

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

VISAKHAPATNAM | MONDAY | 16 NOVEMBER 2020

WEATHER

Max: 33.2°C
Min: 24.8°C
RH: 64%
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Mist.
Max/Min temp.
33/24 °C

RAINS ACROSS S. COAST, SEEMA LIKELY TODAY

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 15

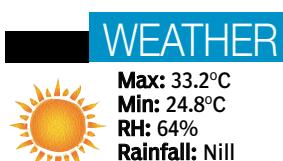
A trough in easterlies will run from Comorin to South Bay of Bengal and adjoining west central Bay of Bengal off Tamil Nadu and south coastal Andhra Pradesh on Sunday. Under its influence, scattered to fairly widespread rainfall accompanied by thunderstorms are likely over coastal Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry.

WEDDING BELLS RING IN AP AFTER EIGHT MONTHS

MD ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 15

The marriage buzz is in the air after eight months of silence caused by the Coronavirus protocols. A good augury is the availability of auspicious muhurats from the third week of this month and stretching up to the first week of January. Many families had either postponed or cancelled weddings of their children, although some did go ahead amidst Covid-19 restrictions.

REPORT ON PAGE 2



NATION | 4

Soumitra Chatterjee, renowned actor, dead

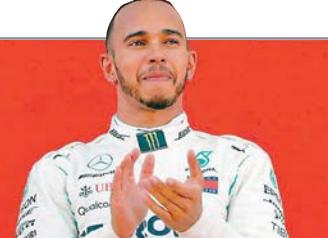


WORLD | 5

Trump supporters, rivals clash in US

SPORTS | 8

Hamilton wins record seventh F1 title



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Sikh victory day



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

YSRC, TD FIGHT ON HONORING SWAMI ON B'DAY

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 15

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

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

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

■ Page 2: EO told to take necessary action

AP frees 124 acres encroached land

Assets worth ₹1,200 cr was with TD men

Hotelier vacated from VMRDA

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 15

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy at the Visakhapatnam international airport with a knife. The NIA questioned Harshavardhan and the airport authorities later closed his restaurant.

Immediately after the demolition, officials put up boards warning trespassers from entering the premises.

The land, valued at approximately ₹1,200 crore, is located in Title Deed No 1180 on the edge of BRITS Road between National Highway and Simhachalam temple.

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

The government constituted a three-member committee, which included a joint collector, the Chief Commissioner of Land Affairs (CCLA) and Commissioner of Survey and Land Records. The panel during their inquiry found that

the land records were tampered with for the convenience of the encroachers.

■ Page 2: Lease violated rules: VMRDA

■ Page 2: Initially, 30 acres of land encroached



OYSTER PERPETUAL DATEJUST 41

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#Perpetual



COVID-19 COUNT

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

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+661)	(+4)
TS: 2,57,374	1,404
(+1,056)	(+14)

AP: 8,54,011

6,868

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

5,46,84,471
DEATHS
13,22,955

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES

217

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Kartika Shuddha Padyami till 7.07 am; Kartika Shuddha Dwitiya till 3.57 am (Tuesday)

Star: Anuradha till 2.39 pm

Varjyam: 7.44 pm to 9.11 pm

Durmuhurtham: 12.23 pm to 1.08 pm; 2.37 pm to 3.22 pm

RahuKalam: 7.30 am to 9 am

HJRI CALENDAR

Rabbul Awwal 29, 1442 AH

PRAYERS

Fajar: 5.50 am

Zohar: 1.30 pm

Asar: 4.45 pm

Maghrab: 6.15 pm

Isha: 8.15 pm

SUNSET TODAY 5.20 PM

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.03 AM

MOONSET TOMORROW 6.30 AM

MOONRISE TODAY 7.00 PM

COUNTER POINT



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

SHORT TAKES

LEASE VIOLATED RULES: VMRDA

FROM PAGE 1

The endowment department, citing the Sri Sarada Peetham letter, directed EOs to take necessary action towards extending temple honours to the seer. This has led to a rift between the ruling YSRC and opposition TD. Incidentally, the BJP has not yet expressed its opinion on the issue.

