

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

COIMBATORE | TUESDAY 17 | NOVEMBER 2020

WEATHER



Max: 26°C
Min: 22°C
Rainfall: 5 mm

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Karthigai 2
Tithi: Thuvithyai/ Thrithiyai
Star: Kettai
Rahukalam:
3 pm to 4.30 pm
Yamagandam:
9 am to 10.30 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 8.09 AM
MOONSET TOMORROW 7.51 PM

CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+22,851)	(+308)
88,68,468	1,30,417

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+1,725)
TN: 7,59,916 11,495

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

5,50,79,655
DEATHS
13,28,269

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES
217

worldometers.info

Vasan Eye Care founder Arun passes away in Chennai

Chennai: Dr A M Arun, who built a healthcare company 'Vasan Healthcare' that runs a chain of eyecare hospitals starting from a single pharmacy in Tamil Nadu, died here on Monday. He was 51. While a corporate hospital here said he was brought dead, the police, quoting preliminary inputs, said the death appeared to be only of natural causes. However, the body has been sent for a post-mortem.

Satya Nadella among 9 American CEOs to meet President-elect Biden

Washington: Two Indian-American CEOs, Satya Nadella from Microsoft and Sonia Syngal from GAP, are among a select group of nine business and labour leaders invited by President-elect Joe Biden on Monday to discuss issues related to the country's economy.

COUNTER

POINT



Our leader is swearing... at their ceremony!

Alagiri triggers rumours of floating party, may meet Shah

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR & D. SEKAR | DC
CHENNAI, NOV. 16

M.K. Alagiri, the elder brother of DMK president M.K. Stalin, came out of his hibernation by calling up some of his erstwhile supporters and followers to greet them on Deepavali, triggering speculation that he has plans to float his own political outfit.

Mr Alagiri, who had been maintaining a low profile after his expulsion from the DMK in 2014, reportedly broke his self-imposed

cocoon and telephoned his men to alert them about potential political activity from December.

Though similar rumours had done their rounds in the past, too, many feel this time it could be for real, given that the elder son of late DMK patriarch M. Karunanidhi could be meeting Union home minister and top BJP leader Amit Shah, when he visits Chennai on November 21. It has also been suggested that Mr Alagiri could possibly tie up with BJP, given that the saffron party



is said to be calling up every political leader they could get in touch with, irrespective of ideological leanings and religious affiliations, to request them to join hands with it.

● **Mr Alagiri, who had been maintaining a low profile after his expulsion from the DMK in 2014, reportedly broke his self-imposed cocoon and telephoned his men to alert them about potential political activity from December.**

● **Alagiri's voter appeal remains a question mark but he could still be used to wean voters away from the DMK, at least in southern Tamil Nadu**

Mr Alagiri was functioning as a southern satrap of the DMK in his heydays — he was the party's south zone secretary last - and is being credited with engineering the infamous

'Tirumangalam formula' that came to national limelight as the pioneering cash-for-vote exercise in the 2009 by-elections to the Tirumangalam assembly constituency.

However, it is believed that the BJP, which has seemingly set itself a goal of defeating the DMK in the 2021 assembly elections, might use Mr Alagiri in its mission.

His voter appeal remains a question mark but he could still be used to wean voters away from the DMK, at least in southern Tamil Nadu. The BJP has high hopes on Mr Shah's one-day visit to Chennai and his programmes include a possible meeting with actor Rajinikanth, party sources said.

Absconding accused returns to set rape survivor ablaze

Jaipur, Nov. 16: A 37-year-old rape survivor was allegedly set ablaze here by the accused who was absconding for seven months, police said on Monday. The woman, her minor daughter and the 28-year-old accused identified as Lekhraj Koli were injured in the incident and have been hospitalised, they said.

Koli, his two brothers, Ramesh and Mannohan, and their father Kanhaiya Lal were arrested by police and booked under

section 307 (attempt to murder) of the IPC. SHO of Kotwali police station Yeshwant Yadav said the woman had lodged a complaint against Koli, who is her neighbour, in April this year alleging that he had raped her in 2018. On Saturday, the accused entered the woman's house and set her on fire after pouring petrol over her. The woman suffered 50 per cent burn injuries, police said. — PTI

STATE | 3

Make Chennai Haj embarkation point: CM



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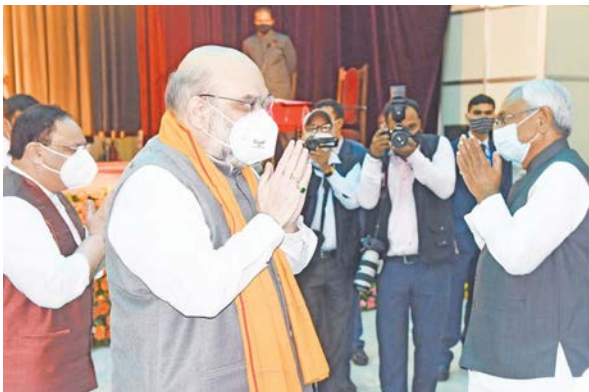
CM Nitish has 2 BJP deputies; will miss SuMo, says his party

NAYEAR AZAD | DC
PATNA, NOV. 16

Janata Dal (United) [JD(U)] president Nitish Kumar was on Monday sworn in Chief Minister of Bihar for the fourth straight term in the presence of top leaders of the national Democratic Alliance (NDA), including Union home minister Amit Shah and BJP national president Jagat Prakash Nadda.

Two BJP leaders — Tarkishore Prasad and Renu Devi — also took oath as Mr Kumar's new deputies at the governor house.

Apart from them, 12 others were also sworn in ministers among whom five each are from the JD(U) and the BJP, and one each from Hindustani Awam Morcha (HAM) and Vikasheel Insaan Party (VIP). The BJP being the largest party in the NDA



Union home minister Amit Shah and BJP national president JP Nadda congratulate Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar after the oath-taking ceremony at Raj Bhawan in Patna, on Monday.

— PTI

has seven ministers, including two deputy chief ministers. This is the seventh time in two decades that Mr Kumar will be Bihar chief minister. Five ministers from the JD(U) who took oath are former Bihar Assembly

Speaker Vijay Kumar Chaudhary, senior JD(U) leader and former energy minister Vijendra Yadav, JD(U) leader Ashok Chaudhary, Mewalal Chaudhary and Sheila Mandal. Besides Tarkishore

Prasad and Renu Devi, the others who took oath from the BJP are former health minister Mangal Pandey, Amarendra Pratap Singh, Rampreet Paswan, Jivesh Mishra and Ramsurat Rai.

HAM chief Jitan Ram Manjhi's son Santosh Suman and VIP chief Mukesh Sahani were also inducted into the Cabinet.

Amid all these developments, there are reports that senior BJP leader Sushil Kumar Modi is rattled over being sidelined by the party.

Popularly called "SuMo", he has been Mr Kumar's deputy since 2005.

After the BJP's debacle in 2015, when Mr Kumar formed a grand alliance government with the RJD and the Congress, it was Mr Sushil Kumar Modi who highlighted the illegal properties allegedly held by Lalu Yadav and his family. ■ P4

BRICS MEET



PM Modi to attend virtual summit today

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will attend a virtual summit of the influential grouping BRICS on Tuesday which will focus on cooperation in counter-terrorism, trade, health, energy and ways to offset impact of the coronavirus pandemic. Chinese President Xi Jinping, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro and Russian President Vladimir Putin are scheduled to attend the 12th summit of the Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS) grouping. The BRICS summit is taking place at a time two of the bloc's members, India and China, are locked in a bitter border standoff in eastern Ladakh for over six months. — PTI

WORLD | 5

I feel great, says Boris in self-isolation

SPORT | 8

Rahul pulls along with tennis ball



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PHASE-3 STUDY RESULT OUT

Moderna claims its Covid-19 vaccine is 94.5% efficient

Covaxin phase-3 trial begins in Hyderabad

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, NOV. 16

Human Phase 3 trials of Covaxin, the anti-Covid-19 vaccine being developed by Bharat Biotech and the National Institute of Virology, commenced at the Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences here on Monday.

The test vaccine will be tested on 26,000 volunteers across 25 centres in India. This is the first and largest

efficacy study in the country for Covaxin. NIMS is the first centre in India where the Covaxin Phase 3 trials are being carried out. The volunteers will be randomly attached to either of the two groups: One will be given a placebo, where no vaccine is administered, and the other will receive the vaccine dose. This data will be known only to the researchers and the company.

including severe disease," Mr Bancel said as the pandemic has killed more than 1.3 million people worldwide, more than 245,000 of them in the US. "The independent, NIH-appointed Data Safety Monitoring Board (DSMB) for the Phase 3 study of mRNA-1273, its vaccine candidate against Covid-19, has informed

Moderna that the trial has met the statistical criteria pre-specified in the study protocol for efficacy, with a vaccine efficacy of 94.5 per cent," Moderna said in a statement.

This study, known as the COVE study, enrolled more than 30,000 participants in the US, it added. — Agencies ■ P4

Counselling for MBBS, BDS begins tomorrow

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 16

Health minister C. Vijayabaskar said on Monday that counselling for MBBS and BDS courses will begin on Wednesday, November 18. Counselling will be held at Jawaharlal Nehru stadium by maintaining the Covid-19 protocols, he said.

The minister was speaking after releasing the merit list based on national Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) scores here. R. Srijan from Tirupur became the topper with 710

marks while M o h a n a p r a b h a Ravichandran of Namakkal scored 705 marks to grab the second position.

G. Swetha of Chennai got 701 marks and stood third.

It may be noted that counselling and the start of medical/dental courses have been delayed by five months due to the pandemic.

The Directorate of Medical Education selection committee had accepted 23,707 application forms though 24, 712 candidates had sent in their applications.



Incessant rains and overflowing lakes leave Senthamizh Nagar in Kattankulathur marooned on Monday. — E.K. SANJAY

OTHER STORIES



Vellore district collector A. Shanmuga Sundaram releases draft electoral roll in the presence of all-party representatives, on Monday. — DC

Tamil Nadu reports 1,725 new coronavirus cases

Chennai, Nov. 16: Tamil Nadu on Monday reported 1,725 fresh Covid-19 cases, taking the tally to 7,59,916, while the death toll touched 11,495 with 17 more fatalities. Of the fresh cases, Chennai accounted for 497, Coimbatore 174 and Chengelpet 118 and the state capital shared 2,09,167 of the over 7.59 lakh infections, a health department bulletin said.

With 2,384 patients getting discharged from various hospitals, 7,32,656 people have got cured so far and the active cases dipped to 15,765.

Those dead include three men aged 41, 82 and 83 and in total 16 had co-morbidities and one no chronic illnesses. The death toll of 11,495 includes 3,772 from Chennai and 696 from Chengelpet, which are among the highest.

In sync with the recent trend, the state continued to post less than 2,000 cases per day and more recoveries than the fresh cases leading to a steady fall in active cases. The number of deaths reported daily also continued to be below 20, a count, among the lowest.

As many as 63,777 RT-PCR samples were tested and cumulatively, 1,11,36,662 specimens have been examined in 210 Covid labs of the state. — PTI

SC notice to I-T dept on appeals by Karti, his wife in tax evasion case

New Delhi, Nov. 16: The Supreme Court Monday sought response from the income tax department on the pleas of Congress MP Karti Chidambaram and his wife challenging the transfer of a tax evasion case filed against them before a lower court to a special court for MPs and MLAs. A bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan and R. Subhash Reddy issued notice to the IT department on an appeal filed by Karti, son of senior Congress leader P. Chidambaram, against the Madras high court judgment. The high court had dismissed the petitions filed by Karti and his wife to quash two criminal complaints under the Income Tax Act and the proceeding before the special court for MP/MLAs. "Issue notice, returnable in two weeks. Petitioner may serve a copy of these petitions to the office of Solicitor General," the apex court said in its order. The matter relates to alleged non-disclosure of Rs 6.38 crore incomes by Karti and Rs 1.35 crore by his wife Srinidhi Chidambaram in 2015. According to the Income Tax department, Karti, elected to Lok Sabha from Sivaganga constituency in 2019 elections, and his wife had received the amount in cash for the sale of a land at Muttukadu but did not disclose it in their I-T returns. The Deputy Director of I-T department, Chennai had filed a complaint on September 12, 2018 against the petitioners before the Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court-II (Economic Offences) for offences under sections 276 c (1) and 277 of the IT Act. — PTI

New corona cases dips to 13 in Pondy; no fresh deaths

Puducherry, Nov. 16: The number of fresh Covid-19 cases in Puducherry dipped to 13 for the first time in recent months while the union territory did not report any related fatalities, a top Health department official said on Monday. Puducherry logged only 13 fresh cases at the end of examination of 1,755 samples during the last 24 hours, Director of Health and Family Welfare S Mohan Kumar said in a release. In a further positive sign, no fresh fatality was reported for the second day in succession from any of the four regions of Puducherry, Karaikal, Mahe and Yanam. He said 95 patients were discharged from hospitals during the last 24 hours. While the Puducherry region registered 12 of the 13 fresh cases, Mahe region reported one infection. The Health department Director said the fatality and recovery rates were 1.67 per cent and 95.84 per cent respectively. — PTI

SHRC finds inspector guilty of assaulting constable

A. ARUL PALANI | DC CHENNAI, NOV. 16

Two years after a Teynampet traffic enforcement wing inspector pushed a constable from a moving two-wheeler for airing his grievance, the State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) has directed the inspector to pay him a compensation of Rs 50,000. The SHRC also recommended disciplinary action against the inspector.

Based on newspaper reports in November 2018, the commission had initiated suo motu proceedings against inspector Ravichandran and sought a report from the Chennai police commissioner.

The matter pertains to constable M. Dharmaraja, who was suspended for refusing to grant him leave to attend his mother's last rites. A video of the inspector pushing the constable from his bike in the middle of the road and dragging him into a patrol vehicle went viral on the social media. The incident took place a few hours after the constable made the complaint. Dharmaraja was on his way to submit his leave application. Ravichandran refused to grant him leave to attend his mother's last rites. A dejected Dharmaraja complained about this over a walkie talkie.

Subsequently, Ravichandran waited with two other traffic police officers to nab him. As the constable arrived, a police official intercepted him in the middle of the road. Dharmaraja lost control over his vehicle and skidded along with the bike. He had a narrow escape as he went under the wheel of a mini truck and the inspector along with another officer dragged him by the collar from the spot. He then pushed him into a patrol van like a criminal. The victim was given treatment at the Government Hospital, Royapettah and Kosha Hospital.

Meanwhile, Dharmaraja's wife lodged a com-

plaint at Abiramapuram police station demanding action against Ravichandran as her husband sustained a fracture on his left leg after being pushed off his bike.

The joint commissioner of police, traffic enforcement, Chennai south, had also submitted a report to the SHRC on February 6, 2019 stating that the inspector violated human rights of Dharmaraja and the inspector was suspended from service and departmental action was initiated against him.

In the reply the inspector denied the allegations and stated that he performed his duty as per law.

