

# DECCAN Chronicle

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

WEATHER

Max: 33.0°C  
Min: 21.0°C  
RH: 73%  
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Humid and Partly Cloudy.  
Max/Min temp. 33/21 °C

COVID-19 C O U N T

CASES

(+45,564)

90,49,609

DEATHS

(+549)

1,32,750

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+894)

TS: 2,61,728

(+1,221)

AP: 8,59,932

DEATHS

(+4)

1,423

(+10)

6,920

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

5,76,27,674

DEATHS

13,72,099

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES

217

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari; Dakshinayana

Tithi: Kartika Suddha Saptami till 9.52 pm

Star: Shravanam till 9.55 am

Variyam: 2.08 pm to 3.49 pm

Durmuhurtam: 6.28 am to 7.57 am

Rahukalam: 9 am to 10.30 am

RAJURI CALENDAR

Rabbi-ul Akhri 5, 1442 AH

PRAYERS (ROYAL MOSQUE)

Fajar: 5.00 am

Zohar: 1.30 pm

Asar: 5.00 pm

Maghrib: 6.35 pm

Isha: 8.30 pm

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.11 AM

SUNSET TODAY 5.26 PM

MOONRISE TODAY 11.55 PM

MOONSET TOMORROW - -

COUNTER POINT

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

## SHORT TAKE

### ICAI warns CA students on exam

**New Delhi:** The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) has warned candidates appearing for CA exams against sending threat mails to examination centres, saying legal action will be initiated for such misdeemeanor. In a statement, the ICAI said, "It has been reported by some examination centres that they are receiving threatening e-mails from some candidates. The institute has viewed such misdeemeanor by the candidates very seriously. It amounts to interfering in the examination process of the Institute," its said.

## India's tax loss is ₹75,000 cr

**New Delhi:** India is losing over \$10.3 billion (about ₹75,000 crore) in taxes every year owing to global tax abuse by MNCs and evasion by private individuals, a report said on Friday. Of this, the State of Tax Justice report said over \$10 billion is lost to tax abuse by multinational corporations (MNCs) and \$200 million to tax evasion committed by private individuals. The social impact of the lost tax is equivalent to 44.70 per cent of the health budget and 10.68 per cent of education spending. It also equals paying yearly salaries of over 42.30 lakh nurses. — PTI



## WORLD | 5

### Trump, allies try to bypass poll mandate



## BUSINESS | 7

### RBI lets bizmen own higher stake in banks

## SPORTS | 8

### Nadal fights back to make ATP semifinals



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# Modi reviews security after intel warns of terror attack

**DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs**  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 20

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

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

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

— **NARENDRA MODI**, Prime Minister

Jammu and Kashmir's Nagrota. Specific intelligence inputs had revealed some Pakistani terrorists had infiltrated into the country with the specific purpose of carrying out a major terror attack just

before the District Development Council local elections to be held in eight phases between November 28 and December 19 in the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Government sources said the terrorists were planning "something big" on the 12th anniversary of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack next week. After the meeting, Mr Modi said in a tweet: "Our security forces have once again displayed utmost bravery and professionalism. Thanks to their alertness, they have defeated a nefarious plot to target grassroots level democratic exercises in J&K."

In another tweet, he added: "Neutralising of

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

The four suspected Jaish terrorists, who were hiding in a truck, were killed after a four-hour-long encounter early Thursday with the security forces on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway near Nagrota. In the gunfight, two J&K police officials were also injured, while the driver and cleaner of the truck managed to escape.



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

— DECCAN CHRONICLE

# Jagan launches Pushkaralu in AP

## Chief Minister holds special yagam for event held once every 12 years at Tungabhardra

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
KURNOOL, NOV. 20

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

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

Later, in traditional attire, he participated in a special *yagam* performed in the newly constructed yagasala near the pushkar ghat where Ayush Homams would be performed

and offered *purna phalam* amid spiritual music and rendition of mantras.

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

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

Before leaving for Amaravati, Jagan Mohan Reddy interacted with family members of

Nandyal Abdul Salam, who committed suicide along with his wife, daughter and son unable to bear alleged police torture. He assured financial help and protection to the victim's kin. Mabunne Sha, mother-in-law of Abdul Salam, wanted the Chief Minister to take stern action against the accused policemen.

Meanwhile, as a preventive measure Kurnool police detained several prominent political leaders belonging to BJP, CPM and CPI and also various delegates of different social organizations.

They were demanding approval for the holy dip in Tungabhadra waters during the pushkaralu.

## HC: IS SHIFTING OF CAPITAL NOT 'MINDLESS ACT'?

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 20

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

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

Special counsel S.S. Prasad raised objection over usage of the phrase 'mindless act'.

■ Full report on Page 2

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 20

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

Arguing before the division bench, comprising Justice Rakesh Kumar and Justice J. Uma Devi, the special counsel asserted that it was the responsibility of the state government to decide which was good and bad keeping in mind the interests of the people and made it clear that there was no role for the judiciary in such issues. He also said that such decisions were

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

not even in the domain of the judiciary.

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

■ Page 2: PILs filed in court with political motives

## Searching for food



Painted storks search for prey near a water pond inside the Indira Gandhi Zoological Park in Visakhapatnam on Friday.

— K. MURALIKRISHNA

## WAR OF WORDS ON LOCAL POLLS NEAR FLASHPOINT

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 20

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

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

■ Full report on Page 2

## ₹366 CRORE INPUT SUBSIDY CREDITED TO 4.91L FARMERS

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 20

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

■ Full report on Page 2

# ‘Love jihad’ is BJP’s term to spread panic: Gehlot

**Jaipur, Nov. 20:** Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Friday said "love jihad" is a term "manufactured" by the BJP to disturb communal harmony, provoking a sharp reaction from Union minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat.

In a tweet, Gehlot said marriage is a matter of personal liberty and bringing a law to curb it is unconstitutional. Hitting back, Shekhawat asked if marriage is a matter of personal liberty "why are the women not free to use their maiden name or religion".

