

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
VIJAYAWADA | SATURDAY | 21 NOVEMBER 2020

WEATHER

Max: 35.0°C
Min: 20.0°C
RH: 81%
Rainfall: 1.8mm

Forecast: Partly cloudy.
Max/Min temp.
35/24 °C

WORLD | 5

Trump, allies try to
bypass poll mandate

BUSINESS | 7

RBI lets bizmen own
higher stake in banks

CORONA
COUNT

CASES (+45,564)
90,49,609
DEATHS (+549)
1,32,750
covid19india.org

STATE GOVT BULLETINS
TELANGANA (+894)
2,61,728
(+4)
1,423

ANDHRA PRADESH (+1,221)
8,59,932
(+10)
6,920

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES
5,76,27,674
DEATHS
13,72,099
COUNTRIES AREAS WITH CASES
217



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SHORT TAKE

Local body poll
duel at flashpoint

Vijayawada: The war of words between ministers and members of the TD over State Election Commissioner Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar's decision to conduct local body elections in February is nearing a flash-point.

Full report on Page 2

Greens: Coringa, Pulicat in Ramsar

Kakinada: Despite eligibility for declaring Ramsar status to the Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary and the Pulicat Lake in AP, such a declaration has not been done so far. Environmentalists are demanding that the Centre and AP government declare these sites as Ramsar sites.

Full report on Page 3

Input subsidy given to farmers

Vijayawada: In a first of its kind, the state government released input subsidy worth of ₹366 crore and credited a major share of it directly into bank accounts of nearly 4.91 lakh farmers even for crop damages suffered during October due to natural calamities in AP.

Full report on Page 2

Modi reviews terror threat

DC CORRESPONDENT
WITH AGENCY INPUTS
NEW DELHI, NOV. 20

A day after security personnel killed four Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorists and seized huge quantities of arms in Jammu and Kashmir, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday asserted the security forces have thwarted their efforts to wreak "major havoc and destruction" in the country.

The Prime Minister had chaired a review meeting on Friday with top security officials as well as home minister Amit Shah and national security adviser Ajit Doval in the wake of the killing of Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir's Nagrota.

Specific intelligence inputs had revealed some Pakistani terrorists had infiltrated into the country with the specific purpose of carrying out a major terror attack just before the District Development Council local elections to be held in eight phases between November 28 and December 19 in the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Government sources said the terrorists were planning "something big"



on the 12th anniversary of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack next week.

After the meeting, Mr Modi said in a tweet: "Our security forces have once again displayed utmost bravery and professionalism. Thanks to their alertness, they have defeated a nefarious plot to target grassroots level democratic exercises in J&K."

In another tweet, he added: "Neutralising of four terrorists belonging to Pakistan-based terrorist organisation Jaish-e-Mohammed and the presence of a large cache of weapons and explosives with them indicate that their efforts to wreak major havoc and destruction have once again been thwarted."

The four suspected Jaish terrorists, who were hiding in a truck, were killed after a four-hour-long encounter early on Thursday.

STATE WILL DECIDE CAPITAL LOCATION, COURT INFORMED

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 20

Special counsel representing the police, S.S. Prasad, informed the division bench of AP High Court that it was the prerogative of the state government to decide the location for setting up its capital city on administrative grounds and ruled out any role for the judiciary to intervene.

Arguing before the division bench, comprising Justice Rakesh Kumar and Justice J. Uma Devi, the special counsel asserted that it was the responsibility of the state government to decide which was good and bad keeping in mind the interests of the people and made it clear that there was no role for the judiciary in such issues. He also said that such decisions were not even in the domain of the judiciary.

Moreover, he said, as the issue of setting up three capitals was before the three-member division bench, it was inappropriate to argue on the issue in the court. He also suggested to the court not to make any statements on the capitals issue.

Page 2: PILs filed in court with political

CM launches Pushkaralu

Once in 12-year event starts amid vedic mantras at Tungabhadra

DC CORRESPONDENT
KURNOOL, NOV. 20

Tungabhadra Pushkarams got-off to a tepid start amid chanting of vedic mantras as Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy formally opened the once in 12-year event at Sankal Bagh pushkar ghat around 1.40 pm here on Friday.

On arrival, he offered prayers to River Tungabhadra and gave Ganga Haarathi to the river besides silk saris.

Later, in traditional attire, he participated in a special yagam performed in the newly constructed yagasala near the pushkar ghat where Ayush Homams would be performed and offered *purna phalam* amid spiritual music and rendition of mantras.

However, the absence of his family members did not go well with the onlookers.

Deputy chief minister S.B. Amzad Basha, district in-charge minister P. Anil Kumar Yadav, ministers Buggana Rajendranath Reddy, Gummanur Jayaram, Vellampalli Sreenivash, M. Shankara Narayana, district collector G. Veera Pandian, MPs T.G. Venkatesh, Dr S. Saniv Kumar and Gorantla Madav, and MLAs accompanied the Chief Minister.



Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy offers prayers while performing rituals to open Tungabhadra Pushkaralu in Kurnool city on Friday.

— DECCAN CHRONICLE

Before leaving for Amaravati, Jagan Mohan Reddy interacted with family members of Nandyal Abdul Salam, who committed suicide along with his wife, daughter and son unable to bear alleged police torture.

He assured financial help and protection to the victim's kin. Mabunne Sha, mother-in-law of Abdul Salam, wanted the Chief Minister to take stern action against the accused policemen. Meanwhile, as a preventive measure Kurnool

police detained several prominent political leaders belonging to the BJP, CPM and CPI and also various delegates of different social organizations. They were demanding approval for the holy dip in Tungabhadra waters during the pushkaralu.

WORLD FISHERIES DAY

8 Fishing Harbours with an outlay of Rs. 3,000 crores ... An Aqua Hub in each constituency, wherever required, with an outlay of Rs. 225 crores ...

Foundation stone for 4 Fishing Harbours and 25 Aqua Hubs to be built in the first phase, Today...

Sri Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy,
Hon'ble Chief Minister, Andhra Pradesh,
to lay foundation stone today

Foundation stone laying today for
4 Fishing Harbours
with an estimated cost of
Rs.1,510 crores at
Juvvaladinne in Nellore district,
Uppada in East Godavari district,
Nizampatnam in Guntur district and
Machilipatnam in Krishna district...
4 more Fishing Harbours
to be established shortly at
Budagatlapalem in Srikakulam district,
Pudimadaka in Visakhapatnam,
Biyyaputippa in West Godavari district and
Kothapatnam in Prakasam district...

To ensure
supply of quality fish and
prawn to consumers so as to
improve domestic
consumption and nutritional
security in the State and to provide
remunerative prices to aqua
farmers and fishermen... **Aqua Hubs**
will be set up in all constituencies,
wherever necessary and will be
linked to Janata Bazaars, at a cost
of **Rs. 225 crores** ...
Foundation stone to be laid
for **25 Aqua Hubs** in
first phase
today...

For the first time
in the entire country,
AP Fish Feed Ordinance was
brought in to supply quality
fish/prawn feed for aqua farmers
and to effectively check
spurious feed in the market !
**Aquaculture Seed Quality
Control Ordinance** issued to
ensure supply of quality
fish/prawn seed !
**Aquaculture Development
Authority** set up to develop
aquaculture sector !

Web Application
eMatsyakar
launched to provide advice
and suggestions to
pisciculture / aquaculture
farmers...
Dial Toll-free No.
155251 for
assistance &
complaints

Rs. 720 crores
per annum to supply
power at just **Rs.1.50** per
unit to benefit Aqua farmers..
35 Aqua labs established across
the State with an expenditure of
Rs. 50.30 Crores for quality
aqua products !
725 Fisheries Assistants appointed
at Rythu Bharosa Kendras (RBKs)...
RBK services made available for
pisciculture / aquaculture
farmers...
Quality certified feed, seed and
medicine supply for aqua
farmers through **RBKs** !

Subsidy on diesel
increased from
Rs. 6.03 paise to
Rs. 9 per Litre..
Facility to fill oil at
discounted rate after subsidy,
at **8 petrol bunks**
recognised by Fisheries
Department
and **79 other Government**
recognised private
bunks !

In the past,
financial assistance to
fisherman families during
fishing ban period was only
Rs. 4,000 and the payments were
done irregularly, that too only
for a few people...
Our Government has increased
the assistance to **Rs. 10,000** under
Matsyakara Bharosa and is
giving to all eligible...
Matsyakara Bharosa assistance extended
to those engaged in fishing with
mechanised boats and rafts also...
Rs.102.47 crores paid to
1.02 lakh fishermen in 2019-20...
Financial assistance amounting
to **Rs.109 crores** paid to
1.09 lakh fishermen
in 2020-21 !

Ordinance issued
for establishment of
**Andhra Pradesh Fisheries
University** in West Godavari
district to develop experts in
pisciculture/aquaculture !
Ex-gratia amount enhanced
from **Rs. 5 lakhs** to
Rs. 10 lakhs
to families of fishermen,
who lost their lives
during fishing !

JAGANANNA GOVERNMENT - COMMITTED TO SAFETY & WELFARE OF FISHERMEN

Fisheries Department, Andhra Pradesh Government

Dr. Seediri Appalaraju

Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairy Development

Agriculture & Allied Services - 1907 | Tele Medicine Services - 14410 | Complaints against Corruption - 14400 | Disha - 181 | Complaints against illegal manufacture, sale and transport of liquor & sand - 14500

Issued by: Commissioner, Information & Public Relations Department, Government of Andhra Pradesh

OTHER STORIES

CM TO VISIT
MACHILIPATNAM
TODAYDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 20

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy will visit Machilipatnam on Saturday to console minister Perni Venkata-raamaiah alias and his family members. Minister Nani's mother Nageswaramma (82) passed away on November 19, and her last rites were performed on Thursday. Mr Jagan Mohan Reddy expressed his heartfelt condolences over the sudden demise of Nageswaramma.

The CM will start for Machilipatnam in a helicopter from his residence in Tadepalli on Saturday at 11.35 am, will reach the helipad at Andhra National College in Machilipatnam at noon and further would go to the residence of minister Nani. CM Jagan will console minister Nani and other family members and would return to his residence at 1 pm.

CM TO SET STONES
FOR FOUR FISHING
HARBOURSDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 20

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy will lay the foundation stones to four fishing harbours and 25 aqua hubs on November 21 on the occasion of World Fisheries Day.

The Chief Minister will virtually lay the foundation stones for fishing harbours in Nellore, Guntur, Krishna and East Godavari districts that cover ₹1,510 crore.

The state government proposes to bring up eight fishing harbours and four fish landing centers costing ₹3,000 crore, to put the maritime wealth of the state in optimum use.

In the first phase tenders have been called for four fishing harbours at Juvvaladinne, Nizampatnam, Machilipatnam and Uppada costing around ₹1,510 crore, aiming to complete in the next two years. The tenders will be finalised in the second week of December.

Although Andhra Pradesh has the second-longest coastline of about 974km in the country, the previous government neglected the maritime activity and only established small fishing harbours.

The state government laid proposals for constructing a good number of fishing harbours and fish landing centres to benefit the 6.3 lakh fisherman population in the state who are depending on fishing and allied marine activities.



Physiotherapist Dr Gurumurthy

JAGAN'S DOC
IS TIRUPATI
LS CANDIDATEDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 20

Ruling YSR Congress has finalised physiotherapist Dr Gurumurthy as its candidate for Tirupati Lok Sabha byelection. An MLC's post has been promised to Balli Kalyan Chakravarthy, son of late MP Durga Prasad Rao, for giving up his father's Tirupati MP seat to another party candidate.

Durga Prasad, sitting MP of YSRC, died due to Covid-19. Party leaders and politicians expected allotment of the bypoll ticket to his son following the tradition. But Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy surprisingly selected Dr Gurumurthy, who was his personal physiotherapist during the padayatra. Dr Gurumurthy accompanied Reddy from November 2017 to January 2019.

According to sources, Jagan had promised a good position to Dr Gurumurthy. Following this, the CM held a meeting with the kin of late MP at the CM's camp office in Tadepalli seeking their cooperation. The late MP's family members agreed to the proposal of Jagan. Municipal administration minister Botsa Satyanarayana, who accompanied the deceased MP's kin, told media that CM promised MLC post to the son of late MP whenever the first seat falls vacant in the legislative council.

Faith matters



Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy participating in special puja on the occasion of inauguration of Tungabhadra Pushkaralu in Kurnool city on Friday.

— DC

AP credits input subsidy
of ₹366cr to 4.91L farmers

The input subsidy is directly credited to farmers' bank a/c

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 20

In a first of its kind, the state government has credited input subsidy of ₹366 crore into bank accounts of nearly 4.91 lakh farmers for crops damaged during the October rains in Andhra Pradesh.

