

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM | MONDAY | 16 NOVEMBER 2020



NATION | 4
Soumitra Chatterjee dies at age of 85



WORLD | 5
Trump supporters, rivals clash in US



SPORTS | 8
Hamilton wins record seventh F1 title

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Vol. 25 No. 199 Established 1940 | 16 PAGES | ₹6.00

WEATHER
Max: 32.0°C
Min: 21.0°C
RH: 73%
Rainfall: Nil
Forecast: Humid and Mostly Cloudy.
Max/Min temp. 32/21 °C

COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+70,622)	(+845)
88,43,398	1,30,066

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+ 661)	(+4)
TS: 2,57,374	1,404
(+1,056)	(+14)
AP: 8,54,011	6,868

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

5,46,84,471

DEATHS
13,22,955

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES
217

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Kartika Shuddha Padyami till 7.07 am; Kartika Shuddha Dwititya till 3.57 am (Tuesday)
Star: Anuradha till 2.39 pm
Varjyam: 7.44 pm to 9.11 pm
Durmuhurtam: 12.23 pm to 1.08 pm; 2.37 pm to 3.22 pm
Rahukalam: 7.30 am to 9 am

HILIRI CALENDAR
Rabbi-ul Awwal 29, 1442 AH
PRAYERS (ROYAL MOSQUE)

Fajar: 5.00 am
Zohar: 1.30 pm
Asar: 5.00 pm
Maghrib: 6.35 pm
Isha: 8.30 pm

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.08 AM
SUNSET TODAY 5.27 PM
MOONRISE TODAY 7.04 PM
MOONSET TOMORROW 7.35 AM

COUNTER POINT

No tie-up with political parties is okay... we should tie up with voters at least!

SHORT TAKE

Recognition for 2 more wetlands

New Delhi: India has 41 wetlands, the highest in South Asia, with two more added to the list of recognised sites of international importance under the treaty of Ramsar Convention. The Lonar lake in Maharashtra and Sur Sarovar, also known as Keetham lake, in Agra, have been added to the list of recognised Ramsar sites. The Ramsar Convention is a treaty for conservation and sustainable use of such sites.

Assam gas fire out after 5 months

Guwahati/Tinsukia: The damaged gas well at Baghjan in Assam was successfully 'killed' and the blaze was fully doused on Sunday after over five months of a blowout, Oil India said. "The well has been killed with brine solution and under control now. Fire has been doused completely," Oil India Ltd (OIL) spokesperson Tridiv Hazarika said in a statement. There is no pressure in the well now.

INSIDE

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Sharp decline in Covid cases in Kadapa
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Offer irumudi in local shrines: Guru swamis

Sikh victory day



Nihang or Sikh religious warriors display their skills as they ride on horses during Fateh Divas (Victory Day) celebrations in Amritsar on Sunday. — PTI

Nitish meets Gov, mystery on Sushil Modi continues

NAYEAR AZAD | DC PATNA, NOV. 15

JD(U) chief Nitish Kumar on Sunday met Bihar Governor Phagu Chauhan and staked claim to form government after he was unanimously elected the NDA's Legislature Party leader here.

Sushil Kumar Modi, Kumar's former deputy for 15 years, did not accompany him to Raj Bhavan,

sparking speculation about his continuance in the Cabinet. Sushil Modi separately met the Governor with Union minister Rajnath Singh, who had been deputed to oversee the election of Kumar.

Kumar did not comment about Modi's role in the next government. Reports suggest that the BJP may push for a fresh face.

"All these things issues will be sorted out before

the oath ceremony. We have to prepare a list of MLAs who will also be taking oath on Monday," Kumar said.

One of the names being floated by a section in the BJP is that of four-time MLA from Katihar Tarkishore Prasad. Sources said that the party may also declare two deputy CMs for the first time in the state, similar to the Uttar Pradesh model.

Diwali fire broke out at 51 places in Godavari

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, NOV. 15

Fire broke out in 51 places during the weekend Diwali festivities in East and West Godavari districts due to bursting of firecrackers. These included 24 houses and huts, including 15 in West Godavari and nine in East Godavari.

Diwali was celebrated on a windy night on Saturday with the wind speed touching 40 kmph. Crackers drifted from one side to another because of gales leading to fire in many places. The fire accidents continued into Sunday and it resulted in loss of property to the tune of Rs.30 lakh to Rs. 35 lakhs. Fortunately, there were no casualties.

Coming in the backdrop of Covid-19, officials not only campaigned for 'Green Diwali' but also celebrated the festival by only lighting lamps to set an example.

However, it did not yield the desired results as many people opted for the traditional method while those selling firecrackers were happy with the last-minute surge in sales. "We worried because of a poor

● **CRACKERS DRIFTED** from one side to another because of gales leading to fire in many places. The fire accidents continued into Sunday and it resulted in loss of property

Friday, but on Saturday our stock has been sold out," said a trader. He said that those selling 1,000 walas and 10,000 walas reported a poor show as there were no takers for them. Manufacturers said that in order to reduce sound pollution, the Union Government called for a decrease in manufacture and sale of such sound-causing crackers.

Meanwhile, in Saturday's tragedy, a poultry unit was gutted and some hens were burnt. According to fire officials the loss could be to the tune of Rs. three lakh. East Godavari fire department officer, Ratnababu said that fire incidents occurred in 24 places in the district and the fire personnel rushed to the spot soon after receiving information and reduced the loss by dousing the fire. Fire mishaps have been reported from

Kakinada, Rally village in Atreyapuram mandal, Tuni, Amalapuram, Mummidivaram, Kothapet, Anaparti, Pithapuram, Jaggampeta, Prathipadu, Peddapuram, Mandapeta and other places. Those gutted included huts, houses, haystack, coconut trees, basket manufacturing and poultry units.

At Atchutapuram junction, a cracker fell on a lorry and damaged some of the oil packets it was carrying but the vehicle was rescued in time.

West Godavari fire officer A.V. Sankara Rao said that there were 27 incidents in the district in the last two days. He said that dried leaves at Kovvuru park were gutted and the fire personnel reached the spot and averted any possible mishaps. He said that incidents happened at Pedavegi, Eluru, Athili, Pippara, Nidadavolu, Aki-veedu, Jangareddygudem, Bhimadolu, Bhimavaram, Chintalapudi, Peravali, Undi, Nallajerla, Palakollu and other places. He said a folded-cot manufacturing unit at Eluru and a paddy shop at Akiividu and an electrical shop had also caught fire.

YSRC, TD FIGHT ON HONORING SWAMI ON B'DAY

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 15

Ruling YSR Congress and opposition Telugu Desam have locked horns over paying traditional respects at various temples to Swaroop-anandendra Saraswathi Swami on occasion of his birthday on Wednesday.

TD leaders are alleging that Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has started the "evil culture" of paying respects to the seer by misusing the endowment department. YSRC claims that this tradition had been started in 2016 by the TD government itself and the ruling party is "only continuing the tradition".

The endowments department, in its circular, has directed executive officers (EOs) of 23 temples including those of Kanaka Durga temple at Vijayawada, Trikot-eswara in Kotapakkonda, and Srisaillam to extend temple honours to Swami. The Visakha Sri Sarada Peetham had earlier written a letter to the endowments department informing it about holding Swami's birthday on November 18, which is also the Nagula Chaviti festival day in the state.

■ **Page 2: EOs told to take necessary action**

AP frees 124 acres encroached land

Assets worth ₹1,200 cr was with TD men

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 15

Revenue officials, accompanied by a large number of police personnel, demolished compound walls and sheds and freed 124 acres of land in Vijayaramapuram Agraharam under Adavaivaram panchayat that was allegedly encroached upon by TD leaders of Rayalaseema and Visakhapatnam.

Immediately after the demolition, officials put up boards warning trespassers from entering the premises. The land, valued at approximately ₹1,200 crore, is located in Title Deed No 1180 on the edge of BRTS Road between National Highway and Simhachalam temple.

Giving details of the case, CPM city secretary Dr B. Ganga Rao, who filed a case in the High Court in 2014 on behalf of the party over encroachment of the land, said the court responded positively and asked the state government to file a report within six months. The government constituted a three-member committee, which included a joint col-

Hotelier vacated from VMRDA

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 15

Dealing another blow to the Telugu Desam cadre, officials of the Visakhapatnam Metropolitan Region Development Authority (VMRDA) seized Fusion Foods located at Siripuram here Sunday morning. It is promoted by T. Harshavardhan Prasad, a close friend of Visakhapatnam West legislator P.V.G.R. Naidu.

The incident comes 24 hours after the demolition of structures in 124 acres allegedly encroached by TD leaders.

Harshavardhan shot to limelight when an employee of his restaurant, J. Srinivas Rao attacked

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy at the Visakhapatnam international airport with a knife. The NIA questioned Harshavardhan and the airport authorities later closed his restaurant. Harshavardhan obtained a lease of the premises owned by VMRDA (formerly VUDA) for 10 years in 2004. After expiry of the lease in 2014, he applied for a 10-year extension. When the VUDA refused to oblige, Harshavardhan went to the High Court and got directions to the state government. The VUDA issued extension orders till 2024.

■ **Page 2: Lease violated rules: VMRDA**

Rain for pollution-hit Delhi



Commuters ply amid low visibility during rain in New Delhi on Sunday. — PTI

PM warns expansionist nations

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 15

Prime Minister Narendra Modi who, continuing with his tradition, celebrated Diwali with soldiers on Saturday at the historic Longewala in Jaisalmer of Rajasthan, asserted, "If there is an attempt to test India, the response will be equally fierce."

Without naming any country, the Prime Minister said that the

entire world feels troubled by "expansionist" forces and expansionism shows a "distorted mindset" which belongs to the 18th century. He said that India has come out as a forceful voice against the ideology of expansionism.

Modi's comments come at a time when India has been in a military stand-off with China for six months at the eastern Ladakh and there has been an increase in cross-border firing with the

Pakistan at the LoC. India and China are set to hold ninth round of Corps Commanders level talks to resolve the stand-off.

Modi said that the world knows that India will not compromise on its national interest. "This status of India is due to its valour and capabilities. India is able to forcefully hold forth on the international fora because of the security provided by the armed forces," the Prime Minister said.

12-YR-OLD LOSES BOTH HANDS TO 'BRINJAL' BOMB

DC CORRESPONDENT KURNOOL, NOV. 15

A 12-year-old boy lost his both hands when a 'brinjal bomb' he was handling exploded at a cattle shed in Chennampally village in Owk mandal near Banaganapalle on Sunday. Five cattle received pellet injuries from the explosion.

The injured child, Varun Kumar, was immediately shifted to Kur-nool government general hospital. Owk town sub-inspector Srikanth Reddy said it was not clear whether the explosion was due to a crude bomb or any other explosive device.

He said that Varun found the explosive when he was repairing his cycle near a cattle shed. He told his friends that it was a 'vankaya bomb' (brinjal bomb) and hit it hard with a stone. It suddenly exploded.

On hearing his cries of pain and the sound of the blast, locals called the police. Chennampalli was a faction-affected village a few decades back though it is peaceful now, SI Srikanth Reddy said.

COVID | IMPACT **Auspicious muhurats falling in November, December and January as next good dates fall only in April**

Wedding bells begin to ring in AP after 8 months

MD ILYAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 15

The marriage buzz is in the air after eight months of silence caused by the Coronavirus protocols. A good augury is the availability of auspicious muhurats from the third week of this month and stretching up to the first week of January.

Many families had either postponed or cancelled weddings of their children, although some did go ahead amidst Covid-19 restrictions.

With strict restrictions being lifted, hundreds of marriages are being scheduled although the guest count would have to be



restricted to between 50 and 100.

Pundits state that auspicious muhurat began on October 25 with Dasara. They said that the propitious Telugu Karthika month starts on November 16 and auspicious muhurat are on November 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 25 and 26 besides

● **MANY FAMILIES** had either postponed or cancelled weddings of their children, although some did go ahead amidst Covid-19 restrictions.

● **WITH STRICT** restrictions being lifted, hundreds of marriages are being scheduled

which are Margasira month dates of December 1, 6, 8, 9, 17, 18, 20, 24 and 27 and January 1, 2, 4 and 7. The next good dates are in April.

They said that the three-and-half month Moodham/Moudhyami starts in the second week of January and is inauspi-

cious for marriages.

It is reported that nearly 40,000 to 50,000 marriages would be performed across the state in the three months.

G. Venkateswarlu said that they had planned to perform the marriage of their son in May year but had indefinitely postponed it. He said that would now perform the marriage in the third week of this month.

Recalling the bitter experience of Kerala about the resurgence of Coronavirus cases for ignoring Covid-19 protocols during Onam festival, officials appealed to the people to strictly follow Covid-19 norms during marriages.

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 15

Marriage halls, caterers, event managers, priests and allied sectors, associated with social customs, had all lost their livelihood because of Covid restrictions. But now they are set to be on track with the marriage season set to take off from Tuesday.

According to reports, nearly 2,000 kalyana mandapams, marriage halls, function halls, mini function halls, shadikhanas and community halls exist

in the 13 districts and these are to witness activity in the next three months.

Vedic pandit P. Raghavendarcharylu said that most priests faced severe financial difficulties in the past eight months. He said that he used to suggest auspicious mahurats for marriages to parents but only few responded. He said that the commencement of the marriage season, despite the limitations, would help them and other related segments get work. He said that in the past few days he

had suggested muhurats to around 60 families.

Function hall manager D. Rama Rao said that many halls and other facilities have been booked for marriages. He said that they had cleaned and disinfected the halls thoroughly and would follow Covid protocol strictly.

Caterer and event manager R. Srinivas said that coronavirus had disturbed lives of people associated with such functions. He hoped people abide by the guidelines and help contain Coronavirus spread.

SHORT TAKES

LEASE VIOLATED
RULES: VMRDA

FROM PAGE 1

But the VMRDA in its notice dated November 14 stated that the lease violated rules which say that lease period could be given for only three years and not beyond unless the state government specifically permits it.

The notice cited that there was no government permission for a nine-year lease and rent was far below the specified norms. Citing these reasons, the commissioner of VMRDA asked the estate officer to take over the premises.

"I took an open land for lease and spent over ₹5 crore for construction of the premises. Without giving any notice and time, they descended in the early hours and removed all the furniture," Harshavaradhan said and added that he was basically a sports person and associated with P.V.G.R. Naidu. He was never associated with TD activities though a section of people were claiming it, he said.

Senior TD leader Bandaru Satyanarayana Murthy said it was political vendetta. "The YSRC government is destroying business houses owned or promoted by TD sympathisers," Mr Murthy said.

FOUR MISSING
GIRLS TRACED
IN 4 HOURSDC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, NOV. 15

Podili police in Prakasam district traced four missing girls of Muslim community, who left home on October 13, Friday evening after parents scolded them for their obsession with mobile phones, on Saturday with the help of technology.

Thanks to the 15 days training given under the auspice of a TATA Project on latest technology to policemen selected from different parts of the district recently at the instance of Prakasam SP Siddharth Kaushal.

