

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

NELLORE | MONDAY | 2 NOVEMBER 2020

WEATHER



Max: 35.0°C
Min: 25.5°C
RH: 57%
Rainfall: Nil
Forecast: clear.
Max/Min temp. 35/25 °C

COVID-19 CUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+47,927)	(+556)
82,27,177	1,22,621
covid19india.org	
STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS	
(+1,416)	(+5)
TS: 2,40,048	1,341
(+2,618)	(+16)
AP: 8,25,966	6,706

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

4,67,09,156
DEATHS
12,03,771
COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES
215
worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Nija Ashwayuja Bahula Vidiya till 1.13 am (Tuesday)
Star: Kritika till 11.48 pm
Variyam: 10.22 amto 12.09 pm
Durmuhurtam: 12.22 pm to 1.07 pm; 2.28 pm to 3.24 pm
Rahukalam: 7.30 pm to 9 am

HJRI CALENDAR
Rabbi-ul Awwal 15, 1442 AH
PRAYERS(SHAHI MASJID)
Fajar: 4:53 am
Zohar: 11:54 pm
Asar: 4:07 pm
Maghrib: 5:44 pm
Isha: 6:56 pm
SUNSET TODAY 5.41 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.06 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 7.01 PM
MOONSET TOMORROW 8.07 AM

COUNTER POINT



No offers on vegetables!

SHORT TAKES

India rejects Pak's Gilgit plan

New Delhi: India on Sunday slammed Pakistan for its attempt to accord provincial status to the "so-called Gilgit-Baltistan", saying it is intended to camouflage the "illegal" occupation of the region by Islamabad. External affairs ministry spokesman Anurag Srivastava said India "firmly rejects" the attempt by Pakistan to bring material changes to a part of Indian territory which is under its "illegal and forcible occupation".

FEVERISH | PITCH

PM pitches 'double yuvraj' against 'double engine'

Modi says Nitish will be CM again

NAYEAR AZAD | DC
PATNA, NOV. 1

Ahead of the second phase of polls due on November 3, Prime Minister Narendra Modi exuded confidence that the NDA in Bihar will return to power after the Assembly polls are over.

He said this while addressing several public meetings in Chapra and Samastipur on Sunday. "The huge turnout in the first phase and all the surveys have proved the poll pundits wrong. Reports suggest that the NDA under the leadership of Nitish Kumar is returning to power after the elections," Mr Modi said.

● **THE PM** also launched a veiled attack on the Congress over its remarks on the Pulwama attack. He said that the Pakistanis had recently accepted their involvement in the attack, which exposed those who doubted the valour of the sons of Bihar.

This was Modi's third tour of Bihar for the ongoing Assembly elections. The PM's visit to Chapra on the eve of the second phase is significant as it has been a stronghold of RJD supremo Lalu Prasad Yadav. Campaigning for the

94 seats in 17 districts that will go to the polls on Tuesday ended on Sunday evening.

The first phase of elections was held in Bihar on October 28. In the second phase, voting for 94 seats will be held on November 3. In the third phase, 78 seats will go to the polls on November 7. The results for all 243 Assembly seats will be declared on November 10.

While addressing his political rallies, Mr Modi tore into the Opposition's grand alliance chief ministerial candidate Tejashwi Yadav and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, referring to

them as "double yuvraj", and saying that they are fighting against the "double engine government" in Bihar (BJP and JD-U) to save their thrones.

"The double engine government is working for the development of Bihar but the double yuvraj are fighting the election only to save their thrones," he said.

During his public meetings, he also reminded people of the "jungle raj" during the 1990s when the RJD was in power and said that several development projects were stuck for many years due to the policies of the previous government in Bihar.

NATION | 4

Scindia mistakenly seeks votes for Congress

deccanchronicle.com, facebook.com/deccannews, twitter.com/deccanchronicle

Jagan: AP will surge ahead irrespective of all hurdles

MD ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 1

Hoisting the National Flag as part of celebrating the Andhra Pradesh Formation Day on Sunday, Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy blamed legal hurdles, vested interests and caste politics for trying to prevent the state from surging ahead on the growth path. Addressing a gathering on the occasion at CM's camp office on Sunday, Jagan Mohan Reddy said certain individuals were manipulating systems to prevent the government from functioning effectively. The weed of caste

is damaging Telugu soil and undermining interests of its people. Still, the state will overcome all hurdles and implement decisions taken by the government in interest of its people, he asserted.

The Chief Minister said, "Government has taken the initiative of revamping government schools on par with private schools under Nadu-Nedu scheme and offer English medium education to all students. It has established health clinics in every village and is providing 51 types of medicines. I am proud to say all these amenities are being provided through-

out the state without any room for corruption since the past 17 months, without any discrimination of caste, creed or gender. However, it is unfortunate that some unscrupulous forces in the state, jealous of the government's good performance, are resorting to mudslinging."

The CM said great people like Potti Sriramulu, who sacrificed their lives, led to formation of Andhra state on October 1, 1953, which became Andhra Pradesh on November 1, 1956.

■ **Page 2: CM regrets there are still 33% illiterates**

Private schools to skip reopening

VADREVU SRINIVAS | DC
KAKINADA, NOV. 1

Though the state government has decided to reopen schools from Monday after almost six months due to Covid-19 pandemic, many private school managements have chosen not to open their institutions yet.

Managements of certain private schools have said guidelines of the state government on reopening of schools are so stringent that they would rather not reopen schools but continue classes online. Many parents are also apprehensive about sending their children to schools, thereby exposing them to the risk of virus, that too when children are in the vulnerable group.

East Godavari Private School Managements Association president Muthukumilli Srivijay said: "Many guidelines

issued by the government are highly unreasonable. They have been framed by the state government without taking private school managements or even headmasters or teachers of government schools into confidence. Scores of parents are not ready to send their children to schools, that too when the state government itself is warning about the second wave of Coronavirus hitting."

Srivijay said so far only one parent has given nod for sending his child to his school. "The state government has also warned private schools that even if a single case of Covid-19 is registered in the school, its registration will be cancelled. Why should school managements reopen schools amidst dire warnings," he asked.

■ **Page 2: Only 16 students per class**

Cinema halls in AP start film screening

MD ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 1

Cinema theatres, the centres of mass entertainment, have started screening movies in Andhra Pradesh from Sunday after a gap of 223 days. All film shows had come to a halt on March 23 because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Initially, two theatres have been opened in Vijayawada at the Inox in Gandhinagar. Each theatre screened a noon and an evening show. Managements took all precautionary measures

● **INITIALLY, TWO** theatres have been opened in Vijayawada at the Inox in Gandhinagar. Each theatre screened a noon and an evening show. Managements took all precautionary measures for safety and security of the audience

for safety and security of the audience in accordance with the Covid guidelines. Occupancy was limited to 50 per cent, with only alternate seats being occupied.

■ **Report on Page 2**

CHILDREN WITH PARENTS' NOD ONLY ALLOWED

NAGESWARA RAO BALLEDA | DC
KADAPA, NOV. 1

All students, whether of private or public educational institutions, will be allowed into schools or colleges only with the consent of their parents. This decision has been taken after government authorities decided to open educational institutions starting from Monday. Managements of all educational institutions have been ordered that they must strictly follow all Coronavirus guidelines issued by the central and state governments, including wearing masks, maintaining sanitisation and ensuring social distancing within the institution premises.

Strict action will be taken against the school or college concerned if it is found that they have violated Covid-19 regulations. Special vigilance teams have been constituted to make surprise visits of schools and colleges with regard to implementation of Covid-19 guidelines.

Although Coronavirus is on the decline in Kadapa district, there are fears that it may pick up intensity with onset of winter. Managements of educational institutions have been asked to remind students about following safety guidelines every day after their daily prayers at schools.

Temperature of students will be checked before allowing them into the school or college premises.

They will have to clean their hands with sanitisers before proceeding further. When the bell is sounded every hour, students will have to wash their hands and drink water.

Indians begin to splurge yet again

First time since Feb, GST crosses ₹1-L cr

SANGEETHA G. | DC
CHENNAI, NOV. 1

Gross GST collections have crossed ₹1 lakh crore mark in October, the first time since Coronavirus upset the Indian economy in March. The last time GST collections crossed over ₹1 lakh crore was eight months ago in February.

GST collections registered growth both on a year-on-year and month-on-month basis, which experts claim indicates recovery in the economy.

"This uptick in (GST) collections on a month-on-month basis and over the same month last year is quite a welcome one for the government and the economy in particular. Some potential reasons for this surge could be the spurred demand on account of the festivities and input tax credit/ other similar reconciliations which were due for businesses in September," said Abhishek Jain, Tax Partner, EY Abhishek Jain, Tax Partner, EY.

The gross GST revenue collected in the month of October stood at ₹1,05,155 crore, which is 10 per cent

● **THE GROSS GST** revenue collected in the month of October stood at ₹1,05,155 crore, which is 10 per cent higher than ₹95,379 crore collected in the same month last year and ₹95,480 crore collected in September 2020.

● **THE TOTAL** revenue earned by the Centre and the state governments after regular settlement in October 2020 is ₹44,285 crore for CGST and ₹44,839 crore for the SGST.

● **ALMOST ALL** the states and Union Territories, except Delhi, Sikkim, Daman Diu, Lakshadweep and Andaman and Nicobar Islands, registered better tax collection in October.

higher than ₹95,379 crore collected in the same month last year and ₹95,480 crore collected in September 2020. During the month, revenues from import of goods was nine per cent higher and the revenues from domestic transactions, including import of services, were 11 per

cent higher than the revenues from these sources during the same month last year.

The total revenue earned by the Centre and the state governments after regular settlement in October 2020 is ₹44,285 crore for CGST and ₹44,839 crore for the SGST. The government has settled ₹25,091 crore to CGST and ₹19,427 crore to SGST from IGST as regular settlement.

Almost all the states and Union Territories, except Delhi, Sikkim, Daman Diu, Lakshadweep and Andaman and Nicobar Islands, registered year-on-year growth in October. Among the larger states, Gujarat grew 15 per cent, Tamil Nadu 13 per cent and Maharashtra and Karnataka five per cent each.

GST collections had dropped well below the psychological mark of ₹1 lakh crore since the lockdown. After making a recovery to ₹90,917 crore in June, collections had dipped in July and August. However, in the past two months, collections have once again improved, mostly due to the festive season demand and normalisation of businesses.

Covid control



A police constable urges people to maintain social distancing at a market ahead of the Diwali festival, in Chennai, Sunday.

— PTI

Anantapur Anantasagaram to resemble Hyd Tank Bund

DC CORRESPONDENT
ANANTAPUR, NOV. 1

The five-century-old big irrigation tank in Anantapur, Anantha Sagaram, is all set to be beautified into a beauty spot that will be as mesmerising as the iconic Tank Bund in Hyderabad.

This is the aspiration of Urban MLA Anantha Venkatrami Reddy because Anantha Sagaram tank built during Vijayanagar regime has great historical importance but remains largely neglected.

● **PLANS ARE** afoot to fill the pond with water and set up a large park to develop it as a picnic spot. The tank is spread over 1200 acres and has storage capacity of 0.50 TMC ft water.

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and Irrigation officials at his office on Sunday. He said groundwater level will also increase in Bukkarayasa mudram, Raptadu and Anantapur constituencies if the tank is filled with HLMC water. He asked the district col-

lector Chandrudu to initiate measures to develop a big park over 200 acres.

When authorities pointed out that several parts of the bund were encroached, the legislator advised them to take legal action in consultation with Revenue and police officials.

The priority is to carry out jungle clearance in the pond.

He said that these works should start from Pandameru.

It was suggested that the development works be undertaken with employment guarantee funds. He assured more funds to develop it on the lines of the picturesque locale in Hyderabad.

Former mayor Rage Parashuram, former municipal chairman Noor Mohammad, former corporators Kogatam Vijayabhaskar Reddy and Balanjaneyulu, were present on the occasion.

HIZBUL CHIEF KILLED IN J&K ENCOUNTER

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR, NOV. 1

The security forces on Sunday killed the 'operational chief' of Jammu and Kashmir's frontline militant organisation Hizb-ul-Mujahideen during a firefight on the peripheries of Srinagar.

The slain man, Saiful-Islam Mir, a resident of Malangpora of south Kashmir, who was known among the militant ranks by pseudonyms of Dr Saifullah and Ghazi Haider had assumed the role of the commander of the Hizb after its 'operation commander' Riyaz Naikoo was killed in a gunfight with security forces on May 6 this year.

"His killing like that of Naikoo in May is a big achievement of the security forces in their fight against militants in J&K," said Inspector General of Police (Kashmir range), Vijay Kumar.

The police claimed that the slain militant was involved in many "terror crimes and civilian atrocities" besides instrumental in recruiting local youth into militant folds. "Dozens of cases in connection with his involvement in terror crimes stand registered against him in different police stations," the police statement said.

TTD RESUMES MORE ARJITHA SEVAS VIRTUALLY

AVINASH P. SUBRAMANYAM | DC
TIRUPATI, NOV. 1

The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) on Sunday performed virtual Arjitha Sevas like Dolotsavam, Arjitha Brahmotsavam and Sahasra Deepalankara Seva in Ekantham at Srivari temple.

Following devotees' request, the TTD has also decided to perform these Arjitha Sevas virtually from the second week of November like virtual Kalyanotsava Seva at the Tirumala temple.

As part of this, TTD will release online tickets for these Sevas from the second week of November. The Arjitha Sevas will be telecast live by the SVBC, the official channel.

The TTD has appealed to devotees, who bought Seva tickets online, to watch the live telecast in traditional dress.

It announced that as per the earlier practice, the list of names and gothras of devotees will be placed at the feet of Lord Venkateswara.

Meanwhile, Arjitha Seva ticket holders will have to separately purchase ₹300 special darshan tickets to have darshan of the Lord at Tirumala temple, as Arjitha Seva tickets bought online do not entitle them for the darshan.

CHINA PLANS RAIL LINE NEAR ARUNACHAL

Beijing, Nov. 1: China is all set to begin the construction of the strategic Sichuan-Tibet Railway between Ya'an in southwest Sichuan province and Linzhi in Tibet, close to the Indian border in Arunachal Pradesh, the official media reported.

China Railway announced on Saturday the bidding results for the construction of two tunnels and one bridge, and a power supply project.

IN BRIEF INTER-STATE DEFENCE LIQUOR RACKET BUSTED

AVINASH P. SUBRAMANYAM
| DC
TIRUPATI, NOV. 1

The Chittoor police in coordination with the Special Enforcement Bureau (SEB) busted an inter-state gang involved in smuggling and selling spurious liquor after tampering the label of bottles and fixing fresh labels to make it look like consignment for defence canteens.

The department sleuths have arrested three people including the kingpin of the gang, M. Mari Rajan, 56, who was a retired Havildar from the Indian army, A. Keshava Murthy, 44, and S. Ramesh, 22. The officials seized 1,500 bottles of spurious defence liquor worth ₹18 lakh, one luggage auto-rickshaw and a CPU.

