent Joe Biden's margin of victory — the President of the United States is doing what he did for four years — sabotaging American democracy because of his pathological narcissism. Mr Trump remains what he has long been — a purely destructive force, a vandaliser, not a builder.

But Trumpism? It did far better than anyone expected. The polls were off — again — missing Republican strength. Down-ballot, many Republicans seriously outperformed their nominal leader. During a health crisis and a recession, the GOP made real gains in the House of Representatives and is likely to hold the Senate, effectively checkmating any progressive ambitions that Mr Biden might have had. The rural

turnout was huge, responding to Mr Trump's boisterous series of big rallies as the campaign ended.

This result is the moment that Mr Trump's core message was seared into one of America's major political parties for the foreseeable future, and realigned American politics. Neo-conservatism is over; globalisation as some sort of conservative principle is over; a conservatism that allows for, or looks away from, unrestrained mass immigration is over. What was cemented in place this week is a new GOP, not unlike the Tories in the United Kingdom. They're nationalist, culturally conservative, geared toward the losers of capitalism as well as its winners, mildly protectionist and isolationist. It is a natural response to the unintended consequences of neo-liberalism's success under a conservative banner. And it speaks in a language that working-class Americans understand, devoid of the woke neologisms of the educated elite.

This election was also an unequivocal rejection of the woke Left. The riots of the summer turned many people off. In exit polls, 88 per cent of the Trump voters said it was a factor in their choice. On the question of policing and criminal justice, Mr Trump led Mr Biden by 46 to 43 per cent. For the past five years, the Democrats have been telling us that Mr Trump and his supporters were white supremacists, and yet he increased his black, Latino, gay and Asian support: 12 per cent of blacks — and 18 per cent of black men — backed him, along with 32 per cent of Latinos, and 31 per cent of Asians. The gay vote for Mr Trump may have doubled.

Pollsters, once again, missed a huge swath of "Shy Trump" voters. Eric Kaufmann, one of the most astute political scientists writing today, noted that the polling under-counted educated white Trump voters, perhaps used to keeping their mouths shut in mixed company: "The exit

polls show that Trump ran among white college graduates 49-49, and even had an edge among white female graduates of 50-49! This puts pre-election surveys out by a whopping 26-31 points among white graduates." The threat of wokeness alienated educated white voters, caused them to lie to pollsters — and led more of them to vote for Mr Trump than anyone expected.

The clarifying truth is that America remains a very closely divided country, growing further apart culturally and socially, exploited by extremists on right and left, and yet still fundamentally sane. The American people do not want a revolution, but they also realised they do not want Mr Trump as head of state. They removed the nutcase, and defanged the woke, showed up to vote in vast numbers, and gave us a constellation of forces in Washington that pleases no one. And that's okay.

America is a vast and complicated place — and its political representa-

tives mirror this rather accurately. That's democracy working, not failing. In such a country, there is a place in the centre for compromise if Americans can unwind the hysteria and polarisation that the far left has fuelled and Mr Trump has exacerbated. We now have a President-elect, voted for by the sane centre, with little personal ambition ahead of him, deep relationships within the Senate that he will desperately need, and with a check on his left flank. There are deals to be done. There is politics to engage. And we'll get there if we can use this moment to listen to each other, especially those whose opinions we have spurned, and whose identities we have feared. Mr Trump will refuse to let go — ever. But he has been removed. The republic will survive, battered and bruised, but it will survive. And with a little grace from all of us, it can also begin to heal.

*By arrangement with the Spectator*







## SHORT TAKES

## Olympian hurdler Jagmohan dead

**Patiala:** Olympian hurdler and multi-faceted sports personality Jagmohan Singh, who introduced scientific fitness training methods in athletics and other sports during his long stint at the NIS-Patiala, died of heart attack here on Tuesday.

He was 88. Jagmohan, who had also served as joint director general of Sports Authority of India, represented the country in 110m hurdles in the 1960 Rome Olympics. He was the national champion in this event from 1958 to 1960. He also had held national records in 110m hurdles and decathlon.