The knowledge gained by a technical assistant Bharath Kumar of Podili Police Station during the training meant to make every constable of the district as future ready and techno savvy came in handy for police teams to locate the girls on Saturday.

"Bharath Kumar has shown brilliant skills in using latest technology to track the movements of missing girls with the help of tracking tools after Command Control Centre in Ongole alerted all police stations in the district to look for the missing girls and launch vehicular checks," said K. Prakasa Rao, Divisional Police Officer of Darsi.

DSP said, "A team of police led by SIs of Podili and Kurichedu located the girls at Vinukonda within 4 hours after receiving complaint from parents using high-end technology to track their movements."

He said they were handed over to the parents after counselling.

As a token of appreciation for resolving the otherwise sensational case, SP Siddharth Kaushal has announced rewards to Bharath Kumar and other police officers involved in the investigation.

ONE INJURED IN
LPG CYLINDER
BLAST IN TIRUPATIDC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, NOV. 15

A 74-year-old man suffered severe injuries after a wall partially collapsed on him when a gas cylinder exploded in his house at Marrimanu area near Karnal street in Tirupati on Sunday. The condition of the victim Raghunath is said to be critical.

According to in-charge fire officer Adhinarayana Reddy, Raghunath lives in a house on the second floor at Marrimanu area near Karnal street. The walls of this house were weak and it is suspected that there was a gas leak in the kitchen.

On Sunday morning, when Raghunath was standing in front of the house, the cylinder exploded with a loud sound. In the impact, the entire house was damaged and the walls on the outer side of the kitchen have been collapsed, causing injuries to Raghunath.

On being informed, police and fire personnel rushed to the spot and the medical teams shifted the injured to the Ruia government general hospital, where he was being treated now and his condition is said to be critical.

World is a stage



Street artistes giving final touches to their make-up at Maruthi Nagar in Vijayawada on Sunday.

— C. NARAYANA RAO

Sharp decline in Covid-19
cases in Kadapa district

By the end of October, only 200 cases were being reported as against 1,000

DC CORRESPONDENT
KADAPA, NOV. 15

In what is welcome news, Coronavirus positive cases in Kadapa district have been decreasing since the past four days, with just about a hundred or lesser instances being reported nowadays.

The district witnessed over thousand cases each day in September. They started declining steadily since the second week of October. By the end of October, only 200 cases were being reported. The number of new cases has been just about 100 in the first week of November. While 71 new cases were registered on Saturday,

only 47 cases have been reported on Sunday.

More than 1,500 tests are being carried out daily in the district. The number of throat swabs has been 1,942 Sunday.

District administration, led by collector Chevuri Hari Kiran, is strict about use of masks, sanitisers and physical distancing. Designation of Red, Orange, and Green zones has made treatment of Covid-19 more focused in the district. Specialised Corona treatment centres had been set up at Kadapa, Proddatur, Pulivendula and Rayachoti. More than five thousand beds have been arranged in the respective hospitals.

● Doctors say masks and physical distance is mandatory owing to possible second wave

● More than 1,500 tests are being carried out daily in the district

Supervised treatment is also being ensured for patients in home isolation.

With decrease in quantum of Coronavirus cases, treatment centres at Rayachoti and Proddatur have been closed for the time being. Treatment though is continuing in Kadapa and Pulivendula. Currently, there are 480

oxygen and 2,620 non-oxygen beds available in the district.

Doctors warn against second wave

Health authorities in the district have warned people that though there has been a decline in Covid-19 instances in the district, they should not be negligent about wearing masks, using sanitisers, and maintaining physical distance. Doctors maintain that although cases are declining, severity of the disease has increased as people are not adhering to preventive measures. Most cases now being reported are those involv-

ing people over the age of 60 years and those with chronic health problems. Doctors insist that everyone must wear masks until the vaccine is available.

General physician Mundla Sureshwar Reddy of District General Hospital underlined that wearing masks and adherence to physical distancing is mandatory. There are also reports of a second wave developing within India. Dr Sureshwar Reddy warned that the second wave could be deadlier. Hence, patients must consult a doctor mandatorily if there is any health problem. They must not be negligent in any way.

Use of firecrackers
down this yearDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 15

The festival of lights Diwali was celebrated in a traditional manner this year in AP State with decreased usage of firecrackers. The majority of people celebrated Diwali by performing Lakshmi pujas, sweets and Diyas reverting to the traditional manner of festival of lights.

This time firecrackers usage was a low key affair due to impact of Covid, time slot restriction of two hours and increased awareness on pollution. Interestingly sweets registered good business for Diwali.

All other business activ-

ities were also on a low note during the current festive season.

The AP Pollution Control Board made sales of green crackers mandatory to reduce pollution and all firecracker shops put the same stocks following the government norms. The modern-hybrid firecrackers would be more attractive compared to green crackers and this also a reason towards reluctance of people to burst firecrackers.

Further the fear of Coronavirus due to polluted environment putting huge impact on lungs also forced people opt for traditional festivity of lights.

Initially, 30 acres of
land encroached

FROM PAGE 1

Initially, the encroachers tampered with records for 30 acres of land, which later grew to 80 acres and finally to 124 acres. The panel named 12 officials, who tampered the records and asked the government to initiate action against them.

According to Dr Ganga Rao, the committee said that out of 8,091.67 acres, 560.02 acres belonged to Simhachalam Devasthanam and the remaining to the forest department, poramboku and private lands. No government has the right to issue pattas of forest land but the tahsildars of Pendurthi and China Gadili issued rythuvari pattas to people. The committee also said these pattas were illegal and invalid.

The TD government did not take any action against the tahsildars or the officials named by the committee, Ganga Rao said and added that the government instead announced that the land belonged to Simhachalam Devasthanam and banned registrations.

Finding fault with the revenue department's action, TD leaders said

Ganta Srinivasa Rao, prior to joining politics purchased 4.5 acres of Inam land in 1997 in the name of his company Pratyusha Associates and obtained bank loans. He subsequently cleared the land. Similarly, PSU bank employees bought five acres of land in an auction. The revenue officials marked both the land parcels as encroached land, a senior TD leader said.

Former sarpanch of Adavivaram and prominent TD leader Pasarla Prasad said 30 acres of land was donated by the royal family of Vizianagaram to the main priest of Padmanabham temple, who in turn sold the property to the head priest of Simhachalam temple Godavarthy Narayana Swamy Acharyulu.

Later the legal heirs of Acharyulu sold the property in pieces of which 4.5 acres was bought by Ganta Srinivasa Rao, Prasad said.

"The remaining 100 acres has not been surveyed and there are no records regarding them till date," Prasad said. Revenue officials could not be contacted.

Online gambling
leads to suicideDC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 15

Unable to repay debts, a 33-year-old man committed suicide by placing his head on the railway track near Meghadrigedda under Gopalapatnam limits in Vizag city after allegedly losing around ₹15 lakh on online card games. Though the incident took place on Saturday, it came to light on Sunday morning.

The deceased was identified as M. Sateesh Kumar, resident of Kothapalem in Vizag city and working as fitter with Naval Dockyard in Vizag city.

He had joined the Naval Dockyard in 2010.

Sources said that he had borrowed over ₹15 lakh from his friends and relatives to fuel his gambling addiction during the lock-

down period. But, he lost most of the games and ended up in debts.

His parents managed to repay some debts by selling properties.

It may be recalled that the Andhra Pradesh government banned the online rummy in September 2020.

Sub-Inspector of Government Railway Police (GRP), Visakhapatnam, T. Kamesh said that Kumar was found dead on the railway track on Saturday. The body was shifted to the morgue for autopsy. A case under Section 174 of CrPc was registered and investigation is on.

The police said that since they didn't recover any suicide note, it was difficult to ascertain the exact reason for the incident.

NEW | HOPE

Party is focusing on Baliya community which is strong in the area

BJP keen to test its luck in Tirupati LS bypoll

AVINASH P.
SUBRAMANYAM | DC
TIRUPATI, NOV. 15

Fresh from the tremendous performance of the party in Bihar as well as bypolls across the country, the state unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party is keen on making its presence felt in the Tirupati Lok Sabha bypolls.

It is clearly ahead of the other two serious players — the ruling YSR Congress and principal opposition Telugu Desam — in launching the preparatory exercise for bypolls which were necessitated by the sudden demise of sitting MP B. Durga Prasad of the YSRC. Ever since state BJP president Somu

Veeraju announced in the temple town that the party is eager to repeat the result of the Dubbak Assembly constituency in Telangana state, where party broke into the strong bastion of the Telangana Rashtra Samiti, the party leaders are busy drawing strategies to win over the voters.

Party sources said the local units have been identifying and shortlisting the probabilities and recommend to the central leadership. Party incharge Sunil Deodhar recently organised party meeting in Tirupati and made a scathing attack on the ruling party and Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy. As expected, the BJP based its elec-



● Ever since state BJP president Somu Veeraju announced in the temple town that the party is eager to repeat the result of the Dubbak Assembly constituency in Telangana state, where party broke into the strong bastion of the Telangana Rashtra Samiti, the party leaders are busy drawing strategies to win over the voters.

tions slogans on the issue of desecration of temples and forcible conversions, making clear its strategy to replace Telugu Desam as the alternative. "We will give equal importance to highlighting the progress the country is witnessing under Modi's leadership," a state party leader pointed out.

State leaders are conducting back-to-back meetings with key leaders in the party and also the local cadres in Tirupati parliamentary constituency.

The BJP is pushing local committees to reach out to the public by propagating the schemes sanctioned to the state and funds released for the develop-

ment of Tirupati smart city by the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre. On the other hand, the party is learnt to have been listing out names for the candidature.

Since four out of the seven Assembly segments under the Tirupati Lok Sabha seat come under Nellore district, it is expected that the party high command will select a strong candidate from these four segments. A few names from these segments have already been on the table of the party's high command, sources said. BJP spokesperson Samanchi Srinivas, however, said that the party will give an opportunity to the best and most suitable candidates. "It is too early

to announce a candidate. In a national party like the BJP, there will be a number of factors for the selection of candidates and senior leaders will give opportunity to those who have worked hard and are loyal to the party," Mr Srinivas told this newspaper.

The party, which had earlier represented Tirupati Assembly seat in alliance with TD in 1999, will ask the Jana Sena to leave the seat to it and request its chief Pawan Kalyan to extend support and campaign extensively. It is focusing on converting the Baliya community, which is considerably strong in the area and with whose support Chiranjeevi could become MLA in 2009, as its base.

OTHER STORIES

MODERATE RAIN
LASHES SPSR
NELLORE DISTDC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, NOV. 15

Several low-lying areas in Nellore were inundated as the rain lashed the district since Saturday night. Rainwater entered homes in Kesava Nagar area among others.

Seawater entered into a fishermen colony at Pallipadu near Nellore because surge in the water following tidal waves in the Bay of Bengal on Sunday. But no serious damage was reported from the area.

Residents alleged that this is first time they were witnessing such a phenomenon in the area while appealing the officials to take remedial measures to prevent repeat of such incident.

TWO GROUPS OF
YSRC CLASH IN
PULIVENDULADC CORRESPONDENT
KADAPA, NOV. 15

A clash took place between two factions of the YSR Congress near Idupulapaya panchayat in Vempalle mandal under the Chief Minister's own constituency Pulivendula. Four people were injured in the incident on Saturday night.

'0' % INTEREST
SCHEME TO COVER
14.5L FARMERSDC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, NOV. 15

Agriculture and food processing minister Kurasala Kannababu said that the state government would release ₹510.30 crore to 14.50 lakhs farmers in the state under zero per cent interest scheme.

He along with Kakinada MP Vanga Gita told the reporters here on Sunday evening that the Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy would credit the amount to the farmers' accounts on November 17.

The minister said that the interest would be given to the farmers who took crop loans during Kharif season in 2019 and cleared their loans within one year.

He said that various crops on 93,908 hectares in the state have been damaged due to heavy rains and floods during June, July, August and September and 1,70,266 farmers have been affected.

He said that ₹136.14 crore input subsidy was already released to compensate for the loss. He said that the crops such as cotton, groundnut, maize and black-grain in Rayalaseema area have been also damaged and input subsidy for these crops would be released soon.

He said that the government was clearing the arrears of the previous government to the farmers.

He said that ₹1,180.66 crore out of ₹1,865 crore of loans has to be paid from 2014 to 2019 and the government has allocated ₹1,152 crore for 2020-21 financial year in the budget and already ₹825 crore have been released.

He said that to curb the onion prices, the government released ₹60 crore.

The minister said that 'social audit' would be made on crops damaged during the calamities and all the grievances of the farmers would be sorted out.

Lowest 1,056 Corona
cases found in a day

Andhra Pradesh's recovery rate climbs to 97.01 per cent

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 15

AP registered single day lowest 1,056 Corona positive cases on Sunday which is lowest in the past four months and further against registering 2,000 to 3,000 positive cases for the past few days. The daily positivity rate too was one of the lowest at 1.98 per cent for the 53,215 samples tested in the past 24 hours.

The total positive cases reached 8,54,011 on Sunday in which 8,28,484 were total recoveries, 18,659 were total active cases and 6,868 were total Corona deaths.

As many as 14 Corona deaths were registered in which Anantapur, Chittoor, Krishna and Visakhapatnam districts reported two new deaths each. East Godavari, Guntur, Kadapa, Prakasam, Vizianagaram and West Godavari districts registered one death each.

There were no Corona

● **AP TESTED** a total of 91,54,263 samples for Corona till date and is in top place in Covid-19 tests.

● **THE LEAST** number of single-day 24 new Corona positive cases registered in Srikakulam district in the past 24 hours

deaths in the remaining three districts namely Kurnool, Nellore and Srikakulam districts.

As many as 53,215 tests conducted in the past 24 hours in which 1,056 found infected from Corona. With 2,140 recoveries the total recoveries increased to 8,28,484 and the recovery rate increased to 97.01 per cent for the first time.

The Guntur district was on top in single day highest Corona cases of 206 on Sunday and registration of a huge number of Corona cases continuing in the duo Godavari districts. Further 2,140 patients were discharged after the cure in the past 24 hours.

East Godavari registered a total of 1,20,441 cases and top among all districts

and West Godavari in the second place with reaching 90,258 total positive cases.

The single day highest number of 206 Corona positive cases was registered in Guntur district in the past 24-hours increasing the total to 70,996 in which 2,220 were active cases. The second single day highest number of 154 Corona positive cases was registered in West Godavari district in the past 24-hours increasing the total to 90,258 in which 1,741 were active cases.

The third single day highest number of Corona positive cases of 153 registered in Krishna district in the past 24-hours increasing the total to 43,197 in which 2,611 were

active cases.

The East Godavari district is in fourth place with registering 139 new positive cases in the past 24 hours increasing total positive cases to 1,20,441 in which 5,210 were active cases. 87 new Corona positive cases registered in Chittoor district in the past 24 hours increasing total positive cases to 82,062 in which 1,281 were active cases. 70 new Corona positive cases registered in Anantapur district in the past 24 hours increasing total positive cases to 66,173 in which 702 were active cases. 57 new Corona positive cases registered in Visakhapatnam district in the past 24 hours increasing total positive cases to 57,295 in which 1,439 were active cases.