Disclosing the case details to the media, SEB ASP Mr Rishanth Reddy said the department officials, for the first time in Chittoor district, stumbled upon this liquor bootlegging racket during a raid on October 22 at Penumuru cross in Chittoor taluk limits, where they seized 210 bottles of spurious liquor bearing the defence liquor label.

“The lure of defence liquor has prompted bootleggers to enter the spurious liquor business by smuggling and selling liquor, branding it as defence personnel only with fake labels, and supplying it in bulk to various states. The investigation started after the Penumuru incident led us to Goa, where we have arrested the kingpin Mari Rajan along with others,” Mr Rishanth Reddy added.

Explaining the modus operandi, the SEB ASP said, Mari Rajan has set up a unit in Goa and struck a deal with a local liquor manufacturing unit to supply him spurious liquor. “They buy used bottles of popular brands and fill them with low-cost alcohol supplied by the local manufacturer. Then, they cap them with fake sealed-caps, and sell them to their customers.

AMARAVATI STIR AGAINST NORTH ANDHRA: YSRC

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 1

Minister for Agriculture Kurasala Kannababu played the opposition leaders for engineering Amaravati Parirakshana agitation that is going against the development of North Andhra and Rayalaseema regions by opposing the three capital initiatives of the state government.

Addressing a press conference on Sunday, the minister played TD leaders for opposing Visakhapatnam as the executive capital and confining themselves to 29 Amaravati villages. He said that the three capitals would pave the way for balanced development, especially in the backward North Andhra region, which was neglected by the previous government.

“While Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy is aiming at a balanced development of all three regions, the opposition is confined only to Amaravati and misleading the public in the name Amaravati Parirakshana agitations,” he said.

Chandrababu Naidu has hampered the state interests for his personal interests and accepted the special package from the Centre and failed to submit revised estimates for Polavaram. Although the project was listed as a national project in the Reorganisation Act, the previous government took over from the Centre and failed to complete it, he said and criticised Mr Naidu for crippling the state finances even leaving debts to TIDCO housing project.

ALL SET TO RESOLVE RTC ISSUES WITH TS

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 1

The standoff between AP and Telangana States over plying RTC buses likely to be resolved on Monday as the officials of both States are all set to resolve issues to restore plying of RTC bus services.

According to sources, APSRTC agreed to decrease its service routes and sent proposals to Telangana before the Dasara hoping to restore bus services but in vain. The APSRTC and TSRTC operated their buses till borders during Dasara festival to fulfil the festival demand and later the same services were continuing.

Formation Day on Nov. 1 hailed

The then Telugu Desam government did not celebrate the state's formation day for five years

MD ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 1

There have been mixed reactions on celebrating the AP Formation Day on November 1 after bifurcation of united Andhra Pradesh. But majority have taken the view that celebrating the Formation Day on November 1 is justified.

Earlier, the then Telugu Desam government did not celebrate the state's formation day for five years. Instead, it organised Nava Nirmana Deekshas on November 1, protesting against “unscientific” bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh.

The YSRC government, however, announced that it would continue celebrating November 1 as AP Formation Day.

Accordingly, the celebrations have been organised all across the state on Sunday with gaiety. Interestingly, while the main opposition Telugu Desam did not celebrate the formation day, other political parties did celebrate the day on Sunday.

AP Congress Committee organising president N. Thulasi Reddy objected to celebration of AP Formation Day on November 1. He claimed that AP was actually formed on October 1, 1953 after it was divided from the then Madras State. Merger of Telangana in AP took place on November 1, 1956. Thulasi Reddy said as Telangana is celebrating its formation day on June 2, AP should have celebrated its formation day on October 1.

Civil supplies minister Kodali Venkateswara Rao alias Nani said TD celebrated Naidu's and its other leaders' birthdays but forgot the great leader Potti Sriramulu, who sacrificed his life.

NAIDU: JAGAN'S LETTER TO PM 'IRRESPONSIBLE'

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 1

Telugu Desam chief N. Chandrababu Naidu on Sunday accused YSR Congress government of blaming the previous TD regime, instead of convincing the Central government into completing the state's largest multi-purpose Polavaram irrigation project.

Interestingly, the former chief minister remained mum on Union finance ministry's 2016 order that it would pay only as per 2013-14 the estimates of the Polavaram project.

Mr Naidu termed as “irresponsible and meaningless” the letter written by Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He charged that ignorance and multifaceted failures of YSRC Government has now put a big question mark on future of Polavaram.

Addressing a press conference, Mr Naidu advised CM to place facts before people whether his government's retendering or non-cooperation with Centre had pushed the project into trouble. The TD chief said it was ignorance and arrogance of Jagan regime that led to reverse tendering contrary to advice given by Polavaram Project Authority (PPA) and the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti.

The former chief minister claimed that the Central government had accepted on several occasions that the irrigation component would include land acquisition as well as relief and rehabilitation (R&R) package. He maintained that the overall project cost had increased enormously mainly because of hike in acquisition and R&R components. The cost went up from ₹2,937.26 crore during 2010-11 to ₹33,187.07 crore after the 2013 Land Acquisition Act.

The TD chief said Jagan's letter to the PM seemed more like an attempt to make political allegations.



Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy garlands the statue of Potti Sriramulu on the occasion of AP Formation Day celebrations at the camp office on Sunday.

HYD CAPITAL WAS MISTAKE: SPEAKER

DC CORRESPONDENT
SRIKAKULAM, NOV. 1:

Shifting of Andhra capital from Kurnool to Hyderabad was a historical mistake, opined Speaker Tammineni Sitaram while speaking at a function organised in connection with the AP Formation Day.

MAKE KURNOOL SECOND CAPITAL: TG

D. SIVA RAMI REDDI | DC
KURNOOL, NOV. 1

Rajya Sabha member T.G. Venkatesh demanded that Kurnool be made the second capital of AP. He said the capital cities such as Amaravati and Hyderabad were never made free zones and Vizag would also be no different, thereby denying employment opportunities to people belonging to other zones.

Speaking after garlanding the statue of Potti Sriramulu at Children's Park to mark AP Formation Day, Mr Venkatesh said Sriramulu had laid down his life for realising a separate state for Telugu-speaking people. He said Kurnool was chosen as the first capital of the Andhra state.



A man sanitizes a theatre in Vijayawada on Sunday.-

— C. NARAYANA RAO

Cinema halls open in AP

MD ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 1

Cinema theatres, the centres of mass entertainment, have started screening movies in Andhra Pradesh from Sunday after a gap of 223 days. All film shows had come to a halt on March 23 because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Initially, two theatres have been opened in Vijayawada at the Inox in Gandhinagar. Each theatre screened a noon and an evening show.

Managements took all precautionary measures for safety and security of the audience in accordance with the Covid guidelines. Occupancy was limited to 50 per cent, with only alternate seats being occupied.

As a precautionary measure, tickets were issued only online. Entry was through the QR code on mobile phones of those booking for the show. Thermal screening was mandatory for the audience, masks were compulsory and sanitisers were provided for cleaning hands. There was a 30-minute gap between the two shows to ensure sanitisation and disinfection of hall for the subsequent screening.

Inox security administrator N. Kishore said movies “Sarileru Neekevvaru” and “Kanulu Kanulanu Dhochaayante” were screened at Audi 2 and Audi 3. Occupancy was good, though they are expecting a rise.

WOMEN | SAFETY

Jagan directs DGP, CS, Intel chief and home minister to visit victim's family

₹10 lakh ex gratia to kin of girl killed by boyfriend

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 1

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy announced an ex gratia of ₹10 lakh to the family of Varalakshmi of Visakhapatnam who was murdered by her lover at Gajuwaka Saturday night.

The Chief Minister directed the Chief Secretary, DGP and Intelligence chief to take serious action against the accused and urged home minister Mekathoti Sucharita, Disha special officers Krutika Shukla and Deepika Patil to immediately visit the family of the victim and console them.

Mr Reddy said that awareness should be created among every woman to download Disha apps for their safety. Efforts should be made to educate school and college girls to compulsorily download the app. He asked the officials to take stern action against perpetrators

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pulsorily download the app. He asked the officials to take stern action against perpetrators of atrocities against women and respond as and when they get a distress call from any woman claiming threat to her life.

Meanwhile, investigation revealed that Akhil Sai, the accused, used a razor blade to slit the throat of Varalakshmi.

People close to the family of the victim said Akhil Sai and Varalakshmi were



Police personnel deployed outside the KGH mortuary on Sunday, while a girl was killed by a jilted lover at Gajuwaka in Visakhapatnam on Saturday.

— K. MURALIKRISHNA

in a relationship since the last two years and recently she began talking to his friend Ramu of the same

JAGAN REGRETS THERE ARE STILL 33% ILLITERATES

FROM PAGE 1

He regretted that still, there is 33 per cent illiteracy in the state even today and 85 per cent of people living below poverty line are dependent on white ration cards. 90 lakh women are struggling for their existence.

Large extents of lands do not have irrigation facilities and 32 lakh people are waiting for a house. “This reminds us of the government's responsibility in fulfilling aspirations of the people,” he stated.

The Chief Minister said the government has been focusing on family health, education, agriculture and irrigation for the past 17 months. It is implementing several welfare schemes for the poor. He asserted that it is his dream to radically change the lives of Telugu people by taking a village as unit of development. Every village with a population of 2,000 has been provided with a village secretariat, where at least 12 volunteers work relentlessly, with each volunteer ensuring door delivery of welfare schemes to 50 families.

Earlier, after hoisting the national flag, Mr Jagan offered floral tributes to Potti Sriramulu and Telugu Tali. He also received a guard of honour on the occasion.

Endowments minister Vellampalli Srinivas, MP Nandigam Suresh, chief secretary Nilam Sawhney, DGP Gautam Sawang among those present at the celebrations.

16 STUDENTS ONLY ALLOWED PER CLASS

FROM PAGE 1

There are nearly 2,000 schools in East Godavari with 1.3 lakh students and 901 schools with 1 lakh students in West Godavari district. West Godavari district education officer P.V. Renuka underlined that schools should allow only 16 students per class.

Her East Godavari counterpart S. Abraham said schools will run only from 9 am to 1 pm with only Class IX and X students.

Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, Kakinada, vice-chancellor M. Ramalinga Raju said all affiliated engineering colleges will be reopening from Monday.

Meanwhile education minister Adiulapu Suresh speaking to media persons at Ongole on Sunday said that they have taken all protective measures necessary to prevent the spread of Coronavirus in the schools.

‘YSRC will fulfil people's aspirations’

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 1

Greeting people of the state on AP Formation Day, government adviser (Public Affairs) Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy said it is a day everyone to take a pledge to fulfil dreams and aspirations of the people, thereby honouring the sacrifices of martyrs like Potti Sriramulu.

Addressing party cadre at YSRC's central office here on Sunday, he maintained that though the occasion should have been celebrated on a grand scale, it is being limited owing to Covid-19 situation.

He said it is a day to

seek a solution for problems facing the people and take remedial measures for their better future.

Ramakrishna Reddy said, “Though the state had been facing a crisis since past six years due to misrule of the previous government and bifurcation of AP Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has put the state back on rails in the past 17 months and implementing several welfare schemes. We can proudly assert that within the five-year mandate that YSRC has got, the government will be able to forge ahead and make AP the number one state in the country.”

PM Modi, HM Shah, Governor greet AP

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 1

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his message on occasion of the AP Formation Day, said: “Andhra Pradesh is synonymous with hard work and compassion. People belonging to AP have excelled in several fields. On AP's Formation Day, my greetings to people of the state and best wishes for their developmental aspirations,” Modi tweeted in both English and Telugu.

Union home minister Amit Shah, in his greetings, underlined that con-

tribution of Andhra Pradesh to India's growth is praiseworthy. “Modi government is committed to all-round development of the state and is working dedicatedly towards its prosperity,” he tweeted.

At the Raj Bhavan in Vijayawada, Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan offered floral tributes to the portrait of Potti Sriramulu, who laid down his life for formation of the Telugu state in 1953. In his message, the Governor said AP has tremendous potential for growth and is marching in the right direction.

20,000 teachers undergoing test as schools reopen

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 1

The health department and district educational office took up the massive exercise of screening 20,000 teachers for Covid-19 infection as a precautionary measure. Around 1.3 lakh students of Class IX and X from 1,100 schools, both government and private/corporate, would be attending classes from Monday.

“We have completed screening of 5,000 teachers during the last two days who will be attending the classes from Monday and complete the remaining teachers in another two days. The screening of primary and secondary teachers would be taken up subsequently,” said District Educational Officer B. Lingeswara Reddy.

He said that it is not mandatory that a teacher would not be allowed to school without test. He

said classes would be adjusted in case some teachers tested positive.

District Medical and Health Officer P.S. Suryanarayana said the teachers were asked to take the Covid-19 tests at the Primary Health Centres in rural and agency areas and Urban Health Centres in the city. There are about 89 PHCs in the rural areas, 36 in the agency and 25 Urban Health Centres. All will undergo Rapid tests so that the results could be obtained quickly.

“As of now no reports of positive cases have come up,” the DMHO said.

As a random check, the DMHO said he screened 16 teachers in Paykaraopeta mandal in Visakhapatnam district and of them two teachers tested positive.

Health experts are eagerly waiting for the test results so that they can advise the government accordingly.

OTHER STORIES

FAMILY KIDNAPS
BOY, RESCUED,
FOUR ARRESTEDDC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 1

A family entered into an apartment in Gajuwaka and kidnapped a two-year-old boy in the presence of his mother on Saturday afternoon. After the boy's father lodged a complaint, kidnappers sent the boy through a taxi which they used for kidnapping.

The boy's father, Naresh Kumar Yadav, said that he was employed with SB Transport company which deals with SAIL and other agencies. His company owed ₹40 lakh to Biswal Marine Corporation and negotiations were on to settle the amount. On Saturday afternoon, Pradeep Kumar Biswal, the owner of the company, along with his wife and 10-year-old son, came to his house in his absence and began chit-chatting with his wife. Later, Biswal offered chocolates to his two-year-old son, Mayank, and took him outside the house along with his own son.

When Naresh went to the house and inquired about his son, Biswal's wife told him all kinds of stories but never revealed their whereabouts.

Later with the help of his friends, he lodged a formal complaint with the police. After lodging the complaint, Biswal's wife told him to deposit ₹40 lakh in her husband's account after which his son would be returned in one hour. Naresh expressed his helplessness and continued to pressure the police.

When the police questioned Biswal's wife, who was all along in Naresh house, she refused to reveal the details. Later, Biswal chickened out and sent the boy in the taxi to his house along with another man at 8 pm. Biswal offered the taxi driver ₹15 lakh to take the kidnapped child to Kakinada, the police said.

The police arrested Biswal's wife, taxi driver, Biswal's employees Bishu and Prabhuji. The main accused, Pradeep Biswal, is still at large. Naresh Kumar Yadav hails from Bulandshahr in Uttar Pradesh.

