

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

COIMBATORE | TUESDAY 3 | NOVEMBER 2020

WEATHER



Max: 33°C
Min: 23°C
Rainfall: 1 mm

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Aippasi 18
Tithi: Thrithiyai
Star: Rohini
Rahukalam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm
Yamagandam: 9 am to 10.30 am

PRAYERS

Fajar: 4.50 am
Zohar: 11.58 am
Asar: 3.13 pm
Maghrib: 5.43 pm
Isha: 6.55 pm

SUNSET TODAY 5.42 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.04 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 7.47 PM
MOONSET TOMORROW 8.55 AM

CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+33,156)	(+383)
82,62,478	1,23,025

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+2,481)
TN: 7,29,507 11,183

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

4,70,65,489

DEATHS

12,08,233

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES 216

worldometers.info

Madras HC panel questions validity of spl courts for lawmakers

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday was informed that a three-judge committee of the Madras high court has questioned the constitutional validity of special courts for MPs and MLAs constituted pursuant to the top court's orders for fast tracking cases against lawmakers. ■ **P3**

Nirav Modi extradition case to enter final stages

London: The extradition case of fugitive diamond merchant Nirav Modi, wanted in India on charges of fraud and money laundering, is expected to enter its final stages at Westminster Magistrates' Court in London on Tuesday.

COUNTER POINT



No more slip of the tongue. They have tattooed the party's name on his hand!

Attack at Afghan university book fair leaves 25 dead

Kabul, Nov. 2: Gunmen stormed Kabul University on Monday as it hosted a book fair attended by the Iranian ambassador to Afghanistan, sparking an hours-long gun battle and leaving at least 25 dead and wounded at the war-torn country's largest school. The ministry's spokesman, Tariq Arian, would not break down the casualty numbers for the attack at the campus in the Afghan capital, though local media reports were saying there

may be as many as 20 killed. Arian also said there were three attackers involved in the assault, all of whom were killed in the ensuing firefight. As the sun slowly set over the Afghan capital, there were few details though the Taliban issued a statement denying they took part in the assault. The attack came as the insurgents are continuing peace talks with the US-backed government. — **AP**



MADHUSUDAN SAHOO | FC
NEW DELHI, NOV. 2

With rising demand and output amidst Covid-19 disruptions, India's factory activity, measured by the Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), expanded to 58.9 in October—nearly a 13-year high and the fastest pace in over a decade. However, on the employment front, the numbers remain a concern, as companies cut more jobs, a private survey showed on Monday. Even though the economy shrank at a record 23.9 per cent in the April-June quarter, the latest PMI survey shows that Asia's third-largest economy is signalling a fast pace of recovery with several economic indicators turning positive. "Rising from 56.8 in September to 58.9 in October, the headline PMI pointed to the strongest improvement in the health of the sector in over a decade, with companies raising output to the greatest extent in 13 years amid robust sales growth.

■ **Full report on P7**

DEEPAVALI FESTIVAL

10% bonus for TN public sector workers

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 2

The state government announced a 10 per cent bonus for 2,91,975 Group C and D employees and workers of its various public sector undertakings on Monday in view of the coming Deepavali festival.

The payment of 8.33 per cent bonus and 1.67 per cent ex-gratia to the permanent workers and employees of the corporations and boards would cost the exchequer ₹210.48 crore, an official press release said.

Though many of the corporations incurred a heavy losses in view of the lock down, particularly the transport corporations, the government decided to pay the bonus and ex-gratia uniformly to all.

The government said the operations of several labour-intensive agencies such as Tamil Nadu State

● **Though many of the corporations incurred a heavy losses in view of the lock down, particularly the transport corporations, the government decided to pay the bonus and ex-gratia uniformly to all**

Transport Corporation, the Tangedco, Tamil Nadu Consumer Goods Corporation, the Tamil Nadu Tea Plantation Corporation have been affected due to Covid-induced lockdown. The operating income of such companies has come down. "The employees' toil plays an important role in accelerating the country's economic growth. It is through their hard work that the country is achieving excellent economic growth," the government release said.

Teach judges on gender justice, says A-G

New Delhi, Nov. 2: Orders in sexual assault cases asking the accused to get the victim to tie him a 'rakhi' are 'drama', attorney-general K.K. Venugopal said on Monday while stressing the need for gender sensitisation and educating judges on the necessity of focusing on facts particularly when impos-

ing bail conditions. The country's top law officer was addressing a Supreme Court bench, headed by Justice A M Khanwilkar, which was hearing an appeal against a Madhya Pradesh High Court order granting bail to an accused in a molestation case on the condition that he requests the



alleged victim to tie a 'rakhi'.

Sindhu wants to bid goodbye to Covid-19 fear

New Delhi, Nov. 2: World badminton champion P.V. Sindhu grabbed attention on Monday by posting "I Retire" on social media only to follow it up with a lengthy statement declaring that she would actually be bidding goodbye to "the negativity, fear, and uncertainty" triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic. "Today, I choose to retire from this current sense of unrest. I retire from this negativity, the constant fear, uncertainty. I choose to retire from a complete lack of control over the

unknown," wrote the Olympic silver medallist on social media. "Most importantly, I choose to retire from sub-standard hygiene standards and our lackadaisical attitude towards the virus," she added. Sindhu said the reason why she started the post with a shocker like 'I Retire' was to ensure that maximum people take note of the message she was trying to convey on dealing with the virus. "I might have given you guys a mini heart attack; unprecedented



times requires unprecedented measures. I guess I needed to get you guys to sit up and take notice," she said. Sindhu is currently in London to work on her nutrition and recovery. She had to pull out of last

month's Denmark Open due to the pandemic. Sindhu's post drew a response from sports minister Kiren Rijiju, who said he was stunned for a moment. "You actually gave a mini shock, but I had unflinching faith in your power of determination. I'm sure you have the strength and stamina to bring many more laurels for India," Rijiju tweeted. The star shuttler, who last competed at the All England Championships in March, is targeting a return to action when the

world tour comes to Asia in January. "This pandemic has been an eye-opener for me. I could train hard to fight the toughest opponents, tooth and nail, right till the final shot of the game. I have done it before, I can do it again. But how do I defeat this invisible virus that has the entire world in a fix? It has been months at home and we still question ourselves every time we step out," she wrote. Sindhu said she will continue to fight the circumstances created by the

virus and her opponents on the courts. "That being said, we must be hopeful about the light shining at the end of the tunnel. Yes, Denmark Open didn't happen but that won't stop me from training. When life comes at you, one must comeback twice as hard. "So will I for the Asia Open. I refuse to give up without putting a solid fight. I refuse to give up without conquering this fear. "And will carry on doing so till we have a safer world," she concluded. — **Agencies**

deccanchronicle.com, facebook.com/deccannews, twitter.com/deccanchronicle, google.com/+deccanchronicle

TN's active Covid-19 cases go below 20,000

■ **No. of Chennai containment zones comes down to 1**

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 2

Tamil Nadu's active Covid-19 cases dropped below the 20,000 mark on Monday even as the daily additions of new case continued to decline, with the state reporting 2,481 cases and 31 deaths in the last 24 hours.

