

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
NELLORE | WEDNESDAY | 18 NOVEMBER 2020



NATION | 4

Amit Shah blasts J&K's 'Gupkar gang'



WORLD | 5

France mulls ban on police images

SPORTS | 8

Olympic champion turns delivery boy



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Vol. 18 No. 132 Established 1938 | 16 pages | ₹6.00

WEATHER

Max: 30.3°C
Min: 23.9°C
RH: 92%
Rainfall: 38.0 mm
Forecast: clear.
Max/Min temp. 27/25 °C

COVID-19 COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD

CASES (+38,201)

DEATHS (+922)

89,11,576

1,30,988

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+ 952)

(+3)

TS: 2,58,828

1,410

(+1,395)

(+9)

AP: 8,56,159

6,890

DEATHS 13,37,982

COUNTRIES AREAS WITH CASES 217

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana

Tithi: Kartika Shuddha Chaturthi till 11.20 pm

Star: Moola till 10.43 am

Varjyam: 9.13 am to 10.43 am; 7.54 pm to 9.26 pm

Durmuhurtam: 11.39 am to 12.23 pm

Rahukalam: 12 noon to 1.30 pm

HILIRI CALENDAR

Rabbi-ul Akhir 2, 1442 AH

PRAYERS(SHAMI MASJID)

Fajar: 4.58 am

Zohar: 11.55 pm

Asar: 4.03 pm

Maghrib: 5.39 pm

Isha: 6.52 pm

SUNSET TODAY 5.38 PM

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.12 AM

MOONRISE TODAY 9.16 AM

MOONSET TOMORROW 9.48 PM

COUNTER POINT

Where were all your one million followers? You got only 100 votes in the elections!

SHORT TAKE

India tests fires missile system

New Delhi: India on Tuesday successfully test-fired the Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air Missile (QRSAM) system at an integrated test range in Chandipur off the Odisha coast, the defence ministry said in a statement. It said the missile "accurately and successfully" neutralised an airborne target. It was the second successful test firing of the missile in the last five days. "The flight test, second in the series, was conducted today at around 3.42 pm from the integrated test range, Chandipur, off the coast of Odisha," said the defence ministry statement.

Varavara is fully conscious: Maha

Mumbai: Jailed poet-activist Varavara Rao, an accused in the Elgar Parishad-Maoist links case, is "fully conscious and oriented", the Maharashtra government stated in a medical report submitted before the Bombay High Court. However, on the submission of Rao's counsel Indira Jaising that the report "did not shed any light on Rao's neurological condition and the urinary tract infection he is said to have developed while at the prison", the HC directed the state to file a "report detailing the type of medical exam conducted and all other findings".

IN JUST A YEAR, COVID-19 SHAKES UP THE WORLD

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, NOV. 17

Exactly a year ago, a viral infection spread to humans in the Chinese city of Wuhan that went to take the lives of over 13 lakh, and counting, across the world. The first case, according to the *South China Morning Post*, can be traced back to November 17, 2019 when a 55-year-old individual from Hubei province was infected with a virus, which later on was identified as a Novel Coronavirus, also dubbed 2019-nCoV. Chinese authorities, however, officially identified the first case only on December 8, 2019 and identified the cause on December 31, 2019.

■ Full report on Page 5

LAXMI VILAS BANK WITHDRAWALS FROZEN AT ₹25K

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, NOV. 17

Minutes after placing beleaguered Lakshmi Vilas Bank (LVB) under moratorium and superseding its Board of directors, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Tuesday announced a draft scheme of amalgamation to merge the ailing lender with DBS Bank India. The 30-day moratorium, which caps deposit withdrawals to ₹25,000, would end on December 16, 2020, according to statements from RBI and the government. Depositors, however, can withdraw above ₹25,000 for unforeseen expenses.

■ Full report on Page 7



Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy releases the amount for the YSR Sunna Vaddi Runalu scheme for farmers at camp office on Tuesday. Ministers K. Kannababu, Ch. Venu and Avanthi Srinivas are also seen. — DC

Jagan releases ₹510 cr for 14.58 lakh farmers

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 17

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has announced that as promised, ₹510.32 crore have been deposited in unencumbered bank accounts of 14.58 lakh eligible farmers towards interest subsidy for 2019 Kharif crop loans under YSR Sunna Vaddi Panta Runalu (zero interest farm loan) Scheme. This apart, ₹132 crore have been credited into bank accounts of 1.98 lakh farmers towards input subsidy for crops damaged during October.

Addressing beneficiaries and officials through video conference from the CM camp office at Tadepalli on Tuesday, the CM reiterated that his government has been giving priority to farmers by taking up unique schemes

The earlier government miserably failed in implementing the loan waiver scheme, pushing farmers into debt and making them bank defaulters. The TD government also left a power subsidy debt of ₹8,655 crore on farmers, ₹960 crore for paddy procurement, and ₹384 crore seed subsidy

— Y.S. JAGAN MOHAN REDDY, CM

for their welfare from the time YSR Congress has come to power one-and-a-half year ago. Jagan Mohan Reddy slammed the previous TD government for burdened farmers with a debt of ₹1,180 crore by denying interest subsidy. "The earlier government miserably failed in implementing the loan waiver scheme, pushing farmers

into debt and making them bank defaulters. The TD government also left a power subsidy debt of ₹8,655 crore on farmers, ₹960 crore for paddy procurement, and ₹384 crore towards seed subsidy. "It is our YSRC government that has cleared all these dues," he asserted. CM Jagan further stated, "The state has signed an MoU with Amul under which milk will be procured from November 26 onwards in the three districts of Prakasam, Chittoor and Kadapa. This scheme will be extended to other districts as well to help dairy farmers and women self-help groups. In around 9,800 Bulk Milk Cooling Units will be set up at Rythu Bharosa Kendras across AP," he said.

■ Page 2: YSRC fulfilled 90% of its poll promises: CM

SC ASKS CENTRE TO REGULATE TELEVISION MEDIA

PARMOD KUMAR I DC NEW DELHI, NOV. 17

The Supreme Court on Tuesday told the Centre to evolve a mechanism to address the grievances against the media — particularly the visual media — for airing allegedly fake news or news with a slant that may be detrimental to a section of people or a community.

"If it (mechanism) does not exist, you create one, otherwise we will hand over the complaints to a private agency," Chief Justice Sharad A. Bobde told Solicitor General Toshar Mehta.

As Mehta told the court that they had taken action against channels in the past, CJI Bobde heading a three-judge bench asked why can't the matter currently before the court be acted upon similarly.

Brics must hold nations backing terror guilty: PM

New Delhi, Nov. 17: The five-nation grouping BRICS on Tuesday adopted a new counter-terrorism strategy to effectively deal with the menace, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserted that there is a need to ensure that countries supporting terrorists are held guilty, a call backed by Russian President Vladimir Putin, who dubbed such nations "black sheep of the family".

Modi, while addressing the 12th BRICS (Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa) summit, held virtually, said terrorism is the "biggest problem" the world is facing, and needed to be dealt with in an organised manner. At the summit, which was also attended by Chinese President Xi Jinping, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro and South African President



Cyril Ramaphosa, the Prime Minister talked about the "crisis" facing multilateralism, and highlighted the need for reform of the UN Security Council as well as various other key global bodies.

"Terrorism is the biggest problem the world is facing. We have to ensure that the countries that support and assist the terrorists are also held guilty and the problem is dealt with in an organised manner," the Prime Minister said. Though, Modi did not name any country, his reference is seen as directed at Pakistan.

"We are happy that the BRICS counter-terrorism strategy has been finalised during the chairmanship of Russia. This is an important achievement and India will take this forward further during its presidency," he said.

The Prime Minister's remarks pitching for holding the countries supporting terrorism guilty was quickly supported by Putin as he said some countries were like the black sheep of the family and the world should not show any complacency in dealing with challenges like terrorism and the Covid-19 pandemic.

The prime minister further suggested that the BRICS Business Council can make a concrete plan to take the mutual business among the member nations to the target of \$500 billion. — PTI

WED | LOCK Forced conversions to attract 5 years imprisonment

MP plans law to stop 'love jihad'

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY I DC BHOPAL, NOV. 17

No case of alleged "love jihad" has so far been reported in Madhya Pradesh and yet the BJP-led government in the state is all set to bring a legislation in the ensuing winter session of the Assembly making "love jihad", a term coined by rightwing politicians to attack interfaith marriages, a cognizable and non-bailable

offence. The BJP and several right-wing, Hindutva outfits have been targeting young couples and interfaith marriages, alleging that they are done with the intention to convert Hindu girls.

The proposed legislation in Madhya Pradesh provides rigorous imprisonment of up to five years for "forcible marriage, seduction and forced conversions". "The draft bill for the proposed legislation, christened Madhya

Pradesh Dharma Swatantra Vidheyak, 2020, is ready. The Bill will be tabled in the coming winter session of the Assembly," MP home minister Narottam Mishra told reporters here on Tuesday.

Mr Mishra's announcement comes in the wake of a stern warning issued by Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan a couple of weeks ago that *jihad* (religious war) in the name of love would not be tolerated in Madhya Pradesh.

The draft Bill proposes to declare forced marriages and conversions null and void. It has provision to treat the collaborator in the forced marriage at par with the main accused.

Madhya Pradesh is the third BJP-ruled state after Uttar Pradesh and Haryana that proposes to introduce a law to curb alleged forced conversions of Hindu girls in some interfaith marriages, particularly with Muslim boys.

Panchayat polls likely in Feb. 2021

SEC silent on holding urban civic polls

N. VAMSI SRINIVAS I DC VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 17

Within days of expressing readiness to conduct polls to local bodies, the State Election Commission on Tuesday took an "in principle" decision to schedule the gram panchayat polls only in February, 2021.

The SEC was silent on conducting polls to the urban local bodies (ULBs) and zilla and mandal parishads which became a bone of contention between the commission and state government.

With gram panchayat elections being scheduled in February, doubts were being raised if N. Ramesh Kumar, State Election Commissioner, would be able to hold polls to the remaining local bodies before his term ends in March next year.

Sources in the SEC told *Deccan Chronicle* that holding polls to ULBs and ZPTCs is subjudice as

High Court is hearing a case relating to them.

Inquiries, however, revealed that the case did not pertain only to ULBs and zilla parishads but covered the entire gambit of local bodies including gram panchayats.

Secondly, there were no orders from the court to not hold elections. "We are also surprised over the SEC decision," a senior official said.

Conducting polls to ULBs and ZPTCs is a tricky affair because the SEC himself wrote to the Centre complaining against largescale violence and forced withdrawal of nominations of rival parties by the ruling party leaders.

Taking a cue from his letter, the Opposition parties unitedly demanded him to cancel unopposed elections and issue a notification beginning the poll process afresh.

Ramesh Kumar also sprang a surprise by heap-

ing praise on the state government for effective control of the Coronavirus. He made it clear that the model code of conduct would not come into force immediately and would come into effect four weeks prior to the announcement of actual date for conduct of polls.

The SEC issued proceedings for conduct of elections to gram panchayats and communicated them to Chief Secretary Nilam Sawhney, DGP Goutam Sawang and to all the departments concerned.

The SEC justified his act of calling for conduct of elections claiming that the elections were long overdue and they were facing no legal impediments. The actual schedule for conduct of panchayat elections would be finalised in consultation with the state government, he said and added that the actual notification would be duly notified thereafter.

Centre yet to give ₹50L to kin of dead Covid frontline staff

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN I DC VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 17

Several frontline healthcare workers, who sacrificed their lives attending to Coronavirus-infected patients, in the state have so far failed in getting the financial relief of ₹50 lakh assured under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY).

The Centre had announ-

ced an insurance cover of ₹50 lakh each under PMGKY for healthcare workers, including doctors, who die after contracting Covid-19 while on duty attending to patients afflicted with the disease and undergoing treatment at various government-run hospitals. Except in a few cases, no kin of the deceased health staff have yet received any relief from the Centre.

For example, family members of 10 government doctors, who succumbed to Coronavirus while treating virus-infected patients in the state, have not got any relief so far.

Following this, they approached the state government seeking its intervention.

■ Page 2: Doctors want state to pay Covid relief

Kejriwal seeks powers to impose Delhi lockdown

VINEETA PANDEY I DC with agency inputs NEW DELHI, NOV. 17

In view of rising cases of Coronavirus in the National capital, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has sought special powers from the Central government to impose localised "lockdown" in specific areas which may emerge as hotspots and shut down those markets that may be aiding to the spread of virus in the city through crowding.

The Delhi government has also decided to withdraw its previous order allowing 200 guests to attend wedding functions and in this regard Kejriwal has sent a proposal to Lt Governor Anil Bajjal to allow only 50 people to attend wedding ceremonies against the earlier limit of 200.

Delhi on Tuesday had 6,396 new cases of Covid-19 after two days of fewer positive reporting. Delhi CM said that such lower numbers in the last two days can be due to a decrease in testing due to holidays.

He added that the state and other central health agencies are doubling efforts to control the situation in the city. On Tuesday, 49,031 tests were conducted — almost double of last days — due to which positivity rate was 13.04% and fatality rate 1.39% with 99 new deaths.

There has been a big drop in daily fresh cases of Covid in the country but Delhi remains a big

NO TEMPLE GIFTS NEEDED ON MY BIRTHDAY: SEER

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 17

The controversy over extending "temple courtesies" to Swami Swaroopanandendra Saraswati, seer of Sri Sarada Peetham in Visakhapatnam, ended on Tuesday with the seer withdrawing his request to the state government for the privilege.

Temple courtesies include presenting of "teertha prasadam" and *sesha vastram* to the seer on his birthday on Wednesday by the *archakas* (priests) from temples of prominence in the state.

A controversy has been made out of the annual ritual, which is in vogue for the last 12 years, with the Opposition Telugu Desam linking it to CM Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy who turns to Swami Swaroopanandendra for spiritual guidance.

Following a memo from the endowments department to prominent temples to extend courtesies to the seer, a public interest litigation was filed in the Andhra Pradesh High Court. S.S. Prasad, senior counsel representing the Sarada Peetham, informed the court about the seer withdrawing his request.

The court disposed of the matter after recording the submissions made by the Peetham counsel. Sources said the seer was baffled over the issue being politicised and decided to end the controversy.

■ Page 2: Seer received gifts for over 10 years

SHORT TAKES

ODISHA
ENCROACHING
AP FOREST: CPMDC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 17

The CPM leaders in the Visakhapatnam Agency have alleged that the Odisha government had encroached into the AP forest area in Visakhapatnam Agency to an extent of one kilometre in two places.