HUSBAND BLAMED
FOR SUICIDE OF
22-YR-OLD WOMANDC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, NOV. 1

Blaming the husband for the suicide of a woman, parents of the victim complained against him in Daramitta police station in Nellore on Sunday.

The deceased woman has been identified as Shaik Salma, 22, of Pragathi Nagar in Podalakur Road in Nellore.

According to the police, Salma married one Nasir of Pragathi Nagar after falling in love affair about one-and-a-half years ago.

The couple was living in a rented house in Pragathi Nagar in Nellore. Trouble started between the couple when Nasir's mother, Shaina, started harassing Salma physically and mentally to bring dowry, in the last two months.

Unable to bear the torture by the husband and in-laws, Salma committed suicide by hanging in her home during the early hours of Sunday.

Her mother, Shaik Shabana, rushed to the spot when Nasir informed her that Salma is not opening the doors. She found her daughter hanging to the ceiling fan after locals broke open the doors.

She squarely blamed Nasir and her parents for the death and lodged a complaint against them at the Daramitta police station.

ANANTAPUR COPS
TO HELP CONDUCT
BYPOLLS IN SIRADC CORRESPONDENT
ANANTAPUR, NOV. 1

Anantapur administration is cooperating with the election authorities of Sira in Karnataka in ensuring law and order and to control illicit liquor. Byelections being held for Sira Assembly constituency of Tumkur district located closer to Madakasira area in the district borders. In the view of death of sitting MLA, bypolls are being held for Sira Assmby segment.

Karnataka police and revenue authorities asked Anantapur administration to cooperate with them to prevent illicit liquor and maintain law and order in border villages.

Collector Gandham Chandrudu said border checkpoints were set up to prevent anti-social elements from border villages to Sira Assembly segment.

Jagan committed to states's
development, says Buggana

FM: Commercial flights from Kurnool Airport near Orvakal will begin soon

D. SIVA RAMI REDDI | DC
KURNOOL, NOV. 1

While Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy is committed to fulfilling all poll promises and usher in a people's government, certain sections of the society are putting breaks and hampering the state's development, said finance minister Buggana Rajendranath Reddy, participating in the AP Formation Day celebrations here on Sunday.

On the occasion, he announced that commercial flights from the Kurnool Airport near Orvakal will commence soon. The finance minister, along with district collector G. Veera Pandian, airport director Kailash Mandal and MLA Katasani Rambhupal Reddy visited Orvakal and inspected the ongoing development works, including runway, administrative building, ATC tower, passenger terminal building, and so on.

A nine-kilometre compound wall encloses the runway. Airport works are being executed by a firm owned by former TD MLA B. C. Janardhan Reddy.

Buggana reiterated that the Chief Minister is focused on developing Kurnool as the judicial capital and Nandyal as a separate district in AP. Orvakal is located in the middle of these two major towns. It is also a suitable place for establishing industries, educational institutions and other development projects, he stated. The minister also reviewed the ongoing Pushkar ghat works at Mantralayam.

● **Kurnool Airport works are being executed by a firm owned by former TD MLA B. C. Janardhan Reddy.**



Finance minister Buggana Rajendranath Reddy garlanded the statue of Sri Potti Sriramulu on the occasion of the AP Formation Day celebrations in Kurnool on Sunday.

Govt drawing inspiration from
Potti Sriramulu: AdimulapuPATHRI RAJASEKHAR | DC
ONGOLE/NELLORE NOV. 1

Recalling the sacrifices of Sri Potti Sriramulu for a separate state for Telugu speaking people, education minister Adimulapu Suresh said that his government drew inspiration from Potti Sriramulu to develop the state under the leadership of Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy.

He was addressing a large gathering while

taking part in the 65th AP State Formation Day celebrations at Ongole on Sunday.

Mr Suresh said 544 types of time-bound services are being offered through village/ward secretariats established all over the state to provide corruption-free governance. He said 1,341 government schools were getting a facelift under Naadu-Nedu programme at an estimated cost of ₹322 crore in Prakasam

district. The administration is ready to distribute house-sites spread over 3,189 acres and 1,921 layouts to 1,30,838 beneficiaries in the district.

Speaking on the occasion, Ongole MP Magunta Srinivasulu Reddy commended the state government for not compromising on development and welfare programmes despite dent in revenues due to corona.

Collector Pola Bhaskar also spoke.

AP IS THE RESULT
OF SRIRAMULU'S
SACRIFICE: DY CMNAGESWARA RAO
BALLEDA | DC
KADAPA, NOV. 1

Deputy Chief Minister S.B. Amjad Basha said that if the Telugu people are living proudly today, it is the result of the sacrifice of Potti Sriramulu.

The Andhra Pradesh Formation Day celebrations were held on Sunday at the collector's office.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that it was a platform to continue our culture, the respect given to us by our ancestors and to commemorate Telugu dignitaries. He said the Andhra Pradesh government had set an example for other states with many welfare schemes that could not be implemented by any other state in the country. Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy is the only Chief Minister in our state who has effectively implemented village self-government by realising Gandhiji's dreams.

As part of the programme, district deputy collector in-charge M. Gowthami, SP Anbu Rajan and Deputy Chief Minister S.B. Amjad Basha unfurled the National Flag.

He later received a police salute.

Before this programme, the Deputy CM and former mayor Suresh garlanded the statue of Potti Sriramulu at Gokul Circle in Kadapa.

● **It is a platform to continue our culture, the respect given to us by our ancestors and to commemorate Telugu dignitaries.**

It was at Bapatla
that demand for
linguistic state roseMD ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 1

It was Bapatla who gave birth to the Linguistic States Policy. In the first Andhra Conference, held in 1913, the demand for a separate state for Telugu speaking people was raised.

The Bapatla conference was a landmark in the struggle for the creation of separate states based on linguistic lines. It was at this conference that the Telugu people's urge for separate statehood was displayed first.

Forum For Better Bapatla conducted the AP Formation Day celebrations in the Town Hall at Bapatla on Sunday.

Dr G. Prasada Rao, Associate Dean, Agricultural College said that the Bapatla Conference was a landmark in the struggle for the creation of separate states on linguistic lines. He said that Andhra Pradesh was the first state

in the country to be formed on linguistic lines.

The Andhra movement originated in Bapatla in 1913 and after four decades of struggle, Andhra state came into being on October 1, 1953, with the martyrdom of Amarajevee Potti Sreeramulu.

Then with the passing of the Reorganisation of States Act, Andhra Pradesh was formed on November 1, 1956, along with other states.

Forum secretary P.C. Sai Babu presiding over the meeting, said, "Swami Sitaram, who belonged to this area sat for a fast unto death on August 15, 1951, for a separate state. But after 10 days he withdrew his fast with the intervention of Acharya Vinoba Bhave."

The Telugu Talli statue at the Town Hall was garlanded. SMG High School in charge headmaster A. Harnadh, teachers, artist GV and other members participated.

Seek permissions for
Rayalaseema LINAGESWARA RAO
BALLEDA | DC
KADAPA, NOV. 1

AP Farmers Association district general secretary Gali Chandra said, "It is sad that the Madras National Green Tribunal ruled that environmental permits should be sought for the construction of the Rayalaseema lift scheme. And the state government should effectively obtain permits for Rayalaseema."

The state government of Andhra Pradesh sanctioned ₹6,829.15 crore and issued administrative clearance for the Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Scheme and widening of the Srisaillam main canal.

The GO was issued on May

5 by the irrigation department, general secretary Adityanath Das.

Gali Chandra, at a press conference on Sunday in Kadapa, questioned, What the Telangana government would say about the construction of the Palamuru Rangareddy, Kalvakurthi, Bhima, Devadula and Nettempadu projects, being built without permits, misrepresenting the Rayalaseema LI, which was an integral part of the previous project.

He said there was no damage to Telangana due to the Rayalaseema lift irrigation project. AP Farmers Association leaders T. Manohar Reddy and P. Chandrasekhara Reddy participated in the meeting.

Development and welfare govt's priorities

DC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, NOV. 1

Social welfare minister Pinepe Viswaroop said that the Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy is ruling the state aimed at development and welfare in an equal manner, and all sections of people are benefitting with the welfare activities.

Flagging off the Andhra Pradesh Formation Day celebrations on Sunday,

Mr Viswaroop said that farmers are playing a vital role to strengthen the financial situation and food security.

The CM has introduced the Rythu Bharosa scheme to the farming community and ₹415.55 crore have been already distributed to 4.55 lakhs farmers' families, he added.

He said that free borewells had been sanctioned to the small and

middle-class farmers and ₹781 crore have been sanctioned in the first phase under YSR Asara scheme to the 10,14,788 self-help groups. He said that the East Godavari district succeeded in reducing Covid-19 cases, adding that the people should be cautious with the Covid-19 pandemic.

Mr Viswaroop, BC welfare minister Ch. Srinivasa Venugopalakrishna, Rajya Sabha member

Pilli Subhashchandra Bose, Kakinada Lok Sabha member Vanga Gita, the MLC Pandula Ravindra Babu, Kakinada MLA Dwarampudi Chandrasekhara Reddy, East Godavari District Collector D. Muralidhar Reddy, Superintendent of Police Adnan Nayeem Asmi, Joint collector G. Lakshmsiha, Kakinada Mayor S. Pavani, Kakinada Municipal Commissioner Swapnil

Dinkar Pundkar and others paid rich tributes to Amarajevee Potti Sriramulu, after garlanding his statue in Ramaraopet.

In Eluru, Andhra Pradesh Formation Day celebrations were organised. Deputy CM and medical and health minister Alla Kalikrishna Srinivas (Nani) unfurled the National Flag and garlanded the photo of Potti Sriramulu.

Saibaba trust signs
MoU with NCERTDC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 1

Sri Satya Sai Central Trust signed a MoU with NCERT-CIET (Central Institute of Educational Technology) to share Sri Satya Sai Vidya Vahini learning materials with the government of India's nodal website known as DIKSHA (Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing), which is the government's national digital infrastructure for teachers.

This MoU was signed by R.J. Rathnakar, Managing Trustee, Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust and Prof Amarendra Behara, joint director, NCERT-CIET on

behalf of the government.

A release on Sunday said SSSVV was invited to New Delhi by the education vertical of the National Institute for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog, the government's think-tank, to present the highlights of the programme.

Soon after, at the request of the NITI Aayog, two districts were selected for piloting the SSSVV programme in the government schools.

Earlier this year, in May, the ministry of education asked for samples of the SSSVV content for a high level review by NCERT.

Tense situation as police
foils TD leader's padayatraDC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, NOV. 1

Tension gripped Pithapuram on Sunday when the police foiled the attempt of former MLA and Telugu Desam leader S.V.S.N. Varma to undertake padayatra, in protest against the delay in taking up Yeleru Ayacut modernisation works. Mr Varma and 20 other TD activists were arrested and released on station bail on Sunday evening.

Mr Varma decided to undertake padayatra to highlight the Yeleru Reservoir issue along with their party workers.

According to sources,

when Mr Varma was about to leave the TD office in Pithapuram on Monday, the police arrived and told him that he did not have permission to undertake the padayatra. There were heated arguments and jostling between the police and the TD workers. The police then took Mr Varma and the activists into custody and shifted them to Kakinada and Karapa police stations.

The TD workers in Pithapuram staged a demonstration at the Kotagummam centre in protest against the arrest of Mr Varma. They demanded the

police should release Mr Varma immediately.

Upon learning the information of the arrest, TD leaders Vanamadi Venkateswara Rao, Pilli Anantha Lakshmi, Pilli Satyanarayana Murthy, Sunkara Pavani and others reached to the Indrapalem police station and rendered their solidarity to Mr Varma. They condemned the police action.

The Pithapuram CI P. Ramachandra Rao told this reporter that Mr Varma applied for permission to undertake padayatra to the RDO. But, due to the Covid-19 scare, the officials have not permitted the agitation.

COVID | UPDATE

Corona recovery rate increased to 96.32%

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 1

The AP crossed 81 lakh above Corona tests and lowest 16 Covid-19 deaths of single day in the past three months registered on Sunday. The dropping of Coronavirus positive cases continued with the registration of 2,618 new positive cases against an earlier

average of 10,000 cases per day. The total positive cases reached 8,25,966 on Sunday in which 7,95,592 were total recoveries, 23,668 were total active cases and 6,706 were total Corona deaths. The recovery rate continues to increase with more new recoveries. It was 96.32 per cent as a total of 7,95,592 patients recovered in the state.

The Chittoor district was on top in single day highest Corona cases of 423 on Sunday and registration of a huge number of Corona cases continuing duo Godavari districts. Further 3,509 patients were discharged after the cure in the past 24 hours.

The highest number of four deaths registered in Krishna district in the past

24 hours, followed by three deaths each in Chittoor and Guntur districts, two in Anantapur district and one each East Godavari, Srikakulam, Visakhapatnam and WG districts.

East Godavari registered a total of 1,16,035 cases and top among all districts and West Godavari in the second place with reaching 86,023 total positive cases.

As many as 88,780 Corona tests conducted in the past 24-hours in which 2,618 were diagnosed as Covid-19 positive.

AP tested a total of 81,17,685 samples for Corona till date and is in top place in Covid-19 tests.

The single day highest number of 423 Corona positive cases was registered in Chittoor district.

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, NOV. 1

Former mayor of Nellore N. Bhanusree said she misunderstood Nellore rural legislator Kotamreddy Sridhar Reddy when he protested against setting up a reading room at CCS Nagar when she was the mayor.

Speaking after inaugurating a park at CCS Nagar along with Kotamreddy Sridhar Reddy on Sunday, she said such a beautiful park would not have come up if she had gone ahead with the reading room proposal then.

She said that she had planned to build the reading room as the park was in dire straits, but Mr Sridhar Reddy launched a stir against the move and locals also supported him then. She hailed him for developing the park at an estimated



● **KOTAMREDDY Sridhar Reddy launched a stir against the move and locals also supported him.**

cost of ₹42 lakh now. Nellore rural segment in-charge Kotamreddy Girdhar Reddy and former Corporator Bobba Srinivasa Yadav were present during the programme.

COUNTRY PISTOL
MISFIRES, TRIBAL
YOUTH DEADDC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, NOV. 1

A 30-year-old tribal youth, Sarla Narayana Reddy of Kutravada village died, when a bullet fired from a country pistol hit him.

According to Maredumilli police, Narayana Reddy and his uncle Kathula Lacha Reddy, 48, of Pamuleru village went to the forests in Pamuleru to hunt wild boar.

When the youth climbed a hill to find the wild boar, Lacha Reddy fired the pistol, and the bullet hit the youth accidentally, and he died. The Maredumilli police seized the country pistol and registered a case.

● **NARAYANA REDDY and his uncle Kathula Lacha Reddy, 48, of Pamuleru village went to the forests in Pamuleru to hunt wild boar.**

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 1

Prof N. Balakrishnan, Honorary Professor, Super Computer Education and Research Centre, Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, delivering a speech on Data to Discovery in Information Security in SRM University – AP emphasised on the storage revolution which is reflected in the smaller systems comprising more complex networks, as compared to the earlier version of computers which were used primarily for computing and processing.