BJP leaders use the term "love jihad" while alleging that Hindu women face harassment and forced conversion in the name of love and marriage. BJP governments in Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Madhya Pradesh have said they are considering enactment of laws to curb such marriages. Gehlot, however, said such a law will not stand scrutiny in any court. "Love jihad is a word manufactured by the BJP to divide the nation and disturb communal harmony," the Congress leader tweeted. "Jihad has no place in love. Marriage

is a personal decision and they are putting curbs on it, which is like snatching away personal liberty," said the Rajasthan Chief Minister.

Union Jal Shakti minister and prominent BJP leader from Rajasthan Gajendra Singh Shekhawat reacted strongly. "Dear Ashok ji, Love Jihad is a trap that has thousands of young women believing marriage is a personal affair. If it is a matter of personal liberty, then why are the women not free to keep their maiden name or religion?" he asked. — PTI

**WETLAND | CONSERVATION**

**Demand Centre, AP declare these sites as being eligible for classification**

# Need Coringa, Pulicat in Ramsar list: Greens

**VADREVU SRINIVAS | DC**  
KAKINADA, NOV. 20

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

Given the ecological value of the sites, environmentalists are demanding that the Centre as well as AP government declare these environmental sites as Ramsar sites. Environmentalists who have studied these two sites recom-

mend that the government make the declaration as these two sites are eligible.

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

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

2002. Birds lover and environmentalist K. Mrityunjaya Rao said that India has a total of 41 Ramsar sites, including three more new sites identified this year. In July, the Kabartal wetland in Bihar, the Lonar lake of Maharashtra (the only crater lake in India) and the Keetham Lake in Agra (called as Sur Sarovar) were added.

He said that despite their potential, the Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary and the AP Pulicat Lake have not been selected. He said these two sites should be

declared as Ramsar sites due to their importance.

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

expressed hope Coringa would get RAMSAR recognition soon.

Environmentalists say even if governments make no efforts for declaration as RAMSAR sites, it should take steps to not destroy it. They said though Kolleru lake has been declared as a RAMSAR site, the destruction of the lake was going on. Coringa qualifies to be included as an internationally important one, which contains a representative, rare, or unique example of a natural wetland type found within the bio-geo-

graphic. Mangroves with most productive and natural ecosystem, tidal flats with exposing during low tides utilized by large number of shorebirds, gulls, egrets and others a feeding grounds, Lagoon within sanctuary which support large number of fish and bird species.

Coringa is surrounded by about 2 km stretch of mainland beach, which attract tourists and support for shoreline organisms of three major rivers, Godthami, and its tributaries Gaderu and Corangi.



## OTHER STORIES

CM TO VISIT  
MACHILIPATNAM  
TODAYDC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 20

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Physiotherapist Dr Gurumurthy

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

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

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

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

## Faith matters



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

— DC

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

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

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 20

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Similarly, with regard to horticulture crops,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

scheme.

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

advantaged communities.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ment and also usurp the party leadership."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

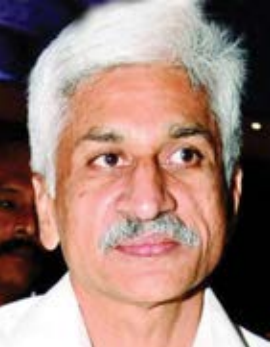
While the state was registering less than 10 Covid-19 cases a day, the SEC postponed the elections without even discussing it with the State government. But when hundreds of cases are reported and the fear of a second wave was looming large, SEC is trying to conduct elections.

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

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

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

He stated that Mr Naidu has no commitment



V. Vijayasai Reddy.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## CAPITAL | RELOCATION

The court observed that it ‘felt pain’ after witnessing stalling of all development works  
Is shifting of capital from Amaravati not a ‘mindless act’, asks HCDC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 20

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

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

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

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

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

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

## PILs filed in the High Court with political motives

From Page 1

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

ties and cautioned that if not, criminals would grab power and rule the roost.

The court said that during the appointment of a peon in a government

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

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

any sanctity for being heard in the court.

He also asked as to how far it could be justified to hold the Chief Minister and DGP responsible when a constable had committed a mistake.

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

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

The court also expressed

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

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



## IN BRIEF

**2 held with 400 kg ganja**

**Visakhapatnam:** The Visakhapatnam police arrested two youth who were allegedly shifting about 400 kg ganja in a container lorry at Chodavaram area in Visakhapatnam district on Friday. The estimated worth of ganja seized is more than ₹40 lakh. According to police, the two youths had come to Paderu from Uttar Pradesh in a lorry and procured the ganja from interior parts and were trying to shift back the weed to Uttar Pradesh. Based on credible information, Chodavaram police intercepted the container lorry and seized the ganja. In order to escape from the police, the smugglers prepared a cabin in between the driver seat and the rear, where they stored the ganja packets. Chodavaram police has registered a case.

**TD'S V-P SATYAPRABHA PASSES AWAY**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
TIRUPATI, NOV. 20

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

The former TD MLA had tested positive for Covid-19 last month and had recovered after a few days. However, her condition turned critical on November 3 following complications from Covid-19, and after a heart attack last night, she breathed her last.

Satyaprabha was born at Sadum in Chittoor district and pursued her matriculation in Bengaluru.

She is an ardent devotee of Sathya Sai Baba, and with his blessings, she got married to D.K. Adikesavulu Naidu, who was then an assistant engineer at a sugar factory in Chittoor.

D.K. Adikesavulu Naidu got elected as the Telugu Desam MP from Chittoor in 2004, besides serving as the TTD chairman twice.

**INVESTMENTS WORTH ₹37,500 CRORE LIKELY**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
TIRUPATI, NOV. 20

Nellore district collector K.V.N. Chakradhar Babu informed that investments worth ₹37,500 crore coming up in the district as part of the Chennai-Bengaluru industrial corridor.

The collector on Friday inspected CBIC lands close to the Nekkanti mega food park in Chillakur mandal and other lands at Kota mandals, where he collected information from the officials on the number of industrial units that have already opened so far and the projects under the pipeline.

Speaking to the reporters, he said that the industrial corridor would boost revenues and opportunities to the unemployed educated youth in the region.

He said they are estimating that around ₹5,735 crore of funds were needed for developing infrastructure in this corridor.

He informed that the Krishnapatnam node is expected to provide direct employment to 2.96 lakh people and also for 1.71 lakh people indirectly.