In a letter to district collector V. Vinay Chand, CPM state committee member Killo Surendra said that on November 9 Koraput sub-collector Lalit Kumar Kanwar and Pottangi MLA Chittam Padhi led a team into Dekkaparu and Nettamamidi villages under Kollaput panchayats in Dumbbriguda mandal, about one kilometre into AP and pitched a board claiming that the forest land belonged to Odisha.

About 30 families living in these two villages along with forest area with over 100 teak trees and the agriculture land would come under Odisha if not intervened by the AP government.

DOCTORS WANT
STATE TO PAY
COVID RELIEF

From Page 1

Doctors claim that though the state government assured to pay ₹50 lakh on its own and claim the relief once the Centre makes the payment, this has not yet happened.

A family member of one government doctor, who succumbed to Covid-19, said: "The state government itself should grant us the ₹50 lakh and help us recover from the loss of our only bread winner. Otherwise, we cannot sustain ourselves."

AP Government Doctors Association convenor Dr. D. Jayadheer said, "We have lost 10 of our colleagues due to Covid-19 while they were treating infected patients. None of their family members have received any relief either from the centre or from the state government. We appeal to Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy to intervene and help us to get the assured relief of ₹50 lakh each."

AP unit of the Indian Medical Association claims that nearly 40 private doctors too had died after contracting Covid-19 while attending to infected patients. None of their family members too have received any relief so far.

Sources in the Health Department say several health personnel got infected while attending to patients. They, in turn, infected their family members. Some of such family members even succumbed to the virus.

A lab technician at Ramachandrapuram in East Godavari infected his six family members after he got infected with the virus in line of duty. His father died of the virus. In Kurnool, another lab technician infected his father, mother and brother. He lost his brother to the virus.

In Anantapur, a health worker got infected and passed on the disease to her husband who died subsequently. Such health workers too have appealed to the state government to provide them relief for losing their dear ones.

YSRC FULFILED
90% OF ITS POLL
PROMISES: CM

From Page 1

The Chief Minister asserted that the YSRC government has fulfilled 90 per cent of its election promises during its 18 months in office.

He pointed out that YSR Rythu Bharosa, the first of the promises of Navaratnam, has been successfully implemented, releasing the promised amount of ₹12,500 for four years. This has since been increased to ₹13,500 for five years.

The government has set up over 10,641 RBKs to benefit farmers, though this was not promised prior to the elections. Like never before, the list of beneficiaries is being displayed at RBKs for transparency and social audit. No eligible farmer is being left out.

"In case someone has missed out, they can approach the nearest RBK or call 155251 toll free number," the Chief Minister clarified.

Ministers K. Kannababu, Ch. Venugopala Krishna and Avanti Srinivas, AP Agri Mission vice-chairman M.V.S. Nagi Reddy, officials of agriculture and marketing departments, and representatives of various banks were among those present at the event.



Minister for water resources P. Anil Kumar Yadav inspects Polavaram project works during his visit to Polavaram in West Godavari on Tuesday. — A. MANIKANTA KUMAR

Polavaram project will be
completed by 2021: Anil

Pipeline proposed to supply water to Vizag through gravitation

DC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, NOV. 17

Water resources minister P. Anil Kumar Yadav on Tuesday made it clear that the Polavaram project, a national project, will be completed by December 2021 and by Kharif 2022, water would be provided to agriculture fields by gravitational flow.

A pipeline was also proposed to supply water through the project to Visakhapatnam through gravitation.

Yadav inspected the project works in West Godavari and reviewed their progress with officials and contractors.

He said that as a national project, the cost should be borne by the Central government and that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was rendering support for

● Pattiseema and Purushottam lift irrigation projects continue after construction of Polavaram.

● 194 TMCs storage capacity will be maintained.

the completion of the project.

He said that the height of the dam will be enough to store not less than 194 TMC water; but according to Central Water

Commission norms, there will be no storage of water in the project in first year and the water will be stored as per the rate of filling i.e., one-third, two-third and other phases. He said that after 25 years of construction, the Kandaluru storage capacity increased to 60 TMC feet of water.

He said that YSR's statue would be installed at the project site. He alleged that during the Telugu

Desam regime, a lot of noise was made about the project and the party made all claims that 70 per cent of the project work had been completed. In fact, he said that it was a false claim and the TD leaders did not have any understanding of how the project should be executed. He demanded that the TD leaders disclose the Union Cabinet resolutions of 2017, which were accepted by the then TD ministers in the Union Cabinet.

The minister instructed officials and contractors to set up 48 gates to the project by April 2021 and take steps to bring 98 hydraulic cylinders by

ship from Germany. He said that the spillway, Gap-3 and other works should be completed on an urgent basis.

He also instructed officials to take steps to complete 70 per cent of housing constructions in the R&R package to the displaced victims.

Polavaram MLA T. Balaraju said that 1,800 houses in eight villages in Kukkunuru mandal were inundated during the floods and heavy rains.

He also said that during the YSR regime houses were allocated to 50 families in Ramayampet village, but the construction of house has not been taken up so far.

Following his statement, the minister directed officials to submit a report on the grievances after as thorough inspection.

50% tax rebate in AP
demanded as in TSDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 17

AP Urban Citizen Forum (APUCF) has demanded that AP government announce 50 per cent rebate in property tax to help people who have been facing a severe financial crisis due to economic downturn following the Coronavirus pandemic.

The demand has risen soon after the Telangana government issued an order giving 50 per cent discount in payment of property tax to house owners paying up to ₹15,000 in Hyderabad and ₹10,000 in other cities and towns of Telangana.

Welcoming the move of the neighbouring state, APUCF convenor Ch. Babu Rao pointed out that people of AP have been facing severe financial

difficulties due to the loss of income or jobs following the pandemic that started in March 2020. Even prior to that, many families had been facing a crisis due to the economic downturn.

Due to these twin blows, majority of families in AP are not in a position to pay their taxes, as they had lost their income or their tenants had vacated.

APUCF convenor deplored that instead of coming to rescue of the people, the state government is imposing a 24 per cent penalty on late payment of taxes.

He pointed out that as per Central government norms, the state government is planning to impose property taxes based on value of the property. This would be burdensome for house owners.

CM TO INAUGURATE TUNGABHADRA
PUSHKARAMS ON NOVEMBER 20DC CORRESPONDENT
KURNOOL, NOV. 17

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy will inaugurate the Tungabhadra Pushkarams on November 20 at Sankalbagh Pushkar Ghat in Kurnool, said district collector G. Veerapandian.

The CM is scheduled to reach Orvakal Airport by 12.30 pm and from there he would hop down to APSP Battalion grounds in a chopper. He will spend 40 minutes to attend Pushkar programme rituals and depart to Vijayawada by 1.50 pm.

BUSINESS | BOOST

APTDC is hoping for breakthrough by starting pilgrim packages

Hospitality, tourism picking up in Tirupati division

AVINASH P.
SUBRAMANYAM | DC
TIRUPATI, NOV. 17

Businesses related to hospitality and tourism, which had been affected the most by Coronavirus pandemic, are slowly picking up in and around Tirupati, though they are nowhere near pre-Covid-19 levels.

Leisure tourists have started visiting hotels, resorts and hill stations in the Tirupati tourism division, considered one of the major revenue sources for

AP Tourism Development Corporation (APTDC) after Visakhapatnam. This, of course, happened after centre relaxed restrictions on the tourism and hospitality sectors.

Since then, the corporation has resumed all tourist services from June 8, except pilgrim package tours. APTDC has restarted its services at the famous hill station – Horsley Hills. It has also opened its chain of restaurants and hotels at

Tirumala, Srikalahasthi, Puligundu, Kailasakona and Palamaner.

Pre-Coronavirus, Horsley Hills generated monthly revenue of ₹50 lakh for the corporation. The average annual income from various tourism packages was ₹2.5 crore in the Tirupati division.

APTDC earn around ₹1.5 crore from its seven hotels at various places in the Tirupati division.

Tourism corporation's divisional manager R. V.

Transfer of officials associated
with electorals banned by CEODC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, NOV. 17

Based on the instructions from the Election Commission of India, Chief Electoral Officer of AP, K. Vijayanand, issued a GO Rt No. 1789 on Monday banning the transfer of officials involved in special summary revision of photo electoral rolls till the completion of the process.

The GO also gave directions to fill the vacant posts pertaining to summary revision of photo electoral rolls immediately.

The ECI has issued a schedule for Special Summary Revision of Photo Electoral Rolls with reference to January 1, 2021, as the qualifying date and the draft publication of the electoral rolls will be made on November 16, 2020, and the final publication will be made on January 15, 2021.

The EC has directed the State Government that no official connected to the exercise of revision of electoral rolls like District Election Officers, Deputy District Election Officers, Electoral Registration Officers and Assistant Electoral Registration Officers should be transferred without prior concurrence of the EC.

The Commission has also stipulated that, if it becomes absolutely essential to transfer any officer like EROs/DEOs etc, a reference giving full justification should be made by the state government in consultation with and through the State CEO for consideration of the Commission. The EC has also directed the state government not to involve officers against whom the Commission has recommended any disciplinary action and the same is pending. This applies to those against whom a

TD for annulment of local
body polls held in MarchMD. ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 17

Telugu Desam chief N. Chandrababu Naidu on Tuesday demanded cancellation of local body elections held last March alleging large-scale irregularities by ruling YSR Congress leaders at that time. He wanted fresh elections to be conducted once again while ensuring a level-playing field for all political parties. He alleged that when polls were held in March, YSRC had resorted to threats and intimidation, forcing many candidates of rival parties to withdraw, thereby enabling win for the ruling party nominees.

Holding a video conference with his party leaders, Naidu demanded that in the fresh elections, nomination process must be made online, so that contesting candidates are not made to forcibly withdraw their nominations or their nomination papers torn by YSRC goons. He demanded that central security forces be deployed for holding the fresh local body polls in a free and fair manner.

The TD chief said CM Jagan Mohan Reddy has betrayed AP people on all fronts. Stalling developing works at capital Amaravati was the first blow, fol-

● Naidu demanded that in the fresh elections, nomination process must be made online, so that contesting candidates are not made to forcibly withdraw their nominations.

lowed by negligence of Polavaram project and Jagan's failure to bring Special Category Status for AP.

Naidu felt that by going in for reverse tenders of the Polavaram project, Jagan has pushed the project into a permanent crisis. The TD chief alleged that first, Jagan promised to give ₹10 lakh to each family for resettlement. But now, he is saying there is no need for any R&R compensation.

Naidu wanted the government to explain why it is not handing over houses to beneficiaries who were given allotments based on lottery. Naidu further charged that Jagan has committed the ultimate breach of trust by saying nothing would happen even if the height of Polavaram dam is reduced.

The TD chief asked why the Chief Minister has called tenders for 10,000 MW power generation after having objected when the previous TD regime did the same in the name of AP having surplus power.

serious criminal case is pending in any court of law, or who was transferred out during any previous revision of rolls or conduct of election for inefficiency or wilfully violating the ECI directions. The Chief Electoral Officer has e directed the

collectors and district election officers to take necessary action on top priority and ensure that all vacant posts of key election officers are filled up before the draft publication and report any unfilled vacancies by November 10, 2020.

LAST TERM FOR
YSRC, SAYS
BJP EX-MLADC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 17

Former BJP MLA and vice president of the party P. Vishnu Kumar Raju said this would be the last term for the YSRC. After 2024 elections, the party would disintegrate and disappear. "I am not K.A. Paul to say without any basis. I do analysis of political developments in the state and performance of the government," the former MLA told a small section of reporters here on Tuesday. He said he foretold the debacle of TD in the last year elections while addressing a meeting in Tirupati.

AP TO START
INTERNATIONAL
MIGRATION CENTREDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 17

AP has decided to start an International Migration Centre to facilitate the youth of the state to get job opportunities in foreign countries.

Industries minister Mekapati Gautam Reddy addressed the 23rd board meeting of the Overseas Manpower Company AP (OMCAP) at the AP State Skill Development Corporation office here as its chairman on Tuesday. He said IMC will help in all aspects with skill development.

day. Earnings from all its wings, except transport, are ₹1.72 crore, as against previous year's ₹4.3 crore.

To tide over the financial stress the APTDC is going through, its divisional manager said they have approached TTD executive officer K. S. Jawahar Reddy for darshan tickets to pilgrims choosing the corporation's packaged tours, which would be a major source of revenue.

"APTDC has resumed all operations except the transport wing, which

generated ₹2.52 crore during April-October last year. Its revenue this year is zero due to Covid-19 pandemic", Suresh Kumar Reddy explained.

He hoped a positive response from Devasthanams' executive officer will help the corporation start pilgrim packages and generate revenues to cut down losses. The divisional manager announced that APTDC will restart its local temple packages from Wednesday onwards.

SHORT TAKES

IDEAS CONTEST INVITING BUSINESS IDEAS

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 17

Idea contest announced aimed to encourage, develop and support the budding entrepreneurs. The IdeaBox is conducting a business ideas contest in which students, entrepreneurs, employees, homemakers, self-employed professionals and anyone who has a business idea and aspire to make their dream idea come alive, can participate. The organisers stated that suitable business plans could get funding and investors based on feasibility.

TWO KIDS DIE DUE TO LOCKING OF CAR DOORS

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 17

Two children belonging to the Sugali social group died inside a car after they accidentally locked themselves in on Tuesday evening. The incident occurred at Repudi Thanda in A-Kondur, and of Krishna district on Tuesday.

Reports said that siblings Banavat Srinivasu, 5, and Banavat Yamuna, 4, entered the car of their relative, who stays near their house, to play. Police said they inadvertently locked themselves in. No one noticed them entering the car.

Much later, their parents returned from work and noticed that their children were missing. They started searching in nearby areas and found the children lying in the car. They immediately got the car doors opened, but it was too late for the children. The A-Kondur police said that they had not received any complaint but had started an investigation into the matter.

PROCESSION OF LORD AFTER 8 MONTHS

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, NOV. 17

On the auspicious Nagula Chavati festival on Wednesday, Lord Malayappa Swamy, the processional deity of Lord Venkateswara, is going to take his maiden procession on the Pedda Sesha Vahanam along the four mada streets in Tirumala after a long gap of nearly eight months.

After the Covid-19 induced lockdown came into effect in March, TTD has been observing all the festivities and arjitha sevas inside the temple premises, where they were being held in Ekantham (Solitude), following the state and central government Covid-19 guidelines.

PADMAVATHI DECKED UP AS SRINIVASA

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, NOV. 17

On the seventh day morning of the ongoing annual Karthika Brahmotsavams, Goddess Padmavathi decked as Srinivasa Murthy glittered on Suryaprabha and Chandraprabha vahanams at Tiruchanoor temple near Tirupati on Tuesday.

