

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

COIMBATORE | FRIDAY 20 | NOVEMBER 2020

WEATHER



Max: 31°C
Min: 19°C
Rainfall: 0.5 mm

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Karthigai 5
Tithi: Shashti
Star: Uthiradam
Rahukalam:
10.30 am to 12 noon
Yamagandam:
3 pm to 4.30 pm
PRAYERS
Fajar: 4.54 am
Jumna: 11.58 am
Asar: 3.12 pm
Maghrib: 5.39 pm
Isha: 6.53 pm

SUNSET TODAY 5.40 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.10 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 11.07 AM
MOONSET TOMORROW 10.48 PM

CORONA COUNT

| CASES | DEATHS |
|-----------|----------|
| (+35,283) | (+359) |
| 89,93,423 | 1,31,978 |

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+1,707)
TN: 7,64,989 11,550

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

5,68,86,865

DEATHS

13,60,282

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES
218

worldometers.info

Union minister Sadananda Gowda tests positive for Covid-19

Bengaluru: Union minister for chemical and fertilisers D V Sadananda Gowda on Thursday said he has tested positive for coronavirus. “After initial symptoms of Covid-19, I got myself tested and the report came out positive. I have isolated myself,” the Union Minister tweeted on Thursday.

Malda blast: 5 killed, BJP seeks NIA probe

Malda/Kolkata: Five persons were killed in a blast in a plastic factory in West Bengal's Malda district Thursday triggering a political slugfest with the opposition BJP demanding an NIA probe into the incident and the ruling TMC asking it not to politicise the issue. The blast inside a plastic factory at Sujapur area of Malda district took place at around 11:30 am.

COUNTER

POINT



Covid Cabinet? You have to wait!

A. ARUL PALANI | DC
CHENNAI, NOV. 19

The language issue is refusing to die down in Tamil Nadu. And this time, it for Union Minister of state for home affairs Nityanand Rai to kick up a controversy. The minister shocked CPM Lok Sabha member from the state S. Venkatesan with a letter in Hindi in answer to a query on examination centres for recruitment to the para medical staff of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).

In his reply to the minister, a BJP MP from Bihar, on Thursday, Mr Venkatesan stated that the minister vio-

lated parliamentary procedures. “I have received your letter dated November 9, 2020. Since the letter was in Hindi I was not in a position to know the contents of it. It was shocking that legal and procedural aspects have been violated by replying in Hindi to my letter,” he said.

“I have sent a letter to you on October 9, 2020 demanding examination centres in Tamil Nadu and Pudhucheri for the recruitment of CRPF para medical staff and I assume that your response was to that demand only”.

He reminded the minister that then Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehruhad



S. Venkatesan

had in 1963 given the people an assurance that Hindi would not be imposed as official language on non-Hindi speaking states, including Tamil Nadu. It was then rein-



ARULOLI M | DC
TENKASI, NOV. 19

Factional fight in the local DMK unit here has allegedly pushed former minister and sitting Alangulam MLA and DMK state doctors' wing secretary, Poongothai Aladi Aruna, to attempt suicide. She was found unconscious at her residence in Alangulam on Thursday morning and was rushed to a private hospital (Shifa hospital) in Tirunelveli, where she is under treatment.

The hospital director, Dr Mohammed Arafath, in a statement issued on Thursday noon said, “She is being evaluated. At present, she is conscious, responsive and her vital parameters are satisfactory.”

The statement also added that her clinical condition warranted stay in the intensive care unit, and she is continuously monitored by

a team of doctors.

Former Assembly speaker R Avudaiyappan, former Radhanapuram MLA Appavu, and sitting Tirunelveli MP Gnanadhariviam, visited Poongothai Aladi Aruna in the hospital.

A doctor herself, Poongothai Aladi Aruna, daughter of veteran Dravidian ideologist late Aladi Aruna, consumed an overdose of sleeping pills, allegedly hurt by insult meted out to her at a party meeting organised on Wednesday night at Kadayam union in Tenkasi district, said party functionaries. ■ P3

Army to retain half of women officers

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, NOV. 19

The Indian Army on Thursday declared the results of its first-ever board held for granting Permanent Commission to Women officers.

As per agency reports, some 49 per cent women officers would continue to serve in the force. Around 320 women officers would

retire after 20 years of pensionable service while 615 women officers were under consideration for being granted Permanent Commission.

The Supreme Court in February had directed that all serving women officers who have been recruited under the Short Service Commission (SSC) will have to be considered for Permanent Commission.

The defence ministry later

issued a formal order to allow serving women officers to be eligible for permanent commission in eight additional streams of the force.

Under SSC, women officers are initially taken for a period of five years, which is extendable up to 14 years. Permanent commissioning will allow them to serve till the age of retirement.

In 2008, women officers were given permanent com-

mission in two non-combat streams of JAG and Army Education Corps.

Defence ministry order had specified grant of PC to SSC women officers in additional eight streams of the Indian Army which are army air defence, signals, engineers, army aviation, electronics and mechanical engineers (EME), army service corps, army ordnance corps, and intelligence corps.

ing with regard to implementation of Official Language Act. According to this, ‘Communications from a Central Government office to State or Union Territory in Region ‘C’ or to any office (not being a Central government office) or person in such State shall be in English. Hence, the approach of your ministry giving reply in Hindi is a clear violation of the above provisions of the Act,” he said.

He noted that the Section 5 (x) of the Office Memorandum issued by DOPT Establishment, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions

dated December 1, 2018 states that “wherever any letter from a Parliament is in English and the reply is required to be given in Hindi... an English translation should also be sent along with the reply for non-Hindi speaking states.”

The letter said the reply sent by the Union home ministry in Hindi without an English version is in violation of parliamentary procedures.

“Hence, I would request you to advise the officials of the ministry to respond to the letters of MPs from Tamil Nadu as per existing practice,” he urged.



YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR, NOV. 19

Four suspected Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) militants on their way to Kashmir Valley with a huge weapons cache were gunned down by the security forces during an encounter at a toll plaza along the Jammu-Srinagar highway Thursday.

The weapons haul included 11 AK-47 assault rifles, three pistols, 29 hand grenades, satellite and mobile phones and compass. “It is for the first time in past few years that such a huge recovery has been made from slain terrorists after an encounter,” said inspector general of police (Jammu range) Mukesh Singh. “Apparently they were planning something very big in the Valley.”

He said it apparently was “a newly infiltrated group” of militants which was travelling in a goods truck to the Valley from Jammu. “But when the truck was stopped at the police check-point at Ban Toll Plaza in Nagrota (22.4



Security personnel inspect the site of encounter at Nagrota Ban toll plaza in Jammu, on Thursday. — PTI

km north of Jammu city) at around 5 am and the policemen began searching it, the driver stepped out and fled. Then the terrorists on board opened a heavy volume of fire, triggering an encounter which lasted for about three hours,” he told reporters.

The IG said all the four militants were killed and two policemen injured in the gunfight. “The injured policemen were immediately evacuated to the hospital and both of them are stable,” he said. The truck

was damaged in the operation in which the Army and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) also took part.

The police sources said that during routine checking of vehicles, the driver of the Valley-bound truck hesitated in answering the policemen’s queries, got off the vehicle and ran away. A group of policemen then quickly started searching the truck while others took up positions as a precautionary measure. ■ P4

Oxford vaccine works better on aged

London, Nov. 19: The coronavirus vaccine developed by teams at the University of Oxford has been shown to trigger a robust immune response in healthy adults aged 56-69 and those over 70 years of age.

The findings published in *Lancet* on Thursday based on 560 healthy adult volunteers shows that the ChAdOx1 nCoV-19 vaccine is “safe and well tolerated” with a lower reactogenicity profile in older adults than in younger adults, meaning the older age groups could build immunity to the disease.

“These findings are encouraging because older individuals are at disproportionate risk of severe Covid-19 and so any vaccine adopted for use against SARS-CoV-2 [Covid-19] must be effective in older adults,” the researchers note.

The team is also testing whether the vaccine stops people developing Covid-19 in larger Phase 3 trials and early results from this crucial stage are expected in the coming weeks.

“We were pleased to see that our vaccine was not only well tolerated in older

adults, but also stimulated similar immune responses to those seen in younger volunteers,” said Dr Maheshi Ramasamy, an investigator at the Oxford Vaccine Group.

“The next step will be to see if this translates into protection from the disease itself,” Maheshi Ramasamy, said. This means there are now four promising vaccines on the horizon after Pfizer-BioNTech, Sputnik and Moderna already reporting good preliminary data from Phase 3 trials. ■ PTI

ELDERLY TO GET VACCINE FIRST, SAYS VARDHAN

New Delhi, Nov. 19: Noting that it is natural to prioritise the Covid-19 vaccine distribution process, union health minister Harsh Vardhan on Thursday said healthcare workers and people aged above 65 years will be given coronavirus vaccine on priority

“It is natural that the vaccine distribution would have to be prioritised,” he said in a webinar.

“As you know the healthcare workers who are corona warriors will be prioritised, then people who are above 65 years of age, they have been priori-

tised and then those from 50-65 years of age have been prioritised. Then those below 50 years who have other diseases,” he said. — PTI

● **A new viral detection test for Covid-19** ■ P3

Teenager attempting selfie atop goods train electrocuted

Tirunelveli, Nov 19: Tragedy struck a teen here on Thursday when the boy was electrocuted after climbing atop a goods train to click a selfie, police said.

According to police, 15 year-old M. Ganeshwar was the son of a state government quality inspector who was inspecting food grains transported here by a goods train at the railway junction here.

US hospitals on a brink as toll crosses 2.5 lakh

New York, Nov. 19: Overwhelmed hospitals are converting chapels, cafeterias, waiting rooms, hallways, even a parking garage into patient treatment areas. Staff members are desperately calling around to other medical centers in search of open beds. Fatigue and frustration are setting in among front-line workers.

Conditions inside the nation’s hospitals are deteriorating by the day as the coronavirus rages across the U.S. at an unrelenting pace and the confirmed death toll surpasses 2,50,000. “We are depressed, disheartened and tired to the bone,” said Alison Johnson, director of critical care at Johnson City Medical Center in Tennessee. — AP



Bihar minister facing graft charges resigns

NAYEEM AZAD | DC
PATNA, NOV. 19

Three days after he became Bihar’s Chief minister for the fourth straight term, the Nitish Kumar-led government faced its first political humiliation on Thursday when education minister Mewalal Chaudhary was forced to resign after being slammed for corruption charges.

Mr Chaudhary put in his resignation within hours of assuming office on Thursday after Mr Kumar intervened.

A case was filed against Mr Chaudhary in 2017 for alleged irregularities in the appointment of assistant professors and junior scientists during his tenure as the vice-chancellor of Bihar Agriculture University, Sabour, in Bhagalpur district.

A case is pending against him in court and the matter is being investigated by the vigilance department. After an FIR was filed against him, the JD(U) had suspended him for a brief period. However, he was made the party candidate from Tarapur Assembly seat.

UK-BASED HEALTH AGENCY

Smoking killed 9,32,711 Indians in a year: Study

Chennai: As many as 9,32,711 people died in India due to tobacco smoking in the last one year, finds a recent international study carried out by Knowledge Action Change, a UK-based public health agency.

Titled “Burning issues: The global state of tobacco harm reduction (GSTHR) 2020”, the study reveals that the number of smokers in the country stands at 116,431,532. While as many as 231,267 women died due to smoking, 701,444 men succumbed to the deadly habit. ■ P2



An aerial view of Thervoy Kandigai reservoir which will be inaugurated by Union home minister Amit Shah on Saturday. — DC

Chennai gets its 5th reservoir

N. SAMPATH | DC
CHENNAI, NOV. 19

Thervoy Kandigai, the fifth water reservoir for Chennai, will be inaugurated by Union home minister Amit Shah via video conference on November 21. Formed by combining two lakes — Thervoy Kandigai and Kannankottai — the reservoir is expected to avert a 2019-like drought in Chennai.

Spread across 1,485

acres, this reservoir in Tiruvallur district supplies 65MLD water to Chennai.

The ₹380-crore Thervoy Kandigai reservoir project was flagged off in 2013 with a 2015 deadline. The project faced a slew of hassles including land acquisition from villagers.

The city has four reservoirs — Chembarambakkam, Red Hills, Cholavaram and Poondi — with a combined stor-

age capacity of 11,257mcft. Water from Thervoy Kandigai reservoir will pass through a 66-km-long pipeline to Poondi reservoir.

“It will then be used to supply drinking water to the city,” said a senior metro water official.

The tank at Karadiputhur and three water bodies in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh are the sources of water inflow for the reservoir.

OTHER STORIES

25-year-old biker killed in accidentDC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 19

A 25-year-old man was reportedly crushed to death under the wheels of a lorry on Tambaram-Velachery road on Thursday afternoon. The deceased identified as Prem Kumar (25), a native of Tiruvavur, who lived in Chennai, worked at a private home appliances service shop in Selaiyur.

On Thursday afternoon, while he was waiting at the MCC signal on Tambaram-Velachery road, a lorry transporting cement sacks rammed his bike from behind. He fell on the road and was subsequently crushed to death under the wheels of the lorry. Based on the alert, Chrompet Traffic investigation police rushed to the spot. They have arrested the lorry driver, Narendran (30) of Thiruvallur. The deceased's body has been sent for post mortem. Further investigations are on.