Leader of Opposition in AP Legislative Council Yanamla Ramakrishnudu alleged that the CM's act of presenting temple honours to Swaroopanandendra Saraswathi Swami is highly objectionable, as it will tarnish the self-esteem of five crore people of Andhra Pradesh.

He said no such respects are paid to even the Kanchi Kamakoti seer and China Jeeyar Swami on their birthdays. Ramakrishnudu said that if the CM wants to honour Swaroopanandendra Swami, he should conduct the programme with his own money and not use endowment department funds, which would tantamount to misuse of power.

Similar opinions were expressed by TD politburo member Varla Ramaiah and the party's state vice president Vemuri Ananda Surya.

YSRC MLA and AP Brahmin Welfare Corporation chairman Malladi Vishnu claimed the then Telugu Desam government in 2016 issued similar orders and YSRC government is continuing the same tradition.

Vishnu maintained the government has suggested that "Seshavastra" be presented to deities of Swaroopanandendra Saraswathi Swami as a mark of respect.

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

"I took an open land for lease and spent over ₹5 crore for construction of the premises.

Without giving any notice and time, they descended in the early hours and removed all the furniture," Harshavardhan said and added that he was basically a sports person and associated with PVG.R. Naidu. He was never associated with TD activities though a section of people were claiming it, he said.

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

FASTING RITUAL ON DIWALI BY JAIN COMMUNITY

DC CORRESPONDENT

VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 15

In an innovative act, the Jain community in AP state observed fasting on Diwali shunning firecrackers, sweets and other delicious foods following Ahimsa principle.

The majority Jain families observed 24-hour fasting amidst traditional pujas and chanting holy keertans and said that Jains will observe Thirthankar Mahavir's attainment of Moksha (salvation).

EOs TOLD TO TAKE ACTION

FROM PAGE 1

DC CORRESPONDENT KADAPA, NOV. 15

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

The district witnessed over thousand cases each day in September. They started declining steadily since the second week of October. By the end of October, only 200 cases were being reported. The number of new cases has been just about 100 in the first week of November. While 71 new cases were registered on Saturday, only 47 cases have been reported on Sunday.

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

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

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

1,942 Sunday.

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

also being ensured for patients in home isolation.

With decrease in quantum of Coronavirus cases, treatment centres at Rayachoti and Prudhuttur have been closed for the time being. Treatment though is continuing in Kadapa and Pulivendula. Currently, there are 480 oxygen and 2,620 non-oxygen beds available in the district.

Doctors warn against second wave

Health authorities in the district have warned people that though there has been a decline in Covid-19 instances in the district, they should not be negligent about wearing masks, using sanitizers, and maintaining physical distance. Doctors maintain that although cases are declining, severity of

the disease has increased as people are not adhering to preventive measures. Most cases now being reported are those involving people over the age of 60 years and those with chronic health problems. Doctors insist that everyone must wear masks until the vaccine is available.

General physician Mundla Sureshwar Reddy of District General Hospital underlined that wearing masks and adherence to physical distancing is mandatory.

There are also reports of a second wave developing within India. Dr Sureshwar Reddy warned that the second wave could be deadlier. Hence, patients must consult a doctor mandatorily if there is any health problem. They must not be negligent in any way.

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

His parents managed to repay some debts by selling properties.

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

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

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

FROM PAGE 1

Sharp decline in Covid cases in Kadapa

FROM PAGE 1

DC CORRESPONDENT KADAPA, NOV. 15

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of January and is inauspicious for marriages.

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

Pundits state that auspicious muhurat began on October 25 with Dasara. They said that the propitious Telugu Kartik month starts on November 16 and auspicious muhurat are on November 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 25 and 26 besides which are Margasira month dates of December 1, 6, 8, 9, 17, 18, 20, 24 and 27. The next good dates are in April. They said that the month of March-Moodham/Moudhyam starts in the second week

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

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

According to reports, nearly 2,000 kalyana mandapams, marriage halls, function halls, mini function halls and community halls exist in the 13 districts and these are to witness activity.

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Vedic pandit P. Raghavendracharyulu said that most priests faced severe financial difficulties in the past eight months. He said that he used to suggest auspicious muhurats for marriages to parents but only few responded. He said that the commencement of the marriage season, despite the limitations, would help them and other related segments get work. He said that in the past few days he had suggested muhurats to around 60 families.