He asked the officials to speed up the process of developing infrastructure.

## SAFETY | MATTERS

**612 people have died, 1,389 were injured in 540 accidents****Reckless driving cause of bloodbath on NH**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
TIRUPATI, NOV. 20

The bloodbath, on the state and national highways and rural stretches, in Chittoor district continues unabated due to various reasons like reckless driving, unscientific construction of roads and poor lighting.

According to statistics, 612 people have died and 1,389 were injured in 540 accidents, reported in 2019. During January-August this year, about 151 people have died and 432 injured in 352 accidents reported on the highways.

While the maximum number of accidents happened on the Kuppam-Palamaner-Madanapalle-Mulakalacheruvu stretch of the National Highway (NH)-42, the other danger

ous stretches are Bengaluru-Palamaner-Chittoor-Ranipet stretch of NH-69 and the NH-40 passing through Chittoor-Piler-Kalakad.

The NH-42 has witnessed the maximum number of accidents in which 43 persons were killed. The NHs-42 and 40 saw 31 deaths each due to accidents, while the NH-71 (Madanapalle-Piler-Tirupati) witnessed 18. About 82 accidents were reported on the state highways, where 34 people have died and 69 injured, while the rural stretches across the district have seen 133 people dying in road accidents.

The officials of National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), roads and buildings and panchayat raj have recently conducted

● The officials have identified 43 black spots on the stretch between Kuppam-Palamaner, followed by 22 each on Chittoor-Piler-Kadapa and Palamaner-Punganur roads and 17 on the stretch connecting Karnataka-AP-TN states, from Palamaner to Ranipet.

● Now the officials had swung into action and taking rectification measures for road accident black spots.

a survey on accidents reported in the district. They have identified 122 most accident spots on the six NHs, besides few on SHs and other rural stretches in the district. They also found that black spots

account for 60-70 per cent of road accidents reported in the district.

As per the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), a road accident black spot is a road corridor, about 500 m long, in which either five road accidents, involving fatalities and grievous injuries, were reported during the last three calendar years or 10 deaths in the previous three calendar years.

Based on this, the officials have identified 43 black spots on the stretch between Kuppam-Palamaner, followed by 22 each on Chittoor-Piler-Kadapa and Palamaner-Punganur roads and 17 on the stretch connecting Karnataka-AP-Tamil Nadu states, from Palamaner to

Ranipet. Concerned over the rise in the number of accidents, now the officials had swung into action and taking rectification measures for road accident black spots.

An official from the transport department said that the report chalked out recently will be sent to the MoRTH for rectification of accident spots on the NH corridors, while the state agencies will take care of spots on the SHs and other rural stretches.

“The transportation planning and research experts will draw rectification plans for black spots and for each location they will enforce measures including engineering treatment, speed control, pedestrian crossing, proper alignment and lighting,” he added.

**MP violates Covid-19 norms****Masks, social distancing ignored, people scuffle for free helmets**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 20

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

Anakapalle MLA Mr Gudivada Amarnath rode a bike leading the rally and Mr Reddy was the pillion rider.

Surprisingly both of them were seen without masks.

So were hundreds of bike riders seen close to the top leadership of the government.

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

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

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



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

— DC

**1,221 new Covid cases, 10 deaths**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 20

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

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

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

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

With regard to the total

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

exchanging blows.

Morning walkers, who comprise the elite and educated section of the Vizag were dismayed at the way the rally was conducted.

“The ministers are sending a wrong signal to the people by not wearing masks and congregating in public for gratifying their political needs,” said a former cardiologist

associated with a corporate hospital.

Another medical professional said these leaders were presuming that the virus lost its sting going by the media reports.

“Perhaps they were not aware of the WHO warning on the second bout which is already taking its toll in the US, Europe and New Delhi,” she said. This is not the first time Mr Reddy led a rally violating the Covid protocol. On November 13, he participated in a walkathon ‘We Support Vizag’ organised by GVMC. Children without masks were seen next to him.

Medical officers in charge of Covid in Visakhapatnam feigned ignorance.

They said they were not aware of these rallies.

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

**AP lorry owners demand toll tax cancellation**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 20

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

APLOA general secretary Y.V. Eswar Rao said that due to Corona the transport sector was pushed into a deep crisis and not to levy any burden on the transport sector. He said that they have been paying taxes for four-line and six-line roads across the state. He lamented that for the last two years the transport sector is in deep crisis and the corona pandemic has shattered the crisis further. He stated that

in this juncture collecting toll for two-line roads will be a heavy burden on the transport sector.

Mr Eswara Rao that at the time of vehicle purchasing they are paying 28 per cent GST and 14 per cent road tax, we have been paying toll at National highways. He said that the government planning to collect toll for two-line roads would be a big setback to the lorry owners and the transport sector, we strongly oppose the government’s move.

Mr Eswar Rao further recalled that in 1997 toll notification was issued and later on from 2004 they have been paying toll at national highways for four lines and six-line. Every year toll tariff has been changing despite paying 22.25 per cent tax on diesel and ₹4 additional development charges along with road cess of ₹1.22 he added.

**WOMAN KILLED IN ROAD ACCIDENT**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
KADAPA, NOV. 20

A married woman Sunita, 21, was killed in a road accident in Chimalapenta village in Pendlimarri mandal on Friday afternoon on the Kadapa – Pulivendula road. She was married to Narasimulu from Chintakommadinne mandal six months ago. Her husband and she went to Vempalle on a bike from Chintakommadinne to attend a function at her

brother’s residence. The accident took place when a car collided with the bike Pendlimarri. Both were rushed to the Kadapa RIMS hospital, while they are on the way Sunita died, while Narasimulu’s condition is stable.

As soon as the information of the accident was known, the Pendlimarri Police Sub-Inspector Kondareddy rushed to the spot and reviewed the situation. The case is being registered and investigated.

**MINISTER DONATES DSNG VAN TO SVBC**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
TIRUPATI, NOV. 20

Karnataka social welfare minister B. Sriramulu on Friday donated ₹1.20 crore worth Digital Satellite News Gathering (DSNG) van to the TTD Sri Venkateswara Bhakthi Channel (SVBC). After special pujas in front of Srivari temple, Manjunath, a representative of the Karnataka minister handed over the keys of the vehicle to the SVBC managing director and TTD additional EO A.V. Dharma Reddy.