Officials help elderly man, who was ill-treated, regain bequeathed propertyK. SENTHIL NATHAN | DC
CHENNAI, NOV. 19

An elderly man hailing from Vellore has gone to the revenue officer to get all his properties registered back in his name after his three sons refused to feed him and take care of him after he registered his properties in their name.

The officer has ordered the properties to be cancelled and written back in his name. Renugopal Mudaliyar(82), hailing from Ponnai district in Vellore has three sons and three daughters. He had registered all his properties to his sons in 2013 and after they refused to take care of him and give him basic facilities he has now gone to the revenue officer and asked him to get all his properties under his name again.He has also alleged torture from his sons.

The officer has ordered all the properties to be registered under his name after conducting an enquirer as per "Maintenance and well-being of senior citizens (MWPSO) Act section 4(1) 23(1), 2007.

IIT-M DSA offers BFSI training coursesDC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 19

The Indian Institute of Technology-Madras (IIT-M) Digital Skills Academy(DSA) has offered banking, financial services and insurance sector (BFSI) training courses partnering with Infact Pro Trainers (OPC) Private Limited.

Prof. K. Mangala Sunder, head, IIT-M DSA said the objective of these courses was to provide graduating students skills towards employment or re-skilling in the relevant sectors.

In addition, the trainers will cover multiple areas through large problem sets that will also help the students to attend competitive examinations in the banking and finance sectors," she said.All students and working professionals who are interested in a career in BFSI can register and benefit from this programme which is also useful to life-long learners and self-learners. Those interested can contact mangalas@dth.ac.in or mangal@iitm.ac.in and/or chairman@infactpro.com.

The DSA at IIT-M is a joint venture with NASSCOM IT-IT Enabled Services Sector Skill Council of India. Upon completion of the course(s), a formal certificate will be issued by the trainer and the knowledge partner, Centre for Continuing Education, IIT Madras. The course details are listed in the website <https://skillsacademy.iitm.ac.in>

Dengue awareness

Greater Chennai Corporation health department officials organise dengue awareness programme at the health centre in Kolathur on Thursday. — DC

CHENNAI TRIPLE MURDER**Three more accused nabbed near Delhi**DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 19

A week after three members of a family were found shot dead in their place in Sowcarpet, the city police are said to have nabbed all the six accused involved in the horrific triple murder case.

While three were arrested from Maharashtra on November 13, the Chennai police are on their way to New Delhi to bring back the remaining suspects, including Jayamala, the

deceased's estranged wife. The accused were nabbed in a hideout near Delhi.

The three accused Jayamala, who is the wife of the deceased man Sheetal Jain, her brother Vikas and their associate are likely to be brought back to Chennai by November 20, after which the arrest will be recorded.

The police arrested Sheetal's brother-in-law Kailash and his two friends, Ravindranath Gar (25) and Vijay Uttam

Kamal (28), from Solapur in Maharashtra, after an intense car chase last Friday and were on the lookout for the other three.

On November 11, three members of a family Dali Chand (74), his wife Pushpa Bai (70) and the couple's son Sheetal Jain (42) were found dead with Bullet injuries. It is alleged that the murder was the result of a bitter divorce settlement between Sheetal and Jayamala.

Wednesday night at the Junior Kuppanna Hotel, near the District Science Center. Over 100 people had dinner there.

One of the guests found some glass pieces in the food served to him, and he questioned the hotel management. But they reportedly did not respond formally.

Later, six others who ate the food got admitted to a private hospital nearby complaining of stomach and throat irritation and pain.

DC CORRESPONDENT
VELLORE, NOV. 19

Glass pieces in food served at a wedding engagement function at the Junior Kuppanna Hotel near Sathuvachari here resulted in six persons being admitted to the hospital for treatment, on Wednesday night.

Sources said, an engagement ceremony was organised for a woman from Alamelumangapuram near Sattuvachari here on

Annaikeni pond restoredDC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 19

The Annaikeni pond in Sholinganallur, Chennai was restored through the efforts of Environmentalist Foundation of India (EFI) in association with Grundfos India, a global leader in pump solutions and water technology.

The abandoned pond, under the jurisdiction of the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC), is estimated to cater to the needs of around 8,000 to 10,000 people within a kilometer. This cleaned pond will now be able to reduce and prevent any waterborne disease and ensure rejuvenation of the ground-water levels in the area.

Began last year, the restoration work including excavation, strengthening of the circumference embankment, fencing and growing of native plant species around the

pond, was undertaken with the CSR fund of the Grundfos India. The water holding capacity of the pond is now increased by 18- 20 percent after clearing more than four tonnes of water hyacinth and Prosopis Juliflora shrubs.

Saravanan Panneer Selvam, general manager, INDO Region, Grundfos, said they took up the effort as part of their commitment towards promoting the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 6 (Water and Sanitation). "Water bodies play a key role in maintaining and ensuring a good ecosystem not only for humans but also for the flora and fauna. Through the restoration of the Annaikeni pond, we hope that the local community can enjoy the presence of clean water in the area", he said.

Conserve water amid good monsoon tidings

B. Vijayalakshmi

Viewpoint

With northeast monsoon intensifying in the state, emphasis has to be laid on water conservation. Water-saving measures must be taken in all places so that Chennai does not run out of options during crucial summer months. Tamil Nadu usually receives 70 per cent of its annual rain between October and December. But NE monsoon failures in the past have pushed the city close to Day Zero. However, fairly widespread rains in 2019 filled up bone dry reservoirs and water bodies.

Meanwhile, the fifth reservoir for the city at Theruvoy Kandigai in Tiruvallur district, to be opened on Saturday will improve Chennai's drinking water supply. Chennai

metro water's 66 km pipeline will help bring water from the reservoir to the one in Poondi.

While Chennai has got a break from showers for the last two days, southern TN has been witnessing heightened monsoon activity.

Farmers in the southern districts are glad that heavy showers in catchment areas in Tirunelveli and Tenkasi districts have led to heavy inflow to all major dams. The water level in Thimirabarani, which caters to the drinking water and irrigation needs of Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi, Tenkasi and Virudhunagar districts, has gone up.

Mettur dam and the four lakes catering to Chennai have also seen a sharp rise in water level following intermittent rains and discharges from neighbouring Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

All the three major waterfalls in Courtallam are flooded. Similarly, heavy rains and gusty winds have been pounding

said.

Stimson also said that smokeless tobacco would ultimately prevent nearly all deaths from respiratory disease currently caused by smoking and reduce the cardiovascular mortality by 50 per cent.

"Over 80 percent of the world's 1.1 billion smokers live in low-middle income countries. Approximately 98 million people use safer nicotine products globally. It is the proof that when given an option, millions of consumers choose to keep away from smoking. As many as 36 countries banned the sale of nicotine vaping products while 75 countries regulated the sale of these products," he added.

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 19

The Madras high court has directed the judicial magistrate-I, Virudhachalam to consider the representation made by S.Prema, the wife of Selvamurugan, who died allegedly due to custodial torture in Virudhachalam jail on November 4, with reference to the cause of death of her husband and accordingly take a decision whether a re-postmortem is to be conducted on the deceased as sought for by her.

Justice T.Ravindran gave the directive while passing orders on a petition filed by S.Prema, which mainly sought an interim direction to the authorities to conduct the post-mortem of the deceased Selvamurugan, by appointing doctors from Jipmer Hospital,



Puducherry, and also sought a direction to the authorities to register a case against three policemen, allegedly involved in his death and investigate the same in accordance with law.

Petitioner's counsel P.Kumaresan submitted that the petitioner was having materials to substantiate her allegation. The petitioner's husband had been subjected to cruelty at the hands of the police, particularly the officials of the DSP office crime team and thereby

only on account of the injuries inflicted on her husband by the police officials, her husband's death had occurred and with a view to suppress the same, the police had hurriedly conducted the post-mortem for hiding the cause of death of her husband and thereby tampered with the evidence and therefore, this court should direct a re-postmortem of the deceased for culling out the truth, he added.

Vehemently opposing the same, State Public Prosecutor A.Natarajan submitted that the post-mortem had been conducted by the competent doctors in accordance with the directions of the magistrate and there was no necessity for ordering re-postmortem as prayed for by the petitioner.

The judge said raising a serious doubt with refer-

ence to the cause of death of the deceased during custody, the petitioner alleges that her husband died only due to the injuries meted out to him by the torture and ill-treatment caused by the police officials. The judge said with reference to the relief sought for by the petitioner for a direction to the superintendent of police, Cuddalore district, to register a case against the three policemen-Arumugam, Sudhakar and Arvazhagan based on the complaint dated November 5, 2020, in the light of the peculiar facts and circumstances of the case, the SP, Cuddalore, was directed to adhere to the guidelines framed by the apex court in Lalithakumari's case and take a decision with reference to same and dispose of the same in accordance with law.

3 held for kidnapping and forcing a minor girl into flesh tradeDC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 19

Three, including a woman, were arrested by the police for allegedly kidnapping and forcing their 16-year-old neighbour into flesh trade.

According to police, the arrested has been identified as Latha (25), his brother Baskar (23) and his friend Ramu(27). All the accused were natives of Madurai.

Police said the minor daughter of a coolie worker in Madurantakam allegedly went missing a few days ago. The father of the victim lodged a complaint with the Madurantakam police.

The police, after a preliminary investigation, learnt about the sister-brother duo, from

The police, after a preliminary investigation, learnt about the sister-brother duo, from Madurai who resided near the victim's house months back. The suspects were seen near the victim's house on the day of her missing. Madurantakam police with the help of the Madurai city police traced the duo to a village in Madurai suburbs

Madurai who resided near the victim's house months back. The suspects were seen near the victim's house on the day of her missing. Madurantakam police with the help of the Madurai city police traced the duo to a village in Madurai suburbs.

Police rushed to the district and nabbed the duo. The 16-year-old girl was held hostage by the duo and their friend, Ramu.

Police rescued the girl and arrested the accused.

During an investigation, the suspects revealed that they kidnapped her to involve her in flesh trade. The three accused were produced before the court and have been remanded.

The accused have been booked under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Pocso) Act.



District collector P. Ponniah along with officials inspecting Theruvoy Kandigai reservoir in Tiruvallur district. — DC

Smoking killed 9,32,711 Indians in a year: StudyT. SUDHEESH | DC
CHENNAI, NOV. 19

As many as 9,32,711 people died in India due to tobacco smoking in the last one year, finds a recent international study carried out by Knowledge Action Change, a UK-based public health agency.

Titled 'Burning issues: The global state of tobacco harm reduction (GSTHR) 2020', the study reveals that the number of smokers in the country stands at 116,431,532. While as many as 2,31,267 women died due to smoking, 7,01,444 men succumbed to the deadly habit.

Adult smoking prevalence now stands at 11.8 per cent,

which is a slight increase from 11.5 per cent in 2015.

However, it is an encouraging trend compared to year 2000 when it was 19 per cent. The study says the prevalence could further drop to 8.5per cent by 2025.

Current smoking prevalence among adult male is 22.2 per cent and 1.4 per cent among women. The study finds smoking among men decreased from 32 per cent in 2000 to 21 per cent in 2015.

It projects 16 per cent decrease by 2025. For women, the prevalence of 6 per cent in 2000 dropped to 2 per cent in 2015, and is projected to decrease to less than 1 per cent by

2025.

The report comes at a time when over 8 million deaths take place due to smoking each year across the globe. The study says smoking is the major cause of premature death.

The premature death cases by smoking last year is 7.1 million. It is three times higher than from the total combined deaths from malaria (405,000 in 2018), HIV (770,000) and TB (1.5 million).

Gerry Stimson, director, Knowledge Action Change, said there had been a downward trend in smoking prevalence in India.

"The comparison is made with data from the World Health Organisation's

(WHO) prevalence trend estimates in tobacco smoking in their second edition report in 2018. Data for the estimates are not age standardised as it was obtained from WHO databases. The trend lines are projections, not predictions of future attainment. A projection indicates a likely endpoint if the country maintains its tobacco control efforts at the same level that it has implemented till date. The methods of estimation used in the first and second editions of the WHO report are the same. The volume of data available for the second edition is larger, i.e. 200 more national surveys. The results in our report are therefore more robust," he



Following heavy rains in Madurai, the arterial road near Periyar bus stand in the city remains inundated. — DC

OTHER STORIES

Man commits suicide

DC CORRESPONDENT
MANNARGUDI, NOV. 19

A 38-year-old advocate clerk allegedly committed suicide by hanging himself in Pudukkudi village under the Thirumakkottai police limits near here in Tiruvavur district during the wee hours of Thursday.

The deceased, Jayakanthan, used to scold his wife, Devika, a honorary lecturer at the government college, Mannargudi, for using the mobile phone continuously for a long time, due to which they quarreled often, and sometimes he also beat her up.

On Thursday, his brothers-in-law Ananda Murugesan, Murali and Devika together had allegedly severely beaten up Jayakanthan following a quarrel. Later, the deceased had gone to his father's house at Pudukudi and hung himself there from a tree near his father's house.

Police are investigating.