Function hall manager D. Rama Rao said that many halls and other facilities have been booked for marriages. He said that they had cleaned and disinfected the halls thoroughly and would follow Covid protocol strictly. Caterer and event manager R. Srinivas said that coronavirus had disturbed lives of people associated with such functions. He hoped people abide by the guidelines and help contain Coronavirus spread.

World is a stage



— C. NARAYANA RAO

12-year-old lost both hands in bomb blast

DC CORRESPONDENT

KURNOOL, NOV. 15

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

The injured child, Varun Kumar, was immediately shifted to Kurnool government general hospital.

Chennmapalli was a faction-affected village a few decades back though it is peaceful now, SI Srikanth Reddy said. Villagers were shocked with this sudden blast and a tense situation prevailed for nearly four-five hours. He said that Varun

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

On hearing his cries of pain and the sound of the blast, locals called the police. A Clues team was deployed and it collected fragments from the explosion for forensic analysis, the SI said.

Chennmapalli was a faction-affected village a few decades back though it is peaceful now, SI Srikanth Reddy said. Villagers were shocked with this sudden blast and a tense situation prevailed for nearly four-five hours.

Initially, 30 acres of land encroached

FROM PAGE 1

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

According to Dr Ganga Rao, the committee said that out of 8,091.67 acres, 560.02 acres belonged to Simhachalam Devasthanam and the remaining to the forest department, poramboku and private lands.

No government has the right to issue pattas of forest land but the talsildars of Pendurthi and Chinna Gadili issued rythuvaris to people. The committee also said these pattas were illegal and invalid.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Online gambling leads to suicide

DC CORRESPONDENT

VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 15

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

Though the sircindent took place on Saturday, it came to light on Sunday morning.

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

He had joined the Naval Dockyard in 2010.

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

OTHER STORIES
MODERATE RAIN LASHES SPSR NELLORE DIST

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, NOV. 15

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

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

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

Meanwhile highest rainfall of 12 cm was recorded in Gudur, 8.3 cm in Bogole and Manubolu, 7.3 cm in Chillaikur, and 6.2 cm at Sydapuram and 5.5 cm in Venkatagiri since morning on Sunday.

OFFER IRUMUDI IN LOCAL SHRINES: GURU SWAMIS

PATHRI RAJASEKHAR | DC NELLORE, NOV. 15

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

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

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

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

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

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Lowest 1,056 Corona cases found in a day

Andhra Pradesh's recovery rate climbs to 97.01 per cent

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 15

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

Purohits arrive from neighbouring states

DC CORRESPONDENT
KURNOOL, NOV. 15

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

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

The district administration is cataloguing all

priests and will start issuing them high security identity cards from Tuesday, November 17.

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

priests and will start issuing them high security identity cards from Tuesday, November 17. The Endowments Department has said purohits will have to produce a "Coronavirus negative report" to obtain their identity cards, said V.L.N. Sastry, a purohit in Mantralayam.

Due to fears of a second wave of Coronavirus pandemic striking, Kurnool administration

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

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

District administration taking measures to be vigilant as there is a wave of opinion spreading within the public that people must be allowed to freely have a holy dip in the river.

The opinion is spreading despite the administration banning bathing in the river due to the risk of Covid-19 pandemic spreading along the river course if any of the patients are Coronavirus positive or even asymptomatic.

Ban on holy dip in Godavari River

DC CORRESPONDENT
RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM, NOV. 15

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

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

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

Swamy, Gowthami (near Iskcon Temple) and Chitnalamma Ghat.

He said that remaining ghats would be closed and the people should take a bath at their houses only.

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

BJP keen on making its presence felt in Tirupati

AVINASH P.
SUBRAMANYAM | DC
TIRUPATI, NOV. 15

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

It is clearly ahead of the other two serious players — the ruling YSR Congress and principal opposition Telugu Desam — in launching the preparatory exercise for bypolls which were necessitated by the sudden demise of sitting MP B. Durga Prasad of the YSRC. Ever since state BJP president Somu Veeraju announced in the temple town that the party is eager to repeat the result of the Dubbakk Assembly constituency in TS, where party broke into the strong bastion of the TRS, the party leaders are busy drawing strategies to win over the voters.