As many as 47 new Corona positive cases registered in Kadapa district in the past 24 hours increasing total positive cases to 53,615 in which 493 were active cases.

DALIT CASES: BOSE
COMPLAINS TO HM
AGAINST THOTADC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, NOV. 15

Rajya Sabha member and the former Minister Pilli Subhashchandra Bose complained against the former MLA of Ramachandrapuram Thota Trimurthulu to home minister Ms M. Sucharitha.

Both Mr Bose and Mr Trimurthulu are in YSRC. It is learnt that Mr Bose wrote a letter to the home minister that the investigation on the tansuring of head case on should be expedited and Thota Trimurthulu is A1 accused in the case.

Mr Bose alleged that Mr Trimurthulu was making use of his influence and trying to delay the case.

He alleged that Mr Trimurthulu was trying to transfer the public prosecutor in the case and the victims belonging to Scheduled Caste are not capable of fighting with Mr Trimurthulu.

YSRC LEADER
ASSURES HELP TO KIN
OF CLASHES VICTIMDC CORRESPONDENT
KADAPA, NOV. 15

Former minister and YSRC leader P. Ramasubba Reddy visited P. Anantapuram village on Saturday to console the Gurupratap Reddy family, who was killed in a clash between the two groups on Friday.

He along with his supporters went to the house of the victim and paid homage to the departed. He assured help from the state government.

Mr Ramasubba Reddy said that he will take the issue to the notice of Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to do justice to the victim's family.

The police deployed additional forces in the village.

Offer irumudi in local
shrines: Guru swamisPATHRI RAJASEKHAR |
DC
NELLORE, NOV. 15

Senior Guru Swamis of Ayyappa are advising devotees to observe their 41-day Vratam but offer their "Irumudi" at Ayyappa temples located within their own area or city. They are suggesting that the risk of going to Sabarimala be avoided due to high number of corona cases in Kerala. The temple of Lord Ayyappa is located amid the Periyar Tiger Reserve of this southern state.

Guru Swamis are further pointing to the stipulation limiting the number of devotees visiting the Sabarimala per day to only 1,000; apart from restrictions imposed against taking the holy bath in Pamba River and *Ghee Abhishekam* at the hill shrine after darshan.

Incidentally, Guru Swamis play a key role in guiding devotees while the latter observe the rigorous 41-day Deeksha.

AP's senior-most Guru Swami S. Chandramouli of Tirupati said the 18 holy steps for reaching Lord Ayyappa have been constructed at many of the God's temples across AP and TS, including the three-decade-old shrine at Nellore. He suggested that devotees of the two Telugu states could conclude their Deeksha by climbing the steps of such temples and offering their Irumudi at these shrines in a relatively much safer manner.

In particular, Mr Chandramouli referred to the condition imposed by the Kerala government that devotees visiting that state must undergo Coronavirus test before leaving for Sabarimala. The same test is also to be taken at the entry point of Sabarimala at Nilakal in Kerala. The Guru Swami pointed out that there is no guarantee that the pilgrims from the Telugu states would not catch the Covid-19 during their journey.

Incidentally, Mr Chandramouli is a close associate of senior priests at Sabarimala as also administrators of the Travancore Devaswom Board, which manages the Ayyappa Temple.

Over some sections insisting on going to Sabarimala for Irumudi, the senior Guru Swami said, "I can't understand the logic behind offering Irumudi only at Sabarimala even by people who have taken pains to build the Ayyappa temples here (in AP and Telanganas)".

"Is the presiding deity at these temples different from one in Sabarimala," Chandramouli asked.

Former priest of Ayyappa shrine in Nellore and noted astrologer Ajith Nambodri of Kerala has endorsed the advice of the senior Guru Swami.

Ajith Nambodri maintains that it is better for devotees, especially aged people, to conclude their Vratam at local Ayyappa temples instead of taking the risk of going to Sabarimala.

Secretary of Ayyappa Seva Samajam in Nellore, G. Seshagiri Rao, said they built the 18 steps last year at the Ayyappa temple in the city for the benefit of devotees who cannot go all the way to Sabarimala to offer their Irumudi.

Pointing to commencement of 41 days' long Mandala Puja at the Ayyappa shrine on Sunday, Seshagiri Rao said they will be offering food to donors and devotees who duly follow the Coronavirus restrictions during the Ayyappa Deeksha for the next 41 days.



Chief Priest Narayana Nambodri and temple priests Subhramanya Nambodri and Ramachandra Bhatt are seen during Dwajarahana ritual held at the Ayyappa temple in Nellore to mark the commencement of 41 days long Mandal Puja on Sunday.

— DC



Youngsters take a selfie on the beach road which was covered with thick smoke during the Diwali celebrations in Visakhapatnam on Saturday evening.

— DC

Purohits arrive from
neighbouring statesDC CORRESPONDENT
KURNOOL, NOV. 15

Anticipating a bonanza, purohitis are coming to Kurnool district from within AP and neighbouring districts of Telangana state and Karnataka in hope of making some money during the Tungabhadra Pushkarams, a once-in-12-years event, to be held all along the course of the Tungabhadra river from November 20 to December 1.

Presence of priests is *sine qua non* for people to perform *pinda pradhana* in honour of their ancestors. As a precautionary measure, the Kurnool district administration has made mandatory Covid-19 tests for purohitis, who will have to compulsorily wear masks and wash their hands frequently with sanitisers.

The district adminis-

● **THE DISTRICT** administration is cataloguing all priests and will start issuing them high security identity cards from Tuesday, November 17

● **PUROHITS WILL** have to produce a "Coronavirus negative report" to obtain their ID cards

tration is cataloguing all priests and will start issuing them high security identity cards from Tuesday, November 17. The Endowments Department has said purohitis will have to produce a "Coronavirus negative report" to obtain their identity cards, said V.L.L.N. Sastry, a purohit in Mantralayam. Due to fears of a second wave of Coronavirus pandemic striking, Kurnool administration has banned devotees from

having a dip in the river. The devout will have to remain content with just sprinkling water over their heads.

An endowment official said there are 21 bathing ghats along the course of Tungabhadra river in the district. Each ghat will have presence of 15 purohitis. During the 2008 Pushkarams, their number was 20 at each ghat.

District administration taking measures to be vigilant as there is a wave of opinion spreading within the public that people must be allowed to freely have a holy dip in the river. The opinion is spreading despite the administration banning bathing in the river due to the risk of Covid-19 pandemic spreading along the river course if any of the patients are Coronavirus positive or even asymptomatic.

PROJECT | HEIGHT

Jagan will dedicate the project to the nation before the end of Dec. 2021: Minister

Anil slams Naidu over remarks on Polavaram

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, NOV. 15

Water resources minister for water resources P. Anilkumar Yadav struck down the allegations over reduction of the height of Polavaram project while stressing that they are not compromising on the height even by an inch.

Strongly reacting to the allegations of former chief minister of AP, Nara Chandrababu Naidu on the reduction in the height of the project, he took potshots against the TD chief while demanding to know whether he measured the height with a tape.

Speaking to media persons at YSR Congress office here on Sunday, Dr Anilkumar alleged that the former CM has been spreading fake news through some newspapers

● **Dr Yadav** said there was no moral right to Chandrababu to speak about the project as he failed to focus R & R packages to the displaced and had not constructed even a single house to them during his regime.

owing allegiance to him ignoring the progress of the project.

He said "state government is very clear on the Polavaram project and CM Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy would dedicate the project to the nation before the end of December 2021."

He said there was no moral right to Chandrababu to speak about the project as he failed to focus R & R packages to the displaced and had not constructed

even a single house to them during his regime.

Referring to the repeated claims of TDP leaders over completing 70 per cent of the project during TD rule, the minister maintained that people will not believe the blatant lies.

Dr Yadav informed that they are going to offer 20,000 houses to the displaced in the first phase under Polavaram project.

Accusing the previous government for various lapses in planning of the project, he dared the TD chief to disclose the Cabinet resolution on Polavaram project submitted to the Central Cabinet during 2017.

The project was neglected during the TD regime as the leaders were paying attention towards their commissions and packages, the minister alleged.

He expressed confidence

in completing all the irrigation projects on priority basis besides providing R & R packages to oustees.

He explained that the state government has earmarked ₹900 crore to around 7,000 families under R & R packages in Gandikota.

Similarly, ₹12,000 crore has been allocated under the R & R package to Veligonda. He added that steps are being taken to provide the same relief to the oustees of Kandaluru project in Nellore district.

Earlier, Dr Yadav said that the CM has been giving top priority to address the problems of minorities.

Addressing a gathering of Muslims at Nellore on Sunday, he said minorities played a key role in YSR Congress coming to power while rebuking the opposition for politicising Kurnool incident.



Minister P. Anilkumar Yadav lights the traditional lamp (Akasa Deepam) at Sri Moolasthaneswara swamy temple in Nellore on Sunday.

— DC

Goddess Padmavathi Devi
rides on Gaja vahanamDC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, NOV. 15

On the fifth day of the ongoing Karthika Brahmotsavams, Goddess Padmavathi Devi took a ride on the mighty Gaja vahanam, at the Tiruchanoor temple on Sunday evening. Like Garuda Vahana to Lord Venkateswara, Gaja Vahana is considered as the most important vehicle to the goddess during the annual Brahmotsavams.

According to Vedanta Desikan in Sri Stuti, Gaja Rajas (elephants) performed abhishekam to Goddess Maha Lakshmi as soon as she emerged from the milk ocean. The Pancharathra agama describes the four gajas serving the goddess Padmavathi, the incarnation of goddess Maha Lakshmi implies four vedas.

● **EARLIER, GODDESS** Padmavathi Devi decked as Andal Sri Goda Devi had mused devotees on the Pallaki Utsavam, held at the vahana mandapam between 8 am and 9 am in Ekantam.

Usually Gaja - the elephant is considered as the symbol of wealth, majesty and richness. Goddess Lakshmi being the deity of universal riches, seated majestically on the mighty Gaja vahanam decked with the special jewel 'Lakshmi Kasula Haram' which was brought from Tirumala temple. Lakshmi Kasula haram is a priceless ornament for Lord Venkateswara, and is used to decorate goddess Padmavathi during the auspicious Gaja

vahanam and Garuda vahanam held every year.

Meanwhile, Dr Chevireddy Bhaskar Reddy, government whip and TUDA chairman also presented silk clothes to Goddess Padmavathi in view of Gaja Vahana Seva.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Reddy said he had come by Padayatra from Tummalagunta to Tiruchanoor to present customary silk clothes on behalf of Sri Kalyanam Venkateswara Temple at Tummalagunta.

Earlier, goddess Padmavathi Devi decked as Andal Sri Goda Devi had mused devotees on the Pallaki Utsavam, held at the vahana mandapam between 8 am and 9 am in Ekantam. Both Pedda Jeeyar and Chinna Jeeyar Swamiji of Tirumala, JEO P. Basanth Kumar were also present.

Ban on holy dip
in Godavari RiverDC CORRESPONDENT
RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM,
NOV. 15

Many people take a dip in River Godavari in the holy Karthika Masam which begins from Monday. However, the Rajamahendravaram Municipal Corporation has imposed a ban on taking the ritualistic bath in the River Godavari due to Covid-19 virus scare.

Rajamahendravaram Municipal Commissioner Abhisikhtha Kishore clarified that as the virus threat was there and it is not safe to allow taking a bath in the river.

However, respecting the sentiments of the devotees, the authorities arranged shower-baths at five ghats - Kotilingala, Pushkara, Markandeya Swamy, Gowthami and Chitnalamma Ghat

● **RESPECTING THE** sentiments of the devotees, the authorities arranged shower-baths at five ghats - Kotilingala, Pushkara, Markandeya Swamy, Gowthami and Chitnalamma Ghat

Gowthami (near Iskon Temple) and Chitnalamma Ghat. He said that remaining ghats would be closed and the people should take a bath at their houses only.

He said that children below 12 years and people above 60 years would not be allowed for shower-bath. The people should maintain social distance, wear masks and follow other Covid-19 protocols.

SHORT TAKES

ASSAM DEPLOYS DRONES AT BORDER FOR SURVEILLANCE

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, NOV. 15

In the wake of growing inter-state border dispute among the north-eastern states, Assam government has augmented vigil along the inter-state border areas and deployed drones to keep surveillance on its forest areas along the border.

Informing that even the ministry of home affairs was keeping a close watch on the situation along the Assam-Mizoram border areas where conflict took place recently, authoritative security sources told this newspaper that more than 589 square kilometres of Assam's land was under encroachment by the neighbouring states.

Pointing out that it was highly challenging to retrieve the lands encroached by neighbouring states long back, security sources said that Assam was determined to stop the fresh attempt of encroaching the land by neighbouring states.

Asserting that the Assam government was committed to protect its constitutional boundaries, security sources said that efforts are on to improve vigil along the inter-state border areas. However, because of the length of the inter-state borders and difficult terrain, it is not easy to deploy police to guard every inch of the border with the people of neighbouring states taking advantage of the situation.

GUPKAR ALLIANCE FAILS TO FINALISE SEAT-SHARING

Srinagar, Nov. 15: The People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration members failed to finalise their seat-sharing arrangement for the District Development Council polls yet again despite holding a marathon meeting on Saturday, the third one in two days, on the issue.

The seat-sharing issue defying a resolution appeared to be exasperating for the two key constituents of the PAGD with its vice-chairperson and PDP president Mehbooba Mufti reminding the alliance that it "has a bigger cause to fight for than to bicker over the DDC elections."

JKPC chairman Sajad Lone too rued that "the statesmanship and magnanimity is still a missing trait in our polity". In a related development earlier during the day, as per the sources, PDP founder member Muzaaffar Hussain Baig resigned from the party following disagreement over seat-sharing for the upcoming DDC elections in Jammu and Kashmir.

The PAGD meeting which lasted for several hours at the National Conference (NC) headquarters 'Nawa-i-Subah' here concluded late on Saturday night, a PAGD leader said.

He said the meeting was part of the consultations between the parties of the alliance for the upcoming DDC polls.

NOW, JAIL-MADE FOOTWEAR TO HIT KERALA MARKETS

Thiruvananthapuram, Nov. 15: 'Jail-made' hawai chappal will soon be available in your next-door shop or market in Kerala as a central prison here has started manufacturing the rubber slippers now.

After dishing out a variety of products, including delicious but cost-effective food items, and successfully venturing into organic farming and beauty parlour business to running a petrol pump, the inmates of the Poojappura central prison here are now making footwear.

As part of a series of welfare measures for the prisoners to bring them to the forefront of society, the Kerala Prisons and Correctional Services Department recently established a manual footwear manufacturing unit at the jail premises.

The jail authorities released photos of inmates, in their conventional attire, engaged in chappal making and the colourful footwear they made.

"Each pair of slipper will be sold at ₹80 and it will be marketed under the brand name-Freedom Walk," Superintendent of the prison and correction home Nirmalanandan Nair said.