Not only he was a top athlete of his time, Jagmohan had served Indian sport as teacher, coach, administrator and physical trainer. After completing his B.Sc. degree, Jagmohan served in Punjab Police for nearly 10 years before joining NIS Patiala as a teacher in 1962. — PTI

## Athletes should be vaccinated: Bach

**Tokyo:** IOC president Thomas Bach has said during this week's trip to Tokyo that he is encouraging all Olympic participants and fans to be vaccinated if one becomes available if they are going to attend next year's Tokyo Olympics. Bach says a reasonable number of fans should be able to attend the venues vaccine or no vaccine. And he said confidently that the postponed Olympics will open on July 23.

We want to convince as many foreign participants as possible to accept a vaccine, he said repeatedly on Monday, his first of two days in Tokyo lining up support for the Games and holding news conferences. Japan has controlled the virus comparatively well, with about 1,900 deaths attributed to Covid-19 in a country of about 125 million. — AP

## Suarez, Munoz are Covid positive

**Uruguay:** Luis Suarez and goalkeeper Rodrigo Munoz have tested positive for the coronavirus, the Uruguayan Football Association said. They and national team staffer Matias Faral, also infected, will miss Uruguay's home match against Brazil on Tuesday in South American World Cup qualifying. — AP

## Honda ready for year-end race

**Portimao, Portugal:** The Repsol Honda Team prepare for the final race of the unprecedented 2020 MotoGP World Championship as the series returns to Portugal. 126 days after the first race of the 2020 MotoGP season in Jerez, the curtain is set to come down. The impressive Alvarve International Circuit will play host to the last dance of the year, many of the riders having sampled the circuit at a brief test on road bikes but few having raced there before.

Alex Marquez arrives at the circuit looking to end the year on a high after a bruising weekend in Valencia. The days between races have afforded the MotoGP rookie a chance to rest and recover after his 23.6g crash on Saturday and he is ready to face the new challenge of the Portimao circuit.

## Live on TV

## CRICKET

**Big Bash League:** Adelaide Strikers vs Melbourne Renegades from 9 am; Sydney Thunder vs Sydney Sixers from 1.35 pm on Sony Six

## TENNIS

**ATP Finals:** Matches from 7.30 pm and 1.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Six, HD

## FOOTBALL

**UEFA Nations League:** Albania vs Belarus from 8.30 pm; Georgia vs Estonia from 10.30 pm on Sony Ten 2; Poland vs Netherlands from 1.15 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 3; England vs Iceland from 1.15 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 1; Belgium vs Denmark from 1.15 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 2

## WWE

**NXT:** Bouts from 6.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 1, HD

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## Covid scare in Oz

## Aussie players airlifted to NSW in attempt to save series

**Sydney, Nov. 17:** Cricket Australia on Tuesday airlifted players, including Test skipper Tim Paine and star batsman Marnus Labuschagne, to New South Wales from Adelaide in an attempt to save the series against India as a coronavirus outbreak in South Australia threatened the upcoming summer.

As Western Australia, Queensland and Tasmania closed their borders to South Australia on Monday, the country's cricket board brought players from Australia's white-ball, Test match and Australia A squads into Sydney from Adelaide to ensure that the upcoming fixtures of the \$300 million season remain unaffected.

"CA has taken a proactive approach and mobilised a number of people across the country over the past 24 hours to shore up our men's domestic and international schedules," CA's interim chief executive Nick Hockley was quoted as saying by *ESPNCricinfo*.

"I would like to thank the players and staff for their understanding regarding the changes to their travel schedules and for their commitment to ensuring the summer of cricket is a huge success," he said.

Besides Paine and Labuschagne, the list of players relocated include their colleagues Matthew Wade, Travis Head and Cameron Green among others.

Despite the spike in Covid cases and developments related to it, CA maintained that the Adelaide Oval will host the first Test of the summer against India from December 17.

Hockley added, "I would also like to thank the various leadership groups across Australian cricket for coming together over the past 48 hours and taking quick, decisive action - made possible by thorough, cross-department contingency planning."

Earlier, CA vowed that all possible measures would be explored to ensure that the series goes ahead as planned. — PTI

## Pucovski confident of making Test debut

**Sydney, Nov. 17:** Fast-rising Australian batsman Will Pucovski feels he has "earned the right" to be in the red-ball squad for the series against India and is better prepared to make his Test debut compared to a couple of seasons ago.