In another big relief for the residents of the state's capital, authorities announced that there is only one containment zone in the Chennai corporation limits now. Manjambakkam area in Manali, (Ward 19 of Zone 2) has been a containment zone since October 27.

According to the data provided by the state health department, the number of active cases including those in self-isolation in the state is 19,504 while fresh cases in the last 24 hours came down to 2,481 to take the total to 7,29,507. As many as 3,940 patients were discharged in the last 24 hours. A total of 70,297 samples were tested on Monday, the health department release said.

The number of active cases took a steep decline from 42,566 on October 14. Now at

TN COVID
Active cases now **19,504**
No. of testing facility **203**
Total no of tests **1,00,99,519**

LONE CONTAINMENT AREA:
Manjambakkam area (Ward 19 of Zone 2)

least 55 per cent dip is recorded in terms of active cases from the last month's figure.

The active cases comprise those who are under treatment, including in home quarantine.

In all, 31 deaths were registered in the state on Monday. Chennai, one of the worst affected districts in the state, reported lowest daily cases of 671 since lockdown. As many as 1,238 Covid-19 patients were discharged and nine deaths were registered.

Chennai's total cases now

THE CHENNAI SCENE
Total cases **2,01,195**
Active cases **6,422**
Total deaths **3,669**

is 2,01,195 while the active cases stood at 6,422.

The city has so far recorded 3T,669 deaths. Of the 31 who succumbed to the virus in the state, three persons had no comorbid conditions and this included a 36-year-old man from Chengalpattu. Coimbatore city had the maximum number of new infections of 243 followed by Tiruppur (149); Chengalpattu (136); Salem (125) and Thiruvallur (115). The total number of samples tested so far was 1,00,99,519, according to the health department data.

No ties with Dravidian parties: Kamal Haasan

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 2:

Actor Kamal Haasan made it clear on Monday that his party, Makkal Needhi Maiyam (MNM), would not have ties with any of the Dravidian parties for the coming Assembly elections in 2021.

Hailed as 'Future Chief Minister' even as he arrived to address the party's district secretaries at a hotel in Chennai, Haasan said the meeting was called to firm up the preparations for the elections, which had started already in earnest.

Party functionaries, who adhered to all Covid-19 safety norms like social distancing and wearing of other gear at the meeting venue, insisted that the party's Chief Ministerial candidate contested the election himself. They suggested that he faced the polls from his hometown of Paramakudi.

However, no decision was taken as Monday's meeting



MNM party president Kamal Haasan addresses the party's district secretaries in Chennai on Monday. — **DC**

was the first of the three phase discussions that the party had charted out with a view to avoiding crowding in the hall. Only election in-charges of 100 constituencies and 17 district secretaries were present.

The rest of the functionaries, including district secretaries, would attend the second phase on Tuesday and the third phase the next day. Some top leaders of the party like Vice President Mahendran, general secre-

tary A G Mourya and youth wing secretary Snehana were present at the meeting.

Talking about having alliances with other parties, he said that he did not mind the party being not part of a coalition. It would contest the elections alone rather than joining hands with the Dravidian parties. All decisions relating to candidates and alliance would be taken at the right time, it was told.

■ **Turn to P4**

SPORT | 8
Delhi beat Bangalore by six wickets



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243-MEMBER BIHAR ASSEMBLY

Bihar 2nd phase, MP byelections today

DC CORRESPONDENTS
PATNA/ BHOPAL, NOV. 2

Over 2.5 crore voters in 94 constituencies will exercise their franchise in the most crucial second phase of elections to the 243-member Bihar assembly even as voters in 28 constituencies in Madhya Pradesh will decide the fate of the Shivraj Singh Chuahan ministry when they vote in the byelections on Tuesday.

Nearly 1,500 candidates are in the fray in the election in the Bihar constituencies spread across 17 districts. Notable among the candidates is the RJD's Tejashwi Yadav, the Opposition Grand Alliance's chief ministerial candidate, who has been aggressively trying to cash in on the anti-incumbency factor against the Nitish Kumar government.

The 31-year-old is seeking re-election from Raghupur in Vaishali district which he had wrested back for his party from the BJP's Satish Kumar in 2015. The BJP leader had defeated Yadav's mother Rabri Devi, a former chief minister, in 2010. The BJP has retained Mr Kumar. Mr Yadav's elder brother Tej Pratap Yadav is trying his luck from Hasanpur in Samastipur district, shifting his base from Mahua in Vaishali.

A total of 355 candidates, including 12 ministers, are in the fray for bypolls to 28 seats in Madhya Pradesh where elections were necessitated after MLAs elected on Congress ticket shifted their loyalties resulting in the change of guard in the state.



SC stays EC order stripping Nath as star campaigner

DC CORRESPONDENTS
NEW DELHI/BHOPAL, NOV. 2

The Supreme Court on Monday questioned the Election Commission's powers to decide as to who will be the leader of a party during electioneering while staying the poll panel's order taking away the "star campaigner" status of Congress leader and former Madhya Pradesh chief minister Kamal Nath. "Who has given power to you (the Election Commission) to remove a candidate from the star campaigner list? Is it you or a leader of the party?" Chief Justice Sharad A. Bobde said while hearing a petition filed by Mr Nath challenging the EC order. "Where do you get the power to determine who will be the leader of a political party? It is for you or the party to decide who is the star campaigner?" he added and issued a notice to the Election Commission seeking its reply.