Prof N. Balakrishnan's lecture encompassed the explosion in data and the Revenge of Silicon, which made the emergence of Artificial Intelligence inevitable.

Prof Balakrishnan emphasised on the storage revolution, which is reflected in the smaller systems comprising more complex networks, as compared to the earlier version of computers which were used primarily for computing and processing data.

SHORT TAKES

HOME MINISTRY
KEEPS TABS ON
CITIES FOR COVID

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 1

The Union home ministry is closely monitoring the Covid situation in cities like Delhi where cases are rising again since the last four days. In view of winter and festive season, Covid cases are expected to rise sharply all over the country and both the home and health ministries are working along with the states to contain the spread.

Senior home ministry officials said that a team headed by home secretary Ajay Bhalla was reviewing the situation regularly and is likely to come out with some additional guidelines to ensure common people strictly follow the Covid health protocols.

Home secretary has been holding a series of meetings to review the situation, particularly in Delhi, Bihar and some other northern states where situation has deteriorated due to several factors like increasing air pollution, festive season and Assembly polls.

COVID RECOVERIES
AT 91%, 470 NEW
DEATHS REPORTED

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 1

With 46, 963 fresh cases, India till Sunday logged in a total of 81.86 lakh cases of Covid while the overall fatalities crossed 1.22 lakh with 470 fresh deaths in the last 24 hours. Among those who died was Tamil Nadu's agriculture minister R. Doraikkannu, who had tested positive for Covid on October 13. However, a steady decline in active cases continues and for the third consecutive day after the active cases fell down below the 6 lakh mark after nearly three months. At present, India's total active cases are 5.70 lakh and the number of those recovered is 74.92 lakh. In the last 24 hours, 58,684 people were discharged from medical supervision. Higher recoveries has aided the national Recovery Rate to further improve to 91.54 per cent. "The active cases have dropped substantially and are only 6.97 per cent of the total positive cases demonstrating a steady falling percentage of the total cases..." With the consistent decline in the active cases, the cases per million in India are among lowest in the world," union health ministry officials said.

196 ARRESTED IN
MUMBAI FOR PUB,
BAR VIOLATIONS

Mumbai, Nov. 1: Mumbai police arrested 196 people from a bar and a pub in suburban Andheri in the wee hours of Sunday for allegedly violating the lockdown guidelines, a police official said. Acting on an information, the city police's social service branch raided the bar and the pub located in Sakinaka area of Andheri, he said. The police subsequently arrested 196 people, including 171 male and female customers, 19 workers, two owners of the facilities, three managers and a cashier, the official said. An FIR was registered under Indian Penal Code sections 188 (disobeying order duly promulgated by public servant), 285 (negligent conduct with respect to fire or combustible matter) and other relevant provisions, he said. The Maharashtra government was easing restrictions in a phased manner.

TN AGRICULTURE
MINISTER DIES OF
COVID, BURIED

Chennai, Nov. 1: Tamil Nadu agriculture minister R. Doraikkannu, who died on Saturday at a private hospital in the city where he was treated for Covid-19, was laid to rest at his native village in Thanjavur on Sunday with full state honours. With the demise of Doraikkannu, who had represented Papanasam in Thanjavur for three straight terms in the state Assembly since 2006, the ruling AIADMK's strength in the 234-member house has reduced by one to 123. Assembly elections in the state are due in April-May 2021 and there are already three vacancies in the House now, all created due to the death of DMK MLAs.

The 72-year-old Doraikkannu, who was on life support for several days after being admitted on October 13, breathed his last at 11.15 pm on Saturday, Kauvery Hospital.

54 seats head for election

Hectic canvassing for Tuesday byelections in the shadow of pandemic

Bhopal/Lucknow/Ahmedabad, Nov. 1 Campaigning ended on Sunday for byelections to 54 Assembly constituencies in 10 states including 28 seats in Madhya Pradesh where the high-stake contest that will decide the fate of the Shivraj Singh Chouhan government saw the parties launching vitriolic attacks against each other.

There was hectic canvassing for the Tuesday byelections in the shadow of the Covid-19 pandemic, with the Election Commission restricting the number of star campaigners and issuing strict guidelines for gatherings.

The main contenders, the BJP and the Congress, traded barbs especially in Madhya Pradesh where the EC had to reprimand leaders of both the parties and even revoked the star campaigner status of former chief minister Kamal Nath, who challenged it in the Supreme Court.

In over 30 seats in MP, Gujarat and Karnataka, the BJP has fielded former Congress MLAs who quit to join the saffron party.

The BJP, which has a comfortable majority in the UP Assembly, is locked in a battle of prestige on seven seats, with the opposition taking on the Yogi Adityanath government on the law and order issue. The issue of 'love jihad' has also been raked up during the campaigning with the UP and Haryana governments announcing plans to bring a law against it.

In Gujarat, the bypolls are being held in eight seats after the Congress MLAs resigned. Five of them later joined the ruling BJP and are contesting again. Assembly bypolls will also be held in Chhattisgarh (1 seat), Haryana (1), Jharkhand (2), Karnataka (2), Nagaland (2), Odisha (2) and Telangana (1).

In Uttar Pradesh, of the seven seats going to the polls on Tuesday, six were held by the BJP and one by the Samajwadi Party.

The state government faced criticism over the law and order situation, particularly after the Hathras and Balrampur rape and murder cases.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar during an election rally for the second phase of Bihar Assembly polls, in Samastipur district, on Sunday.

UP Congress chief Ajay Kumar Lallu said that the BJP government has failed on all fronts and asserted that the public has decided to teach the ruling party a lesson.

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar and Deputy CM Dushyant Chautala held joint public meetings in the Baroda assembly constituency and urged people to vote for BJP-JJP candidate Yogeshwar Dutt.

In Gujarat, both the major political parties—the ruling BJP as well as the opposition Congress—were claiming to make a clean sweep. The Congress' campaign workload was shared by state working president Hardik Patel, who toured all eight seats extensively, and Amit Chavda, Paresh Dhanani, Arijun Modhwadiya, Siddharth Patel, Tushar Chaudhry and Manish Doshi.

During campaigning, Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa announced that the BJP candidate in RR Nagar, Munirathna, would be made a minister. —PTI

Byelections to decide fate of Shivraj in MP

DC CORRESPONDENT
BHOPAL, NOV. 1

The high voltage campaigning for the November 3 by-elections to 28 Assembly constituencies in MP, which may decide fate of the Shivraj government, ended on Sunday.

Chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, state BJP president Vishnu Dutt Sharma and senior BJP leader Jyotiraditya Scindia held road shows in the election-bound constituencies in the state to drum up support for their party in the by-elections on the last day of electioneering on Sunday.

Similarly, former chief minister Kamal Nath staged road shows and addressed election meetings in the state before winding up his campaign-

ing for Congress in the by-polls. Violation of the model code of conduct has robbed Nath of his star campaigner status.

The Assembly byelections may decide the fate of the Shivraj government since the ruling BJP needed nine more seats to gain a simple majority in the 230-member state Assembly. The BJP currently has strength of 107 in the Assembly whose effective strength has reduced to 202 following resignation of 25 Congress MLAs and demise of three sitting legislators.

The Congress' strength in the House has reduced to 88 following the resignation of 25 party MLAs from the House in the last eight months. While 22 Congress MLAs resigned from the Assembly in March leading to fall of

Kamal Nath government, three other Congress legislators resigned in the last one month.

All of them have quit the Congress and joined the BJP. The Congress needed to win all the 28 assembly seats in the byelections to reach the magic figure of 116 to return to power in the state. However, 4 Independents, two BSP MLAs and one SP legislator may play the role of king makers if neither the BJP or the Congress gains simple majority in the byelections. The seven MLAs had earlier extended support to the Kamal Nath government. But, they extended their support to the Shivraj government when the BJP formed a government following the collapse of the Kamal Nath government in March this year.

In slip of tongue, Scindia seeks vote for Congress

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC
BHOPAL, NOV. 1

Senior BJP leader Jyotiraditya Scindia created a flutter when he, in a slip of tongue, sought vote for the Congress while campaigning for his party in Dabra in Gwalior district in Madhya Pradesh late on Saturday evening.

A video in which Scindia was seen appealing to the people to vote for 'Hand', the symbol of Congress while addressing an election meeting in Dabra, has gone viral.

Maintaining flow of his speech, Mr Scindia suddenly called upon people to press the button on 'Hand' while casting their votes on November 3, when by-elections to 28 Assembly constituencies in Madhya Pradesh were scheduled to be held.

However, after realising his mistake he promptly corrected it saying that they should dump Congress and press the button on 'Lotus', the

symbol of BJP.

His faux pas had evoked laughter in the gathering which included BJP candidate for Dabra constituency Imarti Devi.

The Congress on Sunday took a jibe at Scindia for his slip of tongue.

"We assure Mr Scindia that people will vote for Congress in MP assembly by-elections," Congress spokesman here Narendra Saluja said.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission has barred Devi from campaigning for a day on Sunday for her recent offensive remarks against the kin of an unnamed rival.

Devi while reacting to former chief minister Kamal Nath's item jibe at her had said a leader from Bengal had come to Madhya Pradesh to become chief minister and after losing his post of chief minister he had gone crazy.

The leader's wife and sister may be items, she had said.

SP: Yogi makes laws as law and order fails

Ballia (UP), Nov. 1: Taking a jibe at UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's announcement of framing a new law against 'love jihad', SP leader Ram Govind Chaudhary on Sunday said the CM was only making laws while the law and order in the state was deteriorating. Adityanath had on Saturday said his government would come out with a law to deal with 'love jihad' and used the Hindu funeral chant 'Ram Naam Satya Hai' to threaten those who do not respect their daughters and sisters. Love jihad is a derogatory coinage referring to the alleged campaign of Muslims forcing Hindu girls to convert in the guise of love.

"After the BJP formed

government in the state, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is only making laws. The reality is that the Adityanath government is unable to control crime in the state, and the law and order situation is deteriorating," Chaudhary, also the Leader of Opposition in UP Legislative Assembly, said.

"Have incidents of murder and rape stopped?" he told reporters here. The Samajwadi Party leader also accused the CM of moving on the path of German dictator Adolf Hitler. He also claimed that despite the "misuse" of government machinery in the bypolls, the SP candidates will emerge strong. On being asked if his party will register a complaint, he said nothing will come of it. —PTI

Big win for J&K forces



Security personnel leave after an encounter with militants at Rangreth on the outskirts of Srinagar on Sunday. Hizbul Mujahideen chief Dr Saifullah was killed and a suspect has been taken into custody and is being questioned.

Delinked land to be used for affordable housing Sick PSUs' land to be delinked

ANIMESH SINGH
NEW DELHI, NOV. 1

Unable to dispose of 17 out of the 19 sick public sector undertakings (PSUs) which the NDA government had earmarked for time-bound closure back in 2018, mainly due to the delay in disposal of the land held by these state-owned units, the Centre has decided to delink the land component from the companies and transfer them to their parent ministries to expedite the process of doing away with such entities.

The delinked or transferred land would be used in priority sectors of the government, including investments in key eco-

nomics sectors and for affordable housing, sources said.

The sources said the heavy industry ministry has prepared a proposal to seek the Union Cabinet's approval to delink the land from these units and transfer them to the parent ministries, to expedite their disposal.

While the government identified 19 sick PSUs for time-bound closure two years back, till now it has managed to close only two of them, with a backlog existing even from units identified back in 2016, adding on to it.

The reason behind its failure to do away with the sick units was because of inordinate delay in dispos-

al of land belonging to these PSUs, as the Centre has so far managed to dispose of only 41 per cent of the total land owned by the identified 19 sick units.

Despite the fact that the list of sick PSUs that had to be disposed of was notified first in 2016 and later in 2018, the Centre failed to complete the process owing to delay in disposal of land.

Of the 13,000 acres of land which belonged to the 19 PSUs, around 5,400 acres or 41 per cent could not be disposed of. Any sick unit cannot be completely disposed of till its assets and liabilities become zero. Once this is done, only then a PSU can

file an application for closure before the Registrar of Companies (RoC).

Since doing away with the land was proving to be a major impediment, a committee of secretaries suggested that land assets should be alienated and transferred to the ministries under which a particular PSU falls. This will help complete other formalities of closing down sick PSUs in a time-bound manner.

At the same time, the delinked land can be disposed of in a phased way in future for the government's priority projects. This will also eliminate the possibility of a distress sale of the PSUs' land, the sources added.

Kerala Cong chief in soup on rape row

Thiruvananthapuram, Nov. 1: Kerala Congress chief Mullappally Ramachandran on Sunday found himself in the midst of a controversy for his alleged remarks about rape victims.

However, he tendered an unconditional apology after coming under fire from women leaders, including those from his party.

Addressing a protest meet against the LDF government over various issues, he said, "... it's a desperate attempt by the (Left) to dress up a prostitute and make her stand behind the curtain and narrate her tales. This will not work."

"One can understand when a woman is raped

once. But what if she repeatedly says it. A woman with self respect will either die by suicide or try not to be sexually assaulted again."

Ramachandran was criticising the LDF after the Solar scam accused Saritha Nair approached the police recently accusing former Congress Minister A.P. Anil Kumar of raping her.

The solar scam had rocked the then UDF government headed by Oommen Chandy in Kerala after reports surfaced in 2013 that some of his staff were involved in alleged duping of several people of crores of rupees by Saritha and her husband by offering solar panel solutions. —PTI

AT 11.4°C, DELHI SEES LOWEST MIN TEMPERATURE

New Delhi, Nov. 1: The national capital recorded a minimum temperature of 11.4°Celsius on Sunday morning, the lowest this season so far, according to the India Meteorological Department.

Normally, the Safdarjung Observatory, which provides representative data for the city, records a minimum of 15 to 16°C in the first week of November. The mercury dips to 11-12°C by the last week of November, it said.

Kuldeep Srivastava, the head of the regional forecasting centre of IMD, said the absence of cloud cover was the major reason for the low minimum temperature.

Clouds trap some of the outgoing infrared radiation and radiate it back downward, warming the ground. Another reason is calm winds, which allow formation of mist and fog, Srivastava said.

There hasn't been much snowfall in the hills, so cold winds from that region are yet to start affecting Delhi's weather, he added.

The month of October was the coolest in 58 years in the national capital, according to IMD. The mean minimum temperature in October this year was 17.2°C, the lowest since 1962, when it was 16.9°C, it said.

Normally, Delhi records a mean minimum temperature of 19.1°C in October. The city recorded a mean minimum temperature of 17.5°C in October 2007, according to IMD. On Thursday, Delhi recorded a minimum temperature of 12.5°C — the lowest in October in 26 years. The last time Delhi recorded such a low temperature in October was in 1994. —PTI

SHORT TAKES

MISSION TO FIX DIVERSITY GAP FOR WOMEN

London, Nov. 1: A British-Indian financial expert, recently honoured in the Queen's Birthday Honours List for her work in the field of inclusion and diversity, says she is on a mission to fix the diversity gap within the financial services sector, especially for women.