Pucovski, who was named in a 17-member extended Australian Test squad for the four-match series against India, is coming off back-to-back double hundreds in the Sheffield Shield.

Despite missing the opening two rounds of the competition, he has scored 495 runs so far this season in three innings and is currently the tournament's highest run-scorer. "This time it feels like I've earned the right to be here, and I'm pretty pumped to take the challenge on of playing India if I do get the



Indian cricketers Cheteshwar Pujara (left) and Deepak Chahar at a training session in Sydney.

— BCCI

## Virat &amp; Co. undergo Test simulation

**Sydney, Nov. 17:** The limited-overs competition awaits them first but Indian players, led by captain Virat Kohli, seemed focussed on next month's Tests against Australia as they practised in simulated long-format match conditions complete with pacers using red and pink balls here on Tuesday.

All the top batsmen and bowlers, who are in all the three squads, were seen taking part in the practice session.

The likes of senior pacer Mohammed Shami and youngster Mohammad Siraj were seen bowling to Kohli in a video posted on Twitter by the captain himself.

"Love Test cricket ses-

sions," the tweet from Kohli read.

The star batsman will feature in just the opening day-night Test, starting December 17 in Adelaide, before flying back to India for the birth of his first child.

The video showed the players using the centre strip of the ground with proper Test match field and a batsman at the non-striker's end, which is a deviation from traditional net sessions.

Given that the players



on him during the four-match Test series starting with the day-night pink ball game in Adelaide.

Siraj, who is only in the Test squad, followed his senior team-mate and was seen sending down a few deliveries as other senior players watched him bowl.

The 26-year-old, who has played one ODI and three T20Is, took 11 wickets from nine matches for Royal Challengers Bangalore in the recent IPL. "The master and his apprentice."

When @MdShami11 and Siraj bowled in tandem at #TeamIndia's nets. Fast and accurate!," the BCCI tweet read. — PTI

## Man held for issuing a death threat to Shakib

**Dhaka, Nov. 17:** Bangladesh police on Tuesday arrested a man who allegedly issued death threats to cricket all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan for inaugurating a Kali puja pandal in Kolkata, even as the cricketer issued an apology and said he only joined the function briefly.

A joint team of the elite anti-crime Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) and police arrested 28-year-old Mohsin Talukdar from south-eastern Sunamganj district after 24 hours of a massive manhunt.

"He is now in our custody awaiting subsequent legal procedures," a police officer familiar with the development



Shakib Al Hasan

said. After the cricketer's picture at the programme in Kolkata's Amra Sobai Club went viral, Talukdar went live on Facebook on Sunday night carrying a large machete in his hand and threatened to kill Shakib, saying he hurt his religious sentiments by inaugurating the Puja

event in the West Bengal's capital city.

By early morning, Talkudar, however, withdrew the threat and apologised in another live video on social media and then went into hiding. He was later traced in neighbouring Sunamganj district.

The 33-year-old cricketer in a post on Facebook denied inaugurating the puja pandal. He said it was inaugurated by Kolkata mayor Firhad Hakim.

"Media, social media everywhere it was flooded that I went to Kolkata to inaugurate a puja ceremony which actually was not the reason behind my visit and I did not inaugurate puja. — PTI

## ATP | FINALS

## Medvedev masters Zverev on Day 2

**London, Nov. 17:** Daniil Medvedev pulled off an underarm serve as he outlasted Alexander Zverev and joined Novak Djokovic as a winner at the ATP Finals on Day Two. Medvedev prevailed 6-3, 6-4 in an empty O2 Arena on Monday.

Djokovic and Medvedev meet on Wednesday to secure the group lead. Medvedev led 4-3, 30-30 in the second set when he surprised Zverev with a quick underarm serve. It brought the German to the net and he lost the point when his backhand block volley flew long.

"My wide serve was not working as well as I would like and he was returning good. I see that he was five meters behind the baseline and I have the ball close to my racket, so I thought, 'Go for it,'" Medvedev said.

It actually worked. It's also smart. Two games later, he served a love game to earn his first win at the ATP Finals in his fourth match going back to last year.

Medvedev went 0-3 in his first Finals, including a loss to Zverev which he avenged after an attritional opening set.