Unlike the earlier practice, where it used to take a long time for assessing extent of damage to both agriculture and horticulture crops due to natural calamities, the state government has deposited the amount through Real-Time Gross Settlement into the farmers' accounts as input subsidy.

The move is aimed to benefit farmers to use the input subsidy for purchasing seeds, fertilisers and

● It is for the first time, the state government has released input subsidy directly to the farmers who suffered damages to their crops due to natural calamities in an expeditious manner to help them raise crops again to compensate crop loss in the state, says horticulture additional director K. Balaji Naik.

pesticides to raise short-term crops and recoup their loss because of the natural calamity.

Due to the Pethai cyclone in 2018, 4,20,440 farmers suffered damage to their crops to an extent of 2,13,669.59 hectares.

Crops were similarly damaged due to floods and heavy rains in 2019-20 and also in 2020-21 during October. Based on the extent of crop loss, the state government estimated that input subsidy be

given to farmers to the tune of ₹30,692.05 lakh. The same amount was credited into the bank accounts of farmers.

Similarly, with regard to horticulture crops,

authorities estimated the crop loss at 31,250 hectares due to heavy rains and floods from April to October 2020 affecting about 70,932 farmers. Out of an estimated input subsidy amount of ₹59.5 crore, the state government had already credited

₹30 crore into the bank accounts of farmers through RTGS. The remaining amount will be credited in a day or two.

Horticulture additional director K. Balaji Naik said, "It is for the first time that the state government has released input subsidy directly to farmers who suffered damages to their crops due to natural calamities in an expeditious manner, so that they can raise crops again to recoup their loss."

The state government fixed an input subsidy of ₹15,000 per hectare for paddy, cotton, sugarcane, for maize ₹12,500; for pulses, wheat and tobacco ₹10,000; for jowar and castor ₹6,800; for korra and mustard ₹5,000, for sand casting ₹12,200 and for soil erosion ₹37,500.

CONG TO STALL
ASSEMBLY SESSION
FOR AMARAVATIDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 20

The Congress party decided to take Amaravati movement to the national level for the protection of Amaravati as the solo capital of AP state. The leaders of Congress admitted that the then Congress government made a big mistake by bifurcating the united AP and further forming a residuary AP state without a capital.

APCC president Sake Sallajjanath affirmed that Congress is supporting the Amaravati movement, but there is no response from the government and decided to take the movement to national level. The PCC conducted One state - One Capital meeting at Uddandarayunipalem.

46k retail stores take-off
under YSR CheyuthaDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 20

Aiming to establish 78,000 retail stores across the state under the YSR Cheyutha scheme, YSR Congress government has successfully set up close to 46,000 retail stores in the rural and urban areas.

The interiors boast of 32,341 stores whereas, in the urban areas, the government has successfully set up 13,226 retail stores.

On August 12, Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy launched the YSR Cheyutha scheme, providing financial assistance of ₹18,750 to 23 lakh beneficiaries. Within two months, the government launched the second phase of the

● ON AUGUST 12, the CM launched the YSR Cheyutha scheme, providing financial assistance of ₹18,750 to 23 lakh beneficiaries.

● Within two months, the government launched the second phase of the scheme. It endeavoured to support women in 45 to 60 years age-group

scheme.

He stated that the government endeavoured to support women in 45 to 60 years age-group and belonging to socially dis-

advantaged communities.

Officials stated MNCs and FMCG giants like Amul, ITC, HUL, P&G, and Reliance had transformed these women into micro-entrepreneurs in rural areas. Now their outlets are on par with other retail brands, officials said.

Constant mentoring, exchange of business ideas, converting local resources into marketable commodities would empower women transforming them from a micro consumer to be micro-producers.

Society for eliminating rural poverty (SERP) CEO P. Rajababu, said that the average daily sales turnover comes to ₹5,000. The monthly net profit is around ₹13,500.

War of words over local
body polls echoes in RBDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 20

The war of words between ministers and members of Telugu Desam over State Election Commissioner Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar's decision to conduct local body elections in February is nearing a flashpoint.

Even as they were launching scathing attacks against one another, Mr Ramesh Kumar lodged a complaint with Governor Biswa Bhushan Harichandan alleging verbal abuse by minister for civil supplies Kodali Venkateswara Rao (Nani).

The minister came down heavily against Mr Ramesh Kumar and alleged that the SEC was shunning his constitutional responsibility and dancing to the tune of TD chief N. Chandrababu Naidu.

He claimed that Mr Naidu appointed Mr Ramesh Kumar to get benefit from the SEC post and termed him as a mole of Mr Naidu. He demanded removal of Ramesh Kumar from the SEC post as he would not conduct free and fair elections.

Minister for endowments Velampalli Srinivas said that their government was unable to hire services of lawyers charging fees in crore whereas Ramesh Kumar hired

● Mr Ramesh Kumar lodged a complaint with Governor Biswa Bhushan Harichandan alleging verbal abuse by minister for civil supplies Kodali Venkateswara Rao (Nani)

such high-profile advocates for his cases in High Court and Supreme Court which show his politically motivated relations. Minister for education, Audimulapu Suresh alleged that Mr Ramesh Kumar wanted to conduct elections before his retirement, which without consent of the state government was unconstitutional.

Rajya Sabha MP V. Vijayasai Reddy said that the State Election Commissioner was not following constitutional guidelines and was having private meetings with TD leaders.

He stated, "When the state was receiving less than 10 Covid cases a day, the SEC postponed elections without even discussing with the state government, but when hundreds of cases are being registered and the fear of a second wave is looming large, he is trying to conduct elections. Mr Ramesh Kumar might join TD after his retire-

ment and also usurp the party leadership."

The counters from TD leaders have been equally volatile. Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Council, Yanamala Ramakrishnu alleged that the YSRC government was undermining election related laws as well as the Constitution of India by challenging the autonomy of the State Election Commissioner, whose decision-making cannot be questioned. He claimed that the YSRC's non-cooperation amounted to violation of the Constitution itself.

The TD leader demanded that elections that were thrust by YSRC rulers should be cancelled and fresh elections be held to ensure a vibrant democracy.

Stating that nepotism and favouritism were ruling the roost, Mr Ramakrishnu said that Jagan Mohan Reddy's rule was like that of Donald Trump in the US. He claimed that the Chief Secretary has no authority to tell the SEC that elections cannot be held.

TD organising secretary Nadendla Brahmam and other leaders strongly objected to the manner in which minister Kodali Nani has been making unparliamentary comments against the SEC and Mr Naidu.

‘SEC playing into
Naidu’s hand’DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 20

The State Election Commissioner Nimmagadda Ramesh is playing into the hands of TD chief and former chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu by rushing for the local body elections, said Rajya Sabha member V. Vijayasai Reddy.

Addressing a press conference here on Friday, Mr Vijayasai Reddy criticised the State Election Commissioner (SEC) for not following the constitutional guidelines and the Covid-19 protocol.

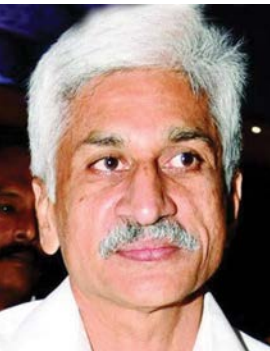
While the state was registering less than 10 Covid-19 cases a day, the SEC postponed the elections without even discussing it with the State government. But when hundreds of cases are reported and the fear of a second wave was looming large, SEC is trying to conduct elections.

"Nimmagadda Ramesh might join TD after his retirement as the party members have an immense trust in him," the MP said.

Speaking on the Polavaram project, he stated that there was nothing wrong in installing the statue of Dr Y.S. Rajashekar Reddy, who initiated the Polavaram project.

While former chief minister Dr Y.S. Rajashekar Reddy laid the foundation for Polavaram and completed a majority of work, Mr Chandrababu tried to stop the land acquisition. Mr Chandrababu Naidu provoked Odisha and Chhattisgarh states to stop the construction and moved to the Supreme Court.

He stated that Mr Naidu has no commitment



V. Vijayasai Reddy.

towards Polavaram and thus failed to keep his promise of completing the project by 2018.

Opposition TD role is completely absent and it has been working like an NRI party, residing in another state and politicising things in AP.

Speaking on Bhogapuram Airport, he said that the current airport in Visakhapatnam belonged to Indian Navy and once the commercial operations start in Bhogapuram, all the civil aviation in Visakhapatnam airports will be moved to Bhogapuram.

Minister for agriculture Kurasala Kannababu said SEC Ramesh was biased towards Opposition leaders and working under the direction of Mr Chandrababu Naidu.

The minister clarified that YSRC was not afraid of elections and there was no reason to fear seeking public mandate when Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy fulfilled 90 per cent of the poll promises within one year of forming the government.

"Our government implemented all the welfare schemes even during the Covid-19 pandemic," he said.

AP WILL LAUNCH
INDUSTRY RESTART
PROGRAMME:
KANNABABUDC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 20

The AP government will soon start industries restart programme to enable the small and medium scale units that were closed due to Covid pandemic are staggering to reopen them, said Kurasala Kannababu, minister for agriculture and who is also in charge minister for Visakhapatnam district.

Addressing a press conference here on Friday, Kannababu said the government would run parallel the agriculture and industries, the two major sources for creating large-scale employment in the state. He said most of the small scale industries were closed during the lockdown and they were never reopened. Hence financial aid would be given to these sick industries in the restart programme that was being planned.

He said an important meeting has been scheduled for Saturday in which entrepreneurs, industrialists and representatives of public sector undertakings would participate. The meeting would discuss the post lockdown scenario of the industries, pollution problems in Visakhapatnam city and comprehensive development of the region. The PSU role in providing helping hand to the unemployed through CSR programmes would also be discussed, the minister added.

Minister Muttamsetti Srinvasa Rao said the city has enough basic infrastructure facilities to develop as a major industrial hub of AP.

CAPITAL | RELOCATION The court observed that it ‘felt pain’ after witnessing stalling of all development works

Is shifting of capital from Amaravati not a ‘mindless act’, asks HC

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 20

The Andhra Pradesh High Court on Friday asked whether the state government's move to relocate capital city Amaravati was not a "mindless act".

A division bench comprising justice Rakesh Kumar and justice J. Uma Devi, while hearing a batch of petitions, including a petition filed by former TD MLA Tenali Sravan Kumar, raising objection against police for not allowing former chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu to conduct a roadshow in Visakhapatnam earlier.

The state government's special counsel S.S. Prasad

raised objection over usage of the phrase "mindless act" of the government in handling such a case.

In response to it, the court asked whether it was not a mindless act on part of the state government to relocate capital city Amaravati, after developing it by "spending thousands of crores of rupees of public money".

The court observed that it "felt pain" after witnessing stalling of all developmental works, including the construction of several buildings. The High Court bench further said that criminals were entering into politics undermining democratic institutions. It felt the need to restrict their entry into poli-

PILs filed in the High Court with political motives

From Page 1

Referring to Justice Rakesh Kumar, the special counsel said that as the judge came here from other state, he might not be knowing the problems pertaining to the location of the High Court and pointed out they were facing a series of problems like lack of water, less availability of tea or food as the court was located in a far-

office, his criminal antecedents are checked and wondered why the same was not the case with those entering politics. It must be done to safeguard

off place. He asked about the need for setting up the court in such a location with no proper amenities.

Referring to the PILs filed in the HC, he opined that they were not having any public interest except to serve political motives.

Prasad slammed former chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu for his capricious attitude towards the police by seeking their help when he wanted and

finding fault with them when he was in no need of their help. He said that as Naidu arrived in Visakhapatnam to play politics, the police asked him to go back wondering why his party leaders were making a hue and cry on the issue. He opined that Naidu should have filed the PIL if he was so concerned instead of allowing his party leaders to file. He said that the PIL lacked

any sanctity for being heard in the court. He also asked as to how far it could be justified to hold the Chief Minister and DGP responsible when a constable had committed a mistake.

As the petitioner's counsel S. Pranathi sought time to file a reply to the counter-affidavit filed by the police, the court adjourned the hearing to Monday.

into politics, they might become rulers and felt a need to safeguard democratic institutions from such persons.

The court also expressed

concern over how IAS and IPS officers were forced to follow dictats of ministers having criminal antecedents. It grieved over the way a top cop in Bihar was forced to listen to a person with a criminal background once he became a minister. The court found fault with Visakhapatnam ACP for serving a notice under section 151 of the CrPC and even felt the need for his dismissal.

Petitioner Tenali Sravan Kumar's contention was that once police had given permission to Mr Naidu to conduct a road show in Vizag, how could they now stop him from leading the road show and instead served him a notice under section 151 of the CrPC.