■ **P4**

Chennai-born Priyanca enters New Zealand's new ministry

Melbourne, Nov. 2: Priyanca Radhakrishnan on Monday became New Zealand's first-ever Indian-origin minister after Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern inducted five new ministers into her executive, two weeks after her party won a landslide victory in the country's general election.

She was elected first as a Member of Parliament in September 2017.

In 2019, she was appointed the parliamentary private secretary to the minister for ethnic communities.

Her work in that area has helped her build the base for her new role of minister for diversity, inclusion and ethnic communities.

In addition to this, she has become the minister for the community and voluntary sector and associate minister for social development and employment.

"Today has been an incredibly special day.



I'm feeling a lot of things including an overwhelming sense of privilege to become part of our government," the 41-year-old Labour Party leader said. She was born in Chennai but her family is from Paravoor in Kerala. She went to school in Singapore before moving to New Zealand to further her education.

She has spent her work life advocating on behalf of people whose voices are often unheard — women survivors of domestic violence, and migrant workers who have been exploited. She lives in Auckland with her husband, who is an IT professional. — **Agencies**

SHORT TAKES

Puducherry adds
70 new cases, no
fresh fatalities

Puducherry, Nov. 2: The union territory of Puducherry reported no fresh Covid-19 death while the new infections dipped to 70, a top Health department official said on Monday. The fresh cases were identified at the end of the examination of 2,820 samples, Director of Health and Family Welfare S Mohan Kumar said in a release. The number of new cases remained below the 100 mark for a second straight day after 96 infections were detected on Sunday. As many as 482 patients were discharged from hospitals in the last 24 hours, he added. The union territory had last week recorded no coronavirus deaths on four days after having reported no related fatality on October 18 for the first time in the month. He said the overall Covid-19 tally in the union territory stood at 35,178 (after transfer of one case to Tamil Nadu). There were 2,956 active cases while 31,627 patients were treated and discharged so far, he said, adding the number of deaths remained at 595. The fatality and recovery rates were 1.69 per cent and 89.91 per cent respectively. The Health department Director said that of the 3.14 lakh samples tested so far 2.76 lakh samples were found to be negative and the result of examination of remaining specimens was awaited. Karaikal did not report any new case during the last twenty four hours while the Puducherry region accounted for 62 of 70 new cases followed by Yanam (6) and Mahe (2). —PTI

Eatery owner killed
by 5-member gang

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 2

An eatery owner was bludgeoned to death by a five-member gang in Chengalpattu's Maraimalai Nagar.

According to the police, the deceased has been identified as M. Devaprasath (26), a resident of Keelkaranai in Maraimalai Nagar. Police said Devaprasath married Abhinaya who belongs to a different caste. They lived in Railway Nagar with their son. He owned a fast-food eatery in the locality.

The incident happened on Sunday night when the victim went to booze with his friends. His friends, Vijji from Keelkaranai, Sathish, Vinoth and two others were drinking in the neighbourhood. After an argument, the five men allegedly bludgeoned Devaprasath and fled.

The severely injured victim was rushed to a hospital nearby. But, he was pronounced dead on arrival. The Maraimalai Nagar police were informed about the incident. Based on a complaint from his wife, the police registered a case and began an investigation into all angles. The body has been sent to the Chengalpattu government hospital for post-mortem. On Monday morning, the police nabbed Vijji from a hideout in the district. Police have launched a search for 4 others.

● **Police said Devaprasath married Abhinaya who belongs to a different caste. They lived in Railway Nagar with their son.**

Defunct RWH structures
turn scarecrows in city

■ Poor maintenance of system cited as reason

T. SUDHEESH | DC
CHENNAI, NOV. 2

While the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) administration encourages residents to maximise rainwater harvesting, the Rain Water Harvesting (RWH) structures constructed in many parts of the city have turned to be scarecrows.

It was in 2003, the then Chief Minister, late J. Jayalalitha, brought in a landmark ordinance on RWH in Tamil Nadu, encouraging residential associations, local governments and public servants to tap the advantage of rainwater harvesting to resolve the recurring water scarcity in the state.

The GCC, 17 years since, continues to remind the people about harvesting water as Southeast Monsoon brings heavy rains to the city. The residents of Race View Colony Main Road Extension in Guindy, however, have now been fed up with a dysfunctional RWH structure in the area constructed by the GCC four years ago.

P. Sathyannarayana, a retired BSNL employee and local resident, says the structure has become a major reason for water stagnation in the area as water does not flow into

● Integrated
Storm Water Drain
Network to be built

the system. The pipe is bunged up after it was covered with a layer of concrete when the road was re-laid a year ago. I have taken up the matter with GCC authorities. But no remedial measures have been taken so far', he said.

A study carried out by Rain Centre, a city-based NGO, had found that most of the RWH systems the government constructed were lying dysfunctional due to broken pipes, clogged pipes, badly maintained bore pits and sediments in the drains. The audit, which covered 1,100 samples including independent houses, government buildings, apartment buildings and other units, had revealed that even government buildings were not maintaining RWH systems properly.

Dr. Shekhar Raghavan or Chennai's Rain Man, who founded Rain Centre, said that if the corporation wants to tap rainwater properly they have to encourage recharging of wells instead of pits. It is very difficult to get desired results from the RWH system if the pipes are not maintained well.

These pipes and drain clog and as a result water is pushed out', he said.

The RWH systems started appearing in the city after the government amended the Madras Metropolitan Area Groundwater (Regulation) Act 1987 in October 2002 to make rainwater harvesting compulsory in all buildings in the state. In 2002 Chennai received rainfall above normal from October to December. It encouraged the government to bring in the ordinance in 2003. As a result, house owners began constructing RWH structures across the city. However, they started becoming useless due to improper maintenance of the system especially after the Chennai deluge of 2015.

Meanwhile, Corporation Commissioner G Prakash claims that the Integrated Storm Water Drain (ISWD) Network the GCC is planning to construct across the city will maximise rainwater harvesting. According to Prakash, the forced aquifer recharge technology associated with ISWD will help improve ground water table in the city. "It will also help store rainwater in the lakes and ponds across the city," said Mr. Prakash.