Among all the vehicle processions, Suryaprabha vahanam has got a unique place as the sun-god controls the affairs of the entire universe and he represents the three Vedas.

Back in action



Visitors take a selfie with elephants during their visit to Indira Gandhi Zoological Park which was opened to the public after the Covid lockdown in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday. 627 people visited the zoo on first day — K. MURALI KRISHNA

Seawater ingresses into low-lying colonies

People blame axing of mangroves near the sea

VADREVVU SRINIVAS | DC KAKINADA, NOV. 17

Seawater surged into the adjacent low-lying colonies where majority of the fishermen are residing in Kakinada city and flooded streets of Dummulpeta, Tarakaramanagar, Jyothula Colony and others.

The fishermen alleged that due to closure of the salt creek and axing of mangroves led to the inundation of their colonies. They said seawater is also seeping into the drains.

Two to three feet of water is accumulating on the streets in morning and evening and making life of residents difficult.

According to the local people, there were huge mangroves nearby the colonies which used to block seawater from the



Seawater enters into Jyothulavari street at Dummulpeta in Kakinada on Tuesday.

— DC

Maha Kumbhabhishekam channel. They used to arrested the ebb and tide of the sea too. But, in January and February, officials axed the mangroves without realising the threats.

Mugu Raju, a local fisherman and resident of Jyothulavari street, said that for the past three-

and-a-half decades he has never seen such sea surge in the colonies. Nearly 13 streets are being inundated in the morning and evening hours.

He said that when he brought the problem to the notice of the local public representatives, they said that they are

helpless as the cases against and house sites that have come up were the mangroves too are pending in the courts. He said that the government should take immediate steps and save the fishermen.

Telugu Desam leader Thummala Ramesh said that though they had submitted several representations to officials concerned pleading with them not to destroy the mangroves and level the land for house sites, but their pleas fell on deaf ears. Now, the residents of some of the colonies are experiencing hardships.

However, superintendent engineer of Kakinada Municipal Corporation Satyanarayana Raju said that the problem was not due to axing of mangroves or closure of the channel.

Accused in beating of youth held after video goes viral

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, NOV. 17

In a swift action, the Nellore rural police led by the DSP Y. Harinath Reddy traced three persons involved in the ruthless beating of youth after the video footage of the incident went viral in social media platforms on Tuesday.

The accused have been identified as Tumma-gunt Rajasekhara, 22, of Baktha-vatsala Nagar, Kiran of Santhapeta and Abbu Sheriff, 22, of Fathekhana Peta in Nellore.

Police also booked another case on Rajasekhara and two others for their role in a similar incident that took place in November last year. Nellore rural DSP Y. Harinath Reddy and Town DSP J. Srinivasa Reddy gave the details of the two cases to the media per-

sons here on Tuesday evening.

In the first incident, the victim Kaveripakkam Yugandhar alias Pandu, 22, is a resident of Chandrababu Nagar in Nellore and working as a driver for a milk van belonging to Abbu of Dycus Road in Nellore.

He took an Innova car belonging to one Srikanth of Batvadipalem for hire to take his own's family to Ongole in the first week of April this year.

Unfortunately, the car got damaged following an accident near Irukhalala Parameswari temple on the same day and Yugandhar failed to pay for the damages.

Irked by this, Srikanth told his friends Rajasekhara and Kiran to collect the money and teach a lesson to Yugandhar.

The duo forcibly took Yugandhar in a car to

3rd mile in Nellore rural mandal and brutally beat him with sticks even while he was pleading to spare him citing his broken hand.

Though the victim did not lodge any complaint fearing another attack by the accused, the police jumped into action and tracked down the culprits seven months after the incident when some satellite channels highlighted the video footage, which was uploaded by someone in the social media, went viral.

Nellore town DSP said that the accused Rajasekhara was also involved in a similar incident that took place on 12 November 2019 near AC Subba Reddy vegetable market in Nellore. In this case, Rajasekhara along with his friends Ranjith and Jagadeesh thrashed a degree student Mandarapu Revanth.

1,395 new Covid cases in AP

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 17

AP registered 1,395 new Covid-19 cases scaling up the tally to 8,56,159 and nine deaths rising toll to 6,890.

The state health authorities released Covid-19 bulletin on Tuesday reporting that out of 66,778 samples tested, 1,395 were found infected with Covid-19. Out of a total 92,64,085 samples tested so far, 8,32,284 infected patients recovered while 16,985 patients are active

with the virus.

Among the daily Covid-19 cases, Krishna topped the state with 260 followed by 247 in West Godavari, 214 in East Godavari, 199 in Guntur, 137 in Chittoor, 75 in Visakhapatnam, 58 in Anantapur, 52 in Kadapa, 37 in Srikakulam, 35 in Vizianagaram, 32 in Nellore, 31 in Prakasam and 18 in Kurnool.

East Godavari recorded the most number of Covid-19 active cases with 5,173, followed by 2,329 in

Krishna, 1,861 in Guntur, 1,447 in West Godavari, 1,354 in Visakhapatnam, 1,221 in Chittoor, 987 in Nellore, 640 in Prakasam, 569 in Anantapur, 527 in Srikakulam, 361 in Kadapa, 266 in Vizianagaram and 250 in Kurnool.

Rate of recovery among the Covid-19 infected patients has been steady in East Godavari with 1,14,985 followed by 88,760 in West Godavari, 80,253 in Chittoor, 68,745 in Guntur, 65,084 in Anantapur.

RELEASE NREGS DUES, SAYS SOMIREDDY

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, NOV. 22

Former minister and TD politburo member Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy said they are posting 10,000 letters to the Vice-President of India M. Venkaiah Naidu seeking his intervention to make payments to works done under National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme in the district.

Speaking to media persons at NTR Bhavan here on Tuesday, he alleged that the Central government had released ₹1,845 crore in three instalments last year and the state government is opposed to release ₹2,200 crore along with its share. However, the funds are yet to be released, Mr Chandramohan Reddy alleged.

He said some people executed the NREGS works by borrowing money and now they have left with no alternative other than committing suicide.

Stressing that the state government had no right to stall the payments, he appealed to the Vice President to intervene and save the lives of people.

He said NREGS bills are pending under Rurban scheme even in Vice President's home mandal- Venkatachalam because of the instructions of YSR Congress legislator in Sarvepalli segment under the pretext of vigilance enquiry.

The senior TD leader also alleged that the government is yet to pay ₹170 cr to farmers.

TWO PERSONS KILLED IN ROAD ACCIDENTS

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, NOV. 17

Two people were killed in two separate road accidents in Nellore city on Tuesday.

In the first incident, a motorcyclist Bala Gopal of Mattempadu succumbed to injuries he sustained after a heavy vehicle ran over him near Kaveri Nagar at Koththur in the City.

Locals said that the victim had screamed for help appealing people to shift him to hospital but no one came forward.

In the second incident at Attmakur Bus Stand, one G. Yanadi, working as conductor in Kavali RTC depot, died on the spot when a speeding vehicle hit his bike.

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FEAR | FACTOR

The enmity between families continues leading to occasional flare-ups

Villagers stock up crude bombs in Kurnool

D. SIVA RAMI REDDI | DC KURNOOL, NOV. 17

Factionists in Kurnool district continue to stock crude bombs as exposed by the recent explosion which killed a boy at Chennamapalli village near Owk town in Banaganapalle constituency.

Owk is the epicentre of crude bombs as it is in this village that people acquired expertise in making bombs. Though factionism died, the enmity between families continues leading to occasional flare-ups.

Chennamapalli village is home town of Bejjam Parthasarathi Reddy, a one-time factionist. Owk is home town of Challa

Faction murders in Rayalaseema:

1977: Seven people including then the congress leaders Katasani Narasimha Reddy, Katasani Obul Reddy were done to death near Gorlagutta village of Kurnool district while they were going in a bus.

1989: Pathikonda MLA Patil Seshi Reddy was brutally killed by opponents in Gonegandla village of Kurnool district.

1993: TD former MLA P Siva Reddy, also known as

Ramakrishna Reddy.

Proximity to Jammalamadugu in Kadapa district and Tadipatri in Anantapur dis-

'Bombula Siva Reddy' was murdered by his rivals in Hyderabad where he had gone to attend a marriage from Jammulamadugu of Kadapa district.

1998: The patriarch of the YS family, Y.S. Raja Reddy was killed in a bomb attack by a rival faction at Vemula village of Kadapa district, just before the Assembly and Lok Sabha elections.

2005: A powerful factional leader of TD Paritala Ravindra was brutally murdered by his rivals in Anantapur district head

tract make these villages prone to work out logistics easily should there be a need for additional deployment and supply of explo-

quarter.

2006: TD key leader Vaikuntam Sriramulu and his wife were killed at Chippagiri of Kurnool district.

2008: Notorious factionist, Kappatrala Venkatappaiah Naidu, and 10 others were brutally killed at Kodumuru town of Kurnool district.

2011: Congress leader Dalvai Ramaiah was killed in faction attacks at Mantralayam of Kurnool district.

2015: TD activist Nagesh was killed at Uppalur vil-

lages, said a police officer.

There are 77 sensitive villages prone to factionism in Kurnool district. The stocking of bombs raise a ques-

tion about the impending attacks. Villagers are torn between two political parties and the elections to local bodies potentially

trigger clashes. Two people died of bomb blast in Kurnool in 2017.

Dhone DSP Narasimha Reddy told *Deccan Chronicle* that police are camping in the village to ascertain facts regarding the death of a boy due to bomb explosion. Some suspects adept at making bombs were also identified and ascertain their role.

There was a faction-related fight between Banaganapalle MLA Katasani Rami Reddy and former MLA Bejjam Parthasarathi Reddy. While Katasani hails from Gundla Singaram Village, Bejjam is a native of Chennamapalli where the recent crude bomb exploded. The DSP said it is being investigated.

lance near Kolimigundla, a follower of BC Janardhan Reddy.

2017: YSRC key leader Cherukulapadu Narayana Reddy and his aide Sambasivudu were done to death at Veldurti of Kurnool district.

2019: Y.S. Vivekanand Reddy was murdered mysteriously in his own house in Pulivendula of Kadapa district.

2019: TD activist Subba Rao was brutally killed by his political rivalries at Belum caves.

SHORT TAKES

NON-MUSLIM TOPS ISLAMIC ENTRANCE LIST

Jaipur, Nov. 17: In a break from the past, a non-Muslim candidate from Rajasthan has topped the all-India entrance exam for a master's course in Islamic studies at the Central University of Kashmir.

"Islam is portrayed as a radical religion and there is lot of misconception about it. The division in the society is growing today and it is really very important to understand each other's religion," said Shubham Yadav, who would join the course in Kashmir for two years.

The result of the common entrance test, held on September 20, was declared on October 29. The university, which had set up the religious studies department, which oversees the course, in 2015, confirmed that Yadav is the first non-Muslim candidate to top the exam.

"This is the first time a non-Muslim has topped the entrance exam. We've had non-Muslim scholars in the past," Professor Hamid Naseem Rafiabadi said.

Yadav (21) has done BA honours in philosophy from the Delhi University and hails from Alwar where two lynching cases of Pehlu Khan in 2017 and Akbar alias Rakbar Khan in 2018 took place. "Such kind of incidents also made me think and gave motivation to read about the religion (Islam). I convinced my parents to pursue Islamic studies by making them understand that it will be about Islamic history and culture and they agreed," he said.

BISWAJIT RAY RESIGNS FROM CONGRESS

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, NOV. 17

In what is said to be a major setback for the party, Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) general secretary and Koch Rajbongshi leader Biswajit Ray resigned from the party after he was served a show cause notice allegedly for sharing the poll campaign stage with BJP leader Himanta Biswa Sarma in the round up to the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) polls on November 12.

Amidst indication of several Congress leaders including few former ministers set to resign from the party, Ray, in his resignation letter sent to APCC president Ripun Bora, said, "For my personal inconvenience and for the sake of serving the Koch Rajbongshi community unbiasedly, I have resigned from the post of Assam Pradesh Congress Committee general secretary and primary membership of Indian National Congress."

Ray admitted that he went to meet Himanta Biswa Sarma to raise the issue of expediting the process of granting Scheduled Tribe (ST) status to the Koch Rajbongshis of Assam and several other issues concerning the indigenous community of the state.

2 MORE HELD IN CONNECTION WITH KANPUR CLASH

Kanpur, Nov. 17: Police arrested two more people in connection with the clash between two communities at Wajidpur's Chakeri locality here as no fresh incident of violence was reported from the area, a senior official said on Tuesday.

A 25-year-old youth was killed and several injured here in the clash that erupted after a man was accidentally splashed with water. Security personnel in large numbers were deployed to ensure normalcy.

"The situation is normal and under control. Heavy police force has been deployed in the area to maintain law and order. Two more arrests were made on Tuesday in connection with the brawl, which had led to communal tensions in the area," Kanpur DIG Preetinder Singh said.

He said so far six people have been arrested in connection with the violence and more arrests are likely to be made soon. Senior police officers, including the Superintendent of police (East) Raj Kumar Agarwal, have been asked to camp in the area to monitor the situation.

Meanwhile, Union minister of state for rural development Sadhvi Niranjan Jyoti and UP minister Satish Mahana paid a visit to the family of Pintu Nishad (25), who had died in the incident. They handed over a cheque for ₹5 lakh to the victim's kin, district magistrate Alok Tiwari said.

Gupkar gang going global: Shah

J&K parties rebuke Amit Shah's remarks; NC says attack shows his frustration

DC CORRESPONDENTS NEW DELHI, SRINAGAR, NOV. 17

Union home minister Amit Shah launched a scathing attack on political leaders, particularly from Jammu and Kashmir, on Tuesday in a series of Tweets saying they wanted "foreign forces to intervene" on the contentious issue of scrapping of Article 370.

The home minister also asked the Congress, which signed the Gupkar Declaration, to clarify its position on the issue. Jammu and Kashmir's regional parties with their allies had recently formed the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD).

"Congress and the

Gupkar Gang want to take J&K back to the era of terror and turmoil.

They want to take away rights of Dalits, women and tribals that we have ensured by removing Article 370. This is why they're being rejected by the people everywhere," the home minister said in his Tweet.

"The Gupkar Gang is going global! They want foreign forces to intervene in Jammu and Kashmir. The Gupkar Gang also insults India's Tricolour. Do *Sonia Ji* and *Rahul Ji* support such moves of the Gupkar Gang? They should make their stand crystal clear to the people of India," Shah added.