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Kartika Suddha Saptami
till 9.52 pm
Star: Shravanam till 9.55 am
Variyam: 2.08 pm to 3.49 pm
Durmuhurtam: 6.28 am to 7.57 am
Rahukalam: 9 am to 10.30 am
HILIRI CALENDAR
Rabbi-ul Akhir 5, 1442 AH
PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.40 am
Zohar: 1.30 pm
Asar: 4.30 pm
Maghrib: 5.45 pm
Isha: 8.15 pm
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.14 AM
SUNSET TODAY 5.32 PM
MOONRISE TODAY 11.59 AM
MOONSET TOMORROW 12.27 PM

COUNTER POINT



How can you recover the money you spent on ticket, votes, campaign...?

IN BRIEF

TD V-P Satyaprbha passes away

Tirupati: Telugu Desam's national vice-president and former Chittoor MLA D.A. Satyaprabha, 70, passed away due to ill health at Vaidehi Institute of Medical Sciences in Bengaluru late on Thursday night.

MP violates Covid-19 norms

Masks, social distancing ignored, people scuffle for free helmets

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 20

Covid-19 safety norms were blown to the winds when thousands of people gathered on the RK Beach Road in Visakhapatnam in the early hours of Friday to participate in a rally to create awareness on the use of life-saving helmets. The rally was flagged off by none other than Rajya Sabha member and north coastal in-charge of YSRC Mr V. Vijaya Sai Reddy.

Anakapalle MLA Mr Gudivada Amarnadh rode a bike leading the rally and Mr Reddy was the pillion rider. Surprisingly both of them were seen without masks. So were hundreds of bike riders seen close to the top leadership of the government.

Later, actor and well-known comedian of Telugu movie industry Ali addressed a meeting with the mask hanging from his ears and minister Muttamsetti Srinivasa Rao and others wore no masks surprising the health-conscious people who had a glimpse at the meeting.

Little people saw commotion and scuffle on the beach where free helmets were distributed to the motorists.

Mr Reddy himself distributed the helmets standing next to minister Mr Srinivasa Rao and hundreds of people rubbed against each other without masks and at one stage fought for it exchanging blows.

Morning walkers, who comprise the elite and



Rajya Sabha member V. Vijaya Sai Reddy sits as a pillion rider with Anakapalli MLA, Gudivada Amarnadh and takes part in a bike rally to create awareness on safe driving in Visakhapatnam on Friday.

1,221 new Covid cases, 10 deaths

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 20

AP registered 1,221 new Covid-19 cases scaling up the tally to 8,59,932 and 10 deaths raising toll to 6,920.

The state health authorities issued Covid-19 bulletin on Friday reporting that out of 66,002 samples tested, 1,221 persons were found infected with Covid-19. Out of a total 94,74,870 samples tested so far in the state, 8,37,630 patients were discharged after

recovery while 15,382 patients are still active with the virus.

Among the daily Covid-19 cases, East Godavari registered 202 followed by 198 in Krishna, 175 in Chittoor, 145 in West Godavari, 69 in Visakhapatnam, 65 in Kadapa, 50 in Prakasam, 47 in Nellore, 41 in Anantapur, 34 in Srikakulam, 32 in Vizianagaram and 19 in Kurnool.

With regard to the total

Covid-19 active cases, East Godavari topped the state with 4,881 followed by 2,107 in Krishna, 1,724 in Guntur, 1,319 in West Godavari, 1,282 in Visakhapatnam, 1,023 in Nellore, 828 in Chittoor, 581 in Prakasam, 465 in Anantapur, 443 in Srikakulam, 296 in Kadapa, 218 in Vizianagaram and 215 in Kurnool.

The rate of recovery among Covid-19 infected patients has been good in East Godavari.

"Perhaps they were not aware of the WHO warning on the second bout which is already taking its toll in the US, Europe and New Delhi," she said.

This is not the first time Mr Reddy led a rally violating the Covid protocol. On November 13, he participated in a walkathon 'We Support Vizag' organised by GVMC. Children without masks were seen next to him.

Medical officers in charge of Covid in Visakhapatnam feigned ignorance. They said they were not aware of these rallies.

At last Friday's rally, the chief medical officer Dr K.S.L.G. Sastry said few people gathered around the leaders, but there was social distance among the walkers and most of them wore masks.

CPM, JS against closure of Vizag airport

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 20

City unit of CPM and Jana Sena came out against the proposal to close the Vizag city airport for 30 years after commencement of Bhogapuram International Airport.

The proposal was made by Rajya Sabha member V. Vijaya Sai Reddy to the Union Civil Aviation minister Hardeep Singh Puri on November 18.

Jana Sena general secretary Bolisetty Satyanarayana said Vijaya Sai Reddy has no right to ask for closure of the airport without discussing the issue with the stake holders

67 ACRES TO BE ACQUIRED FOR KADAPA AIRPORT EXPANSION

DC CORRESPONDENT
KADAPA, NOV. 20

District collector Chevuri Harikiran on Friday inspected the land required for the Kadapa Airport expansion works. The collector, along with Kadapa sub-collector Pridhivitej, spoke to the farmers of Chinnamachupalle and Palampalle areas who are

and the local people.

He said Mr Reddy is unilaterally taking decisions

losing their lands in the airport area for expansion works. The collector said that the Kadapa Airport is further expanded in the interest of the public. Therefore, about 67 acres of land in the surrounding areas have to be acquired from farmers. In this context, views were sought from the concerned farmers for the acquisition.

ignoring the elected leaders and people of Uttaraandhra, which was not in the true

spirit of democracy. There is no public interest or public purpose in the letter written to the government for closure of Visakhapatnam Airport for 30 years.

"We need airports in Vizianagaram and Srikakulam districts and also involve local people to decide their locations and not by the Chief Ministers, industrialists or real-estate mafia. Opening New International Airport in Bhogapuram shall not be the closure of Visakhapatnam International Airport," Mr Satyanarayana said.

General secretary of CPM Dr B. Ganga Rao also spoke against the proposal.

Greens seek Coringa, Pulicat as Ramsar sites

VADREVV SRINIVAS | DC
KAKINADA, NOV. 20

Despite eligibility for declaring Ramsar status to the Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary and the Pulicat Lake in Andhra Pradesh, such a declaration has not been done so far.

Given the ecological value of the sites, environmentalists are demanding that the Centre as well as Andhra Pradesh government declare these environmental sites as Ramsar sites. Environmentalists who have studied these two sites recommend that the government make the declaration as these two sites are eligible.

Though India has numerous wetlands of various types, there are certain criteria of selection of a site for Ramsar designation, environmentalists said.

As per Article 2.2 of Ramsar convention, wetlands are broadly categorised under two groups. The Coringa wetland satisfies all criteria and is eligible for a Ramsar declaration. The Kolleru lake was already identified as a Ramsar site on August 19, 2002.

Birds lover and environmentalist K. Mrityunjaya Rao said that India has a total of 41 Ramsar sites, including three more new sites identified this year. In July, the Kabartaal wetland in Bihar, the Lonar lake of Maharashtra (the only crater lake in India) and the Keetham Lake in Agra (called as Sur Sarovar) were added.

He said that despite their potential, the Coringa



Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary near Kakinada in East Godavari.

Wildlife Sanctuary and the AP Pulicat Lake have not been selected. He said these two sites should be declared as Ramsar sites due to their importance.

International forest Biodiversity and mangrove management specialist Dr Ravishankar Thupalli said that he has submitted a report on Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary to the Ramsar site cell last year on behalf of EGREE Foundation, a UNDP and Central government project with the Andhra Pradesh Forest Department. He said if wetlands are declared as Ramsar sites, they get global recognition and give a boost to tourism. He expressed hope Coringa would get Ramsar recognition soon.

Environmentalists say even if governments make no efforts for declaration as Ramsar sites, it should take steps to not destroy it. They said though Kolleru lake has been declared as a Ramsar site, the destruction of the lake

was going on. Coringa qualifies to be included as an internationally important one, which contains a representative, rare, or unique example of a natural wetland type found within the biogeographic. Mangroves with most productive and natural ecosystem, tidal flats with exposing during low-tides utilized by large number of shorebirds, gulls, egrets and others a feeding grounds, Lagoon within sanctuary which support large number of fish and bird species.

Coringa is surrounded by about two kilometres of stretch of mainland beach, which attract tourists and support for shoreline organisms of three major rivers, Godavari, and its tributaries Gaderu and Corangi besides 32 canals traversing the mangroves, flood plain, natural levees, Kakinada bay, sand pits and conserving biological diversity and meets Ramsar criteria.

AP lorry owners demand toll tax cancellation

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 20

The AP Lorry Owners Association (APLOA) appealed to Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to cancel the new proposal of collecting toll tax in double roads. APLOA wrote a letter to Mr Jagan on Friday and lamented that the transport sector had been badly affected due to the Corona crisis for the past eight months.

APLOA general secretary Y.V. Eswar Rao said

that due to Corona the transport sector was pushed into a deep crisis and not to levy any burden on the transport sector. He said that they have been paying taxes for four-line and six-line roads across the state. He lamented that for the last two years the transport sector is in deep crisis and the corona pandemic has shattered the crisis further. He stated that in this juncture collecting toll for two-line roads will be a heavy burden on the transport sector.



National archery player K. Jyothi taking charge as one day AP State women's commission chairperson under "Kids Takeover" programme in Guntur on Friday. — DC

Demand for new Vijayanagar dist

DC CORRESPONDENT
ANANTAPUR, NOV. 20

With the Karnataka government announcing a new district called Vijayanagar in memory of Vijayanagar Empire's main capital, there is a similar demand from AP historians seeking Penukonda, the summer capital of Vijayanagar, as one among the new districts, which are in the process of being formed in Andhra Pradesh.

The erstwhile ceded area of Rayalaseema region - Bellary district, located closer to Anantapur district, was divided into two districts by Karnataka government. One of them has been named Vijayanagar, by combining Hospet, Kampli, Hagaribommanagali, Kottur, Hadagali and

Harapanahalli constituencies. In the new district Vijayanagar, Hampi, erstwhile capital of Vijayanagar Empire during the 14-17th centuries and an International tourism centre, has been added. The original Bellary district remains with areas of Bellary, Kurugodu, Siruguppa, Sandur and Kudligi areas.

Hospet and Hampi are twin cities. Hampi is the first capital of Vijayanagara Empire, whose summer capital was Penukonda in Anantapur district.

Meanwhile, a group of rich iron ore mine owners, along with Jindal Steels, are said to be behind the aspiration of having a separate district that includes Hampi, the then capital of the Hindu Vijayanagara Empire.

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SHORT TAKES

14 PEOPLE DEAD
AS CAR COLLIDES
WITH TRUCK IN UP

Lucknow/Pratapgarh, Nov. 20: As many as 14 people, including seven children, died when their car collided with a stationary truck on the Lucknow-Allahabad highway, around 70 km from Pratapgarh district headquarters, an official said on Friday.

The road accident took place late on Thursday night when the victims were returning from a wedding function in the Nawabganj area of Pratapgarh, Additional Chief Secretary, Home, Awanish Awasthi said.

Pratapgarh Superintendent of Police (SP) Anurag Arya said the speeding SUV dashed into the truck parked by the road in the Manikpur police station area after one of its rear tyres got punctured near Deshraj Inara.

While five bodies could be taken out initially, a JCB machine had to be used to pull out the SUV from under the truck to retrieve the remaining bodies, he said, adding the bodies have been shifted to CHC Kunda and will be sent for autopsy later in the day.

It took almost two hours to pull the car out from under the truck, the SP said.

Arya, who visited the spot, said the police have spoken to the family members of the victims and assured all possible help.

Awasthi said Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath directed senior officials to reach the spot and extend all possible help. The Chief Minister has extended ex gratia of ₹2 lakhs to each of those killed in the crash, he added.

ED FILES MONEY
LAUNDERING CASE
IN TRP SCAM

SAURABH JOSHI | DC
MUMBAI, NOV. 20

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday filed a money laundering complaint in connection with the alleged TRP (television rating points) rigging scam case that is being investigated by Mumbai police. The ED officials said that the case was filed by them on the basis of the Mumbai police's FIR.

The officials said that they would summon all those named accused in the case for questioning in the fresh case. The Mumbai crime branch is currently probing the case that was filed in October naming *Republic TV*, two Marathi channels accused of rigging the TRP ratings for their channels with help of some other persons, who are also named in the case.

The Mumbai police's probe revealed that apart from the named accused, two former employees of Hansa research agency were in cahoots with the accused persons. These persons will be summoned by the ED for recording their statement and the prime focus of the probe will be to ascertain if there was any laundering of ill-gotten money in the case.

"ED will probe if fake TRPs were generated and if the money earned through this was used to generate illegal funds and create illegitimate assets. TRP is the parameter to ascertain programmes with highest viewership and hence it becomes crucial for the channels to earn advertising and other revenue," said officials.

Mumbai police filed a case after ratings agency Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) filed a complaint through Hansa Research Group pertaining to the alleged rigging. Several people including *Republic TV*'s Arnab Goswami were arrested in the case that has attracted several eyeballs and has become bone of contention between the state and central governments.