Tale of two cities in Covid times



People visit a cemetery in Kilpauk, Chennai, to remember and pray for their loved ones and ancestors on All Souls Day. — K. Manikandan

Kilpauk cemetery in Chennai remains closed owing to Covid precautionary measures. — DC

GIRL ON PILLION
KILLED AS BIKE
HITS POLE

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 2

A 16-year-old schoolgirl, riding pillion on a motorbike, was killed after the bike rammed into a pole near Aalandur on GST road on Monday.

The deceased has been identified as R. Deepika of Mahalakshmi Nagar in Adambakkam. She was studying in class 12 at a private school in the area.

While she succumbed to her injuries minutes after the accident, her friend, Mohammed Taufique (18), a college student who was riding the bike, received grievous injuries.

According to the police, Taufique picked up Deepika from Adambakkam and was heading towards Guindy. When they crossed Aasarkana on the GST Road, Taufique lost control of the bike and rammed it against a pole.

The duo sustained serious injuries. With the help of commuters, the police rushed them to a private hospital, where doctors declared Deepika dead. Later, Taufique was sent to the Rajiv Gandhi government hospital.

The St. Thomas Mount Traffic investigation police registered a case regarding the accident. Investigation is in process.

IIT-M students develop 'Covid game'

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 2

The students of Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT-M) have developed a multi-lingual digital game christened 'IITM Covid Game' to create awareness on the importance of maintaining Covid protocol.

According to IIT-M, the free of cost game is browser-based and can be played on any device including personal computers, laptops, tablets and mobile phones. It can be played

from the home page of www.letsplaytolearn.com as well as the website of IIT-M. The game is available in 12 languages including Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Tamil and Telugu. The students plan to make the

game available in more regional games. This game was created by students who took a nine-credit elective course called 'Let's Play To Learn' offered during the January-May 2020 semester, in which students were taught game-based learning tools and techniques.

Apart from English, the game is available in 12 languages including Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Tamil and Telugu. The students plan to make the

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5 RED SANDERS
SMUGGLERS
KILLED IN MISHAP

Tirupati (AP), Nov. 2: Five suspected red sanders smugglers hailing from Tamil Nadu were charred to death in a road mishap involving three vehicles in neighbouring Kadapa district, 150 km from here on Monday, police said. Kadapa police told PTI that all the victims were occupants of the SUV that was gutted, while some burnt red sanders logs were also found in the vehicle. Both the car and the SUV were gutted in the accident also involving a truck, the cause of which was under investigation, police said without divulging further details about the occupants of the other vehicles. —PTI

100 MDMA tablets
worth ₹4 lakh seized

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 2

The Chennai air customs officials have seized two parcels that contained 100 MDMA tablets, worth ₹4 lakh, that arrived at the foreign post office from the Netherlands.

According to sources, the air customs detained two postal parcels on suspicion of containing narcotic substances. On examination, the first parcel contained a plastic pouch with green colour tablets suspected to be MDMA, a narcotics substance, were found. Total 60 tablets were recovered. These tablets, known as "Reaper", were embossed with a skull



mark and contain 350 mg of MDMA which is a very high dose.

The second parcel contained a plastic pouch with green colour tablets suspected to be MDMA. 40 tablets were recovered. These tablets, known as "Red Bull", are embossed

with bull marks and contain around 225 mg of MDMA. Total 100 MDMA tablets valued at ₹4 lakh were recovered and seized under the NDPS Act, 1985.

Both the parcels, which arrived from the Netherlands, were addressed to two individuals in Chennai city. On searches the consignee address and names were found fake. Further investigation is in progress.

MDMA, commonly known as Ecstasy and Molly, is an illegal party drug that alters mood and perception and is chemically similar to both stimulants and hallucinogens, which produce feelings of increased energy and pleasure.

Min reviews safety
measures ahead of
reopening of schools

Chennai, Nov. 2: School education minister K. A. Sengottaiyan on Monday reviewed the precautionary measures to be taken for students vis-a-vis Covid-19, ahead of the reopening of schools for classes 9-12.

In its latest set of relaxations of lockdown norms, the state government had announced reopening of schools for classes 9-12 from November 16.

It had earlier announced a partial reopening of educational institutions from October 1, but later put the order on hold.

As the response from parents was mixed to the latest move, with some welcoming it and others expressing concern in the wake of the pandemic situation, the minister held detailed discussions with senior officials of his ministry at the state secretariat to work out the modalities.

According to official sources, Sengottaiyan directed the officials to ensure the schools took appropriate measures to prevent the spread of the pandemic among the children.

Students should wear masks and schools should take steps to thermal scan the students on a daily basis. Also, the classrooms should be disinfected while seating arrangements complying with



social distancing should be ensured.

For their part, the schools have urged the government to announce the details of omitted lessons for state board students to enable the teachers to complete the portions on time, sources said.

"We are not sure if all the students would attend the classes from November 16 due to the lurking fear of the coronavirus. We are expecting detailed instructions from the government with regard to precautions to be taken when we reopen," a senior principal of a state government aided school said on condition of anonymity.

But many parents want the reopening deferred under the present circumstances and also because the government has extended the lockdown till this month-end, he added. —PTI

Gearing up for monsoon



Tamil Nadu fire and Rescue Service department display public rescue operation equipment for monsoon emergency at Esplanade fire station on Monday.

—DC

2G case: Firm director seeks govt to
place docus relating to CBI appeal

New Delhi, Nov. 2: Kusegaon Fruits and Vegetables director Rajiv Agarwal, who along with former telecom minister A Raja was acquitted in the 2G spectrum allocation case, urged the Delhi High Court on Monday to place on record the documents containing the process to be followed before taking a decision to file an appeal.