Mohan Reddy. As expected, the BJP based its election slogans on the issue of desecration of temples and forcible conversions, making clear its strategy to replace Telugu Desam as the alternative. "We will give equal importance to highlighting the progress the country is witnessing under Modi's leadership," a state party leader pointed out. State leaders are conducting back-to-back meetings with key leaders in the party and also the local cadres in Tirupati parliamentary constituency.

The BJP is pushing local committees to reach out to the public by propagating the schemes sanctioned to the state and funds released for the development of Tirupati smart city by the BJP-led NDA government at the centre. On the other hand, the

party is learnt to have been listing out names for the candidature.

Since four out of the seven Assembly segments under the Tirupati Lok Sabha seat come under Nellore district, it is expected that the party high command will select a strong candidate from these four segments. A few names from these segments have already been on the table of the party's high command, sources said.

BJP spokesperson Samanchi Srinivas, however, said that the party will give an opportunity to the best and most suitable candidates. "It is too early to announce a candidate. In a national party like the BJP, there will be a number of factors for the selection of candidates and senior leaders will give opportunity to those who have worked hard and are loyal to the party," Srinivas told this correspondent.

The party, which had earlier represented Tirupati Assembly seat in alliance with TD in 1999, will ask the Jana Sena to leave the seat to it and request its chief Pawan Kalyan to extend support and campaign extensively. It is focusing on converting the Balija community, which is considerably strong in the area and with whose support Chiranjeevi could become MLA in 2019, as its base.

ELEPHANT MOVES INTO SRIKAKULAM FOREST AREA

DC CORRESPONDENT
SRIKAKULAM, NOV. 15

The male elephant after trampling to death two farmers in a span of 15 days, finally entered into the forests of Srikakulam district, said divisional forest officer of Srikakulam Sandeep Kurpaker Gundala.

He said the Forest Department workers and mahouts were tracking the lone elephant's movements since it killed the farmer on October 29. The 12-year-old elephant separated itself from the herd and created havoc all alone.

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SHORT TAKES

ASSAM DEPLOYS DRONES AT BORDER FOR SURVEILLANCE

MANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, NOV. 15

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

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

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

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

GUPKAR ALLIANCE FAILS TO FINALISE SEAT-SHARING

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

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

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

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

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

NOW, JAIL-MADE FOOTWEAR TO HIT KERALA MARKETS

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

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

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

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

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

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

DELHI STUDENTS TO GET LESSONS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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

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

"There is a need to raise awareness about the responsible use of social media," said a senior official of the education department.

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

— PTI

Gangotri temple closes for winters



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

SABARIMALA TEMPLE OPENS FOR DEVOTEES

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

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

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

The newly elected Sabarimala melsanthi V.K. Jayaraj Potti and Malikkapuram Melshanthi M.N. Raj Kumar, were the first to climb the 148 steps and offer prayers.

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

Sena's decision to reopen temples stirs political row

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC
MUMBAI, NOV. 15

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

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

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Saturday announced that places of religious worship in Maharashtra, which have been shut from March due to coronavirus-induced lockdown, will reopen from Monday. The state government has also issued guidelines under which religious places located out of Covid-19 containment zones will be open.

They noted that the party put up candidates in only six seats where the BJP was in the fray while contesting on almost each of the 115 seats where the JD(U) contested in the elections to the 243-seat Bihar Assembly polls.

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

They noted that the party put up candidates in only six seats where the BJP was in the fray while contesting on almost each of the 115 seats where the JD(U) contested in the elections to the 243-seat Bihar Assembly polls.

With the JD(U), hit hard by the LJP in the elections, likely to oppose any friendly vibes to the party by its ally BJP, the sources in party claimed that it was offered only 15 seats to contest in the polls. — PTI

ONLY 100 TO GET DARSHAN AT SIDDHIVINAYAK

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC
MUMBAI, NOV. 15

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

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

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

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

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

Nearly 160 tonnes of biomedical waste generated during election

LJP CLAIMS IT PROVED ITS WORTH IN BIHAR

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

The safety material which included face masks, face shields, gloves and personal sanitiser bottles were put in a bag meant for a polling party of six persons.