LoC locals call for 'end to hostility'

Flare up along LoC last week left at least four civilians and an equal number of jawans dead

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
BALKOT (LoC), NOV. 20

"I was away when I received a phone call from my wife saying intense artillery shelling is underway. She asked me what she and other family members should do, stay at home or leave", recalled Abdul Haleem, a resident of Balkote, a sleepy village comprising scattered traditional houses at the foothills just a stone's throw from the Line of Control (LoC) in Baramulla district.

Alarmed by the grimness of his spouse's voice, Haleem quickly headed for home but, before he could reach there, his wife called up again to inform him that two houses including their's have caught fire due to the artillery fire. "I was shocked and merely asked her if all the family members were safe. I felt relief when told everyone at home has escaped unhurt," Haleem told this newspaper.

Standing beside the debris of his house and that of his uncle's, Haleem said, "You can yourself see everything has been reduced into rubble. What was our fault? Indians and

Pakistanis may do to each other whatever they want to but why should we suffer?"

Farooqa Begum was not as lucky as her neighbour Haleem's family. An artillery shell pierced through a wall of her house killing the 35-year-old housewife on the spot. "*Hum par qayamat guzri hai* (we've gone through doomsday)", lamented her husband Bashir Ahmed Dar.

Tahir Ahmed Mir, an employee of J&K's department of consumer affairs and public distribution, was distributing ration at a depot in Kamalkote area when a mortar shell fell and exploded a couple of metres away. Mir suffered multiple splinter injuries and died on the way to the hospital. Back in his native village Sultan Daki, the world of his aged parents and siblings lies completely shattered after the tragedy.

Raveel Ahmed, his brother, said, "We were six brothers and one of them has been snatched from us. Our hearts are bleeding". The rage in Ahmed's eyes was clearly evident as he repeatedly asked 'Why was he snatched from



Last week's flare up left behind a trail of destruction in villages close to the LoC in Hajipur and Kamalkote sectors of Baramulla district.

— DC

us...what was his fault?"

The interminable hostility between India and Pakistan troops along the LoC flared up again last week, leaving at least four civilians and an equal number of Indian Army and one Border Security Force (BSF) jawans dead and more than a dozen civilians and three Army personnel injured.

Pakistan reported the death of four civilians and one Army soldier and injuries to 12 civilians in cross-LoC firing and shelling on November 12 and 13.

However, Indian Army claimed to have killed, at

least, 11 Pakistani soldiers and caused "substantial damage" to its infrastructure including ammunition and FOL (Forward Operating Location) dumps and "terrorist launch-pads" across the LoC "in retaliation to unprovoked ceasefire violations".

In their counterclaim, the Pakistan Army claimed inflicting "substantial losses" both in terms of men and material to the Indian troops "in response to their provocative act of engaging innocent civilians".

In J&K, many houses in villages falling in close

proximity of the LoC including Balkote, Kamalkote, Gowhalan, Sarai Bandi, Nambala and Gwalta (Baramulla district), Dawar (Bandipore district), Keran (Kupwara district) and Sawjian (Poonch district) were damaged in artillery shelling, forcing the residents to flee to safer locations.

As reported by Pakistan media, 15 residential houses, a few multi-storey buildings and one shop were gutted and 24 residential houses and a guest-house suffered partial damage and 20 cattle and eight goats perished in the Indian shelling.

The guns fell silent on the evening of November 13. Next day when residents returned to the affected villages on the Indian side of the LoC they found their homes burnt or damaged extensively and the household goods strewn and wrecked apart.

The two countries' armies accused each other of initiating firing and it was not the first time that the exchanges caused deaths among both facing troops and civilians besides leaving a trail of

destruction in villages.

As per official statistics, 32 Indian Army and Border Security Force (BSF) personnel, 26 militants and infiltrators, 16 civilians and three civilian porters working for the Army or the BSF (total number of casualties were 77) were killed in the incidents of cross-border firing and shelling, clashes and sneak attacks carried out by militants or Pakistan's Border Action Teams (BATs) along the LoC and the IB, so far, this year.

As the civilians have routinely fallen prey to such exchanges, Nazir Ahmed, a resident of Balkote asked, "When an artillery shell lands in a house, a cowshed or courtyard we can't immediately say who fired it. But the fact is that it is mainly the civilians on both sides who suffer whenever India and Pakistan troops clash. This has to be brought to a close".

The border-dwellers were also unanimous in demanding early construction of community and individual bunkers in shelling prone areas to minimise the casualties in such eventualities.

TMC MANTRI
COMPARES DIDI
WITH NETAJI

RAJIB
CHOWDHURI | DC
KOLKATA, NOV. 20

Trinamul Congress minister Bratya Basu on Friday compared his party supremo and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee with Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose to fan an eternal "Bengali" sentiment about the legendary freedom fighter against the Bharatiya Janata Party ahead of the next year's Assembly election. He also branded her party as her own "Azad Hind Fauj" in what may trigger a controversy.

The state science and technology minister alleged, "it is a fact Bose had to go away from the politics of Bengal and India as the freedom movement was against a colonial power. Exactly the same thing happened after 50 years with Mamata Banerjee. But she did not have to go since her fight was not against any colonial rule for freedom. Mamata Banerjee's battle was on parliamentary democracy for which she formed a separate party."

Night curfew in three more
Guj cities to contain Covid-19

DC CORRESPONDENT
with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, NOV. 20

The Union government has rushed four high level teams to Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Manipur to help the states deal with surging cases of Coronavirus.

The Union health ministry said on Friday that the teams will visit the districts reporting a high number of Covid-19 cases and support the state efforts towards strengthening containment, surveillance, testing, infection prevention and control measures, and efficient clinical management of the positive cases.

India on Friday crossed 90 lakh cases with 45,882 new detections. The total deaths so far is 1.32 lakh out of which 584 are in the last 24 hours.

India has tested a total of 12,95,91,786 samples, as on date. Close to 11 lakh tests were conducted in the past 24 hours.

"High levels of widespread testing have ensured that the cumulative positivity rate is sustained at low levels and is presently following a downward trajectory. The cumulative national positivity rate stands at 6.95% today, less than the 7% mark. Higher volumes of testing eventually lead to low positivity rate," health ministry said.

The National Recovery Rate has reached 93.60%. Meanwhile, vaccine maker Serum Institute of India's CEO Adar Poonawalla has said the Oxford Covid-19 vaccine should be available for healthcare workers and elderly people by February 2021 and by April for the general public, and will be priced at a maximum of 1,000 for two necessary doses for the public, depending on the final trial results and regulatory

DC CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, NOV. 20

Amid the rising numbers of Covid-19 positive patients in Mumbai, the Shiv Sena ruled Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) on Friday announced that schools will remain closed in the city till December 31. Earlier, the Maharashtra government had planned to open schools from November 23.

According to the circular issued by BMC's education department, although pandemic is under control in Mumbai, other countries are witnessing the second wave and considering the situation of the infection of the other states, the possibility of the second wave cannot be ignored in Maharashtra. "The next four to six months are very crucial for containing the

pandemic. Hence, the schools in BMC's jurisdiction cannot be started from November 23rd. All the schools will remain closed till December 31, 2020.

Maharashtra reported a single day rise of 5,640 Covid-19 new cases on Friday taking its overall tally to 17,68,695 cases while 155 new deaths were reported which pushed the fatality count to 46,511.

Gaikwad said that the online classes will continue at the schools that remain closed. "Even if the schools do not reopen, the students can still attend the online classes and learn. I have given necessary instructions to the officials concerned," the minister added.

Gaikwad said that the education department has approved the BMC's proposal.

approvals. He added probably by 2024, every Indian will get vaccinated.

"It will probably take two or three years for every Indian to get inoculated, not just because of the supply constraints but because you need the budget, the vaccine, logistics, infrastructure and then, people should be willing to take the vaccine. So these are the factors that lead up to being able to vaccinate 80-90 per cent of the population. It will be 2024 for everybody, if willing to take a two-dose vaccine, to be vaccinated," Poonawalla said.

Meanwhile, to curb the spike in coronavirus cases, the Gujarat government decided to impose night curfew in Surat, Vadodara and Rajkot cities from November 21. The announcement came as a 57-hour-long weekend curfew came into effect from 9 pm in Ahmedabad city, which will end at 6 am on November 23. The government has already announced a night curfew in Ahmedabad from November 23. Deputy CM Nitin Patel announced curfew between 9:00 pm and 6:00 am in Surat, Rajkot and Vadodara.

FB: HATE SPEECH
PREVALENCE IS
0.10 PER CENT

New Delhi, Nov. 20: Social media giant Facebook has for the first time disclosed prevalence of hate speech on its platform, saying that out of every 10,000 content views globally in the third quarter, 10-11 were hate speech.

Facebook, which has 1.82 billion daily users globally, has drawn flak in the past for its handling of hate speech on the platform in India.

In its community standards enforcement report for Sept. 2020 quarter, Facebook said it is including the prevalence of hate speech on its platform globally "for the first time". "In Q3 2020, hate speech prevalence was 0.10 per cent, 0.11 per cent or 10 to 11 views of hate speech for every 10,000 views of content," it added.

— PTI

Sonia shifts to Goa to
avoid Delhi pollution

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 20

Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Friday set up three separate panels for discussing policy issues related to economic affairs, foreign affairs and national security before leaving Delhi due to health issues.

Mrs Gandhi, who has been advised to shift out of Delhi to avoid the heavy pollution in the national capital in view of her chronic chest infection, has shifted to Goa for a few days.

Congress sources said she was accompanied by Rahul Gandhi. The Congress president has been under heavy medication following her discharge from hospital in August, and doctors are concerned about her consistent chest infection.

The air pollution in Delhi has aggravated her asthma and her chest condition, the sources added. Hours before leaving, Gandhi set up three separate committees for discussing policy issues related to economic affairs, foreign affairs and national security. Former prime minister Manmohan Singh is a part of all three panels.

The economic affairs committee will comprise of former finance minister P. Chidambaram and party leaders Mallikarjun Kharge and Digvijaya. Rajya Sabha MP Jairam Ramesh will be its convener.

While the committee on foreign affairs will have Anand Sharma, Shashi Tharoor, Salman Khurshid and Saptagiri Ulaka. Khurshid will be the convener of the

panel, the committee on national security will have leader of opposition in Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad, party leaders Veerappa Moily, Vincent H. Pala and V. Vaithilingam, with Pala as its convener.

"The Congress president has constituted three committees to consider and discuss issues and policies related to the subjects of economic affairs, foreign affairs and national security," an official statement from AICC general secretary K.C. Venugopal said.

It is interesting to note that those nominated in the committees include Ghulam Nabi Azad, Anand Sharma, Veerappa Moily and Shashi Tharoor, who were part of the 23 letter-writers seeking an organisational overhaul of the Congress.

TAX | FRAUD

The farmer alleges that photocopies of his ID cards were misused

Odisha farmer gets ₹10cr GST evasion notice

AKSHAYA KUMAR
SHAHU | DC
BHUBANESWAR, NOV. 20

A farmer in Sonepur district, who ekes out a living by toiling day in and out in his one-acre farmland, has received a notice for alleged Goods and Services Tax (GST) evasion to the tune of a whopping ₹10 crore.

Naveen Bag, the farmer, on Friday said he came to know how his name has been used by some unknown, dishonest businessmen to evade GST

when some departmental officials recently raided his humble accommodation on charges of tax evasion. The poor farmer learnt that a firm — Bag & Bag — had been set up using his name.

According to Naveen, he had shared the photocopies of his Aadhaar card, voter identity card and other documents with one Dilip Meher of his district around eight months ago to avail loans from a bank. He now suspects that his identification documents had been misused, leading to the

● FOLLOWING THE detection of the fraud, Naveen Bag has lodged a complaint with the Odisha police.

● THIS IS NOT the first time such massive irregularities and instances of GST evasion have come to the light in Odisha.

fraud. Following the detection of the fraud, Naveen has lodged a complaint at the Rampur police station. "The agricultural land is registered in the name of

my father. We are completely dependent on farming and we are completely ignorant how the company was set up in my name," Naveen said.

However, this is not the first time such massive irregularities and instances of GST evasion have come to the light in Odisha. On November 11, a delivery boy working with a private company in Rourkela had received a notice for ₹10 lakh GST evasion.

Preliminary investigations had revealed that a

fake company by the name of 'Manorama Trading' was set up using the name of the delivery boy and fraudulent transactions of over ₹70 lakh had been carried out.

Similarly, a man residing in Sector-20 area of Rourkela was also charged with gross tax liability under Section 74(5) for allegedly receiving taxable goods amounting to ₹23.96 crore and further availing ₹4.31 crore under CGST and SGST on the basis of fake invoices.

that no relief can be provided against inflated electricity bills, had claimed that the state is not in a position to waive off electricity bills because three companies which are providing electricity to state are running into losses due to non payment of bills.