"Jammu and Kashmir has been, is and will always remain an integral

● CONGRESS CRITICISED Shah for his 'unsavory remarks' and asked him to explain the BJP's alliances with the PDP, NC in the past.

part of India. Indian people will no longer tolerate an unholy 'global gathbandhan' against our national interest. Either the Gupkar Gang swims along with the national mood or else the people will sink it," Shah stated.

J&K parties sharply reacted to Amit Shah's terming the PAGD an "unholy gathbandhan" against the national interest.

National Conference (NC) vice president and former chief minister

Omar Abdullah in a series of tweets said Shah's remarks clearly revealed 'frustration'.

He said, "I can understand the frustration behind this attack by the Hon'ble Home Minister. He had been briefed that the People's Alliance was preparing to boycott elections. This would have allowed the BJP & newly formed King's party a free run in J&K. We didn't oblige them."

Abdullah said those who oppose BJP ideology were labelled as anti-nationals. "Only in J&K can leaders be detained & called anti-national for participating in elections & supporting the democratic process. The truth is all those who oppose the ideology of the BJP are labelled "corrupt

& anti-national".

People's Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti tweeted, "Fighting elections in an alliance is also anti-national now. BJP can stitch as many alliances in its hunger for power but somehow we are undermining national interest by putting up a united front."

In another tweet, she said, "Old habits die hard. Earlier BJP's narrative was that the *tukde tukde* gang threatened India's sovereignty & they are now using 'Gupkar Gang' euphemism to project us as anti nationals. Irony died a million deaths since it's BJP itself that violates the constitution day in & day out."

She also wrote, "BJP's

stale tactic of dividing India by projecting themselves as saviours & political opponents as internal & imagined enemies is far too predictable now. Love jihad, *tukde tukde* & now Gupkar Gang dominates the political discourse instead of like rising unemployment & inflation."

The Congress criticised Shah for his "unsavory remarks" and asked him to explain the BJP's alliances with the PDP and NC in the past. It also said that it is not part of the PAGD.

"Congress has entered only seat sharing at certain places at local district level (for the district development council elections in J&K)," the party said in a statement here.

RITA BAHUGUNA'S GRANDDAUGHTER DIES OF BURNS

Allahabad, Nov. 17: The granddaughter of Allahabad MP Rita Bahuguna Joshi has died of burns received during bursting of crackers, a close aide of the BJP leader said on Tuesday. She was six-year-old.

The MP's aide said Kiya died around 2 am on Tuesday at the city hospital where she was admitted following the incident on Monday afternoon.

He said the Bahuguna's granddaughter was bursting crackers with a couple of other children when the accident took place.

A spokesman said the MP's son Mayank was in Lucknow at the time of the incident and had booked an air ambulance to take Kiya to Delhi for treatment. Kiya was to be taken to Delhi on Tuesday. Kiya will be cremated at Allahabad's Daraganj on his father's arrival from Lucknow. —PTI

MAN HELD FOR RAPE, MURDER OF 5-YEAR-OLD

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, NOV. 17

Odisha police on Tuesday arrested a man who allegedly raped and murdered a 5-year-old girl in Dhenkanal district.

The accused was identified as Sankarshan Dehury of Kaliapani village in Jajpur district. He is a relative of the deceased girl, the local police said.

The body of the girl was found in a drain near a market at Kharkhari village under Kankadahad police limits in Dhenkanal district on November 13.

It was alleged that the child was raped and then murdered while the body was dumped in the drain. "During the course of investigation, police apprehended Dehury. He has confessed to the crime during questioning," the police said.

Sea of power



Navies of India, US, Australia and Japan during the second phase of the Malabar naval exercise in the northern Arabian Sea on Tuesday. The exercise involved two aircraft carriers and a number of frontline warships, submarines and maritime reconnaissance aircraft. — PTI

Nitish allocates portfolios, retains home

NAYEAR AZAD | DC PATNA, NOV. 17

A day after taking the oath as Bihar Chief Minister for the fourth straight term, Nitish Kumar on Tuesday allocated portfolios to his 14-member team.

While he kept the home, vigilance, general administration and cabinet affairs portfolios, BJP leader Tarkeshwar Prasad, who replaced Sushil Kumar Modi as one of two deputy chief ministers, was allotted important departments like finance, commercial taxes, environment and forest, information and technology, disaster management and urban development.

Prasad, who hails from the Seemanchal region, won the Katihar seat for the fourth time. He has his roots in the RSS and is seen as a strong Vaishya face.

Similarly, Renu Devi, the

other deputy chief minister, was allotted panchayati raj, backward caste upliftment and EBC welfare and industry.

This is the first time in Bihar's history that two deputy chief ministers have been named on the lines of Uttar Pradesh.

Political analysts said, "By creating two deputy chief ministers and allotting important departments to them, the saffron party in the state is trying to win the Vaishya and EBC communities. Most of the departments allotted to the new deputy chief ministers were earlier handled by a veteran leader like Sushil Kumar Modi".

The health department was allotted to the BJP's Mangal Pandey. In 2019, Pandey, as health minister, had faced criticism from the Opposition for his failure to handle the encephalitis outbreak,

● BJP LEADER Tarkeshwar Prasad, who replaced Sushil Kumar Modi as one of two deputy chief ministers, allotted important departments like finance, commercial taxes, environment and forest, information and technology, disaster management and urban development.

● HAM CHIEF Jitan Ram Manjhi's son Santosh Suman allotted minor irrigation, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe welfare portfolios.

also known as AES.

More than 100 children had died in the state due to the disease. Apart from the health ministry, Pandey will also handle key departments like road construction and art and culture.

Agriculture, cooperatives and sugarcane have

been given to the Bharatiya Janata Party's Amarendra Pratap Singh, while Scheduled Caste MLA from Mithilanchal Rampreet Paswan was given public health and engineering.

From the upper castes, the BJP's Jiwesh Kumar was allotted tourism, mines and labour. Apart from this, the revenue and law department has been allotted to OBC leader Ram Surat Rai.

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) ally VIP's chief Mukesh Sahani, despite losing the Assembly polls by a narrow margin from Simri Bakhtiyarpur, was given animal husbandry and fisheries.

He is being sent to the Legislative Council. His party VIP has won four seats in the Assembly elections.

HAM chief Jitan Ram Manjhi's son Santosh Suman was allotted minor irrigation and Scheduled

Caste and Scheduled Tribe welfare portfolios.

"Although I have lost the Assembly elections by a thin margin, I assure the people who voted for me that I will work for the welfare of the state. I am also happy that as a minister I will get a chance to learn from a leader like Nitish Kumar", Mukesh Sahani said.

From the JD(U), former Assembly Speaker Vijay Kumar Chaudhary has got rural engineering, rural development, water resources, parliamentary affairs and information and public relations.

Mewalal Chaudhary will be education minister. The transport ministry has been allotted to Sheila Kumari.

Senior JD(U) leader Bijendra Yadav, who is also considered close to chief minister Nitish Kumar, will handle energy, planning, food and consumer affairs.

Ex-Mayor held for B'luru riots

VINAY MADHAV I DC BENGALURU, NOV. 17

Former Bengaluru Mayor Sampath Raj, who was on run for the last one month after being accused of instigating riots at KG Halli and DJ Halli areas on the night of August 11, has been arrested by CCB police. On August 11, following a Facebook post by BJP activist Naveen, who happens to be nephew of Pulikeshinagar Congress MLA Akhanda Srinivas Murthy, communal violence had erupted.

The rioters had tried to set fire to the KG Halli and DJ Halli police stations and burned down the house of Akhanda Srinivas Murthy. Police had to struggle for over 12 hours to bring the situation under control, as the rioters were targeting

police also.

However, during the course of investigation, it was revealed that the riot was not a spontaneous reaction, but was instigated by some of the Congress members. Targeting Congress MLA houses by members of minority communities was something that baffled police.

After intercepting a number of telephones in the area, police traced that mobile phone belonging to close associate Sampath Raj was in constant touch with the rioters, giving out instructions to torch Akhanda Srinivas Murthy house and attack the police station.

Akhanda Srinivas Murthy migrated to Congress from JD(S) during the last general elections and is a supporter of Siddaramaiah.

DEOBANDI | FACTION

Police say the duo was also planning to cross the border and go to Pakistan for training

Two suspected JeM terrorists from J&K arrested in Delhi

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA | DC NEW DELHI, NOV. 17

The special cell of Delhi police has apprehended two suspected Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) terrorists from Sarai Kale Khan area in Southeast Delhi. The duo was apprehended by the police on Monday night. The police said that the duo was also planning to cross the border and go to Pakistan for training.

The duo has been identified as Abdul Latif Mir (22), a resident of Doru village in Baramulla district, and Mohammad Ashraf Khatana (20), a resident of Hat Mulla village in Jammu and Kashmir's

Kupwara district.

According to DCP (special cell) Sanjeev Kumar Yadav, on November 16 specific inputs were received that Abdul and Asraf would go near Sarai Kale Khan and then go to Nizamuddin area and would stay for a short period in Delhi for their onward journey to Uttar Pradesh for the purpose of training.

"Acting on the specific inputs, a trap was laid and they were nabbed in the late hours. During interrogation, it was revealed that both the terrorists follow the 'Deobandi' faction of the community and their role model is Maulana Masood Azhar, the leader

of JeM.

"Abdul has a Facebook account in the name of Mir Latif and has displayed the picture of Maulana Masood Azhar in his display picture. He used to listen to Maulana Masood on social media and wanted to join them for the freedom of J&K and to spread Islam all over the world," said the DCP.

"Abdul used to listen to news of brutality with the Muslims all over the world on news channels and the lectures delivered in Deobandi by Arhsad Madani, Maulana Mufti Faizul Waheed Sahab, and in J&K by Mufti Muzaffar Hussain and Nazir Ahmad Shah Kashmiri.

YUSUF JAMEEL I DC SRINAGAR, NOV. 17

The families of two Kashmiri youth arrested by Delhi police's special cell on charges of being Jaish-e-Muhammed (JeM) operatives have pleaded their innocence and claimed that they travelled to the Union capital from the native villages in northwestern Valley's Kupwara and Baramulla districts earlier this month for personal reasons.

"My son was scheduled to tie the nuptial knot on

November 12. He went to Delhi along with his friend to buy some clothing and personal material for his wedding. They left the Valley on November 4 and the last time my son spoke to us from an unknown number was on November 5 to inform he would be returning home the next day," Bashir Ahmad Khatana, father of accused Muhammad Ashraf, told reporters.

He insisted, "My son has no militancy links which you can get confirmed from local police as well.

He is a religious person and would lead prayers in a masjid (mosque)," Khatana, a resident of frontier Kupwara district's Hathmulla village, said that his son's arrest has shocked him and also his (Ashraf's) in-laws who were preparing for the wedding of their daughter.

Khatana said that he after learning about the arrest of his son spoke to the area deputy superintendent of the police and some other police and administration officials back home to plead the

innocence of his son.

Sanaulah Mir, father of the other accused Abdul Latif, said that barely two days after his 22-year-old son went to Delhi on Nov. 4 the family lost contact with him. "Today, I was shocked to know through a TV news channel that he along with another Kashmiri youth has been arrested on the pretext of being militants. The allegation is totally false. I vouch for my son's innocence," Mir, a resident of Duroo suburb of Valley's northwestern Sopore city, said.

IN BRIEF

MCBRIDE AMONG FINALISTS FOR CARNEGIE MEDAL

New York, Nov. 17: James McBride's latest novel and nonfiction by poets Claudia Rankine and Natasha Trethewey are among the finalists for the Andrew Carnegie Medals for fiction and nonfiction.

The American Library Association announced Tuesday that McBride's "Deacon King Kong" was a fiction nominee, along with Ayad Akhtar's novel "Homeland Elegies" and an acclaimed debut novel, Megha Majumdar's "A Burning." The nonfiction finalists are Trethewey's "Memorial Drive: A Daughter's Memoir," Rankine's "Just Us," which combines poetry, prose and photography, and Rebecca Giggs' "Fathoms: The World in the Whale."

Winners in each category will be receive \$5,000, and will be announced Feb. 4, 2021. The awards are supported, in part, by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

MCCANN SUSPECT HURT IN CUSTODY

Berlin, Nov. 17: A suspect in the disappearance of Madeleine McCann, the British toddler who vanished from a Portuguese resort 13 years ago, suffered two broken ribs in an incident at a German court, authorities said Tuesday.

The incident occurred after Christian Brueckner, who is serving time on a drug conviction, was taken to Braunschweig state court on Monday for a routine hearing on that case. Court spokeswoman Jessica Knab-Henrichs told *The Associated Press* that he was briefly treated in a hospital for two broken ribs, and was then returned to the court where the hearing was carried out. The incident is under investigation and further details on what happened at the court were expected to be released later in the day, she said. Although Brueckner is a suspect in the McCann case, prosecutors have said they do not yet have enough evidence to hold him on the McCann case alone.

In addition to the drug trafficking sentence, which Brueckner will have finished serving in January, he was convicted in 2019 of the 2005 rape of a 72-year-old American woman in Portugal and sentenced to another seven years.

That conviction is under appeal. McCann was 3 at the time of her 2007 disappearance from an apartment while her family vacationed in the seaside town of Praia da Luz.

CHINA POSITIONS ROCKET FOR LUNAR MISSION

Beijing, Nov. 17: China on Tuesday moved a massive rocket into place in preparation for launching a mission to bring back materials from the moon for the first time in four decades.

The Long March-5 was transported by tractor from its hangar to the nearby launch site at the space base in Wenchang along the coast of the southern island province of Hainan. The Chang'e 5 mission it will carry is scheduled to launch early next week, placing a lander on the moon that will drill 2 meters (almost 7 feet) beneath the surface and scoop up rocks and other debris to be brought to earth.

That would allow scientists to study newly obtained lunar materials for the first time since the American and Russian missions of the 1960s and 1970s.

The mission, named for the Chinese moon goddess, is among China's most ambitious as its space programme continues to build steam since it first put a man in space in 2003, becoming only the third nation to do so after the US and Russia. China currently has a mission on the way to Mars, along with a rover on the moon's far side that is providing the first full measurements of radiation exposure from the lunar surface, information vital for any country that plans to send astronauts to the moon.

China has increasingly engaged with foreign countries on missions, although US law still prevents collaboration with NASA, excluding China from partnering with the International Space Station.

That has prompted China to work on its own space station and launch its own programmes that have put it in a steady competition with Japan and India among Asian nations seeking to notch new achievements in space. The space programme has progressed cautiously, with relatively few setbacks in recent years.