Dr Bijna Kotak Dasani, an Executive Director at global investment bank Morgan Stanley, was awarded an MBE by Queen Elizabeth II for "Services to Diversity and Inclusion in Financial Services" last month.

She now wants to make use of that platform to support women in India as she advocates the upskilling of women in the financial services workforce.

"This fix in the diversity gap needs to be a firm partnership between both men and women and the shared responsibility discussion needs to extend beyond the boardroom and into the home environment," said Dasani.

"My primary focus is on promoting women into senior roles and I will be extending mentoring capabilities to India with a focus on helping as many young women as possible thrive and progress in their career trajectories," she said.

TURKISH FM IN AZERBAIJAN AS TENSIONS MOUNT

Baku, Nov. 1: Turkey's foreign minister arrived in Azerbaijan on Sunday for talks over the breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh after Baku's arch-enemy Armenia requested security assistance from Russia. "We are once again in Baku with our brothers to renew our strong support for dear Azerbaijan and exchange on the latest developments in Nagorno-Karabakh," Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said on Twitter.

On Saturday, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan formally asked Russian President Vladimir Putin to begin consultations on security assistance, invoking the two countries' defence pact.

Pashinyan said hostilities were approaching Armenia's borders and reiterated that Turkey was backing Baku.

Moscow's defence pact with Armenia does not extend to Nagorno-Karabakh and Russia said Saturday that "necessary" help would be provided if the fighting reaches Armenian territory. At the same time, Russian foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said "concrete formats" of assistance to Armenia would be discussed.

Armenia's request for assistance from Moscow further raised fears of Russia and Turkey getting sucked into the decades-old conflict over Karabakh.

HK LAWMAKERS ARRESTED FOR LEGISLATURE RALLY

Hong Kong, Nov. 1: Seven pro-democracy Hong Kong politicians were arrested on Sunday over protests and scuffles that broke out in the legislature earlier this year, the latest prosecutions targeting Beijing's opponents in the deeply divided city.

The seven politicians — four of them sitting lawmakers — were arrested on charges of "contempt" and "interfering" with members of the city's Legislative Council in early May, police said.

The chamber passes semi-autonomous Hong Kong's laws, but only half of its seats are directly elected and a complex appointment system ensures the city's pro-Beijing establishment is all but guaranteed a handsome majority.

Scuffles and protests routinely break out, with the pro-democracy minority often resorting to filibustering, chanting and obstruction to try and halt bills they oppose. On May 8, confrontations broke out in a committee that decides which bills come up for debate.

The opposition had used months of filibustering to stop the appointment of the committee's leader. The pro-Beijing camp responded by forcibly installing one of their politicians to the committee chair.

That prompted angry scenes and protests in the chamber with lawmakers from both sides displaying placards amid boisterous heckling and physical obstruction.

Security guards and pro-Beijing lawmakers eventually dragged most of the pro-democracy politicians from the chamber and the installation of the committee chair went ahead.

US polls: Focus turns to key states

Trump, Biden, running mates, converge on Pennsylvania; Covid failure major election issue

US ELECTION IN NUMBERS

THE RACE FOR THE WHITE HOUSE CONTINUES TO BREAK NEW GROUND AND SET RECORDS IN 2020 — ON EARLY VOTING, AD SPENDING AND MORE. THESE FIGURES BREAK DOWN THE CAMPAIGN IN NUMBERS.

3 NOVEMBER

That's the date for the US presidential election, congressional races, Senate contests and several state and local races. Election Day is traditionally set for the Tuesday after the first Monday in November.

10 KEY STATES:

The presidential election is expected to come down to results in 10 states where residents tend to vacillate in their support between one party and the other.

Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Michigan, Florida, Iowa and Ohio were essential for Donald Trump's victory in 2016. Polls show that Joe Biden could disrupt Republican electoral power in Georgia, Arizona, North Carolina and Texas this year.

35+435

Besides voting for president, millions of American voters will also be choosing members of the country's 117th Congress. There are 35 Senate seats up for grabs, as are all 435 in the House of Representatives.

If Biden is elected president and Democrats take control of the Senate, the party will have its hands on all of the biggest levers of federal power in Washington for the first time since the early days of Barack Obama's presidency.

2,30,000,000

There are 230 million Americans who are eligible to vote in the presidential election, although a large portion often sit it out. But the 2020 election could see record-high turnout.

Early voting has already exceeded previous years' numbers, with many voters preferring to fill out their ballots in advance to avoid long lines on an Election Day taking place in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic. As of Friday midday nearly 84 million people had cast their ballots early.

Some 138 million Americans voted in 2016.

American democracy is executed through a unique mechanism on the national level: the Electoral College. Rather than vote directly for their presidential candidate of choice, Americans actually vote for 538 electors who then elect the president. To win the White House, a candidate must take an absolute majority of electoral votes, making 270 the magic number. The number of electoral votes granted to each state is calculated by the number of representatives they send to the House (a number which itself is based on population) plus their senators (two each).

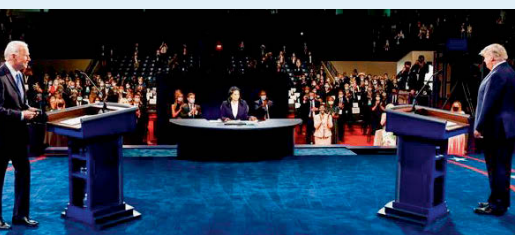
6,600,000,000

Campaigns have smashed spending records in 2020, with \$6.6 billion spent by the respective presidential candidates -- \$2 billion more than was spent during the Trump-Clinton race four years ago, according to a study by the Center for Responsive Politics.

The Biden campaign has pulled ahead on that front, flooding airwaves in key states with political ads. In total, more than \$14 billion has been spent in the run-up to November 3, with more than \$7 billion of that going toward congressional races.

IT'S THE STATE where the American Constitution was signed. Three days from now, this is the state that will save the American Dream. On November 3, we're going to win Pennsylvania. We're going to win four more years in that very beautiful White House.

— DONALD TRUMP



IN THREE DAYS, we can put an end to a presidency that has divided this nation. In three days, we can put an end to a presidency that has failed to protect this nation. In three days, we can put an end to a presidency that has fanned the flames of hate all across this nation.

— JOE BIDEN

exhausting Sunday schedule with successive rallies in Michigan, Iowa, North Carolina and Georgia before an unusual 11:00 pm rally in Florida.

On Monday, both Trump and Biden, as well as their

running mates, will converge on Pennsylvania, which Trump won in 2016 by less than one percentage point.

Amid the surge of mail-in ballots to be counted, and with legal challenges

likely, Pennsylvania is expected to be a focus of prolonged uncertainty — and anxiety — for days after the election.

Democrats have dominated in early voting, but polls show many

UNPRECEDENTED ELECTION

This is the first time a woman of colour has been nominated by a major party. It's the first time both presidential nominees are in their 70s. It is the first time a presidential election has been held in the throes of a pandemic.

The 1918 midterm election, in the midst of the Spanish flu pandemic and World War I, saw voter participation drop 20% The pandemic has sparked an unmatched shift to early voting, by mail or otherwise. President Donald Trump has seized on concern about mail voting to repeatedly suggest that the election is beset by fraud.

There are rising fears that days or weeks might pass before the outcome is known. Until 1937, Presidents were inaugurated in March, partly because it took so long to report and count the votes. The 2000 election was not resolved until Dec. 12, when the US Supreme Court made George W. Bush the winner by ruling that Florida must stop counting votes. One more pandemic-inspired departure from the norm: While Trump has campaigned furiously, jetting from town to town, until recently Biden stayed in or near his home in Delaware.

ROAD TO 270: BIDEN HAS OPTIONS, TRUMP WALKS NARROW PATH



Democratic presidential candidate former vice president Joe Biden and former President Barack Obama greet each other with an air elbow bump, at the conclusion of rally at Northwestern High School in Flint, Mich.

— AP

1. President Donald Trump and Democratic challenger Joe Biden each has a path to the 270 Electoral College votes needed to win the White House. Biden's is appreciably wider.

2. Biden is competitive in all the battleground states Trump won in 2016, and has put a handful of traditional Republican states, including Georgia and Arizona, in play.

3. Trump is putting his hopes for reelection on two of the most populous swing states (states that could vote either way) — Florida and Pennsylvania.

4. Biden can win an electoral majority by carrying the three states where Trump stunned Hillary Clinton in 2016: Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, and either Arizona and North Carolina.

5. They would give Biden 279 electoral votes, as long as he wins all the other states where Hillary won. Under this scenario, Biden would not need to win any other states Trump won in 2016.

6. The fiercest struggle among the three is in Pennsylvania. Biden has had a slight advantage in most polls, while some suggest Trump remains within striking distance.

7. If Biden loses Pennsylvania, it would require him to find 11 electoral votes elsewhere.

8. Once reliably Republican Arizona, offering exactly 11, and North Carolina, with 15, are states Trump won four years ago that are well within Biden's reach.

9. The Arizona alternative supposes that he also wins Nevada, last won by a Republican in 2004.

10. The race for North Carolina appears tighter. Barack Obama won from there in 2008 but Republicans have taken the state in 2012 and 2016.

11. Florida, the perennial battleground, offers 29 electoral votes and is, per usual, exceedingly close. Some have suggested a slight Biden advantage and Trump is campaigning hard there.

12. There's one more big prize on the table: Texas, where Democrats have struggled.

13. Trump almost certainly cannot reach 270 electoral votes without carrying Florida, where polls show a tight race.

the pandemic — was the central issue.

"Joe Biden is saying we can lock it down, like we're seeing in Europe, and it will destroy our economy," she said on CBS. "I think the American people are

saying, I can't afford for the economy to close down." Underscoring the high stakes, a record 92 million early votes have already been cast, according to the nonpartisan US Elections Project. — AFP

Suspect arrested after 2 killed in Quebec stabbing

Quebec City, Nov. 1: Police in Quebec City early on Sunday arrested a man on suspicion of killing two people and injuring five others in a stabbing rampage on Halloween near the provincial legislature in Quebec City.

They say a man in his mid-20s has been arrested in connection with the Halloween night attacks and taken to a hospital. Quebec police said in a tweet their initial information indicates the motive is personal.

Police had earlier warned residents to remain indoors as they hunted for a man dressed in medieval clothing and armed with a bladed weapon who had left "multiple victims."

Spokesman Etienne Doyon said police were first notified of the stabbings near the National Assembly shortly before 10:30 pm on Saturday.

The five injured victims were taken to a hospital, and a spokeswoman said their lives do not appear to be in danger.

Police have asked any potential witnesses to contact them. Doyon declined to offer any information about the two people who were killed, saying only that "Our thoughts are with the family of the people who died today." Carlos Godoy, who lives in the area, said police K-9 units had searched his backyard as they hunted for the suspect. — AP

UK braces for complete lockdown as Covid -19 tally crosses 1 mn mark

London, Nov. 1: The UK has crossed the grim milestone of 1 million Coronavirus cases as it prepares for a second complete lockdown in an attempt to curb the rapid spread of infections.

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson declared the latest stay-at-home rules for England, to take effect from Thursday and last until at least December 2, during a 10 Downing Street briefing on Saturday evening.

As the experts ran through the latest figures and statistics showing a surge in the numbers being infected by the deadly virus, Johnson declared that "no responsible PM can ignore the message of those figures" and must be humble in the face of nature, even as he faced a backlash from sections within his

ISRAEL REOPENS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSES AFTER SIX WEEKS

Jerusalem, Nov. 1: Israel reopened elementary school classes after a six-week shutdown on Sunday as the country eases restrictions following a nationwide lockdown that began in September.

First to fourth grade students will attend school four days a week, with up to 20 students in each class. Students and teachers are required to wear face masks in class.

Group prayers are also now allowed with up to 10

people indoors and 20 in open spaces. Hairdressers and beauty salons across the country have too been allowed to reopen.

Other businesses, including street shops, will remain closed until next Sunday. Israel imposed a second nationwide lockdown on Sept. 18 as the country saw one of the highest per capita infection rates. Israel's Health Ministry has recorded over 3,14,000 cases of the Coronavirus and 2,541 deaths. — AP

own Conservative Party and the Opposition Labour Party — the former opposed to the harsh measures and the latter

accusing him of acting too late.

"In this country alas, as across much of Europe, the virus is spreading

FRANCE MAKES NEW ARRESTS OVER ATTACK

Paris, Nov. 1: French police have made two new arrests in the probe into an attack on a church in the southern city of Nice that left three dead, as authorities seek to understand the profile of the suspected killer, judicial sources said on Sunday.

Authorities are now holding a total of six people for questioning to understand if they were linked to Tunisian Brahimi Issaoui, who prosecutors say carried out the knife rampage early Thursday morning in the Notre-Dame Basilica.

It so far remains unclear if he had outside help for the attack, which French President Emmanuel Macron has described as an act of "Islamist" terror and was the latest of a string of attacks in recent weeks in France.

The latest people to be detained are aged 25 and 63 and were arrested on Saturday at the residence of an individual detained earlier in the day, a judicial source said, asking not to be named. Three others detained earlier over suspected links to Issaoui remain in custody.

Issaoui was shot by police multiple times and is currently in a serious condition in hospital. Investigators have been unable to question him and his precise motivations remain unclear.

"It is still too early to say if there were others complicit, what his motivations were in coming to France and when this idea took root in him," another source close to the inquiry who asked not to be named said Saturday. — AFP

BEING COUNTED Around 7 million community volunteers will drive the two-month data collection

China starts census of world's largest population

Shanghai, Nov. 1: Millions of census-takers began knocking on doors across China on Sunday for a once-a-decade head count of the world's largest population that for the first time will use mobile apps to help crunch the massive numbers.

Around seven million community workers and volunteers will drive the two-month data-collection effort, visiting homes ranging from residential skyscrapers in downtown

Shanghai to remote Tibetan mountain villages.

China conducts the census every ten years to determine population growth, movement patterns and other trends, using the findings to apportion resources for education, health, transportation, labour, elderly care and other services.

The previous tally in 2010 counted 1,339,724,852 persons, an increase of 5.83 percent, or 73,899,804 people — equal to adding

more than the population of France over 10 years.

Much of the attention on this year's census — expected to take two years to fully compile — will focus on whether it indicates any population bump from China's relaxation of its former "one-child policy".

The policy was introduced in the late 1970s to slow rapid population growth amid concerns over too many mouths to feed, but was relaxed four years ago to allow two chil-

dren due to fears over China's fast-ageing society and shrinking workforce.

But the change has not yet resulted in a baby boom. The national birth rate last year was the slowest since the founding of Communist-ruled China in 1949, with many Chinese today choosing smaller families amid rising living costs.