Fadnavis said, "during our regime, energy minister Chandrakant Bawankule had done excellent work. We provided electricity at the cheaper rate. We purchased power at a very cheap rate and we gave a concession to the poor and farmers during our rule. If this government has the courage, they should also do it," he said.

The BJP has been target-

ing the MVA government over consumers' complaint of getting inflated electricity bills during the pandemic. Earlier this month, Nitin Raut had hinted at a major relief to the consumers facing the issue of inflated power bills, saying that a Diwali gift was in the offing.

However, a few days back, the minister had said that the government will not be able to provide any relaxation in the inflated electricity bills that consumers received and that they will have to make full payment of the bills.

Raut said that Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray has ordered an inquiry into the dues of the state-run power company.

IN BRIEF

Truck hits funeral mourners, kills 9

Beijing: A truck crashed into a funeral procession in central China on Friday, killing nine people and injuring four others, the state media reported. The accident happened on a national highway in Henan province's Huabin county. Nine people were killed in the incident, Xinhua news agency reported. Four people were injured and hospitalised, it said. The Ministry of Public Security has sent a team to investigate the case, the report said.

'Cannibal' arrested after bones found

Berlin: German prosecutors said Friday there is evidence of "cannibalism" in the killing of a 44-year-old man whose remains were found on the northern edge of Berlin earlier this month. A 41-year-old man was arrested on Thursday on suspicion of murder with sexual motives at his home close to the site where the victim's bones were found. "The suspect had an interest in cannibalism," Berlin prosecutors' office spokesman Martin Steltner said.

Pak: Ancient Hindu temple discovered

Peshawar: A Hindu temple, believed to have been constructed 1,300 years ago, has been discovered by Pakistani and Italian archaeological experts at a mountain in northwest Pakistan's Swat district. The discovery was made during an excavation at Barikot Ghundai. Announcing the discovery on Thursday, Faez Khaliq of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Department of Archaeology said that the temple discovered is of Lord Vishnu. It was built by the Hindus 1,300 years ago during the Hindu Shahi period, he said. The Hindu Shahis or Kabul Shahis (850-1026 CE) was a Hindu dynasty that ruled the Kabul Valley (eastern Afghanistan), Gandhara (modern-day Pakistan), and present-day northwestern India.

Pfizer, BioNTech seek emergency nod from FDA for virus vaccine

Washington, Nov. 20: Pfizer and its partner BioNTech confirmed they will apply on Friday for emergency use authorisation for their Coronavirus vaccine, becoming the first to do so in the US or Europe as the pandemic rages around the world. The vaccine has been developed with breathtaking speed — just 10 months after the genetic code of the Coronavirus was first sequenced. The announcement had been expected for several days, after the companies said that a completed study of trials of the product showed it was 95 percent effective in protecting people from infection. The announcement also confirms what BioNTech's CEO said.

"Filing in the US represents a critical milestone

in our journey to deliver a Covid-19 vaccine to the world and we now have a more complete picture of both the efficacy and safety profile of our vaccine, giving us confidence in its potential," Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla said.

The vaccine has been under evaluation for weeks in the European Union, Australia, Canada, Japan and the United Kingdom, the companies said. "The companies will be ready to distribute the vaccine candidate within hours after authorisation," their statement said. The Food and Drug Administration has not said how long it will take to study the vaccine data, but the government expects to give the green light for the vaccine in the first two weeks of December.

Serbian Church leader dies due to Covid at 90

Belgrad, Nov. 20: The leader of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Irinej, has died after testing positive for the Coronavirus, the church said on Friday. He was 90. The patriarch was hospitalised with the virus early in November, soon after attending the funeral of the head of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro, Bishop Amfilohije, who also died from complications caused by the Covid-19 infection.

"It was an honor to have known you," Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic said on Instagram with a

black and white photo of the patriarch. "People like you are never gone." At that funeral, thousands of mourners, most of them with no masks or keeping any distance between each other, gathered at the funeral in the Montenegrin capital of Podgorica on Nov. 1, in violation of coronavirus-fighting measures proclaimed by the small Adriatic state's authorities. Since Amfilohije's death, and the hospitalization of the patriarch, Serbian priests have been appealing for their parishioners to take the deadly virus seriously.

WRITE | MOVE **Book Shuggie Bain was rejected by 30 editors**

Douglas Stuart wins Booker Prize

London, Nov. 20: New York-based Scottish writer Douglas Stuart has won the prestigious 50,000-pound Booker Prize for his autobiographical debut novel 'Shuggie Bain', a coming of age tale of love and alcoholism set in 1980s Glasgow and "destined to be a classic", beating five other shortlisted authors including Indian-origin Avni Doshi.

Stuart, 44, dedicated the book to his mother, who died of alcoholism when he was 16-years-old. After graduating from the Royal College of Art in London, he moved to New York to start a career in fashion design.

"I cannot believe this. Shuggie is a work of fiction but writing the book was extremely healing for me; hugely cathartic," Stuart said, adding that he was



Douglas Stuart

debut novel 'Burnt Sugar', lost out on the top prize.

She was in the running for this year's prize alongside Zimbabwean writer Tsitsi Dangaremba for the third novel in her trilogy 'This Mournable Body' on a shortlist otherwise dominated by US authors — Diane Cook for 'The New Wilderness', Maaza Mengiste for 'The Shadow King' and Brandon Taylor for 'Real Life'.

The 2020 Booker Prize judging panel was chaired by Margaret Busby, editor, literary critic and former publisher, and consists of author Lee Child; author and critic Sameer Rahim; writer and broadcaster Lemn Sissay; and classicist and translator Emily Wilson.

"We bonded across Zoom meetings. It was a wonderful experience... please read all the books on the short-

list," said Busby, who led the panel through whittling down the finalists from 162 entries. "Shuggie Bain is destined to be a classic — a moving, immersive and nuanced portrait of a tight-knit social world, its people and its values. The heart-wrenching story tells of the unconditional love between Agnes Bain — set on a descent into alcoholism by the tough circumstances life has dealt her — and her youngest son," she said in reference to the winning book.

"Shuggie Bain can make you cry and make you laugh — a daring, frightening and life-changing novel," she added.

The book was rejected by 30 editors before it was picked up by publishers Grove Atlantic in the US and Picador in the UK.

— PTI

Trump team cries foul over Joe's win

Take frantic steps to subvert poll results

Washington, Nov. 20: President Donald Trump and his allies are taking increasingly frantic steps to subvert the results of the 2020 election, including summoning state legislators to the White House as part of a long-shot bid to overturn Joe Biden's victory.

Among other last-ditch tactics: personally calling local election officials who are trying to rescind their certification votes in Michigan, suggesting in a legal challenge that Pennsylvania set aside the popular vote there and pressuring county officials in Arizona to delay certifying vote tallies.

Election law experts see it as the last, dying gasps of the Trump campaign and say Biden is certain to walk into the Oval Office come January. But there is great concern that Trump's effort is doing real damage to public faith in the integrity of US elections. Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, one of Trump's most vocal GOP critics, accused Trump of resorting to "overt pressure on state and local officials to subvert the will of the people and overturn the election."

Romney added, "It is difficult to imagine a worse, more undemocratic action by a sitting American President." Trump's own election security agency has declared the 2020 presidential election to have been the most secure in history. Days after that statement was issued, Trump fired the agency's leader.

The increasingly desperate and erratic moves have no reasonable chance of changing the outcome of the 2020 election.

— AP

Don is damaging democracy: Biden

Willmington, United States, Nov. 20:

US President-elect Joe Biden on Thursday accused Donald Trump of brazenly damaging democracy, as the incumbent's campaign to reverse his election loss through fraud claims was dealt another blow with a recount in Georgia.

Trump was behind "incredibly damaging messages being sent to the rest of the world about how democracy functions," Biden told reporters in his home state of Delaware.

"It's hard to fathom how this man thinks," said Biden. "I'm confident he knows he hasn't won, is not going to be able to win and we're going to be sworn in January 20th." Trump has refused to accept his loss on November 3, despite his opponent getting over six million more votes.

Biden won the state-by-state Electoral College votes that ultimately decide who takes the White House by 306 to 232, flipping five states that went to Trump four years ago.

That includes Georgia, where a hand recount of its five million ballots confirmed Thursday that Biden is the first Democratic presidential candidate to win the southern state in almost three decades.

The recount showed Biden had won by 12,284 votes, according to figures posted on Georgia secretary of state Brad Raffensperger's website —

BIDEN: CHINA MUST PLAY BY RULES, U.S. TO BE BACK IN WHO

Washington, Nov. 20: US President-elect Joe Biden has said that he wants to make sure that China plays by the rules and announced that his administration will rejoin the World Health Organisation.

Biden was responding to a question on Thursday about his remarks during the presidential debates that he wanted to punish China over the way Beijing has been behaving.

He was asked if that could include economic sanctions or tariffs on China, the world's second largest economy.

In April, President Donald Trump announced that the US would withdraw from the WHO, accusing the UN organisation for failing to oversee the onset of the coronavirus as it began to spread in China.

"It's not so much about punishing China, it's about making sure China understands they've got to play by the rules. It's a simple proposition," Biden said during a meeting with a bipartisan group of governors in his hometown in Wilmington, Delaware.

— PTI

slightly fewer than the approximately 14,000 he originally led by.

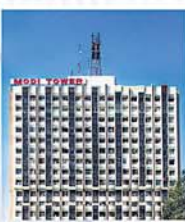
— AFP



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DECCAN Chronicle

21 NOVEMBER 2020

SC fails if it can't protect fundamental rights of all

The Constitution is the guarantee of the individual against the state. For, it lists his fundamental rights, which are non-negotiable except through the process of law, and denies state a chance to be arbitrary. These rights are not pious declarations without remedies; the Constitution has provided for mechanisms to ensure that its writ runs. The Supreme Court of India is that supreme institution the Constitution has envisaged to perform the noblest job of protecting the fundamental rights.

Article 32 of the Constitution guarantees people the right to move the Supreme Court by appropriate proceedings for the enforcement of the fundamental rights. It also empowers the court to act appropriately to enforce them. The founding fathers who debated the Article in the Constituent Assembly were near unanimous on this unique power which made Supreme

Court of India a unique institution. And between Article 32 and the Supreme Court, they thought the fundamental rights of the people are in the safe hands. M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar, who later became the speaker of the first Lok Sabha, called the Supreme Court the supreme guardian of the citizen's rights in any democracy. "I would even go further and say that it is the soul of democracy," he said, and explained if the fundamental rights of the individual are left to the tender mercies of the gov-

ernment of the day, they cannot be called fundamental rights at all. Members called Article 32 "the most important article of the whole Constitution", "fundamental to all the fundamental rights guaranteed under this Constitution" which "makes all the fundamental rights become real". Dr B.R. Ambedkar who wound up the discussion in no uncertain terms made the importance of the Article clear. "If I was asked to name any particular article in this Constitution as the most important — an article without which this Constitution would be a nullity — I could not refer to any other article except this one (Article 32). It is the very soul of the Constitution and the very heart of it."

Now, cut to 2020. The Chief Justice of India, S.A. Bobde, while hearing a petition seeking the release of a journalist who was apprehended by the police while on his way to report the rape-murder of a teen, told his counsel that the court was "trying to discourage" individuals from filing petitions under Article 32. The policy statement is disappointing, unfortunate and unacceptable not only because it refused to repeat its act which ensured the personal liberty of another journalist a few days ago under Article 32 but also for its decision to totally abdicate itself from the solemn duty. The court had already started showing the signs of its fatigue with the Article when it chose to look the other way when the several people from Kashmir approached it with habeus corpus petitions, when lakhs of people were made to walk their way home which are thousands of miles away due to governmental apathy during the pandemic and when the government chose to introduce religion as a condition for citizenship. If the Supreme Court fails Article 32, it fails the fundamental rights of the people, and thereby, the Constitution itself.

Trump to leave mess for Biden

By still not recognising Joe Biden to be the President-Elect a fortnight after polling for the US presidency was completed, outgoing President Donald Trump is causing America's reliability as a partner, and also as a democracy, to be brought into question. This is apt to makes it more difficult for Mr Biden to extricate US foreign policy from the mould in which Mr Trump placed it, although the President-Elect is acknowledged to be a seasoned foreign policy hand who leans in the direction of building democratic alliances, and finding the middle ground.

Across a wide range, President Trump has taken steps in the dying weeks of his presidency to place hurdles in the path of the incoming President, who turned 78 on Friday. Assuming that he goes quietly on January 20, Mr Biden's efforts in respect of Afghanistan and Iran will be watched in New Delhi. Mr Trump signed a so-called peace deal with the Taliban under whose terms US troops are to vacate Afghanistan by May 2021. In an extraordinary move, after the counting of votes in the presidential election the US leader decided to reduce US force levels to only 2000 from 4,500 by Christmas. (At its peak, a few years ago, the US had 1,35,000 soldiers in Afghanistan.)