In a petition, Agarwal has challenged the decision making process behind the order passed by the central government which gave approval to the agency to file an appeal against the acquittal of the accused. After hearing the submissions on behalf of Agarwal, Justice Brijesh Sethi said it will hear on Tuesday arguments on behalf of another acquitted individual, former telecom secretary

■ In March 2018, the ED and Central Bureau of Investigation had approached the high court challenging the special court's order acquitting all the accused



Siddharth Behura. Advocate Vijay Aggarwal, appearing for Rajiv Agarwal, said he was not challenging the actual decision taken by the government but as to whether the decision taken by the Centre is arrived at properly or not. He argued that the appeal filed by the CBI was unstructured and was filed without application of mind and urged the court to direct the authorities to place on record the complete file containing the process which was fol-

lowed before taking decision to file the appeal. The counsel also questioned the conduct of the government as to why it was shying away from placing the record before the court and questioned as to whether it can seek exemption from scrutiny of the court. A special court had on December 21, 2017 acquitted Raja, DMK MP Kanimozhi and others in the CBI and the ED cases related to the scam. Besides Raja and Kanimozhi, the special

court had acquitted Behura; Raja's erstwhile private secretary R K Chandolia; Unitech Ltd MD Sanjay Chandra and three top executives of Reliance Anil Dhirubhai Ambani Group (RADAG) — Gautam Doshi, Surendra Pipara and Hari Nair, in the 2G case filed by the CBI. Swan Telecom promoters Shahid Balwa and Vinod Goenka, Asif Balwa and Rajiv Agarwal were also acquitted in the CBI case. The special court had also acquitted Swan Telecom (P) Ltd; Unitech Wireless (Tamil Nadu) Ltd; Reliance Telecom Ltd; film producer Karim Morani and Director of Kalaignar TV Sharad Kumar in the CBI case. In March 2018, the ED and CBI had approached the high court challenging the special court's order acquitting all the accused. —PTI

SHORT TAKES

Govt urged to review plan to reopen schools, colleges

R. VALAYAPATHY | DC TIRUCHY, NOV 2

The Federation of Consumers and Service Organisations expressed deep concern over the government's decision on reopening schools and colleges on November 16, and appealed to the government to reconsider its move for the welfare of the student community, and their parents.

In his letter to Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami, federation president, M Sekaran, pointed out that these educational institutions may be reopened after the removal of the existing lockdown period. While Sekaran hailed the efforts of the government to check Covid-19 and wanted everyone to be more cautious during the festive and rainy seasons, he expressed his apprehension that under the present circumstances reopening of educational institutions on November 16 may create a negative impact, and requested the government to review its decision on the subject.

Widow kills two daughters, ends life

DC CORRESPONDENT KANYAKUMARI, NOV 2

A young widow committed self-immolation after poisoning her two daughters to death at Nagercoil in Kanyakumari district, on Monday morning. The woman was identified as Rasi (28), who was reportedly dejected since her husband's first death anniversary on October 30. Nesamoni Nagar police said she committed self-immolation in the bathroom in her house on Monday morning. Before killing herself, Rasi had poisoned her two daughters, Akshaya (5) and Anushya (3), who were found dead in the bed

Priya is Perambalur collector

Perambalur: P Sri Venkata Priya on Monday assumed the office of the Collector of Perambalur. Prior to this, she was director of sericulture department, government of Tamil Nadu. She replaced V Shantha who was transferred and posted as Tiruvavur Collector.

Rahul to attend farmers' rally in TN against farm legislations

Chennai, Nov 2: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi will attend a farmers' rally in Tamil Nadu against the Centre's three contentious farm legislations, the party's state unit said on Monday. The state Congress has planned to conduct protests in 150 locations in the state where tractors fitted with ploughs will be used in the agitation, TNCC president K. S. Alagiri said in a statement. The party would soon announce when the protests will be held, he said. "Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is slated to attend a farmers' rally at the end of these protests," he said, while citing the Wayanad MP's participation in similar rallies in Punjab and Haryana against the farm laws, approved by Parliament. The TNCC chief said the latest legislations were inimical to the interests of the farmers, alleging corporate will have a greater say in fixing price of produce, and that his party was making all efforts to mobilise support against them. Parliament had recently approved the

Kanimozhi calls for fight against Centre's farm Acts

ARULOLI M | DC THOOTHUKUDI, NOV 2

Terming the three farm acts recently enacted by the Union government as anti-farmer, DMK MP Kanimozhi Karunanidhi on Monday called upon farmers to fight it out to protect the future of farming.

Addressing farmers of Srivaikundam, Tiruchendur and Ottapidaram assembly constituencies in the district on Monday, Kanimozhi said that farm laws enacted by the Union government would destroy the existing structure of farming.

"In the guise of creating Farmer's Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020, the Farmers (Empowerment



a free market for farm produce, the Centre has done away with the regulations imposed by the Essential Commodities Act, and thereby, created a threat to food security in the country," she said, adding that the enactment of the new farm legislations also created a fear that MSP for

farm produce would be scrapped.

The farming community should hence come forward against the Centre's farm acts to protect their future. She also promised the farmers that she would take up the issue of desilting irrigation tanks and feeding channels with concerned officials.

Tiruchendur MLA Anitha Radhakrishnan along with several leaders of farmers' associations also were present at the meeting. Earlier, Kanimozhi inspected the Srivaikundam dam and the two major irrigation channels of the dam, accompanied by PWD officials.

(Amendment) Bill, 2020, even as farmers in parts of the country, especially in Punjab, have been opposed to them. —PTI

PRIORITY TO PROVIDE FREE HOUSE PATTAS: COLLECTOR

DC CORRESPONDENT KARUR, NOV 2

Collector of Karur, S Malarvizhi, on Monday said her first preference will be providing house site free pattas to houseless people across the district. The new collector who took over office on Friday, told newsmen here that the government aimed to provide free house site pattas to the homeless, and the revenue department is now gathering details of such eligible persons to give them free house site pattas. She said an exclusive App would be created for the district where people can contact dt administration.



In response to student Soundarya's plea during the grievance day meet on Monday, Tiruvannamalai collector K.S. Kandaswamy gifted her a mobile smartphone worth ₹7,000 to help her attend online classes. Soundarya hails from Seriyanthal village in Tiruvannamalai district and is a B.Com 1st year student, in a local govt college. The collector also presented the family with some sweets, fruits and ₹2,500 for expenses and a few clothes for Soundarya's mother and younger brother. —K. Senthil Nathan

'Madras HC panel questions validity of special courts for lawmakers'

New Delhi, Nov 2: The Supreme Court on Monday was informed that a three-judge committee of the Madras high court has questioned the constitutional validity of special courts for MPs and MLAs constituted pursuant to the top court's orders for fast tracking cases against lawmakers.