The government estimates the 2020 census could update the population to 1.42 billion, a 5.99 percent increase. — AFP



Census workers collect information from a woman in Lianyungang, in Jiangsu province on Sunday. — AFP

DECCAN Chronicle

2 NOVEMBER 2020

A change in Washington to be a test for New Delhi

The result of the November 3 elections in the United States is likely to bring about changes in focus, emphasis, or orientation in the conduct of America's foreign and military policies, as well as trade, technology and economic outlook toward the major countries of the world in the event that President Donald Trump falls short, of which many analysts do see a possibility, and his Democratic challenger and former vice-president Joe Biden makes it to the White House.

But in the event of America's leader receiving a fresh endorsement, in India we would do well to look for points of emphasis rather than change in direction. Trade relations between the two countries need to look better if the comprehensive global strategic partnership between the two countries is not to remain confined to India picking up American military hardware off the shelf. If India's exports of goods and services are not permitted to find a stable footing in the US market, we may just begin to look like a client state.

For all the hoopla we saw on the supposedly ascendant Narendra Modi-Donald Trump personal chemistry — the main basis on which a section of traditionally Democratic voting Indian origin voters in the US have reportedly switched to Mr Trump's corner, especially the chauvinistic "Hindu Indian" outfits — on the trade and economy side India has failed to make much headway in the US market while giving US goods, services and investments a much easier ride here.

Perhaps the Modi government's efforts do not appear to have been forceful enough, or single-minded and purposeful, in leveraging the Indian diaspora in a strategic way in this direction. Nor has New Delhi played up this country's natural geo-strategic advantages, although Mr Trump has persisted with his predecessor Barack Obama's "pivot to Asia" approach, which has seen the shift of America's strategic and military focus to the Far East.

In the event of a Trump victory, these have to be worked on while working to strengthen India's position in relation to a possibly uncertain or dangerous situation materialising in Afghanistan. Of course, the current Republican administration has been more understanding of India in this dynamic and in relation to the Pakistan theatre more broadly than a Democratic administration might have been, looking at the historical record.

Should Mr Biden prevail, and this seems the likelier possibility at this juncture, Indian diplomacy may have to tidy up. The ideological strain that he represents is quite different from that of the Indian leader and his party who appear to be near soul mates of Mr Trump on the ideological side.

A Democratic win in America will please the Western world greatly but for India it is likely to be more bittersweet. At the civil society level, constituencies that are critical of the majoritarian steamrolling on view today will have something to be glad about. On the important matter of Iran, with which we ought to be good friends, a Biden victory can be more facilitating although the Trump administration has not been as obstructive as may have been expected.

In the end, if we are sensible, we can do business with a Republican or a Democrat in the White House provided we know how to remain united internally and where to pitch ourselves in the world.

The first and best Bond

A man's man, that's how his co-stars remember him. As 007, no doubt, he had had many a close shave, but the death of the legendary Sean Connery at the ripe old age of 90 finally brings the curtain down on the first and best James Bond ever to have lit up the big screen. A tall and muscular bodybuilder, footballer and streetfighter, the then-working-class Connery's rugged charisma contributed to the barely controlled menace he brought to the character of the M16 spy which, along with a bit of method acting and some well-coached mannerisms, managed to make over the British secret agent's movie persona into something far more vital and immediate than what his creator Ian Fleming had written. It ended up securing a global appeal for Fleming's originally lanky and blue-eyed English hero.

The charismatic Scottish actor starred in seven Bond films, beginning with *Dr No* (1962) and returning twice for encores with *Diamonds are Forever* (1971) and *Never Say, Never Again* (1983), the title of the last being contributed by his wife, Micheline Roquebrune, who has survived him. He wore his Scottish nationalism as a tattoo just under his sleeve and rarely changed his accent. Connery was also a character artiste and won award — one Oscar, two Bafta and three Golden Globes — and acclaim for many more memorable films, *The Untouchables*, *The Name of the Rose*, *The Hunt for Red October* and *Indiana Jones and The Last Crusade* among them. *Murder on the Orient Express* and *The Man Who Would be King* were but two of his best-loved films, and he was finally knighted for his services to film and drama in 2000.

Globalisation, technology and a change in sensibilities have all conspired today to strike the last nail in the coffin of the larger-than-life action hero. There is no more space for male fantasy, no new civilisations left to explore. The last bastion has been conquered. Cinema, too, has, meanwhile, evolved, from the exuberant adventures of yore, turning realist and/or experimental.

To that effect, Connery's death spells the end of an era. The world is shaken, not stirred by its demise.

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Subhani



TMC realpolitik, BJP & future of 'Gorkhaland'

Shikha Mukerjee

Playing the politics of divisiveness by raising expectations that indeed a "permanent political solution" will be found on the demand for a separate "Gorkhaland", carved out of West Bengal, to fulfil aspirations for a "Bas Bhoomi", or homeland, or a heartland all Nepali-speaking Indian citizens can call their own, is a signal that the West Bengal Assembly polls, due before May 2021, will be fiercely competitive. Realpolitik is back in the chronically volatile politics of Darjeeling.

Unlike in the past, when the demand for a separate state was always initiated by Darjeeling's leaders to muster the masses and warn off ambitious challengers, this time the spark was lit by the October 7 invitation to talks to "discuss issues related to Gorkhaland" by the Union home ministry. The ambiguity was deliberate: the use of "Gorkhaland" to describe the political space of the Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong subdivisions and the Gorkha-dominated areas in Siliguri, Jalpaiguri, Naxalbari was a signal that the BJP and its government in New Delhi were preparing to use fissiparous politics to outflank Mamata Banerjee.

In retaliation, Ms Banerjee rescued absconding Gorkha Janamukti Morcha leader Bimal Gurung and his aide Roshan Giri, from oblivion and struck a deal later in October, just before Durga Puja. This ended the Gurung-led Gorkha Janamukti Morcha's 2016 alliance with the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance and signalled the champion's return to the centrestage of Darjeeling politics and a revival of its entente with the Trinamul Congress. It also ended the left the

GJM's support gave to the BJP and helped it win the Darjeeling Assembly seat in the 2019 bypolls, and more significantly delivered the parliamentary seat to an outsider, though a Gorkha, Raju Bista from Manipur.

Mr Gurung's return is effectively his reinstallation, thanks to Ms Banerjee, as leader of the GJM in Darjeeling. It obviously destabilises, if not unseats, the leadership of Binay Tamang, who stepped in when Mr Gurung fled. It may trigger a period of ugly infighting in the GJM. It may also prove a dud card, if Mr Gurung's popularity dips as a result of his deal with Ms Banerjee's TMC as the price for his return to the heartland of Gorkha politics.

His return does other things, too. It puts a spoke in Meghalaya CM Conrad Sangma's National Peoples Party's expansionist plans and his ambitions as a champion of a "Bas Bhoomi" or homeland for all Nepali-speaking Indian citizens, otherwise identified as "Gorkhas," an omnibus description that includes the multiplicity of communities who are demanding Schedule Tribe status as part of a permanent political solution. As the first Northeast party to be recognised as a national party by the Election Commission, the NPP's aspirations to lead in places other than Meghalaya could suffer a setback with Mr Gurung's resurfacing. The NPP's alliance with the BJP as part of the NDA also positions it as a proxy for the BJP. Without a base in Darjeeling, the NPP's expansionist plans would automatically serve as an alternative space for local leaders disaffected with the parties to which they currently belong. There are indications

that Mr Gurung's return will be perceived by many as an opportunistic sell-out to the West Bengal government and a move that, even if temporarily, irretrievably pushes the demand for separate statehood deeper into a pit. Whether that is the verdict of the masses, who till his re-emergence hailed him as a leader, is open to speculation.

The anticipation that there will be widespread disaffection because he has teamed up with the TMC could be, however, offset if New Delhi decides to hound him as a wanted person in a UAPA case. It could also be that a maturing electorate, having experienced the vicissitudes that unsatisfactory bargaining with the government in West Bengal and in New Delhi have produced on the Gorkhaland issue, will make choices that could be surprising. There could be a surge of support for the BJP, so that there is, theoretically, a better chance of striking a deal on a "Bas Bhoomi", or territorial space that would be a "heartland" for all Gorkhas. Or a mature electorate may be as enamoured of Mr Gurung, as the Bihar electorate seems to be of Lalu Prasad Yadav's heir Tejashwi, despite his legacy of corruption, prosecution and a long jail term.

The irreconcilable minimum in the search for a permanent political solution is a separate state, however many intermediate entities are created that stop short of conceding the ultimate goal of a movement that has gone through several stages of evolution over the past four decades. It is a

The othering of the Bengali in West Bengal for the Gorkha cause would probably destroy all parties that facilitated it. Knowing this, the Trinamul Congress has stepped forward regardless of what its critics make of it.

demand that chills political leaders of parties with roots in West Bengal's 22 other districts, because the cost of conceding to the demand for a separate state of Gorkhaland would be an effective division of the state and dangerously risky because partition is an idea that is intensely subjective for millions of Bengalis, who went through the pain of separation in 1947. The othering of the Bengali in West Bengal for the Gorkha cause would probably destroy all the parties that facilitated it.

Knowing this, the Trinamul Congress has stepped forward, regardless of what its critics make of it for ignoring the criminal charges against Mr Gurung. The BJP may have attacked Mr Banerjee over her ruthless realpolitik, but it too knows that its promises of a permanent political solution must stop short of "any split in Bengal", as minister of state for home G. Kishan Reddy had declared at the October 7 meeting.

The present phase of politics over Gorkhaland and the return of Bimal Gurung are not about finding a permanent political solution acceptable to all sides in the issue. The politics is over the number of seats where voters who are Nepali-speaking Indian citizens in West Bengal could significantly influence outcomes. By one estimate, there are 16 seats across North Bengal in Jalpaiguri, Alipurduar and Cooch Behar districts as well as in and around Siliguri where the pockets of Nepali voters could be the difference between a win and a loss. In 2019, of the BJP's tally of 18 Lok Sabha seats, seven were from North Bengal, where Gorkha voters have a significant impact. Mr Gurung's return under the aegis of Mamata Banerjee unsettles the BJP's gains of 2019 and could give the Trinamul Congress a return that is worth the mud that the Opposition slings at it for doing so.

Shikha Mukerjee is a senior journalist in Kolkata

LETTERS

POLAVARAM

Polavaram is a national project (CM seeks PM nod on Polavaram rate, DC, Nov. 7). Further delay will result in additional cost escalation, harming national interests. Inflation, time overrun, new GST, design alignment, last but not the least the Covid pandemic took their toll. Instead of blame game, the best course of action is to adhere to the timeline and complete the project.

Dr C. Ghanshyam
Visakhapatnam

PATEL MEMORY

The hat worn by the PM to salute Sardar Patel was befitting the occasion and also enhanced the stature of the PM. Kudos to his dress-code manager.

K. Nehru Patnaik
Visakhapatnam

YSRC SCHEMES

The socio-economic welfare schemes launched by the YSRC government are benefiting the poor no doubt. However, in the process is the government not guilty of making these sections wholly dependent on it? It is said that during the past 16 months, the new government has raised ₹80,000 crore so far to fund them. What the poor actually need is a steady monthly income through employment even if it is a daily wage.

Govardhana Myneedu
Vijayawada

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

Polish minister run over at Karachi airport

KARACHI, November 1 A Pakistani shouting "death to Communists" drove a baggage truck into an airport reception line today for Polish President Marian Spychalski, knocking him down and killing his Deputy Foreign Minister Zygfryd Wolniak and three others.

Police identified the three others killed as the Deputy Director of Pakistani Intelligence, a Government press photographer and the photo editor of Associated Press of Pakistan. Eight others were injured, none seriously, police sources said.

The incident came as President Spychalski, who had just arrived from Poland for a five-day visit was moving down the reception.

Kishwar Desai
London Diary



Why Covid stress affects the young; UK gets ready for a digital Diwali

Since there has been very little to cheer about during the pandemic — here is something a little uplifting. Hopefully enough to make our desi hearts beat faster: we are going to have new statues in Leicester Square, of Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol from *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* on the 25th anniversary of its release. Of course, the movie itself was a globe trotting romance, and Leicester Square was part of it. So Kajol and SRK will join Paddington Bear, Harry Potter and Mary Poppins in 'Scenes in the Square'. These statues will be lit up every evening — and will no doubt push the Indian community to troop down to the square and pose for selfies with the stars.

The Director of Destination Marketing at Heart of London Business Alliance, Mark Williams, said in a statement: "It's fantastic to be adding such titans of international cinema to our trail as Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol. This statue is a fitting tribute to the global popularity of Bollywood and the cultural bridges that cinema can help

build, and we're in no doubt it will attract fans from all around the world."

The weather is definitely turning wintry. Even on the Covid front, things are getting worse rather than better. The second attack of the infection is now here to stay. There is a deep division across the country on how to handle it. There is no nationwide circuit breaker (a short total lockdown) that many want imposed. A more complicated system like a traffic light signal has been worked out — and only some parts of the country are in lockdown, as in the North. London has no lockdown, but just a few rules such as restrictions on pubs, which have to close early and no more than six people meeting at once. Or it may be only two. It is very difficult to know what the rules are as they keep changing! Better to just stay at home and go through the albums remembering what it was like to meet people!

At this rate, we are gearing up for a digital Diwali. The restrictions on

people getting together from different households means some relatives will be left out, and this will definitely impact our relationships. Who do you invite and who do you leave out? Things may not improve by winter and it promises to be a blue Christmas... Fortunately the Scottish government has ruled that Santa Claus does an 'essential' job so he is allowed to go down chimneys and deliver Christmas presents to children. The "six or less" rule does not apply to him. The reindeers must be Covid-free of course!

School-meals have now raised a political storm. There are many children here from poor families who depend on these free meals. (Yes, even in the UK!) Marcus Rashford a young talented football player who plays for Manchester United had persuaded the government that the scheme for free lunches be continued during the holidays. He was reflecting on his hard childhood. This was done (or so we thought). He even got an honour from the Queen for his bril-

liant suggestion. Alas, the government is refusing to continue the free meals during half term. But the community has risen to the challenge. Local councils are paying up and restaurants and hotels are chipping in. McDonalds have donated a million Macs to feed these marginalised children. Britain has a big heart!

With online viewing an essential part of our survival kit, BBC has revived their very popular show, *Strictly Come Dancing*. This is where serious dancers pair up and get judged for executing some really complicated routines. The audience also votes by e-mail or phone to select the winners. The show has offered a great revival to the sagging careers of retired politicians and journalists and made their popularity soar: Ed Balls who was a Cabinet minister under the Labour government and an economist had a successful stint going through many rounds. Now Jacque Smith (Home Secretary in the Tony Blair government) is trying her luck. At

least we know that there is life after politics and it is called dance!