"They were trained for disposal of the safety material also. It could be littered anywhere," Bihar Chief Electoral Officer H.R. Srinivas said.

He said roughly 160 tonne of biomedical waste was generated. All districts have its biomedical waste (BMW) disposal agency.

"The challenge was the agency would lift BMW from health centres, hospitals but not lift from polling stations. The districts then appointed BMW workers," Srinivas said.

— PTI

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

It had also bought a total of 29 lakh hand sanitiser bottles of 100 and 500 ml.

As per the guidelines issued by the Election Commission and poll authorities in Bihar, the polling stations were sanitised a day before election and three times on the day of the election.

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

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

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

analysed and it will be ascertained why the Congress' performance was not at par with other Mahagathbandhan partners," he said.

Anwar said the reasons for the below par showing cannot be ascertained immediately, but what was important was to identify the mistakes committed and ensure they are not repeated in the Assembly polls in four states and one Union Territory in the coming months. — PTI

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

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

(Da) Chatterjee. He has been a legend in his lifetime. International, Indian and Bengali cinema has lost a giant. We will miss him dearly. The film world in Bengal has been orphaned. Best known for his films with Satyajit Ray, Soumitra Da was conferred with Legion of Honor, Dadasaheb Phalke Award, Bangla Bibhushan, Padma Bhushan & several National Awards.

A great loss. Saddened. Condolences to his family, the film fraternity & his admirers across the world."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

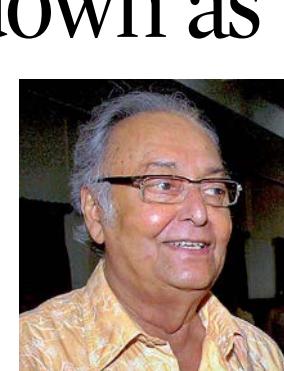
Feluda is no more. Apu said goodbye. Farewell, Soumitra (Da) Chatterjee, tweets Mamata

Bengal breaks down as Soumitra Chatterjee passes away

RAJIB CHOWDHURY | DC
KOLKATA, NOV. 15

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

The versatile thespian is survived by his wife Deepa, son Sougata and daughter Pouli. Chatterjee had won the national film awards thrice and was a recipient of the Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 2012



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

NARENDRA MODI
Prime Minister

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

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IN BRIEF
**ISRAELI HOUSES
TO COME UP IN
EAST JERUSALEM**

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

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

**AZERBAIJAN
TO PROTECT
CHURCHES: PREZ**

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

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

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

**COP GRAFT:
BALTIMORE TO
PAY \$8 MN**

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

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

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

Violence erupts as Trump supporters, rivals clash

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

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

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

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



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

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

Videos posted on social media showed some demonstrators and counter-demonstrators trading shoves, punches and slaps.

Anti-Trump protesters clashed with law enforcement in downtown DC as they tried to make their way to a hotel where Trump supporters were staying, the CNN reported.

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

Later in the day, Trump in a tweet alleged that

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

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

support of Trump.

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

The president claimed

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

BIDEN, HARRIS,
TRUMP SEND
DIWALI GREETINGS

Washington, Nov. 15: US President-elect Joe Biden, his deputy Kamala Harris and incumbent President Donald Trump have extended Diwali greetings to those celebrating the festival of lights.

To the millions of Hindus, Jains,

Sikhs, and Buddhists celebrating the Festival of Lights, @DrBiden and I send our best wishes for a #HappyDiwali.

May your new year be filled with hope, happiness, and prosperity. Sal Mubarak," Biden tweeted on Saturday.

Harris, who scripted history by becoming the first Indian-American and Black woman vice president in the US, extended greetings on the occasion of Diwali. "Happy Diwali and Sal Mubarak! @DouglasEmhoff and I wish everyone celebrating around the world a safe, healthy, and joyous new year," Vice President-elect Harris tweeted.

In a joint statement, Biden and Harris wished everyone celebrating the festival of lights across the US, India and the world.