OPERATION CLEAN-UP



Despite Covid-19 regulations, people of Chennai celebrated Deepavali in a low-key manner bursting their favourite crackers and other fancy fireworks. The bursting of crackers left behind a huge volume of paper and metal debris, cleaned mostly by workers of Chennai Corporation and other local bodies. However, some residents came up with innovative methods to recycle empty boxes of firecrackers — preventing these boxes from heading to the garbage dumpyard. These people of Kottivakkam along the East Coast Road travelled around their localities for the past two days, collecting empty boxes that contained fancy fireworks. They filled these empty boxes with mud, compost and seeds of various ornamental plants. Once the seeds germinate and the saplings are raised, they can be shifted to wherever the residents want the plants and trees to grow — in the kitchen gardens of their homes or apartments or even public spaces and parks. — E.K. Sanjay

Two of a family killed in road accident

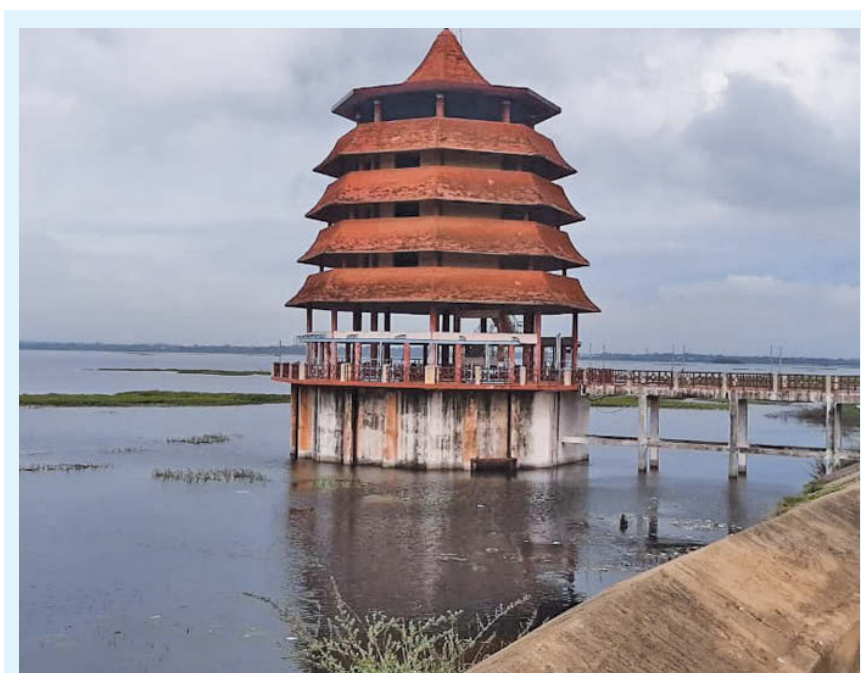
DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, NOV. 16

In a horrific accident, two members of the same family died after the car in which they were travelling overturned and slipped into a roadside ditch in Kanchipuram district.

The accident happened on Sunday, at around 10 pm, when a family of five from Sai Nagar in Tambaram, were returning to the city from Kanchipuram. According to the police, when they were on Walajabad-Tambaram road, near Nandhanallur, their vehicle slipped and fell into a roadside ditch.

Police said Sri Nath (34) and his mother-in-law, Kanagam (54) died on the spot, while Sri Nath's wife, Ishwarya (29), his father Rajan (65) and the couple's 2-year-old son, Anantharajan, escaped with minor injuries.

Passerbys rushed to their help. The police and ambulance were alerted.



Sembarambakkam lake brims with water.

— DC

Govt: No need to panic on Sembarambakkam water level

N. SAMPATH | DC CHENNAI, NOV. 16

The public works department officials on Monday said citizens of Chennai need not fear about flood as the water level in the Sembarambakkam lake is only 20 feet now. The maximum water level is 24 feet.

The water level in the lake was 1,720 cubic feet on Sunday due to continuous rains in Tiruvallur

and Kanchipuram districts for the last few days.

The Sembarambakkam lake near Poonamallee is the main source of water for Chennai.

Heavy rains in 2015 caused the Sembarambakkam lake to overflow leading to flood in Chennai. Rumours spread on social media now that a similar situation had come.

In this backdrop,

Tiruvallur district public works department supervising engineer Kannaiya inspected the Sembarambakkam Lake. As of Monday, 15 cm of rain have been reported in the Sembarambakkam lake area.

A public works official said flood warning should be issued only when the water level reaches 22 feet and people need not fear as the water level is low.

Gold seized by Chennai customs

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, NOV. 16

Customs officials at the Chennai airport on Sunday seized 1.84 kgs gold worth ₹97.7 lakhs. One air passenger has been arrested.

According to the Airport sources, five cases of gold smuggling were detected on Sunday. Four passengers Mohamathu Tharig (36) Syed Mohamed Paris (26) from Ramanathapuram, and Sikandar Masthan (36) and Rahuman Khan (31) from Chennai who had arrived from Dubai by Emirates flight EK-544,

were intercepted at the exit on the suspicion of carrying gold bundles concealed in the rectum.

On personal search, 12 bundles of gold paste weighing 1.93 kg were recovered from their rectum. On extraction 1.61 kg gold of 24K purity valued at ₹84.94 lakhs was recovered and seized under the Customs Act.

In another case, late Sunday night Dhasthager (34) of Ramanathapuram who arrived by Flight FlyDubai FZ 8517 was intercepted at the exit. On personal search, one bundle of gold paste was recovered from rectum and one packet of gold paste was found taped on the ankle of his right. Total 280-gram gold paste recovered which on extraction yielded 243 grams of 24K purity gold valued at ₹12.8 lakhs and the same was seized under the Customs Act. The passenger was arrested based on a previous offence.

Total 1.85 kg gold valued at ₹97.7 lakhs was recovered and seized under the Customs Act. One arrested. Further investigation is under progress.

HC directs temple to reopen Seetha Kingston school on payment of rent

J. STALIN | DC CHENNAI, NOV. 16

Directing the Dharmapuri Rao Bahadur, Calavala Cunnann Chetty's Charities to pay ₹20 lakh as monthly rent for the month of November 2020 to the Executive Officer of the Arumigu Ekambaranathar Thirukkottai in Kancheepuram district, on whose land the 51-year-old Seetha Kingston Matriculation Higher Secondary School is situated in Kilpauk, the Madras high court has asked the Executive Officer of the temple to remove the seal immediately on receipt of the amount and open the school, besides permitting it to function regularly till the end of the academic year.

Justice N.Anand Venkatesh passed the further interim order on the petitions filed by Dharmapuri Rao Bahadur, Calavala Cunnann Chetty's Charities and D.Jerina and 6 others.

The judge said, "The petitioner trust shall make the payment of a sum of Rs 20 lakh for the month of November 2020 to the Executing Officer of the temple."

The Executive Officer immediately on receiving this amount shall remove the seal and open the school. The school shall be permitted to function regularly till the end of the academic year. If in case the petitioner trust is not able to come to a settlement with the temple and resolve the dispute, the students and the staff belonging to the school shall be informed latest by March 2021 to look for an alternative school to continue their studies/employment. This school has been running from the year 1969 onwards and this court has the fond hope that the parties will resolve the dispute amicably and the school will continue functioning in the same premises for a long period to come".

In its petition, the Trust, sought to quash the notice of the temple relating to the government letter concerning the closure of the school premises and direct the authorities to unlock the seal of the school premises for the use of the students and the school in the interest of justice.

The judge said while passing the orders on



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The judge said while passing the orders on

October 28, 2020, this court had taken into consideration the claim made by the temple and this court thought it fit to fix a sum of ₹25 lakh as tentative rent payable from November 2020 up to June 2021 on the premise that it will at least satisfy a small portion of the claim made by the temple, to the text of ₹2 crore.

The claim made by the temple towards arrears of rent runs to nearly ₹13 crore and of course, this issue has to be decided finally while disposing of the petition.

This court only wanted to find an interim solution to ensure that the school was run during this academic year and the students do not lose one full academic year because of the dispute between the trust and temple, the judge added. He posted after 8 weeks, further hearing of the case.

Are A-listers 'more' equal than dissenters?



Sanjay Pinto

If an 83-year-old priest needs to move a court to get a straw and sipper, because he cannot hold a cup due to Parkinson's, among a plethora of other ailments, and the prosecution seeks almost three weeks to respond, what does it say about our respect for human rights? For the record, Parkinson's figures in the list of Specified Disabilities as a "chronic neurological condition" under Clause 4(a)(ii) of the

Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. Even if he is kept in a dispensary in prison, does he have "barrier free access" as mandated by Section 25 (1)(b) of the statute?

I'm not in a position to go into the merits of the case against Father Stan Swamy, or journalist Siddique Kappan arrested on the way to cover the Hathras rape horror, or lawyer and activist Sudha Bharadwaj. Charges under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act do call for thorough investigation. But that is not the point.

During the hearing of Arnab Manoranjan Goswami Vs State of Maharashtra (2020) the Supreme Court is reported



JUSTICE FOR ALL

to have observed that "if we as a constitutional court do not lay down law and protect liberty, then who will? Constitutional courts have to protect freedom, or they will be walking on a path of destruction. We need to send a message to the high courts as well, to exercise their

jurisdiction to uphold personal liberty." The moot question is whether the enforcement of fundamental rights under Articles 226 or 32 of the Constitution of India, before the High Courts or the Supreme Court, is relatively quicker for the well-heeled compared to the poor and the relatively powerless? Ditto with the right against deprivation of life or liberty, except according to procedure established by law under Article 21, or equal protection under Article 14 of the Constitution.

Threats to personal liberty do not go by a calendar - of working days and vacations. Which is why the difference between a right being real and exist-

ing only on paper, lies in expeditious listing and compassionate hearing, based on merit and not status of the petitioners.

Much is often written and spoken about due process. The term 'bail not jail' was first used 43 years ago by the erudite Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer in State of Rajasthan Vs Balchand (1977). "The basic rule may perhaps be tersely put as bail, not jail, except where there are circumstances suggestive of fleeing from justice or thwarting the course of justice or creating other trouble in the shape of repeating offences or intimidating witnesses..." This phrase has now become a cliché. But does it prevail on the

ground?

Another equally old but landmark and relevant decision, arguably the first Public Interest Litigation, was by the Supreme Court in Hussainara Khatun Vs State of Bihar (1979) Lamenting that under trials were treated as "mere ticket numbers", the Court had thundered: "It is a crying shame on the judicial system which permits incarceration of men and women for such long periods of time without trial...Are expeditious trial and freedom from detention not part of human rights and basic freedoms? It is high time that the public conscience is awakened and the Government as well as the

judiciary begin to realise that in the dark cells of our prisons there are large numbers of men and women who are waiting patiently, impatiently perhaps, but in vain, for justice, a commodity which is tragically beyond their reach and grasp. Law has become for them an instrument of injustice and they are helpless and despairing victims of the callousness of the legal and judicial system." Not my words but those of the apex court.

More than four decades later, who gets timely adjudication and who feels abdication? You decide.

(The writer is an advocate at the Madras high court, columnist & author)

SHORT TAKES

Karti pitches for introspection in Congress

Chennai, Nov. 16: Congress MP Karti P. Chidambaram on Monday said it was time for introspection and consultation in the party, days after its poor showing in the Bihar Assembly elections.

Karti, son of former Union minister P. Chidambaram, in a tweet said: "Its time we introspect, ideate, consult & act @INCIndia."

The Lok Sabha MP from Sivagangai in Tamil Nadu made the cryptic comment while tagging a tweet by senior party colleague Kapil Sibal on his interview to an English daily about the Bihar poll outcome.

Karti's comment comes a day after senior Congress leader Tariq Anwar said delay in finalising seat sharing for the Bihar election adversely impacted the grand alliance's poll performance. —PTI

HC imposes cost of ₹1 lakh on Goa Volleyball Assn

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 16

The Madras high court has dismissed as withdrawn, the suit filed by the Goa Volleyball Association relating to the elections of office-bearers of the Volleyball Federation of India and imposed a cost of Rs 1 lakh for consuming valuable time of the court.

Justice N.Sathish Kumar dismissed as withdrawn the suit filed by the Goa Volleyball Association, which sought to declare that the electoral college list dated February 24, 2020, and February 26, 2020, issued by the president and secretary general of Volleyball Federation of India (VFI) respectively, are ultra vires the bylaws of the VFI.

DMK's top panel to meet on Nov. 23

Chennai, Nov. 16: The DMK's high level committee would meet here on November 23 to deliberate on organisational growth, the party said on Monday.

The meeting of the party's high level executive panel would be chaired by president M K Stalin at the DMK headquarters 'Anna Arivalayam,' party's general secretary, Duraimurugan said in a release. Members of the committee should take part without fail, he said adding the agenda of the meet was deliberations about party's "growth plans and work," which is seen as a reference to preparations for the Assembly elections next year. —PTI

Man murdered with beer bottle in drunken fight

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 16

A 30-year-old man was attacked to death by his friend in a drunken brawl in Anakaputhur on Pallavaram on Sunday.

The deceased identified as Manikandan (30) was murdered by his friend Gopi (32), both residents of Mint area.

According to police, Manikandan and Gobi were invited by their friend, one Vasudevan, to a booze party at his house in Anakaputhur on Sunday night. During the party, an argument broke out between Manikandan and Gopi, when Gopi allegedly hit Manikandan's head with a beer bottle. Manikandan died on the spot.

Based on the alert, Shankar Nagar police rushed to the spot and arrested Gopi. They sent Manikandan's body to the Chromepet government hospital for post-mortem.

A case has been registered.

356 years and still going strong

Dean E. Theranirajan, Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital, along with doctors and nurses celebrate 356th 'birthday' of RGGGH. — DC

Make Chennai Haj embarkation point: CM

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 16

Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to designate Chennai as an embarkation point for Haj 2021, as it was done earlier years, keeping in mind the hardship and inconvenience caused to pilgrims from Tamil Nadu.

Pointing out that Chennai had been left out in the new list of 10 embarkation points in India, Palaniswami, assured the Prime Minister, in this letter, that the state government would follow all prescribed Covid-19 protocols for ensuring the safety of the pilgrims while sending them from Chennai.

He said that every year more than 4500 Haj pilgrims from Tamil Nadu and neighbouring States proceed for Haj pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia from the embarkation point at Chennai.

Direct flights were operated from Chennai to Jeddah and back since the year 1987, benefiting the pilgrims of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Puducherry, Lakshadweep, Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

But this year, the Haj Committee of India has now informed that due to Covid-19 pandemic, the number of embarkation points in India have been reduced from 21 to 10.

The Haj pilgrims from Tamil Nadu had been assigned Cochin as their embarkation point, the Chief Minister said, adding that it would be logistically challenging for the pilgrims, who are mostly senior citizens travelling from various locations in Tamil

EPS pleads for TN medical aspirants

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 16

CM Edappadi K. Palaniswami urged the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to allot examination centres within Tamil Nadu for its aspiring medical students appearing for the INI-CET Combined Entrance Test since travelling to faraway places like Madanapalle and Nellore would cause them needless stress.

"I request you to kindly intervene in the matter and direct the health ministry to allot the Examination Centres of their choice, by creating additional Centres, within Tamil Nadu, if necessary," CM said in his letter.

He said some students from TN have been allotted examination centres in faraway places like Madanapalle and Nellore Andhra for the entrance examination scheduled for November 20.

Those places were not well connected from various places in Tamil Nadu and were located 175 to 250 km away from the



hometowns of the students, he added.

The INI-CET Combined Entrance Test is held for admission into Post Graduate courses [MD, MS, DM (6yrs), MCh (6 Yrs)] at Institutes of National Importance (INI) for Medical Education namely, All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS) at New Delhi and all new AIIMS.

Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research (JIPMER) at Puducherry, Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research at Chandigarh, NIMHANS at Bengaluru.

Palaniswami congratulates Nitish

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 16

Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami conveyed his greetings and good wishes to Nitish Kumar, who took charge as Chief Minister of Bihar on Monday.

Nadu.

He said the pilgrims had made a representation to him on the hardship and

difficulties they were likely to face while embarking on Haj pilgrimage from Cochin.



Hundreds of devotees gather in Tiruvalithayam Tiruvallesvarar Temple at Padi during Guru Peyarchi festival. — DC

Rallies that divide people won't be allowed: AIADMK mouthpiece

Chennai, Nov. 16: In a blunt message to its ally BJP, the ruling AIADMK in Tamil Nadu on Monday said it would not allow the former's 'Vel Yatra' and permit attempts towards what it called 'politics of vote bank' based on religion.

Amid remarks by AIADMK ministers defending denial of permission for the yatra in view of Covid-19 and BJP leaders insisting on going ahead with it, the ruling party's organ 'Namadhu Puratchithalaivi Amma' said the state was a cradle of Dravidian ideology and there was no room for bigotry.

The Tamil daily referred to BJP's Mahila Morcha national president Vanathi Srinivasan's comment that 'scuttling' the

Tamil daily referred to BJP's Mahila Morcha national president Vanathi Srinivasan's comment that 'scuttling' the yatra would only lead to 'reactions' hinting at a kind of cascading effect

yatra would only lead to 'reactions' hinting at a kind of cascading effect.

In its first direct response to BJP in over a week, the AIADMK said a tranquil Tamil Nadu would not back processions or yatras that have an 'ulterior' motive of 'dividing' the people on caste or religious lines.

The Tamil Nadu people have time and again

proven that the state was a cradle of Dravidian ideology and there was no room for bigotry as religions were only for nurturing harmony, the AIADMK mouthpiece said in a write-up.

Be it Hinduism, Christianity or Islam, all religions taught love, peace and equality and when this was the case, "the AIADMK, which is beyond caste and religion, will not allow attempts towards vote bank politics based on religion and those who desire to take out the Vel Yatra should realise this," it said.

The BJP, however, dismissed the allegations as baseless and absolutely devoid of truth.

In Tamil Nadu, Hindu religious beliefs were

being "denigrated continuously" over the years and the latest was the "Karuppar Kootam" episode, BJP Tamil Nadu state general secretary K T Raghavan told PTI.

The BJP had said the yatra, led by state unit chief L Murugan, was to expose the DMK, which it alleged, had lent support to Karuppar Kootam, a group of atheists that denigrated 'Kanda Sashti Kavacham' a centuries old Tamil spiritual hymn in praise of Lord Muruga, whose spear-like weapon is Vel.

The AIADMK organ comparing the saffron flag, which denotes sacrifice with Karuppar Kootam was highly condemnable, he said. —PTI

Traffic chokes Perungulathur as thousands return to city

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 16

Chennai city was hit by massive traffic snarls in several major areas as people return to the city on Monday after celebrating Deepavali in their native towns.

The Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation (TNSTC), State Express Transport Corporation (SETC) and private operators, operate buses from various destinations to Chennai.

Thousands of people on Monday returned to the city via Perungulathur. To reduce traffic, Chennai traffic police has made buses from south districts return to Chennai on Tambaram-Maduravoyal Bypass road. The passen-

Buses from state-owned transport corporations, omni-buses and other regular vehicles piled up on the Tambaram — Perungulathur road causing massive traffic congestion

gers who ought to get down at Tambaram, Guindy, Chrompet, Medavakkam, Pallikarai, Pammal, Pallavaram were dropped in Perungulathur, causing their inconvenience. Passengers faced hardship waiting in Perungulathur to board buses and cabs into the city.

Though officials had made arrangements to

manage the crowd, traffic was exceptionally heavy in Tambaram and Perungulathur on Monday morning, leading to traffic snarls on almost all major roads.

Buses from state-owned transport corporations, omni-buses and other regular vehicles piled up on the Tambaram — Perungulathur road causing massive traffic congestion.

Police sources said that additional forces were deployed on several important roads and they did their best to ease traffic difficulties. But still, traffic jams couldn't be avoided. Police added that Monday's traffic was better compared to that of previous year's Deepavali rush.



A huge pile of garbage dumped on Kansa Mettu Street in Madurai. — K. Manikandan

Residents fume as tourists defy coronavirus norms in Nilgiris

B. RAVICHANDRAN | DC
OOTY, NOV 16

Tourists flouting Covid-19 norms have annoyed residents here, and they have urged the district administration and the police departments to be vigilant and keep a keen vigil on tourists who do not wear face masks and also do not maintain social distancing norms.

With the relaxation of the mandatory e-pass norms for tourists entering the Nilgiris, tourist inflow has started to rise for the past two weeks, but now, the problem of

With the relaxation of the mandatory e-pass norms for tourists entering the Nilgiris, tourist inflow has started to rise for the past two weeks, but now, the problem of tourists defying Covid-19 prevention norms, have left residents here fuming

tourists defying Covid-19 prevention norms, have left residents here fuming.

The huge influx of tourists during the Deepavali weekend that continued on Monday also, is indeed a harbinger for renewed tourism activities here, but tourists defying Corona preven-

tion norms pose health hazards to the public here.

The president, Ooty Town Public Awareness Association, G Janardhanan, lamented that concerned officials and the police have been adopting a go-by attitude about tourists defying health norms, while they are very stringent with

residents and traders on the issue.

"One could see some tourists not wearing face masks and defying social distancing norms on the Commercial road, Garden Road, Ettimur road area in Ooty, which are the arterial parts of the town.

The district administration here should deploy enough staff on these roads to rein-in tourists defying health norms. Besides, police should keep vigil and ensure that everyone wears face masks and maintain social distancing," he added.

Incessant rains leave southern districts flooded

ARULOLI M | DC
TIRUNELVELI, NOV. 16

Incessant rains on Monday disrupted normal lives out of gear in the southern districts. Traffic went haywire in several places and flash floods inundated some villages.

Being a coastal district, Thoothukudi was the worst affected. Having registered a total of 202.60 mm rainfall in 24 hours ending 8 am on Monday, Tiruchendur in Thoothukudi district registered 55 mm, the highest in the district and the lowest of two mm was recorded at Ettayapuram and

Thoothukudi city, located below the sea level, was water logged since rain lashed the place continuously from Sunday evening till the next afternoon. Rain water inundated Toovipuram and Anna Nagar regions in Thoothukudi

Vilathikulam, in Thoothukudi district.

Thoothukudi city, located below the sea level, was water logged since rain lashed the place continuously from Sunday evening till

the next afternoon. Rain water inundated Toovipuram and Anna Nagar regions in Thoothukudi. The government staff quarters near the VVD junction was completely inundated. Rain water mixed with drainage entered houses in the ground floor of the government employees quarters, forcing residents to take refuge in the houses of neighbours and relatives. Residents of Chidambaram Nagar, Old Corporation Office road, Siluvai Kovil area were completely water logged, disrupting traffic. City corporation officials

swung into action, said the corporation commissioner. Thoothukudi district police superintendent, Jayakumar, said that additional police personnel have been deployed to monitor and set right disrupted traffic.

Rain in neighbouring Tirunelveli and Tenkasi districts, however, has been viewed as a boon as the dams in these two districts registered a good inflow. Water level at the Papanasam dam that registered an inflow of 2071.88 cusecs on Monday morning, was at 101.53 feet against its maximum storage of 143 feet. The water catchment

area of Papanasam dam registered 23mm rain. Manimuthar dam having a water level of 82.20 feet had 1,066 cusecs of inflow, while Servarar dam experienced 9 mm till Monday morning, with water level at 100 feet.

People living in low-lying areas on the banks of river Thamirabarani were advised to shift to safer places and the Tirunelveli and Tenkasi district administrations have issued warning against public taking bath in the river.

Almost all the water falls in Courtallam in Tenkasi district were in spate. Thiruparappu falls in

Kanyakumari district also was in full spate on Monday due to continuous rains in the district since Sunday evening. Major reservoirs Pechiparai and Perunchani dams in Kanyakumari district, had their water level respectively at 42.43 feet against 48 feet and 68.90 feet against 77 feet as on Monday, said PWD sources.

Kanyakumari district registered a total rainfall of 94 mm during the 24 hours ending 8 am on Monday. The highest rainfall of 29 mm was recorded at Kottar, while Thuckalay registered the lowest rainfall of 1.2 mm.

Handbook on renal transplant released

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 16

Telangana Governor Tamilsai Soundarrajan released a Handbook of Renal Transplantation in Developing Countries through video

conference at a function held at the Madras Medical Mission hospital in Chennai on Monday.

An initiative by Georgi Abraham, Director - Nephrology, and Anusha Rohit, Head Microbiology at Madras Medical Mission, the handbook

attempts to bridge the gap between the knowledge and practices of the West and those of South Asia.

Soundarajan said, "Kidney transplants started in India 45 years ago but only 10,000 transplants are

conducted in India every year in spite of the fact that the demand is for 2.5 lakh transplantations annually. With the demand being like it is, it is timely that the Handbook has been brought out by highly esteemed authors.'

SHORT TAKES

SABARI PILGRIMAGE BEGINS

Sabarimala, Nov. 16: Wearing masks and strictly adhering to Covid-19 protocols, devotees of Lord Ayyappa trekked the holy hill Sabarimala and offered prayers at the famous temple here as it opened for the annual two-month-long Mandala-Makaravilakku season on Monday morning.

It is the first annual pilgrimage season at the hill temple after the coronavirus outbreak and authorities have decided to restrict the number of devotees to 1,000 per day and to 2,000 on weekends. However, the 'Sannidhanam', the temple complex which used to witness a sea of devotees on the first day of the Malayalam month of Vrichikam, saw only a few devotees this morning. Pilgrims, having Covid-19 negative certificates, were allowed to trek the hills since 3 am from Pampa, the base camp. — PTI

WOMEN VOTERS OUTNUMBER MEN

From Page 1

During the claims and objection period from November 16 to December 15, an elector or eligible citizen wanting to get enrolled or make deletion, correction or transposition in existing entry may submit the relevant form at the office of the booth level officer, electoral registration officer or assistant electoral registration officer on any working day or the booth level officers on special camp days at the respective polling stations or the designated officer at the designated location on any working day during the summary revision claims and objections period, the release added.

For Indian citizens living abroad, Form 6A should be submitted to the electoral registration officer directly or sent by post and for getting replacement EPIC on shifting/correction/loss/mutilation/destruction, an application has to be made in Form-001 in the Taluk/Zonal Office.

'SUSHIL MODI WILL BE MISSED'

From Page 1

In 2017, when Mr Kumar broke his ties with the grand alliance and formed the government with the BJP's support, Sushil Kumar Modi was made the deputy chief minister.

"He will be missed," JD(U) leaders said after the oath on Monday. However, BJP leaders when asked about Sushil Kumar Modi's role in the government said that "he is party's asset and may get some important role. Our Central leadership will take a final decision about his new role".

NDA insiders said that the ministries have been allocated on the basis of two berths each for every seven seats won by the allies. However, sources said that both the JD(U) and the BJP may increase ministerial berths in the coming days after consulting NDA allies.

'MODERNA VACCINE IS 94.5% EFFICIENT'

From Page 1

Based on these interim safety and efficacy data, Moderna intends to submit for an Emergency Use Authorisation (EUA) with the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) in the coming weeks and anticipates having the EUA informed by the final safety and efficacy data.

Moderna also plans to submit applications for authorisations to global regulatory agencies.

Bancel said the company is looking forward to the "next milestones" of submitting for an emergency use authorisation in the US, and regulatory filings in countries around the world, "while we continue to collect data on the safety and efficacy of the vaccine in the COVE study. We remain committed to and focused on doing our part to help end the Covid-19 pandemic."

By the end of 2020, the company expects to have approximately 20 million doses of mRNA-1273 ready to ship in the US. The company remains on track to manufacture 500 million to 1 billion doses globally in 2021. The announcements about the vaccines and their potential availability for use among the general population in the coming weeks and months has offered hope to millions around the world in a year that has seen the pandemic devastate lives. — PTI

Daggers drawn in Congress over Bihar election debacle

It could win only 19 out of the 70 seats it contested in just concluded polls

SREEPARNA CHAKRABARTY | DC NEW DELHI, NOV. 16

Even as Nitish Kumar begins his record fourth term as Bihar chief minister, the Congress Party is in the throes of a meltdown over its disastrous performance in the Assembly polls which prevented the Grand Alliance from winning the elections by a hair's breadth.

The Congress, which could win only 19 out of the 70 seats it contested in the just concluded Bihar polls, is largely being held responsible for the debacle of the Mahagathbandhan or the Grand Alliance with the Left parties and the Rashtriya Janata Dal having performed far better.

This has led to many senior Congress leaders, who were already on a warpath over the "organisational mess in the party", to speak out again. Sources told this newspaper that the group of 23, which comprises leaders who had written a letter to Congress president Sonia Gandhi expressing their grievances in late August, are planning to take up the Bihar polls debacle, too.

Sources said that the leaders are waiting for Congress treasurer Ahmed Patel to recover from Covid-19. Patel, who is known to be very close to Congress president Sonia Gandhi and has been her political secretary, is currently in hospital.

Senior lawyer and Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal, who is one of the leaders among the group of 23, has already come out in the open saying that the party is unwilling to introspect. "If for six years, the Congress has not introspected, what hope do we have for introspection now? We know what is wrong with Congress. The party itself knows the answers. But they are not



Union home minister Amit Shah and BJP national president J.P. Nadda, Bihar Governor Phagu Chauhan, HAM (S) chief Jitan Ram Manjhi with Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, Deputy Chief Ministers Renu Devi and Tarkishore Prasad pose for a group photograph after the oath-taking ceremony at Raj Bhawan in Patna on Monday. — PTI

willing to recognise those answers. If they do not recognise those answers, then the graph will continue to decline," he said.

Sibal added that there was "reluctance because the CWC is a nominated body. Democratic processes must be adopted and embraced even in the constitution of the CWC, which is reflected in the provisions of the Congress' constitution itself".

Among others who have spoken out are Tamil Nadu MP and former finance minister P. Chidambaram's son Karti Chidambaram and Bihar Congress leader Tariq Anwar.

"It's time we introspect, ideate, consult & act @INCIndia," Karti Chidambaram tweeted.

Anwar said on Sunday that the Congress must learn from the Bihar debacle and complete alliance formalities well in advance for upcoming

CHIRAG TAKES A DIG AT NITISH, HOPES HE COMPLETES TERM AS NDA CM

Patna, Nov. 16: LJP president Chirag Paswan on Monday congratulated Nitish Kumar on becoming the Bihar Chief Minister once again, saying, tongue-in-cheek, that he hopes the JD(U) leader will "continue to remain the NDA's CM".

In an apparent swipe at Kumar becoming the Chief Minister despite having way too less MLAs than the BJP, he said, "I

Assembly polls. He, however, claimed that the high command was serious about introspection as well as a thorough analysis of the results.

Sources said that the issue was likely to be taken up at the AICC meeting which is likely to be

congratulate you on becoming the Chief Minister and the BJP for making you one".

"Congratulations to respected @NitishKumar ji for becoming the chief minister once again. Hope the government will complete its term and you will continue to be the NDA's chief minister," Paswan, a bitter critic of Kumar, said in a series of tweets in Hindi. — PTI

held in late January or early February and preparations for which have already begun.