Fire breaks out in grocery shop

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUCHY, NOV. 19

A fire broke out at a grocery shop in KK Nagar area here in the wee hours of Thursday.

Neighbours who noticed heavy smoke coming out of the locked shop, informed the fire and rescue department personnel as also the shop owner. A fire fighting unit led by station fire officer M Melchio Raja put out the fire after about a four-hour struggle. The reason behind the mishap is said to be electrical short circuit, and goods worth several lakhs were destroyed, police added.

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MLA 'abused' at party meet

From P1
Sources said in the meeting, the MLA was allegedly abused by supporters of Kadayam union secretary, Kumar, who claimed that Poongothai was not respecting office-bearers of the district unit.

Following an altercation, Poongothai walked out in the middle of the meeting as some functionaries raised their voices against her, but was later called inside.

Supporters of Kumar had further tried to prevent her from delivering her speech on the stage by switching off the mike, said party sources.

Poongothai Aladi Aruna was former minister for social welfare in the Karunanidhi ministry since 2004, and is said to be a staunch supporter of party's women's wing secretary and Thoothukudi MP, Kanimozhi.

It is to be noted that Alangulam MLA's younger brother, Ezhilvanan, is also an aspirant for the party ticket to contest in the Alangulam assembly constituency in the 2021 assembly election.

Supporters of Kumar had further tried to prevent her from delivering her speech on the stage by switching off the mike, said party sources

Will Amit Shah cement BJP-AIADMK ties?

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR & D. SEKAR | DC
CHENNAI, NOV. 19

More than BJP cadre, it is the AIADMK leadership that seems to be eagerly awaiting the visit of Union home minister Amit Shah to Chennai on November 21, when he would be opening the Kannankottai-Thervoy Kandigai reservoir, besides laying the foundation for a slew of high-profile projects, including the Chennai Metro Rail phase 2.

Shah, who would be arriving in the city by noon, has only the state government function to attend as an honourable chief guest. The rest of the time on Saturday would be spent on meeting party functionaries and cadre and visiting dignitaries, according to party sources. He is leaving the city only the next morning.

It is expected that Shah would finalise the BJP's alliance with the AIADMK in the next election and that would ensure that the BJP would not continue to be a thorn in the flesh of the AIADMK government. Of

didate, BJP leaders had been time and again saying that that call will be taken by Delhi. The AIADMK would like the matter to be settled for once.

The question of seat-sharing is another matter that has been creating problems between the functionaries of the two parties in the State. The BJP has now developed a sense of entitlement for a bigger share of seats than earlier, citing the party's growth in the State.

BJP functionaries feel that the AIADMK should allot more number of seats for them than that the DMK would be earmarking for the Congress in the State as they had grown phenomenally in the last few months.

So to display the party's strength and cadre base, they are also planning to accord a grand reception to Amit Shah when he arrives in Chennai on Saturday.

Elaborate arrangements are being made to welcome their leader by organizing crowds all the way from the airport to his hotel and also decorate the city

with arches and festoons.

Such a grandiose welcome would enthuse the cadre and also enable the leaders to negotiate with the alliance partners on seat allotment, they feel. Also going by the manner in which the government was not interfering with the BJP's plans, they are also expecting certain things from Amit Shah's visit.

Outside the BJP and AIADMK, too, the visit has evoked considerable interest as Amit Shah has seemingly given appointments to several leading personalities of the city beyond midnight. He has also agreed to meet with groups of BJP cadre and functionaries.

One more issue that might be taken up by Amit Shah is the AIADMK government's indirect run-in with the Governor. By ordering an enquiry against Anna University Vice Chancellor M K Surappa the government has ruffled the feather of the Governor, who sees Surappa as his nominee. Will Shah bring about a rapprochement on the Surappa issue?

Jumbo rescued from well after 14-hr struggle

DHARMAPURI: After rescue efforts that stretched to about 14 hours, a sub-adult elephant that fell into a 50-feet open farm well near here was safely rescued on Thursday, forest officials here said.

The cow elephant, aged about eight, fell into the well at Yelugundur village near Panchampalli here in the wee hours of today and local people immediately alerted the authorities.

The elephant, stuck inside the almost dry, deep well was rescued after a 14-hour struggle involving personnel drawn from forest and fire and rescue services department.

The pachyderm, after tranquilisation twice, was tied to a heavy duty crane on the ground using rope like, robust belts and then it was lifted to the surface level to all round applause.

The elephant was being monitored and all necessary 'attention' given, officials said. As soon as word about the elephant falling into the well spread, local people gathered.

Vaikundarajan seeks security cover

ARULOLI M | DC
TIRUNELVELI, NOV. 19

In a petition complaining that his brother's son had been planning to abduct him, beach mineral mining and export tycoon, S Vaikundarajan, sought protection for life from the city police commissioner.

Submitting a petition on Thursday in this regard with 35 video footages and documents to Tirunelveli range DIG, who is also city commissioner in-charge, Vaikundarajan said that he caught red-handed a youth, Marikannan, an employee of his brother, S Jegadeesan, spying him for quite some days and handed him over to the Palayamkottai police, who let the accused go scott-free on the intervention of an advocate without enquiring him." Vainjundarajan had retrieved the 35 video footages from the mobile phone of Marikannan.

The mobile videos allegedly recorded by Marikannan, spying Vaikundarajan and his family members, is said to have been sent to Senthil Rajan, eldest son of Vaikundarajan's brother, Jegadeesan, with whom he had a property dispute.

Receiving the complaint, the DIG promised to look into the issue.

Tabs on development work



Tirupur district collector K. Vijayakarthyayan inspects agriculture department's development work in Palladam and Pongalur.

— DC

TN reports 1,707 new Covid cases, 19 fatalities

Chennai, Nov. 19: Tamil Nadu on Thursday recorded 1,707 fresh coronavirus cases taking the tally to 7.64 lakh and the toll touched 11,550 with 19 more deaths. Of the fresh infections, Chennai logged 471, neighbouring Chengelpet 119, and Tiruvallur 138, a health department bulletin said adding the rest of the new cases were spread across other regions of the state.

The tally of 7.64 lakh plus cases include 2,10,601

Seven— four women and three men — among the deceased were 70 and above and in total, 18 had co-morbidities and one no chronic illness

from here and 47,071 from Coimbatore.

Seven-four women and three men- among the deceased were 70 and above and in total, 18 had co-morbidities and one no chronic illness. The toll of 11,550 covers 3,792 reported from the state capital,

the highest.

With 2,251 patients getting discharged from various hospitals, the active cases dipped to 13,907 and cumulatively, 7.39 lakh people have got cured so far. As many as 67,115 samples were tested (RT-PCR method) today and 1.13 crore is the aggregate number of specimens examined till date in 213 Covid-19 labs in the state. Since November 13, the active cases have remained below the 2,000 mark.

— PTI

A new viral detection test for coronavirus

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 19

The world's first CRISPR Cas-9 based diagnostic test that would help increase testing for COVID-19 would be introduced by Apollo Hospitals Group and Tata Medical and Diagnostics (Tata MD), the new healthcare venture of the Tata group, from the first week of December.

Approved by Indian Council of Medical Research and Drug Controller General of India (DCGI), the viral detection test with high accuracy and a quick result turnaround time would be offered in the National Capital Region from the first week of December.

After being rolled out to other major centres like Kolkata, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Chennai, Ahmedabad and Pune, it would be made available in other cities by a second phase.

After being rolled out to other major centres like Kolkata, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Chennai, Ahmedabad and Pune, it would be made available in other cities by a 2nd phase

TataMD CHECK, powered by FELUDA, is the world's first Covid-19 diagnostic test based on the DNA genome editing tool CRISPR Cas-9, a press release from Apollo Hospitals said, adding that the FELUDA diagnostic technology platform has been developed by Institute of Genomics & Integrative Biology (CSIR-IGIB).

Apollo Hospitals Group, which is the first healthcare institution in the country to adopt the test, will ensure the availability of TataMD Check testing in eight hospitals in phase 1 and the location-wise quantities would be ramped up based on the demand and need for expanding this to other centres, the press release said.

In four yrs, over 37k given free house pattas: Min

DC CORRESPONDENT
NAGAPATTINAM, NOV 19

As many as 37,962 homeless poor people in the district have been given free house pattas by the district administration from 2016 till date, said Handloom and textile minister, OS Manian, on Wednesday after distributing free house site pattas worth ₹4.83 crores to 207 Tsunami victims at a function here, presided by Collector Praveen P Nair.

The minister also distributed ₹7.12 crore worth welfare measures to 541 beneficiaries and later flagged off four new 108 ambulance vehicles for Nagapattinam and the newly-created Mayiladuthurai districts.

Later, the minister told newsmen that the AIADMK high command would consider the plea of political parties which wanted to join the AIADMK alliance, and are willing to accept the AIADMK leadership, its norms and conditions.



Cow elephant rescued from a farm well after 14-hour struggle in Dharmapuri on Thursday.

Elderly woman trampled to death by elephant

Coimbatore, Nov. 19: A 70-year-old woman, who went missing two days back, was found trampled to death by an elephant in Mullankadu forest area on the outskirts early on

Thursday. Forest department personnel on rounds in the area under Boluvampatti forest range noticed the body of Maruthammal with injuries this morning.

The victim belonging to Sarkar Porathi tribal settlement was reported missing two days back from her daughter's house in nearby Alandurai, police said.

— PTI

Medical aspirant gets seat, farmer-father elated

N. SAMPATH | DC
CHENNAI, NOV. 19

It was a dream come true for over 300 poor students who secured admission in medical colleges across the state benefiting from the government's 7.5 per cent reservation scheme for government school students. They joined the medical colleges they had been allotted.

Chinaiah and Parvathi, residents of Ganapathipatti village in Sivagangai district, were all tears while standing at Stanley Medical College, Chennai where their third daughter Chinanambi got admission for MBBS course.

"Of my 5 children Chinanambi studied well and aspired to become a doctor right from her



Chinaiah thanks CM Palaniswami.

childhood. We wanted to realise her dream but were sceptical as we were poor. But thanks to the government's 7.5 per cent reservation scheme for government school students in state medical col-

leges my daughter was able to secure a seat in Stanley Medical College," he said.

The farmer said that because of the failed crop he had to take a loan of Rs. 2 lakh to pay for his daughter's coaching fee. "I worked in a hotel in Tiruchirappalli as a waiter to meet our daily needs and pay the interest for the loan. I am happy today as my daughter will become a doctor in five years. I would like to thank Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami for providing 7.5 per cent reservation for government school students in medical colleges and realising the dreams of several poor students in the state," he added with tears rolling down his cheeks.

Salem resumes magnesite mining

ZAKEER HUSSAIN | DC
SALEM, NOV. 19

Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami said that the Salem magnesite mining operations resumed from Thursday.

Addressing a function at the Vanavasi Polytechnic College campus near Salem, the chief minister said that late chief minister MG Ramachandran started magnesite mining in 1979. It is a government public sector entity with annual revenue

of ₹ 100 crore. Salem Omalur Circle, Government Magnesite Mining at Thathaiyangarpatti village, Magnesite and Dunite Minerals, are mined in a mechanized open field mine. About 70 percent of the total magnesite mineral resources in the country come from Salem district. The ore is used to produce heat-resistant furnaces and smelters used in iron and chemical industries. In addition, Dunite, which is available as a co-element, is used

in the iron industry. The company sells the magnesite in two separate factories, converting it into value-added products, full-burned magnesite and medium-burned magnesite. Mining work was suspended in 2018 pending approval by the Ministry of Environment. The application was submitted to the Ministry of Environment of the Union Government, and the terms of reference were obtained and the public was consulted on January 29,

2020 and a report sent to the State Environment Commission. In addition, Rs 72 crore was paid as compensation to the Geology and Mining department and a no-objection certificate obtained. Environmental clearance from the TNPCB was obtained and approval for the operation of the mine was obtained from the Pollution Control Board on November 10. He said the resumption of mining would benefit 534 workers directly and 2,000 indirectly.

Schools association splits

R VALAYAPATHY | DC
TIRUCHY, NOV. 19

The Tamil Nadu Nursery Primary Matric higher secondary and CBSE schools association suffered a vertical split following a majority of its members including a few state-level office-bearers quitting the association, and deciding to function separately.

This was announced at a press conference by association state deputy general secretary, GR Sridhar, soon after the meeting with senior members and a few

state office-bearers of the association here on Thursday. It is alleged that they had decided to come out of the association in protest against the attitude of the present association administration, especially, association state general secretary, KR Nandakumar.

Sridhar further said Nandakumar was taking anti-government moves without consulting even state level office-bearers. Nandakumar had even condemned the government's move to provide 7.5 per cent exclusive reservation for

students of government higher secondary schools in medical admissions from this year onwards, and has also challenged the government's decision in court, he added.

Sridhar also said there are 12,000 schools in the association, of which 90 per cent of them from 20 educational districts, have quit the association and attended Thursday's meeting and expressed their solidarity for the new move.

They will meet again shortly and decide the next move, he added.

SHORT TAKES

BJP, BPF TO GO SEPARATE WAYS IN ASSAM

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, NOV. 19

In what may lead to a major realignment of political forces, the ruling BJP is heading to breaking its partnership with Bodoland People's Front (BPF) that it had built more than four years ago to form its first government in Assam, along with the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP).