Director General of Prisons and Correctional services Rishi Raj Singh, DGP, on Saturday launched the sale of the slippers at a function in the jail premises adhering to Covid-19 protocols.

DELHI STUDENTS TO GET LESSONS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

New Delhi, Nov. 15: From how much information to share online to how to deal with cyber threats, over seven lakh students in schools under the Delhi government, the city's cantonment board and NDMC will soon get lessons on the "responsible use of social media".

The month-long series of online sessions, which will be conducted for 1,040 schools, is scheduled to begin from November 23. The lessons are being conducted against the backdrop of increased usage of gadgets and exposure to social media during the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Threat through the unknown and anonymous cyber world is a harsh reality nowadays. Ease of access and unmonitored reach has exposed the children to unscrupulous elements on the net," deputy director of education Mohinder Pal said.

"The series on 'responsible use of social media' will create awareness about the various kinds of threats on the internet and also ways to secure oneself from these threats. The children will also be sensitised about responsible use of social media," he said. —PTI

Gangotri temple closes for winters



A large number of pilgrims attend the door closing ceremony of Gangotri Dham for winter in Uttarkashi on Sunday. After the closure of the temple gates, an idol of goddess Ganga was carried in a palanquin decorated with flowers to Mukhba village where she will be worshipped during winters. —PTI

SABARIMALA TEMPLE OPENS FOR DEVOTEES

Sabarimala (Kerala), Nov. 15: The hill shrine of Lord Ayyappa here opened on Sunday evening for the annual two-month long Mandala-Makaravillakku season, adhering to strict Covid-19 protocol.

Devotees would be allowed inside the temple only from Monday morning, temple sources said. No special pujas were held on Sunday.

Melshanti A.K. Sudheer Namboothiri opened the doors of the sanctum sanctorum and lit the lamps at 5 pm in the presence of Tantri Kandararu Rajeevaru, heralding the start of the 62-day long pilgrim season.

The newly elected Sabarimala melsanthi V.K. Jayaraj Potti and Malikkapuram Melsanthi M.N. Raj Kumar, were the first to climb the holy 18 steps and offer prayers.

They took charge this evening. Each day, only 1,000 pilgrims, who have booked through the virtual queue system, would be allowed to offer prayers.

They have to carry Covid-19 negative certificate taken 24 hours before they reach Nilackkal and Pamba, base camps. —PTI

Cong: Delay in seat sharing affected Bihar grand alliance

Party serious about introspection, thorough analysis of election results

New Delhi, Nov. 15: Delay in finalising seat sharing for the Bihar election adversely impacted the Mahagathbandhan's poll performance, senior Congress leader Tariq Anwar said on Sunday, asserting that the Congress must learn from it and complete alliance formalities well in advance for upcoming assembly polls.

Anwar, party's general secretary and a veteran leader from Bihar, acknowledged that there were shortcomings due to which the party performed worse than other 'Mahagathbandhan' constituents and asserted that the high command was serious about an introspection as well as a thorough analysis of the results.

Anwar said the Bihar poll results were "definitely below" the Congress' expectations and it was a setback to bag only 19 out of the 70 seats it contested. "There was an environment of change with enthusiasm among the common people for it, but we could not exploit that. We had the expectation that with the Congress fighting on 70 seats, it would win at least 50 per cent of the seats," the former union minister said.

"Our government was not formed and we (the Congress) also have a responsibility in that. Going forward, our efforts will be aimed at strengthening the Congress and the Mahagathbandhan and we will make a strategy for it," he said.

Nearly 160 tonnes of biomedical waste generated during election

New Delhi, Nov. 15: Nearly 160 tonne of biomedical waste in the form of gloves, face masks and empty sanitiser bottles used by polling personnel and voters was generated during the Bihar Assembly polls held amid the Covid-19 pandemic, poll authorities in the state have said.

The poll authorities also relied on an inexpensive but effective technology used to track EVMs to ensure that the waste reached public health centres for its onward journey to the incinerator.

To ensure safety of voters, polling staff and security personnel in the first-ever polls held amid the pandemic, the Election Commission had procured 18 lakh face shields, 70 lakh face

masks, 5.4 lakh single use rubber gloves for polling and security personnel and 7.21 crore 'one hand' single use polythene gloves for voters to press the EVM button and sign the register at the polling stations.

It had also bought a total of 29 lakh hand sanitiser bottles of 100 and 500 ml. As per the guidelines issued by the Election Commission and poll authorities in Bihar, the polling stations were sanitised a day before election and three times on the day of the election.

The office of the Chief Electoral Officer of Bihar had sought the help of the state health department to decide on "Covid safety material" for the three phase elections.

His remarks assume significance as several poll analysts have stated that the Congress dragged the Mahagathbandhan down as it fell short of the majority mark, with the NDA under Nitish Kumar's leadership emerging victorious in the polls by a narrow margin.

Anwar, who was a member of the party's poll management committee, said there should be an introspection and "we have also demanded that it should happen".

He said the high command was ready for an introspection and stressed the top leadership had given all possible support during the polls with former party chief Rahul Gandhi also holding many public meetings in the state.

"But there have been shortcomings on our part otherwise we should have won 35-40 seats. So whether there were shortcomings in organisation or campaign, all of that will be discussed and

LJP CLAIMS IT PROVED ITS WORTH IN BIHAR

New Delhi, Nov. 15: With questions being raised about the Lok Janshakti Party's prospects after it won only one seat in the Bihar Assembly polls, party sources on Sunday cited its "influence" in "changing" results in over 40 seats to assert that it will continue to have a key presence in the state politics.

The LJP was instrumental in the defeat of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar-led JD(U) in at least 36 seats which is evident from its vote share, and the BJP would also have been hit hard if the regional party had gone all out against it in a similar manner, the sources claimed. The LJP might have won only one seat, but it has underscored its presence by fetching 5.7 per cent votes, the party sources said.

They noted that the party put up candidates in only six seats where the BJP was in the fray while contesting on almost each of the 115 seats where the JD(U) contested in the elections to the 243-seat Bihar Assembly polls. With the JD(U), hit hard by the LJP in the elections, likely to oppose any friendly vibes to the party by its ally BJP, the sources in party claimed that it was offered only 15 seats to contest in the polls.

—PTI

Sena's decision to reopen temples stirs political row

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC MUMBAI, NOV. 15

Maharashtra government's decision of reopening of religious places has resulted in the game of political one upmanship with the BJP calling it a win for Hindutva. However, the Shiv Sena has countered it saying it was neither a victory nor a defeat of anybody.

"The government was forced to reopen the places of religious worship due to the protests by Hindutva organizations and the support extended to them by the BJP," said Praveen Darekar, the leader of opposition in the Vidhan Parishad.

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Saturday announced that places of religious worship in Maharashtra, which have been shut from March due to coronavirus-induced lockdown, will reopen from Monday. The state government has also issued guidelines under which religious places located out of Covid-19 containment zones will be allowed to remain open as per the timings decided by the authorities and devotees will be allowed inside in a staggered manner.

"The state government was against the reopening of religious places. But it relented as the BJP stood firmly behind the Hindutva organisations who demanded reopening of temples," said Darekar.

However, senior Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut has said that there was no

ONLY 100 TO GET DARSHAN AT SIDDHIVINAYAK

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC MUMBAI, NOV. 15

Though the Maharashtra government has allowed to reopen the places of worship from Monday, Shri Siddhivinayak Trust has decided to allow only 100 people to seek the blessing of lord Ganesha to its temple in Dadar.

Mumbai's Iconic Siddhivinayak Temple is one of the most revered places in Mumbai for devotees. The trust has come out with a list of SOPs (Standard Operation Procedure) for the safety of devotees.

Addressing a pressure conference in Mumbai on Sunday, Aadesh Bhandekar, Chairman of Shree Siddhivinayak Temple Trust, which is controlled by Maharashtra government, said that the temple will be reopened for the devotees from Monday.

As lakhs of devotees are eager to take 'darshan' of Siddhivinayak, therefore, crowding should be avoided in the temple.

question of taking credit for reopening of places of worship. "Not just temples, but all places of worship will reopen. It was God's will that people stay at home and now it is God's will that places of worship reopen with precautions," he added.

LEGENDARY | LIFE

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, NOV. 15

Legendary actor Soumitra Chatterjee, who successfully carried forward the golden period of Bengali cinema with his epic roles beyond the era of screen icons like Uttam Kumar and Utpal Dutt, died on Sunday afternoon at a private hospital in Kolkata while fighting prolonged illness from Covid-19. He was 85.

The versatile thespian is survived by his wife Deepa, son Sougata and daughter Poulomi.

Chatterjee had won the national film awards thrice and was a recipient of the Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 2012

Feluda is no more. Apu said goodbye. Farewell, Soumitra (Da) Chatterjee, tweets Mamata

Bengal breaks down as Soumitra Chatterjee passes away

before being conferred with the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, France's highest award for artists, in 2017.

He worked with a league of famous film directors like Satyajit Ray, Mrinal Sen, Tapan Sinha, Goutam Ghose, Aparna Sen and Rituparno Ghosh. Chatterjee has also contributed to drama and poetry during his six-decade career.

Admitted at Belle Vue Clinic in October 6 with Covid-19, Chatterjee beat the infection in a week but he needed ventilator support twice as his condition weakened due to Covid encephalopathy besides age-related ailments.



The film veteran's condition turned grave since late on Saturday night. He stopped responding to treatment early on Sunday. Chatterjee breathed his last at 12.15 pm.

Eulogising his famous

Shri Soumitra Chatterjee's death is a colossal loss to the world of cinema, cultural life of West Bengal and India. Through his works, he came to embody Bengali sensibilities, emotions and ethos. Anguished by his demise. Condolences to his family and admirers. Om Shanti."

NARENDRA MODI Prime Minister

roles in popular Bengali films *Joybaba Felunath* and *Apur Sansar*. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said on Twitter, "*Feluda*" is no more. 'Apu' said goodbye. Farewell, Soumitra

(Da) Chatterjee. He has been a legend in his lifetime. International, Indian and Bengali cinema has lost a giant. We will miss him dearly. The film world in Bengal has been orphaned. Best known for his films with Satyajit Ray, Soumitra Da was conferred with Legion of Honor, Dadasaheb Phalke Award, Banga Bibhushan, Padma Bhushan & several National Awards. A great loss. Saddened. Condolences to his family, the film fraternity & his admirers across the world."

Visiting the hospital Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee later along with her ministerial colleagues

and a host of film personalities, walked with a sea of Soumitra Chatterjee's fans in his last journey which covered his Golf Green residence, Artists Forum and Rabindra Sadan.

His funeral was performed at Keoratala Crematorium with a gun salute by the Kolkata police.

Mourning Soumitra Chatterjee's demise, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, "Shri Soumitra Chatterjee's death is a colossal loss to the world of cinema, cultural life of West Bengal and India. Through his works, he came to embody Bengali sensibilities, emotions and ethos.

Anguished by his demise. Condolences to his family and admirers. Om Shanti."

French Ambassador to India Emmanuel Lenain tweeted, "Deeply saddened to learn legendary actor Soumitra Chatterjee has passed away. A versatile artist, he earned the world's admiration and many awards, including Order of Arts and Letters & Legion of Honour. My heartfelt condolences to his family and fans."

Union home minister Amit Shah, West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar and several actors including Sharmila Tagore condoled Chatterjee's death.

IN BRIEF ISRAELI HOUSES TO COME UP IN EAST JERUSALEM

Jerusalem, Nov. 15: Israel is moving forward on the construction of hundreds of new homes for Jewish residents in a sensitive east Jerusalem neighbourhood, the country's Housing Ministry and a settlement watchdog group said Sunday.

The Housing Ministry on Sunday opened up tenders for more than 1,200 new homes in the Givat Hamatos area of Jerusalem. The settlement watchdog group Peace Now and other critics say construction there would seal off the Palestinian city of Bethlehem from east Jerusalem, further cutting off access for the Palestinians to the eastern sector of the city, which they claim as capital of their hoped-for state. The move may test ties with the incoming administration of President-elect Joe Biden, who is expected to take a firmer tack against Israeli settlement expansion after four years of a more lenient policy under President Donald Trump.

AZERBAIJAN TO PROTECT CHURCHES: PREZ

Moscow, Nov. 15: The president of Azerbaijan has promised that Churches will be protected when the strongly Muslim country takes possession of areas formerly controlled by Armenians.

President Ilham Aliyev's office said he made the promise in a telephone call with Russian President Vladimir Putin, who is deploying peacekeeping forces in the areas under an agreement that ended six weeks of fighting between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh region. Ethnic Armenian forces controlled Nagorno-Karabakh and sizeable adjacent territories since the 1994 end of a separatist war.

Fighting resumed in late September and ended with an agreement that calls for Azerbaijan to regain control of the outlying territories as well as allowing it to hold on to parts of Nagorno-Karabakh that it seized during the fighting. The first of the territories, Kalbajar, is being turned over on Sunday. Kalbajar is home to the well-known Dadivank monastery of the Armenian Apostolic Church. A day before the territory's handover, workers removed many of the monastery's sacred objects. Other residents in Kalbajar torched their own homes, fearing what will happen when Azerbaijani forces take over. Azerbaijan is about 95% Muslim and Armenians fear that churches would be damaged or closed when it takes control of the territories.

COP GRAFT: BALTIMORE TO PAY \$8 MN

Baltimore, Nov. 15: Baltimore officials are set to approve a roughly \$8 million settlement to two men who went to prison after drugs were planted on them a decade ago during an encounter with members of a rogue police unit that brutalised, robbed and falsely arrested residents.

The city's spending board is scheduled to take up the settlement Wednesday. The Board of Estimates has approved several settlements in recent weeks stemming from the misconduct of members of the Gun Trace Task Force, a once-lauded group that was supposed to take guns off the streets of Baltimore. The settlement for Umar Burley and Brent Matthews is the largest settlement in connection with the task force and surpasses the amount paid in 2015 to the family of Freddie Gray, a young Black man who died a week after he was critically injured in police custody and whose death led to civil unrest. The proposed payment includes \$6.3 million for Burley and Matthews as well as \$1.8 million to pay off a lien due to the estate of Elbert Davis, which sued Burley. Burley and Matthews encountered task force members in 2010 during an illegal traffic stop that led to a high-speed chase.

Burley crashed with another vehicle, killing Davis. Burley spent seven years in prison, while Matthews served two-and-a-half years behind bars. Their convictions were vacated in 2017 after officers cooperating in the federal investigation into the task force told authorities that a member of the unit had spoken of drugs being planted in the incident. "Mr. Burley and Mr. Matthews were overtly and undeniably framed by a conspiracy of at least four police officers," the men's attorneys, Steve Silverman, said in a statement. "It should not take an army of lawyers litigating for years to right wrongs like this."

Violence erupts as Trump supporters, rivals clash

Don backers held rally to support his unproven claims of massive voter fraud

Washington, Nov. 15: Violence erupted on the streets of downtown Washington after thousands of supporters of US President Donald Trump held a protest rally to back his unproven claims of massive voter fraud and electoral malpractices during the 2020 presidential elections. The "Million MAGA March", held a week after Democrat Joe Biden was declared the winner of the November 3 election, was mainly peaceful throughout the day on Saturday, but by late in the night, clashes erupted between Trump's supporters and counterprotesters. A mass brawl broke out later on Saturday night just five blocks away from the White House as counterprotesters clashed with a group of Trump supporters.