In August, when the 23 senior leaders had raised issues critical to the party organisation, they were confronted and accused of being disloyal.

Nitish Kumar: Masterful craftsman of realpolitik

Patna, Nov. 16: "Politics is the art of the possible", German statesman Otto Von Bismarck once famously said. And who understands it better than Nitish Kumar, the modern-day craftsman of realpolitik, who has survived many a headwind to secure a fourth straight term as the Bihar Chief Minister despite his party finishing a poor third in the 243-member state Assembly.

Nitish Kumar's unusual knack for spotting friends has got him where it has despite the drastic slump in the electoral fortune of his party that won just 43 seats, down from 71 it had in 2015, and 31 less than ally BJP which clinched 74. The most atypical of politicians owing their rise to post-Mandal politics, Nitish Kumar stood out for his ability to address the governance deficit, unlike a majority of the breed reared in the social-stable, but was often accused of pursuing politics of opportunism. Call it political opportunism or sagacity, his moves, in effect, prevented the

Hindutva forces from holding sway over Bihar, where a section of the BJP feels mortified over not having its own chief minister till date despite enjoying a near hegemonic status nationally.

Known for weighing his options carefully before making any move, Kumar, upon a closer look, comes across as a risk taker who has not shied away from going against the tide. An engineer by training who had taken an active part in the JP movement, he spurned a job offer from the state electricity department and decided to take the political gamble, an oddity among educated youth in Bihar for whom the lure of "sarkari naukri" remains undiminished.

Unlike Lalu Prasad and Ram Vilas Paswan, his co-travellers during the movement led by Jayaprakash Narayan, electoral success eluded Kumar for long.

He got the first taste of victory, after three successive defeats, in the 1985 Assembly polls when he won from Harnaut as a candidate of the Lok Dal

GRAND ALLIANCE BOYCOTTS NITISH'S OATH-TAKING

Patna, Nov. 16: The opposition Grand Alliance on Monday decided to boycott the oath-taking ceremony of Nitish Kumar, claiming the mandate in the elections was "against the NDA" which has been changed by a "fraud".

RJD, which is spearheading the five-party Mahagathbandhan, and its allies have decided to remain away from the swearing-in function of Kumar.

"The RJD boycotts oath-taking ceremony of this puppet government. The mandate is for a change, and against the (ruling) NDA. The peoples verdict has been changed by the rulers order," the RJD alleged in a tweet. — PTI

Ministers lose bypolls in MP, refuse to resign

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, NOV. 16

Two ministers in the Shivraj Singh Cabinet have sparked a political row by 'deciding' to continue in their positions despite being defeated in the recent by-elections in their respective Assembly constituencies.

State ministers Imarti Devi and Giriraj Dandotia have so far maintained a silence over their next course of action following their loss in the bypolls, indicating that they are not in favour of stepping down and want to continue in their position till January 2 when their six-month tenure in the ministry ends.

As per the Constitution, a non-MLA can be inducted into a ministry for six months during which he or she needs to be elected.

The Congress on Monday raked up the issue demanding that all the ministers in the Shivraj Singh ministry who lost the bypolls should step down on moral grounds.

"It is unethical on the part of the ministers who lost the bypolls to continue in their positions. They forfeited the moral right to continue in the ministry after losing. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan should ask them to put in their papers if they do not volunteer to resign," Congress spokesman

● **MP MINISTERS** Imarti Devi and Giriraj Dandotia have so far maintained a silence over their next course of action following their loss in the bypolls, indicating that they are not in favour of stepping down and want to continue in their position till January 2 when their six-month tenure in the ministry ends.

Bhupendra Gupta said here.

The BJP has chosen to keep mum on the issue. "It is the Chief Minister's prerogative to decide whom he wants in his ministry and whom he wants to drop", BJP spokesman here Rajneesh Agrawal said.

Legal experts say that Constitutional provisions do not bar the defeated ministers from continuing in the ministry till the end of the six-month-period even after failing to get elected to the House during the period.

"As per Article 164 (4) of the Constitution, a person who is not an MLA can continue as a minister for six months," Anand Bhardwaj, senior advocate of the Gwalior bench of the Madhya Pradesh High Court, said.

Another minister in the Shivraj Singh cabinet, Anand Singh Kansana, has also lost the by-elections. He has announced that he will step down. But he is yet to put in his papers.

MODI, PUTIN, XI TO ATTEND BRICS SUMMIT ONLINE

New Delhi, Nov. 16: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will attend a virtual summit of the influential grouping BRICS on Tuesday which will focus on cooperation in counter-terrorism, trade, health, energy and ways to offset impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

Chinese President Xi Jinping, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro and Russian President Vladimir Putin are scheduled to attend the 12th summit of the Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS) grouping.

The BRICS summit is taking place at a time two of the bloc's members, India and China, are locked in a bitter border standoff in eastern Ladakh for over six months. Both Modi and Xi had come face-to-face virtually at the annual summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) on November 10.

"At the invitation of President Putin, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be attending the 12th BRICS Summit hosted by Russia, under the theme 'Global Stability, Shared Security and Innovative Growth' on November 17," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a statement.

The BRICS is known as an influential bloc that represents over 3.6 billion people. — PTI

2 LAKH INDIAN STUDENTS CHOSE US IN 2019-20

New Delhi, Nov. 16: Nearly two lakh Indian students chose the United States as their destination to pursue higher education in the 2019-20 academic year, according to the Open Doors Report released by the US embassy on Monday.

Indian students comprised nearly 20 per cent of the over one million students from around the world, and the US has seen a steady increase in the number of undergraduate students from India, the report stated.

"Over the last 10 years, the number of Indians studying in the United States has roughly doubled, and we know why the US is the gold standard for higher education, providing practical application and experience that gives our graduates an advantage in the global economy," said minister counsellor for public affairs David Kennedy.

The US department of state offers advising services to prospective students through seven EducationUSA advising centres throughout India - in New Delhi, Hyderabad, Chennai, Kolkata, Bangalore, Ahmedabad and Mumbai. "Early next year, a second EducationUSA Center is opening in Hyderabad hosted by Y-Axis Foundation," an official statement by the embassy said. — PTI

GUPKAR | ALLIANCE

BJP terms PAGD an unholy alliance, which wants exactly what 'Pak, anti-India nations want

BKP asks Congress to clarify its stand on Article 370

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 16

Slamming the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) as an "unholy alliance," which wants exactly what "Pakistan and anti-India countries want," the BJP on Monday asked the Congress to clarify its stand on Article 370 after the Jammu and Kashmir PCC chief said that the party will contest the maiden District Development Council (DDC) with the alliance.

Reminding the Congress top brass, including party president Sonia Gandhi and former president

Rahul Gandhi, that restoration of Article 370 is the declared agenda of the alliance, senior BJP leader and Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said the Congress should tell the nation categorically whether or not it supports annulment of pro-people and humanist laws that came into force in J&K after the annulment of the Article 370.

Prasad also asked the Congress leadership whether or not it supports the statement of PAGD chairman and National Conference chief Farooq Abdullah that he wished Article 370 will be restored with China's help and also

● **THE PEOPLE'S** Alliance for Gupkar Declaration is an amalgamation of various Jammu and Kashmir based political parties who are seeking the restoration of Article 370.

of PDP's Mehbooba Mufti, who had said that she would only hold the Tricolour after the J&K state flag is restored.

He cited Central laws including on juvenile justice, human rights and reservations for SC/ST, OBCs, and those against child marriage, corruption, transactions and against triple talaq, that

were implemented in J&K post-annulment of Article 370 and the benefits of annulment of Article 35(A).

He asked: "I want to ask Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi, do they want the restoration of Article 370? Please tell the nation categorically and clearly does the Congress support annulment of pro-people laws."

He accused the PAGD of pushing J&K towards a state of "narrow conservatism."

The PAGD is an amalgamation of various Jammu and Kashmir based political parties who are seeking the restoration of

Article 370.

Earlier, targeting the Congress over its ties with the NC and the PDP, BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra also lashed out at the PAGD, describing the alliance as "unholy".

"This Gupkar Alliance wants exactly what Pakistan and anti-India countries want. Pakistan has gone to every forum and spoken against the removal of Article 370. The Gupkar Alliance says the same thing," said Patra who also took a dig at Gandhi over comments of the likes of former US president Barack Obama to RJD leader Shivanand Tiwari.

EVICTION OF GUJJAR-BAKERWAL COMMUNITY 'ILLEGAL': MEHBOOBA

Srinagar, Nov. 16:

Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti on Monday warned the government against evicting members of the Gujjar-Bakerwal community from forest areas in the Union Territory, saying if they are harassed, the consequences would be dangerous.

Mehbooba visited the upper reaches of Pahalgam in south Kashmir's Anantnag district on Monday and met

people whose 'Dhoks' (temporary shelters) were demolished by authorities as part of an anti-encroachment drive.

"This is part of the illegal process started by central government in Jammu and Kashmir after the abrogation of Article 370, under which the people, who live here like nomads, Gujjars, Bakerwals, whose forefathers have been living here for centuries, are being evicted," Mehbooba said. — PTI

IN BRIEF EXTREMIST GOES ON TRIAL IN FRANCE

Paris, Nov. 16: An Islamic State operative goes on trial Monday in France on terror charges for swaggering bare-chested through a train in 2015 with an arsenal of weapons and shooting one passenger.

He was brought down by three American vacationers in an electrifying capture that Clint Eastwood turned into a Hollywood thriller. The scene five years ago on the fast train from Amsterdam to Paris is the focus of the month-long trial of Ayoub El Khazzani, with testimony expected from the two US servicemen and their friend, who have been hailed as heroes. Eastwood, who turned the drama on August 21, 2015 in car No. 12 into a movie "The 15:17 to Paris," has been also summoned to appear on November 23. It was unclear whether they would be present or testify by video. El Khazzani, a 31-year-old Moroccan boarded the train in Brussels armed to the hilt, authorities say.

JETLINER HITS BROWN BEAR IN ALASKA

Yakutat (US), Nov. 16: An Alaska Airlines jetliner struck a brown bear while landing early Saturday evening, killing the animal and causing damage to the plane, officials said.

None of the passengers or crew members on board the plane were injured during the accident at the Yakutat Airport in southeast Alaska, *The Anchorage Daily News* reported. The Boeing 737-700 killed the brown bear sow, but a cub thought to be about 2 years old was uninjured, Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities spokesman Sam Dapevich said.

Airport crew members had cleared the runway about 10 minutes before the flight was expected to land, Dapevich said. The plane landed after dark and crews followed normal procedures for runway checks. The staff did not see signs of wildlife during the check, but the pilots spotted the two bears crossing the runway as the jet slowed after landing, Dapevich said.

"The nose gear missed the bears, but the captain felt an impact on the left side after the bears passed under the plane," Alaska Airlines said in a statement. The pilots saw the bear lying about 20 feet (6 metres) from the center of the runway as the plane taxied to a parking area just before 6:30 p.m., the airline said. It was not immediately clear how many passengers were on the flight. The plane departed from the town of Cordova.

SPACEX SENDS 4 ASTRONAUTS TO SPACE STATION

Cape Canaveral, Nov. 16: SpaceX launched four astronauts to the International Space Station on the first full-fledged taxi flight for NASA by a private company. The Falcon rocket on Sunday thundered into the night from Kennedy Space Center with three Americans and one Japanese, the second crew to be launched by SpaceX.

The Dragon capsule on top — named Resilience by its crew in light of this year's many challenges, most notably COVID-19 — reached orbit nine minutes later. It is due to reach the space station late Monday and remain there until spring. "By working together through these difficult times, you've inspired the nation, the world, and in no small part the name of this incredible vehicle, Resilience," Commander Mike Hopkins said right before liftoff. Once reaching orbit, he radioed: "That was one heck of a ride." Sidelined by the coronavirus himself, SpaceX founder and chief executive Elon Musk was forced to monitor the action from afar.

He tweeted that he "most likely" had a moderate case of Covid-19. NASA policy at Kennedy Space Center requires anyone testing positive for coronavirus to quarantine and remain isolated. Sunday's launch follows by just a few months SpaceX's two-pilot test flight. It kicks off what NASA hopes will be a long series of crew rotations between the US and the space station, after years of delay. More people means more science research at the orbiting lab, according to officials. Cheers and applause erupted at SpaceX Mission Control in Hawthorne, California, after the capsule reached orbit and the first-stage booster landed on a floating platform in the Atlantic. Musk tweeted a single red heart. The flight to the space station — 27 1/2 hours door to door — should be entirely automated.

Belgium's Janssen begins Covid-19 vaccine trial in UK

Clinical trial to involve 6,000 volunteers across the country

London, Nov. 16: Belgium-headquartered global pharmaceutical company Janssen began a major new clinical trial of its potential vaccine against Covid-19 in the UK from Monday, which will involve 6,000 volunteers across the country. Recruitment into the Phase 3 study will complete in March 2021 and the trial will last for 12 months. It marks the third potential vaccine to enter clinical trials in the UK, alongside US biotech company Novavax and University of Oxford/AstraZeneca, whose studies remain ongoing.

"The start of further clinical trials in the UK is yet another step forward in the race to discover a safe and effective vaccine, and comes alongside recent news that we could be on the cusp of the first major breakthrough since the pandemic began," said UK Business Secretary Alok Sharma.

"While we are optimistic with the progress being made, there are no guarantees and it is possible there will be no one-size-fits-all vaccine. That is why it is absolutely vital that while our scientists are cracking on with the job, we continue to follow the guidance to control the virus, protect the NHS and save lives," he said. The UK volunteers will take part in the trial at 17 National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) sites, including in Southampton, Bristol, Cardiff, London Leicester, Sheffield, Manchester, Dundee and Belfast, according to the government's Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

It said the government has developed a portfolio of six different vaccine candidates and secured access to 350 million doses to date. Of this, 30 million doses of the Janssen vaccine could be made available to the UK if it is safe and effective by mid-2021.

PERU PRESIDENT RESIGNS, CRISIS GRIPS NATION

Lima, Nov. 16: Peru's interim president resigned Sunday as the nation plunged into its worst constitutional crisis in two decades following massive protests unleashed when Congress ousted the nation's popular leader.

In a short televised address, Manuel Merino said Congress acted within the law when he was sworn into office as chief of state Tuesday, despite protesters' allegations that legislators had staged a parliamentary coup. "I, like everyone, want what's best for our country," he said.