Mr Dharma Reddy said that the new DSNG van with state of the art technology would go a long way in the live telecast of programmes at Srivari temple and Sri Padmavati temple regularly. SVBC CEO Suresh Kumar and others were present.

**For big catch**

Fishermen catch fish at the river Krishna near Bhavani Island in Vijayawada on Friday.

— DC

**PRODDATUR IS FIT FOR A DIST HQ: RAMANA REDDY**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
KADAPA, NOV. 20

Proddatur town has all credentials to continue as the district headquarters, said former MLA M. V. Ramana Reddy.

When some members of some non-government organisations and literary associations discussed the issue with him on Friday, Ramana Reddy said the government should respond positively as it is an important commercial centre in Andhra Pradesh.

President of Sanskruthi, Onteru Srinivasula Reddy, advocate and district authors’ association president N. Vijayasarthi, Putta-parthi Sahiti Peetham representative Subrahmanyam and others feel Proddatur will be convenient for all as it is a geographical focal point for all constituencies.

Everyone cutting across party lines should prepare an action plan to get Proddatur as a new district, they maintain.

● Everyone cutting across party lines should prepare an action plan to get Proddatur as a new district, they maintain

**Five of same family gone missing traced**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
TIRUPATI, NOV. 20

The Venkatagiri police have successfully traced the five members of a family including two women and three children, who had gone missing under mysterious circumstances from the G.K. Palli in Venkatagiri mandal of Nellore district on Nov 16.

Disclosing the case details to media persons, Gudur DSP Mr B. Rajagopal Reddy said that they have received a missing complaint from Polipaka Krishnaiah on November 17.

The complainant stated that his wife Polipaka Vijaya along with his two daughters and his brother’s wife Polipaka Supriya and their daughter, who went out saying that they were going to the primary health centre, had gone missing from November 16.

Based on his complaint, the police have registered a case and launched an investigation into the matter: “During the course of investigation, we have found that the missing persons have gone to Hyderabad via Vijayawada in a rented car. After tracking their exact location, our teams have gone to Yellamabanda area of Kukatpally in Hyderabad and brought back the missing persons to

their native”, the DSP said.

On being questioned, both Vijaya and Supriya have stated that they have left the house because of family disputes.

They both also alleged that they have been harassed by their husbands and hence they have decided to escape to Hyderabad.

“Supriya said that she had befriended a woman called A. Sridevi of Miryalaguda, when they both were working in Nellore some time ago. As Sridevi looks like a man in appearance, she got attracted to her and started a relationship with her. As both Vijaya and Supriya have allegedly been facing harassment from their husbands, they left the village and started staying with a relative of Sridevi in Kukatpally,” the DSP said.

Meanwhile, the DSP said that they would send the women back to their house if they are willing to go there or otherwise, they would be shifted to Sakhi-one stop centre at Nellore for counselling.



SHORT TAKES

14 PEOPLE DEAD AS CAR COLLIDES WITH TRUCK IN UP

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ED FILES MONEY LAUNDERING CASE IN TRP SCAM

SAURABH JOSHI | DC MUMBAI, NOV. 20

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

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

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

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

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

LoC locals call for 'end to hostility'

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

However, Indian Army claimed to have killed, at

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

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

In J&K, many houses in villages falling in close proximity of the LoC including Balkote, Kamalkote, Gowhalan, Sarai Bandi, Nambla and Gwalta (Baramulla district), Dawar (Bandipore district), Keran (Kupwara district) and Sawjian (Poonch district) were damaged in artillery shelling, forcing the residents to flee to safer locations.

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

destruction in villages.

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

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

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

TMC MANTRI COMPARES DIDI WITH NETAJI

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, NOV. 20

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

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

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

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, NOV. 20

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

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

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

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

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

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

Schools to remain closed in Mumbai till December 31

DC CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, NOV. 20

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chhath Puja in the time of Covid



Devotees gather to take holy dip in Ganga on the occasion of Chhath Puja in Patna on Friday. The four-day festival began with folk songs dedicated to the Sun God and aroma of traditional offerings filled the air. It is celebrated by scores of people, especially those hailing from Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh.

FB: HATE SPEECH PREVALENCE IS 0.10 PER CENT

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

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

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

Sonia shifts to Goa to avoid Delhi pollution

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 20

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

TAX | FRAUD The farmer alleges that photocopies of his ID cards were misused

Odisha farmer gets ₹10cr GST evasion notice

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, NOV. 20

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Preliminary investigations had revealed that a

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

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





## IN BRIEF

**Truck hits funeral mourners, kills 9**

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

**'Cannibal' arrested after bones found**

**Berlin:** German prosecutors said Friday there is evidence of "cannibalism" in the killing of a 44-year-old man whose remains were found on the northern edge of Berlin earlier this month. A 41-year-old man was arrested on Thursday on suspicion of murder with sexual motives at his home close to the site where the victim's bones were found. "The suspect had an interest in cannibalism," Berlin prosecutors' office spokesman Martin Steltner said. "He searched online for the topic." Steltner said it was unclear whether the victim had also had an interest in cannibalism. The two men, both Germans, had been in touch with each other online, he said.

**Pak: Ancient Hindu temple discovered**

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

**Mink farmers mourn as livelihood dies**

**Copenhagen:** Denmark's mink farmers are mourning what they say is the death of their industry after a government order to cull all of their stocks over a mutated variant of the Coronavirus. On Saturday (Nov 21), angry farmers and supporters plan to demonstrate against the cull in the country's two biggest cities, Copenhagen and Aarhus, with 400 tractors expected to roll in. "We're in shock," Marianne Norgaard Sorensen said. "Words can't describe the nightmare we've been through." She and her husband, who has been a mink farmer since 1993, live in North Jutland, the region in northwestern Denmark home to the most mink farms. Like millions of others across the country, their 27,000 minks were slaughtered in early November and around two thirds of the country's stocks have been culled to date.