Chemical-laced water on Thai protesters



Pro-democracy protesters take shelter as police use chemical-laced water cannons to disperse them during an anti-government rally in Bangkok on Tuesday.

— AFP

More virus deaths if Trump impedes transition: Biden

Trump has not conceded defeat but alleged poll fraud without any evidence

Washington, Nov. 17: President-elect Joe Biden has warned that many more Americans "may die" if incumbent President Donald Trump does not cooperate with the transition process and hamper the incoming administration's ability to tackle the deadly coronavirus pandemic. According to media projections, Democrat Biden has won the November 3 presidential election.

Biden has 306 votes in the electoral college, surpassing the 270 threshold needed to win. However, Trump, a Republican, has not conceded and instead alleged election fraud without presenting any significant evidence. The Trump campaign has also mounted legal fights in a number of battleground states where he lost.

"More people may die if we don't coordinate," Biden said in his home state of Delaware on Monday, responding to a question on President Trump refusing to concede the election and the outgoing administration not co-operating in the transition process.

The US government agency that launches transition process — the General Services Administration (GSA), headed by a Trump appointee — has

yet to recognise Biden and his running mate Kamala Harris as winners. The Trump-appointed administrator of the General Services Administration has so far refused to take the legally necessary step to begin the transition process, which would give Biden's team a budget, intelligence briefings and access to federal agencies.

"A vaccine is important. It's of little use until you're vaccinated. So, how do we get the vaccine, how do we get over 300 million Americans vaccinated? What's the game plan? It's a huge, huge, huge undertaking to get it done, prioritise those greatest in need and working our way through, and also cooperate with the World Health Organization and the rest of the world in dealing with this," he said.

"So they (Trump administration) say they have this 'Warp Speed' programme that not only deal with getting vaccines, but also how to distribute this. The number of Covid-19 infections in the US has reached new heights in recent days, surpassing 160,000 cases in one day for the first time since the outbreak began. More than 247,000 people have died in the US. — PTI

Pentagon: Downed unarmed missile

Washington, Nov. 17: In a first for the Pentagon's push to develop defenses against intercontinental-range ballistic missiles capable of striking the United States, a missile interceptor launched from a US Navy ship at sea hit and destroyed a mock ICBM in flight on Tuesday, officials said.

Previous tests against ICBM targets had used interceptors launched from underground silos in the United States. If further, more challenging tests prove successful, the ship-based approach could add to the credibility and reliability of the Pentagon's existing missile defense system.

The success of Tuesday's test is likely to draw interest from North Korea, whose development of intercontinental-range

ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons is why the Pentagon has sought to accelerate its building of missile defence systems over the past decade.

North Korea has recently refrained from flight tests of ballistic missiles of intercontinental range and has not continued its nuclear testing. But the intentions of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un are uncertain as President-elect Joe Biden prepares to take office.

Although the US approach to missile defence is designed to protect the US homeland against an ICBM fired from North Korea, both Russia and China have expressed concern that the US could use its missile defences to undercut the deterrent value of their nuclear forces. — AP

A year ago, the illness had emerged in Wuhan

Wuhan, Nov. 17: One year ago, a mysterious illness emerged in Wuhan, China, marking the start of the Coronavirus pandemic that has now killed more than 1.25 million people around the world and infected tens of millions more, according to a report in the *Newsweek*.

In March, the *South China Morning Post* published an article based on Chinese government data that showed the first known case of Covid-19 can be traced back to November 17, 2019—possibly a 55-year-old individual from Hubei province, although "patient zero" has yet to be confirmed.

Chinese authorities did not officially identify the first case of the new disease until December 8, 2019. Over the weeks that followed, medical staff in Wuhan treated dozens of patients suffering from pneumonia of unknown cause.

The patients were treated for a range of unexplained symptoms including high fever, coughing

and respiratory problems.

Among these individuals were an elderly couple who sought treatment at Hubei Provincial Hospital of Integrated Chinese and Western Medicine on December 26.

A doctor at the hospital who attended to the couple, Zhang Jixian, later told Chinese state-run news agency Xinhua in April that the illness "looked like flu or common pneumonia."

But CT scan images revealed lung abnormalities that were not characteristic of either of these diseases. Zhang had worked as a medical expert during the SARS outbreak that originated in China in 2003, which went on to kill more than 800 people around the world.

Given her experience with this epidemic—caused by a pathogen in the coronavirus family—she was attuned to the possibility that the elderly couple's illnesses could represent a new infectious disease.

SPUTNIK VACCINE CAN BE MADE IN INDIA: PUTIN

Moscow, Nov. 17: President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday called for a joint effort by the BRICS countries on the development of the Coronavirus vaccines as he suggested that Russia's Sputnik V vaccine against Covid-19 could be produced in China and India, which are members of the five-nation bloc.

"We believe it is important to speed up the establishment of the centre for development and research of BRICS vaccines, which we agreed to do two years ago, upon the initiative of our South African friends," Putin said while addressing the 12th BRICS summit via videoconferencing. The summit, hosted by Putin, was attended by PM Narendra Modi, Chinese President Xi Jinping, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa. Putin said that Russia's Sputnik V vaccine registered in August could be produced in China and India. — PTI

France mulls police image ban

Paris, Nov. 17: France's lower house of parliament is opening debate Tuesday on a security bill that would permit the imprisonment of people who publish images of police officers with intent to cause them harm.

Critics, including France's human rights ombudsman, say the measure would hurt press freedoms.

Offenders would face up to one year in prison and a 45,000-euro (\$53,000) fine under the proposed law championed by lawmakers of President Emmanuel Macron's party, which has a majority at the National Assembly.

The bill's most controversial measure would make it a new criminal offense "to disseminate,

by whatever means and on whatever media, with the intent of causing physical or psychological harm, an image of the face or any other element that could identify a police officer."

The measure's backers include Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin. He said it is needed because officers "are constantly threatened". — AP

Peru: Sagasti is third Prez in a week

Lima, Nov. 17: Peru's political crisis appeared on the verge of resolution Monday as Congress cleared the way for an elder statesman and consensus candidate to become the country's third president in a week.

Jubilant people waved the nation's red-and-white flag and blared horns on the streets of Peru's capital as Francisco Sagasti of

the centrist Purple Party was selected as the new president of Congress. The 76-year-old engineer has not yet been sworn into office, but as head of Congress becomes the nation's chief of state by default. Peru currently has no president or vice president, making him next in line.

It will now fall on Sagasti to heal a nation bruised by

a week of upheaval. "What's at stake is taking a step toward rebuilding confidence between the people and the state," said Samuel Rotta, president of the Peruvian chapter of Transparency International.

Applause erupted in the legislative palace as Sagasti clinched the required majority vote. A respected academic, he has also spent decades consulting

UNSC impaired organ, says India

United Nations, Nov. 17: A handful of countries are using the Inter-Governmental Negotiations (IGN) as a "smoke-screen" and stopping progress on reforming the Security Council, which has become "impaired", India has said, asserting that it is time for a "decisive movement" to achieve the long-delayed reform of the powerful UN body. India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador T.S. Tirumurti, speaking in the UN General Assembly on "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council", lamented that nothing has moved for more than a decade in the IGN except hearing passionate statements on the need for reform.

"Today's Security Council is an impaired organ. It has been unable to act with credibility essentially due to its unrepresentative nature. But then, what is happening inside the IGN process, which we seem to be wedded to?" Tirumurti said on Monday. Criticising the absence of even a single negotiating text, Tirumurti said that the IGN has become like a "platform

for debate in a University rather than a serious result-oriented process in the United Nations consisting of sovereign member states".

"And why have we come to this pass? because just a handful of countries don't want us to proceed. They have stopped the IGN from progressing. They are using the IGN as a smoke-screen to stop themselves from being identified by paying lip-service to Security Council reform.

"The conditions they are laying out are impossible to fulfill — which is a full consensus of all member states. Ironically, this is happening at a time when we were in a tearing hurry last week to give ourselves e-voting rights. But for IGN, they want no voting, leave alone e-voting, but only full consensus!" he said.

Asserting that there is a need for a decisive movement this year in the UNSC reform process, Tirumurti said: "Without decisive movement, I feel that those who support real reform and who wish to deliver on the commitment made by our leaders, will be forced to look beyond the IGN."

— PTI

Pak military, Qaeda had links: Obama

Washington, Nov. 17: Barack Obama has said that he had ruled out involving Pakistan in the raid on Osama bin Laden's hideout because it was an "open secret" that certain elements inside Pakistan's military, and especially its intelligence services, maintained links to the Taliban and perhaps even al-Qaeda, sometimes using them as strategic assets against Afghanistan and India. Giving a blow-by-blow account of the Abbottabad raid by American commandos that killed the world's most wanted terrorist on May 2, 2011 in his latest book "A Promised Land", the former US president said that the top secret operation was opposed by the then defence secretary Robert Gates and his former vice president Joe Biden, who is now the President-elect.

In the book that hit the stands globally on Tuesday, America's first Black president described the various options of killing bin Laden once it became increasingly clear that the elusive al-Qaeda chief

PAK'S EXTREMIST GROUP LIFTS SIEGE TO CAPITAL

Islamabad, Nov. 17: Hundreds of activists of an extremist religious group in Pakistan have ended their protest following their talks with the government, two days after they laid a partial siege to the national capital to denounce the publication of blasphemous cartoons in a French magazine and force the government to expel the French ambassador, official said on Tuesday.

Tehreek-i-Labaik Pakistan (TLP) of firebrand cleric Khadim Hussain Rizvi started the protest march on the Murree Road of the garrison city of Rawalpindi on Sunday. Riot police had to resort to teargas shelling on Monday against the stone-pelting TLP protesters who succeeded to reach the Faizabad interchange connecting Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

— PTI

Brennan to explore what a raid would look like," Obama writes in his memoir. The need for secrecy added to the challenge; if even the slightest hint of our lead on bin Laden leaked, we knew our opportunity would be lost.

— PTI

SPACEX CAPSULE DOCKS WITH SPACE STATION

Cape Canaveral, Nov. 17: SpaceX's newly launched capsule with four astronauts arrived Monday at the International Space Station, their new home until spring.

The Dragon capsule pulled up and docked late Monday night, following a 27-hour, completely automated flight from NASA's Kennedy Space Center.

The linkup occurred 262 miles (422 kilometers) above Idaho.

"Oh, what a good voice to hear," space station astronaut Kate Rubins called out when the Dragon's commander, Mike Hopkins, first made radio contact.

"We can't wait to have you on board," she added after the two spacecraft were latched together. This is the second astronaut mission for SpaceX. But it's the first time Elon Musk's company delivered a crew for a full half-year station stay. The two-pilot test flight earlier this year lasted two months.

— AP

NEW | STUDY

Comets are the most pristine material in our Solar System, find scientists

Building blocks of life can form long before stars

London, Nov. 17: Scientists have shown that glycine, an important building block of life, can form under the harsh conditions that govern chemistry in space, indicating that the molecule may form in dense interstellar clouds well before they transform into new stars and planets.

The study, published in the journal *Nature Astronomy*, detected glycine in the comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko, and in samples returned to the Earth from NASA's Stardust mis-

sion which was the first to return extraterrestrial material from outside the orbit of the Moon to the Earth.

According to the researchers, including those from the Queen Mary University of London in the UK, comets are the most pristine material in our Solar System and reflect the molecular composition present at the time our Sun and planets were just about to form. While until recently, scientists thought that the formation of amino acids like glycine

required energy, setting clear constraints to the environment in which it can be formed, the current findings suggest that these protein building blocks can form long before stars.

The researchers showed that it is possible for glycine to form on the surface of icy dust grains of comets, in the absence of energy, through 'dark chemistry'. "Dark chemistry refers to chemistry without the need of energetic radiation," explained Sergio Ioppolo, lead author

of the study from Queen Mary University of London. The findings contradicted previous studies which suggested that ultraviolet (UV) radiation was required to produce this molecule.

"In the laboratory we were able to simulate the conditions in dark interstellar clouds where cold dust particles are covered by thin layers of ice and subsequently processed by impacting atoms causing precursor species to fragment and reactive interme-

diates to recombine," Ioppolo said.

The researchers first demonstrated that methyllamine, the precursor molecule of glycine which was detected in the coma of the comet 67P, could form. Then, using a unique ultrahigh vacuum setup, equipped with a series of atomic beam lines and accurate diagnostic tools, the scientists confirmed that glycine could also be formed, and that the presence of water ice was essential in this process.

Further investigation using chemical simulations confirmed the experimental results and allowed the researchers to extrapolate data obtained on a typical laboratory timescale of just one day to interstellar conditions, bridging millions of years.

"From this we find that low but substantial amounts of glycine can be formed in space with time," said Herma Cuppen, a co-author of the study from Radboud University in the Netherlands. — PTI

DECCAN Chronicle

18 NOVEMBER 2020

Nitish weakened, will his govt survive?

JD(U)'s founder-leader Nitish Kumar was sworn in Chief Minister of Bihar for the fourth straight term last Monday, courtesy his alliance partner BJP which won 31 seats more than Mr Kumar's relatively meagre 43, but it is far from clear if the NDA alliance, principally a BJP-JD(U) show, can offer stable governance or indeed even cohere with any sense of certainty.

The relationship between the key coalition partners has been prejudiced. There is a widespread feeling in the state and in political circles more broadly that the BJP had tried to undermine JD(U) from the start by propping up LJP's Chirag Paswan, and this was an important consideration for the less than satisfactory showing of Mr Kumar's party. Purportedly, the reason for this move was BJP's own ambition to be in the driver's seat to the extent of seeking to have its own CM instead of Mr Kumar.

Upon Mr Modi's removal, two new deputy CMs have been foisted on the CM by the BJP. It is a strong likelihood that Patna will be run from Delhi, possibly in tandem with Nagpur.

The game came unstuck because the saffron party, while improving its performance, could not reach a zone of comfort in number terms that may have enabled it to cobble together a government through the use of unconventional methods. The BJP could not choreograph a situation in which both the JD(U) and the RJD, the main Opposition force led by the very young Tejashwi Yadav, could be pushed down electorally at the same time. In the event, the RJD has done exceedingly well, arriving on the scene yet again as the number one party in the Assembly, ahead of BJP.

Having failed to reach its first objective, the BJP, being the bigger ally, looks to be aiming to call the shots more directly in the governance of the state. This can only be done by pushing down the CM and making him as redundant as possible. Ideally, from the BJP's perspective, the CM should be seen but not heard. In furtherance of this, the saffron party has taken their suave and veteran Bihar leader Sushil Modi, who had been deputy CM with Mr Kumar for 13 years, out of the equation. Mr Modi was known to enjoy a special relationship with Mr Kumar, sometimes to the chagrin of the state BJP.