The politician agreed to step down after a night of unrest in which two young protesters were killed and half his Cabinet resigned. Peruvians cheered the decision, waving their nation's red and white flag on the streets. — AP

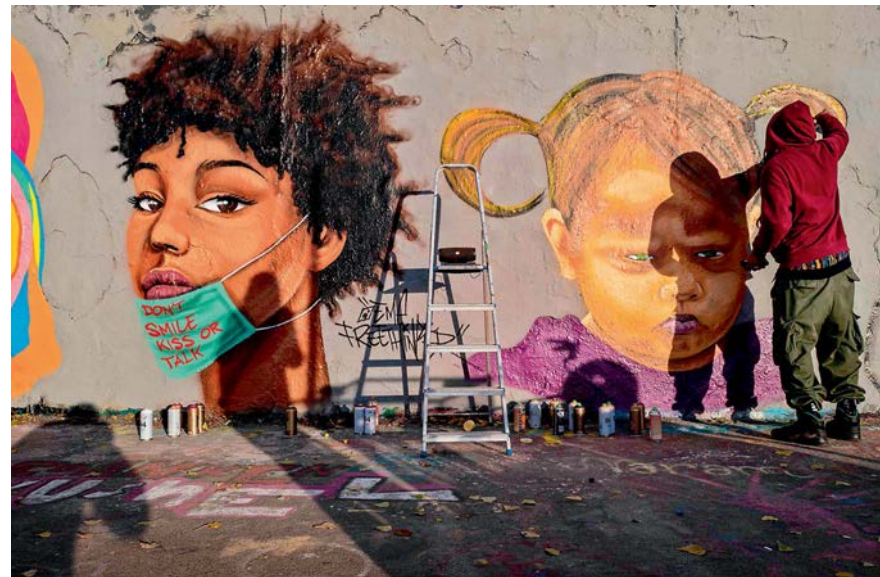
MALL | MOVE

Kids will tell what they want for Christmas from six feet away

Here comes Santa with mask, plexiglass

New York, Nov. 16: Santa Claus is coming to the mall — just don't try to sit on his lap. Despite the pandemic — and the fact that Santa's age and weight put him at high risk for severe illness from the coronavirus — mall owners are going ahead with plans to bring him back this year. But they are doing all they can to keep the jolly old man safe, including banning kids from sitting on his knee, no matter if they've been naughty or nice. Kids will instead tell Santa what they want for Christmas from six feet away, and sometimes from behind a sheet of plexiglass. Santa and his visitors may need to wear a mask, even while posing for photos.

And some malls will put



Street artist Eme Freethinker works on one of his mural paintings on a segment of the Berlin wall (1961-1989) in Berlin's Mauerpark on Sunday. The still-standing segment of the so-called "rear wall", which used to prevent access for east Germans to the death strip, is a legal graffiti and street art space that has become an alternative to museums, many of which are closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. — AFP

"Finding an effective vaccine with a good safety profile is a top priority in helping to protect us all more quickly against Covid-19. While the news of a potential vaccine is tremendously exciting, our ambition in the scientific community is to ensure we leave no stone unturned in the search for a solution to help end this pandemic," said Professor Saul Faust, Director of the NIHR Southampton Clinical Research Facility and Chief Investigator for the Janssen Phase 3 trial.

"All the vaccines that are being trialled work by generating immune responses to the same part of the coronavirus as the RNA vaccine that has announced some interim early results," he said.

The trial by Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies, part of Johnson & Johnson, is jointly funded by the UK government's Vaccine Taskforce to test the safety and effectiveness of a potential Covid-19 vaccine. Paul Stoffels, Vice Chairman of the Executive Committee and Chief Scientific Officer,

Merkel, govts to assess lockdown

Berlin, Nov. 16: German Chancellor Angela Merkel will assess the effects of a nearly two-week-long partial lockdown with state governors in a video conference Monday.

Germany went into a partial lockdown at the beginning of November that included closing restaurants, cafes and cultural institutions, but left open schools and stores after virus figures spiked exponentially in October. The rise of new infections has since slowed down, but on Friday the country still registered a new record of 23,542 cases. On

Monday, 10,824 new cases were reported by the country's disease control center. However, virus figures are usually lower at the beginning of the week because there's less testing on weekends.

Merkel and the 16 state governors will begin their evaluation of the country's Coronavirus situation in the afternoon. Local media reported that possible new measures could include recommendations to further reduce social contacts and to cut school classes in half and have elementary school children wear masks. — AP

Johnson & Johnson, said: "We are delighted to be initiating our global Phase 3 trial in the UK to study the safety and efficacy of a two-dose regimen of our investigational Covid-19 vaccine candidate. "This

collaboration with UK researchers and the NIHR demonstrates our continued commitment to working together with partners around the world, and marks another positive step forward." — PTI

Macron sees Donald's envoy TIME FOR TRUMP TO CONCEDE, SAYS OBAMA

Paris, Nov. 16: French President Emmanuel Macron faced the potentially uncomfortable position Monday of meeting US President Donald Trump's top diplomat, having already congratulated President-elect Joe Biden for his election victory.

Neither side said much in advance about US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's low-profile visit to Paris, the starting point of a seven-country tour of Europe and the Middle East. Macron's office described Pompeo's planned stop Monday at the presidential Elysee Palace as a "courtesy" visit.

No press conference was scheduled, seemingly ruling out the likelihood of journalists getting to ask Pompeo or Macron about their conflicting visions of the US election outcome. Pompeo has not accepted Trump's election defeat. Macron has already spoken by phone with Biden to congratulate him. Pompeo's trip is aimed at

Washington, Nov. 16: It's time for US President Donald Trump to concede to President-elect Joe Biden, as there is no scenario to reverse the outcome of the election, his predecessor Barack Obama has said. Trump, who is refusing to concede, has 232 electoral college votes. He has challenged the election results in various states including Pennsylvania, Nevada, Michigan, Georgia and Arizona. He had demanded a recount in Wisconsin.

In all these states, he alleged there were massive voters' fraud and electoral malpractice. Biden

has 306 of the 538 electoral college votes, well above the halfway mark of 270. "Absolutely," Obama told 60 Minutes of the CBNS News in an interview aired Sunday when asked if in his view it is time for Trump to concede. "Well, I mean, I think it was time for him to concede probably — the day after the election — or at the latest, two days after the election. When you look at the numbers objectively, Joe Biden will have won handily. There is no scenario in which any of those states would turn the other way, and certainly not enough to reverse the outcome of

the election," Obama said.

More than the courtesy of a concession, the Trump White House is declining to free up the usual funds and facilities for the incoming administration. Biden is not receiving secret national security briefings as Trump did when he was president-elect, he alleged. Asserting that a president is a public servant, Obama said that they are temporary occupants of the office, by design. "And when your time is up then it is your job to put the country first and think beyond your own ego," he said. — PTI

shoring up the priorities of Trump's outgoing administration. From Paris, he was expected to travel to Turkey. The trip will also include visits to Israeli

settlements in the West Bank that have been avoided by previous secretaries of state. Before the scheduled meetings with Macron and his foreign minister, Pompeo laid a

bouquet of red, white and blue flowers at a memorial to victims of terrorism at a Paris landmark, the Hotel des Invalides. The ceremony lasted about a minute. — AP

Gilgit-Baltistan: PTI wins 8 seats

Islamabad, Nov. 16: Prime Minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) on Monday won eight of 23 constituencies and was leading in one seat in the legislative assembly polls in Gilgit-Baltistan, prompting Opposition parties to dub the election as "stolen." India has slammed Pakistan for its decision to hold elections in Gilgit-Baltistan and said any action to alter the status of the militarily-occupied region has no legal basis.

Elections were held on 23 seats of the third legislative assembly on Sunday amidst tight security due to the threat of militancy. Polling on one seat was postponed after the death of one of the contestants. Unofficial results compiled by the various media outlets showed that PTI won at least 8 seats and was ahead in one, but it was still well short of majority to form the government. However, it was in a position to form the government as 6-7 independent candidates also won.

Geo TV reported that PTI won 8 seats, independent candidates 7, Pakistan People's Party (PPP) 3, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) 2, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JIU-F) and Majlis Wahdatul Muslimeen (MWM) 1 seat each. The official results were still not known as election authorities may take some time to announce

SUGAR SCAM: FIA CASE AGAINST SHAHBAZ

Lahore, Nov. 16: Pakistan's top investigative body has registered an FIR against top Opposition leader Shahbaz Sharif, Prime Minister Imran Khan's friend and three others in a multi-billion sugar scam. The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) registered the case on Sunday against Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) President Shahbaz Sharif, his sons Hamza and Suleman, Prime Minister Khan's friend Jahangir Tareen and his son Ali Tareen under money laundering, forgery, criminal breach of trust and cheating of public shareholders.

Tareen and his son are accused of defrauding and laundering Rs 4.35 billion in the case, while Shahbaz and his sons are facing similar charges amounting Rs 25 billion. The complaint comes days after the Lahore High Court struck down a case filed by the Security and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) with the FIA against Tareen's JDW Sugar Mills and Farooqi Pulp Mills and Shahbaz's Al-Arabia Sugar Mills. — PTI

the final outcome. — PTI

CHINA: RCEP IS A MILESTONE OF GREAT SIGNIFICANCE

Beijing, Nov. 16: China on Monday termed the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement to create the world's biggest free trade bloc as a "milestone of great significance", while studies showed that the deal is more of a strategic significance to Beijing providing marginal economic impact. Fifteen Asia-Pacific nations, including China, on Sunday signed the agreement. India, one of the leading consumer-driven markets in the region, pulled out of talks last year, concerned that the elimination of tariffs would open its markets to a flood of imports that could harm local produc-

ers. A declaration by the countries which have signed the RCEP agreement said that they can start negotiations with India for joining the pact once New Delhi submits a written request stating its intention for the same.

Analysts say that without India, the agreement would not have much relevance as it cannot provide a big market combining India and China, the most populous countries in the world. "After 8 years of negotiations, the RCEP was officially signed," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian told a media briefing here while answering a question on the agreement. — PTI

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited
Regd. Office: PSEB, Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001
Corporate Identity Number (CIN): U40109PB2010SGC033813
Website: www.pspcl.in

E-Tender Enquiry No. 295/P-2/EMP-W-11752 dt 09-Nov-2020 & ID: 2020_POWER_56098_1

Scope of Work: Preventive / Breakdown maintenance of lighting equipment and cables connected with the same of cabling system of four units of GGSSTP Roopnagar, lighting and cabling of Stage-I, Micro Hydel Project including street, fencing / boundary Lighting and cleaning and up keeping of cabling system and preventive / Breakdown maintenance of 415V LD system its lighting equipment and cables connected with the same, cabling system of residential & non-residential buildings & street lights of Nuhol Colony, Power Colony, Work Charge Colony, Sarsa Colony & along Nangal Hydel Channel of GGSSTP, Roopnagar.

EMD: Rs. 3,00,000/- (Three Lacs only)

Time period: As per NIT

Date & time up to which tender shall be received: 17.12.2020 & 11:00 AM
Date & time of opening of tender: 24.12.2020 & 11:30 AM

Tender specification can only be downloaded from website <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in/> & no hard copy of the same will be issued by this office.

Note:

- In case any difficulty regarding uploading of the tender the prospective bidders are requested to get clarification from this office or M/s e-procurement system Government of Punjab. Contact No. +91-(172)-2970284/63. It is also requested to get their digital signature well in time so as to submit tenders through e-tendering only.
- It is informed that in case tender process is not completed due to any reason, no corrigendum will be published in newspapers. Details regarding corrigendum may be seen on website: eproc.punjab.gov.in

RTP-51/2020
RO : I/104599

SE/HQ
GGSSTP, Rupnagar



Sydney Poulos, 8, gives Santa a fist bump through a transparent barrier at a Bass Pro Shop in Bridgeport. — AP

faux gift boxes and other decorations in front of

Saint Nick to block kids from charging toward

him. Other safety measures include online reser-

vations to cut down on lines, workers wiping down holiday-decorated sets, and hand sanitizer aplenty. Santa's hours are also getting cut to give him a break from crowds.

Macy's cancelled its in-person visits this year, saying it couldn't provide a safe environment for the more than 250,000 people that show up to see Kriss Kringle at its New York flagship store. But malls, which have struggled to attract shoppers for years, are not willing to kill a holiday tradition.

"You have to give them a reason to come or they'll stay home and shop online," says Michael Brown, who oversees the retail team at consulting firm Kearney. — AP



DECCAN Chronicle

17 NOVEMBER 2020

As RCEP is born, India must tread cautiously

The world's largest trade bloc emerged on Sunday after 15 countries in East and Southeast Asia, and Australia signed a deal to open up their economies further to foster free trade. The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which has been anchored by China, accounts for 29 per cent of the global economy in terms of its size, overshadowing similar arrangements in Europe and North America. However, India, the third-largest economy in terms of purchasing power parity, is conspicuous by its absence as it walked out of negotiations in 2019.

Prime concerns expressed by India were the fear of Chinese goods flooding the country, misuse of simplified country of origin rules, lack of mechanism to prevent dumping of industrial products by China and agricultural and dairy products by Australia and New Zealand. There was no mechanism to address a potential trade deficit arising out of lower tariffs mandated under the RCEP. The deal expected the member-countries to offer similar treatment to co-members as they offer to any of their strategic-partner countries. The member-countries expected India to adhere to these conditions without an assurance on opening up services sector, where Indian companies are far ahead, and allowing easy movement of labour under this deal, making the RCEP tilted heavily towards China.

After the signing of the deal, several member-countries of the RCEP wished India too joined the deal, which seeks to promote free trade in Asia. The interests of the current member-countries do not align any further. While it is a fact that India would lose out of accessing the largest market in the world, one must also try to understand if India - with the current level of industrialisation - can cash in on the RCEP. Currently, RCEP is nothing but ASEAN plus-5, which means China, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand and Australia and 10 countries of the ASEAN. Southeast Asian countries already have a free-trade agreement. But now three leaders in manufacturing - China, Japan and South Korea - and two agricultural and dairy majors - Australia and New Zealand - have joined the ASEAN's free trade zone. It is a win-win for all of them. While companies can choose to set up factories in smaller countries to access the world's largest market, China, Japan, and South Korea can compete to sell products. The Indian industry, however, does not have the inherent strength to compete with bigger players and may end up being a dumping ground.

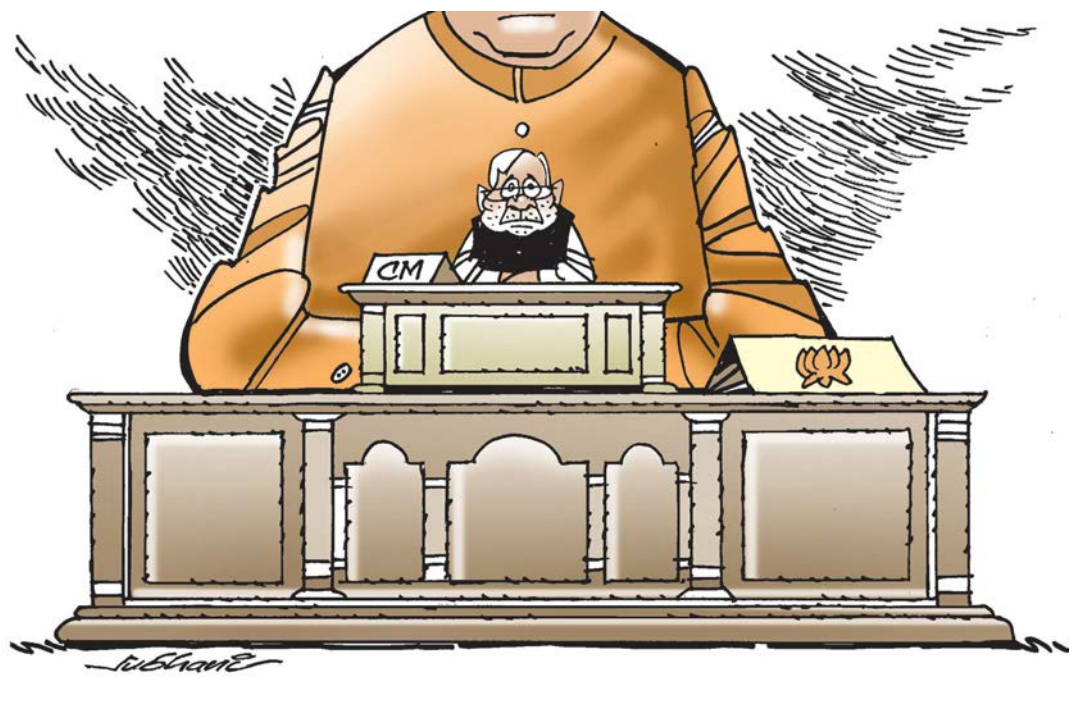
Nevertheless, staying away from the RCEP is also not a smart move because India would be an attractive investment destination for export-focused companies. The government, therefore, should begin consultations on the reforms required to make the Indian industry as competitive and efficient as South Korea and Japan. If the government intends to double farmers' income, it should become more productive. It doesn't reflect well on India to be fearful of New Zealand's dairy products. It is high time the government nudges its industry and farming truly world-class and does whatever is required for that to happen.