This appears precipitous since violence in Afghanistan has gone up alarmingly after the inking of the US-Taliban deal last February. Can Mr Biden make troops withdrawal more gradual? In fact, US force strength needs to be a lot higher to ensure that the non-Taliban factions are not disadvantaged in the talks with the Taliban as violence rages. In his fading hour, and attempting to bind his successor's hands, Mr Trump has imposed further sanctions against Iranian entities and even prepared nuclear attack scenarios against Iran. Mr. Biden has to scale back comprehensively from the dangerous Trump era path of "maximum pressure" against Tehran and seek to return to some practical version of the Obama-period Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action that curbed Iran's nuclear plans. Normalising US-Iran ties creates better conditions for a healthy Iran-India relationship.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

KAUSHIK MITTER
Editor

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NO SIR,
YOU CAN'T
FIRE ALL THE
VOTERS

China's Ladakh chimera: India needs to stand firm

Syed Ata Hasnain

In June 2020 after the Galwan incident I responded to a television anchor's question on how long the Ladakh standoff might last by saying: "Till at least the end of the campaigning season". That in plain language meant the end of November 2020. My rationale was not too complex. First, China would not mobilise resources to coerce India and return without achieving any objectives a second time, the first being Doklam. These objectives and intent have been the subject of much debate without conclusion, a kind of Chinese chimera. Second, winter is a difficult period in Ladakh even on the Chinese side despite the flat open terrain. Whatever the Chinese would do, campaign style operations in such conditions may not be possible and they were not prepared. The Chinese would seek to withdraw or draw-down by December and await the next summer or the one after to pursue their objectives, which weren't specific or cogent. Also, China would always wish to have some kind of agreement, knowing well that India as a rule-bound nation wouldn't not contravene it. An agreement with "advantage China" written all over is what it would seek. It would bargain to retain the most of what it had progressively transgressed upon. Most of these assessments are coming true. Obviously, India will not agree to any of this and the standoff will probably continue through winter; yet this is against my reckoning but it's too early to conclude a final stance. My understanding of China's intent, off-repeated, continues to be that it is India's rising strategic confidence that worried China at the instance of Pakistan. The spate of strategic decisions

regarding national security that India has taken in the last four years or so include the surgical strikes, the Balakot strike, Doklam standoff, the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A, the publishing of new maps of J&K laying full claim to Gilgit Baltistan and Aksai Chin, and the long awaited creation of a Chief of Defence Staff in pursuit of eventual theatrisation. All this has perked up the adversaries to review their own security. The intent then was simply to puncture India's confidence about dealing with dual threats, by limited coercion at selected friction points that would leave the PLA in a position of tactical advantage in the continental domain and keep India imbalanced in the development of its capability. The latter is skewed against the maritime domain, where China's well recognised fragility lies.

What upset China's intent to a great extent and in fact virtually amounted to a strategic ambush was the Indian Army operation on the night of August 29-30, 2020 by which it progressively occupied seven tactical features on the Chhota Kailash range south of Pangong Tso in the Chushul Bowl; all the features are on own side of the Line of Actual Control and were never occupied all these years for various reasons. It left the situation with the theoretical potential of the PLA advancing on Daulat Beg Oldi (DBO) from Depsang, but without the support of a Pakistani offensive

which could only be made through the Siachen area. The Indian Army's Kailash Range operations upset everything for the PLA, with Indian domination over Moldo and Spangpur on the other side of the LAC which could balance any

adventurism at Depsang by a foray towards Highway 219, the crucial road link to Kashgar which had triggered the entire issue of Aksai Chin between India and China over 60 years ago.

Now comes the floating, rumoured and unconfirmed information that the Chinese have proposed the PLA's withdrawal from Fingers 4 to 8 and the creation of a buffer zone for patrolling, with no patrolling rights for India. In addition, it proposed mutual withdrawal of all artillery and armoured vehicles in the vicinity of the LAC to suitable depth areas and, most important, all this to be preceded by the Indian Army's withdrawal from the Chushul Heights on Kailash range. Those in severe criticism of India's willingness to engage in the corps commander-level talks are unhappy at receiving such tripe as proposals for disengagement. While I agree that the proposals are tripe, it is the talks which bear significance since in ground-based discussions over time it is not difficult to gauge the adversary's intent. China's *Global Times* has cleverly denied these proposals and turned the report around to a perceived psychological advantage, terming them the wishful thinking of Indian commanders who fear surviving the cold of eastern Ladakh. However, the airy proposals have triggered much-needed debate in the strategic community in India, for good measure.

A few plain facts need to be kept in mind when examining the current situation. The Kailash range deployment, which

should have happened many years ago but for the low strategic confidence India possessed, has given us a strategic advantage which we never had all these years. While it must not become the reason for unnecessary bluster, it does give quiet optimism of holding important cards in an environment where everything always appeared to be packed against us. We need not be worried about Chinese adventurism to coerce us because whatever escalation China attempts to do can be responded in equal if not greater measure, albeit also with the risk of greater escalation, about which we need not be perturbed. There is a lot of talk by our strategists about lack of Indian aggressiveness in Depsang to push beyond the Y Junction to assert our right to patrolling to our claim line. This is absolutely unnecessary. Aggression must never come from a position of weakness because it will peter out even before it becomes effective. We did what we did at the Chushul Heights because we were "balanced in disposition" after having inducted reserves to Ladakh. This term, which is often taught and discussed in the Army's schools of instruction, could not have seen better application. The basics of the Indian military leadership are clear, and it is the critics who need to revisit their basics.

With the advantage achieved by the Kailash Range decision India's occupation of Chushul Heights is akin to deployment on the Saltoro Range in Siachen, such is the strategic advantage which it offers. Justifiably it should therefore be a greater strategic advantage which must accrue to us by any decision to vacate the heights. China's Ladakh chimera must never view India as a pushover; not ever again. We have not seen the end of standoffs in this strategically crucial region.

The writer, a retired lieutenant-general, is a former GOC of the Srinagar-based 15 Corps

LETTERS

POLITICAL STANDARDS

AP rulers need to mind their standards and language when something unpalatable to the ruling party is done. A minister came to limelight for calling the SEC names and using unparliamentary words. Nehru quoted French philosopher Voltaire in Parliament when sharply criticised by his opponents and said, "I may not agree with what you said but I endorse to death your right to say it."

Dr T. Ramadas

Visakhapatnam

MALABAR CALLING

The ongoing Malabar exercise will hit affect China and weaken it. By welcoming Australia to the trilateral navy (India, US, Japan) after 13 years and calling it Quad 2, the countdown for China has started. There are chances that China will impose more restrictions on Australian exports to their country as it did in the past. Australia deserves applause for its bold move against China.

N. Vamshi Krishna
Vizianagaram

GIVE DADS LIFE

In cricket, only privileged players like Rohit and Kohli can avail paternity leave and their place in team is secure (*Give dads family time*, DC, Nov. 20). Very few players will have a non-stop career for 10 to 15 years and Damocles sword will be hanging on their heads to either perform or perish.

Parthasarathy Mandadi
Tirupati

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

Mass starvation feared in E. Pakistan

DACCA, EAST PAKISTAN, Nov. 20.

Mass starvation fears in disaster shattered East Pakistan grew hour by hour here and top officials issued urgent orders to step up relief operations into full flow.

A high-level conference was held here last night to get international aid that was pouring into Dacca airport to the coastal area decimated a week ago by a cyclone and gigantic tidal wave.

President Yahya Khan declared a day of mourning and special prayers were being offered for the dead, Radio Pakistan reported. Hardly any of the food, medicines, blankets and other vital life-saving supplies donated has so far reached the disaster zone due to transport problems.

Farrukh Dhondy
Cabbages & Kings



"I drive, therefore I am
Stuck in this F...ing traffic jam!
If you want some change, be the change
I don't go for chillar, dollars — the whole range!
I've done unto others as they would do unto me
Now not the best F...ing lawyers can set me free..."

— From Namkeen Pumpkeen by Bachchoo

Vaccines on the way... amid talk of conspiracies, Bill Gates' role

Every boy and even some girls I knew in Pune in my boyhood had two marks like little wrinkled lips on the top of their left arms. My two scars stood out for years and then age eroded them and now they are gone. Those were the marks of vaccination that Doctor Frenchman (yes, I know, but he was a Parsi and we inherited all manner of surnames through our subservience to European colonialism) dispensed, against various possible diseases, including rabies, because we lived amongst mad dogs.

Now every year in London I go down

to my local surgery and get a free "flu jab" on the UK's National Health service. It's rendered by a needle injection and, apart from a bit of discomfort in the same location below the left shoulder, leaves no mark. As I was a mere infant when Doc Frenchman inoculated me, I don't know how the scares came about, but using my renowned forensic skills, I deduce that it was a cut with a sharp blade into which the vaccine was introduced.

I am sure the anti-Covid-19 vaccine, promised by the end of the year to the most vulnerable and then to the general population, will be delivered by a needle injection.

The announcement that these anti-Covid vaccines are in the stages of testing and perfection is welcome news. I look forward to a time when, with the aid of the vaccine, the population is shielded against this contemporary plague and we can mingle and live our lives as dharma and karma dictate. I will line up for the vaccine as soon as my generous and caring local medical practice indicates its availability. I shall even advise all the illegal immigrants I know, though they are mostly

wary of exposing their status, to register close to where they live and get a jab.

When the vaccine was announced, instead of praising Ahura Mazda and lining up for a shot, I read all manner of lunatic anti-vaccine propaganda. Some of it is reported on the news and some of it pops up on my mobile phone and my email as unsolicited, threatening information. Now I am sure, gentle reader, that some or all of you have been subjected to the same load of contentious contentions — I will suppress the stronger terms that come to mind. (Yes, keep it clean. — *Ed.*)

One persistent message on these platforms urged me to reject the vaccine because it said it was a ploy by Bill Gates and his wife to secretly inject billions of humans with a microchip which would then make those supposedly vaccinated people slaves to Mr Gates who would control their lives and instruct them what to do. They would become the robot civilisation of the Gates family!

"Destroy your Apple computer. Buy one of ours!"

The Gates family (not to be confused

with The Doors, and renowned inventors of Windows) are known to have saved millions of lives through their charitable endeavours through supplying medicines to the poor. It is ironic then that a survey in the United States among those who voted for Donald Trump found that 46 per cent believed that Covid-19 was a hoax and among them were believers in the Bill Gates conspiracy.

They were, of course, the same people who said they wouldn't have the vaccine when it became available. Other conspiracy theorists, including a taxi driver hired by the BBC to carry me to a recording, determinedly believe that the Covid-19 symptoms and deaths are not caused by a virus, but by the presence or proximity of 5G mobile phone towers.

O Tempora O Mores! This is the twenty-first century, and the human brain has evolved for billions of years. And yet, and yet...

The fact that Pfizer, which was the first company to put forward an effective, tested and safe vaccine against Covid-19, has had its share price skyrocketing is not surprising. If I

announce the discovery of a diamond mine in my back garden, the price of my property will go up. Of course, the conspiracy-wallas would say that this was what it was all about — set a disease loose on humanity and then sell the cure for zillions. The reported facts are that Pfizer's vaccine, which has to be kept at minus 70 degrees Centigrade, will cost £30 for the two doses, fuels such crazy speculation. The second vaccine, developed by AstraZenica and Oxford, expected soon, will stay healthy at home-refrigerated temperatures and will cost a mere £2.23 a dose.

When I was in Pune last, I was shown around the vaccine manufacturing plants of the Serum Institute of India, set up and owned by my friend and schoolmate Cyrus Poonawalla. His institute has manufactured and distributed, at loss-making, nominal costs, scores of vaccines as a humanitarian gesture and I am now told that the institute is working on an anti-Covid vaccine in partnership with the US Codagenix. I am confident that when it is tried and tested, Cyrus won't be charging £30 a go.

quick
BITES

INDICATORS

		%
Sensex	43,882.25	0.65
Nifty 50	12,859.05	0.68
S&P 500*	3,570.89	-0.31
Dollar (₹)	74.14	0.18
Pound Sterling (₹)	98.45	-0.35
Euro (₹)	87.92	-0.09
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	49,551.65	0.13
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	44.36	0.36
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.877	0.017
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.849	-0.702

* As of 8:30 PM IST

CCI approves
Reliance-Future
Group deal

The Competition Commission has approved Reliance's proposed acquisition of Future Group businesses. The Rs 24,713-crore deal was announced in August. In a tweet on Friday, the regulator said it has approved "acquisition of retail, wholesale, logistics & warehousing businesses of Future Group by Reliance Retail Ventures Limited and Reliance Retail and Fashion Lifestyle Limited".

Rabi sowing
begins; wheat
planted in 97L ha.