Mental health has become a big problem during the pandemic as people find staying at home very tough. It has specially impacted the youth who have found that their school, college and job participation has fallen apart. The British Asian Trust has launched an emergency appeal to help the sufferers of mental health problems. Rakesh Chauhan has composed a music video Neelam's Song — shown on YouTube, where through some very Indian-style dance and song the problems of mental health have been flagged. Prime Minister Boris Johnson has praised Rakesh for his 'tremendous efforts'. But we need to do more for all age groups. Covid stress will stay on for a long time — and there is no vaccine against it.

Kishwar Desai is an award-winning author. Her latest book, The Longest Kiss: The Life and Times of Devika Rani, will be out by November.

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	39,614.07	-0.34
Nifty 50	11642.40	-0.24
S&P 500*	3,269.96	-1.21
Dollar (₹)	74.10	98.9
Pound Sterling (₹)	96.27	-0.20
Euro (₹)	86.94	-0.14
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	50,700▲418	0.83
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	37.35	-0.30
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.881	0.023
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.859	0.022

As of Friday/Saturday

FPIs turn net buyers, invest ₹22,033 cr in Oct.

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) turned net buyers in October in Indian markets by putting in Rs 22,033 crore. In September, FPIs were net sellers at Rs 3,419 crore. As per depositories data, overseas investors invested a net Rs 19,541 crore into Indian equities and Rs 2,492 crore into debt during October 1-30. Total investment on a net basis stood at Rs 22,033 crore in October.

SpiceJet plans to expand seaplane services



Buoyed by the response to the Ahmedabad-Statue of Unity seaplane service, SpiceJet said it plans to start a similar service connecting Surat in south Gujarat with the 182-metre tall statue near Kevadiya. Other routes under consideration for the seaplane service are Port Blair to Havelock, Delhi to Haridwar, Delhi to Rishikesh and Naini lake, Udaipur, Dal lake, Leh and Kerala backwaters, Spicejet CMD Ajay Singh said.

Trading in green certificates may resume on Nov. 25

The trading of renewable energy certificates (RECs) is likely to be resumed after a gap of four months on November 25, as electricity tribunal APTEL has completed all hearings and may issue the final judgement soon on the REC pricing issue. Trading of RECs or green certificates is done on the last Wednesday of every month on the Indian Energy Exchange (IEX) and the Power Exchange India (PXIL).

Settlement time for illiquid stock options extended

The Sebi has extended till December 31 the one-time settlement scheme for entities that executed reversal of trades in the stock options segment of the BSE during 2014 and 2015. The settlement scheme, introduced by the regulator in July, commenced on August 1, 2020 and was supposed to end on October 31. As per the notice issued by Sebi in July, erring entities will be liable for action.



October shakes off the Covid blues

■ Companies beef up dealer inventories

Car-makers ring in festive cheers

MICHAEL GONSALVES
PUNE, NOV. 1

Major car-makers in India, the world's fourth biggest automobile market, have rung in festive cheer, with Maruti Suzuki, India's biggest carmaker, Hyundai, the second largest, Mahindra, Toyota Kirloskar Motor, Honda Cars, and MG Motor reporting higher sales in October to cash in on the festive demand for cars.

Auto-makers beefed up their dealer inventories across the country last month in anticipation of festive demand. They consider factory-gate dispatches of passenger vehicles to the dealerships as sales.

But the ground reality would be known only when retail sales are made available later this month by dealers' association, Fada.

Sales at Maruti Suzuki jumped 17.6 per cent at 1,63,656 units in October. Its six-car pack of the Wagon R, Swift, Celerio, Ignis, Baleno and Dzire cumulatively added 95,067 units, up 26.6 per cent compared with last year.

Hyundai, the Korean car maker, reported a 13.2 per cent rise in sales last month at 56,605 units.

"With the advent of the festive season, Hyundai shares the spirit of happiness and celebration with our customers through our



super-performer brands-all new Creta, Verna, Venue, Aura, and Nios, achieving landmark sales of 56,605 units in October 2020," Tarun Garg, director (sales, marketing & service) at HMLL, said.

The October sales have a positive tone for overall business environment, he pointed out.

Similarly sales at Mahindra and Mahindra also increased 1 per cent at 18,622 units, up from 18,460 units it sold last year.

"For Mahindra, the festive season has started on a positive note with deliveries and bookings being higher than last year," Veejay Nakra, CEO, auto-motive division at M&M, said.

Sales at Toyota Kirloskar Motor also grew 4.27 per cent at 12,373 units last month, up from 11,866 units it sold last year.

"October has been our best month so far since March 2020. The festive

season has proved to be bullish as we witness demand surging, month on month. This has been true of our retails too as order flow has been smooth, from the very beginning," Naveen Soni, senior vice president, sales & service at TKM, said.

Sales at Honda Cars rose 8.3 per cent at 10,836 units in October against 10,010 units in corresponding month last year.

"We have seen positive sales momentum in line with market sentiment and our October results have been as per our plan. The festive buying picked up from Navratri in mid-October and we are focusing on maximising deliveries during this period," Rajesh Goel, senior vice president and director, marketing & sales at Honda Cars India, said.

He expects this demand to continue through Diwali.

Sales at MG Motor India grew 6 per cent at 3,750 units last month. "With festive demand, we have registered 48 per cent growth vis-a-vis last month. We expect continued traction because of Diwali," Rakesh Sidana, director-sales at MG Motor India, said.

Sales at Hero MotoCorp, India's biggest motorcycle-maker, jumped 35 per cent as it sold a record 8.06 lakh two-wheelers last month.

Diesel, petrol sales cross pre-March levels

NIDHI VERMA
NEW DELHI, NOV. 1

India's diesel consumption in October rose 6.6 per cent from a year earlier, the first such increase since Covid-19 restrictions were imposed in late March, preliminary data showed on Sunday, signalling a pick-up in industrial activity.

Diesel sales by the country's three state fuel retailers totalled 6.17 million tonnes in October, according to provisional data compiled by Indian Oil Corp, the country's biggest refiner and fuel retailer.

Month-on-month, sales of diesel, which account for about two-fifths of India's fuel demand, rose 27.5 per cent from September.

Rising diesel sales in the world's third-biggest oil consumer and



importer should help refiners, who had to cut crude-processing runs during the coronavirus crisis.

IOC hopes to operate refineries at full capacity in a couple of months, up from 95 per cent now, as local fuel demand is rising, company chairman S.M. Vaidya said on Friday.

Petrol sales in October rose above pre-pandemic levels for a second month in a row. Petrol sales rose 4 per cent from a year earlier to about 2.4 mil-

lion tonnes, about 8.6 per cent higher than September, the data showed.

State companies IOC, Hindustan Petroleum Corp and Bharat Petroleum Corp own about 90 per cent of the country's retail fuel outlets.

State retailers sold 3.8 per cent more cooking gas in October than a year ago, at about 2.44 million tonnes, while jet fuel sales halved to 328,000 tonnes.

— Reuters

Power consumption increases 13% YoY

K K SHANKAR
NEW DELHI, NOV. 1

India's power consumption grew 13.38 per cent to 110.94 billion units (BU) in October this year, driven by buoyancy in industrial and commercial activities.

Electricity consumption was recorded at 97.84 BU in October 2019, showed the power ministry data.

Experts earlier last month had exuded confidence that the power consumption would grow by

double digits in October on the basis of the extrapolation of half-month data.

The power consumption had grown 11.45 per cent to 55.37 BU during October 1 to 15, against 49.67 BU, in the corresponding period a year ago.

A double-digit growth in power consumption in October, experts said, gives sufficient indication that commercial and industrial demand has perked up, with the easing of lockdown restrictions.

The government had imposed nationwide lockdown on March 25.

Power consumption started declining from March and the trend continued for six months till August this year.

Power consumption on year-on-year basis declined 8.7 per cent in March, 23.2 per cent in April, 14.9 per cent in May, 10.9 per cent in June, 3.7 per cent in July and 1.7 per cent in August.

— PTI

Hotels await loan restructuring

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, NOV. 1

Despite a bank credit exposure of over Rs 48,000 crore, none of the hospitality companies have got their loan restructured yet.

According to the industry body of hoteliers, many companies had evinced interest in getting their loans restructured. But the stringent criteria laid down by the Kamath committee have made things tougher for them.

As per RBI data, tourism, hotels and restaurants have a total bank credit exposure of Rs 48,378 crore as of September-end.

"The eligibility conditions suggested by the K. V. Kamath Committee are found to be more stringent than what the banks used to have earlier, thus, making the entire restructuring process a futile exercise. Further, companies are considered as defaulters. We are just victims of the pandemic and lockdown," said Pradeep Shetty, honorary secretary of the Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India.



The Kamath committee has set sector-specific benchmarks on five parameters like total outside liabilities/ adjusted tangible net worth, total debt/Ebitda, current ratio, debt service coverage ratio and average debt service coverage ratio.

The total debt/ Ebitda has been prescribed to be less than or equal to 5. According to the FHRAI, during the pre-covid period, the ratio was more than 6. In order to meet the said parameter, hotels need to achieve higher financial metrics than the pre-covid by 2022, which is not possible and practically defeats the whole purpose of providing the said relief.

Further, total outside liabilities/adjusted tangible net worth should be less than or equal to 4. The capital investment (land/building/plant and

machinery) in hotels are reflected at their historical cost in the accounting books whereas the intrinsic market value of such assets is almost 2-3 times of the historical book value of that asset. Many hotel companies are unable to meet this criterion.

The committee also prescribed the current ratio to be greater than or equal to 1. In the hospitality industry, this ratio generally is in the average range of 0.75.

According to the association, banks are not keen on restructuring the loan amount of the hospitality sector, as they have to make a provision of 10 per cent. Moreover, the industry is finding it difficult to mobilise working capital loans since the financial institutions have marked the industry in the negative list.

NBFCs seek extension of ₹3L crore MSME scheme

FC BANKING BUREAU
MUMBAI, NOV. 1

The Finance Industry Development Council (FIDC), a representative body of non-banking finance companies, has written to the government requesting to extend the operation of the Rs 3-lakh crore Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) by another two months, that is to allow guarantee cover on eligible loans sanctioned till December 31, 2020, besides also requesting that the time to complete disbursement of such loans be till March 31, 2021.

"The scheme is officially closing today in terms of loan sanctions. We understand from our members that estimated 4 lakh to 5 lakh customers are still being contacted by them and educated on the benefits of the scheme, and the process of getting the necessary documentation done may take some more time. You may recall that categories of borrowers such as individuals and societies were included in the scheme a few weeks later and hence the time



available to cover all eligible customers was short," said FIDC in a letter on Saturday.

"In the best interest of these small and marginal borrowers, we request the government of India to kindly extend the operation of the ECLGS scheme by another two months i.e., allow guarantee cover on eligible loans sanctioned till December 31, 2020 and also request that the time to complete disbursement of such loans till March 31, 2021. Of course, the guarantees provided under the scheme would be subject to the limit of Rs 3,00,000 crore as announced earlier," said FIDC.

Under the Rs 3 lakh crore scheme, banks have sanctioned Rs 1.88 lakh crore, out of which Rs 1.36 lakh crore were disbursed to Rs

27 lakh business units till October 5. The sanctioned amount is only 63 per cent of the targeted Rs 3 lakh crore for stressed MSMEs, while disbursements were at 45.38 per cent of the total amount.

Credit growth of scheduled commercial banks continues to remain slow despite availability of liquidity in the banking system and has been mainly supported by disbursements in ECLGS from June to September 2020.

The overall bank credit growth in September also continued to decline and was the lowest in the last three years. The retail segment registered a growth of 9.2 per cent in September 2020 on year-on-year basis and accounted for 28.2 per cent share of the total credit during the period as compared to 27.3 per cent during the period one year ago. As of September 2020, services segment outstanding credit grew by 9.1 per cent followed by agriculture & allied segment (growth of 5.9 per cent). Industrial segment registered a nil growth during the same period.

Elections, earnings, Covid to keep stocks volatile

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, NOV. 1

The stock market is poised for more volatility ahead, as the US elections outcome after the November 3 voting will be in focus globally. The second wave of Covid-19 infections has intensified in many countries, forcing lockdown till December in several European nations like Germany, France, Belgium, Czech Republic, Ireland and the UK; in the US too fresh cases have risen to above 1 lakh daily.

"Nearly eight months after the WHO first declared Covid-19 a global pandemic, the virus continues to blaze across the world. The current resurgence of Covid-19 in countries like France, which were thought to have successfully curbed the outbreak, highlights the fact that the global economy is still far from being stable," law firm Nishith Desai Associates observed.

Reliance Industries and ICICI Bank earnings and Bihar assembly elections are also going to impact market movement. The Bihar results will be announced next week. Both US and Bihar elections are unpredictable so far.

Considering index heavyweight Reliance Industries' not so good second quarter performance in oil & gas as well as retail businesses, the stock may prove a drag on the benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty-50. However, stellar second quarter result by another heavy weight ICICI Bank will neutralise the impact to some extent.

The market will remain under pressure as political developments related to the US election will act as an overhang amidst higher volatility. The Supreme court is expected to pass its verdict next week on the much awaited moratorium case of the Banking sector. Indian markets are awaiting major economic data points such as PMI, banking business data, Vinod Nair, head of research, Geojit Financial Services said.



SHORT TAKES

Harris, Pucovski in 486-run stand

Sydney: Will Pucovski and Marcus Harris smashed double centuries to fire a message to Australia coach Justin Langer in setting a new record Sunday for the biggest partnership in Sheffield Shield history. The pair shared in a massive 486-run opening stand for Victoria against South Australia, surpassing the previous mark of 464 set by Steve and Mark Waugh for New South Wales in 1990.

Harris, who has not played a Test since being dropped following the 2019 Ashes against England, finally fell for 239, caught behind off the bowling of Wes Agar. It left Pucovski in the middle and he remained unbeaten on 255 when captain Peter Handscomb declared at 564 for 3. Their exploits will cause incumbent Test openers Joe Burns and David Warner to sit up and take notice, with Langer's squad for an upcoming four-Test home series against India yet to be announced.

Pucovski, one of Australia's brightest prospects, has been on the cusp of Test selection for the past two summers, but has battled mental health problems. He was in the national set-up for Tests last summer against Sri Lanka, but was overlooked. — *AFP*

Jagan Mohan handball prez

Hyderabad: Telangana's Jagan Mohan Rao Arshnapally has been unanimously elected president of the Handball Federation of India. He is the first Telangana man to become the president of a national sports federation.

Other members of the HFI who were elected are Dr Anandeswar Pandey, Dr Pradip Kumar Balamchu (senior vice-presidents), Padmasri Saptal, Amal Narayan Patowani, Reena Saveen (vice-presidents), Preet Singh Saluria (general secretary), Tejraj Singh, Brizkumar Sharma, N. K. Sharma, Veena Shekhar (joint secretaries), and Vinay Kumar Singh (treasurer).

"I am truly grateful to all the 29 State associations for electing me as HFI president unanimously. I swear to work hard for the development of handball in the country," Jagan said in a statement.