Differences between the two political parties have cropped after the decision of the BJP to go all out to take control of the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) in elections which are going to take place in two phases on December 7 and 10. The council has been in the hands of BPF for the last 17 years at a stretch.

Assam minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, while campaigning for elections to Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), an autonomous council, said, "The BJP will contest the 2021 Assembly elections on its own here, too. There will be no alliance with BPF this time."

The BJP made a seat-sharing arrangement with the BPF and AGP before the 2016 Assembly polls and formed the first coalition government in the state. The BPF had won 12 seats and joined hands with the BJP after dumping Congress, which had been its partner in government since 2011. The BJP had finished short of a simple majority in the 2016 polls and banked on BPF and AGP to form its government.

K'TAKA BJP STIRS TROUBLE WITH MARATHA BODY

VINAY MADHAV | DC BENGALURU, NOV. 19

The BJP strategy in Karnataka to win the byelections by promising sops to the dominant community in each constituency is becoming counter-productive for the government.

The government announced the formation of the Maratha People Development Authority, just on the eve of the byelections to the Basavakalyana constituency, which has a sizable Marathi population.

This move has irked pro-Kannada organisations as Karnataka has a long border as well as water sharing disputes with Maharashtra. It has given a platform for Maharashtra not only to reiterate its claim on Belagavi, but also to extend it till Karwar. Worse even the Maharashtra Ekikarana Samithi in Belagavi has opposed the move to form the Maratha Development Authority.

Basavakalyana has over 30,000 Marathi speaking voters and the bypoll for the constituency is in offing. Soon after announcing this, the Lingayat community, which is the dominant community in the state, demanded a similar body for them. The government immediately announced the Lingayat Development Corporation, as the constituency has more than 35,000 Lingayats.

RAJ TO EASE MINING RULES FOR RAM TEMPLE

Jaipur/Ayodhya, Nov. 19: The district administration in Rajasthan's Bharatpur is seeking the denotification of part of a wildlife sanctuary to allow the mining of a special sandstone, much sought after by builders including those constructing the Ram temple in Ayodhya.

Thousands of tonnes of the pink sandstone mined in Bharatpur's Bansi Paharpur have been sourced for the temple over the years, but much more is needed.

There were concerns in Ayodhya that supplies of this stone with a unique pink hue would dry up. Since blocks of this sandstone had already been carved — ready to be put in place as the temple comes up — switching over to a lesser grade of stone would have caused problems. The Dholpur variant is said to be no match to the Bansi Paharpur stone.

Authorities in Congress-run Rajasthan denied the move to denotify Bansi Paharpur block in Bharatpur's Band Baretha wildlife sanctuary has anything specific to do with the Ram temple. But a Vishwa Hindu Parishad leader approved of reports that this "technical problem" is now being sorted out. "The Rajasthan government never created hurdles in the supply of the stone. However, there was some technical problem regarding Forest and Wildlife Act at Bansi Paharpur," a VHP leader said.

Malabar calling



An aerial view of ship refuelling during the second phase of the Malabar naval exercise in the Arabian sea. India, Australia, Japan and the United States started the second phase of a strategic navy drill on November 17 in the Northern Arabian sea.

— Indian Navy

MP'S DEFEATED MINISTERS MAY GET PARTY POSTS

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, NOV. 19

Rajya Sabha member and senior BJP leader Jyotiraditya Scindia on Thursday indicated that state ministers who lost the November 3 Assembly byelections may be suitably accommodated.

Scindia, who arrived here in the afternoon from Delhi, told reporters that he had earlier held discussions with Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on the fate of the defeated ministers.

Asked if the defeated ministers would be accommodated in corporator bodies, he said, "The BJP has always promoted those who worked hard." He has tended to add that the party would take the final call on the matter.

Three out of 14 non-MLA ministers in the Shivraj Singh government who sought re-election lost the recent Assembly byelections. While two of them, Imarti Devi and Giriraj Dandotia, are yet to resign from their posts, the other minister, Anand Singh Kansana, has put in his papers.

Swapna says she is under ED pressure to name Pinarayi

DC CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, NOV. 19

A voice clip said to be that of gold smuggling key accused Swapna Suresh accusing Central investigating agencies of exerting pressure on her to give a statement against Kerala Chief Minister has triggered a major controversy in the state.

In the voice clip published by a private news portal on Wednesday night, Ms Suresh is heard saying that the Enforcement Directorate officials promised to make her an approver in the gold smuggling case and compelled her to give a statement that she had gone to Dubai along with chief minister's former principal secretary M. Sivasankar to carry out financial deals on behalf of the chief minister.

Both Ms Suresh and Mr Sivasankar are currently in judicial custody in connection with cases pertaining to gold smuggling and money laundering registered by the Central probe agencies.

In the clip Swapna says that despite the pressure applied by the central agencies she refused to name the chief minister. She also alleged that the investigating officials directed her to sign documents related to her statements without allowing her to go through the contents.

The CPM state secretariat alleged that the voice clip of the accused clearly indicated that the

In a desperate bid to check the spread of Covid-19 in the national capital, Delhi government on Thursday jacked up the fine cost for not wearing a mask in the city by 300 per cent — from Rs 500, to Rs 2000 — to ensure people make behavioural changes and do not spread virus.

This is one of the several steps that the NCT government is taking to restrict the spread of novel coronavirus in the city. Amid rising cases, Ahmedabad city administration has decided to impose night curfew from 9 pm to 6 am.

India till Thursday had overall 89.58 lakh cases of COVID-19 with 45, 576 fresh cases even though the number of active cases dropped down. India now has 4.43 lakh active cases while total recovered cases are over 83.83 lakh. Deaths so far due to the virus in India is 1.31 lakh out of which 585 were in

Central agencies were targeting the Chief Minister with the objective of toppling the democratically elected LDF government in Kerala. "It is a very serious matter. The party will launch a statewide campaign to expose the 'evil designs' of central agencies," it said.

CPM general secretary Sitaram Yechury said in Delhi that the party strongly condemned the manner in which the CBI and other central investigating agencies are being used in Kerala. On the other hand, the opposition Congress and the BJP alleged that the voice clip was nothing but a drama staged by the CPM to divert people's attention from the serious charges faced by the chief minister's office ahead of the crucial local bodies poll.

Kerala Pradesh Congress chief Mr Mullapally Ramachandran said the voice clip was an attempt by the state government to shift focus from the serious charges of gold smuggling and money laundering.

Union minister and BJP leader V Muraleedharan accused the chief minister's office of planting the voice clip. "It is an attempt to prevent the probe from reaching the chief minister's office ahead of the poll. By citing the voice clip the CPM wants to strengthen its ongoing campaign against central agencies," he added.

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 19

In the last 24 hours, 45,576 persons were found to be infected with COVID in India. During the same period, India has registered 48,493 new recoveries ensuring a net reduction of 2917 cases from the active caseload," union Health Ministry said. India's recovery rate is 93.58%.

After few days of respite, cases have again started rising in Maharashtra that reported 5, 011 new positives in the last 24 hours. The highly crowded Dharawi slums also reported three new cases in a day.

Meanwhile, Union Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan announced Central government's decision to introduce a new category called 'Wards of Covid Warriors' in the guidelines for selection and nomination of candidates against central pool MBBS seats for the academic year 2020-21. The Union Health Minister

said that this move aims to dignify and honour the noble contribution made by the Covid Warriors in treatment and management of Covid-19 patients. "This will honour the solemn sacrifice of all Covid warriors who served with selfless dedication for the cause of duty and humanity", he stated.

Central Pool MBBS seats may be allocated for selection and nominations of the candidates from amongst the wards of "Covid Warriors", who have lost life due to Covid 19; or died accidentally on account of Covid-19 related duty. Five Central Pool MBBS seats have been reserved for this category for the year 2020-21. The selection of candidates will be made by the Medical Council Committee (MCC) through online application on the basis of rank obtained in the NEET-2020 conducted by National Testing Agency.

Sayeed gets 10 year RI in Pak

From page 1

Saeed and his two close aides - Zafar Iqbal and Yahya Mujahid - have been sentenced to 10 and a half years each, while JuD chief's brother-in-law Abdul Rehman Makki was sentenced to six months imprisonment.

"Judge Arshad Hussain Bhutta of ATC Court No. 1 heard the case No. 16/19 and 25/19 filed by Counter Terrorism Department in which the verdict has been announced after the statements of witnesses were cross-examined by Naseeruddin Nayyar and Mohammad Imran Fazal Gul Advocate," the official said

A total of 41 cases have been registered by the CTD against the JuD leaders, out of which 24 have been decided while the rest are pending in the ATC courts. Four cases have been decided against Saeed so far. Saeed-led JuD is the front organisation for the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) which is responsible for carrying out the 2008 Mumbai attack that killed 166 people, including six Americans.

The US Department of the Treasury has designated Saeed as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist. He was listed under the UN Security Council Resolution 1267 in December 2008.

DIGITAL | ECONOMY

IT minister says India producing huge data in digital ecosystem

Govt keen to finalise data protection law

Bengaluru, Nov. 19: Union IT and communications minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on Thursday said the government was very keen to promote India as a very big centre of the data economy and would finalise a data protection law very soon.

"I'm very keen to promote India as a very big centre of the data economy. Data is going to drive the digital economy. It is also going to drive international commerce," he said.

Addressing the Bengaluru Tech Summit, 2020 (BTS2020) virtually,

he said India produces huge data and the digital ecosystem, like mobile phones and Aadhaar, is producing data.

"We are going to finalise a data protection law very soon. India is waiting for its movement for data economy, data innovation, data refinery. I would urge the Chief Minister (of Karnataka) to ensure that the state becomes a great centre of India's data economy," he added.

Organised by the Karnataka government, along with Karnataka Innovation

Parl panel grills Twitter for Kamra anti-SC, CJI tweets

New Delhi, Nov. 19: A parliamentary committee questioned representatives of social media giant Twitter on stand-up comedian Kunal Kamra's recent "obscene" tweets targeting the Supreme Court and the chief justice of India and sought a reply within seven days, the panel's chairperson Meenakshi Lekhi said on Thursday.

This came close on the heels of Twitter apologising in writing to the same parliamentary panel for wrongly showing Ladakh in China and promising to correct the error by the month-end.

Twitter India representatives deposed before the Joint Committee of Parliament on Data Protection Bill on Thursday.

"It is shameful that Twitter is allowing its platform for obscene remarks like the one by stand-up comedian Kunal

● **THIS COMES** close on the heels of Twitter apologising in writing to the same parliamentary panel for wrongly showing Ladakh in China and promising to correct the error by the month-end.

● **KAMRA HAS** refused to retract his controversial tweets against the Supreme Court or apologise for them, saying he believes they 'speak for themselves'.

● **MEENAKSHI LEKHI** said members of the committee across political spectrum grilled Twitter.

Kamra against the Supreme Court and the chief justice of India," Lekhi told reporters here.

"Twitter is allowing its platform to be misused for abusing top constitutional authorities, such as Supreme Court and chief

justice of India," she said.

She said members of the committee across political spectrum, including Congress MP Vivek Tankha, BSP MP Ritesh Pandey and BJD MP Bhatruhari Mahtab, grilled Twitter representatives on this issue. Lekhi also said that explanation of Twitter about banning handles and tweets was found to be inadequate.

Meanwhile, Kamra has refused to retract his controversial tweets against the Supreme Court or apologise for them, saying he believes they "speak for themselves".

Earlier, Attorney General K.K. Venugopal consented to the initiation of criminal contempt proceedings against him for a series of tweets following the Supreme Court giving interim bail to Republic TV Editor-in-Chief Arnab Goswami.

— PTI



GUPKAR DECLATION A CONSPIRACY, SAYS NAQVI

DC CORRESPONDENT SRINAGAR, NOV. 19

Union minister for minority affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi has termed the 'People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration' (PAGD) formed by Jammu and Kashmir's regional opposition parties and their allies from national left parties to seek restoration of its special status as a "conspiracy" and asserted that the abrogation of Article 370 in August last year was the "death of destructive dynastic politics" in the erstwhile state.

He said that likewise the PAGD will prove but a "paying declaration" for "dynastic and destructive politics" of the Congress and other alliance partners in the erstwhile state.

"It (the formation of PAGD) was the conspiracy of political parties against the people of the Union Territory. The amalgam will try to keep J&K away from development and prosperity," he said while speaking at a rally of BJP workers in the frontier town of Kupwara. He claimed that the people of J&K were deprived of their political rights only because of Articles 370 and 35A "as the dynasty rule in J&K had kept them away from the mainstream and unaware of constitutional rights."

He said that the maiden District Development Council polls in J&K are being contested by all the parties including those which had claimed that they won't contest any polls until the August 5, 2019 decision is reversed. "These elections," he said, "will send a clear message that the people of J&K are now part of dignity, development, rights and all this will be fulfilled by BJP."

matter of investigation. We are looking into it. We are trying to find out." Replying to another question, he said, "Yes, it appears they infiltrated late Wednesday night or early Thursday morning."