The three-judge criminal rules committee of the high court has said special courts (directed to be set up for the first time in 2017) can only be "offence centric" and not "offender centric" and can be constituted only by statute and not by "judicial or executive fiat". The committee in its report sent to senior advocate Vijay Hansaria, appointed as amicus curiae in the matter by the top court, said though the Supreme Court was very guarded in its orders passed on the issue, it "fell in error by creating special courts" for trial of criminal cases involving lawmakers. The high court's committee said the top court adopted the format of the government

Difficulties listed out

The High Court committee referred to several difficulties in setting up these courts and said in case of Tamil Nadu, by sending the case from Kanyakumari district to the special MP/MLA court in Chennai, the witnesses from Kanyakumari were required to travel 700 kilometers for giving evidence and none thought about their safety. It said, "The two principal political parties namely DMK and ADMK, whenever they come to power, file defamation cases against opposition leaders in the court of sessions. These cases will invariably be stayed by the High Court. When there is change in government, all the cases filed by the previous government will be withdrawn".

order that was passed by Telangana. It said "the fallacy" in the government order

The committee further said special courts for Members of Parliament and Legislative Assemblies (MPs and MLAs) created by virtue of a government order cannot oust the jurisdiction of the special court constituted under the enactment. Hansaria countered the objections raised by the three-judge committee of Madras High Court and referred to the provisions of CrPC and to various top court verdicts including constitution bench judgments upholding setting up of special courts. "It is thus submitted that the ratio of Anwar Ali case (1952 verdict) and the subsequent judgments following the same did not lay down that 'offender centric' classification is per se unconstitutional and hit by Article 14, and that the classification can only be 'offence centric'," he said in his report. The senior advocate further said the apex court has directed expeditious trial of criminal cases against MPs/ MLAs by designating special courts in view of the fact that offenders are or have been legislators, who constitute a class in themselves, and speedy trial of such cases is in public interest.

creating special courts for MPs/MLAs is that it erroneously traces the source of

"The legislators are lawmakers who lay down policies for socio-economic development of the country and are responsible for upholding constitutional morality. It is on record that a large number of cases, including heinous offences, are pending in the courts

not only for years but for decades," he said. Hansaria added that a special mechanism for speedy trial of these cases cannot be flawed and no special procedure less advantageous to the accused persons has been prescribed for trial of cases involving MPs/ MLAs. These cases are tried as per general procedure prescribed under CrPC. "The conclusion drawn by the Criminal Rules Committee of the High Court that the designation of Special Courts MP/ MLA is unconstitutional as Special courts can only be 'offence centric' and can never be 'offender centric', with all humility, is not correct. It is also incorrect that Special Courts can never be constituted by judicial order," he said.

Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay and not to any statute. It said the existing court struc-

ture in Tamil Nadu, which is robust, is more than enough to deal with the cases involving MPs and MLAs and requested the Madras High Court chief justice "to bring this fact to the notice of the Supreme Court and get exemption from establishing Special Courts for trial of cases involving MPs and MLAs and permit restoration of status quo ante". The high court's committee said, "the constitution of the special courts for MP/MLAs cannot be sustained on the judicial side in the light of the authoritative pronouncement of the Supreme Court" and referred to three verdicts of the top court. The objections raised by the Madras high court committee were brought before the court by Hansaria and advocate Sneha Kalita assisting him, through their 80-page report filed on Monday. The matter is likely to be taken up for hearing on Wednesday by a Supreme Court bench headed by Justice N V Ramana.

Leopard death: Gun owners under scanner

B. RAVICHANDRAN | DC OOTY, NOV 2

As the autopsy result revealed bullet injuries in the carcass of a male leopard which was found dead in a private tea garden in Pandalur limits in the Nilgiris border last Tuesday, cops and foresters have formed a joint team to examine guns possessed by licensed gun holders in Pandalur belt, to trace and nab the culprits involved in the killing of the leopard.

The five-year-old leopard is suspected to have died of some physical ailments though there were no visible injuries in the carcass. But autopsy reports revealed a small bullet mark in its hind legs. The veterinary team is also said to have retrieved a bullet piece found inside the visceral



region of the animal.

As this triggered suspicion that the leopard could have died due to gunshot, now a team of police and forest officials together have sent notices to gun license holders in Pandalur limits asking them to produce their guns and pistols and also the bullets and cartridges. While this drive began on Sunday, the team is also continuing their efforts to gather other related information on the matter.

Vigilance arraigns Kerala CM's former principal secy: 'Commission paid to facilitators of housing scheme'

DC CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, NOV 2

The Kerala Vigilance and Anti Corruption Bureau (VACB) has arraigned chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan's former principal secretary M Sivasankar as an accused in a corruption case registered in connection with irregularities in awarding the contract of a housing project to a private firm.

Sivasankar was found to have received an iPhone as a gift from the private firm that got the contract for the Rs 20 crore housing project under Kerala Government's Life Mission programme in Wadakkanchery, in Thrissur district. One of the iPhones purchased by Unitac

Company was allegedly given to Sivasankar by gold smuggling case key accused Swapna Suresh.

Sivasankar has been made fifth accused along with Swapna Suresh, Sarith and Sandeep Nair who are sixth, seventh and eighth accused respectively in the case.

A report in this regard has been filed by the VACB before the vigilance special court in Thiruvananthapuram. The vigilance argument is that even if a government official accepts an iPhone as a gift or commission, it would be treated as a bribe under the anti corruption law.

Sivasankar is currently in the custody of Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with the money trail in

the Kerala gold smuggling case. The vigilance is likely to question him once his ED custody period ends.

The vigilance case against Sivasankar has come as a major setback for the government as the officer was monitoring at least five mega projects including Life Mission. The investigation agency has already sought details of the projects which were monitored by Sivasankar.

The Wadakkanchery LIFE mission housing project corruption case pertains to the alleged payment of Rs 9 crore as commission to various persons including government officials and mid-lemen.

The Rs 20-crore housing project is sponsored by UAE

based NGO Red Crescent.

Earlier the CBI had initiated a separate probe into the matter following a complaint filed by Congress MLA Anil Akkara regarding violation of Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act.

He alleged that the foreign funds for the housing project was received by private construction companies; Unitact Builders and Developers and its subsidiary Sane Ventures which amounted to violation of the provisions of FCRA.