Badminton official Sudhakar honoured

Hyderabad: Sudhakar Vemuri, international badminton umpire and referee, is among the five who have been conferred awards by the Dr Ramineni Foundation in the USA. Sudhakar is the only Asian to have officiated at three consecutive Olympics — Barcelona 1992, Atlanta 1996 and Sydney 2000. He is also the first Asian to be awarded the BWF Distinguished Service Award (the highest award for badminton technical officials in the world) in 2015. The award is presented in recognition of long and/or distinguished and exemplary service to badminton at the international level for at least 15 years.

National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) chairman Govinda Raju Chintala and actor Sonu Sood are among the five Dr Ramineni Foundation awardees. Sonu has been recognised for his humanitarian service during the Covid pandemic with a special award.

The foundation, established in Cincinnati (Ohio, USA) by Dr Ramineni Ayyanna Chowdary, has been honouring achievers since 1999.

Live on TV

CRICKET

IPL: Delhi Capitals vs Royal Challengers Bangalore from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

TENNIS

ATP Paris Masters: Day 1 action from 3.30 pm on Sony Six

FOOTBALL

English Premier League: Fulham vs West Brom Albion from 11 pm; Leeds United vs Leicester City from 1.30 am (Tuesday) on Star Sports Select 2

Italian League: Verona vs Benevento from 1.15 am (Tuesday) on Sony Ten 2

WWE

Raw: Bouts from 6.30 am (Tuesday) on Sony Ten 1

Dhoni & Co end on high

CSK finish season with 9-wicket win, KXIP too knocked out

Abu Dhabi, Nov. 1: Chennai Super Kings crushed Kings XI Punjab by nine wickets to end their worst-ever IPL season here on Sunday on a positive note, with Ruturaj Gaikwad's third successive half-century providing hope for a bright future.

The result also cut short KXIP's campaign in the 13th season of the lucrative event. KXIP needed a win in their final league game to remain in contention for the play-offs besides depending on other results. But CSK had other ideas.

Bringing his big-hitting prowess to the fore, Deepak Hooda lifted a floundering KXIP to 153 for six with a counterattacking 30-ball 62 after being invited to bat.

In reply, the returning Faf du Plessis (48) provided CSK the impetus at the top with young Gaikwad playing second fiddle.

The seasoned South African hit four boundaries and two sixes in a first-wicket stand of 82 with Gaikwad in just under 10 overs.

As he looked to put the match beyond KXIP's grasp, du Plessis got out after going for a premeditated scoop off Chris Jordan, who, smartly took the pace off the ball.

The needless shot, notwithstanding, CSK never looked in trouble with the duo of Gaikwad and Ambati Rayudu taking them home with seven balls to spare.

Gaikwad remained not

SCORECARD

Kings XI Punjab: K.L. Rahul b Lungi Ngidi 29, M. Agarwal b Lungi Ngidi 26, C. Gayle lbw Tahir 12, N. Pooran c Dhoni b Thakur 2, M. Singh b Jadeja 14, D. Hooda (not out) 62, J. Neesham c Ruturaj Gaikwad b Lungi Ngidi 23, C. Jordan batting 4. Extras (b-1, w-1) 2. **Total (for 6 wickets, in 20 overs) 153.**

FoW: 1-48, 2-62, 3-68, 4-72, 5-108, 6-113

Bowling: Chahar 3-0-30-0, Curran 2-0-15-0, Thakur 4-0-27-1, Ngidi 4-0-39-3, Tahir 4-0-24-1, Jadeja 3-0-17-1.

Chennai Super Kings: Ruturaj Gaikwad (not out) 62, Faf du Plessis c Rahul b Jordan 48, Ambati Rayudu (not out) 30. Extras (lb-7, w-7) 14. **Total (for 1 wkt, in 18.5 overs) 154.**

FoW: 1-82

Bowling: Jimmy Neesham 3-0-26-0, Mohammed Shami 4-0-29-0, Chris Jordan 3-0-31-1, Ravi Bishnoi 4-0-39-0, Murugan Ashwin 4-0-17-0, Chris Gayle 0.5-0-5-0.

out on 62 off 49 balls after striking six boundaries and a six, while Rayudu made a run-a-ball 30.

Earlier, Hooda smashed four sixes and three fours during his entertaining stay in the middle.

Thanks to Hooda, KXIP managed 40 runs in the last three overs after CSK, opting to field, choked their middle-order for runs.

— *PTI*



Ruturaj Gaikwad of Chennai Super Kings raises his bat after scoring a fifty against Kings XI Punjab in an Indian Premier League match at the Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi on Sunday. — *BCCI*

RCB, DC aim to arrest slide

Abu Dhabi, Nov. 1: Delhi Capitals and Royal Challengers Bangalore are both expected to go all out against each other on Monday to arrest their rapid slide in the IPL and, more importantly, secure a top-two finish in the points table.

DC and RCB go into the virtual quarterfinal, having lost four and three games on the trot respectively, showing that things can change rather quickly in the highly-competitive IPL.

At stake is a top-two finish which provides a couple of attempts to make it to the final. The loser of Monday's game could still end up making the play-offs but it will be then at the mercy of other teams.

DC, who were bossing most teams in the first half of the tournament, has had a dramatic fall from grace with their last win coming two weeks ago. Their batsmen have come a cropper since then and the bowling doesn't look as potent as it was in the first half.



Shikhar Dhawan

Problems started with DC unable to find a stable combination at the openers' slot. Both Prithvi Shaw and Ajinkya Rahane have been paired up with Shikhar Dhawan but either of them has not provided the much needed consistency.

In fact, Dhawan, who was flying high with back-to-back hundreds,

has managed 0, 0, 6 in the last three games.

RCB too are smarting from a string of losses, most recently against Sunrisers Hyderabad on Saturday. The three losses on the trot has reignited the debate on the team's dependency on its star players — Virat Kohli and AB de Villiers.

— *PTI*

NUMBERS GAME

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL:

- Matches: 24
- Bangalore: 13
- Delhi: 9
- Tied: 1
- No Result: 1 (Royal Challengers Bangalore beat Delhi Capitals in Super Over after match ended in a tie)

MEETING IN 2019

- DC beat RCB by 4 wickets in Bangalore.
- DC beat RCB by 16 runs in Delhi.

MEETING IN 2020

- Delhi Capitals beat Royal Challengers Bangalore by 59 runs in Dubai.

FOR THE RECORD

- Yuzvendra Chahal with 20 wickets in 13 innings of as many matches, is the highest wicket taker for RCB in this IPL
- Shikhar Dhawan with 471 runs in 13 innings of as many matches is the second highest run-getter in this IPL. He received two successive ducks in last two matches.

— *S. PERVEZ KAISER*

IPL PLAY-OFF IS A TOURNAMENT IN ITSELF FOR ROHIT

Abu Dhabi, Nov. 1: His first target accomplished, defending champions Mumbai Indians skipper Rohit Sharma has not set his sights on the IPL play-offs, which he considers as a "small little tournament".

MI (18 points from 13 games) has ensured a top-two finish in the IPL league table with a clinical nine-wicket win over Delhi Capitals on Saturday and will take on Sunrisers Hyderabad in their final game on Tuesday in Sharjah.

"Now that we know we have qualified, it's a good achievement. All the hard work that we did before we came here and also when we came here, it all paid off.

"So, one hurdle which is being crossed, another small little tournament to play for us and before that we still got one more game against SRH," Rohit said in a video posted on MI's official Twitter page.

— *PTI*

MSD confirms he will be back in '21

Abu Dhabi, Nov. 1: Mahendra Singh Dhoni will be back in the IPL next year. The World Cup-winning captain confirmed it himself at the toss of Chennai Super Kings' final game of the season here on Sunday.

Dhoni made the customary toss tradition a memorable one for his countless fans by confirming that he will be back in the yellow jersey next season.

"Definitely not," said Dhoni when asked by former New Zealand pacer Danny Morrison if the game against Kings XI Punjab was his last for CSK.

As expected, his terse response sent social media into a frenz.

However, the 39-year-old Dhoni was expected to play the IPL for at least two seasons after announcing his international retirement on August 15 after the T20 World Cup, to he held in Australia in October-November, was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dhoni's final India appearance happened to be the 2019 World Cup semifinal against New Zealand.

CSK have had their worst season ever this year and are set to finish at the bottom of the table. It is the first time that the three-



Mahendra Singh Dhoni

time champions have not made the play-offs, showing their remarkable consistency over the years.

The IPL next year is scheduled to be held in the usual April-May window but the dates could change due to the evolving COVID-19 situation around the world. — *PTI*

Knights stay in play-offs mix

Dubai, Nov. 1: Kolkata Knight Riders comprehensively beat Rajasthan Royals by 60 runs in an Indian Premier League encounter on Sunday.

Batting first, Kolkata Knight Riders scored 191 for 7, riding on skipper Eoin Morgan's unbeaten 68 off 35 balls.

Morgan top-notch knock was studded with six maximums and five fours as Kolkata Knight Riders amassed 59 in last five overs.

For Royals, leg-spinner Rahul Tewatia (3/25) and Kartik Tyagi (2/36) were the most successful bowlers.

In reply, Royals only managed 131 for 9 with Pat Cummins grabbing 4 for 34 in four overs.

Kolkata Knight Riders finished with 14 points from 14 games with a net run-rate of -0.214 and will now wait for the results of the last two fixtures between DC and RCB followed MI against SRH to know if they will make it to the last four.

Earlier, Shubman Gill (36) and Rahul Tripathi (39) shared a 72-run stand for the second wicket, while Andre Russell had a 11-ball-25 to his credit.

Sent in to bat, Nitish Rana fell for a first-ball duck after he edged a Jofra Archer delivery and was caught behind. But the opener went for a review only to waste it early.

Gill (36), however, looked in good touch as he blasted three boundaries off Varun Aaron and then sent spinner Shreyas Gopal soaring over the ropes twice.

Rahul Tripathi (39), who looked uncomfortable against pace early on, also got into the act, smashing Gopal for a couple of fours as KKR scored 17 runs in the fourth over. Ben Stokes then went for 11 runs with Tripathi pulling him for a six in the last ball. — *PTI*

SCORECARD

Kolkata Knight Riders: Shubman Gill c Jos Buttler b Rahul Tewatia 36, Nitish Rana c Samson b Jofra Archer 0, Rahul Tripathi c Uthappa b Shreyas Gopal 39, Sunil Narine c Stokes b Rahul Tewatia 0, Eoin Morgan not out 24, Dinesh Karthik c Steven Smith b Rahul Tewatia 0, Andre Russell c (sub) Miller b Kartik Tyagi 25, Pat Cummins c Samson b Kartik Tyagi 15, Kamlesh Nagarkoti not out 1. Extras: (LB-5, W-2) 7. **Total (for 7 wickets in 20 overs) 191.**

FoW: 1-73, 2-74, 3-94, 4-99, 5-144, 6-184, 7-187.

Bowling: Jofra Archer 4-0-19-1, Varun Aaron 2-0-22-0, Shreyas Gopal 3-0-44-1, Ben Stokes 3-0-40-0, Rahul Tewatia 4-0-25-3, Kartik Tyagi 4-0-36-2.

Rajasthan Royals: Robin Uthappa c Nagarkoti b Pat Cummins 6, Ben Stokes c Dinesh Karthik b Pat Cummins 18, Steve Smith b Pat Cummins 4, Sanju Samson c Dinesh Karthik b Shivam Mavi 1, Jos Buttler c Pat Cummins v Varun Chakravarthy 35, Riyan Parag c Dinesh Karthik b Pat Cummins 0, Rahul Tewatia c Dinesh Karthik 31, S. Gopal not out 23, Jofra Archer c Shivam Mavi b Nagarkoti 6, Kartik Tyagi c&b Shivam Mavi 2, Varun Aaron not out.

Extras: (LB-1, W-4) 5. **Total (for 9 wickets in 20 overs) 131.**

FoW: 1-19, 2-27, 3-32, 4-32, 5-37, 6-80, 7-105, 8-125, 9-129.

Bowling: Pat Cummins 4-0-34-4, Shivam Mavi 4-1-15-2, Varun Chakravarthy 4-0-20-2, Sunil Narine 4-0-37-0, Nagarkoti 4-0-24-1

THE RESULTS

Burnley	0
Chelsea	3
<i>(Ziyech 26, Zouma 63, Werner 70)</i>	
Liverpool	2
<i>(Salah 42-pen, Jota 85)</i>	
West Ham	1
<i>(Fornals 10)</i>	
Sheffield United	0
Manchester City	1
<i>(Walker 28)</i>	



Liverpool's Diogo Jota celebrates after he scores against West Ham in their Premier League match at the Anfield Stadium in Liverpool on Saturday. — *AP*

son. Liverpool thought they had claimed the lead with just over 10 minutes remaining when substitute Jota turned in a loose ball.

Jota had pounced after Lukasz Fabianski saved

Sadio Mane's shot but after a lengthy delay that saw referee Kevin Friend make use of the pitchside monitor, the goal was ruled out for a foul by the Senegal winger. In the 85th minute, Jota ran

onto Xherdan Shaqiri's pass to score his fourth goal since joining from Wolves in September. It was Liverpool's fourth successive victory since Virgil van Dijk was sidelined. — *AFP*

HAMILTON GETS RECORD WIN FOR MERCEDES

Imola (Italy), Nov. 1: Lewis Hamilton made the most of his luck to lead team-mate Valtteri Bottas home in Sunday's Emilia-Romagna Grand Prix as Mercedes sealed a record seventh consecutive constructors' championship triumph.

The six-time champion capitalised on pole-sitter Bottas's ill fortune in picking up a debris-damaged floor to win with a near-flawless tactical drive and the fastest lap of a dramatic and incident-filled race at Imola. Daniel Ricciardo finished third for Renault ahead of Daniil Kvyat of Alpha Tauri and Ferrari's Charles Leclerc after Max Verstappen had crashed out of the race in his Red Bull in the closing stages. He was unhurt. — *AFP*

Jota caps Reds fightback

London, Nov. 1: Diogo Jota capped Liverpool's dramatic fightback as the Premier League champions beat West Ham 2-1 to move three points clear at the top, while Manchester City and Chelsea both won to keep in touch with the leaders on Saturday.

Jurgen Klopp's side were rocked by Pablo Fornals' early strike at Anfield as the West Ham midfielder punished a poor header from Joe Gomez in the 10th minute.

The Reds drew level in the 42nd minute when Mohamed Salah was fouled by Arthur Masuaku and the Egyptian stepped up to convert the penalty for his eighth goal of the sea-

son. Liverpool thought they had claimed the lead with just over 10 minutes remaining when substitute Jota turned in a loose ball.

Jota had pounced after Lukasz Fabianski saved

Sadio Mane's shot but after a lengthy delay that saw referee Kevin Friend make use of the pitchside monitor, the goal was ruled out for a foul by the Senegal winger. In the 85th minute, Jota ran

onto Xherdan Shaqiri's pass to score his fourth goal since joining from Wolves in September. It was Liverpool's fourth successive victory since Virgil van Dijk was sidelined. — *AFP*

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