Sowing of winter crops has started in the country, with farmers planting wheat in about 97.27 lakh hectare so far in this rabi season, the agriculture ministry said. Wheat is the main winter or rabi crop. Rice and pulses, such as gram, urad, moong as well as oilseeds like groundnut and sunflower, are other rabi crops. Paddy has been sown in more area at 7.26 lakh hectare compared with 6.98 lakh hectare a year ago.

Large IPOs may
be allowed with
5% equity dilution

The Sebi proposed to reduce the minimum offer size in an initial share-sale, whereby companies with a post-issue capital of above Rs 10,000 crore would be required to offer at least 5 per cent stake in IPO. At present, all companies with a post-issue capital above Rs 4,000 crore have to dilute at least 10 per cent shareholding in an IPO. Sebi felt minimum public holding of 10 per cent may be achieved in 18 months.

Forex reserves
surge \$4.28 bn to
record \$572.77 bn

The country's foreign exchange reserves swelled by \$4.277 billion to a record high of \$572.771 billion in the week ended Nov. 13, RBI data showed. In the previous week ended Nov. 6, the reserves had risen by a massive \$7.779 billion to \$568.494 billion. Foreign currency assets climbed by \$5.526 billion to \$530.268 billion. The gold reserves declined by \$1.233 billion to \$36.354 billion.

■ RBI panel for 26% promoter stake
Corp. houses set to
get banking licenceFALAKNAAZ SYED
MUMBAI, NOV. 20

In what could potentially change the landscape of the Indian banking sector, an internal working group of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has suggested that large companies and industrial houses may be allowed as promoters of banks with necessary legislative changes, and large, well-run NBFCs could convert into banks after 10 years of operations.

Interestingly, the panel also suggested that the cap on promoters' stake in the long run (15 years) banks may be raised from the current level of 15 per cent to 26 per cent of the paid-up voting equity share capital.

The views gain significance in the light of year-long legal battle between Uday Kotak, promoter of Kotak Mahindra Bank, and the RBI that ended in January this year. Under the current RBI norms, promoters of private banks have to reduce their stake to 40 per cent within three years of operations and then to 20 per cent within 10 years and to 15 per cent within 15 years.

The group headed by RBI executive director P.K. Mohanty was set up in June 2020 to review the extant ownership guidelines and corporate structure for Indian private sector banks with the terms of reference, including the review of the eligibility criteria for individuals/entities to apply for banking licence, examination of



preferred corporate structure for banks and harmonisation of norms in this regard, and review of norms for long-term shareholding in banks by the promoters and other shareholders.

The panel that submitted its report on Friday said, "Large corporate/industrial houses may be allowed as promoters of banks only after necessary amendments to the Banking Regulations Act, 1949 to deal with connected lending and exposures between the banks and other financial and non-financial group entities; and strengthening of the supervisory mechanism for large conglomerates, including consolidated supervision. RBI may examine the necessary legal provisions that may be required to deal with all concerns in this regard."

Large non-banking finance companies with an asset size of Rs 50,000 crore, including those owned by large corporate houses, may be allowed to convert to private banks subject to completion of 10 years of operations and

other criteria. The working committee recommended minimum initial capital requirement for licensing new banks should be enhanced to Rs 1,000 crore from Rs 500 crore for universal banks and Rs 300 crore from Rs 200 crore for small finance banks.

"The cap on promoters' stake in long run of 15 years may be raised from the current levels of 15 per cent to 26 per cent of the paid-up voting equity share capital of the bank. This stipulation should be uniform for all types of promoters and would mean that promoters, who have already diluted their holdings to below 26 per cent, will be permitted to raise it to 26 per cent of the paid-up voting equity share capital of the bank. The promoter, if he/she so desires, can choose to bring down holding to even below 26 per cent, any time after the lock-in period of five years," said the report.

For non-promoter shareholding, a uniform cap of 15 per cent of the paid-up voting equity share capital of the bank may be prescribed, the report said.

Gland now
among top
10 pharma
companiesRAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, NOV. 20

Hyderabad-based Gland Pharma made a grand debut on the bourses, listing at Rs 1,710 on both NSE and BSE, a premium of 14 per cent over the public issue price of Rs 1,500 per share.

Gland is now among top 10 pharma companies in terms of market value, with a market capitalisation of Rs 29,848 crore at the close of trade on the NSE.

The stock touched an intraday high of Rs 1,850 on both NSE and BSE. Earlier this month, Gland Pharma raised Rs 6,479.55 crore through an initial public offering priced at Rs 1,490 to Rs 1,500 per share with Re 1 face value. The issue was subscribed more than two times but had received very poor response from retail and high network investors, making its bourses debut quite a suspense till the last moment.

On the NSE, Gland Pharma shares finally closed at Rs 1,828 providing public shareholders a return of 21.8 per cent on their IPO investment. On the BSE the stock closed at Rs 1,820.45.

Since retail and high net worth investors had largely skipped the public offer, there was a rush to buy the shares after the initial listing gains and so the percentage of deliverable quantity of shares was high at 56.25 per cent on the NSE.

ROCHE'S COVID-19
ANTIBODY
COCKTAIL LAUNCH
LIKELY BY MARCHFRANCINE LACQUA &
NAOMI KRESGE
NOV. 20

Roche Holding AG is working hard to rapidly boost supply of Covid-19 antibody treatments and will be able to make its first deliveries in the first quarter of next year, according to CEO Severin Schwan.

Roche has filed for emergency authorisation for an antibody cocktail it's working on with US biotech Regeneron Pharmaceuticals Inc and that could be granted "very soon," Schwan said on Friday in an interview. "At Roche we'll be able to provide supply in the first quarter," he added, cautioning that availability will initially be limited and should be reserved for patients at high risk.

"We're working hard to ramp up production as fast as we can," Schwan said. "No matter what, irrespective of other therapeutics, the demand for antibody cocktails will be far outstrip supply, so we have to make sure we target really the right patient groups." —Bloomberg

Profits zoom, but wages
flat at listed companiesSANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, NOV. 20

In business, there seems to be no relation between profits and wages. While listed companies made bumper profits in the September quarter, wages have grown in low single digits, much lower than in past several quarters, finds private think-tank CMIE.

The net profit of listed companies zoomed to record levels, as they grew 209 per cent in the September quarter. Even in the first half of the fiscal, which covered the entire period of the lock down of different intensities and associated uncertainties, the net profits of these companies grew 23.8 per cent. This growth was even higher than 11.8 per cent, the average growth in the past 60 quarters. The data is based on the financial statements of 1,897 companies available in CMIE's Prowess database as of November 11.

However, this profit growth seemingly has nothing to do with the wage growth. "In business and for corporate



honchos, there is no relation between growth in profits and growth in wages. The two move completely independently. Corporate managers would minimise their wage bill to maximise their profits," says Mahesh Vyas, managing director, CMIE.

Amidst lay-offs, salary cut and negligible hiring, wage growth was 2.8 per cent in the first half of the fiscal. Even in the September quarter wage growth stood at 3.7 per cent, which was lower than the average year-on-year growth in wages over the past 60 quarters at 13 per cent. "The low single-digit growth in wages in the last two quarters is therefore very low by historical standards and is in stark contrast to the

extraordinary profits earned by companies," says CMIE.

Manufacturing companies saw a 9.1 per cent fall in wages in the June 2020 quarter, which was the toughest quarter for them. Sales had shrunk by 42 per cent and net profits by 62 per cent. Then, in the September 2020 quarter, while sales fell again by 9.7 per cent, profits sprang a surprise by scaling up by a handsome 17.8 per cent. Yet, wages declined by one per cent. Evidently, companies do not apportion resources to labour in any proportion of profits.

In the services sector's case, except for banking and IT, the remaining sectors collectively saw a 9 per cent fall in wages in the June quarter and a 5 per cent fall in the second quarter.

"Shareholders are being awarded interim dividends or buy-backs. There is still very little interest in investing into new capacities... Employment in the corporate sector could recover if business picks up again," says Vyas.

Mills to get ₹12.5K-cr loan to make ethanol

New Delhi, Nov. 20: The food ministry on Friday said it has given in-principle approval to 185 sugar mills and standalone distilleries to avail Rs 12,500 crore of loans for capacity addition of 468 crore litre of ethanol per annum as part of its efforts to achieve 20 per cent blending with petrol.

In the last two years, 70 ethanol projects were sanctioned loans of Rs 3,600 crore.

Apart from promoting ethanol production from sugarcane, the ministry is making efforts to manufacture ethanol using surplus rice with state-owned FCI as well as maize.

The move is aimed at

boosting ethanol blending with petrol, which now stands near 5 per cent.

Under the ethanol interest subvention scheme for molasses-based distilleries, the government had opened a window September for 30 days, inviting sugar mills/ distilleries, to apply for the scheme, the ministry said. —PTI

Job situation worsens for
women in garment industrySANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, NOV. 20

Covid-19 has worsened the condition of women in the garment industry in many Asian countries, including India, due to underlying challenges like discrimination and harassment, under-representation of women's voice, wage gaps as well as unevenly shared unpaid care and family obligations, finds the International Labour Organisation.

The pandemic has had a significant impact on the global garment industry. As measures like lockdown have led to retail and factory closures, changes in supply and demand, layoffs & unpaid furloughs and revenue losses, the livelihoods, health and security of millions of women and men workers and employers throughout the garment sector have come under risk. Given that women account for nearly 80 per cent of the garment sector workforce, the pandemic impacts them disproportionately.

The ILO study has included the garment industries of Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Indonesia and the Republic of Korea.

As many factories have furloughed and retrenched workers, many women and men, some of whom are still owed wages for completed work, have been unable to access basic necessities such as food, rent money or medical expenses for their households.

In factories which later rehire workers, women are more likely to be directly and indirectly discriminated against. Practices have been documented where women are offered short-term contracts to defer access to maternity benefits. In the case of dismissals due to the pandemic, this may lead to disproportionate dismissals of specific groups of women regardless of their actual skill level or years of service at a given factory.

Prior to the pandemic, women around the world

did an average of three times more care work than men. In Asia and the Pacific and in Arab states women did over four times more. Looking after children at home due to school and nursery closures during the lockdown, as well as caring for family members who fall ill due to the pandemic has increased the demands of unpaid care and household work for many women. This also risks delaying the return of women workers to work, and could lead to them dropping out of the labour force altogether.

"It is a reality that women have become more vulnerable as they are largely informal workers and their voices are generally not heard. In the garment sector, women work on a piece rate model and no order means no compensation," said Ritu-parma Chakraborty, co-founder & executive VP of TeamLease Services.

She said women are unable to make use of the pockets of employment emerging as they have difficulties in travelling.

WINNER | TECH'S IT ALL?

It's feared that the rise of fintech firms may send banks the dinosaur way

Ant's setback holds a lesson for all fintechs

ELISA MARTINUZZI
NOV. 20

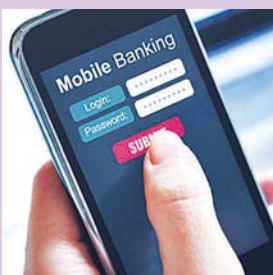
Speaking in October to his banking brethren at the world's biggest payments confab-the annual Sibos conference-Jamie Dimon didn't mince words. The rise of financial technology companies, warned JPMorgan Chase & Co's chief executive officer, will see some banks "go the way of the dinosaur."

In the world of finance, as in many other parts of the economy, Covid-19 has accelerated a shift to digital interactions that was already under way. And it hasn't gone unnoticed by regulators. In Asia, Europe, and the US, central banks and other regu-

lators are increasingly focused on how technology companies could come to dominate financial services, undermining the stability of the systems the watchdogs are entrusted to preserve.

One obvious sign of the growing importance of fintech companies is their surging market value.

The valuation of PayPal Holdings Inc, the US e-commerce payments giant, had exceeded \$225 billion as of early November-more than that of Europe's top four banks combined and higher than all US banks bar JPMorgan. In Europe, where lenders' stock prices have plummeted to record lows this year, only HSBC



Holdings Plc, with \$3 trillion in assets and a history dating to 1865, was worth more than Adyen NV, a 14-year-old Dutch payments processor.

And of course, none compare with Jack Ma's Ant Group Co, the Chinese financial giant that at the end of October was proceeding with an initial

public offering set to value it at \$315 billion—bigger than Dimon's JPMorgan. But then China's regulators stepped in to halt the IPO at the eleventh hour, demanding that Ant adhere to stricter capital requirements and provide at least 30 per cent of the funding for loans it underwrites, just like the banks it competes with.

Analysts at Morningstar Inc and other firms estimated the rules could cut the company's value in half. China's top banking watchdog also warned that it will step up probes to ensure fair competition where monopolies can be spotted. Ant and Tencent Holdings Ltd, which owns the WeChat Pay platform,

are luring customers away from commercial banks in the consumer-loan market.