Mr Singh claimed that after the election authorities on November 4 announced dates for the first ever District Development Council elections and for vacant seats of panchayats and Urban Local Bodies in Jammu and Kashmir, the police began receiving inputs about possible infiltration bids in Jammu region. "There were general intelligence inputs regarding some fresh infiltration bids by Jaish-e-Muhammad and LeT," he said.

From Page 1

In January this year, three JeM militants were killed in an encounter with the police after a similar situation had emerged at the same place. The police said a manhunt has been launched for the truck driver.

The police also said the identities of the slain militants are being ascertained but as per intelligence inputs the group belonged to JeM which sneaked in Jammu and Kashmir from Pakistan through some porous section of the 198-km stretch of the International Border (IB), most probably in Kathua district.

Asked where the militants infiltrated, the IG, however, said: "This is a

and we decided to convert it into an opportunity. The global manufacturing world was looking towards alternative destinations. In view of India's enormous success in mobile manufacturing, we came up with a big idea of production linked incentive," he said. Prasad said major global companies, including from India, have committed to invest close to ₹11 lakh crore in the next five years and proposed to manufacture mobiles and components, out of which ₹7 lakh crore would be only for exports.

Addressing Chief

Minister B.S. Yediyurappa, Prasad said he wanted to give him some very good information, which was that during the Covid-19 pandemic, the government has got Apple to shift nine of their operating units, along with components, from China to India.

"In your city of Bengaluru, the Apple company has started production to manufacture its quality phones for India and also for abroad for exports," he said. Prasad noted that the summit was taking place in very challenging times.

— PTI

IN BRIEF

HOUSTON: 5 SHOT AT IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, 2 DEAD

Houston, Nov. 19: Five people were shot Wednesday, two fatally, in what investigators say was a case of domestic violence in western Houston, police said.

Officers went to a house in response to a report of an "active shooter" about 2:45 pm Wednesday and arrived to find the body of a man in the driveway of the house he's believed to have owned, Assistant Police Chief Larry Satterwhite said.

Upon entry, they found a wounded man with a gun beside him, whom police suspect was the gunman, and a wounded woman believed to have been the complainant, Satterwhite said. Upstairs, they found two women, one dead and the other wounded.

A 3-month-old child appeared unharmed. All involved appeared to have been related to one another, Satterwhite said, but no motive was immediately determined.

IRAN LAUNCHES CRAFT-CARRYING HEAVY WARSHIP

Tehran, Nov. 19: Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard said it launched a heavy warship Thursday capable of carrying helicopters, drones and missile launchers amid ongoing tensions with the US.

Photographs of the ship, named after slain Guard naval commander Abdullah Roudaki, showed it carrying truck-launched surface-to-surface missiles and anti-aircraft missiles. It also carried four small fast boats, the kind the Guard routinely uses in the Persian Gulf. Sailors manned deck-mounted machine guns.

The Guard said the ship has a length of 150 metres (492 feet). By comparison, a US Nimitz-class aircraft carrier has a length of 332 metres (1,092 feet). The Guard's ship does not have a runway, but includes a landing pad for a helicopter.

The commander of the Guard's navy, Adm Ali Reza Tangsiri, suggested his forces wanted to move beyond the waters of the Gulf into deep-water patrolling.

US HOUSE PASSES TIBET BIPARTISAN RESOLUTION

Washington, Nov. 19: A bipartisan resolution recognising the cultural and religious significance of an autonomous Tibet and seeking peaceful solutions to the conflict has been passed by the US House of Representatives. The resolution recognised the significance of the genuine autonomy of Tibet and the Tibetan people, and the work done by 14th Dalai Lama to promote global peace, harmony and understanding.

Passed by a voice vote, the resolution determined that it would be beneficial to convene a bipartisan, bicameral forum, either through a Joint Meeting of Congress, a teleconference broadcast at the Capitol Visitor Center, or roundtable, between Members of Congress and His Holiness the Dalai Lama to discuss peaceful solutions to international conflicts.

It also noted that there is overwhelming bipartisan Congressional support for the Tibetan people's aspirations for internationally recognised human rights.

ETHIOPIA: WHO CHIEF BACKING TIGRAY REGION

Nairobi, Nov. 19: Ethiopia's government is accusing the head of the World Health Organisation, a fellow Ethiopian, of lobbying neighbouring countries to come to the aid of the country's rebellious Tigray regional government with arms and other support.

Ethiopia's army chief, Gen Birhanu Julia, asserted to reporters on Wednesday that Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus had urged unnamed neighbours to "oppose the war and for (the Tigray People's Liberation Front) to get arms."

The army chief did not provide any evidence to support his claims. The TPLF has been clashing with Ethiopian federal forces for two weeks after the country's prime minister accused the heavily armed regional government of attacking a military base.

Each government regards the other as illegal after a months-long falling-out amid political reforms. The army chief accused Tedros, a former Ethiopian foreign minister when the TPLF dominated Ethiopia's ruling coalition, of being a member of the TPLF.

Anti-terror court sentences Hafiz Saeed to 10 yrs in jail

Mumbai terror attack mastermind was arrested on July 17 last year in Pak

Lahore, Nov. 19: Mumbai terror attack mastermind and Jamat-ud-Dawa (JuD) chief Hafiz Saeed was on Thursday sentenced to 10 years in jail by an anti-terrorism court in Pakistan in two more terror cases. Saeed, a UN designated terrorist whom the US has placed a \$10 million bounty on, was arrested on July 17 last year in the terror financing cases.

He was sentenced to 11 years in jail by an anti-terrorism court in February this year in two terror financing cases. He is lodged at the Lahore's high-security Kot Lakhpat jail. "The Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) of Lahore on Thursday sentenced four leaders of Jamat-ud-Dawa, including its chief Hafiz Saeed, in two more cases," a court official told PTI.

Saeed and his two close aides — Zafar Iqbal and Yahya Mujahid — have been sentenced to 10 and a half years each, while JuD chief's brother-in-law Abdul Rehman Makki was sentenced to six months imprisonment. "Judge Arshad Hussain Bhutta of ATC Court No. 1 heard the case No. 16/19 and 25/19 filed by Counter Terrorism Department in which the verdict has been announced after the statements of witnesses were cross-examined by Naseeruddin Nayyar and Mohammad Imran Fazel Gul Advocate," the official said.

A total of 41 cases have been registered by the CTD against the JuD leaders, out of which 24 have been decided while the rest are pending in the ATC courts. Four cases have been decided against Saeed so far. — PTI



Pakistan's PM Imran Khan at a press conference with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani at the Presidential Palace in Kabul on Thursday. — AFP

Imran vows to do everything to decrease Afghan violence

Islamabad, Nov. 19: Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Thursday met with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani on his maiden visit to Kabul and vowed to "do everything" to reduce violence in Afghanistan as the two leaders explored ways to deepen the bilateral ties and discussed the reconciliation process, amidst an uptick in violence that could jeopardise the peace push in the war-torn country.

President Ghani who received Khan upon his arrival at ARG Presidential Palace, situated in the heart of Kabul, called his visit "historic" and said it was an "important message to help end violence". On his part, Khan assured Ghani that his government would do "everything possible" to

● **KHAN SAID** Pakistan played a role in the peace deal signed between the Taliban and the US side and later on starting the intra-Afghan dialogue.

help reduce violence in Afghanistan and bring a durable peace.

"The idea of visiting at a time when violence is increasing (in Afghanistan) is to assure you, President Ghani, that the people and the government of Pakistan have only one concern: Peace in Afghanistan," Khan said while addressing a joint press conference with the Afghan leader after their talks on issues ranging from bilateral ties to the Afghan peace and regional situation.

Khan said Pakistan played a role in the peace deal signed between the Taliban and the US side and later on starting the intra-Afghan dialogue. He regretted that despite such efforts violence was increasing in Afghanistan and assured that Pakistan was ready to help if it was possible. "If you feel there is somewhere Pakistan can help (in reduction of violence), please let us know...We assure you that we will do everything and whatever is within our reach," he said.

He said that Pakistan's tribal areas were devastated by the violence in the past and it was one of the reasons to help Afghanistan tackle violence. "The only way to help people on both sides of the border is by peace, trade and connectivity," he said. — PTI

KIDNEY PAIN: AILING NAWAZ VISITS HOSPITAL

Islamabad, Nov. 19: Pakistan's ailing former prime minister Nawaz Sharif made a string of unscheduled hospital visits in London this week after he developed acute pain due to stones in his kidney, according to a media report on Thursday. Sharif, 70, who has been staying in London since November 2019 on medical grounds, during his visits to the hospital underwent several tests and scans to determine a course of treatment, the Dawn reported.

"He is very unwell and has serious pain in his kidney owing to deteriorating kidney function. Doctors are conducting tests and scans to determine a course of action. He has developed kidney stones," Dr Adnan Khan, the personal physician of Sharif, was quoted as saying by the paper.

Sharif, who in the past has undergone heart surgery, visited consultants on Harley Street on Tuesday and Wednesday and is scheduled for more scans on Thursday, the report said.

On Tuesday, Sharif's daughter Maryam Nawaz said in a tweet that her father was unable to participate in a meeting of the Pakistan Democratic Movement because of "severe kidney pain" and added that she would attend in his place. — PTI

Australian special forces unlawfully killed 39 Afghans

● **AUSTRALIA LAUNCHED** the inquiry in 2016, amid reports from whistle-blowers and in the local media of the alleged killing of unarmed men and children in Afghanistan.

Melbourne, Nov. 19:

There is "credible information" that at least 19 serving and former Australian special forces allegedly committed up to 39 unlawful murders during the conflict in Afghanistan, according to a long-awaited military report into war crimes released on Thursday.

Australia launched the inquiry in 2016, amid reports from whistle-blowers and in the local media of the alleged killing of unarmed men and children in Afghanistan. The four-year inquiry by NSW Court Of Appeal Justice Paul Brereton found there was "credible information" of 23 incidents where Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel were involved in the serious crimes, either carrying out the offences or at least being "accessories" to the incidents.

There was "credible information" that 39 Afghans were allegedly murdered by Australian special forces in 23 incidents. There were also two incidents could be classified as the war crime of "cruel treatment", the report said. According to the Australian media, the latest report has been based on over 400 interviews with soldiers and officers from the SAS, a special forces unit, and Commands, Afghan villagers, special forces interpreters and support staff.

The inquiry found evidence some Australian troops in Afghanistan carried "throwdowns" such as weapons, radios and grenades not issued by the ADF but planted next to the bodies of Afghan civilians to suggest they were a "legitimate target"

in any post-incident investigations. "This practice probably originated for the less egregious though still dishonest purpose of avoiding scrutiny where a person who was legitimately engaged turned out not to be armed," Brereton said. Issuing an apology to Afghan people while releasing the report in Canberra, Australia's Chief of Defence Force Angus Campbell said:

"These findings allege the most serious breaches of military conduct and professional values. The killing, the unlawful killing, of civilians and prisoners is never acceptable." Campbell also apologised to the Australian people, saying he was sincerely sorry for any wrongdoing by members of the Australian Defence Force. Campbell said the report discloses a "disgraceful and a profound betrayal of the Australian Defence Force's professional standards and expectations".

"Today the Australian Defence Force is rightly held to account for allegations of grave misconduct by some members of our special forces community on operations in Afghanistan," he said. The public summary of the inquiry found that Australian soldiers summarily executed non-combatants and prisoners. — PTI

China perceives rising India as rival

Washington, Nov. 19: China perceives a rising India as a "rival" and wants to constrain its strategic partnership with the US, its allies, and with other democracies, the State Department said in a report, emphasising that Beijing intends to displace America as the world's foremost power.

Coming ahead of the transition of power from Donald Trump's administration to President-elect Joe Biden's administration after the November 3 US presidential election, the detailed policy document highlights that China is undermining the security, autonomy and economic interests of many nations in the region.

"China perceives rising India as a rival and seeks to impel it to accommodate Beijing's ambitions by engaging economically while constraining New Delhi's strategic partnership with the US, Japan, Australia and its relations with other democracies," the report said.

"China is undermining the security, autonomy, and economic interests of many others in the region — such as member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), including those in the vital Mekong Region, as well as the nations of the Pacific Islands," the report added.

The 70-page report states that awareness has been growing in the US — and in nations around the

FACE HONG KONG REALITY, CHINA TELLS 'FIVE EYES'

Beijing, Nov. 19: China on Thursday rejected the latest attack on its Hong Kong policy by the US and several of its allies, saying they "should face up to the reality" that the former British colony has been returned to China.

Foreign ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian was responding to a statement on Hong Kong issued by the US, UK, Australia, Canada and New Zealand, which together make up an intelligence partnership known as the Five Eyes. "No matter if they have five eyes or 10 eyes, if they dare to harm China's sovereignty, security and development interests, they should beware of their eyes being poked and blinded," he said at a daily briefing. — AP

world — that the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has triggered a new era of great-power competition. "Yet few discern the pattern in China's inroads within every region of the world, much less the specific form of dominance to which the party aspires," said the report. — PTI

Oxford vaccine boosts adult 'immunity'

London, Nov. 19: The Coronavirus vaccine developed by teams at the University of Oxford has been shown to trigger a robust immune response in healthy adults aged 56-69 and those over 70 years of age. The findings published in *Lancet* on Thursday based on 560 healthy adult volunteers shows that the ChAdOx1 nCoV-19 vaccine is "safe and well tolerated" with a lower reactogenicity profile in older adults than in younger adults, meaning the older age groups could build immunity to the disease.