Upon Mr Modi's removal, two new deputy CMs have been foisted on the CM by the BJP. These are politicians not known to possess their own personality. Consequently, it is a strong likelihood that Patna will be run from Delhi, possibly in tandem with Nagpur, the RSS headquarters. The NDA parties had not advanced any particular agenda for the state in their election campaign, which was centred on attacking RJD and Congress and not on defending its poor record or projecting a viable future. It does look as if they have run out of ideas. Getting investment rolling in the state, the need of the hour, is a tall order.

Mahagathbandhan, the NDA's principal opponent led by Mr Yadav, has secured only 12,000 votes fewer than the ruling side. Seats have been won or lost by double-digit margins, leading the Opposition to cry foul. The Opposition boycotted the government's swearing-in and could be in attack mode from the start. There could be unsettling times ahead in a key Hindi-belt state.

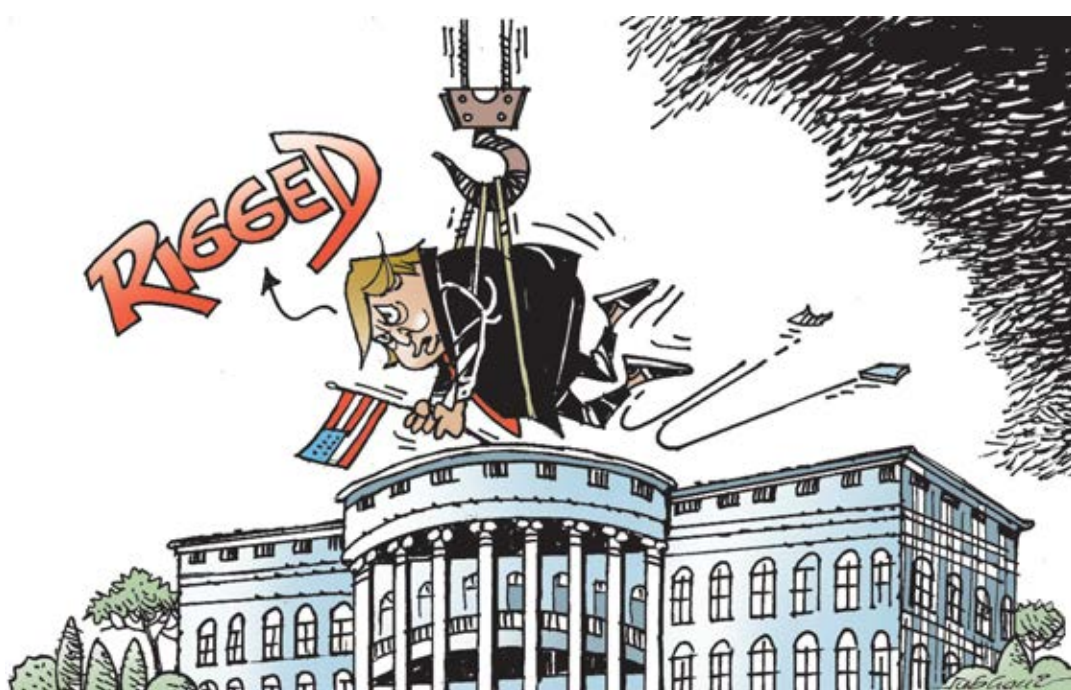
Two cheers for Suu Kyi

It was a vote for continuity. In winning what was only the second election in Myanmar since the end of five decades of military rule in the country, convincingly, the crafty National League for Democracy (NLD) head and incumbent state counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi has effectively consolidated her people's democratic ambitions. However, in trying to avoid 'criticism' that she is favouring Rohingyas from the military-backed Opposition Union of Solidarity and Development Party, she delayed decision-making vis-à-vis the crisis. Over 40,000 Rohingyas are stranded in India and eight lakh in Bangladesh awaiting repatriation. The estimated six lakh who remain in the conflict-rife Rakhine state are severely persecuted and were disenfranchised in these elections.

Alarming, the Islamophobic and anti-Rohingya Arakan National Party has won the largest bloc of seats in the regional parliament, even flipping a few previously held by the NLD. The NLD has reached out to them, so a prolonging of the crisis is on the cards. Reforming the 2008 military drafted constitution in which the Army had written in a role for itself in government and politics is another less urgent, but equally important, challenge before Ms Suu Kyi.

For India, Ms Suu Kyi's win spells both diplomatic comfort and continuity. Aside from trying to thwart China's expansionist and encirclement moves around India, New Delhi must be on good terms with all neighbours to maximise trade, market and investment opportunities as well as to bolster our strategic ingredients. Besides, Myanmar is important for its own sake - it is India's gateway to Southeast Asia. Facing charges of Rohingya genocide at the International Court of Justice and chastened, thereafter, by the world community, Ms Suu Kyi has been seen leaning towards China lately. But India has not been idle. Foreign secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla and Chief of Army Staff Gen. M.M. Naravane met the leader recently to discuss Covid cooperation and review progress of India-assisted projects in Myanmar. New Delhi needs to further strengthen its relationship with Yangon, possibly by identifying more areas of mutual cooperation as well as brainstorming solutions to Myanmar's problems, so that it is effectively weaned off its Beijing dependencies.

Subhani



Beyond Covid: Towards a 'new normal' at work

Shashidhar Nanjundaiah

Last month Microsoft joined the new-age league — Facebook, Twitter, Google and Salesforce — in bringing forth an extended work-from-home policy. But the Redmond-based tech giant went further and announced that Microsoft employees all over the world can now opt to work from home permanently, embedding the concept of the hybrid workplace in the system. When a company's product is virtual, the processes can also be virtual, it would seem. No doubt there is the inevitable fine print about approvals and proportions. Still, is it a feasible proposition?

Microsoft's communiqué is compelling and competitive, and the narrative is bold — rather than making it about lockdowns and Covid-19 compliances, it indicates to us what it has learnt from and developed during the pandemic, to that extent embodying the concept of "the new normal". But more important, could this be the beginning of a new era of trust and partnership between employer and employee? That's the question managers are struggling with.

Undoubtedly, the transition to that virtual partnership will be less arduous for the technology and consulting companies. The tech industry has been responsible for systematising work flow and work processes in new ways. The "water-fall" process in management of software development process, for example, entailed a process from brainstorming to delivery that depended on long periods of low communication and reporting. But the new "agile" systems stipulate more rapid dipstick project management sequences such as regular meetings and frequent stock-taking to ensure that processes don't go askew

even in the United States, remote locations come with bandwidth issues, and most tech companies pay employees an incentive each month so that the employee can afford a reliable network connection.

That problem is compounded in an Indian environment, where there is far more caution in extending the work-from-home arrangement beyond the least possible period. Tech clusters like those in Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Gurgaon attract a diverse workforce. Many employees come to these hubs from smaller towns. In a lockdown work-from-home scenario, a significant proportion of them choose to work from their native towns, where the necessary infrastructure — including power supply, connectivity and bandwidth — is often suspect. This unreliable infrastructure has compelled many employers to dissuade employees from travelling or to provide portable connectivity devices such as dongles.

That is why it does not come as a surprise that the heads of even technology companies in India do not believe that virtual working — even for non-administrative functions — can be a permanent arrangement. Most of them hanker to go back to the old normal. Employers have calibrated their processes to better quantify the output, but in the absence of qualitative evaluation, they may not be entirely comfortable with an artificial adjustment. On the other hand, strict quantification of processes and output also sets up an alluring case for using artificial intelligence (AI). Already, there have been layoffs and consolidation or restructuring of processes. While the ongoing cutting-edge research on AI as a sup-

plement to human tasks is well-documented, techies worry — thanks to the pandemic — about the enhanced possibility that automation could replace some human processes.

Work-from-home policies are essentially policies of space and time. Employers are having a hard time grappling with them because what was meant to be a temporary fix has unearthed more challenges than they had bargained for. Most technology employers allow employees to work at their own pace, although filling out time sheets is still the norm among Indian companies. So, for many human resources (HR) managers, the new issue is as much about the process as about the theory. On one hand, HR managers are now grappling with effective ways of monitoring. Without it, they find it difficult to fit the existing matrix of periodic assessments and suchlike. On the other, should they continue the surveillance-like monitoring, or should they simply trust the employee more?

Psychological impacts of a protracted work-from-home situation have been well-documented, but Indian companies face additional challenges. The more traditional HR systems among them are accustomed to ways of monitoring their employees' time and space. The work-from-home situation's best and worst feature may be the flexibility of time and space. Redefined office space is a major reason many youngsters hanker to work at the New Age "cool" technology companies. Yet the Covid-19 pandemic is forcing these very companies to redefine their offices as post-Covid workplaces. Home is the best place to work from, some employers seem to be saying. For now, the space to watch over the next few months will be whether systems manage to build on their current success, or the compulsion of human communication and physicality render them unviable.

The writer is a communications expert and has launched and headed a number of reputed institutes of higher education

LETTERS

BE IN RCEP

India's non-participation in RCEP is understandable. But remaining outside is also detrimental for the simple reasons of economy. We must try to plug the holes in the MoU that hurt us most rather than dissociation keeping China's dominance in view. Ground realities have to be tackled judiciously and diplomatically. Who but Prime Minister Narendra Modi can do it.

K. Nehru Patnaik
Visakhapatnam

PALNADU DISTRICT

Palnadu is backward even though it is a historical area with Nagarjunasagar dam, island museum on Nagarjuna Konda in the middle of Krishna reservoir and Ethipothala waterfalls nearby. The people of Palnadu from all parties have been demanding the creation of separate district with Gurajala town as headquarters. This will result in quick development of the area.

Doradla Satyanarayana
Nidubrolu

A LEGEND PASSES

Soumitra Chatterjee was a multi-spectrum artiste, theatre personality, poet, painter, essayist, winner of the Dadasaheb Phalke award and above all, a naturalistic actor par excellence (Farewell to a legend, DC, Nov. 17. He is missed, but his work lives on).

Dr C. Ghanshyam
Visakhapatnam

50 YEARS AGO IN

DECCAN Chronicle

LUNA-17's historic feat, Vehicle moving on command from earth

MOSCOW, November 17. The Soviet Union today placed on the moon the world's first self-propelled vehicle which is moving about on the lunar surface and conducting experiments on command from earth.

A TASS announcement said the vehicle "Lunokhod-1" mounted on an eight-wheel chassis go off the automatic station, Luna-17, about two and a half hours after softlanding of the station in the area of the sea of rains.

It got out of the station by a special gangway and moved to a distance of 20 metres to begin, what TASS called "planned experiments". The first announcement was not clear on the nature of the experiments, how long they would be conducted and if the vehicle would be returned to earth along with the automatic station Luna-17.

Andrew Sullivan



Donald Trump may have lost, but his agenda is here to stay

Donald Trump is now showing exactly why he had to be defeated. Well after the votes have been counted, with no evidence of anything but the usual minor glitches — none of which is sufficient to dent Joe Biden's margin of victory — the President of the United States is doing what he did for four years — sabotaging American democracy because of his pathological narcissism. Mr Trump remains what he has long been — a purely destructive force, a vandaliser, not a builder.

But Trumpism? It did far better than anyone expected. The polls were off — again — missing Republican strength. Down-ballot, many Republicans seriously outperformed their nominal leader. During a health crisis and a recession, the GOP made real gains in the House of Representatives and is likely to hold the Senate, effectively checkmating any progressive ambitions that Mr Biden might have had. The rural

turnout was huge, responding to Mr Trump's boisterous series of big rallies as the campaign ended.

This result is the moment that Mr Trump's core message was seared into one of America's major political parties for the foreseeable future, and realigned American politics. Neo-conservatism is over; globalisation as some sort of conservative principle is over; a conservatism that allows for, or looks away from, unrestrained mass immigration is over. What was cemented in place this week is a new GOP, not unlike the Tories in the United Kingdom. They're nationalist, culturally conservative, geared toward the losers of capitalism as well as its winners, mildly protectionist and isolationist. It is a natural response to the unintended consequences of neo-liberalism's success under a conservative banner. And it speaks in a language that working-class Americans understand, devoid of the woke neologisms of the educated elite.

This election was also an unequivocal rejection of the woke Left. The riots of the summer turned many people off. In exit polls, 88 per cent of the Trump voters said it was a factor in their choice. On the question of policing and criminal justice, Mr Trump led Mr Biden by 46 to 43 per cent. For the past five years, the Democrats have been telling us that Mr Trump and his supporters were white supremacists, and yet he increased his black, Latino, gay and Asian support: 12 per cent of blacks — and 18 per cent of black men — backed him, along with 32 per cent of Latinos, and 31 per cent of Asians. The gay vote for Mr Trump may have doubled.

Pollsters, once again, missed a huge swath of "Shy Trump" voters. Eric Kaufmann, one of the most astute political scientists writing today, noted that the polling under-counted educated white Trump voters, perhaps used to keeping their mouths shut in mixed company: "The exit

polls show that Trump ran among white college graduates 49-49, and even had an edge among white female graduates of 50-49! This puts pre-election surveys out by a whopping 26-31 points among white graduates." The threat of wokeness alienated educated white voters, caused them to lie to pollsters — and led more of them to vote for Mr Trump than anyone expected.

The clarifying truth is that America remains a very closely divided country, growing further apart culturally and socially, exploited by extremists on right and left, and yet still fundamentally sane. The American people do not want a revolution, but they also realised they do not want Mr Trump as head of state. They removed the nutcase, and defanged the woke, showed up to vote in vast numbers, and gave us a constellation of forces in Washington that pleases no one. And that's okay.

America is a vast and complicated place — and its political representa-

tives mirror this rather accurately. That's democracy working, not failing. In such a country, there is a place in the centre for compromise if Americans can unwind the hysteria and polarisation that the far left has fuelled and Mr Trump has exacerbated. We now have a President-elect, voted for by the sane centre, with little personal ambition ahead of him, deep relationships within the Senate that he will desperately need, and with a check on his left flank. There are deals to be done. There is politics to engage. And we'll get there if we can use this moment to listen to each other, especially those whose opinions we have spurned, and whose identities we have feared. Mr Trump will refuse to let go — ever. But he has been removed. The republic will survive, battered and bruised, but it will survive. And with a little grace from all of us, it can also begin to heal.