Farewell to a legend

What does it take to become the best loved man of Bengali cinema? A formidable supply of talent, love for one's craft, a vast body of work, association with legends? Matinee idol looks that would floor a generation of college-goers? Or is it the fact that he represented the last of the bhadralok, a way of being rendered obsolete by the changing mores and aesthetic of the people of a nonetheless-declining state? Mentored by theatre actor Ahindra Choudhury and the icon, Sisir Kumar Bhaduri, the boy from Kolkata's Surya Sen Street got his big break when selected by Satyajit Ray for the titular role in *Apur Sansar*, the concluding part of Apu Trilogy based on Bibhutibhusan Bandopadhyay's *Pather Panchali*. Soumitra Chatterjee would go on to collaborate with Ray on some of his best acclaimed projects. He would play the ebullient Amal in Tagorean *Charulata* and the inscrutable Feluda of Ray's own detective series with equal ease. Straddling the world of arthouse and popular cinema with aplomb, a director's actor, he could be versatile, as the hardy Punjabi cab-driver of *Abhijaan*, the attractive imposter of Mrinal Sen's *Akash Kusum* or the swashbuckling villain in Tapan Sinha's history thriller *Jhinder Bandi*, setting the screen alight with the chemistry he shared with Sharmila Tagore, Aparna Sen and Madhabi Mukherjee. His ability to fit into the role in a way that offered his audiences identification at extraordinarily intimate levels was the quality that defined him. He also famously refused the Padma Shri on account of there being no safety net for film industry daily wagers. But recognition, Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, Padma Bhushan, Dadasaheb Phalke Award, Chevalier of Legion d'Honneur, would follow this gracious soul who confidently stuck to his genre, refusing offers from Bollywood, and choosing to return to the stage and poetry. A lifelong pursuit of the arts thus ended on Sunday. All around there is the sound of hearts shattering. The world of Bengali, nay international, cinema is poorer. Travel well, Apu.

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Subhani



RCEP shifts Indo-Pacific dynamics, blow to Delhi



K.C. Singh

While the entire world was focused on the American presidential election, the signing on November 15 of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) has significantly altered the Indo-Pacific strategic environment. With all 10 ASEAN members joining China and Japan, besides South Korea, Australia and New Zealand, a huge free trade bloc is born. With a combined \$26.2 trillion of GDP, one-third of the world's total, it will facilitate commerce among members by eliminating 90 per cent of tariffs.

Therefore, while US President-elect Joe Biden's path to office is now clear, despite the Trumpian Twitter tantrums, he faces a more complex scenario in the Indo-Pacific region. There is still some time before the RCEP is fully implemented as a certain number of Asean and non-Asean signatories must ratify it first. But any analysis of the implications of the Biden presidency simply cannot ignore this new development.

Multiple challenges await the next US President, at home and abroad. Overcoming the Covid-19 pandemic, with cases spiking due to the onset of winter and the lax observance of precautions, looms above all else, as indeed do its economic consequences. The American economy has shrunk, compared to a year earlier, by slightly over minus four per cent, as Britain's figure tops minus 10 per cent and the Eurozone at minus eight per cent. Canada and Japan fall in between those figures and that of the US. The Economist magazine writes that while the pandemic will fade by the end of 2012, the "tech surge will outlive

Mr Biden's presidency". These deeper changes are pitted against the desire of the liberal faction of the Democrats to favour manufacturing jobs and social goals. The US markets did not drop on the Biden-Harris victory as control of the Senate remains with the Republicans, seen as blocking the Democratic socio-economic agenda. This balance hinges on the fate of two Senate run-off contests in Georgia on January 5. If the Democrats win both, they will seize control of the Senate, the strength of both parties being tied at 50 each, giving the vice-president the casting vote. That could rile the US and even the Indian markets.

As regards the pandemic, Mr Biden's approach has emerged, despite Mr Trump not cooperating with his transition team. A group of experts has been formed to suggest a plan, including for vaccination of the populace, based on science and medical expertise rather than Trumpian evasion and half-truths. Mr Biden realises control of the pandemic is critical to reviving the economy and jobs. The Democrats want to hit the ground running after Mr Biden's inauguration on January 20.

As a global power, the US cannot ignore the foreign policy challenges. On China, Mr Trump's forthright criticism of predatory trade practices, theft of intellectual property and state capitalism led to trade sanctions to coerce Beijing to accept a more transparent rules-based system. The Covid-19 pandemic emanating from China and its delay in alerting the world has merely crystallised concerns into open hostility, now percolating down to the popular level. Thus, there is bipartisan consensus for maintaining the pressure on China. The Biden administration

Multiple challenges await the next US President, at home and abroad

may substitute open confrontation, which Henry Kissinger calls the two nations at the foothills of a new Cold War, with smarter containment strategies. The difficulty is that if the sanctions are rolled back, what does China offer as concessions to address America's economic and security concerns? Michele Flournoy, a frontrunner for the defence secretary's job, has advocated US defence readiness to have the capacity to sink the entire Chinese naval fleet in 72 hours!

There is also the technology competition symbolised by the US barring Huawei's access to top US semiconductors. Taiwan is a key component in US advances in cutting-edge semiconductor design and production. The continuing Chinese threats to Taiwan and the US dithering over defending it, in case China tries to annex it militarily, has created strategic vacuum. Some Chinese analysts argued that if China occupies Taiwan, as it has Hong Kong, Taiwan's famed chip producer TSMC would be a bonus.

The RCEP's signing by two components of the "Quad" - Australia and Japan - queers the US and Indian approach to the Indo-Pacific. Only weeks back this group was being projected as the skeleton of a new security architecture to contain China. It was hoped the Biden administration may review US withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which Japan had championed to balance Chinese trade influence in the Indo-Pacific. It exists in a modified form, minus the US, as the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). It is possible the US and Japan may yet re-engage to discuss America's re-entry, but with the RCEP finalised China has first-mover advantage. In one swoop China has negated the hype over the de-coupling

from China. It also leaves India stranded, strategically and trade-wise, between its Quad partners and a China-dominated group, which has drawn away two of the Quad's four members. Moreover, for the new US administration, the Indo-Pacific may be a lower priority than rebuilding alliances ignored or abandoned by Mr Trump and healing rifts with nations like Germany and France.

The *Global Times*, the largely reliable English voice of Beijing, headlined an editorial: "Indo-Pacific strategy upholder India misses the bus of RCEP and long-term growth". India still has paths open to both joining the RCEP, albeit with diminished negotiating weight, or playing along with the US if its interest in CPTPP emerges. But in any case, all the bluster over Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI), that the Quad members were to create as an alternative to Chinese dominance of supply chains, now appears a non-starter.

Besides the fear of RCEP affecting Indian industry and farmers, including those in the dairy sector, Chinese obduracy in accepting full de-escalation at the Line of Actual Control in Ladakh has heightened Indian suspicions. Is it a coincidence that the Chinese intrusions followed India's unwillingness to join the RCEP in November 2019, and sponsoring alternative approaches like Quad Plus? With India's options now conditioned by the initiatives of others, New Delhi needs peace at home with farmers and in the region with neighbours. In any case, its majoritarian proclivities, with the West Bengal election approaching, can become an irritant in US-India ties just as China has outplayed it in the Indo-Pacific. In chess terms, it is not checkmate yet. But China controls the board with the better pieces.

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

LETTERS

US POLITICAL VIOLENCE

It was shocking to note that in the US, former President Donald Trump supporters clashed with their rivals (President-elect Joe Biden's supporters) during a rally on Saturday near the White House leaving some injured (*Violence erupts as Trump supporters, rivals clash*, Nov.16). Violence indeed is the ugly side of democracy. Trump is cantankerous. So are his followers. Indian politicians will not condemn this for sure, as the political breeze in the US is more or less same as in the sub-continent. A very bad example indeed!

S. Ramakrishnasayee, Chennai

HAD TRUMP conceded his defeat gracefully violence would not have erupted. And the anarchists, ntfia and other unruly elements would not have fished in the troubled waters stocking violence. What baffles is Trump even after Joe Biden's indisputable victory is intransigent and moved the judiciary befooling the GOP supporters that still he can stay put like a limpet in the White House despite his decisive defeat! Trump's tricky-dick tweets blaming the news channels wantonly not showing his supporters rallies are farfetched and for the public consumption. It looks that he is positioning himself as Republican candidate in the 2024 elections. Albeit the United States of America has turned into a Divided States of America courtesy Mr Trump and his supporters!

A. Seshagiri Rao, Chennai

CHARGES AGAINST SURAPPA

NOW AN inquiry by a retired judge of the Madras high court has been ordered by the government against Anna University VC MK Surappa and the charges against him, say like abuse of power, financial irregularities, corruption in appointments to the tune a whopping ₹200 crore are very grievous in nature. It is but natural that a shocked VC is crying hoarse against the probe stating that he is innocent of all charges framed against him. It is expected that the VC should submit himself for the probe and present his case effectively without any fear if he is really innocent of the charges framed against him.

Tharcus S. Fernando, Chennai

Mail your letters to editor@deccanmail.com

Aakar Patel



Everything is looking bleak: Can Modi still bring change?

The BJP has won yet another election, and victory is attributed to the popularity of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He is in the seventh year of his term and appears to have lost none of his attractiveness for the voter. There is no data available on this, of course, and elections across the subcontinent are won on the back of tribalism, organisation and money.

But let us assume that it is the personal attractiveness and credibility of the Prime Minister that has yet again taken the BJP through in Bihar. The question is — to what end does he want to keep winning? Power is held for a purpose — to be able to effect change. What change has Mr Modi used his power for?

On the economy, the numbers cannot be kept hidden. The rate of GDP growth has gone from eight to seven to six to five to four to three per cent over the last 12 quarters. Something sabotaged the economy just before January 2018 and today

is not the time to go again into it. The fact is that without Covid-19 and long before the lockdown, the Indian economy was wrecked. Hours after the Bihar election results were out, the RBI announced that in the second quarter, meaning July to September, India's economy would again contract, and we were in recession.

The government did not acknowledge this or respond to it. The Prime Minister muttered some more things about development, but his heart is not in it. Do you remember the last time he spoke about his world beating economic performance? It is because there is nothing to say. Bangladesh has overtaken India's per capita GDP. What more can be added to that?

As I am writing this, there is news that we have lost at least 11 more lives on the Line of Control in Kashmir. The media's response to this in India has been to claim that Pakistan has also lost 11 lives. It has become like a game, and if we are able to get enough of the other

side out then it is fine for us to suffer the losses we have. This is lunacy but it is the product of the way that Mr Modi has characterised relations with neighbours, as being a zero sum game. Meaning that their loss is our gain. But this is bogus. We gain nothing material by killing their people. We lose when our people are killed.

On the LAC, we are preparing to formalise the surrender that we have already effected on the ground. We have permanently been stopped from patrolling till Finger 8 in Ladakh and heaven alone knows what else has been given up amid the secrecy.

Mr Modi's refusal to acknowledge that the Chinese had intruded into and were holding ground that India had been previously patrolling was a clear signal to the other side. He has since stopped speaking on this subject. What is there to say? India has not even been given an explanation for why our leader thinks his friend Xi Jinping had launched his aggression. Our constitutional

recklessness in Jammu and Kashmir happened without any understanding of the international ramifications.

As one defence analyst has said, Mr Modi changed the status of Ladakh on the map, while Mr Xi changed it on the ground. So much for the 56 inches. Our clinging to Donald Trump has not paid off. His secretary of defence, who was promising an eternal military alliance, was fired this week.

What else is there? We could talk about Covid-19. We carry the second highest number of infected people in the world, the third highest number of dead. What role if any the government has had in controlling it or mitigating it is unknown. The lockdown appears to have had exactly the opposite effect that we were told it would have. We are still clocking over 40,000 cases a day and have no real control over the epidemic. Two-thirds of India's working women lost their jobs because of the lockdown. Reports have shown that the work participation

rate for women fell from an already low 9.15 per cent in December 2019 to just 5.8 per cent in August this year. For men, it is down from 67 per cent to 47 per cent. Most of India is not working. Have you heard Mr Modi talk about this? No. What is there to say?

The good thing is that we are in Year 7 of his reign. His words do not mean anything at this point. It is the numbers we must look at and the numbers are clear. If there is still support for Mr Modi among the population, it must be for something else, not his performance. There the record is quite clear.

Power is held to effect change. Mr Modi has shown himself incapable of effecting it in the positive sense. On the economy, on the border, on employment, on the epidemic. One wonders to what end he not only holds on to it but seeks to acquire more.

The writer is a columnist and a senior journalist

quick
BITES

INDICATORS

		%
Sensex	43,637.98	0.45
Nifty 50	12,780.25	0.47
S&P 500*	3,621.33	1.01
Dollar (₹)	74.61	0.04
Pound Sterling (₹)	98.19	0.21
Euro (₹)	88.11	0.04
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	50,425.241	0.47
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	44.39	1.61
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.878	-0.024
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.918	0.025

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Munot to leave
SBI Mutual Fund
to head HDFC MF

HDFC Mutual Fund said its board has approved the appointment of Navneet Munot as its next managing director and chief executive officer. Munot, who was the chief investment officer of SBI Funds Management, will succeed the present MD Milind Barve, HDFC Mutual Fund said. In a separate statement, SBI Funds Management said Munot has decided to leave the organisation to pursue other opportunities.

■ RIL, Aramco, BP, Total all stay away
Biggies keep off
BPCL stake sale

New Delhi, Nov. 16: The government on Monday received 'multiple' bids for buying out its stake in India's second-biggest fuel retailer BPCL but Reliance Industries as well as supermajors Saudi Aramco, BP and Total did not make a bid.

Tuhin Kanta Pandey, secretary, Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (Dipam), which is handling the strategic sale, tweeted that the transaction advisors (TAs) for the sale of government's 52.98 per cent stake in Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL) have reported receiving "multiple expressions of interest."

"The transaction will move to the second stage after scrutiny by TA," he said. "Strategic disinvestment of BPCL progresses: Now moves to the second stage after multiple expressions of interest have been received," finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman also tweeted.

Neither of them gave the number of bids received or the names of the bidders. Separately, four industry officials said three-four bids have been put in.

Reliance Industries, which was considered a potential bidder as BPCL would have added a 22 per cent fuel market share to its fledgling retail business and made it the nation's number one oil refiner, did not put in an expression of interest



(EoI) at the close of the deadline on Monday.