However, the high court stayed the CBI probe for two months following a petition filed by the government questioning the maintainability of the central agency's investigation into FCRA violation.

AMMK STIR AGAINST FRAUD IN DPCs

Thanjavur, Nov. 2: Members of the Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam (AMMK) staged a demonstration at Thiruvaiyaru near here, protesting against what they alleged corruption, discrepancy and deficiency in paddy procurement from farmers. The agitation led by Velu Karthikeyan, party's advocates' wing secretary, said that paddy bags were stagnant in direct purchase centres (DPCs), as there is delay in procurement. The stagnant paddy should be procured immediately, and the evil practice of collecting ₹0 per bag allegedly by DPC staff must end.

Save temple tank



Shthalasayana Perumal Temple tank is covered with lotus leaves in Mahabalipuram. Devotees and local residents seek government intervention in cleaning the tank.

— DC

Two cheat ₹40 lakh from public, arrested

ZAKEER HUSSAIN | DC SALEM, NOV 2

The Central Crime Branch police here arrested two persons for allegedly cheating people up to ₹40 lakh under the pretext of securing them bank loans, providing them milch animals and sewing machines.

Senthamarai and Manimegalai from Tenkasi district lodged a complaint with the Central Crime Branch Police here stating that

one Muthukumaran (37) from Ayodhiyapattinam, and another Vanilla (47), resident of Aindhu Salai area here, had allegedly cheated more than 20,000 people to the tune of ₹40 lakh.

Salem Central Crime Branch Inspector Amutha, took up investigations and it was found that an organization called 'All World Women's Federation' was involved in fraud. Several women in Salem, Erode, Cuddalore, Nellai and

Tenkasi districts became victims of the fraud.

Following this, police arrested Vanilla and Muthukumaran. Investigations revealed that up to ₹40 lakh was involved in the scam, and the fraudsters had appointed district-wise personnel to collect the amount from gullible people. Police are collecting the bank account details of the two, and have taken steps to freeze their bank accounts.

Consultant inspects agri tech demo fields

DC CORRESPONDENT PUDUKKOTTAI, NOV. 2

K.M. Shahjahan, consultant of the Tamil Nadu Irrigation Agricultural Modernisation project, inspected intensive production technology demonstration fields at Meboothakudi village near Vralimalai in Pudukkottai district on Saturday, according to Assistant Director of Agriculture TRamu. He said the paddy crop

has been transplanted in Samba season in the rice intensification method in Ponnaiyar river sub-basin in Vralimalai.

He said reduced seed rate like 5 kg per hectare, 14 days old young seedlings, weeding by mechanical cono-weeder at weekly intervals, use of leaf color chart for ascertaining nitrogen requirement of crop, soil test-based nutrient applications are key technologies adopted for maximising

the yield in paddy cultivation.

Mr. Shahjahan advised the farmers in the Ponnaiyar river sub-basin to follow the production technologies in a time-bound manner to get two times more yield and three times more farm income. The beneficiary farmers in Meboothakudi Periyakulam Ayacut area in Ponnaiyar river sub-basin participated in the discussion held by the state consultant.

Ooty tribal hamlets cry for water, basic infra

B. RAVICHANDRAN | DC OOTY, NOV 2

The tribal residents in Chengalpudur and Chengalkombai tribal hamlets located at the Ulikkal town panchayat near Coonoor are crying for action to provide water supply to their hamlets and also for other infrastructure facilities.

Stating that these two hamlets dominated by Kurumba tribesmen, have long been neglected as the concerned local body failed to develop basic infrastructure in these tribal hamlets, Mani, president, Alu-kurumba tribesmen welfare association, said that though

● Tribesmen are still finding it tough to commute to nearby areas, especially, during medical emergencies

some efforts were taken in the past to construct a community hall in Chengalpudur, the work is still incomplete.

"Tribesmen in Chengalpudur were promised of water supply by digging a well near a water source in the village limits and laying pipe lines to the hamlet. But work on it has been pending for a long, long time, leaving the village lacking

good water supply for years together. Likewise, the road which connects Chengalpudur with nearby Droog was not laid in a proper way as it lacks channels to drain storm water. This leads to water-logging during rainy days. The Chengalkombai hamlet located eight kilometers away from Chengalpudur lacks proper road facility. Though some efforts were taken in the past to lay a road to this hamlet, it was left incomplete after making the landscaping. Because of this, tribesmen are still finding it tough to commute to nearby areas, especially, during medical emergencies," he added.

SHORT TAKES

EC SAYS IT WILL FILE REPLY IN NATH CASE

From Page 1

The Election Commission said it would file a response at the earliest.

The relief for Mr Nath, however, came a day after campaigning for bypolls in 28 Assembly constituencies in the state ended. Voting is to take place today.

On October 30, the Election Commission stripped Mr Nath of his star campaigner status over his remarks, which, the commission said, were "repeated violation of model code of conduct" and "complete disregard" of warnings to him.

At the outset of the hearing, senior counsel Rakesh Dwivedi told the court that Mr Nath's petition challenging the Election Commission's order has become infructuous as campaigning has ended.

However, CJI Bobde focused on the larger issue of the powers of the poll panel to take the decision to oust a star campaigner from electioneering.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Mr Nath, asserted that "no notice was issued to us" and the decision was arbitrary.

Chief Justice Bobde heading, a bench also comprising Justice A.S. Bopanna and Justice V. Ramasubramanian, referred to Section 77 of the Representation of the People Act that deals with the expenditure of a candidate or by the leader of a political party campaigning during election. While a political party pays for the expenditure of its star campaigner, candidates pay the expenses of other campaigners.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission said on Monday it will file its reply at the earliest on the petition of Mr Nath.

"Hon'ble Supreme Court is supreme. EC has been given an opportunity to file a reply in the matter, which shall be filed at the earliest," the Commission said.

Taking a serious note of the breach of "ethical and dignified behaviour", the election watchdog had on Friday revoked the 'star campaigner' status of Mr Nath.

NO ALLIANCE WITH DRAVIDIAN PARTIES: KAMAL

From Page 1

According to insiders in the party, the functionaries were in an upbeat mood as they felt that actor Rajinikanth backing out of politics would only help Haasan. They also expect Rajinikanth to support his friend in the film industry, thus increasing MNMs' vote tally.