By arrangement with the Spectator

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	43,952.71	0.72
Nifty 50	12,874.20	0.74
S&P 500*	3,617.83	-0.25
Dollar (₹)	74.44	0.23
Pound Sterling (₹)	98.47	0.23
Euro (₹)	88.35	0.13
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	50,114.3	0.005
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	43.49	-0.33
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.877	-0.001
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.873	-0.033

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Embassy REIT to acquire biz park for ₹9,780 crore

Embassy Office Parks REIT said it has agreed to acquire a large business park 'Embassy TechVillage' in Bengaluru from Embassy group, Blackstone and some other investors for Rs 9,782.4 crore. Embassy REIT is India's first publicly listed Real Estate Investment Trust sponsored by Blackstone and Embassy group. It got listed on stock exchanges last year. The deal is subject to unitholders' and regulatory approvals.

Tata Steel eyes assets of Neelachal Ispat



Tata Steel evinced its interest for acquiring stake in Odisha-based steel maker Neelachal Ispat Nigam Ltd. "NINL plant is something we will look at whenever it is available," Tata Steel EO & MD T. V. Narendran said in a conference call. NINL is a joint venture in which four central PSUs—MMTC, NMDC, Bhel and Mecon—and two Odisha state companies Ipicol and Odisha Mining Corporation are shareholders.

Kris G'krishnan to head RBI Innovation Hub

Senapathy (Kris) Gopalakrishnan, former co-chairman of Infosys, has been appointed the first chairperson of the Reserve Bank Innovation Hub, which aims to promote innovation across the financial sector. Members of the council include CEO-designate Ashok Jhunjunwala (IIT, Madras), H. Krishnamurthy (IISc-B), Gopal Srinivasan (TVS Capital) and K. Nikhila (Institute for Development & Research in Banking Technology, H'bad).

Karvy case: Funds, securities worth ₹2,300 crore settled

The NSE said funds and securities worth Rs 2,300 crore belonging to 2.35 lakh investors of Karvy Stock Broking Ltd have been settled so far. The case pertains to Karvy unauthorisedly transferring securities of clients into one of its Demat accounts by misusing the power of attorney given by its clients. Investors with fund balances up to Rs 30,000 due from Karvy Stock Broking have been settled, the NSE said.



RBI proposes merger with DBS Bank Lakshmi Vilas put under moratorium

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, NOV. 17

Minutes after placing beleaguered Lakshmi Vilas Bank (LVB) under moratorium and superseding its board of directors, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Tuesday announced a draft scheme of amalgamation to merge the ailing lender with DBS Bank India Ltd (DBIL).

RBI has placed the Tamil Nadu-based LVB under moratorium for 30 days that would end on December 16, according to statements from the regulator and the government on Tuesday. As part of this, the regulator has capped deposit withdrawals by customers at Rs 25,000. Depositors can withdraw above Rs 25,000 only for unforeseen expenses, including medical treatment, education, etc, the central government said in a statement.

This is the third such instance in the banking sector as the RBI had placed Yes Bank under moratorium for two weeks on March 5, which was later rescued by an SBI-led consortium while PMC Bank was also placed under moratorium.

Proposing the scheme of amalgamation, the central bank said that DBIL is well-capitalised and will bring in additional capital of Rs 2,500 crore upfront, to support the credit growth of the merged entity.

Owing to a comfortable level of capital, the combined balance sheet of DBIL would remain



healthy after the proposed amalgamation.

DBIL is a wholly owned subsidiary of DBS Bank Ltd, Singapore (DBS), which in turn is a subsidiary of Asia's leading financial services group, DBS Group Holdings Limited and has the advantage of a strong parentage. It had been issued a banking licence in October 2018.

In a statement the central bank said, "LVB has undergone a steady decline with the bank incurring continuous losses over the last three years, eroding its network. In absence of any viable strategic plan, declining advances and mounting non-performing assets (NPAs), the losses are expected to continue. The bank has not been able to raise adequate capital to address issues around its negative net-worth and continuing losses. Further, the bank is also experiencing continuous withdrawal of deposits and low levels of liquidity. It has also experienced serious governance issues and practices in the recent years which have led to deterioration in

its performance."

LVB was placed under the RBI's Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework in September 2019.

RBI said "the bank's efforts to enhance its capital through amalgamation of a Non-Banking Financial Company with itself appears to have reached a dead end."

In October, non-bank lender Clix Capital had submitted a non-binding offer for LVB. In an unprecedented move, shareholders at the last AGM voted against the appointment of the bank's top brass.

The RBI said it has superseded the board of the lender for a period of 30 days as any effort to revive the bank "will be in vain" with the present board steering its affairs. It appointed T.N. Manoharan, former non-executive chairman of Canara Bank, as LVB's administrator.

C.H. Venkatachalam, general secretary of bank union Aibea, said the RBI decision would create doubt in the minds of people about the stability and dependability of banks.

AirAsia hints at possible India exit

Kuala Lumpur, Nov. 17: Malaysia's flagship budget carrier AirAsia Group Bhd has given its strongest indication to date that it could exit India, saying on Tuesday it was reviewing its investment in a joint venture airline there.

The group said in a statement that its operations in India, like those of its now-shuttered Japan business, have been draining cash and adding to the group's financial stress.

"Cost containment and reducing cash burn remain key priorities evident by the recent closure of AirAsia Japan and an ongoing review of our investment in AirAsia India," it said.

AirAsia shut its operations in Japan, the smallest of its foreign offshoots,



last month.

The airline owns 49 per cent of AirAsia India, a joint venture with Tata Sons.

News reports said that the Tatas are in discussions to buy AirAsia Group's stake.

AirAsia Group chief executive officer Tony Fernandes told Reuters in September that the group intends to consolidate and

strengthen its Asean foothold, which could mean one day exiting both Japan and India.

AirAsia Group said it remains confident of returning stronger, more robust and faster than many competitors, given strong signs of recovery in its key domestic markets due to pent-up demand and numerous Covid-19 vaccines in near

final stages of testing. "The general outlook is that air travel will be bouncing back real soon; we expect to get back to pre-pandemic levels on many routes across the Group by mid-2021, if not earlier," president for the group's airlines, Bo Lingam said.

AirAsia Group's share price touched its highest since June 29 on Tuesday in a second consecutive day of sharp gains, likely buoyed by news that US vaccine maker Moderna Inc's experimental vaccine is 94.5 per cent effective in preventing Covid-19 based on interim data from a late-stage trial.

Shares in its long-haul arm AirAsia X Bhd increased as much as 14 per cent.

—Reuters

Huawei sells off Honor business

Nov. 17: Huawei Technologies Co sold its Honor smartphone business to a Chinese government-backed consortium for an undisclosed amount, hiving off the entry-level devices arm after the Trump administration cut off its access to American technology.

The consortium was jointly founded by Shenzhen Smart City Technology Development Group Co Ltd and more than 30 of Honor's agents and dealers. Huawei will no longer hold any shares in Honor.

"This acquisition represents a market-driven investment made to save Honor's industry chain," said the statement, without explaining how the deal would bypass the

sanctions.

Honor was an integral part of Huawei's smartphone business, once larger than Samsung Electronics Co's but now struggling to secure enough crucial components and software for production. The sale illustrates the uneven impact of White House sanctions on China's largest technology company, whose consumer business is ailing even as its networking unit soldiers on. Shenzhen-based Huawei is said to have safeguarded its core telecom equipment business by stockpiling critical components to continue supplying its home country's 5G rollout through at least 2021.

Citing national security

concerns, the US has waged a far-ranging campaign against Huawei since 2018. The White House enacted sweeping restrictions against suppliers this year, closing off loopholes that let Huawei procure ready-made semiconductors to keep its consumer business afloat.

It's unclear if the Honor spin-off would lead to an automatic resumption of American chip supply to its new owners.

Huawei's smartphone shipments plummeted 22 per cent in the September quarter because of the US sanctions, according to research firm IDC. It now has to defend its No. 2 position against fellow Chinese players from Vivo to Xiaomi Corp,

which recorded a 42 per cent jump in third quarter shipments, IDA data show.

Honor has been operating as a budget phone brand alongside mainstream phones like the Mate series, and doesn't compete directly with the best offerings from Apple Inc or Samsung. Honor-branded phones are sold as low as 899 yuan (\$137) and go up to around 4,000 yuan. The most expensive Huawei phones go for as much as 17,000 yuan—surpassing the most expensive iPhone 12 Pro Max. Honor also competes with its own parent in a range of consumer electronics from gaming laptops to smart watches.

—Bloomberg

Global majors see upside to Indian stocks

ERIC LAM NOV. 17

Record highs in Mumbai are stoking the enthusiasm of strategists calling for further upside for Indian stocks, with companies poised to take advantage of a post-pandemic economic recovery in Asia through next year and beyond.

Morgan Stanley, Goldman Sachs Group Inc and JPMorgan Asset Management are among a number of prominent names talking up prospects for the country's shares in recent days. India traders marked Diwali by watching the S&P BSE Sensex Index rally to record highs last week, helped in part by a solid third-quarter earnings season.

About 86 per cent of reporting firms in the benchmark posted a sales beat while more than 70 per cent topped earnings expectations, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. The benchmark is up 10 per cent this month and has narrowed its year-to-date underperformance against the MSCI Asia Pacific Index to about 5 percentage points from over 10 percentage points earlier this year.

"India's earnings revisions trend has improved sharply and valuations are on the cheaper side of their historical relation-

SENSEX BREACHES 44K-MARK INTRADAY

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, NOV. 17

The Sensex crossed the 44,000-mark in early trade, driven by the bullish trend in global stock markets. The benchmark index touched a new all time high of 44,161.16 before closing at 43,952.71, gaining 314.73 points.

The broader Nifty-50 also inched closer to the 13,000-mark as it closed at 12,874, up 93.95 points.

Heavyweight financials outperformed again with the BSE Bankex up 1.88 per cent and the Nifty Bank gaining 2.05 per cent. Some beaten down sectors like capital goods, Metals, realty and automobile also gained.

The Sensex gained close

to 1,000 points in just six sessions as it had closed above 43,000 for the first time on November 10.

With stocks surging ahead BSE's market capitalisation soared to an all time high of over Rs 170.56 lakh crore.

Analysts expect now the broader market to gain momentum after the sharp run-up in the large cap stocks. "With index regaining new peaks, we expect broader markets to participate, going forward, with small cap, mid-cap space to relatively outperform their large cap counterparts," said ICICI Securities.

FPIs were net buyers of equities worth Rs 4,905.35 crore while domestic institutions booked profit.

ship with Asia and emerging markets." Morgan Stanley strategists, including Jonathan Garner, wrote in a November 15 note. The firm upgraded its recommendation for the MSCI India Index to overweight, naming it one of the top trades for their 2021 outlook.

India's economy will benefit from easy global financial conditions as well as increased foreign direct

investment following broad structural reforms delivered through 2020, according to the strategists.

Goldman Sachs strategists have also upgraded Indian stocks to overweight, with the market seen as the most sensitive to vaccine optimism. The firm had cut their recommendation to market weight in April amid a nationwide shutdown and

rising infections.

"The investment case for India has improved now," a team including Timothy Moe wrote in a note last week. "We expect a 'catch up' laggard rally given the positive news flow on the vaccine front, which could spur a faster than expected recovery"

Goldman forecasts real economic growth to bounce back strongly over the next two years, fuelling a corporate profits rebound of 27 per cent in 2021 that's ahead of its projected 23 per cent increase for the MSCI Asia Pacific ex-Japan Index.

The team expects the NSE Nifty 50 Index to hit 14,100 by the end of next year, implying about 10 per cent upside from last week's close.

Looking further ahead, JPMorgan Asset Management projects strong long-term average annualised returns for Indian stocks of 8.9 per cent over the next 10-to-15 years.

"We see broad potential in India from a macro perspective," said Sylvia Sheng, global strategist with the firm's multi-asset solutions team in a press briefing last week. Bullish factors include population growth as well as room for productivity to grow, she said.

—Bloomberg

Textile industry finds PLI criteria tough to meet

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, NOV. 17

The textile industry feels that the incremental growth proposed under the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme is difficult to achieve.

The PLI scheme for man-made fibre products and technical textiles has set high eligibility criteria in terms of turnover growth for the units.

As per the scheme outlined for the sector, firms with a minimum turnover between Rs 100 crore and Rs 500 crore will have to increase the turnover by 50 per cent every year for five years. A company with a turnover of Rs 300 crore will have to make incremental revenue of Rs 150 crore in the first year in order to receive 9 per cent of Rs 14 crore incentive. In the second year, the incentive will be 8 per cent of the incremental revenue of Rs 224 crore, or Rs 24 crore.

While the incremental turnover growth would remain 50 per cent in subsequent years, the incentive will be 7 per cent in the third year, 6 per cent in the fourth year and five



per cent in the fifth year.

For companies with a turnover above Rs 500 crore, the incremental growth expected is 50 per cent for the first year and the incentive will be 7 per cent of the incremental turnover. In the subsequent years, the incremental turnover growth expected from the company is 25 per cent. However, the incentive will be 6 per cent, 5 per cent, 4 per cent and three per cent in the subsequent years.

In order to receive the additional incentive for greenfield projects with a minimum investment of Rs 500 crore, the company will have to achieve a turnover of Rs 1,500 crore in the first year and 25 per cent in the subsequent years. In the first year, it

will receive an incentive of 11 per cent and it will come down to 10 per cent, 9 per cent, 8 per cent and 7 per cent in the subsequent years.

"I don't think the incremental growth target is achievable, at least for the next two to three years. The export market has been stagnating and the domestic sales too are not improving. Further, the pandemic has hit both domestic and export markets. The stimulus packages have largely skewed towards providing funding. But that will not improve the demand situation. Without an assurance on return on investment, companies will hesitate to invest," said D. K. Nair, an industry veteran.

Sidharth Rajagopal, executive director of Texprocil, hopes that the government will tweak the eligibility criteria. "There is a challenge. It is a tall task to achieve the targets considering that the demand is sluggish, retail is not doing well, the clientele is price-conscious and earnings are going down. We hope that the government will tweak the criteria."

CROP | INSURANCE

Agri ministry seeks DGCA nod for aerial survey of rice fields

It's a bird, It's a plane, It's govt drone

LAXMI DEVI NEW DELHI, NOV. 17

The agriculture ministry has sought civil aviation regulator DGCA's nod for allowing shortlisted private agencies operate drones to capture images of rice fields in 100 districts to assess crop yields at gram panchayat level under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), a senior government official said.

This is the second year the ministry has hired private agencies for a pilot study of unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) based remote sensing data col-

lection in agricultural areas of 100 districts for assessing gram panchayat level under the PMFBY.

"Since harvesting in selected 100 rice growing districts is in full swing currently and will be completed shortly as per the crop season, we have requested the Directorate General of Civil Aviation to give approval for flying drones over selected regions," the official said.