According to reports, a man in his 20s, believed to be a Black Lives Matter protester, received serious injuries and was rushed to a hospital after being stabbed in the back during the altercation and two police officers were also injured. The clash lasted for several minutes as the two groups wielded batons and pushed and shoved each other until cops intervened, the reports said. Thronging to Washington DC from various parts of the US, participants of the Make America Great Again (MAGA) Rally asserted that Trump won the elections and that they were in the city to express their support to their leader.

Trump, who has not yet conceded the election to the projected winner, Biden, has repeatedly asserted, without evidence, that fraud and other irregularities deprived him of mil-



Supporters of President Donald Trump protest in front of the Clark County Election Department, in Las Vegas, Nevada on Saturday. — AP

lions of votes in key battleground states. According to *Fox News*, anti-Trump demonstrators allegedly hurled eggs at Trump supporters — or stole signs, hats and banners, and lit them on fire.

Videos posted on social media showed some demonstrators and counter-demonstrators trading shoves, punches and slaps. Anti-Trump protesters clashed with law enforcement in downtown DC as they tried to make their way to a hotel where Trump supporters were staying, the *CNN* reported.

President Trump on Saturday briefly drove by the protesters through Pennsylvania Avenue on his way to his golf course in a Virginia suburb and he waved at his supporters.

Later in the day, Trump in a tweet alleged that

● **TRUMP IN a tweet alleged that news channels are not showing the massive gatherings in support of him, as he posted a picture of protestors of his MAGA rally.**

news channels are not showing the massive gatherings in support of him, as he posted a picture of protestors of his MAGA rally.

"Instead they have their reporters standing in almost empty streets. We now have SUPPRESSION BY THE PRESS. MAGA!" he said. Participants of the rally, which started at Freedom Plaza, chanted "four more years" and "stop the steal."

Sporting the red MAGA cap, they displayed large posters and banners in

support of Trump. Washington DC Metropolitan Police Department, late Saturday said that at least 20 people were arrested. Trump in a tweet blasted counter protesters who turned up at the Million MAGA March as 'Antifa scum' as he joked that they ran for the hills after violent scenes erupted in Washington DC on Saturday night.

The president claimed 'Antifa' had waited until the end of the march to attack attendees as he praised his supporters who "aggressively fought back". "Antifa SCUM ran for the hills today when they tried attacking the people at the Trump Rally, because those people aggressively fought back," he tweeted. Later, in a series of tweets, Trump attacked media outlets. — PTI

Thousands attend protest against Bibi

Jerusalem, Nov. 15: Several thousand protesters gathered outside Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's official residence in Jerusalem on Saturday night in what has become a weekly demonstration calling for the Israeli leader to resign.

The protesters have been demonstrating for some five months, saying Netanyahu is unfit to lead while he is on trial for corruption charges and because of his handling of the Coronavirus crisis.

The pandemic has hit Israel's economy hard, and many of the protest-

ers are students and young Israelis who have lost their jobs.

Many protesters held Israeli flags or black or pink flags, which the grassroots movements behind the demonstrations have adopted as symbols. With the weather cooling down ahead of the rainy winter season, turnout Saturday appeared to be lower than in recent weeks. Smaller demonstrations also were reported in Tel Aviv, outside Netanyahu's vacation home in the upscale coastal town of Caesarea and locations across the country. — AP

Peru Prez faces calls to resign

Lima, Nov. 15: The head of Peru's Congress has called for the "immediate resignation" of interim president Manuel Merino after a violent crackdown on protests against his new government left at least three dead and more than 60 injured.

Thousands have taken to the streets in days of protests against Merino following the ouster of his popular predecessor Martin Vizcarra, who was impeached on corruption allegations on Monday.

"I ask Mr. Merino to evaluate his immediate resignation," Congress head Luis Valdez said in a statement Saturday night to Channel N television.

Lawmakers will meet in an emergency session on Sunday to discuss Merino's resignation, a statement released later on the Congress Twitter account said.

The ultimatum came after news of the death of three protesters during a massive and peaceful march in Lima, which was violently repressed by police firing shotgun pellets and tear gas.

Lima mayor Jorge Munoz, from the same center-right Popular Action party as Merino, also demanded the resignation of the president.

● **THOUSANDS HAVE taken to the streets in days of protests against Merino following the ouster of his popular predecessor Martin Vizcarra, who was impeached on corruption allegations on Monday. The ultimatum came after news of the death of three protesters during a massive and peaceful march in Lima.**

"I just found out about the third death" in the protests, said the Archbishop of Lima, Carlos Castillo, deploring the police crackdown in a statement to state television. Police reported two deaths, while the National Human Rights Coordinator indicated it was investigating whether there were four.

The Ombudsman's Office said the first fatality, a 25-year-old man, was killed by pellet shots to the head and face. At least 63 protesters were injured, the health ministry said.

The police tactics have been criticized by the UN and rights organizations such as Amnesty International since the protests began on Tuesday. — AFP

Gilgit-Baltistan assembly poll over, counting begins

Islamabad, Nov. 15: Wearing face masks, the people of Gilgit-Baltistan in northern Pakistan voted on Sunday in the third legislative assembly election amidst tight security. India has slammed Pakistan for its decision to hold election in Gilgit-Baltistan and said any action to alter the status of the militarily-occupied region has no legal basis.

The voting which commenced at 8.00 am (local time) ended peacefully without any break at 5.00 pm and no untoward incident was reported. The counting of votes has started and complete results are expected by tomorrow. Earlier, the polling officials said that the voters present inside the polling stations would be allowed to cast ballots even after the end of polling time. There are 24 seats for the contest but polling on one seat was postponed, leaving 23 seats up for grabs. As many as 330 candidates, including four women, are in the contest, they said. India has opposed Pakistan's plan to hold election in Gilgit-Baltistan. — PTI



People queue to cast their ballot at a polling station during the legislative assembly election in Skardu city in Gilgit-Baltistan region of Pakistan on Sunday. — AFP

Special courts for speedy rape trials

Islamabad, Nov. 15: Pakistan government is all set to promulgate next week an ordinance seeking establishment of special courts for speedy trial of rape cases, according to a media report.

Under the proposed law, rape cases would not be investigated by ordinary police officials and only a gazetted officer up to the level of DIG or SSP would monitor these cases, Adv-

BIDEN, HARRIS, TRUMP SEND DIWALI GREETINGS

Washington, Nov. 15: President-elect Joe Biden, his deputy Kamala Harris and incumbent President Donald Trump have extended Diwali greetings to those celebrating the festival of lights. "To the millions of Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, and Buddhists celebrating the Festival of Lights, @DrBiden and I send our best wishes for a #HappyDiwali. May your new year be filled with hope, happiness, and prosperity. Sal Mubarak," Biden tweeted on Saturday. Harris, who scripted history by becoming the first Indian-American and Black woman vice president in the US, extended greetings on the occasion of Diwali. "Happy Diwali and Sal Mubarak! @DougEmhoff and I wish everyone celebrating around the world a safe, healthy, and joyous new year," Vice President-elect Harris tweeted. In a joint statement, Biden and Harris wished a happy Diwali to everyone celebrating the festival of lights across the US, India and the world.

Trump shared a picture of him lighting a lamp in the White House along with Indian American members of his administration. "Happy Diwali" was written on the photo. "During this Festival of Lights, friends, neighbours, and loved ones join in fellowship to commemorate the spiritual triumph of good over evil, light over darkness. — PTI

Virus curbs tighten in Europe as global deaths top 1.3 mn

Vienna, Nov. 15: A swathe of new restrictions to curtail a second wave of Coronavirus infections were announced or came into force from Austria to Greece, Italy to Portugal on Saturday as the global death toll climbed above 1.3 million. More than 53 million have been infected worldwide by Covid-19, which is running rampant throughout America and Europe, forcing governments to take more action despite the potential economic devastation.

Austria joined a growing trend announcing schools and non-essential shops would close from Tuesday, having imposed a partial lockdown two weeks ago. "There are still many who say that infections don't happen at school, in shops or services," said Chancellor Sebastian Kurtz.

"But the truth is the authorities can no longer trace 77 percent of new infections, which means they no longer know where contamination is happening." Greece, battling a saturated national health system, announced it

NEW COMPOUNDS TO TREAT NOVEL VIRUS IDENTIFIED

Washington, Nov. 15: Researchers have discovered new drug compounds that target a protein which enables the novel Coronavirus and other viruses with pandemic potential to replicate in human cells, an advance that may lead to new therapeutics for Covid-19.

According to the researchers, including those from the University of Maryland in the US, these compounds disrupt the functioning of a protein complex inside human cells that are critical for the replication and survival of coronaviruses, including the one that causes Covid-19. — PTI

would shut all schools after imposing a nationwide night curfew from Friday. — AFP

German ad hails couch potatoes

Berlin, Nov. 15: The German government has released a tongue-in-cheek ad hailing an unlikely hero in the fight against the Coronavirus pandemic: The humble couch potato.

The 90-second video posted online Saturday begins with an elderly man recalling his 'service' to the nation back when he was just a young student "in the winter of 2020, when the whole country's eyes were on us."

"I had just turned 22 and was studying engineering," he continues, "when the second wave hit." With violins stirring at viewers' heart strings, the setting switches to a scene of the narrator as a young man.

"Suddenly the fate of this country lay in our hands," he says. — AP

SECRET PARTIES TEST FRENCH LOCKDOWN

Paris, Nov. 15: France is in a second lockdown amid a second wave of the Coronavirus, but some people can't stop partying.

Police broke up one gigantic fete outside Paris early Saturday, reportedly using special grenades to do so. Police intervened to end a middle-of-the-night house party attended by at least 300 people "in total disdain for health rules," the Paris Police Prefecture tweeted.

Party-goers threw bottles at police, police said. Police had to toss special grenades as intermediate weapons to break up the gathering and escape. — AP

Indian couple's drive-by wedding

Dubai, Nov. 15: An Indian couple in the UAE has organised a "drive-by wedding ceremony" where guests were allowed to wish them from their cars only, in a bid to maintain social distancing due to the Covid-19, a media report said.

Muhammed Jazem and Almas Ahmed from Kerala first had their 'Nikah' then they stood under a flower arch outside their home in Dubai for a socially-distanced wedding reception, *Khaleej Times* reported. The couple's family members and friends, who could not attend the marriage, stopped their cars outside the newlyweds' home and wished them.

"We asked our guests to stop only for a few moments, give us their best wishes, take a picture and then they could drive away," Jazem said. "We instructed them not to step out of the car, to keep moving to avoid traffic, and not pull over," he said. Jazem and Almas, who grew up in the UAE, had an arranged marriage. Jazem, an aeronautical engineer with Emirates Airline, said that since their parents and many of their relatives are elderly, they did not want to have a big event because they fall under the high-risk category. — PTI

LEADERS | WARNED

World faces multiple famines of biblical proportions '21 to be worse than '20: Nobel UN agency

United Nations, Nov. 15: The head of the World Food Programme says the Nobel Peace Prize has given the UN agency a spotlight and megaphone to warn world leaders that next year is going to be worse than this year, and without billions of dollars "we are going to have famines of biblical proportions in 2021."

David Beasley said in an interview with *The Associated Press* that the Norwegian Nobel Committee was looking at the work the agency does every day in conflicts, disasters and refugee camps, often putting staffers' lives at risk to feed millions of hungry people — but also to send "a message to the world that it's getting worse out there ... (and) that our

hardest work is yet to come." "It was so timely because we've been fighting to get above the choir," Beasley said of last month's award, pointing to the news being dominated by the US elections and the Covid-19 pandemic, and the difficulty of getting global attention focused on "the travesty that we're facing around the world." "So this was really a gift from above," Beasley said, recalling the surprise and delight of WFP's 20,000 staffers worldwide, and his own shock at being interrupted during a meeting in Niger in Africa's Sahel region with the news.

Beasley recalled his warning to the UN Security Council in April that as the world was deal-

● **WORLD FOOD programme needs \$15 billion next year — \$5 billion just to avert famine and \$10 billion to carry out the agency's global programmes.**

ing with the Coronavirus pandemic, it was also "on the brink of a hunger pandemic" that could lead to "multiple famines of biblical proportions" within a few months if immediate action wasn't taken.

"We were able to avert it in 2020 ... because the world leaders responded with money, stimulus packages, deferral of debt," he said. Now, Beasley said, Covid-19 is surging again, economies are continuing to deteriorate particularly

in low- and middle-income countries, and there is another wave of lockdowns and shutdowns. But he said the money that was available in 2020 isn't going to be available in 2021, so he has been using the Nobel to meet leaders virtually and in person, talk to parliaments, and give speeches to sensitize those with power to "this tragedy that we are facing — crises that really are going to be extraordinary over the next, who knows, 12 to 18 months."

"Everybody now wants to meet with the Nobel Peace Prize winner," he said, explaining he now gets 45 minutes instead of 15 minutes with leaders and is able to go into depth and explain how bad things are going to be next

year and how leaders are going to have to prioritize programs, Beasley said.

"And the response has really been good." "I'm telling them you're not going to have enough money to fund all the projects you historically fund," he said. "Those are important things," Beasley said, but he likened the upcoming crisis to the Titanic saying "right now, we really need to focus on icebergs, and icebergs are famine, starvation, destitution and migration." Beasley said WFP needs \$15 billion next year — \$5 billion just to avert famine and \$10 billion to carry out the agency's global programmes including for malnourished children and school lunches. — AP

DECCAN Chronicle

16 NOVEMBER 2020

No sign of a thaw yet at the LAC in Ladakh

India's official signalling to its own citizens on where the situation stands in eastern Ladakh, where China has positioned some 50,000 troops along with artillery and armour, obliging India to play the matching game, is confusing and far from reassuring.

In May this year Indians woke up to the nasty fact that the Chinese armed forces had crossed over into India's side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) across eastern Ladakh, from north to south. The government was caught wholly unawares. It simply did not matter to China that the Doklam crisis in the eastern Himalayas had been just about defused in 2017, with the informal Wuhan summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping then offering hope of a mutual understanding toward a measure of stability in bilateral relations. Now we know better.

Although possessing no *locus standi*, China used the emasculation of Article 370 in respect of Jammu and Kashmir and declaring Ladakh as a Union territory in August 2019 as a supposed justification for its military forces to move into the Indian side across a vast swathe of land. Starting from then, the government has refused to take the people into confidence about the status of our borders in the Ladakh region. Indeed, its communication with the public appears to have been less than transparent.

In mid-June, the PM told the Opposition leaders in a virtual formal meeting that China had not intruded into Indian territory. This may have been designed to save face and to avoid political damage within the country, but this was no help to India's cause. The Chinese have continued to throw the PM's words back at us. Even so, the militaries of the two countries have so far held eight rounds of talks with the intention of "disengagement" at the "friction points", which will hopefully lead to a "de-escalation" in eastern Ladakh.