Trump shared a picture of him lighting a lamp in the White House along with Indian American members of his administration.

"Happy Diwali" was written on the photo. "During this Festival of Lights, friends, neighbours, and loved ones join in fellowship to commemorate the spiritual triumph of good over evil, light over darkness. — PTI

Virus curbs tighten in Europe as global deaths top 1.3 mn

**NEW COMPOUNDS
TO TREAT NOVEL
VIRUS IDENTIFIED**

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

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

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

German ad hails couch potatoes

**SECRET PARTIES
TEST FRENCH
LOCKDOWN**

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

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

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

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

Thousands attend protest against Bibi

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

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

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

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

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

Gilgit-Baltistan assembly poll over, counting begins



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

Islamabad, Nov. 15:

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

The voting which commenced at 8.00 am (local time) ended peacefully without any break at 5.00 pm and no untoward incident was reported. The

counting of votes has started and complete results are expected by tomorrow. Earlier, the polling officials said that the voters present inside the polling stations would be allowed to cast ballots even after the end of polling time. There are 24 seats for the contest but polling on one seat was postponed, leaving 23 seats up for grabs. As many as 330 candidates, including four women, are in the contest, they said. India has opposed Pakistan's plan to hold election in Gilgit-Baltistan. — PTI

isler to the Prime Minister on Parliamentary Affairs Babar Awan said. He said the proposed law also suggested steps for speedy disposal of cases.

He said this after PM Imran Khan through a tweet announced that the government had planned to bring a "stringent and holistic anti-rape ordinance closing all loopholes".

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

— PTI

Special courts for speedy rape trials

Islamabad, Nov. 15:

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

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

— PTI

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

Mohammed Jazem and Almas Ahmed from Kerala first had their Nikah then they stood under a flower arch outside their home in Dubai for a socially-distanced wedding reception, *Khaleej Times* reported.

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

We asked our guests to stop only for a few moments, give us their best wishes, take a picture and then they could drive away," Jazem said. "We instructed them not to step out of the car, to keep moving to avoid traffic, and not pull over," he said.

"And the response has really been good," Jazem said. "I'm telling them you're not going to have enough money to fund all the projects you historically fund," he said.

"Those are important things," Beasley said, but he likened the upcoming crisis to the Titanic saying "right now, we really need to focus on icebergs, and icebergs are famine, starvation, destabilization and migration," Beasley said.

WFP needs \$15 billion next year and \$10 billion just to avert famine and \$10 billion to carry out the agency's global programmes including for malnourished children and school lunches.

— AP

World faces multiple famines of biblical proportions

'21 to be worse than '20: Nobel UN agency

United Nations, Nov. 15:

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

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

hardest work is yet to come." It was so timely because we've been fighting to get above the choir," Beasley said of last month's award, pointing to the news being dominated by the Covid-19 pandemic, and the difficulty of getting global attention focused on "the travesty that we're facing around the world."

"So this was really a gift from above," Beasley said, recalling the surprise and delight of WFP's 20,000 staffers worldwide, and his own shock at being interrupted during a meeting in Niger in Africa's Sahel region with the news.

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

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

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

"And the response has really been good," Beasley said.

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— AP

DECCAN Chronicle

16 NOVEMBER 2020

No sign of a thaw yet at the LAC in Ladakh

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Covid-19: Stick to protocol

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

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

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

DECCAN CHRONICLE

KAUSHIK MITTER

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Gram: CHRONICLE Postal registration no: No. H/S-D-348/2006-08

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Subhani



Will apex court protect liberty for all citizens?



Pavan K. Varma

Chanakya's View

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

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

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

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

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

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

Perhaps the honourable Supreme Court could take suo motu cognisance of such matters as well. Travesty of justice has many forms. In some cases, the rule book is thrown at those deprived of personal liberty, who languish in prison for months without bail. In others, matters are fast tracked...

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

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

The nation looks upon the Supreme Court, and the judiciary in general, as an agency of the last resort to get justice. When the Supreme Court declares that it will intervene proactively to ensure personal liberty, it raises, in the thousands of prisoners who are for untenable and inhumane reasons being denied personal liberty, the possibility of hope. Surely, the Government of India is not so vulnerable that it treats people above the age of 80 who are nearly disabled, as "enemies" who can destabilise the State. The administering of justice should never be selective, or so lacking in humanity that it revolts the human conscience.