Saudi Arabian Oil Company (Saudi Aramco), which had been keen to enter the world's fastest-growing fuel market, too did not put in an EoI.

UK's BP plc and Total of France—which have plans to foray into the Indian fuel market—had previously ruled themselves out of the BPCL race as they did not want to add oil refining assets when the world was moving away from liquid fuels.

A clutch of private equity funds and/or pension funds are said to have put in an EoI.

Russian energy giant Rosneft-led Nayara Energy, which operates a 20 million tonne oil refinery at Vadinar in Gujarat and also has 5,822 petrol pumps, was considered a potential bidder for BPCL but reports last month had indicated it was no longer keen.

Abu Dhabi National Oil Co (Adnoc), which has ambitions for Indian mar-

ket, too was considered a potential bidder but it wasn't immediately known if it had put in an EoI.

Vedanta's Anil Agarwal has been considered another potential bidder given his interest in the oil and gas business with the \$8.67 billion acquisition of Cairn India.

Sources said transaction advisors will now evaluate the bidders to ascertain if they indeed meet the qualifying criteria and would have the financial muscle to do the acquisition.

This process may take two-three weeks, thereafter request for proposal (RFP) will be issued and financial bids sought.

At Friday's closing price of Rs 412.70 on the BSE, the government's 52.98 per cent stake in BPCL is worth Rs 47,430 crore. Also, the acquirer would have to make an open offer for buying another 26 per cent stake from the public, which would cost Rs 23,276 crore.

—PTI

M&M plans
to revive
BSA bikeSIDDHARTH PHILIP
NOV. 16

Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd is crafting plans to build a UK factory to resurrect the BSA motorcycle brand in a test case for whether Britain can attract companies post-Brexit.

Mahindra, which bought the defunct marque in 2016, is scouting for a site to assemble the motorcycle, chairman Anand Mahindra said in an interview. Whether it goes ahead partly hinges on talks over government grants and a trade deal with the European Union, he said.

"With Brexit, the UK government is going out of its way to give benefits, which actually goes toward filling that difference in viability," said Anupam Thareja, a managing partner at Phi Capital and co-founder of Mahindra's Classic Legends subsidiary.

The classic-bike brand owner is adopting a wait-and-see approach to Brexit negotiations before giving the green light to BSA. The factory project would depend on tariff levels and the ease of moving both workers and products across borders, Thareja said.

Making the bikes in the UK is key for the brand to maintain authenticity, says Mahindra.

BSA started as a bicycle maker before crafting its first motorcycle over a century ago. It featured in the World War-II, when used by the British Army, but went bust in the 1970s. —Bloomberg

Just 5 mall projects see
completion in 2020SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, NOV. 16

As the business in malls has still not recouped to pre-Covid levels, mall development is moving at a snail's pace.

The calendar year was supposed to see the launch of 54 new malls spanning over 22.2 million sq. ft, as per the pre-Covid estimates. However, just 5 malls covering 2.75 million sq. ft have been completed yet. These new malls have come up in Gurgaon, Delhi, Lucknow and Bengaluru, as per the data from Anarock Retail.

The yet-to-recover business in malls has put the construction process on hold. Malls remained closed for a longer period even after the lock-down. As of August, malls were seeing 60 per cent sales of last year, though the footfalls were much lesser. However, malls are



expecting the festive season to take the sales to 80 per cent.

"Since the shopping malls reopened across the country, the industry and mall developers noticed more serious buyers walking-in with a set agenda of what to buy. While the dwell time has decreased, however, the ticket size has increased drastically. During the Navratri and Diwali season, shopping malls across the country

reported an increase in footfalls on a week-on-week basis and witnessed a continued growth during the weekends. We are hoping to reach 80 per cent of sales on an average," said Amitabh Taneja, Chairman, Shopping Centres Association of India.

Considering the slower pace at which mall development is taking place, many of the launches would be pushed to 2021. "Covid-19 added enormous pressure to the already delicately-poised Indian retail sector. The anticipated new mall supply was severely hit this year and most of it will spill over to 2021 and beyond. New completions have been deferred and leasing activity has been delayed," said Anuj Kejriwal, CEO and MD of Anarock Retail.

However, even in 2021, only 14 new malls spread over 5.9 million sq ft are likely to get operational.

WPI inflation at 8-month high of 1.48%

FC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, NOV.16

Driven by rising prices of vegetables and manufactured items such as vegetable oils, steel and basic metals, the wholesale price-based inflation went up to an eight-month high of 1.48 per cent in October, the data released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry showed on Monday.

This was the highest

level for the Wholesale Price Index inflation after February, when it was 2.26 per cent. The WPI inflation was at 1.32 per cent in September and zero per cent in October last year. "Some food article prices softened in October, while manufactured items witnessed hardening of prices in the same month. Food inflation in October stood at 6.37 per cent against 8.17 per cent in the previous month," the

release said. Similarly, the price rise in vegetables and potato remained high at 25.23 per cent and 107.70 per cent, respectively. "Inflation in non-food articles and minerals was higher at 2.85 per cent and 9.11 per cent, respectively. While, in the manufactured products category, inflation stood at 2.12 per cent in October, compared to 1.61 per cent in September," the data showed.

COFFEE-BREAK

Your day today By Dr C.V.B. Subrahmanyam



Aries: Deadlines could create stress, but you'll work around those. Apply yourself instead of worrying about issues you can't control.



Taurus: Organise resources to minimise the scope of delays; it'll help you prepare for contingencies. Be restrained socially. Get your projects' overviews before making decisions.



Gemini: Expect domestic issues. Finding innovative solutions to problems will help you successfully deal with complicated assignments. Romantic relationships get intense.



Cancer: Expect delays but don't give up yet; brainstorming with others helps you find solutions. Sudden insights help you find a better overview of complicated situations.



Leo: Keep loved ones informed. You'll be drawn to projects that include you in the creative process. Participate in company-sponsored seminars etc.



Virgo: Use innovative strategies while dealing with difficult problems/people. You'll channel your energy in a creative, productive manner to achieve your goals. Expect a vague sense of unease when you think someone's holding out on information.

You share your b'day with

Dylan Charles Hunter Walsh is an American actor. Dylan worked in films like Betsy's Wedding, Nobody's Fool, Congo, The Stepfather, and the Secretariat



Libra: Build a consensus and give others a stake in the outcome; your projects will gather support at critical junctures. You'll make progress on pending domestic tasks.



Scorpio: Avoid involving too much in other's problems; your actions might be misconstrued. Being proactive keeps you ahead of the competition.



Sagittarius: You'll prioritise spending a quiet evening with close friends. Infuse new elements in your love life to prevent monotony.



Capricorn: Building a consensus frees up some time. Sudden insights could offer ideas for new projects at work or home. If you lack time to follow through right away, postpone these plans.

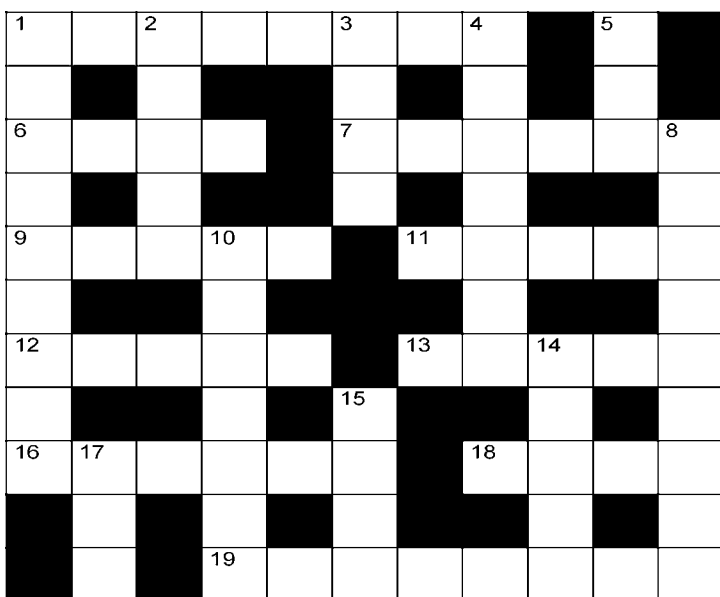


Aquarius: What you visualize succeeds if you work on it. You'll want to indulge yourself in a break from tedious commitments. You'll find it easy to decide on personal matters.



Pisces: Changing your routine is good, but first define what you want to change. For results, work step-by-step on important projects. Enhance your knowledge and update yourself on the latest developments in your field.

QUICK CROSSWORD



Across

1. Elated (8)
6. Go (4)
7. Lodge builder (6)
9. Sunken vessel (5)
11. Triangular river mouth (5)
12. Model (5)
13. Civilian dress (5)
16. Come to rest (6)
18. Indian garment (4)
19. Calls into question (8)

Down

1. Alpine flower (9)
2. Lever open (5)
3. Vestment (4)
4. French manor house (7)
5. Charge (3)
8. Israelite (anag) (9)
10. Fashioned by hand (7)
14. Banquet (5)
15. Realises (4)
17. Unit of work (3)

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

- Across: 6. Belladonna, 8. Alert, 10. Adobe, 13. Acquisition, 14. Cache, 17. Comet, 19. Distillate.
- Down: 1. Gene, 2. Plot, 3. Idea, 4. Undo, 5. Maternity, 7. Cavalcade, 9. Rough, 11. Ditto, 12. Ask, 15. Cosh, 16. Evil, 17. Colt, 18. Mate.

Word Mine

E
T
A
T
U
I
T
B
R

TODAY'S RATINGS: 26 AVERAGE: 30
GOOD: 35 OUTSTANDING

How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown in today's puzzle? In making a word, each letter may be used once only. Each word must contain the letter at the top of the pyramid. There should be at least one nine letter word. Plurals, foreign words and proper names are not allowed.

Answer here: _____

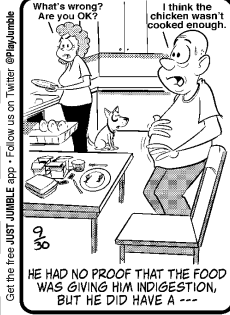
jumble

TINYU
IGBEE
DLIFED
GTIYZL

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Answer here: _____

Yesterday's



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Jumbles: DOLLY PRIZE SKINNY OUTAGE

Answer: The iguana bar was popular and crowded with — LOUNGE LIZARDS

Geoff Hampson (West) won with his jack and led his remaining diamond. In this way, Greco and Hampson took four diamonds and one spade to defeat the contract.

Was East nervous that South had started with queen-doubtton of diamonds? No, because West, if he had the J-8-5-3 of diamonds, would have led the three, not the five.

At the other table, the auction was identical, except that

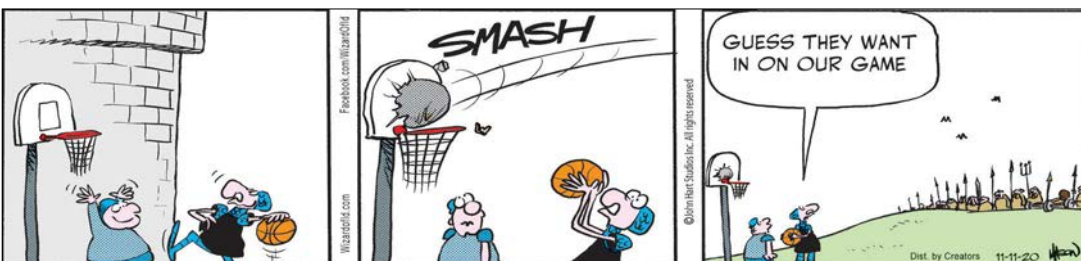
East doubled over one spade. Then, East won the first trick with the diamond king before returning the diamond six. The declarer, Bobby Levin, worked out what was happening: He played his queen to win the trick. Levin drove out the spade ace and took the heart finesse to collect one spade, three hearts, one diamond and four clubs.

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CALVIN AND HOBBS | Bill Watterson



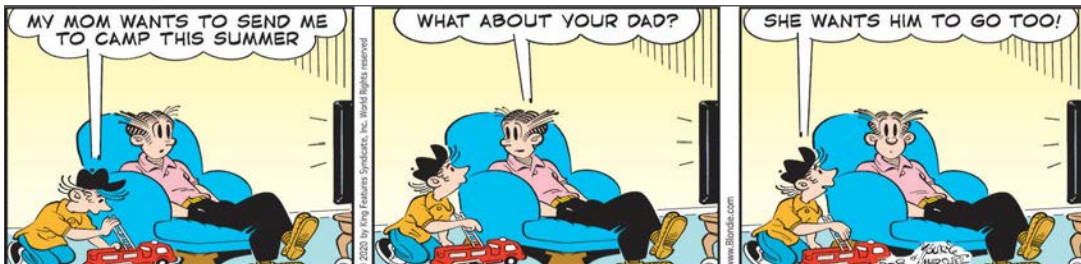
THE WIZARD OF ID | Parker and Hartsd



ARCHIE | Bill Henry Scarpelli & craig boldman



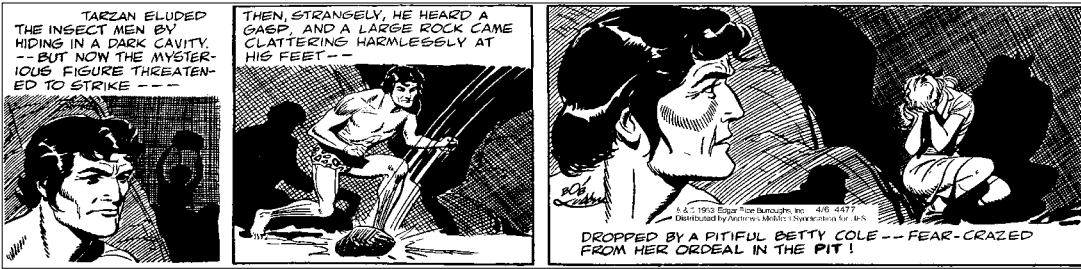
BLONDIE | Dean Young and John Marshall



ANDY CAPP | Reg Smythe



TARZAN | Edgar Rice Burroughs

bridge
PHILLIP
ALDERTHINKING
QUICKLY;
MISLEADING
QUICKLY

In "Macbeth," William Shakespeare wrote, "If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well it were done quickly." That is appropriate for today's deal.

What happens in three no-trump after West leads what is purported to be a fourth-highest diamond five? The auction was straightforward, South showing a balanced 18 or 19 points, and North raising to game.

This deal was played in an

online match between two tough American teams.

At the table shown, sitting East was Eric Greco, a Rosenblum Cup world team champion in 2010.