**SINGAPORE PM'S SIS-IN-LAW BARRED FOR LAW ABUSE**

**Singapore, Nov. 20:** Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong's sister-in-law was on Friday barred from practising law for 15 months over professional misconduct in her handling of the final will of Lee Kuan Yew, the founding father of modern Singapore and the patriarch of the Lee family. The Court of Three Judges, the highest disciplinary body for the legal profession, found senior lawyer Lee Suet Fern guilty of "misconduct unbefitting an advocate and solicitor", for preparing and executing the will which is seen as a gain for her husband, Lee Hsien Yang, the prime minister's younger brother. Following the death of Lee Kuan, the prime minister and his brother are disputing the status of the family property at Oxley Rise on the outskirts of the central business district and hotel belt of Orchard Road. A disciplinary tribunal (DT) had found Lee Suet guilty of grossly improper professional conduct in February this year.



Migrants use a rope to cross the Tachira river, the natural border between Colombia and Venezuela, as the official border remains closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic in Cucuta, Colombia. Hundreds of Venezuelans stranded in Colombia tried to cross the international bridge Wednesday as heavy rains had increased the river level. — AFP

**Pfizer, BioNTech seek emergency nod from FDA for virus vaccine**

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

in our journey to deliver a Covid-19 vaccine to the world and we now have a more complete picture of both the efficacy and safety profile of our vaccine, giving us confidence in its potential," Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla said. The vaccine has been under evaluation for weeks in the European Union, Australia, Canada, Japan and the United Kingdom, the companies said. "The companies will be ready to distribute the vaccine candidate within hours after authorisation," their statement said. The Food and Drug Administration has not said how long it will take to study the vaccine data, but the government expects to give the green light for the vaccine in the first two weeks of December. — AFP

**Serbian Church leader dies due to Covid at 90**

**Belgrad, Nov. 20:** The leader of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Irinej, has died after testing positive for the Coronavirus, the church said on Friday. He was 90. The patriarch was hospitalised with the virus early in November, soon after attending the funeral of the head of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro, Bishop Amfilohije, who also died from complications caused by the Covid-19 infection. "It was an honor to have known you," Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic said on Instagram with a

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

**MANY MOURN DEATH OF BELARUS PROTESTER**

**Minsk, Nov. 20:** About 5,000 people gathered in the Belarus capital Minsk on Friday for the funeral of an opposition activist who died of brain trauma after being arrested by police. Roman Bondarenko, a 31-year-old soldier, died last week in Minsk after police arrested him following a dispute in a city square that has become a regular meeting place for the opposition.

Mourners carried red and white flowers — the colours of the opposition — to a church on the outskirts of Minsk. For more than three months, Belarus has been gripped by historic protests after a disputed presidential vote that saw strongman leader Alexander Lukashenko re-elected for a sixth term.

Protesters demand that Lukashenko, 66, resign and hand over power to political novice Svetlana Tikhanovskaya, who they believe won the election.

"It is not in our power to bring back Roman, but we can try to ensure that such crimes are never repeated," Tikhanovskaya, 38, wrote on her Telegram channel from exile in EU member Lithuania. — AFP

**UK PM's adviser quits as 'bullying' minister stays on**

**London, Nov. 20:** UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Friday backed his Cabinet minister Priti Patel, despite a Cabinet Office inquiry into allegations of bullying concluding that she had breached the Ministerial Code, albeit "unintentionally". While ministers are usually expected to resign if they breach the code, it ultimately rests with the prime minister on whether to take any action on the independent Ministerial Code adviser's findings.

Johnson, who has consistently supported Patel ever since the allegations first emerged earlier this year, declared that he still has "full confidence" in the 48-year-old Indian-origin minister, who holds one of the UK's highest political offices as Home Secretary.

It has, however, led to the resignation of Alex Allan, the independent adviser on the Ministerial Code, as the decision seems to go against the findings of his report. "My advice is that the Home Secretary has not consistently met the high standards required by the

● **WHILE MINISTERS** are usually expected to resign if they breach the code, it ultimately rests with the prime minister on whether to take any action on the independent Ministerial Code adviser's findings.

Ministerial Code of treating her civil servants with consideration and respect. Her approach on occasions has amounted to behaviour that can be described as bullying in terms of the impact felt by individuals," his report notes.

"To that extent, her behaviour has been in breach of the Ministerial Code, even if unintentionally. This conclusion needs to be seen in context. There is no evidence that she was aware of the impact of her behaviour, and no feedback was given to her at the time," it reads. The report takes note of the high pressure and demands of the UK Home Office role and the need for more supportive leadership from the top of the department as a "contributory factor". — PTI

**WRITE | MOVE** **Book Shuggie Bain was rejected by 30 editors before US, UK publishers picked it up**

**Douglas Stuart wins 2020 Booker Prize**

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

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

● **STUART, 44,** was stunned to win the award for his fiction and dedicated the book to his mother who died due to alcoholism when he was 16-years-old design.

"I cannot believe this. Shuggie is a work of fiction but writing the book was extremely healing for me; hugely cathartic," Stuart said, adding that he was "absolutely stunned" to win the coveted prize. "I always wanted to be a writer so this is fulfilling a dream. This has changed my entire life," he said in



Douglas Stuart

his acceptance speech on Thursday.

Stuart has worked for various brands, including Calvin Klein, Ralph Lauren and Gap. He started writing in his spare

time a decade ago. Dubai-based Indian-origin writer Doshi, who was shortlisted among the final six authors for her debut novel 'Burnt Sugar', lost out on the top prize.

She was in the running for this year's prize alongside Zimbabwean writer Tsitsi Dangaremba for the third novel in her trilogy 'This Mournable Body' on a shortlist otherwise dominated by US authors — Diane Cook for 'The New Wilderness', Maaza Mengiste for 'The Shadow King' and Brandon Taylor for 'Real Life'. The 2020 Booker Prize

**Trump team cries foul over Joe's win****Take frantic steps to subvert poll results**

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

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

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

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

The increasingly desperate and erratic moves have no reasonable chance of changing the outcome of the 2020 election, in which Biden has now received more votes than any other presidential candidate in history and has clinched the 270 Electoral College votes needed to win.