Zverev, the 2018 champion, earned a break in the first game but gave it straight back with three

● **Medvedev prevailed 6-3, 6-4 in an empty O2 Arena. He will now meet Novak Djokovic to secure the group lead.**

double faults. Another double fault by Zverev in the sixth game gave Medvedev a 4-2 lead, and the Russian finished the set with his first ace.

A weak forehand into the net cost Zverev the decisive break at 3-3 in the second.

Medvedev held with the underarm serve, and he beat Zverev again eight days after winning their Paris Masters final. The top-ranked Djokovic smothered Schwartzman after conceding an early break and, despite no fans inside the 20,000-capacity O2 Arena, he gestured to each section as if to say thanks. "Why I celebrated? Because that's my celebration and that's also my gratitude to the court and to this opportunity to be able to compete," the Serb said.

"Even though there was no crowd in the stands, I know that there was a lot of people watching it on TV, so that was me sharing that emotion with them," Djokovic added. — AP



Russia's Daniil Medvedev returns to Alexander Zverev of Germany during their singles match at the ATP World Finals tennis tournament at the O2 Arena in London on Monday. Medvedev won 6-3, 6-4. — AP

## PARGAT, GURBUX ARE IN MASTERS PANELS

**New Delhi, Nov. 17:** Former captain Pargat Singh, Mir Ranjan Negi and Gurbux Singh have been included in the 'Masters Committees' constituted by Hockey India's state member units to promote and develop masters hockey in the country; the national federation said on Tuesday.

The initiative will provide opportunities for all age groups (both male and female) to continue their passion for hockey and remain active in the sport irrespective of any age barrier; the HI said in a release.

In March, HI had joined 38 other national associations from around the world as a member of the World Masters Hockey (WMH), which is the sole

masters entity recognised by the International Hockey Federation (FIH) and is responsible for organising international masters hockey globally.

To further carry out responsibilities at the state level, HI urged all the state member units to form working committees comprising of former national and international hockey players to lead the state level activity.

The committee's first responsibility will be to ensure all the masters athletes of various age categories are registered on the Hockey India member units portal.

The Masters Committee will be overseeing all matters related to these masters matches and tournaments at the national level in India. — PTI

## Olympic champ turns delivery rider

**Lodz (Poland), Nov. 17:** Back home in Venezuela, Ruben Limardo Gascon is hailed as a national hero for winning a gold medal in fencing at the 2012 London Olympics.

In Poland, where he has lived for years, he's taken up delivering food for Uber Eats to support his family as he trains for the Olympics in Tokyo next summer.

Every day after intensive training, he jumps on his bike and with a green thermal bag on his back he crisscrosses the city of Lodz, where he lives with his wife and two children, delivering food to people's doorsteps.

With the global economic situation precarious amid the coronavirus pandemic and little chance for sponsorship, Limardo is grateful to have a job, particularly one that leaves him time for sports practice.

"There is no sponsorship now because there is no competition, but I still have to generate



**There is no sponsorship now because there is no competition, but I still have to generate some resources to support my family. I don't want to leave the sport because I still have a dream.**

— RUBEN LIMARDO GASCON  
2012 fencing champion

Limardo said.

With a mask covering his face these days, fans of fencing have little chance of recognizing the Olympic gold medalist known for his modesty.

But some know about him and ask for selfies and take the opportunity to chat with the native of Ciudad Bolivar, who speaks perfect Polish.

Limardo moved to Poland, which has a long tradition in fencing, some 20 years ago as a teen to train on the p e, the heaviest of modern fencing weapons.

He has also won gold in individual epee at the 2007 Pan American Games and at the 2006 and 2008 championships in Poland.

His gold medal from London is the second Olympic win ever for a Venezuelan, making him a celebrity in his native land.

He competed in the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro in the individual and team p e competitions, but failed to secure any medals.

From his home in central Poland, he continues to root for Venezuela, which has seen problems including political discontent exacerbated by hyperinflation and shortages of food and medicine.

He says he hopes that things will get sorted out soon in Venezuela. In the meantime, he seeks to represent his country with pride.

"Wherever I go, I'll lift the flag 100%, with a lot of pride, with a lot of ardour," Limardo said. — AP