A letter to the effect has been sent to the DGCA seeking permission for agencies such as Amnex, Agrotech, RMSI Pvt Ltd and Weather Risk Management Services



Private Ltd to operate drones for two months till December 31, he said.

The official mentioned that the drone-based images are one of the important inputs in the

models for crop yield estimation and validation. The shortlisted agencies have already started the study in their assigned regions as per the time schedule.

The drone-based images will be captured in 10 states—Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh.

On benefits of using drones for the PMFBY, the official said crop damage valuations have traditionally been difficult to make as it is carried out manually after an insurable

event such as floods, drought or pest infestation.

However, the remote sensing data captured through drones will help get the accurate information on crop conditions and losses to farmers, and shorten timelines for crop insurance claims, he explained.

"After the success of pilot studies, it will be scaled up," the official added.

As per the official data, about 241.7 lakh hectare farm land has been insured in the 2020 kharif season.

—PTI

SHORT TAKES

Olympian hurdler Jagmohan dead

Patiala: Olympian hurdler and multi-faceted sports personality Jagmohan Singh, who introduced scientific fitness training methods in athletics and other sports during his long stint at the NIS-Patiala, died of heart attack here on Tuesday.

He was 88. Jagmohan, who had also served as joint director general of Sports Authority of India, represented the country in 110m hurdles in the 1960 Rome Olympics. He was the national champion in this event from 1958 to 1960. He also had held national records in 110m hurdles and decathlon.

Not only he was a top athlete of his time, Jagmohan had served Indian sport as teacher, coach, administrator and physical trainer. After completing his B.Sc. degree, Jagmohan served in Punjab Police for nearly 10 years before joining NIS Patiala as a teacher in 1962. — PTI

Athletes should be vaccinated: Bach

Tokyo: IOC president Thomas Bach has said during this week's trip to Tokyo that he is encouraging all Olympic participants and fans to be vaccinated if one becomes available if they are going to attend next year's Tokyo Olympics. Bach says a reasonable number of fans should be able to attend the venues vaccine or no vaccine. And he said confidently that the postponed Olympics will open on July 23.

We want to convince as many foreign participants as possible to accept a vaccine, he said repeatedly on Monday, his first of two days in Tokyo lining up support for the Games and holding conferences. — AP

Suarez, Munoz are Covid positive

Uruguay: Luis Suarez and goalkeeper Rodrigo Munoz have tested positive for the coronavirus, the Uruguayan Football Association said. They and national team staffer Matias Faral, also infected, will miss Uruguay's home match against Brazil in South American World Cup qualifying. Besides missing Suarez and Munoz, Uruguay are already without goalkeeper Martin Silva, defenders Sebastian Coates and Matias Vina, midfielder Federico Valverde, and striker Maxi Gomez for the match against Brazil. Suarez will also miss Saturday's Spanish league match between Atletico Madrid and his former club Barcelona. — AP

MKE in final of T20 tournament

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, NOV. 17

Murali Krishna Enterprises defeated KK Blasters by 29 runs to enter the final of the Gosports T20 Cup in Vijayawada on Tuesday. Batting first in the first semifinal, MKE made 170 for 9, built on a fine knock from Abdullah (49). In reply, the Blasters could only manage 141 for 8.

BRIEF SCORES

Murali Krishna Enterprises 170/9 in 20 overs (Abdullah 49, Vamsi 26, Ch Srikanth 24, Krishna Kanth 2/30, Bhuvaneshwar 2/33) bt KK Blasters 141/8 in 20 overs (Vineeth 24, Baji 22, Sudhakar 3/34, Ravi 2/21, Ch Srikanth 2/19).

Man of the Match: Abdullah.

Live on TV

CRICKET

Big Bash League: Adelaide Strikers vs Melbourne Renegades from 9 am; Sydney Thunder vs Sydney Sixers from 1.35 pm on Sony Six

TENNIS

ATP Finals: Matches from 7.30 pm and 1.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Six, HD

FOOTBALL

UEFA Nations League: Albania vs Belarus from 8.30 pm; Georgia vs Estonia from 10.30 pm on Sony Ten 2; Poland vs Netherlands from 11.15 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 3; England vs Iceland from 1.15 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 1; Belgium vs Denmark from 1.15 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 2

WWE

NXT: Bout from 6.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 1, HD

Regd. No. H/SD/509/2018-20
Printed and Published by K. Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited. Printed at Deccan Chronicle Press situated at Nellore: Survey No.527/2, Burranpur Village, Venkatachalam (M), Chennamudugunta Panchayat, Nellore, Ph: 0861-2348581/82; Telefax: 0861-2348580
RNI Registration No. 3081/1957. Editor: Kaushik Mitter

Covid scare in Oz

Aussie players airlifted to NSW in attempt to save series

Sydney, Nov. 17: Cricket Australia on Tuesday airlifted players, including Test skipper Tim Paine and star batsman Marnus Labuschagne, to New South Wales from Adelaide in an attempt to save the series against India as a coronavirus outbreak in South Australia threatened the upcoming summer.

As Western Australia, Queensland and Tasmania closed their borders to South Australia on Monday, the country's cricket board brought players from Australia's white-ball, Test match and Australia A squads into Sydney from Adelaide to ensure that the upcoming fixtures of the \$300 million season remain unaffected. "CA has taken a proactive approach and mobilised a number of people across the country over the past 24 hours to shore up our men's domestic and international schedules," CA's interim chief executive Nick Hockley was quoted as saying by *ESPNCricinfo*.

"I would like to thank the players and staff for their understanding regarding the changes to their travel schedules and for their commitment to ensuring the summer of cricket is a huge success," he said.

Besides Paine and Labuschagne, the list of players relocated include their colleagues Matthew Wade, Travis Head and Cameron Green among others.

Despite the spike in Covid cases and developments related to it, CA maintained that the Adelaide Oval will host the first Test of the summer against India from December 17.

Hockley added, "I would also like to thank the various leadership groups across Australian cricket for coming together over the past 48 hours and taking quick, decisive action-made possible by thorough, cross-department contingency planning."

Earlier, CA vowed that all possible measures would be explored to ensure that the series goes ahead as planned. — PTI

Pucovski confident of making Test debut

Sydney, Nov. 17: Fast-rising Australian batsman Will Pucovski feels he has "earned the right" to be in the red-ball squad for the series against India and is better prepared to make his Test debut compared to a couple of seasons ago.

Pucovski, who was named in a 17-member extended Australian Test squad for the four-match series against India, is coming off back-to-back double hundreds in the Sheffield Shield.

Despite missing the opening two rounds of the competition, he has scored 495 runs so far this season in three innings and is currently the tournament's highest run-scorer. "This time it feels like I've earned the right to be here, and I'm pretty pumped to take the challenge on of playing India if I do get the



Indian cricketers Cheteshwar Pujara (left) and Deepak Chahar at a training session in Sydney.

— BCCI

Virat & Co. undergo Test simulation

Sydney, Nov. 17: The limited-overs competition awaits them first but Indian players, led by captain Virat Kohli, seemed focussed on next month's Tests against Australia as they practised in simulated long-format match conditions complete with pacers using red and pink balls here on Tuesday.

All the top batsmen and bowlers, who are in all the three squads, were seen taking part in the practice session. The likes of senior pacer Mohammed Shami and youngster Mohammad Siraj were seen bowling to Kohli in a video posted on Twitter by the captain himself.

"Love Test cricket sessions," the tweet from Kohli read. The star batsman will feature in just the opening day-night Test, starting December 17 in Adelaide, before flying back to India for the birth of his first child.

The video showed the players using the centre strip of the ground with proper Test match field and a batsman at the non-striker's end, which is a deviation from traditional net sessions.

Given that the players were kept busy by the IPL for the last two months, the white-ball training has taken a back-seat. Opener K.L. Rahul facing the pink ball was an indicator that he is in line to be picked for the first Test.

In another video, posted by the BCCI, Shami was seen bowling in tandem with youngster Siraj. Shami, who took 20 wickets from 14 matches for Kings XI Punjab, is a part of all the three squads. India will rely heavily on him during the four-match Test series starting with the day-night pink ball game in Adelaide.

Siraj, who is only in the Test squad, followed his senior team-mate and was seen sending down a few deliveries as other senior players watched him bowl.

The 26-year-old, who has played one ODI and three T20Is, took 11 wickets from nine matches for Royal Challengers Bangalore in the recent IPL. "The master and his apprentice. When @MdShami11 and Siraj bowled in tandem at #TeamIndia's nets. Fast and accurate!," the BCCI tweet read. — PTI

Man held for issuing a death threat to Shakib

Dhaka, Nov. 17: Bangladesh police on Tuesday arrested a man who allegedly issued death threats to cricket all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan for inaugurating a Kali puja pandal in Kolkata, even as the cricketer issued an apology and said he only joined the function briefly.

A joint team of the elite anti-crime Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) and police arrested 28-year-old Mohsin Talukdar from south-eastern Sunamganj district after 24 hours of a massive manhunt.

"He is now in our custody awaiting subsequent legal procedures," a police officer familiar with the development



Shakib Al Hasan

said. After the cricketer's picture at the programme in Kolkata's Amra Sobai Club went viral, Talukdar went live on Facebook on Sunday night carrying a large machete in his hand and threatened to kill Shakib, saying he hurt his religious sentiments by inaugurating the Puja

event in the West Bengal's capital city.

By early morning, Talkudar, however, withdrew the threat and apologised in another live video on social media and then went into hiding. He was later traced in neighbouring Sunamganj district.

The 33-year-old cricketer in a post on Facebook denied inaugurating the puja pandal. He said it was inaugurated by Kolkata mayor Firhad Hakim.

"Media, social media everywhere it was flooded that I went to Kolkata to inaugurate a puja ceremony which actually was not the reason behind my visit and I did not inaugurate puja. — PTI

ATP | FINALS

Medvedev masters Zverev on Day 2

London, Nov. 17: Daniil Medvedev pulled off an underarm serve as he outlasted Alexander Zverev and joined Novak Djokovic as a winner at the ATP Finals on Day Two. Medvedev prevailed 6-3, 6-4 in an empty O2 Arena on Monday.

Djokovic and Medvedev meet on Wednesday to secure the group lead. Medvedev led 4-3, 30-30 in the second set when he surprised Zverev with a quick underarm serve. It brought the German to the net and he lost the point when his backhand block volley flew long.

"My wide serve was not working as well as I would like and he was returning good. I see that he was five meters behind the baseline and I have the ball close to my racket, so I thought, 'Go for it,'" Medvedev said.

It actually worked. It's also smart.

Two games later, he served a love game to earn his first win at the ATP Finals in his fourth match going back to last year.

Medvedev went 0-3 in his first Finals, including a loss to Zverev which he avenged after an attritional opening set.

Zverev, the 2018 champion, earned a break in the first game but gave it straight back with three

double faults. Another double fault by Zverev in the sixth game gave Medvedev a 4-2 lead, and the Russian finished the set with his first ace.

A weak forehand into the net cost Zverev the decisive break at 3-3 in the second. Medvedev held with the underarm serve, and he beat Zverev again eight days after winning their Paris Masters final.

The top-ranked Djokovic smothered Schwartzman after conceding an early break and, despite no fans inside the 20,000-capacity O2 Arena, he gestured to each section as if to say thanks. "Why I celebrated? Because that's my celebration and that's also my gratitude to the court and to this opportunity to be able to compete," the Serb said.

"Even though there was no crowd in the stands, I know that there was a lot of people watching it on TV, so that was me sharing that emotion with them," Djokovic added. — AP



Russia's Daniil Medvedev returns to Alexander Zverev of Germany during their singles match at the ATP World Finals tennis tournament at the O2 Arena in London on Monday. Medvedev won 6-3, 6-4. — AP

PARGAT, GURBUX ARE IN MASTERS PANELS

New Delhi, Nov. 17: Former captain Pargat Singh, Mir Ranjan Negi and Gurbux Singh have been included in the 'Masters Committees' constituted by Hockey India's state member units to promote and develop masters hockey in the country; the national federation said on Tuesday.

The initiative will provide opportunities for all age groups (both male and female) to continue their passion for hockey and remain active in the sport irrespective of any age barrier; the HI said in a release.

In March, HI had joined 38 other national associations from around the world as a member of the World Masters Hockey (WMH), which is the sole

masters entity recognised by the International Hockey Federation (FIH) and is responsible for organising international masters hockey globally.

To further carry out responsibilities at the state level, HI urged all the state member units to form working committees comprising of former national and international hockey players to lead the state level activity.

The committee's first responsibility will be to ensure all the masters athletes of various age categories are registered on the Hockey India member units portal.

The Masters Committee will be overseeing all matters related to these masters matches and tournaments at the national level in India. — PTI

Olympic champ turns delivery rider

Lodz (Poland), Nov. 17: Back home in Venezuela, Ruben Limardo Gascon is hailed as a national hero for winning a gold medal in fencing at the 2012 London Olympics.

In Poland, where he has lived for years, he's taken up delivering food for Uber Eats to support his family as he trains for the Olympics in Tokyo next summer.

Every day after intensive training, he jumps on his bike and with a green thermal bag on his back he crisscrosses the city of Lodz, where he lives with his wife and two children, delivering food to people's doorsteps.

With the global economic situation precarious amid the coronavirus pandemic and little chance for sponsorship, Limardo is grateful to have a job, particularly one that leaves him time for sports practice.

"There is no sponsorship now because there is no competition, but I still have to generate



There is no sponsorship now because there is no competition, but I still have to generate some resources to support my family. I don't want to leave the sport because I still have a dream.

— RUBEN LIMARDO GASCON
2012 fencing champion

Limardo said.

With a mask covering his face these days, fans of fencing have little chance of recognizing the Olympic gold medalist known for his modesty.

But some know about him and ask for selfies and take the opportunity to chat with the native of Ciudad Bolivar, who speaks perfect Polish.

Limardo moved to Poland, which has a long tradition in fencing, some 20 years ago as a teen to train on the p e, the heaviest of modern fencing weapons.

He has also won gold in individual epee at the 2007 Pan American Games and at the 2006 and 2008 championships in Poland.

His gold medal from London is the second Olympic win ever for a Venezuelan, making him a celebrity in his native land.

He competed in the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro in the individual and team p e competitions, but failed to secure any medals.

From his home in central Poland, he continues to root for Venezuela, which has seen problems including political discontent exacerbated by hyperinflation and shortages of food and medicine.

He says he hopes that things will get sorted out soon in Venezuela. In the meantime, he seeks to represent his country with pride.

"Wherever I go, I'll lift the flag 100%, with a lot of pride, with a lot of ardour," Limardo said. — AP