While the news was shocking, thwarting the world's biggest-ever IPO, the truth is that China isn't alone in expressing new concerns about the regulatory advantage provided to the digital finance industry. The collapse of fintech poster child Wirecard AG after billions of dollars went missing from the Bavarian startup has prompted a review of how regulators in Germany and Europe oversee payment companies.

In the UK, the banking supervisor is considering tougher demands on so-called neobanks and once-hot fintechs such as Monzo

and Revolut that are struggling. In the US, the New York Department of Financial Services has sued to bar the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency from handing out licences under a fintech charter that would place companies under lighter regulation than banks.

The pace at which consumers have turned to digital transactions during the pandemic, as bank notes and coins became untouchable, is one reason regulators fret. Given the rate at which some fintechs are growing, regulators will have to decide quickly how far they want to go to keep them in check. —Bloomberg

SHORT TAKES

Women's T20 WC pushed to 2023

Dubai: The South African edition of the Women's T20 World Cup was on Thursday postponed by three months to February 2023 to avoid a cluster of big-ticket events in 2022 and manage players' workload, International Cricket Council (ICC) announced on Thursday. The tournament was scheduled in November 2022 but will now be held in February 2023. In August this year, the ICC had postponed the 50 over Women's World Cup slated in New Zealand from 2021 to 2022 owing to pandemic and women's T20 cricket is also set to make its debut in the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games. "The Board confirmed that the ICC Women's T20 World Cup will move from its current slot at the end of 2022 to 9-26 February 2023. If not postponed, the year would have "three major events in 2022 with the Commonwealth Games in July 2022 and the ICC Women's T20 World Cup due to be held in November 2022," ICC said. The ICC said the decision was taken keeping in mind the workload of the players and also considering long term interest of women's cricket. — PTI

Champ Rossi gears up for final race

Portimao, Portugal: Nine-time world champion Valentino Rossi says it will be a "special moment" when he brings the curtain down on his 15-year factory Yamaha MotoGP career in the final race of the season in Portugal on Sunday. Joan Mir's World Championship may already be secured but second place and the constructors' title will also be on the line in Portimao. Rossi, who has won seven of his world titles in the elite class, is among a number of riders bidding farewell, with Andrea Dovizioso heading off for a planned sabbatical and Cal Crutchlow exiting the series to become a Yamaha test rider next year.

Rossi will join Yamaha's satellite Petronas team, leaving the factory to go ahead with Fabio Quartararo alongside Maverick Vinales in 2021. "Sunday will be a special moment because it was a long journey together," said Rossi. Pol Espargaro, Jack Miller, Johann Zarco and Danilo Petrucci are also among those departing for pastures new. — AFP

Task cut out for Spurs against City

London: Tottenham's title credentials face a thorough examination when they host Manchester City as the Premier League returns on Saturday after the international break. Spurs are just a point behind early pace setters Leicester, but only three points separate the top six, with Chelsea and Aston Villa also having the chance to claim top spot for a few hours at least when they face Newcastle and Brighton respectively. With the final international fixtures of the year done and dusted, a gruelling winter schedule of club football awaits for England's top-flight with nine rounds of league matches before January 2. Defending champions Liverpool are already bearing the brunt of the hectic schedule as Jurgen Klopp's squad has been ravaged by injury ahead of Leicester's trip to Anfield. Tottenham enjoyed a couple of hours at the top of the table for the first time in over three years prior to Leicester's victory over Wolves before the international break. — AFP

Live on TV

CRICKET

Big Bash League: Hobart Hurricanes vs Perth Scorchers from 10.10 am; Sydney Sixers vs Melbourne Renegades from 1.35 pm; Perth Scorchers vs Adelaide Strikers from 4.50 am (Sunday) on Sony Six, HD

TENNIS

ATP Finals: Semifinal-1 from 7.30 pm, Semifinal-2 from 1.30 am (Sunday) on Sony Six, HD

FOOTBALL

English Premier League: Newcastle vs Chelsea from 6 pm; Aston Villa vs Brighton from 8.30 pm; Tottenham Hotspur vs Manchester City from 11 pm; Manchester United vs West Brom from 1.30 am (Sunday) on Star Sports Select 1

Indian Super League: NorthEast United vs Mumbai City from 7.20 pm on Star Sports 2, 3

Italian league: Crotone vs Lazio from 7.30 pm; Spezia vs Atalanta from 10.30 pm; Juventus vs Cagliari from 11.5 am (Sunday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

NADAL NAILS IT

Djokovic also makes semifinals at season-ender

London, Nov. 20: Rafael Nadal kept alive his hopes of a first ATP Finals title on Thursday, beating defending champion Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-4, 4-6, 6-2 in London to qualify for the Last four.

Novak Djokovic too advanced to the semifinals after beating Alexander Zverev 6-3, 7-6 (4).

The top-ranked Djokovic set up a match against Dominic Thiem on Saturday as he goes for a record-tying sixth title at the season-ending event, and a first since 2015.

Rafael Nadal will take on Daniil Medvedev in the other semifinal match.

Bouncing back from a straight-set loss to Medvedev on Wednesday, Djokovic broke Zverev to take a 2-0 lead in the first set when his opponent double-faulted on the second break point.

Djokovic saved two break points at 4-2 before clinching the set with a backhand down the line as he closed in on the net following a serve out wide.

Zverev posed more problems for Djokovic in the second set, and led 2-0 in the tiebreaker. Djokovic then won five of six points and, on his first match point, sent a deep and penetrating forehand that Zverev could only slice into the net on the stretch.

Nadal, whose haul of 86 singles titles includes just one on indoor hard courts, is chasing the biggest prize missing from his resume at the eight-man elite event. The 34-year-old has qualified for the ATP Finals for a record 16 consecutive years but has been forced to withdraw on six occasions.

The second seed won his opening round-robin match against Andrey Rublev but defeat against Dominic Thiem meant he faced a shootout against 2019 champion Tsitsipas to reach the semifinals.

Both players were rock solid on serve until Nadal

To be in the semifinals here at the last tournament of the year is an important thing. Happy for that and looking forward to the semifinals against Daniil.

— RAFAEL NADAL after defeating Stefanos Tsitsipas



Rafael Nadal of Spain reacts during the match against Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas in their men's singles match of the ATP World Tour Finals tennis tournament at the O2 Arena in London on Thursday. — AFP

earned the first two break points of the set in the seventh game, which he failed to convert.

Tsitsipas was again under pressure in his next service game and this time he cracked, double-faulting on break point.

Nadal pressed home his

advantage, serving consecutive aces to take the set 6-4 against his 22-year-old opponent.

The Spaniard, twice a finalist at the tournament, had another chance to break in the first game of the second set but the Greek sixth seed dug him-

self out of danger with a searing backhand.

Tsitsipas did well to cling on against his illustrious opponent who was serving with metronomic efficiency and dominating the longer rallies.

But out of nowhere the Greek earned two set

points on Nadal's serve and levelled when the Spaniard double-faulted on the second of those.

The match took a bizarre twist at the start of the decider, with neither player able to hold serve until Nadal finally held to lead 3-1. — Agencies

INDIA SLIP TO SECOND SPOT IN TEST RANK

Dubai, Nov. 20: India on Thursday slipped to the second position in the standings of the ongoing World Test Championship (WTC) after the ICC decided to rank teams "in order of percentage of points earned" from the contested matches.

Australia (296 points from 3 series) topped India (360 points from 4 series) in the standing after the revision with a percentage of 82.22 compared to the latter's 75 per cent.

According to current regulations, incomplete matches are treated as draw but after due deliberation, the ICC Cricket Committee, headed by Anil Kumble, recommended that the final WTC standings should be determined on the basis of matches played, which was approved by the Board. — PTI

GUILTY ZOYSA SAYS THERE IS FOUL PLAY

Colombo, Nov. 20: Former Sri Lanka cricketer Nuwan Zoysa on Friday denied any wrongdoing after being found guilty of corruption on three counts by an independent tribunal of the ICC.

Already serving suspension on match-fixing charges, Zoysa was charged under the ICC anti-corruption code in November 2018 and was found guilty on all charges on Thursday after he exercised his right to a hearing before an independent anti-corruption tribunal.

The ICC said Zoysa will remain suspended and sanctions will follow in due course. — PTI

Bagan blast past Kerala in opener

Bambolim, Nov. 20: In their new avatar, ATK Mohun Bagan kicked off the seventh season of the Indian Super League on a high, defeating Kerala Blasters by a solitary goal here on Friday.

Fijian hitman Roy Krishna, who was ATK's top goal scorer with 15 goals last season, struck the all important goal after a 67 minute deadlock to give the all important three points for the green-and-maroon brigade.

The Yellow Brigade playing with a heavy defensive lineup of 4-2-3-1 managed to thwart ATKMB throughout the first half but after the hour mark they left a loose ball as the Fijian International pounced on it with a calm and composed finish.

All eyes were on the 131-year-old legacy club Mohun Bagan as they were making their ISL debut following their 'marriage' with three-time defending champions ATK.

ATKMB had a dominant first half and made some early inroads with Roy Krishna missing an early chance, even as KBFC enjoyed more ball possession in the first 45 minutes.

KBFC, who were the designated home team, looked more threatening and came out with an attacking intent in the second-half.

But KBFC were made to pay for it as Roy Krishna made amends for his three misses in the first half with his poacher goal to become the difference between the two sides.

That goal was enough for ATKMB to sink Kerala Blasters' hearts. — PTI

MUMBAI TAKE ON NORTHEAST TO OPEN BID

Vasco, Nov. 20: A revamped Mumbai City FC, with 19 new recruits and a Spanish coach of repute, will be aiming for a positive start in pursuit of a maiden ISL title when they take on NorthEast United here on Saturday.

Mumbai City have never won the coveted trophy and would be hoping that there is a turnaround in fortunes under new coach Sergio Lobera, who had guided FC Goa to a Super Cup win in 2019.

Mumbai have two good strikers in Bartholomew Ogbeche and Adam Le Fondre who can prove to be more than handful for any opposition.

The inclusion of Mandar Rao Dessai has bolstered the team's defence and he coupled with the likes of Sarthak Golui, Senegalese Mourtada Fall and Mohamad Rakip are ready to thwart any attacking line-up.

On the other hand, NorthEast United FC under new coach Gerard Nus, would also be aiming for redemption after a poor last season.

They will expect their foreign players to pull their weight with much depending on former Anderlecht and Queens Park Rangers striker Idrissa Sylla and former Ghanaian international Kwesi Appiah. — PTI

Betting charges dog Andhra T20

DC CORRESPONDENT ANANTAPUR, NOV. 20

At least six players from Andhra Premier League (APL) conducted at RDT stadium here last month were reportedly involved in cricket betting.

The six cricketers from Andhra Pradesh include four from Kadapa district and another from Anantapur district. They used 'Dafabet', an online betting company. The anti-corruption unit of Andhra Cricket Association (ACA), reportedly identified the role of some players in betting.

Andhra Premier League was held as Karbonn Harmonycity T20 Andhra by Andhra Cricket Association for 18 days in October. A total of 98 players participated in the event and 33 matches were held overall with Kings-XI

emerging triumphant.

Now, the online betting allegations have raised many eyebrows. Sources close to ACA revealed the players were involved in betting, although there was no evidence of match-fixing.

Association president Sharath, secretary Durgaprasad and several others were present during the tournament. The organisers reportedly warned players for involvement in suspicious activities.

"The players were not involved in match-fixing activities but in betting by using an online betting company," an official from ACA confirmed.

A police officer from Anantapur district observed that he had become suspicious because of a group of sponsors in the league.



Winners of the Gosports T20 Cup pose with the trophy and medals in Vijayawada on Friday.

ME win Gosports Trophy with ease

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, NOV. 20

Muralikrishna Enterprises defeated SS Interiors to win the Gosports T20 Cup in Vijayawada on Friday.

Choosing to make first use of the wicket after winning the toss, ME made a modest 133 for 8 in the stipulated overs. Ch Srikanth (34) and Sandeep (33) came up with decent scores while Vardhan (2/22) and Ganesh (2/31) were among the wickets for SSL.

In reply, Interiors were bundled out for a mere 94

in 16.5 overs as ME bowlers Manikanta (3/23) and Ravi (3/20) proved too hot to handle.

BRIEF SCORES

■ Muralikrishna Enterprises 133/8 in 20 overs (Ch Srikanth 34, Sandeep 33, Vardhan 2/22, Ganesh 2/31) bt SS Interiors 94 in 16.5 overs (Manikanta 3/23, Ravi 3/20). **Man of the match:** Ch Srikanth.

■ **Man of the Tournament:** Ch Srikanth (Muralikrishna Enterprises). **Best Batsman:** Ujwel (SS Interiors). **Best Bowler:** Ravi (Muralikrishna Enterprises).

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