After the eighth round earlier this month, the Indian media, obviously fed by unnamed government or defence sources, communicated a sense of hope of reaching disengagement shortly. Central to this was the idea that the Chinese had agreed to pull back their forces from "Finger 4" (the "fingers" refer to mountainous spurs on the north bank of the Pangong Lake) eastward to "Finger 8", where the LAC runs on the Indian side. The intervening space would be declared as a "no-patrol zone" by the troops of either side. Similarly, on the south bank of the lake and the Kailash Range area broadly, the Indians were to vacate the heights they had seized and these tactically sensitive points were also to be converted into no-patrol zones.

If the Indian government is amenable to such ideas, it will be pushed into a further disadvantageous position since the proposed "no-patrol" zones are within the LAC on the Indian side. Anyhow, for now the whole thing is academic. China's *Global Times* newspaper, an official propaganda sheet, has rejected the contents of the Indian media stories, claiming that India's understanding of the LAC itself is faulty.

Despite this, the PM said, addressing troops in Longewala on Diwali day, that those coveting Indian territory will be given a "*prachand jawab*", or fierce response. There has been little sign of that so far. First things first — let the government come out with a White Paper laying out the factual position.

Covid-19: Stick to protocol

The steady quantum of reports that comes out of the research laboratories all over the world about one vaccine candidate or the other clearing another step has been the only positive news on the Covid-19 front of late. As per the World Health Organisation, there are at present more than 100 Covid-19 vaccine candidates under development, with a number of them in the human trial phase.

Close on the heels Pfizer announcing that the vaccine it develops with BioNTech has proved 90 per cent effective in preventing Covid-19 has come the news Sputnik-V being developed by the Russians is 92 per cent effective. The phase-III trials of the vaccine being developed by Oxford University along with AstraZeneca are being undertaken all over the world including in India. It has also been reported that India will get 10 crore doses of the vaccine by December this year, which should come as a big relief for us. US manufacturer Moderna has reported major advancements in the trials. Covaxin, which is being developed by Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech International Limited along with Indian Council for Medical Research, has also entered the human trial phase. Ahmedabad-based Zyds Cadila's vaccine candidate is expected to enter phase III clinical trials by December.

It could be for the first time that the search for a vaccine has covered such substantial distance in such a short time as in the case of Covid-19 vaccine. However, experts are worried over the timeline it could take for it to reach everyone who wanted it. The director of All-India Institute of Medical Sciences, who is a member of the Union government's Covid-19 task force, has said it could take at least two years for the vaccine to reach all. The virus has not gone anywhere, and the vaccine is yet to come. Strict adherence to Covid-19 protocols is the only option people are left with for the time being.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

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Subhani



Will apex court protect liberty for all citizens?



Pavan K. Varma

Chanakya's View

The Supreme Court of India upheld the principle of personal liberty by granting interim bail to Republic TV's chief Arnab Goswami in a 2018 case where he is accused of abetment of suicide. This is a good thing. There are some who do not like Goswami's views, or the abusive felicity with which he name-calls and verbally humiliates his ideological "opponents" or demeans those whom he does not like. However, anyone's personal likes and dislikes are not material to the protection of his or her constitutional rights. If his personal liberty has been unfairly violated, and he deserves to get bail, he should not be arbitrarily kept in prison by the law enforcement machinery of a state government with which he is at loggerheads.

It was heartening for citizens to hear the clarification call of Justice D.Y. Chandrachud: "If we as a constitutional court do not lay down the law and protect liberty, then who will?" The message was clear. The highest court in the land will intervene to protect personal liberty at any cost, list a case of this nature with lightning speed, overrule the standard judicial procedures like first pursuing a bail petition before the designated lower court, and hear the petition even if means working on the weekend. This is also a good thing.

However, such heartening news may not have bought much hope to Father Stan Swamy, who is languishing in Talaja jail in Navi Mumbai. The 83-year-old tribal rights activist has been incarcerated

since January 2018 for his alleged Maoist links in the Elgar Parishad case. On November 6 this year, Swamy moved a petition before the National Investigation Agency special court in which he asked for a straw or a sipper cup in jail. "I cannot hold a glass as my hands are unsteady due to Parkinson's (disease)", his petition said. He was asking not for big things like personal liberty and freedom. His only request was for a sipper cup or a paper straw so that he could drink water without spilling. A straw or a sipper are not dangerous items, nor are they luxury items which prisoners should not have. But that request does symbolise some things as important as personal liberty, which the Supreme Court so vigilantly defended. It symbolises a human being's legitimate craving for dignity; of his supplication for compassion; of his expectation of humane treatment; of his hope in a caring system for those in deep medical distress. The special court judge who heard this desperate petition simply asked the NIA to file its reply on the matter on November 26.

For 20 days Father Stan Swamy will continue to wait with his trem-

A straw or a sipper are not dangerous items, nor are they luxury items which prisoners should not have. And Fr Swamy's request does symbolise personal liberty, which the Court so vigilantly defended.

For 20 days Fr Stan Swamy will continue to wait with his trembling hands for a straw or a sipper to be provided to him... And there is no guarantee that... on Nov. 26, the court would accede to the request.

bling hands for a straw or a sipper to be provided to him. The NIA will get *twenty days* to consider whether such a request should be conceded to. And there is no guarantee that when it does file its reply on November 26, it would accede to the request. The legal position in the matter may require further deliberation. The rules need to be checked out for "dangerous" prisoners. If these don't provide for a straw to be given to prisoners, how can an exception be made? After all a sipper, that would enable an 83-year-old prisoner suffering from advanced Parkinson's disease to take a sip of water, could sabotage the interests of the state.

Perhaps the honourable Supreme Court could take suo motu cognisance of such matters as well. Travesty of justice has many forms. In some cases, the rule book is thrown at those deprived of personal liberty, who languish in prison for months without bail. In others, matters are fast tracked at incredible speed, and the judiciary makes public its unwavering commitment to protect personal liberty. Perhaps, the highest court of the land will also then take steps to ensure that the personal liberty of people like the octogenarian Varavara Rao, who has been repeatedly denied bail, and not given permission to be admitted to hospital. The 80-year-old poet, teacher and activist, who has been in jail without trial since 2018, again for alleged Maoist links in the Elgar Parishad case, "was

found lying on a soiled bed soaked in urine with no one to attend to him". His health is extremely precarious; he has suffered deliriums in jail, where he also contracted the Covid-19 virus. Perhaps the Supreme Court may also ask its judicial subordinates why bail in the case of a pregnant Safoora Zargar, arrested for participating in the protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act, took as much as 70 days to be processed.

The nation looks upon the Supreme Court, and the judiciary in general, as an agency of the last resort to get justice. When the Supreme Court declares that it will intervene proactively to ensure personal liberty, it raises, in the thousands of prisoners who are for untenable and inhumane reasons being denied personal liberty, the possibility of hope. Surely, the Government of India is not so vulnerable that it treats people above the age of 80 who are nearly disabled, as "enemies" who can destabilise the State. The administering of justice should never be selective, or so lacking in humanity that it revolts the human conscience. When Father Stan Swamy is given the freedom to drink water with a semblance of dignity, we will believe that the Supreme Court's concern for Arnab Goswami has a larger meaning and a message for the conduct of the judiciary as a whole.

The writer, an author and a former diplomat, is in politics

Travesty of justice has many forms. In some cases, the rule book is thrown at those deprived of personal liberty, who languish in prison for months without bail. In others, matters are fast tracked...

LETTERS

DON'S CHARACTER

It was a hilarious potpourri and food for thought (How to be a good loser... Don needs crash course, DC, Nov. 14). I do share her view that one's true character is revealed when one loses and not when one wins. In fact, one needs to exit when one is at his/her peak.

Dr C. Ghanshyam
Visakhapatnam

FLOATING HOTEL

The owners of Bangladesh cargo ship MV Maa that went aground near Tenneti Park declared its salvage uneconomical and decided to abandon the same (*Vizag likely to convert MV Maa into a hotel*, DC, Nov. 14). This is a fit case for taking it to its logical conclusion. The AP tourism minister should prioritise this venture since the logistics of the vessel are extremely favourable for a floating motel.

K. Nehru Patnaik
Visakhapatnam

OBAMA'S MEMOIR

Barack Obama's observations about Rahul deserve to be taken seriously by all Indians before even considering to vote for him as an MP in future. The People of Amethi did recognise his caliber or lack of it, but the Wayanad electorate would have by now learnt a bitter lesson for sending him to Lok Sabha in the 2019 polls. Thanks to Obama for the truth spoken about the "future" Prime Minister.

Govardhana Myneedu
Vijayawada

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

86 p.c. husbands want wives to do jobs

NEW DELHI, Nov. 15
Husbands of 86 per cent working women in the country "want, very much want, or at least do not mind" their wives' being in job or profession because of the extra money accruing to the family.

They have, however, not been able to accept that working wives should have a social status of their own.

This is disclosed in a study on the problems of working wives by eminent sociologist, Dr. (Mrs.) Promilla Kapur, in her book "Marriage and the Working Woman in India". A result of over to years' research the study is based on questionnaires and interviews involving 300 working women.

Anita Katyal
Political
Gup-Shup



Why Shah held back in Bihar; hunt for unhappy Trinamul men

When home minister Amit Shah tested positive for the Coronavirus and was hospitalised twice, it was generally accepted that the BJP's chief election strategist would not be joining the poll campaign in Bihar because of medical reasons. But Mr Shah's recent two-day visit to West Bengal immediately set tongues wagging as people wondered that if Mr Shah had recovered sufficiently, why didn't he make it for the last phase of the campaign in neighbouring Bihar? While it is true that Mr Shah kept away from Bihar on doctor's orders, the home minister was also not happy with the fact that he would be constrained from propagating his hard Hindutva line in his speeches. The BJP had decided that it would play down the communal card in Bihar as identity politics usually takes precedence here. Since the home minister and Hindutva are inseparable, it would have been difficult for Mr Shah to contain himself and speak about issues that do not have a dash of

minority-bashing or Hindu nationalism. Though Yogi Adityanath did do his bit, he was promptly put down by Nitish Kumar.

Is the Madhya Pradesh government's women and child department jinxed? How else can one explain why the incumbent minister, Imarti Devi, previously with the Congress and now with the BJP, was unable to hold her seat in the recently-concluded byelections. According to the grapevine in Bhopal, ministers who have headed this department have invariably failed to stage a comeback. The previous minister Maya Singh did not get a ticket in the last Assembly poll while an earlier minister Ranjana Baghel had also failed to make the grade. It was widely expected that Imarti Devi would come through with flying colours. Not only is she Jyotiraditya Scindia's camp follower but she was also in the news in the run-up to the election when former chief minister Kamal Nath used derogatory language and referred to her

as an "item". The BJP had launched an offensive against Kamal Nath for insulting a woman and had approached the Election Commission that withdrew the Congress leader's star campaigner status. But despite these efforts and the publicity, Imarti Devi was unable to break the jinx.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's emphatic declaration that Janata Dal (United) leader Nitish Kumar will remain Bihar chief minister has not gone down well with a section in the BJP that feels the top post rightfully belongs to their party since it has a higher tally in the Assembly. In fact, even before the election, the BJP's Bihar unit had been urging its Central leadership to stake claim to the chief minister's post since it has emerged as the dominant force in Bihar. However, Mr Modi is not pressing his party's claim as it would not like to give Nitish Kumar a reason to switch over to the other side. The BJP has decided it is better to forgo the

chief's minister's post rather than risk losing yet another ally. As it is, there is talk that regional parties, which are making tentative moves to form a joint front, would approach Nitish Kumar to join them and if he was at a loose end, the JD(U) could even be propped up as its prime ministerial candidate.

Now that Bihar is in the bag, the BJP has shifted focus to West Bengal, which goes to polls next year. Keen to expand its footprint in the East, the BJP is eyeing disgruntled leaders and workers of the Trinamul Congress, which can be persuaded to join the saffron party. West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee has reason to worry as the BJP is determined to dethrone her and will not stop at anything in its mission. It has deployed her former colleague Mukul Roy to identify the unhappy leaders in the Trinamul. In addition, the BJP plans to take a hard look at Trinamul leaders whose names figure in cases of financial impropriety. It will not be surprising if these

cases are suddenly activated in the coming months, only to disappear miraculously once the person concerned crosses over to the BJP.

Former Madhya Pradesh chief minister Kamal Nath faces an uncertain future after he failed to stop the BJP from picking up a substantial number of seats in the state byelections. Mr Nath currently holds two posts - he is leader of the Congress legislature party and the state unit president. With Congress insiders blaming Mr Nath for the party's poor performance, there is a growing demand that the party follow the principle of "one man, one post" and replace Mr Nath as state unit president. Mr Nath would ideally like to return to Delhi as he is used to playing on a larger stage but there is no role for him here. He may well be forced to stay on in Madhya Pradesh and focus on grooming his son, a first time MP from Chhindwara.

Anita Katyal is a Delhi-based journalist

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	43,637.98	0.45
Nifty 50	12,780.25	0.47
S&P 500*	3,566.86	0.84
Dollar (₹)	74.61	0.04
Pound Sterling (₹)	98.19	0.21
Euro (₹)	88.11	0.049
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	50,425*241	0.47
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	42.87	-0.66
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.878	-0.024
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.893	0.007

* As of Friday/Saturday

FPIs invest over ₹35K cr in stocks, debt this month

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have invested a massive Rs 35,109 crore in Indian markets in November so far, as corporate earnings and reforms measures undertaken by the government to revive investment activities kept the investors' sentiment upbeat. According to the depositories data, FPIs invested a net sum of Rs 29,436 crore into equities and Rs 5,673 crore into debt segment during Nov. 2-13.

UAE 'golden' visa allows 10-year residency to pros



The UAE has approved granting "golden" visas allowing 10-year residency to certain professionals and others. All holders of doctorate degrees, medical doctors and also computer, electronics, programming, electrical and biotechnology engineers are eligible. Also eligible are those with specialised degrees in artificial intelligence, big data and epidemiology, as well as school students living in the UAE who rank top in studies.

Ministry seeks opinion on social security code

The Ministry of Labour and Employment has sought feedback from stakeholders on draft rules under the Code on Social Security, 2020. The feedback has to be given within 45 days from Nov. 13. The draft rules provide for operationalisation of provisions in the Code on Social Security, 2020 relating to EPFO, ESIC, gratuity, maternity benefit, social security and cess in respect of construction workers, gig workers and the like.

Muhurat trading: Sensex, Nifty soar new highs

Equity benchmarks surged to lifetime highs on Saturday as investors built up fresh positions in the special Muhurat trading session to mark the beginning of Hindu Samvat year 2077. The Sensex soared 194.98 points or 0.45 per cent to close at a record 43,637.98. Intra-day, it hit its all-time high of 43,830.93. The Nifty advanced 60.30 points, or 0.47 per cent, to finish at its lifetime high of 12,780.25.