Without thought, Greco took the first trick with his diamond ace (not the textbook king, bottom of touching honors when playing third hand high) and returned the diamond six. South, a seven-time national champion, played low. So,

North	South
♠ K 8 7 4	♠ 9 2
♥ 10 7 2	♥ A 7 3
♦ A 10 9 8	♦ 4 3 2
♣ 9 8 5	♣ K 9 8
West	East
♠ 9 8 5	♠ 10 9 8 5
♥ A 10 7 2	♥ K 9 8
♦ 4 3 2	♦ A 7 3
♣ K 9 8	♣ 10 9 8
Dealer: North	Vulnerable: North-South
1♠	2♥
3♦	4♣
5♣	6♣
7♣	8♣
9♣	10♣
11♣	12♣
13♣	14♣
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269♣	270♣
271♣	272♣
273♣	274♣
275♣	276♣
277♣	278♣

SHORT TAKES

Kipruto charged with sex crime

Nairobi, Kenya: Olympic steeplechase champion Conseslus Kipruto of Kenya has been charged with having sexual intercourse with a 15-year-old girl and was released on bail Monday after pleading not guilty. Kipruto was charged with what is referred to as "defilement" in Kenyan law — sexual intercourse with a minor under the age of 18. Because of the girl's age, Kipruto faces at least 20 years in prison if convicted, according to Kenya's sexual offenses laws. The 25-year-old Kipruto, who is a policeman, was charged in a courthouse in Kapsabet. He was released on \$1,800 bail. Kipruto is alleged to have had intercourse with the girl on Oct. 20 and 21, according to the charge sheet, and was first arrested on Nov. 11. Kipruto won gold in the 3,000-meter steeplechase at the 2016 Olympics. — AP

Five ISL clubs fail to secure license

New Delhi: Five Indian Super League clubs have failed to meet the AFC and national licensing criteria and will now have to either appeal against the decision or seek exemption from the AIFF in order to take part in the cash-rich event starting on Friday. Odisha FC, NorthEast United FC, Kerala Blasters, Hyderabad FC and new entrants Sporting Club East Bengal are the five clubs which were not handed licenses by the AIFF to be able to take part in AFC and national competitions this season. The five clubs which failed to secure licenses can either appeal to the Club Licensing Appeals Body of AIFF against the decision of the Club Licensing Committee (First Instance Body) within a stipulated time or can apply for an exemption to the Club Licensing Committee. — PTI

Prajnesh loses US Challenger final

Cary, US: Indian Davis Cupper Prajnesh Gunneswaran squandered initial advantage to lose to Denis Kudla of USA in three sets in the final of the Atlantic Tire Championships here. The fourth seeded Indian lost 6-3, 3-6, 0-6 in the men's singles summit clash of the ATP Challenger event in one hour 33 minutes on Sunday.

Apollo Tyres extends CFC deal

Chennai: India's leading tyre manufacturer, Apollo Tyres on Monday renewed its association with two-time Indian Super League champions, Chennaiyin FC, as principal sponsor after signing a multi-year deal. In what is one of the longest-running partnerships in Indian sports, Apollo Tyres came onboard as CFC's Principal Sponsor ahead of the 2017-18 ISL campaign. Both brands have found synergy in the ensuing years with CFC proudly donning the Apollo Tyres logo on the front of their jersey. Commenting on the extension of association, Satish Sharma, president of Asia Pacific, Middle East & Africa (APMEA), Apollo Tyres Ltd said, "This has been a very fruitful association with Chennaiyin FC, wherein we have engaged and interacted with their large fan base, especially the youth, both in rural and urban areas. The club has also garnered more followers in their home state of Tamil Nadu and beyond."

Live on TV

CRICKET

Big Bash League: Sydney Sixers vs Brisbane Heat from 9 am; Sydney Thunder vs Melbourne Renegades from 1.35 pm on Sony Six, HD

TENNIS

ATP Finals: Matches from 7.30 pm on Sony Ten 2, HD and 1.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony Six, HD

FOOTBALL

UEFA Nations League: France vs Sweden from 1.15 am (Wednesday) on Sony Ten 3; Spain vs Germany from 1.15 am (Wednesday) on Sony Ten 2; Croatia vs Portugal from 1.15 am (Wednesday) on Sony Ten 1

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Covid threat to Test

Paine in self-isolation after Corona outbreak in Adelaide

Sydney, Nov. 16: A fresh Coronavirus outbreak in Adelaide on Monday forced Australian players, including captain Tim Paine, into self-isolation but the country's cricket board asserted that the first Test against India here from December 17 will go ahead as scheduled.

A cluster of Covid-19 cases in Adelaide prompted other states like Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory to close their borders with South Australia and impose a 14-day hotel quarantine on all visitors from Adelaide from 11.59 pm on Monday.

"There is ongoing monitoring but that's the end of the story," a CA spokeswoman was quoted as saying by *Sydney Morning Herald* on the match which is will be a day-nighter.

The number of cases had crept up from four on Sunday to 17 on Monday.

The development has the potential to throw the Australian summer of cricket into chaos but CA insisted there is no reason to think next month's Test series opener against India — Day/Night Pink ball match — at the Adelaide Oval is in doubt.

The newspaper said CA is monitoring the fallout of the outbreak and its officials were in contact with key decision-makers in Adelaide.

Tasmanian health authorities have returnees from South Australia since November 9 to quarantine.

This meant that Paine, Matthew Wade and their team mates in the Tasmania squad, which recently completed the opening round of Sheffield Shield matches in South Australia, had to go into isolation.

The India squad and those Australians who took part in the Indian Premier League in the UAE are in a 14-day quarantine in Sydney since Thursday.

They will complete the isolation a day before the ODI series which begins on November 27 at the SCG. — PTI

PUCOVSKI UNLIKELY FOR OZ TEST TEAM

Sydney, Nov. 16: Australia great Adam Gilchrist believes that promising batsman Will Pucovski is set to miss out on making the side for the opening Test against India despite "strong reason" for his inclusion as the selectors seem reluctant to drop under-pressure Joe Burns.

Gilchrist said Australia are likely to keep faith in the tried and tested combination of Burns and David Warner at the top of the order, despite Pucovski's rising credentials through consecutive double-centuries in the Sheffield Shield.

"It's only my opinion, but I detect that the selectors and the team really enjoy the partnership of Joe Burns and David Warner," Gilchrist told *foxsports.com.au*.

"There is a fair bit of that strong reason in the case of Pucovski. (But) They'll be reluctant to break that (partnership) of Warner and Burns) up without really strong reason. They feel they complement each other and they have a yin and yang partnership."

The legendary wicketkeeper-batsman said though Burns hasn't been able to have personal tally of big scores, the team and selectors value his partnership with Warner.

— PTI



Indian cricketers Ravindra Jadeja (from left), Umesh Yadav and Kuldeep Yadav jog during a practice session in Sydney on Sunday.

— BCCI

Rahul pulls along with tennis ball

Sydney, Nov. 16: After competing on the slow UAE tracks for nearly two months during the IPL, India's star studded batting line-up is gearing up for the lively Australian pitches with the traditional tennis ball training on Monday. In-form K.L. Rahul spent considerable time in perfecting his pull-shots with deliveries hurled from 18 yards during Monday's net session.

There was nothing unusual in such session as players train like this when they gear up to compete on tracks where there is steep bounce on offer. In a video posted on

twitter by the BCCI, Rahul's senior teammate Ravichandran Ashwin was seen using a tennis racket and serving the stand-in white ball vice-captain with tennis balls aimed at his rib cage.

Rahul was trying to keep the pull shot down, an art his skipper Viat Kohli has mastered over the years, rolling his wrists.

There is a basic purpose of practising against tennis balls. From a shorter distance, the ball travels faster and it helps in making the reflexes quick.

Therefore when the leather ball is used, any

In-form batsman K. L. Rahul spent considerable time perfecting his pull-shots with deliveries hurled from 18 yards during Monday's net session.

batsman will get a fraction of a second more from the 22 yards.

During the '80s and '90s before a tour of Australia or West Indies, the specialist batsmen were known to bat against wet tennis balls from 16 or 18

yards on cement wickets to get adjusted to the bounce.

With training modules undergoing a sea change, now the tennis racquets are used to add more pace to the light tennis balls.

Team's senior speedster Mohammed Shami posted a video on his personal twitter handle, where he was seen bowling with the pink kookaburra ball.

Shami is a part of all three squads and it is a given that India will need his skills most during the four-Test series starting on December 17 with the day-night pink ball game in Adelaide. — PTI

Dustin dazzles at the Masters

Augusta (Georgia, USA), Nov. 16: Nothing ever comes easily for Dustin Johnson in the majors, except for slipping into that Masters green jacket.

Johnson overcame a jittery start that conjured memories of past majors he failed to finish off. He turned that into a command performance, making sure this one-of-a-kind Masters with no fans also had no drama.

Not even close.

Johnson tapped in for par on the 18th for a 4-under 68 to finish at 20-under 268, breaking by two shots the record set by Tiger Woods in 1997 and matched by Jordan Spieth in 2015.

His five-shot victory was the largest at the Masters since Woods won by 12 in his record-breaking win in 1997. All that was missing were the roars for any of his pivotal putts early and his birdie putts on the back nine that put it away.

The Masters, postponed from April because of the Covid-19 pandemic, was forced to do without patrons for the first time. Johnson still received a warm reception coming up the 18th from club members and their wives, his partner, Paulina Gretzky, and a few champions.

Two-time champion Bubba Watson was there to congratulate him.

"I always dreamed of having one of those,"

Johnson said as he went to sign his card. "Now I got one."

Johnson's four-shot lead was reduced to one after five holes, and then he quickly restored control. Cameron Smith and Sungjae Im each shot 69 and were the only ones who really had a chance.

Smith got quite the consolation. He became the first player in Masters history to post all four rounds in the 60s, and all it got him was a silver medal.

Johnson became the 12th Masters champion to never trail after any round, and his closing 68 broke another record held by Woods it was his 11th consecutive sub-par round at Augusta National.

No one had a better finish than defending champion Tiger Woods, but only after the five-time Masters champion posted the highest score of his career three balls in Rae's Creek for a 10 on the par-3 12th hole. He finished with five birdies over the last six holes to salvage a 76.

The betting favourite and biggest basher in golf, Bryson DeChambeau, couldn't even beat 63-year-old Bernhard Langer, who shot 71 and wound up one shot ahead of the U.S. Open champion.

These were only sideshows on a quiet Sunday at Augusta National. — AP



Last year's Masters champion Tiger Woods (right) presents Augusta Masters winner Dustin Johnson his first green jacket in Augusta, Georgia, on Sunday.

— AP

Nadal starts with comfortable win

London, Nov. 16: Rafael Nadal launched his bid for a first ATP Finals trophy in style on Sunday, taming in-form Andrey Rublev in straight sets in London.

The Spanish world number two, chasing the biggest prize missing from his glittering resume, barely broke sweat as he outclassed the Russian debutant 6-3, 6-4 at the empty O2 Arena.

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

His record at the eight-man elite event pales in comparison with his main rivals. Federer, who is absent with injury.

Novak Djokovic produced a masterclass against Argentina's

Diego Schwartzman on Monday as he embarked on his campaign for a record-equalling sixth title.

The world number one wobbled at the start of the match against the diminutive eighth seed, making his debut at the elite eight-man event but recovered to win 6-3, 6-2.

The Serbian, 33, has enjoyed another sparkling season despite the coronavirus interruption, winning four titles including the Australian Open.

"Always the first match is very tricky," said Nadal. "Every match is difficult when you are playing against the best of the best so it's a positive start for me, very happy," he added.

Nadal has qualified for the ATP Finals for a record 16 consecutive years but has been forced to withdraw on six occasions.

A combination of injury and his preference for other surfaces has counted against him but his greater freshness as a result of a shorter season may boost his chances this year.

— AFP

Australians to form 'barefoot circle' to support anti-racism

Sydney, Nov. 16: Australian players will form a barefoot circle to acknowledge the culture of indigenous people before every series, starting with the ODI contest against India, said pacer Pat Cummins, who admitted that his team has not done enough to support anti-racism movement.

The Australian Test and ODI vice-captain said his team considered the move as the best way to begin addressing racism, both at home and around the world.

"We've decided to do the Barefoot Circle. We're going to look at doing it at the start of each series and it's a pretty easy decision for us. Not only as a sport, but we as people are absolutely against racism," Cummins was quoted as saying by *ESPNCricinfo*.

"We can probably put our



In this file photo, West Indies players take a knee before the start of the third Test against England at Old Trafford in Manchester on July 24, 2020.

— AP

hands up and say we haven't done enough in the past and we want to get better; so this is one small thing we're going to introduce this summer," he added.

Earlier this year, West Indies legend Michael

Holding has criticised the Australian team for not taking a knee in support of the Black Lives Matter movement, during the limited overs series in England.

— PTI

Not only series win, WTC berth also on India, Oz minds



Hemant Kenkre
Silly Point

There must have been plenty on Indian skipper Virat Kohli's mind as he boarded the chartered flight from Dubai to Sydney. Not qualifying for the final of the Indian Premier League must be tingling his thoughts, even as a section of the media rose in favour his erstwhile vice captain, Rohit Sharma as a better option to lead the country in white ball cricket. Their brief for Rohit to captain the country may be justified but their timing, on

the eve of the team's departure for Australia, isn't the best from the perspective of the team that's poised to take on one of the best in the game.

The first of the three One Day Internationals begins in a less than two weeks from now and the team has got a guarded welcome from the Aussies even as they practice in the bubble created in suburban Sydney. Former Aussie skipper Steve Smith, who missed the last Test series against India, has fired the first salvo, telling the

Indians that short pitch bowling does not bother him and his four failures to Kiwi left-arm pacer Neil Wagner were nothing but an aberration. The Aussie taste for the hook and pull shot is legend and one doubts whether the Indians will fall to this ruse.

Notwithstanding the ODI series and the three Twenty20 that follow, the home team is concentrating on the four-match Test series that kicks off mid-December. The Aussie distaste for losing is well documented and their loss in the last Test series to India will be at the back of their minds. Aussie head coach, Justin Langer, has reminded the Indians that his team is 'two-years better' and more experienced. Their focus on the Test

series is not only to try and avenge their loss and get the Border-Gavaskar Trophy back down under. It is also a crucial one vis-a-vis the World Championship of Test cricket (WTC) as both teams are in contention to qualify final of the tournament.

India is currently at the number one spot with 360 points followed closely by Australia (296), England (292) and New Zealand (180). With the hiatus on Test series due to the pandemic, International Cricket Council is reported to have tweaked the ranking system to give the teams an opportunity to qualify for the prestigious WTC final. A leading cricket website has published a report stating that ICC's cricket committee

has opted to choose the finalists from the percentage of points they have earned from the series played so far. Reacting to the report, ICC has clarified that no decision has been taken as yet and the future of the WTC will be discussed at their board meetings this week.

To decide who gets to become the champion in the WTC, it is only fair for all teams (constituting the pool of nine) get a chance to play against each other at home and away. With India and Pakistan not likely to clash in the near future and the Covid pandemic disrupting the execution of a few series, featuring Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, the ICC Board will have to come up with a solution for the WTC to be held as scheduled before

Kohli walks out for the toss with Tim Paine at Adelaide for the first Test on December 17.

The way things are panning out, it looks very difficult for all nine Test teams to play six series (home and away), as per the original plan for the WTC. It would therefore be prudent for the ICC to reschedule the tournament and extend it for another year to enable all teams to get a fair shot for the championship. For now, only India, Australia, England, New Zealand and Pakistan stand a realistic chance of qualifying for the WTC final scheduled for next June at Lord's. In context of the WTC being decided, either as originally planned or by a new formula mooted by the ICC Board, the result of the

India, Australia Test series will set the tone for the next set of series' featuring other teams.

Irrespective of what the ICC decides, both teams will be giving it their very best in what promises to be a tough series of Test matches. As far as ICC goes, deciding a world championship on percentages or runs/wickets ratios will not be the best way to decide the ultimate winner.

Deviations, considering these difficult times, will ensure completion of the first cycle of the WTC, but will, as a senior journalist friend put it, only be of academic interest. Giving each team a fair chance in the WTC is what the ICC need to decide on or (in short) it simply won't be cricket!