"These findings are encouraging because older individuals are at disproportionate risk of severe Covid-19 and so any vaccine adopted for use against SARS-CoV-2 must be effective in older adults," the researchers note.

The team is also testing whether the vaccine stops people developing Covid-19 in larger Phase 3 trials and early results from this crucial stage are expected in the coming weeks. "We were pleased to see that our vaccine was not only well tolerated in older adults, but also stimulated similar immune responses to those seen in younger volunteers," said Dr Maheshi Ramasamy, an investigator at the Oxford Vaccine Group.

"The next step will be to see if this translates into protection from the disease," she said. This means there are now four promising vaccines after Pfizer-BioNTech, Sputnik and Moderna already reporting.



The empty inner city of Vienna is pictured at Stephansplatz on Thursday, amid the Covid-19. — AFP

Biden: Transition delay hits vaccine

Washington, Nov. 19: US President-elect Joe Biden has warned that a delay in transition by the outgoing Trump administration will put behind the Covid-19 vaccination plan by "weeks or months".

In a virtual roundtable with healthcare workers on Covid-19, Biden alleged on Wednesday that his transition team has not been receiving any cooperation from the Trump administration. President Donald Trump has refused to concede the November 3

US election and has filed multiple lawsuits challenging results in several States.

"One of the problems that we're having now is the failure of the administration to recognise — the law says that the General Services Administration has a person who recognises who the winner is and then they have to have access to all the data and information that the government possesses to be prepared," he said. — PTI

US records more than 2.5L deaths

Washington, Nov. 19: The US has recorded over 250,000 deaths from Covid-19, a bleak milestone as cases soar once again across the country, worst-hit by the deadly infectious disease that has claimed over 1,349,000 lives across the world.

According to Johns Hopkins University, the US has now reported 250,537 deaths and over 11.5 million confirmed cases. It has more reported infections and a higher death toll than any other country worldwide. The Coronavirus is now killing at least one American every minute of the day, bringing the country to another horrific milestone on Wednesday.

At least 250,029 people in the country have died of Covid-19 since the first death on February 29 in Washington state, *CNN* reported. The situation is only going to get worse, warned Dr Jonathan Reiner, a professor at George Washington University School of Medicine, amidst the continued obstruction from the Trump administration for a smooth handover to the incoming administration of US President-elect Joe Biden.

"The horrible death count that we saw yesterday in the United States ... reflects the number of people who were being

INFECTIONS MAY BE 6 TIMES MORE THAN REPORTED

Melbourne, Nov. 19: The actual number of global infections in the Covid-19 pandemic could be up to six times higher than the reported number of cases, according to a modelling study. The researchers, including those from the Australian National University (ANU) and the University of Melbourne, found infection rates between March and August across 15 countries were on average 6.2 times greater than reported cases.

The data, published in the journal *Royal Society Open Science*, shows Covid-19 infection rates in the UK, France, Belgium and Italy are much higher than reported and in the case of Italy up to 17-times higher. It shows Australia had the best level of detection at the end of April, but the rate of infection may still have been five times higher than what has been reported. — PTI

infected three weeks ago — two to three weeks ago, because that's the lag," Reiner said on Wednesday. — PTI

UNDER COVER

Criminals and extremists are exploiting deadly pandemic to build their support networks

Al-Qaeda, ISIS groups spread conspiracy theories

United Nations, Nov. 19: Groups associated with al-Qaeda and ISIS are exploiting the Covid-19 pandemic to spread conspiracy theories that the virus is "punishing the unbelievers", is "God's wrath upon the West" and incites terrorists to use it as a form of biological weapon, according to a UN report.

The report titled 'Stop the virus of disinformation: The malicious use of social media by terrorist, violent extremist and criminal groups during the

Covid-19 pandemic' was released by the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI). It said that criminals and violent extremists are exploiting the pandemic to build their support networks, undermine trust in government and even weaponise the virus.

The report added that terrorist, violent extremist and organised criminal groups have maliciously used social media to disseminate conspiracy theories

about the origin of Covid-19.

"Groups associated with ISIL and Al-Qaeda have also spread conspiracy theories that assert that the virus is a 'soldier of Allah' that is punishing the unbelievers and the enemies that have damaged Muslims over the last years. For example, ISIL and Al-Qaeda claimed that the virus is God's wrath upon the West," the report said. Similarly, Al-Shabab declared that the coronavirus disease is spread

● **THE GLOBAL** Fatwa Index has identified Covid-19 related messages from groups associated with ISIS and al-Qaeda, including non-official fatwas that called on ISIS members who have contracted Covid-19 to act as "biological bombs".

by the "crusader forces who have invaded the country and the disbelieving countries that support

them", the report said.

The Global Fatwa Index has identified Covid-19 related messages from groups associated with ISIS and al-Qaeda, including non-official fatwas that called on ISIS members who have contracted Covid-19 to act as "biological bombs" by "deliberately spreading the disease among the organisation's enemies," it said.

UNICRI Director Antonia Marie De Meo wrote in the introduction to the report that it is "alarming

that some terrorist and violent extremist groups have attempted to misuse social media to incite potential terrorists to intentionally spread Covid-19 and to use it as an improvised form of a biological weapon." "There are cases in which right-wing extremist groups... explicitly asked their followers to spread the virus by coughing on their local minority or by attending to specific places where religious or racial minorities gather. Other groups... advocate to

spread Covid in countries with large populations or high levels of pollution," it said. It also notes the case of "inspired terrorism" was that of Timothy Wilson, who plotted to detonate a bomb in a hospital caring for Coronavirus patients in Kansas City.

Researchers examined three groups of non-State actors: right-wing extremists; groups associated with the ISIS or Da'esh terrorist group and al-Qaeda; and organised crime groups. — PTI

DECCAN Chronicle

20 NOVEMBER 2020

Let Cong show humility, call for wider dialogue

After the Mahagathbandhan in Bihar, of which the Congress was the second largest component, was pipped to the post by NDA, the party's dissidents who had formed a group of 23 or G-23 last August have come to the surface with vigour.

The prominent lawyer and former Union cabinet minister Kapil Sibal, who has virtually emerged as the G-23 spokesman, asserted in a recent interview that the Congress was "in decline", that the way forward was in sight but the presumed leadership (meaning interim president Sonia Gandhi and her son Rahul) was not visible, and that experienced, senior folk weren't being consulted.

Much of this is valid, although Mr Gandhi has hardly been inactive. Indeed, it is hard to think of any leader of any party who has emerged as a harder or more frontal critic of this government, of PM Narendra Modi, and the RSS, especially from the liberal, secular perspective. But the former Congress chief does give the impression that he has gone solo. There is hardly any semblance of a functioning organisation that he built when he was formally at the helm. This is no way to run a party, especially one with an ambition to make its influence felt nationwide.

Mr Sibal has sought to rub his point in by pointing to the Congress' none too bright showing in the recent Bihar election and the byelections in Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, UP and Karnataka. In fact, were it not for these reverses, it is unlikely he would have sprung to life the way he did.

However, the criticisms around the poll reverses do not appear well-grounded. In the byelections, the ruling parties did well everywhere, including Jharkhand where the Congress came good. As for Bihar, it is true that the bulk of the share of seats that fell in the Congress' share to fight were those that no Mahagathbandhan party had won in three decades. So, probably these would have fallen in NDA's kitty even if the resurgent RJD fought on them.

All these arguments are in the nature of garnishing, however. The core of the dissidents' argument pertains to the field of party organisation and these are not without merit, even if the G-23 are people who had thrived in a party built on nominations when the going was good and the Congress was in power.

Even if Mrs Gandhi has got into motion a process for AICC elections, a key requirement for organisation-building and daunting task at the best of times, no one really knows what's going on. Since the G-23 are experienced and senior folk, although none amongst them can claim to be a mass leader or ground-level politician, it would have been in the fitness of things if they too had been associated with this exercise and consulted routinely. Instead, it seems they have been cast aside.

It was singularly distasteful of Congress Lok Sabha leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury to suggest that Mr Sibal either float his own party or join another party instead of speaking out aloud. This is not the way of democratic parties. He — and others — should not forget that even P. Chidambaram has criticised the Congress' performance in Bihar and asked that experienced hands be consulted. The Congress would do well to summon some humility.

Give dads family time

Some old-timers feel that it's just not cricket. But Anil Kumble took it in 2004, followed by Gautam Gambhir and Rahul Dravid in 2009, Rohit Sharma in 2018 and Joe Root earlier this year. And now skipper Virat Kohli officially asked for it and got it! The Board of Control for Cricket in India's grant of paternity leave to Kohli during his team's upcoming Oz tour is a sure sign of changing times.

At present, fathers who are government servants are permitted 15 days of leave to be availed within six months of the birth of the child under Rule 43A of the Central Civil Services (Leave) Rules, 1972. Similar provisions can be found in the leave rules of state governments. It is only about eight per cent of the 182 days allowed to mothers. But private companies like Zomato, Ikea, Amazon and Novartis as well as tech giants Facebook, Deloitte and Microsoft play a big role in defining workplace cultures and they allow longer leaves.

Blinkered to shifting realities, possibly due to an ivory tower consciousness, then woman and child development minister Maneka Gandhi in 2016 scoffed at the idea of legislating for paternity leave. She was convinced that "Indian men" would turn "it into a holiday". The truth is that even where rules are in place fathers are shamed into not availing it or otherwise subjected to pressures by the office management. We need more teeth in our labour laws for holding such employers accountable. Not only in high-profile jobs or for executives in general, paternity leave should be the norm for peons, clerks and blue-collar workers. But that can only happen if there is political will to honour the cultural change taking place.

Although it was women who first argued for work-life balance, a term that originated in the UK during the Industrial Revolution, allowing moderate amounts of leave to employees has been seen to improve both quality of output and prevent burnouts. An egalitarian policy of parental leaves will direct social change — promote participation of women in the labour force, currently at 26 per cent, thus drawing in their diverse skills and vision, optimise our gross domestic product as well as create friendlier workplaces.

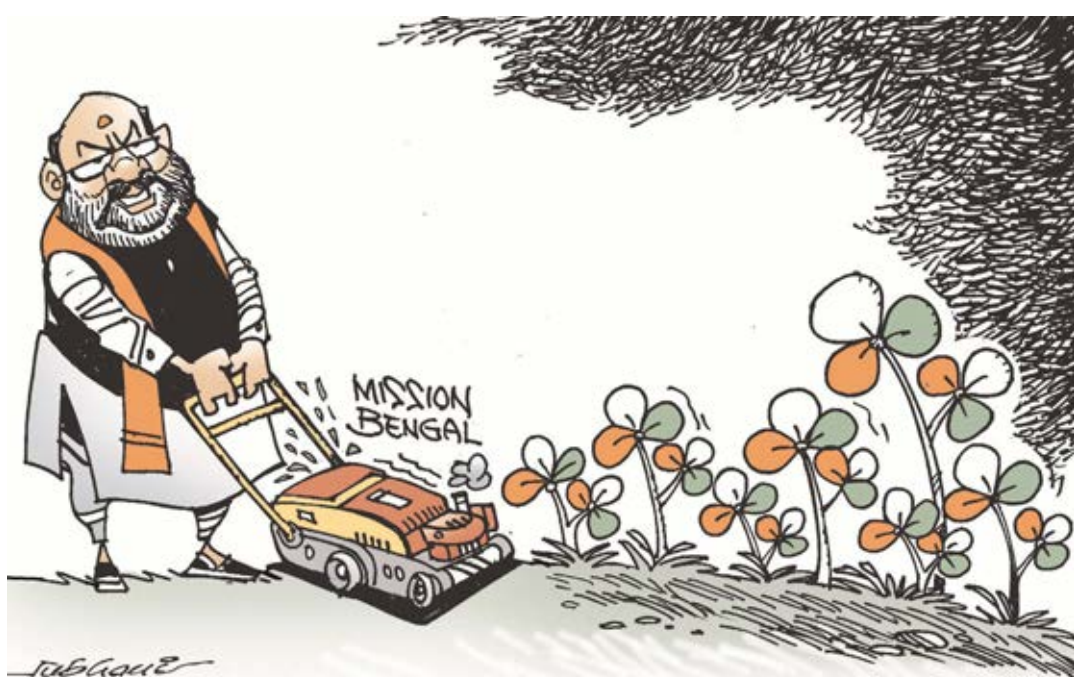
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Subhani



Can KCR's gameplan stop Modi juggernaut?

Sriram Karri

The municipal elections under-way in Hyderabad might have a political significance nationally, if TRS chief and Telangana chief minister K. Chandrashekar Rao's (KCR) strategy helps his party trounce the newest challenger to power — the Bharatiya Janata Party. If KCR succeeds in nipping the saffron party's surge in the bud, he might reveal a perfect playbook to counter the seemingly unstoppable juggernaut of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

It is only of footnote value, not headline material, that the Congress, which ruled India for two terms based on the strength of members of Parliament Telugu people sent to Lok Sabha, and which enacted and implemented the formation of Telangana, is rapidly declining in the state. The interesting part is KCR himself pushed the weak Congress, the principal challenger to TRS as recently as the 2018 Assembly elections, from the general ward into the ICU.