World's biggest trade agreement floats 15-country bloc Asia-Pacific nations sign RCEP pact without India

GURDIP SINGH SINGAPORE, NOV. 15

Fifteen Asia-Pacific nations, including China, on Sunday signed the world's biggest trade agreement, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), sans India with hopes that it will help recover from the shocks of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The RCEP was signed after eight years of negotiations at the annual summit of Southeast Asian leaders and their regional partners, held virtually this year.

The agreement, which covers almost a third of the world economy, will progressively lower tariffs across many areas in the coming years, reported Channel News Asia.

After the signing, all countries would have to ratify the RCEP within two years before it becomes effective.

India, a leading consumer-driven market in the region, pulled out of talks last year, concerned that the elimination of tariffs would open its markets to a flood of imports.

But other nations have said in the past that the door remains open for India's participation in the RCEP, influenced by China.

The RCEP was first proposed in 2012 and loops in 10 Asean economies—Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia—along



SIGNATORIES WAIT FOR INDIA

New Delhi, Nov. 15: Countries that have signed the RCEP agreement can start negotiations with India for joining the pact once New Delhi submits a written request stating its intention for the same, according to a declaration.

On November 4 last year, India walked out of mega free trade agreement as negotiations failed to address New Delhi's outstanding issues and concerns.

The remaining 15 member countries have signed the RCEP agreement and have stated that the pact would

remain open to India.

"The RCEP signatory states will commence negotiations with India at any time after the signing of RCEP agreement once India submits a request in writing of its intention to accede to RCEP agreement to the depository of the RCEP agreement, taking into consideration the latest status of India's participation in RCEP negotiations and any new development thereafter," according to the Ministers' Declaration on India's Participation in RCEP.

The declaration is dated November 11. —PTI

with China, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand and Australia.

Host country Vietnam's prime minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc said the pandemic has harmed global and regional trade and investment flows, including the countries partici-

pating in the RCEP talks.

The global and regional economies are facing huge obstacles and challenges caused by not only Covid-19 but also decreased global trade, he was quoted as saying by the Vietnam News Agency (VNA).

The conclusion of the

negotiations of the RCEP, the largest free trade agreement in the world, will send a strong message of Asean's leading role in supporting the multilateral trade system, helping to create a new trading structure in the region, VNA quoted Phuc as saying.

Singapore prime minister Lee Hsien Loong said he joins fellow RCEP countries "in hoping that India too, will be able to come on board at some point so that the participation in the RCEP will fully reflect the emerging patterns of integration and regional cooperation in Asia."

They make up nearly a third of the world's population and account for 29 per cent of global gross domestic product, he said.

"We have reached a major milestone of signing this agreement today. It has taken us eight years, 46 negotiating meetings and 19 ministerial meetings to get here," he said.

Malaysia's trade minister Mohamed Azmin Ali, ahead of the summit, had said, "after eight years of negotiating with blood, sweat and tears, we have finally come to the moment where we will seal the RCEP Agreement this Sunday."

The four-day Asean summit included meetings between Southeast Asian leaders and their counterparts from China, Japan and South Korea in the Asean Plus Three Summit, as well as the East Asia Summit and RCEP Summit. —PTI

Infosys says 63% of US ops no longer tied to visas

New Delhi, Nov. 15: Infosys has been "intensely focused" on skilling and generating local employment in markets like the US, which has helped the IT services major become about 63 per cent visa-independent in the US and over 50 per cent in Europe and Australia-New Zealand, its chief operating officer Pravin Rao said.

Infosys, which counts the US as its biggest market, said it is still early to comment on the approach the new US administration could take towards work visas but it expects to continue benefiting from its localisation efforts.

"We continue to see challenges to mobility of talent. New proposed immigration regulations in USA could impact onsite wage costs, granting of visas, tenure of visas, and overall costs of compliance."

"Our localisation programme across USA, Europe and Australia, launched three years ago, mitigates many of these," said at a recent analyst meet.

He said Infosys has eight innovation hubs across the US and the EU, nine global Digital Studios (including a 5G lab in Melbourne) and seven global cyber defence centres.

"We are close to 63 per cent visa-independent in the US and over 50 per cent in Europe and ANZ," he said. —PTI

RIL acquires 96% in Urban Ladder



New Delhi, Nov. 15: Reliance Industries' retail arm has picked up a 96 per cent stake in online furniture retailer Urban Ladder for over Rs 182 crore.

In August, RIL had acquired a majority stake in digital pharmacy marketplace Netmeds for around Rs 620 crore.

Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd (RRVL), a subsidiary of Reliance Industries (RIL), has acquired equity shares of Urban Ladder Home Decor Solutions Pvt Ltd for a cash consideration of Rs 182.12 crore, RIL said on Saturday.

The investment represents 96 per cent holding in the equity share capital of Urban Ladder, it added.

RRVL has an option of acquiring the balance stake, taking its shareholding to 100 per cent.

Besides, RRVL has proposed to make a further investment of up to Rs 75 crore in Urban Ladder.

The further investment is expected to be completed by December 2023, it said.

This acquisition will help RIL in bolstering its presence in the fast-growing e-commerce segment and widening the bouquet of consumer products provided by it as it looks to compete with e-commerce majors as Amazon and Flipkart.

The investment will further enable the group's digital and new commerce initiatives and widen the bouquet of consumer products provided by the group, while enhancing user engagement and experience across its retail offerings, it said.

According to RIL, no governmental or regulatory approvals were required for the investment. RIL, which has been on a fund raising spree by selling stakes in RRVL, had earlier this month announced a Rs 9,555 crore investment from Public Investment Fund of Saudi Arabia, taking total fundraise in the last two months to Rs 47,265 crore.

The investment had valued RRVL at a pre-money equity value of Rs 4,587 lakh crore. Reliance Retail Ltd, a subsidiary of RRVL, operates India's largest retail business with 12,000 stores.

The booming e-commerce market in India will be worth \$86 billion by 2024, according to research firm Forrester. —PTI

Drug firms recall products in US

New Delhi, Nov. 15: Indian drug firms like Marksans Pharma, Aurobindo Pharma, Zydus and Jubilant are recalling products in the US market, as per the latest enforcement report by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

While Marksans Pharma is recalling a diabetes drug, Zydus Pharmaceuticals (USA) is recalling a drug used to reduce stomach acid. Similarly, Aurobindo Pharma (USA) is recalling a pain relieving drug while Jubilant Cadista is recalling a medication used to treat schizophrenia.

Marksans is recalling close to six lakh bottles of diabetes drug metformin hydrochloride extended-release tablets in strengths of 500 mg and 750 mg in the US market. The medication lot has been manufactured at the firm's Goa-based facility.

As per the FDA, the company is recalling the prod-

uct due to deviation from the current good manufacturing practices (CGMP).

"FDA analysis detected N-Nitrosodimethylamine (NDMA) impurity above the acceptable intake level," it noted.

NDMA has been defined as a probable carcinogen.

The FDA said Zydus Pharmaceuticals (USA) is recalling 14,748 cartons of lansoprazole delayed-release orally disintegrating tablets due to failed dissolution specification. The product has been manufactured by Ahmedabad-based Cadila Healthcare.

The FDA has classified the initiatives taken by Marksans and Zydus as class II recalls. Further, Aurobindo Pharma USA is recalling 7,440 bottles of ibuprofen oral suspension drug for labelling error.

Jubilant Cadista Pharmaceuticals, Inc is recalling 23,616 blister packs of olanzapine orally disintegrating tablets for being "subpotent."

INDIA RECOVERING FASTER: OXFORD ECONOMICS

New Delhi, Nov 15: The Indian economy is seen recovering faster than expected and the Reserve Bank is likely to have come to an end of the rate easing cycle, according to global forecasting firm Oxford Economics.

It further said inflation is expected to average significantly above 6 per cent in the fourth quarter and the RBI may hold policy rates in the December monetary policy review.

"While Q4 is likely to mark the peak for inflation, we have turned more cautious on the trajectory over 2021," it said.

Costlier vegetables and eggs pushed up retail inflation to a nearly six-and-a-half year high of 7.61 per cent in October.

"At the same time, robust bottom-up activity data suggest that the economy may be recovering faster than we anticipated. As such, we see an increasing possibility that the RBI's easing cycle has ended," it said. —PTI

Minimum broadband speed needs to be 2 Mbps: Forum

New Delhi, Nov. 15: Industry think-tank BIF has said a revision of broadband definition and speeds in India are long overdue and that it should be reviewed and upgraded to 2 Mbps from current 512 kbps, which is "dismally low".

The Broadband India Forum (BIF) has said communications technology has transformed radically over the past years and entirely new markets for data services have emerged across the nation. Numerous modern internet applications and use cases now require higher speeds than prescribed by the current definition.

"It is our view that since the current definition of broadband captures neither the development of the technology nor the Indian consumers' appetite for high speed broadband services, it must be reviewed and



redefined," the BIF said in its submission to Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai). The submissions form part of BIF's response to the regulator's consultation paper on 'road map to promote broadband connectivity and enhanced broadband speed'.

Trai had floated the discussion paper to seek stakeholder views on various issues, including whether existing definition of broadband need to be reviewed along with threshold download and upload speeds; possibility of defining different cate-

gories of broadband depending on speeds; need for speed measurement programmes in the country, amongst others.

When contacted, BIF president T. V. Ramachandran said the current definition of broadband in India at 512 kbps is dismally low, and the upgrade to 2 Mbps for the same is long overdue, even by the national policy mandates.

According to the BIF, the broadband speeds in India, even post the introduction of 4G, are less than half of the global good practices.

It suggested that a network must provide 2 Mbps download and upload speeds to be considered a broadband.

Different categories of broadband such as 'Basic, Fast, and Ultra-Fast' would help set optional thresholds that can serve distinct use cases, it said.

—PTI

ONGC NET PROFIT DOWN 55% IN Q2

New Delhi, Nov. 15: Top oil and gas producer ONGC booked a Rs 1,238-crore impairment loss, which together with a fall in prices led to a 55 per cent drop in the company's September quarter net profit.

Standalone net profit at Rs 2,878 crore in July-September was 54.6 per cent lower than Rs 6,336 crore net profit a year ago, the company said.

Revenue dropped 31 per cent to Rs 16,917 crore.

The company got \$41.38 for every barrel of crude oil it produced and sold in the second quarter of the current fiscal. This was 31.4 per cent lower than \$60.33 per barrel price it had got in July-September 2019. Gas price was also down by more than one-third to \$2.39 per million British thermal unit.

—PTI

KEEPING | COUNT

Out of touch with finances? Here are steps to help you level the playing field with your partner

Wives, stop leaving money management to your spouse

FARNOOSH TORABI NOV. 15

Another day, another study suggesting women are bad with money.

A UBS Global Wealth Management survey of over 1,800 married men and women recently found that nearly half of the women-led by Millennials-defer major financial and investment decisions to their spouses.

The wives cited reasons for this such as not wanting to argue, having "no idea where to begin" and believing their spouses are better with money. Close to 60 per cent said simply that they wanted to be "taken care of."

While the sample of women in the study is narrow (the people surveyed were wealthy), the financial imbalance in marriage that the findings underscore is hardly an

anomaly. I speak to hundreds of women each year about their money. Financial avoidance is a recurring narrative among women and wives, often passed down from previous generations.

Now in the pandemic, with more women losing their jobs or dropping out of the workforce than men, traditional gender roles in marriage are increasingly at play, including deferring significant financial decisions to husbands.

We already know the risks inherent to burying your head in the sand-things like getting a false sense of security, scrambling to piece together your finances when a spouse is no longer around or worse, and feeling financially trapped in a bad relationship. So let's discuss tangible solutions.

If you find yourself out



of touch with your finances, here are steps to help you level the playing field with your partner. In the end, the goal is to arrive at a place where you feel like an active participant in the decisions that impact your financial life together.

Go to the dark place. For just a moment imagine yourself suddenly left alone needing to manage your finances independently after years of being

in the dark. Or consider wanting out of your relationship, with no idea about the current balances in your joint brokerage account, or even how to access them, to ensure assets get divided fairly.

If, like some of the women in this study, you worry about not knowing where to begin today, think about how lost you'd be later if and when you really need to manage your investments, life insurance and will, with your partner out of the picture.

The facts are that women tend to live longer and are more likely to be alone in old age. We often face higher long-term care costs.

This exercise isn't meant to add anxiety to your life, but to provide the wakeup call necessary to understand the risk that comes with walking through your financial life blindfolded. Face the "what ifs"

and you might be motivated to embrace your finances.

Get back in the game. This will require a conversation with your partner; but it doesn't have to be hard. Try something to the effect of: "I've been thinking, and starting this week (or month), I'd like to be more in touch with our finances... It doesn't help you or me when I'm not knowledgeable about things." Your partner should understand and be open to it.

If not, explore why. In my experience, a spouse's resistance to financial transparency and co-piloting big decisions can be an indication of larger issues.

I hope this goes smoothly, but bottom line: You shouldn't feel like you need to get "permission" to know how money's getting managed.

Start with access and

transparency. Sharing a password-protected document that provides a list of all usernames and passwords to your financial accounts is an easy first step that promotes equal access to your shared financial life. From there, use an online tool that can help you see all account balances and cash flow in one place. On your own time you can log in to such apps and review balances and become more familiar with the numbers.

Make weekly strides. From here, expand your knowledge. Dedicate weekly time to touching base with your partner until you feel caught up. Your investments and long-term financial plan can be a lot to digest in one sitting, so pace yourself and commit to learning something new at each meeting. For example, the first can focus on retirement, specifically,

your contributions, investment breakdown and exposure to risk. Are you 100 per cent in stocks or just 60 per cent? Are you comfortable with that? Week two can be about life insurance, followed by your will and then long-term care planning.

Consider a pro. Working with a certified financial planner was instrumental in the beginning of my own marriage because it helped us create a financial road map, fill some insurance gaps and create an overall sense of accountability that we may not have had on our own. It was also helpful to have an objective individual in the room to give us highly qualified feedback and advice. If you're worried about disagreements, a good certified financial planner can help calm the waters.

—Bloomberg

SHORT TAKES



Sreekara Darbha Dhruva Thota

Sreekara, Dhruva are chess champs

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, NOV. 15

Sreekara Darbha and Dhruva Thota won the juniors and open categories of the 174th Brilliant Trophy Chess Tournament that was conducted online at www.lichess.org due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Sreekara won the event by scoring 10.5 points out of 12 rounds. Sk Taj Abdul and Aahlad Karthik took the second and third places with 9.5 points each.

In the Open category Dhruva Thota and M. Niranjana tied for first place with 10.5 points each out of 12 rounds. The tie-break was clinched by Dhruva of Maestro Chess Academy. Niranjana and Ritobroto Sen finished third with 10 points each.