But the Republican president's constant barrage of baseless claims, his work to personally sway local officials who certify votes and his allies' refusal to admit he lost is likely to have a lasting negative impact on the country. — AP

**Don is damaging democracy: Biden**

**Willmington, United States, Nov. 20:** US President-elect Joe Biden on Thursday accused Donald Trump of brazenly damaging democracy, as the incumbent's campaign to reverse his election loss through fraud claims was dealt another blow with a recount in Georgia.

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

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

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

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

The recount showed Biden had won by 12,284 votes, according to figures posted on Georgia secretary of state Brad Raffensperger's website — slightly fewer than the approximately 14,000 he originally led by.

Trump campaign legal advisor Jenna Ellis attacked the outcome and pledged the campaign will "pursue all legal options." After initially making baseless claims of widespread fraud, Trump has appeared to shift his strategy to asking states to overrule the will of voters. In Michigan, Trump

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

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

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

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

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

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

placed a telephone call to a Republican on a once-obscure board who wants to withdraw her certification of the election result in a heavily Democratic county that includes majority-Black Detroit.

"He was checking to make sure I was safe after seeing/hearing about the threats and doxxing," Wayne County Board of Canvassers chairwoman Monica Palmer said, referring to personal information posted about her on social media. — AFP

**Tech giants tell Pak to ease data rules**

**Islamabad, Nov. 20:** Global technology companies have told the Pakistan government that its "draconian" data regulations would make it extremely difficult for them to continue their operations, two days after the IT ministry notified rules to define how social media will be governed in the country, according to a media report on Friday.

Under the new rules announced by the Ministry of Information and Technology on Wednesday, social media companies and internet service providers shall provide the designated investigation agency with any information or data in decrypted, readable and comprehensible format, the *Dawn* newspaper reported. Subject to justifiable technical limita-

tions, the information to be provided may include subscriber information, traffic data, content data and any other information or data. In a statement, the Asia Internet Coalition (AIC), which exclusively represents leading global internet companies on matters of public policy, expressed its alarm over the scope of new law targeting internet companies, as well as the government's "opaque process" by which their rules were developed.

Earlier this year, Prime Minister Imran Khan promised to initiate a "broad-based" consultation on content regulation after a strong backlash from stakeholders over the release of formally known as the Citizen Protection (Against Online Harm) Rules 2020. — PTI

**ICE STORMS IN RUSSIA'S FAR EAST LEADS TO EMERGENCY**

**Vladivostok, Russia, Nov. 20:** Freak ice storms following an abnormal weather phenomenon has left 1,50,000 people without water and electricity in the far eastern Russian city of Vladivostok and prompted a state of emergency.

The exceptional weather brought down cables and trees with the government of the Primorsky region declaring a state of emergency.

"The situation with the electricity supply remains very difficult — the destruction is widespread," the regional administration's deputy head Elena Parkhamenko said.

She said it could take "several days" to restore power. Freezing rain began pummeling the city of some 6,00,000 people overnight Thursday after a cyclone carrying hot air met an anticyclone carrying cold air; Boris Kubay, a local weather service official said.

He said in some places the resulting ice was 12 millimetres thick — something not observed in the region in 30 years. Photos and videos published by local authorities and on social media showed everything from apartment buildings to road signs to public transport covered in ice.

Video footage from a security camera showed a man moving away from his car at the last second as he was cleaning ice from its windshield before a block came crashing down from the side of a building. — AFP



# DECCAN Chronicle

21 NOVEMBER 2020

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

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

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

**His policy statement (made in connection with the Siddique Kappan case) is disappointing, unfortunate and unacceptable**

Court of India a unique institution. And between Article 32 and the Supreme Court, they thought the fundamental rights of the people are in the safe hands. M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar, who later became the speaker of the first Lok Sabha, called the Supreme Court the supreme guardian of the citizen's rights in any democracy. "I would even go further and say that it is the soul of democracy," he said, and explained if the fundamental rights of the individual are left to the tender mercies of the government of the day, they cannot be called fundamental rights at all. Members called Article 32 "the most important article of the whole Constitution", "fundamental to all the fundamental rights guaranteed under this Constitution" which "makes all the fundamental rights become real". Dr B.R. Ambedkar who wound up the discussion in no uncertain terms made the importance of the Article clear. "If I was asked to name any particular article in this Constitution as the most important — an article without which this Constitution would be a nullity — I could not refer to any other article except this one (Article 32). It is the very soul of the Constitution and the very heart of it."

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

## Trump to leave mess for Biden

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

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

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

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Subhani



## China's Ladakh chimera: India needs to stand firm



Syed Ata Hasnain

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**The Kailash range deployment, which should have happened many years ago but for the low strategic confidence India possessed, has given us a strategic advantage which we never had all these years**

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

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

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

### LETTERS

#### POLITICAL STANDARDS

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

**Dr T. Ramadas**  
Visakhapatnam

#### MALABAR CALLING

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

**N. Vamshi Krishnan**  
Vizianagaram

#### GIVE DADS LIFE

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

**Parthasarathy Mandadi**  
Tirupati

### 50 YEARS AGO IN

## DECCAN Chronicle

#### Mass starvation feared in E. Pakistan

DACCA, EAST PAKISTAN, Nov. 20.

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

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

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

Farrukh Dhondy  
Cabbages & Kings



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

— From **Namkeen Pumpkeem** by Bachchoo

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

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

Now every year in London I go down

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Gates family (not to be confused

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

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

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

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

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

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



quick BITES

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

\* As of 8:30 PM IST

CCI approves Reliance-Future Group deal

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

Rabi sowing begins; wheat planted in 97L ha.



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

Large IPOs may be allowed with 5% equity dilution

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

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

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



RBI panel for 26% promoter stake Corp. houses set to get banking licence

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, NOV. 20

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

Job situation worsens for women in garment industry

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, NOV. 20

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

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

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

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

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

Prior to the pandemic, women around the world

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

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

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

Gland now among top 10 pharma companies

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, NOV. 20

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

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

The stock touched an intraday high of Rs 1,850 on both NSE and BSE.

Earlier this month, Gland Pharma raised Rs 6,479.59 crore through an initial public offering priced at Rs 1,490 to Rs 1,500 per share with Re 1 face value. The issue was subscribed more than two times but had received very poor response from retail and high networth investors, making its bourses debut quite a suspense till the last moment.