In that election, which the TRS had foresight to schedule ahead of completion of term, and delink state elections from national elections to avoid having to face the Modi wave, the pink party retained power with a bigger majority, winning 88 out of 119 seats. The Congress returned as the principal Opposition party, with 19 seats, while the BJP secured a lone seat. The MIM, ever friendly to whoever is the ruling party, won seven seats.

Ignoring the mandate for over two months, without even declaring a cabinet, the TRS boss ensured defections from the Congress, till it was finally split by over two-thirds, and Congressman Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka lost the status as leader of the Opposition. The void left

by the Congress proved to be a signal to the BJP to make it an all-out direct battle with the TRS for the state.

The TRS lost two of its advantages in this possibly irreversible decline of the Congress and consequent rise of the BJP — a split in anti-incumbency votes will cease and a party with a more effective election machinery will have to be faced.

The BJP has shown it has the striking firepower. Debutant D. Arvind defeated sitting MP K. Kavitha, daughter of KCR, in Lok Sabha elections for Nizamabad, a hurt the TRS still nurses. The recent snatching of Dubbaka byelections by the BJP has consolidated a perception Telangana is now a predominantly two party state, notwithstanding the factor X that is Owaisi-led MIM.

The BJP has already pushed the TRS into a spot by making the elections to Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) about nationalist Hindutva, a template the TRS has not really been tested against. The BJP has declared that the GHMC elections are between them and the MIM, accusing the TRS of appeasing Muslims, especially Owaisi brothers, and being their sidekicks. The TRS could laugh off charges of nepotism, family rule and corruption when they were hurled by the Congress, but the same attack from the BJP could have a sharper bite. Above all, the TRS cannot arm-twist the BJP the way it could do the Congress.

With the reputation and political future of TRS working president K.T. Rama Rao, son of KCR, heavily invested in the urbane electoral climes of hi-tech Hyderabad, CM Rao is taking nothing to chance because in Indian politics, like in many Indian families, the loss to a daughter is painful, but

the loss to the image of a son, that too heir apparent, is nearly politically fatal.

Taking the reins into his own hands, KRC has firstly declared that his party would fight both the BJP and the MIM based on secular values. KCR has announced that none of their party leaders or candidates would visit temples, mosques, churches or any other places of worship as part of their campaign. Wearing of religious identity won't be a vote-winning tactic of the TRS.

This will be backed by giving a second lease of life to the idea of a Federal Front, a non-Congress, anti-BJP national front and making it about a direct confrontation between KCR and Narendra Modi as principal rivals on the national scene. This seems congruent with the perception that KCR will hand over the reins of the state to his son soon and take a one-way fight to Delhi.

Just as the TRS has seldom faced a tough rival like the BJP at the state-level head-on, Mr Modi and BJP, too, has not yet seen a challenge as KCR can alone mount in India. KCR understands the value of rhetoric and optics as few in Indian politics, besides the Modi-Shah duo. He believes in disruptive moves and being unpredictable, keeping everyone guessing. He would seldom waste a stone to kill one bird.

KCR would like to take on the BJP pan-India with a front which would acquire the image of India itself — a union of states — hence the KCR-initiated front would be a union of state-level parties and leaders. Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, besides neighbouring Andhra Pradesh, are early potential recruits for this front.

Making every state election about Modi versus his front will be crucial to KCR's strategy — make every election harder for the BJP across the country, by involving every part of the whole, all the time, leading to 2024. Thus, even a loss in, say Delhi or Jharkhand, which BJP presently dismisses as a local loss with no impact at national level, would hence-

forth become a win for the anti-Modi front, and thus a score.

KCR will likely pitch secular federalism, marked with good governance, high on welfare and development, with a strong stress on inclusivity as key ideological differentiators, with a stress on "true". KCR believes this will reduce the ability of the BJP to coerce Opposition leaders with other means, aka, use of Central agencies.

It is his calculation that the long-term incarceration of leaders in Kashmir would have become impossible, if leaders of all states had stood up with them, together. Drawing a leaf from Lincoln, KCR will now put his marketing skills to convince all state leaders to the mantra — let us hang together, lest we be hanged separately.

The TRS has a great understanding of how to build a narrative and sustain it through innovative programmes and schemes. It is hardened in social media battles. It can come out with attractive slogans and put up a convincing counter narrative. It can lure, or coerce, the media. Above all, KCR can put Telangana's own success in input investments for farmers, water as a right for all Indians, jobs, infrastructure and universal healthcare as rival models — the Hyderabad model versus the Gujarat model.

His timing is perfect, too. The Congress is at its weakest and can be dictated to support the front at any later date. Most regional leaders are also too weak to resist; they will happily follow anyone giving them hope against Modi's BJP.

But will KCR emerge the Pied Piper or end up doing an encore of 2019, when his high vision was reduced to gallantry of Don Quixote class, will start becoming clear when Hyderabad votes for its 150 municipal wards on December 1, and its results are declared on December 4.

With a final caveat — it will be by paper ballot. Does a low-tech election in a hi-tech city finally hold the key to a different result in the next Lok Sabha? KCR will hope the answer is yes.

LETTERS

PLAYING WITH FIRE

Your editorial on 'Love Jihad' laws pointed out the rights of citizens in India and the dangers that the country could face if the Union government remains a mute spectator in not curbing/putting an end to such drastic, unethical, frivolous and unnecessary laws. The editorial rightly advises the governments and political parties to concentrate on public welfare and to avoid poking their noses in the private lives of citizens in the name of religion.

This law will definitely sow hatred in the minds of the younger generation who have an open mind and tolerance to all religions. India is known for its tolerance and peace and marriages are between two hearts and not two religions.

M.C. Vijay Shankar, Chennai

LVB COLLAPSE

WHY ARE some banks, once considered 'good buys', falling on the wayside? Right from the infamous PMC and Yes Bank episodes to Lakshmi Vilas Bank, there has been a saga of failures, putting the gullible depositors and shareholders to untold problems. Improper, inadequate auditing, willful misdeeds and what not. The RBI and the MoF should ensure such things do not recur. The vested interests of directors are the foremost and employees are not tech savvy and continue to handle customers like what it was 50 years ago. The loan disbursement at the lowest level was only put up with all other decisions being taken at the highest level and was considered without taking the risk factors involved in such consortium and other huge advances resulting in default and increasing NPAs turning a burden on the bank.

C.K. Subramaniam, Chennai

IT'S HEARTENING to note the assurance from the Reserve Bank of India that the money of depositors with the beleaguered Lakshmi Vilas Bank (which has been merged with the Singaporean lender DBS) is safe and the employees working there will not be shown the door. The move should be seen in the light of Covid-19 situation, wherein thousands of people have lost their jobs due to fall in demand and other factors. Be that as it may, the downfall of the 94-year-old LVB is indeed pathetic. Someone said it's the mad aggression to capture a huge market share that had led to its fall.

S. Ramakrishnasayee, Chennai

Devi Kar



Prepare kids for future as worries rise amidst Covid

This time of the year is always fraught with anxieties for school-leaving students. First, there is the looming board examination, the results of which determine their entry into colleges and universities. Next, there is the constant brooding over the choice of career paths. But 2020 has been especially tense for them on account of the untold disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Indeed, it is such a difficult time for school-leavers that the past seems unnaturally alluring while the future looks pretty grim.

As yet, nobody knows when on-campus classes will be resumed. Nor can anybody predict when, how and where the board examinations will be held. It is no wonder that the future after leaving school seems so terrifying for high schoolers. Even in normal years, students have a tough time selecting their branch of higher studies while keeping an eye on possible career paths. This year they are totally at sea, knowing that the world of work is undergoing turbulent changes. Further, they know that they will probably have to settle for virtual classes and will not

experience college campus life, which they had been looking forward to for years.

At this time, we need to make a conscious effort to boost our students' morale. Professional career counsellors are probably doing their job of keeping abreast of changes that are taking place and of trends that are already perceptible. However, career counsellors alone can't be expected to allay the anxieties of students. Parents, mentors and teachers have an onerous responsibility too. They need to give students a sense of security and stability so that their education — irrespective of the timing and nature of the board and college entrance examinations — continues uninterrupted. Further, they must help them to face the world with a calm frame of mind and develop the adaptability to cope with the demands of new situations. Living examples may be cited, of enterprising people who have reinvented their lines of work successfully in these trying times. It would help them enormously, if teachers and mentors suggested concrete steps while their students go about trying to prepare for

an unnervingly uncertain future.

Here are a few thoughts that we can share with our students while engaging with them. I feel that such dialogues make them less anxious about their future. The first point to drive home is that they are not the only ones facing this predicament — everybody was in the same boat. Although quite obvious, somehow, they find solace in this realisation which needs to be reinforced from time to time. They must also be made aware that humans have overcome many perilous situations in the past; therefore, we can believe with reason that the present condition is only temporary. Students must make most of the time they have at their disposal and learn not only from their prescribed coursework but from the myriad resources that are available on the Internet. It has become already clear that the future demands a broad outlook and an interdisciplinary approach — narrow specialisation has become passé.

Many students, along with their parents, worry because they are undecided about their career path. Instead of trying to coax them to make a decision

immediately, it is perhaps wiser to reassure them that there is plenty of time to make a definite choice. In any case, people do not need to stick to any particular career line all through their working life. Examples may be given of the multifarious new occupations that have spawned in the recent past to demonstrate that there is no end to the opportunities that will be available to them. In the face of a possible job losses, resourceful young people have got hold of several digital assignments while working from home. Who knows, multiple careers can easily turn out to be the norm in future.

So far as their immediate anxiety of admission into reputed colleges is concerned, students must understand the need to be practical. Even a very good student may not get a seat in the college of his or her choice. This should not break the person. There are enough real-life examples to show that it is not necessary to attend a particular institution in order to make a success of life.

In the context of seeking "success", it is imperative that young people must understand that success does not have

a single definition — it comes in different forms. One way of defining success is the fulfilment of individual goals. Therefore, instead of chasing nebulous dreams, students should be encouraged to look inward and discover what they want out of life, where their interests lie and what their strengths are. To attain success, students must be resilient in the face of inevitable setbacks. In addition, they should possess certain skills and qualities which will always be in demand irrespective of place or circumstances. These include "people skills", the ability to communicate effectively and being a reliable team player. Above all, it is important to be able to manage one's own emotions competently and respond to other people's emotions sensitively.

Parents and teachers must make a conscious effort not to pass on their own worries to the young. It is easier said than done, but we must cultivate a robust outlook ourselves while holding up for them an optimistic, yet not unrealistic, picture of the future.

The writer is a veteran school educator based in Kolkata

SHORT TAKES

Botham grandson for rugby debut

Cardiff, United Kingdom: England cricket legend Ian Botham's grandson, James, will make his debut for the Wales rugby team in Saturday's Autumn Nations Cup match against Georgia as coach Wayne Pivac picked an experimental side with an eye on the future.

James Botham, a former Wales Under-20 international who plays for Cardiff Blues, is the son of Liam Botham, the son of Ian, and himself a former professional cricket, rugby union and rugby league player, who appeared for Cardiff in the 1990s.

Botham is one of three uncapped players named by Pivac for the match which will take place behind closed doors at Parc y Scarlets, Llanelli.

Scrum-half Kieran Hardy and centre Johnny Williams will also earn their first caps in a game Pivac will be desperate to win after six successive defeats, their worst run since 2012.

— AFP

Para cyclists to cut across country

Srinagar: Indian para cyclists, led by Limca Book of Records holder Aditya Mehta, on Thursday embarked on a journey from Kashmir to Kanyakumari as part of the Infinity Ride 2020 to raise awareness and scout para talent from across the country. The ride, a brain-child of the Aditya Mehta Foundation (AMF) and supported by Border Security Force (BSF), took off from Nishant Bagh, Srinagar on Thursday with Rakesh Asthana, Director General BSF flagging off the ride.

Asian Para Cycling Championship bronze medalist Harinder Singh and Asian Games Track Cycling bronze medalist Gural Singh also joined the journey which will end at Tirunelveli, Kanyakumari on December 29 after covering 34 cities in 41 days. "India has no dearth of talent. My goal is to scout young talents and train them," Mehta said in a release. — PTI

Fifa rules for maternity rights

Geneva: Female soccer players should soon get their maternity rights protected under new employment rules announced Thursday by FIFA. The governing body of soccer is preparing to mandate clubs to allow at least 14 weeks of maternity leave paid at a minimum two-thirds of a player's full salary. National soccer bodies can insist on more generous terms. "Her club will be under an obligation to reintegrate her into football activity and provide adequate ongoing medical support," FIFA said. Any club that ended a player's contract for becoming pregnant faces having to pay compensation and a fine, and being banned from the transfer market for one year.

"The idea is to protect female players before, during and after childbirth," FIFA chief legal officer Emilio Garcia said on a conference call.