THE RESULTS

■ **Boys Under 15:** 1. Aahlad Karthik, 2. Pradyumna. **Under 13:** 1. Hemanth, 2. Akshith Mattupalli. **Under 11:** 1. Sk. Taj Abdul, 2. T. Aryan. **Under 9:** 1. Vihaan Saikrishna, 2. Vineel R. Karthik. **Under 7:** 1. Havish Kovid, 2. Hariram Perecharla. ■ **Girls Under 15:** 1. Swaralakshmi S. Nair, 2. Sara Kausar. **Under 13:** 1. Naannya, 2. Sahasra Samudrala. **Under 11:** 1. P. Sravani, 2. Amulya Bhagavathula. **Under 9:** 1. Hritika Thota, 2. Laasya. **Under 7:** 1. SriLakshmi, 2. Bhavishya. ■ **Open category:** 1. Dhruva Thota, 2. Niranjana, 3. Ritobroto Sen, 4. S. Sumer Arsh, 5. Tulasi Ramkumar, 6. A. Sai Mahathi, 7. A. Vikas, 8. Siddarth Ramanand, 9. Chidvilas Sai, 10. Abdul Sattar.

France bag finals spot, Germany win

Paris: World champions France and Germany rode on the influence of their Chelsea stars to rack up Nations League wins on Saturday while Spain's Sergio Ramos missed two penalties on the night he celebrated a record-setting 177th international appearance. Chelsea midfielder N'Golo Kante scored just his second international goal as France defeated European champions Portugal 1-0 in Lisbon to secure a place in next year's finals. Kante was quickest to react to a rebound as he netted the winner on 53 minutes that clinched France top spot in their group. France led Portugal by three points ahead of Tuesday's clash with Sweden in Paris but are guaranteed first place by virtue of their superior head-to-head record. — *AFP*

Johnson seizes Masters lead

Augusta: Top-ranked Dustin Johnson went four-under par in the first four holes to seize a three-stroke lead early in Saturday's third round of the Masters, pulling away from an elite field at Augusta National. The 36-year-old American, who grew up only an hour's drive from the course, unleashed his best to any major round in his career to stand on 13-under par for the tournament. South Korea's Im Sung-jae, Spain's second-ranked Jon Rahm, third-ranked American Justin Thomas and Mexico's Abraham Ancer shared third on 10-under. Johnson is trying to become the first top-ranked golfer to win the Masters since Tiger Woods in 2002. Defending champion Woods, who began the third round four strokes off the pace, opened with seven pars before taking a bogey at the par-5 eighth. — *AFP*

Live on TV

TENNIS

ATP Finals: Matches from 7.30 pm and 1.30 am (Tuesday) on Sony Six

WWE

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

Regd. No. H/SD/509/2018-20

Printed and Published by K. Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited. Printed at Deccan Chronicle Press situated at Rajamahendravaram. Dhawaleswaram Rd. Rajamahendravaram. Ph: 0883-2417618/2417208. Telefax: 0883-2417208. RNI Registration No. 3081/1957. Editor: Kaushik Mitter

SEVENTH WONDER

Hamilton wins record-equalling seventh F1 world title

Istanbul, Nov. 15: Lewis Hamilton secured a record-equalling seventh Formula One world title on Sunday after winning the Turkish Grand Prix despite starting sixth on the grid.

The Briton matched Michael Schumacher's haul of drivers' crowns with three races of the season remaining.

The 35-year-old sealed his latest title with a typically measured masterclass, handling treacherous wet early conditions to claim his 94th career win despite his unaccustomed start position.

A breathless Hamilton said: "I'm lost for words. This is way beyond my dreams."

Hamilton, who sealed his first title in 2008, was adding to his unprecedented roster of records — most wins with 94, most pole positions (97), most podium finishes (163) and most consecutive points finishes (47).

It was widely declared as one of his finest triumphs and entirely appropriate on the day he drew alongside Schumacher in the record books.

He lapped his team-mate and only remaining title rival Valtteri Bottas, who finished 14th after a desultory outing, to claim his 10th victory in 14 races this season.

Hamilton came home over half a minute clear of Sergio Perez for Racing Point. Both chose to make only one pit-stop and spend most of the race on a single set of intermediate tyres as their rivals pitted several times to cope with the slippery conditions.

Hamilton's old rival, four-time former champion Sebastian Vettel, finished third ahead of his Ferrari team-mate Charles Leclerc, Carlos Sainz of McLaren and, after a wild and impulsive afternoon, Max Verstappen in the leading Red Bull. Alex Albon came home seventh in the second Red Bull ahead of Lando Norris in the second McLaren, Lance Stroll, who had started from his maiden pole position for Racing Point, and Daniel Ricciardo of Renault. — *AFP*

I often say it is beyond wildest dreams but my whole life secretly I have dreamt as high as this. It felt so far-fetched. I remember watching Michael win those world championships. To get one or two or even three is so hard. Seven is unimaginable.

— LEWIS HAMILTON



Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton celebrates after winning the Turkish Formula One Grand Prix at the Istanbul Park circuit racetrack in Istanbul on Sunday.

— *AFP*

LEWIS LETS TEARS FLOW AFTER WIN

Istanbul, Nov. 15: After winning a difficult race to equal Michael Schumacher's record of seven Formula One championships on Sunday, the hardest thing for Lewis Hamilton was containing his emotions.

His voice could be heard breaking as he thanked his team over the radio moments after crossing the line at the Turkish Grand Prix, while underneath the helmet the tears were

starting to build up.

"All these emotions were running through me and I was trying to stop it," Hamilton said in his post-race news conference.

"I was thinking about my whole career, from when I was five when I drove in a go-kart, from when we won the British championship, driving home with my dad and singing 'We Are The Champions' and dreaming of being here."

Moments after victory

No. 94 and title No. 7, he sat in his car with his head in his hands.

"It really hit me and I just burst into tears. I couldn't get out of the car because I just couldn't believe it," Hamilton said.

"I didn't want the visor to come up and people to see tears flowing, because I had always said I would never let you see me cry. I remember watching drivers in the past crying and I was like 'I'm not going to do

that.' But it was too much," he said.

Speaking a short time after his win, Hamilton was wiping away those tears as he prepared to mount the podium.

"I'm definitely a bit lost for words. I dreamed of this as a kid. This is way, way beyond our dreams," he said, thanking his family.

Hamilton only had one title, with McLaren in 2008, when he replaced Schumacher at Mercedes in 2013. — *AP*

Hami: Not bad for boy from council house

Istanbul, Nov. 15: Lewis Hamilton cemented his position as one of Formula One's true greats when he equalled Michael Schumacher's all-time record of seven world titles on Sunday, another staggering achievement for a boy who grew up in modest circumstances.

His victory in Istanbul — the 94th of his career — allowed him to add the 2020 title to his championships of 2008, 2014, 2015, 2017, 2018 and 2019.

The son of a black father and a white mother, whose parents separated in his youth, Hamilton, 35, grew up on a municipal housing estate. His father Anthony at one time held down three jobs to fund his son's embryonic racing career in karting.

Hamilton's journey was unprivileged and without

luxury, but it was clear from an early age that he had an outstanding gift for speed and all the gutsy natural instincts of a born racer.

In 1995, aged 10, and wearing a jacket and shoes borrowed from his predecessor as British Formula Cadet karting champion, he went to a glittering awards ceremony in London where he met McLaren's then-boss Ron Dennis.

He asked for an autograph and told him "one day I want to race for you". Dennis replied: "Phone me in nine years and I'll sort you a deal."

'MERCURIAL, TEMPESTUOUS'

Bold, determined and individual, he almost won the title in his first record-breaking season as he



Lewis Hamilton poses with his dog as he celebrates his record win in Istanbul on Sunday.

— *AP*

reeled off nine successive podiums from his debut in Melbourne, rocking the establishment along the way with his speed and his style.

On and off the track, he was fast, somewhat mer-

curial and occasionally tempestuous and the combination led to a fierce rivalry with team-mate and two-time champion Fernando Alonso at McLaren. That was a signal of how tough it was to

be for all his future team-mates as Hamilton, who narrowly missed out on the 2007 title, returned to triumph in 2008 with a dramatic last-gasp fifth-place finish in Brazil.

He also showed frustration as McLaren failed to deliver the speed to beat Sebastian Vettel and Red Bull, who reeled off four straight title triumphs from 2010 to 2013, by which time Hamilton had departed for Mercedes.

Escaping the management regime of Dennis and his father, Hamilton found freedom at Mercedes alongside team-mate Nico Rosberg, his teenage karting friend and rival. Rosberg broke Hamilton's sequence of supremacy in 2016 and then retired, leaving the Englishman to dominate.

— *AFP*

Thiem survives Tsitsipas scare

London, Nov. 15: Dominic Thiem beat Stefanos Tsitsipas in the opening singles match of the ATP Finals on Sunday.

In a repeat of last year's final at London's O2 Arena, won by Tsitsipas, US Open champion Thiem stumbled after winning a first-set tie-break but found his range again to win 7-6 (7/5), 4-6, 6-3.

Thiem was impressive on serve in the first set, winning 79 per cent of service points, but failed to convert three break points against the Greek world number six.

The Austrian third seed found himself in deep trouble when trailing 4-1 in the tie-break but battled back and made his first set point count when Tsitsipas went long with a backhand lob.

Tsitsipas produced a forehand winner in the third game of the second set to break the Austrian and haul himself back into the contest, facing no break points as he levelled the match.

The defending champion appeared to have the momentum but it was Thiem who drew first blood in the deciding set, earning a break with a del-

icately dinked forehand at the net in the second game.

The fifth game ultimately proved to be decisive. Tsitsipas had a chance to break but caught the net with a powerful backhand and could not engineer another break point in a game that contained six deuces.

Earlier, Novak Djokovic received the ATP Tour No. 1 trophy after finishing the year at the top of the rankings for a record-equalling sixth time.

The Serbian, who has drawn level with American Pete Sampras, said: "Obviously I am super proud of it, but I have mixed emotions because of what is going on in the world. I can't be ignorant to that, although I have achieved one of the biggest goals in sport."

Top seed Djokovic, who is competing in Group Tokyo 1970 alongside Daniil Medvedev, Alexander Zverev and Diego Schwartzman, plays his opening match on Monday.

London's O2 Arena is hosting the ATP Finals for the 12th and final season before the year-end championships moves to Turin next year. — *AFP*



Novak Djokovic poses with his year end ATP number one trophy during Day One of the ATP Finals tennis championship at The O2 Arena in London on Sunday.

— *AP*

Aussies love to hate 'polarising' Kohli

Sydney, Nov. 15: Test captain Tim Paine says Australians have "polarising" opinions on India skipper Virat Kohli, one whom they love to hate as rivals but at the same time enjoy watching him bat as fans. Australia and India are set to lock horns in a four-Test series with the opening Day-Night game in Adelaide starting December 17.

"I get asked a lot of questions about him, he's just another player to me it doesn't really bother me. There's not really a relationship there with him to be fair, I see him at the toss and play against him and that's about it," Paine told ABC Sport.

"With Virat it is a funny one, we love to hate him but we also love to watch him bat as cricket fans. He certainly is polarising in that type of scenario. We love watching him bat, but we don't like seeing him score too many runs."

The last time the two sides met tempers flared with both skippers having

a go at each other at every given opportunity. The duo even had to be separated by the on-field umpires on a couple of occasions.

"Australia and India, it's a heated competition and he's obviously a competitive person and so am I, so yeah there were a few occasions when we had words but that wasn't because he was the captain and I was the captain, it could have been anyone," Paine said.

Comparing his on-field battle with Kohli to the likes of Joe Root and Ben Stokes, the wicketkeeper-batsman said it always a heated affair when the best players are out in the middle. "There is always a bit more tension when a player is as good as he is, it's the same when you play against England, its Joe Root or a Ben Stokes," Paine said.

"It's often the best player is the one that your team goes up a little bit, the intensity goes up when the best players in the world come out to the crease." — *PTI*

Kohli withdrawal has put broadcaster, CA in distress

Ayaz Memon
Over The Top

Virat Kohli's decision to be with his wife for the birth of their first-born has thrown the impending Test series against Australia into a tailspin on several fronts.

Kohli is among the foremost batsmen in the game, and over the past 7-8 years easily India's best batsman in the five-day format.

His absence considerably weakens the Indian batting. Considering he is also captain, this is a double whammy for the Indian team. Kohli's most cele-

brated win also came in Australia, in 2018, when led India to a first-ever Test series Down Under.

That he is the game's biggest drawcard has added to the turmoil his decision to return to India after the pink-ball Test at Adelaide has caused more particularly for broadcasters Channel 7.

Financially in the doldrums for over a year, India's tour has come as a lifeline for Cricket Australia. This included a trade-off to ensure the IPL was played at the cost of

the T20 World Cup.

Meanwhile, Cricket Australia structured a complex telecast deal between Fox Cricket and Channel 7 where the latter got rights for all Test cricket played in Australia and the former exclusive rights for all white ball cricket, plus simulcast rights for Tests. Had things gone normally, Fox Cricket would have had 7 exclusive match days featuring Kohli (4 ODIs, 3T20s), plus 20 days (potentially) of him in the four Tests.

Kohli's withdrawal from three Tests has put Channel 7 in deep distress. Now they have only five days (maximum) of the Indian captain, which potentially diminishes viewership and hence revenues.

But while terribly impor-

tant for Channel 7 and CA, this is not the only reason why Kohli's absence from the three Tests has invited widespread scrutiny and opinion.

Former players like Allan Border and Steve Waugh, while respecting Kohli's decision have recalled the times when these things wouldn't even have been on the radar of cricketers.

This, in fact, is the crux issue (financial implications are consequential) and needs to be assessed in a contemporary frame of reference.

Societies evolve, sensibilities change, people's behavioural patterns also change over time. What may have seemed normal 30-40 years back in several aspects, would be considered gross and insensitive

today. It could be unacceptable to the mother that her partner is not with her at the time of delivery. Or indeed the male partner is even if the female partner is accepting of his absence.

While uncommon in the past, this is hardly unusual in this day and age. Rohit Sharma returned from Australia in 2018, missing a Test, to be with his wife who was expecting their first child.

This year, Joe Root missed the first Test against West Indies to be with his wife who was expecting their second child. And it need not be only about birth of a child.

Ben Stokes missed the home series against Pakistan to be with his ailing father in New Zealand. In fact, he missed a few

weeks of the IPL, too to spend more time with his dad.

What's compounded matters currently is of course the Covid pandemic. Had times been normal, Kohli perhaps may have missed one Test at most.

Once out of the bio-secure bubble, however, he would have to be quarantined again for a fortnight, which makes his return to Australia redundant.

Dismay at Kohli missing three Tests is genuine, and not just for CA and broadcasters, but also fans. The longest format deserves the best to be seen in action.

Could the itinerary have been planned differently so that he featured in all Tests?

Perhaps. That Kohli wanted to be with his wife

at the time of delivery was known even before the IPL started. Had the Tests been scheduled before the ODIs and T20s, he would have played in all four.

But that would have meant missing almost the entire ODI and T20 series, which would have left Fox Cricket fuming!

All told, the final determinant can't be based only on monetary considerations. In being present for the birth of a child or someone sick in the family, the decision rests with the player.

HR practices in sport, certainly at the elite level, are no longer about dictats from authority or rough and ready solution-finding. That such practices have to be holistic, highly sensitive and enlightened is the new reality.