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

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

ROCHE'S COVID-19 ANTIBODY COCKTAIL LAUNCH LIKELY BY MARCH

FRANCINE LACQUA & NAOMI KRESGE NOV. 20

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

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

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

—Bloomberg

Profits zoom, but wages flat at listed companies

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, NOV. 20

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

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

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



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

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

extraordinary profits earned by companies," says CMIE.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The move is aimed at

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

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

JLR seeks to block imports of Audi, Porsche SUVs in US

CHRISTOPHER YASIEJKO & SUSAN DECKER NOV. 20

Jaguar Land Rover Automotive Plc filed a complaint on Thursday to block US imports of Porsche, Lamborghini, Audi and Volkswagen sport utility vehicles it says are using its patented Terrain Response technology without permission.

Jaguar Land Rover, a British carmaker owned by Tata Motors Ltd, said in its filing with the US International Trade Commission that the technology helps negotiate a "broad range of surfaces" and is a key feature in Jaguar's F-Pace and Land Rover Discovery vehicles.

"JLR seeks to protect itself and its United States operations from companies that have injected infringing products into the US market that incorporate, without any licence from JLR, technology developed by JLR and protected by its patent," Jaguar's lawyer, Matthew Moore, said in the filing.

Representatives of Volkswagen didn't immediately respond to emails seeking comment on the complaint.

Jaguar wants to block imports of Porsche's Cayenne; Lamborghini's Urus; Audi's Q8, Q7, Q5, A6 Allroad and e-tron vehicles; and VW's Tiguan vehicles. It said there are plenty of other luxury midsize SUV and compact crossover vehicles to meet buyer demand if the SUVs are banned from the US.

Still, the premium Porsche and Audi lines provide much of the profit VW is using to fund its investments in technology for electric vehicles, autonomous vehicles and further innovations.

In addition to the four brands, Volkswagen Group owns other upscale nameplates, including Bentley and Bugatti.

The International Trade Commission is an independent, quasi-judicial agency that investigates complaints of unfair trade practices, like patent infringement. It can't award damages but does have the power to block products from entering the US.

—Bloomberg

Hyundai i20 sells 20,000 units in 20 days



MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, NOV. 20

Despite uncertainty in the market due to Covid pandemic, the all-new Hyundai i20 premium hatchback is turning out to be a big hit for the car-maker, which sold 20,000 cars in just 20 days, that is, 1,000 cars per day.

Prices of the all-new Hyundai i20 start from Rs 6.80 lakh, making the car significantly expensive than its main rival the Maruti Baleno.

The new i20 offers plenty of choice for buyers with multiple variants, engines and transmission options.

In fact, one in every four buyers has opted for automatic/semi-automatic variants of the car while one in three buyers has opted for the sunroof equipped, top-end trims. Even the diesel variant found one in five buyers.

WINNER TECH'S IT ALL? It's feared that the rise of fintech firms may send banks the dinosaur way

Ant's setback holds a lesson for all fintechs

ELISA MARTINUZZI NOV. 20

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



## SHORT TAKES

## Women's T20 WC pushed to 2023

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

## Champ Rossi gears up for final race

**Portimao, Portugal:** Nine-time world champion Valentino Rossi says it will be a "special moment" when he brings the curtain down on his 15-year factory Yamaha MotoGP career in the final race of the season in Portugal on Sunday. Joan Mir's World Championship may already be secured but second place and the constructors' title will also be on the line in Portimao. Rossi, who has won seven of his world titles in the elite class, is among a number of riders bidding farewell, with Andrea Dovizioso heading off for a planned sabbatical and Cal Crutchlow exiting the series to become a Yamaha test rider next year. Rossi will join Yamaha's satellite Petronas team, leaving the factory to go ahead with Fabio Quartararo alongside Maverick Vinales in 2021. "Sunday will be a special moment because it was a long journey together," said Rossi. Pol Espargaro, Jack Miller, Johann Zarco and Danilo Petrucci are also among those departing for pastures new. — AFP

## Task cut out for Spurs against City

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

## Live on TV

## CRICKET

**Big Bash League:** Hobart Hurricanes vs Perth Scorchers from 10:10 am; Sydney Sixers vs Melbourne Renegades from 1:35 pm; Perth Scorchers vs Adelaide Strikers from 4:50 am (Sunday) on Sony Six, HD

## TENNIS

**ATP Finals:** Semifinal-1 from 7:30 pm, Semifinal-2 from 1:30 am (Sunday) on Sony Six, HD

## FOOTBALL

**English Premier League:** Newcastle vs Chelsea from 6 pm; Aston Villa vs Brighton from 8:30 pm; Tottenham Hotspur vs Manchester City from 11 pm; Manchester United vs West Brom from 1:30 am (Sunday) on Star Sports Select 1

**Indian Super League:** NorthEast United vs Mumbai City from 7:20 pm on Star Sports 2, 3

**Italian league:** Crotone vs Lazio from 7:30 pm; Spezia vs Atalanta from 10:30 pm; Juventus vs Cagliari from 1:15 am (Sunday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