The move is seen as a key step in professionalising women's football. — AP

Aditi is tied 29th at Saudi golf

KAEC, Saudi Arabia: Indian golfer Aditi Ashok faltered on the back-nine and slipped to the Tied-29th position in the individual standings after the second round of the Saudi Ladies Team International here. Aditi, who shot one-under 71 in the first round, added a three-over 75 and was individually two-over 146 in the unique tournament that is also being played as a team event. As for the other Indians, Diksha Dagar added a 78 to her first-round 71 and lay T-50th, while Tvesa Malik (74-76) was T-64th. Astha Madan (80-81) was T-108. Aditi had two birdies against three bogeys, two of them on the back-nine, and a double bogey in her round. She could not find any birdies on the back-nine. — PTI

Live on TV**FOOTBALL**

Indian Super League: Kerala Blasters vs ATK Mohun Bagan from 7:15 pm on Star Sports 1, 2, 3

TENNIS

ATP Finals: Matches from 7:30 pm and 1:30 am (Saturday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

WWE

SmackDown: Bouts from 6:30 am (Saturday) on Sony Ten 1, HD

BELGIAN BOOST

Italy and Belgium barge into Nations League final

Paris, Nov. 19: Romelu Lukaku helped fire Belgium into the UEFA Nations League finals by scoring twice in a 4-2 win over Denmark on Wednesday, while Italy also secured a place in the last four with victory away to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The world's number one-ranked side, Belgium only required a draw from their last League 'A', Group 2 game at home to Denmark behind closed doors in Leuven and took an early lead through Youri Tielemans.

Jonas Wind equalised for Denmark, but Lukaku got a second-half double and Kevin De Bruyne made sure of the victory for Roberto Martinez's side after Thibaut Courtois allowed a Nacer Chadli back-pass to squirm under his leg and in for an own goal.

Italy secured first place in Group 1 with a 2-0 triumph in Sarajevo thanks to a goal in each half from Torino's Andrea Belotti and Domenico Berardi of Sassuolo.

That ensured they finished a point ahead of the Netherlands, who came from behind to beat Poland 2-1 away with captain Georginio Wijnaldum scoring the winner after Memphis Depay's penalty cancelled out Kamil Jozwiak's opener.

Italy and Belgium join Spain and World Cup holders France in a final tournament which is expected to be held in Italy in October next year.

Before the finals, European national teams will start their 2022 World Cup qualifying campaign in March and then the delayed Euro 2020 is set to go ahead next June and July.

England have more than one eye on that tournament, with the semi-finals and final scheduled for Wembley, and Gareth Southgate's team rounded out their Nations League campaign with a 4-0 win over Iceland.



Russian midfielder Aleksandr Erokhin (left) vies with Serbia's defender Nikola Milenkovic during their UEFA Nations League match at the Rajko Mitic Stadium in Belgrade on Wednesday. Serbia won 5-0.

— AFP

THE RESULTS

| | | | |
|---|----------|--|----------|
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | 0 | Austria | 1 |
| Italy | 2 | (Grbic 90+4) | |
| (Belotti 22, Berardi 68) | | Norway | 1 |
| | | (Zahid 61) | |
| Poland | 1 | Israel | 1 |
| (Jozwiak 6) | | (Solomon 44) | |
| Netherlands | 2 | Scotland | 0 |
| (Depay 77-pen, Wijnaldum 84) | | | |
| England | 4 | Czech Republic | 2 |
| (Rice 20, Mount 24, Foden 80, 84) | | (Tomas Soucek 17, Zdenek Ondrasek 55) | |
| Iceland | 0 | Slovakia | 0 |
| | | | |
| Belgium | 4 | Serbia | 5 |
| (Youn Tielemans 3, Romelu Lukaku 56, 69, Kevin De Bruyne 88) | | (Radonjic 10, Jovic 25, 45+1, Vlahovic 41, Mladenovic 64) | |
| Denmark | 2 | Russia | 0 |
| (Wind 17, Chadli 87-og) | | | |
| Northern Ireland | 1 | Hungary | 2 |
| (Boyce 56) | | (Siger 57, Varga 90+5) | |
| Romania | 1 | Turkey | 0 |
| (Bicfalvi 81) | | Republic of Ireland | 0 |
| | | Bulgaria | 0 |

Declan Rice and Mason Mount scored in the first half and Manchester City's Phil Foden got his first international goals with a late brace as England had three players aged 21 or younger score in the same match for the first time since 1883.

Wales move up, Scotland miss out

Wales won promotion to League 'A' with a 3-1 win over 10-man Finland in Cardiff that allowed them to top Group B4.

Despite manager Ryan Giggs being missing after his recent arrest on suspicion of assaulting his girlfriend, Wales came good with goals from Harry Wilson, Daniel James and Kieffer Moore.

Teemu Pukki netted for Finland, who had left-back Jere Uronen sent off after just 12 minutes.

Winning their group also improves Wales' chances of securing a place in the 2022 World Cup qualifying play-offs, as the two best group winners in the Nations League are guaranteed play-off places if they don't make it via the usual route.

While Wales go up, Scotland missed out on promotion from League B, Group 2 after losing 1-0 in Israel, their second consecutive loss since clinching qualification for Euro 2020.

Manor Solomon's first-half goal sunk the Scots.

— AFP

IPL over, it's football now for India

Bambolim (Goa), Nov. 19: Behind closed doors and with a raft of health safety measures in place, football's Indian Super League (ISL) will kick off here on Friday and become the country's first major tournament to be organised since the enforcement of a Covid-19 lockdown eight months ago.

Former champions ATK Mohun Bagan and Kerala Blasters will start the tour-

ceedings with what is expected to be a blockbuster clash at the GMC Stadium here.

But the season's first big game will undoubtedly be the one between ATK Mohun Bagan and SC East Bengal in Fatorda on November 27, the two heavyweights renewing their more-than-a-century-old rivalry in a new avatar.

ATK Mohun Bagan, playing in their first tour-

nament after the merger of last season champion sides of ISL and I-League into one club, will start as the frontrunner for the title in the seventh edition of the lucrative franchise-based tournament.

They have roped in some quality players like star India defender Sandesh Jhingan while retaining the core of last season champions ATK side such as Fijian international Roy Krishna who was on

rampage against opposition defences.

Roy was last season's joint top-scorer with 15 goals from 21 matches while also providing six assists.

He was named captain in the final as ATK cruised to their third ISL title and will return as skipper alongside four other leaders of the newly-formed ATK Mohun Bagan outfit. Chief coach Antonio Lopez Habas had recently

announced that five players will be given the captain's armband in rotation through the upcoming season.

Habas has named Fijian striker Roy Krishna and Spanish midfielder Edu Garcia among the captains. Indian players, Pritam Kotal, Arindam Bhattacharya and the seasoned Sandesh Jhingan, will also share the leadership responsibilities.

— PTI

Lanka's Zoysa is proved corrupt

Dubai, Nov. 19: Already serving suspension on match-fixing charges, former Sri Lanka player and bowling coach Nuwan Zoysa has been found guilty of three offences under the ICC anti-corruption code by an independent tribunal, the global cricket body said on Thursday.

Zoysa was charged under the ICC anti-corruption code in November 2018 and has been found guilty on all charges after he exercised his right to a hearing before an independent anti-corruption tribunal.

The Sri Lankan remains suspended and sanctions will follow in due course, the International Cricket Council said in a release.

He was provisionally suspended in May 2019 on charges of indulging in corruption during a T20 league in the UAE.

ICC said Zoysa has been found guilty of:

Article 2.1.1 — for being party to an agreement or effort to fix or contrive or otherwise influence improperly the result, progress, conduct or other aspect(s) of a match.

Article 2.1.4 — Directly or indirectly soliciting, inducing,



Nuwan Zoysa

instructing, persuading, encouraging or intentionally facilitating any Participant to breach Code Article 2.1.

Article 2.4.4 — Failing to disclose to the ACU full details of any approaches or invitations received to engage in corrupt conduct under the Code.

"Zoysa has also been charged by the ICC on behalf of the Emirates Cricket Board (ECB) with breaching four counts of the ECB anti-corruption code for participants for the T10 League and these proceedings are ongoing," the ICC said in the release.

Zoysa, who played 30 Tests and 95 ODIs for Sri Lanka, was appointed Sri Lanka's bowling coach in September, 2015.

— PTI

Women's cricket in India is still untapped market: Lisa

NEHA SURANA | DC CHENNAI, NOV. 19

Former Australian captain Lisa Stahlekar feels women's cricket in India remains a largely untapped market and the country has a lot of potential to dominate at the world stage.

"I think, the BCCI is moving in the right direction. But the fact that the Board-contracted players don't know when they'll play next is a matter of great concern. I feel this is the biggest untapped market and if they get it right, the Indian women may dominate. The reason why women's cricket in Australia is doing really well is that we invested in it. We invested in it even before it was hyped up," said Lisa at the Women in News and Sport (WINS) programme funded by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

For Lisa, India holds a special place in her heart. A permanent fixture in the commentary box of the Indian Premier League, the Aussie enjoys talking cricket in her country of



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— LISA STHALEKAR
Former Oz cricketer

birth. "It's a perfect place as I can talk cricket 24x7. Cricket is the raging topic wherever you go in India. I have met so many knowledgeable fans here," said Lisa.

Lisa who recently became the ninth female cricketer to be inducted into the ICC's Hall of Fame said her transformation into a commentator wasn't a breeze.

"When I had my first stint as commentator in India, I had to make sure I got the pronunciations right. In the beginning, when we first got into the IPL, Anjum Chopra and I

were very cautious. We didn't want people to say that 'those females are rubbish, get rid of them'. We had to do a lot of home work," she added.

The Pune-born says India would do well to take a leaf out of Australia when it comes to dealing with mental health.

"I feel, in India, there's still stigma around mental health and that is a real concern. For Indian cricketers, male or female, there's a big burden of carrying the expectations of billions of fans."

Covid hits South Africa cricketers

Cape Town, Nov. 19: Three players of the South African men's cricket team have been placed under isolation after one of them tested positive for Covid-19 ahead of the white-ball series against England, the country's cricket board confirmed.

Cricket South Africa (CSA), though, did not disclose the names of the three players.

CSA said about 50 Covid-19 RTPCR tests on players and support staff were conducted prior to entering the bio-bubble here for the limited overs series, starting on November 27.

"One player has returned a positive test result and two players were considered close contacts based on the risk assessment undertaken by the medical team," a CSA statement said.

"All three players have been placed in immediate isolation in Cape Town as part of the Covid-19 protocols. While all players are asymptomatic, CSA's medical team will monitor them to ensure their health and well-being," it added.

No replacements have been named for the series, comprising three T20Is and as many ODIs, but the board said two new players will join the group to make up the numbers. "At this stage, none of these players will be replaced for the tour, but two replacement players will be included into the squad for the purposes of the inter-squad practice matches that will be played on Saturday, 21 November," it said.

— PTI

LIVERPOOL'S SALAH TESTS +VE AGAIN

Cairo, Nov. 19: Liverpool striker Mohamed Salah will likely miss the club's next Premier League game after the Egyptian football association said that he had tested positive for the Coronavirus for a second time.

The 28-year-old Salah, who has mild symptoms, has been in self-isolation in Egypt's Red Sea resort of el-Gouna, where he arrived earlier this week. He had previously self-isolated in a Cairo hotel.

He first tested positive for the virus on Friday on the eve of Egypt's Africa Cup of Nations qualifier against Togo. The Pharaohs beat Togo 1-0 in Cairo, and 3-1 on Tuesday in Togo's capital, Lome.

The Egyptian association said Arsenal midfielder Mohamed Elneny also returned another positive test. Elneny, 28, first tested positive Monday after the squad arrived in Togo.

Striker Ahmed Hassan Kouka of Olympiacos tested positive after his return to Cairo with the national team from Togo, the association said.

— AP

Seven more cases in Uruguay camp

Montevideo (Uruguay), Nov. 19: Uruguay's football federation reported seven new cases of Covid-19 in the camp Wednesday, bringing the number of positive cases among its World Cup qualifying squad to 11.

Players Alexis Rolin, who plays for Uruguay club Rentistas, and Los Angeles FC's Diego Rossi — as well as five officials — tested positive for the coronavirus after Tuesday night's 2-0 defeat at home to Brazil.

"They are all fine and appropriate sanitary measures have been implemented," the federation said.

The seven new cases are in addition to four announced in the run-up to Tuesday's match — including star striker Luis Suarez, substitute goalkeeper Rodrigo Munoz and spokesman Matias Faral.

On Saturday, the federation announced that full-back Matias Vina, who plays for Brazilian club Palmeiras, had also tested positive.

— AFP



Novak Djokovic of Serbia reacts during his loss to Daniil Medvedev of Russia at the ATP World Finals tennis tournament at the O2 arena in London on Wednesday. Djokovic lost in straight sets at 3-6, 3-6.

— AP

Djoker loses big at Tour Finals

London, Nov. 19: Daniil Medvedev is enjoying the ATP Tour Finals a lot better in his second appearance. Medvedev secured a spot in the semifinals of the tournament by dominating five-time champion Novak Djokovic 6-3, 6-3 on Wednesday for his second straight win of the group stage.

Medvedev, who lost all three of his group matches last year on his tournament debut, has now beaten Djokovic three straight times to go from 3-3 in the first set to a 3-0 lead in the second.

— AP

4-6, 6-3 victory over Diego Schwartzman earlier Wednesday. Medvedev broke Djokovic three straight times to go from 3-3 in the first set to a 3-0 lead in the second.

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