When Father Stan Swamy is given the freedom to drink water with a semblance of dignity, we will believe that the Supreme Court's concern for Arnab Goswami has a larger meaning and a message for the conduct of the judiciary as a whole.

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

LETTERS

DON'S CHARACTER

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

Dr C. Ghanshyam
Visakhapatnam

FLOATING HOTEL

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

K. Nehru Patnaik
Visakhapatnam

OBAMA'S MEMOIR

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

Govardhana Myneedu
Vijayawada

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

86 p.c. husbands want wives to do jobs

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

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

This is disclosed in a study on the problems of working wives by eminent sociologist, Dr. (Mrs.) Promilla Kapur, in her book "Marriage and the Working Woman in India". A result of over 10 years' research the study is based on questionnaires and interviews involving 300 working women.

Anita Katyal
Political Gup-Shup

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Anita Katyal is a Delhi-based journalist

quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	43,637.98
Nifty 50	12,780.25
S&P 500*	3,566.86
Dollar (₹)	74.61
Pound Sterling (₹)	98.19
Euro (₹)	88.11
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	50,425.24
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	42.87
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.878
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.893
* As of Friday/Saturday	0.007

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

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

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



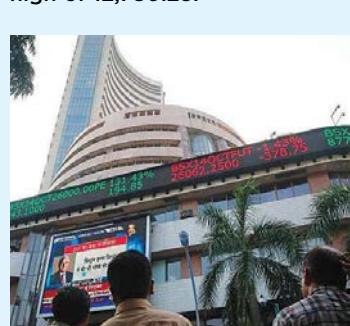
The UAE has approved granting "golden" visas allowing 10-year residency to certain professionals and others. All holders of doctorate degrees, medical doctors and also computer, electronics, programming, electrical and biotechnology engineers are eligible. Also eligible are those with specialised degrees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

Ministry seeks opinion on social security code

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

Muhurat trading: Sensex, Nifty soar new highs

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



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

GURDIP SINGH
SINGAPORE, NOV. 15

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



SIGNATORIES WAIT FOR INDIA

New Delhi, Nov. 15:

Countries that have signed the RCEP agreement can start negotiations with India at any time after the signing of RCEP agreement once India submits a request in writing of its intention to accede to the depositary of the RCEP agreement, taking into consideration the latest status of India's participation in RCEP negotiations and any new development thereafter," according to the Ministers' Declaration on India's Participation in RCEP.

The remaining 15 member countries have signed the RCEP agreement and have stated that the pact would remain open to India.

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

The declaration is dated November 11. —PTI

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

Host country Vietnam's prime minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc said the pandemic has harmed global and regional trade and investment flows, including the countries participating in the RCEP talks.

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

The conclusion of the

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The conclusion of the

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

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

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

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

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

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

"We are close to

SHORT TAKES



Sreekara Darbha Dhruva Thota

Sreekara, Dhruva are chess champsDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, NOV. 15

Sreekara Darbha and Dhruva Thota won the juniors and open categories of the 17th Brilliant Trophy Chess Tournament that was conducted online at www.lichess.org due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Sreekara won the event by scoring 10.5 points out of 12 rounds. Sk Taj Abdul and Aahad Karthik took the second and third places with 9.5 points each.

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

THE RESULTS

- Boys Under 15: 1. Aahad Karthik, 2. Pradyumna. Under 13: 1. Hemant, 2. Akshith Mattpalli. Under 11: 1. Sk. Taj Abdul, 2. T. Aryan. Under 9: 1. Vihana Saikrishna, 2. Vineel R. Karthik. Under 7: 1. Havinash Kovidh, 2. Hariram Perekarla.
- Girls Under 15: 1. Swaralakshmi S. Nair, 2. Sara Kausar. Under 13: 1. Naannya, 2. Sahasra Samudrala. Under 11: 1. P. Sravani, 2. Amulya Bhagavathula. Under 9: 1. Hritika Thota, 2. L. Laasya. Under 7: 1. Sri Lakshmi, 2. Bhavishya.
- Open category: 1. Dhruva Thota, 2. Niranjan, 3. Ritobroto Sen, 4. S. Sumer Arsh, 5. Tulasi Ramkumar, 6. A. Sai Mahathi, 7. A. Vikas, 8. Siddarth Ramanand, 9. Chidvilas Sai, 10. Abdul Sattar.