## NADAL NAILS IT

## Djokovic also makes semifinals at season-ender

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

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

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

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

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

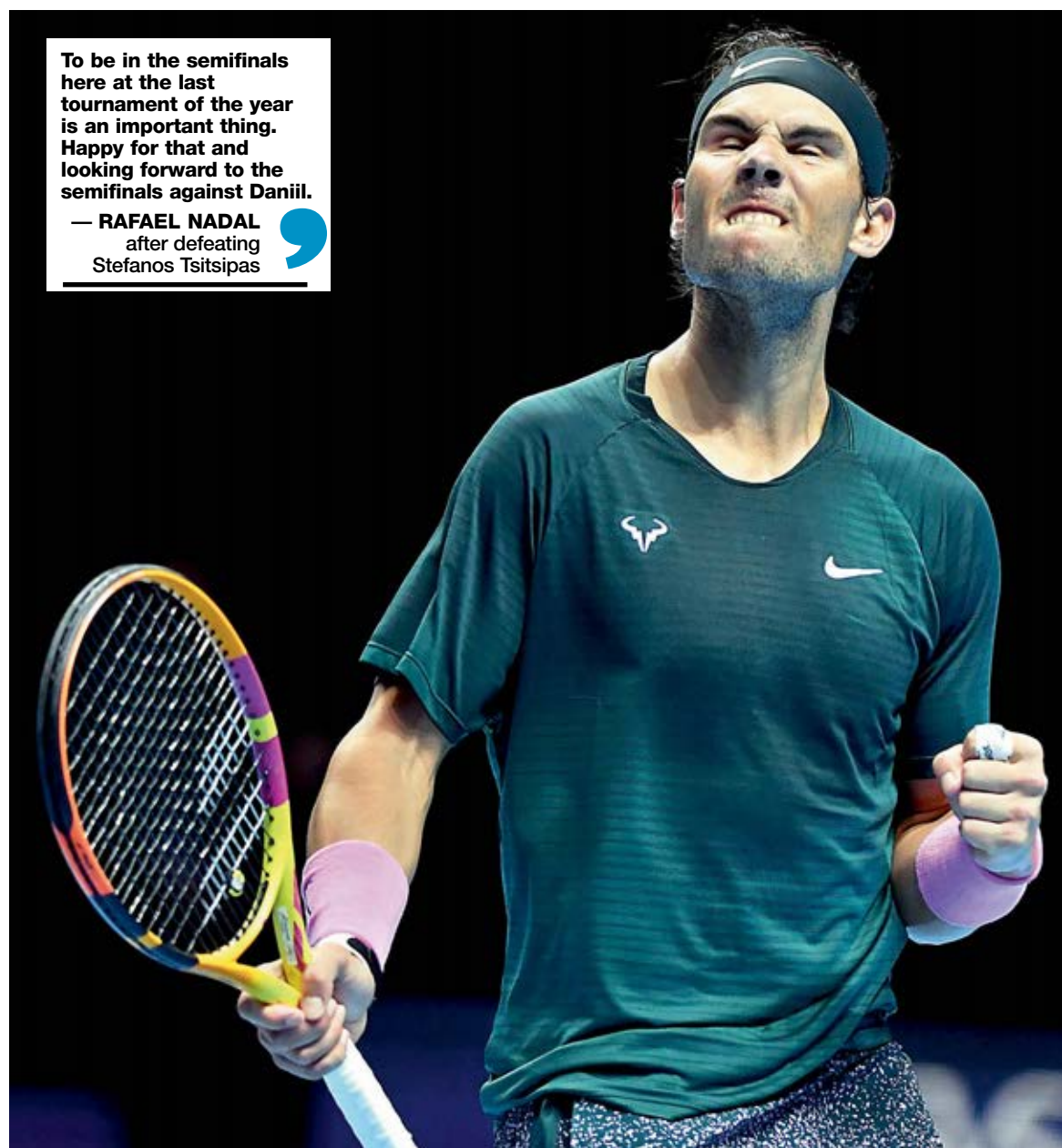
Djokovic saved two break points at 4-2 before clinching the set with a backhand down the line as he closed in on the net following a serve out wide.

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

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

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

Both players were rock solid on serve until Nadal



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

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

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

Nadal pressed home his

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

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

self out of danger with a searing backhand.

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

But out of nowhere the Greek earned two set

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

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

— AFP

## INDIA SLIP TO SECOND SPOT IN TEST RANK

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

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

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

— PTI

## GUILTY ZOYSA SAYS THERE IS FOUL PLAY

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

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

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

— PTI

## Bagan blast past Kerala in opener

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

— PTI

## MUMBAI TAKE ON NORTHEAST TO OPEN BID

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

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

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

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

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

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

— PTI

## Betting charges dog Andhra T20

**DC CORRESPONDENT ANANTAPUR, NOV. 20**

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

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

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

emerging triumphant.

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

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

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

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



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

## ME win Gosports Trophy with ease

**DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, NOV. 20**

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

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

In reply, Interiors were bundled out for a mere 94

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

## BRIEF SCORES

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

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

## Pat looks to keep Kohli quiet

**Sydney, Nov. 20:** Australia speedster Pat Cummins expectedly considers Virat Kohli the "big" wicket he would target in the upcoming series against India and said that keeping the visiting captain quiet would be crucial to the home team's chances.

The Indian cricket team is currently in Australia for a full series that includes three ODIs and as many T20

Internationals followed by a four-Test rubber. The tour will start with the ODIs here on November 27.

"I think every side has that one or two batters and they are the big wickets. Most teams have their captain — Joe Root for England, Kane Williamson for New Zealand. You feel like if you get their wickets that goes a long way in winning the game,"

the three-match ODI series begins on November 27 followed by a T20 International series.

"But in saying that, India have still got back-ups, more than capable of playing that role. We saw K. L. Rahul, the performance that he put on during the last IPL was extraordinary," Maxwell further added.

— PTI

## Rohit's absence will help us: Maxwell

**Mumbai, Nov. 20:** Rohit Sharma's absence from the upcoming white ball series is a big "positive" for Australia but K. L. Rahul is as good a player to fill in the void, feels dashing batsman Glenn Maxwell.

Rahul will be Virat Kohli's deputy in the white-ball leg since regular vice-captain Rohit is recuperating from a hamstring injury sustained during IPL.

"He (Rohit) is a class performer, so consistent as an opening batsman

## UNTESTED PITCHES ARE A CONCERN: MCC CHIEF

**Melbourne, Nov. 20:** The drop-in pitches at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) which will host the second Test between India and Australia have not been tested and it is a cause of concern, says Melbourne Cricket Club (MCC) chief executive Stuart Fox.

"It is a concern for me because I would like to give them every opportunity to trial the pitches," Fox was quoted as saying by *Sydney Morning Herald*.

The opening round matches of Sheffield Shield were held in Adelaide instead of MCG due to the Covid-19 outbreak at Melbourne and also plans to have a two-day trial match at the MCG this week also couldn't materialise due to the spread of virus in Adelaide.

"It demonstrates how vulnerable we still are day by day. Ideally, we would love to have a game and we are still working on that but, ultimately, it may not happen," Fox further added.

— PTI