France bag finals spot, Germany win

Paris: World champions France and Germany rode on the influence of their Chelsea stars to rack up Nations League wins on Saturday while Spain's Sergio Ramos missed two penalties on the night he celebrated a record-setting 17th international appearance. Chelsea midfielder N'Golo Kante scored just his second international goal as

France defeated European champions Portugal 1-0 in Lisbon to secure a place in next year's finals. Kante was quickest to react to a rebound as he netted the winner on 53 minutes that clinched France top spot in their group. France lead Portugal by three points ahead of Tuesday's clash with Sweden in Paris but are guaranteed first place by virtue of their superior head-to-head record. — AFP

Johnson seizes Masters lead

Augusta: Top-ranked Dustin Johnson went four-under par in the first four holes to seize a three-stroke lead early in Saturday's third round of the Masters, pulling away from an elite field at Augusta National.

The 36-year-old American, who grew up only an hour's drive from the course, unleashed his best to any major round in his career to stand on 13-under par for the tournament. South Korea's Im Sung-Jae, Spain's second-ranked Jon Rahm, third-ranked American Justin Thomas and Mexico's Abraham Ancer shared third on 10-under.

Johnson is trying to become the first top-ranked golfer to win the Masters since Tiger Woods in 2002. Defending champion Woods, who began the third round four strokes off the pace, opened with seven pars before taking a bogey at the par-5 eighth. — AFP

Live on TV**TENNIS**

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

WWE

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

Regd No./VM-RNP/72
Printed and Published from Visakhapatnam by S. Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited at Deccan Chronicle Press, Survey No.1/3A, Beach Road, Near Kalaisagaripet, Way, Sector-9, M.V. P. Colony, Visakhapatnam-530014. Phones: 255233/255234/2553806. Fax: 2755285. Grams: CHRONICLE. Editor: Kaushik Mittra. RNI Registration No.44813/55.

SEVENTH WONDER

Hamilton wins record-equalling seventh F1 world title

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

— AFP

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

— LEWIS HAMILTON



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

— AFP

LEWIS LETS TEARS FLOW AFTER WIN

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

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

Moments after victory

starting to build up.

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

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

Moments after victory

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

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

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

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

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

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

Hamilton only had one

title, with McLaren in

2008, when he replaced

Schumacher at Mercedes in 2013.

— AP

Hami: Not bad for boy from council house

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

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

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

Hamilton's journey was unprivileged and without

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

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

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

'MERCURIAL,
TEMPESTUOUS'

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

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

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

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

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

He also showed frustra-

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

Escaping the manage-

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

— AFP

the T20 World Cup. Meanwhile, Cricket Australia structured a complex telecast deal between Fox Cricket and Channel 7 where the latter got rights for all Test cricket and the former exclusive rights for all white ball cricket, plus simulcast rights for Tests. Had things gone normally, Fox Cricket would have had 7 exclusive match days featuring Kohli (4 ODIs, 3T20s), plus 20 days (potentially) of him in the four Tests.

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

But while terribly import-

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Perhaps. That Kohli wanted to be with his wife

Thiem survives Tsitsipas scare

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

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

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

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

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

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

icate dinked forehand at the net in the second game.

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

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

The Serbian, who has drawn level with American Pete Sampras, said:

"Obviously I am super proud of it, but I have mixed emotions because of what is going on in the world. I can't be ignorant to that, although I have achieved one of the biggest goals in sport."

Top seed Djokovic, who is competing in Group Tokyo 2020 alongside Daniil Medvedev, Alexander Zverev and Diego Schwartzman, plays his opening match on Monday.

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



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

Aussies love to hate 'polarising' Kohli

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

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

Comparing his on-field battle with Kohli to the likes of Joe Root and Ben Stokes, the wicketkeeper-batsman said it always a