Haasan's declaration that he would have nothing to do with the Dravidian parties is also said to be keeping with a perceptible mood in the social media, where people were seemingly looking for a 'change'. It was evident in the manner in which Rajinikanth was exhorted to enter politics in the last few days. Haasan perhaps wants to capitalize on that.

SC REFUSES TO EXTEND SECURITY OF EX-JUDGE

New Delhi, Nov. 2: The Supreme Court on Monday refused to extend the security of former special judge S.K. Yadav who had pronounced the verdict in the Babri Masjid demolition case and acquitted all 32 accused, including BJP veterans L.K. Advani, M.M. Joshi and Uma Bharti.

A bench, headed by Justice R.F. Nariman and also comprising Justices Navin Sinha and Krishna Murari, was considering the former judge's request to continue his personal security in view of the sensitivity of the case decided by him on his last day in office.

"Having perused the letter, we don't consider it appropriate to provide security," the bench said.

On September 30, the special court had acquitted all 32 accused in the case saying there was no conclusive evidence that they were part of any conspiracy to bring down the disputed structure in Ayodhya.

The 16th century mosque was demolished on December 6, 1992 by 'kar sevaks' who believed that it occupied the site where Lord Ram was born, the destruction triggering riots that left hundreds dead in the country and widening rifts between the communities.



People, flouting social distancing norms, visit a crowded Sadar Bazar market in New Delhi on Monday during the festive season, amid the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic. — PTI

Fearing 2nd wave, Punjab expands contact tracing

Sharing of suspicious CT scans by hosps with health department made must

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, NOV. 2

With 45,231 fresh cases, India on Monday recorded 82.29 lakh total cases of Coronavirus. At the same time, 75.44 lakh people have recovered from the deadly virus, taking the national recovery rate to 91.68 per cent.

In the last 24 hours, 53,285 persons were discharged from medical supervision including Maharashtra deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar, who was admitted to a hospital after testing positive for Covid-19 last month.

The active cases too are on the downslide and stand at 5.62 lakh which comprise 6.83 per cent of the total caseload. Union health ministry officials said the number of active cases of Covid-19 remained below six lakh for the fourth consecutive day.

Kerala and Delhi continue to report a very high number of cases pushing Maharashtra to number three position now. However, Maharashtra is still registering a high number of daily deaths due to Covid-19.

The overall fatalities due to the virus in the country has reached 1.22 lakh with 496 new deaths taking the case fatality rate to 1.49 per cent.

Meanwhile, Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh ordered expansion of Covid-19 contact tracing to 15 persons

Out of 736 spl trains, 327 have waitlisted passengers

New Delhi, Nov. 2: Out of the 736 special trains currently in operation, 327 have passengers in the waiting list, the Railways said on Monday, indicating a major surge in demand from people keen on travelling even as the Coronavirus pandemic refuses to die down.

According to data provided by the Railways, the average occupancy of these special trains is around 92 per cent. "We are monitoring these 327 trains daily. Once we determine the nature of the waitlist — for how many days is the waitlist and how long — we will run clone trains on those routes. We have been saying that we will introduce trains wherever necessary, but they will be only reserved trains and will follow all Coronavirus protocols," said Railway Board Chairman and CEO

and made it mandatory for hospitals and laboratories to share suspicious CT scans with the health department, as part of measures to strengthen Covid management amid projections of a second wave in Punjab, Punjab CM office said.

Meanwhile, the

V.K. Yadav at a press briefing on Monday.

The Railways, which had suspended all passenger train services since the lockdown in March, has so far earned ₹3,322 crore as revenue from the segment, which is 90 per cent less than what it earned during the same period last year, Yadav said.

Other than the 736 special trains being operated, the Railways is also running 200 services of the Kolkata Metro, 2,276 Mumbai suburban services, 20 special clone trains and 436 festival special trains from October 20 to November 30.

Yadav said while the overall occupancy of the 736 trains is around 92 per cent, 19 trains have occupancy below 30 per cent, 44 have occupancy between 30 per cent and 50 per cent, 83 trains have occupancy between 50 per cent and 75

per cent and 327 trains have waitlisting.

Yadav also said besides Mumbai, the Railways is geared to begin suburban services in other cities. Discussions are underway with the West Bengal and the Tamil Nadu governments in finalising modalities for the resumption of suburban services there, he said.

While passenger trains have all but stalled, the Railways' freight business seems to be speeding forward with incremental loading of over 14.32 metric tonne over October 2019. In October this year, the freight revenue was ₹869 crore more than last year and it also saw the highest ever automobile loading. While 320 rakes of automobiles were loaded in October 2020, as many as 162 were loaded in 2019 which is around a 97.5 per cent increase. — PTI

measure by amending the Rajasthan Epidemic Act, with Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot asserting that face masks are the sole anti-Covid vaccine as of now.

The House passed the Rajasthan Epidemic (Amendment) Bill, 2020 by voice vote.

ODISHA GOV, WIFE TEST +VE FOR COVID-19

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC with agency inputs BHUBANESWAR, NOV. 2

Odisha Governor Professor Ganeshi Lal on Monday announced that he and his wife have tested positive for the Covid-19.

The news was shared on his official Twitter handle which mentioned: "Hon'ble Governor and first lady have tested Corona positive." He has also advised all those who have come in close contact with him recently to get themselves tested.

Meanwhile, the Covid-19 tally in Odisha mounted to 2,93,214 with 1,389 fresh cases on Monday, while nine more fatalities pushed the death toll to 1,340, a health department official said. Of the new cases, 798 were reported from different quarantine centres and 591 detected during contact tracing. Khurda district, of which Bhubaneswar is a part, registered the highest number of new cases at 142, followed by Cuttack (101) and Sundargarh (100).

Taking to Twitter, the health and family welfare department said, "Regret to inform the demise of 9 Covid positive patients while under treatment in hospitals."

HAM seeks probe into Paswan's death

Patna, Nov. 2: NDA ally HAM created a flutter on Monday with its leader Jitan Ram Manjhi demanding a judicial inquiry into the death of union minister Ram Vilas Paswan while pointing an accusing finger at Chirag Paswan, prompting the LJP chief to claim it was a "plot" by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar to discredit him when election was under way.

Chirag Paswan, in an angry retort to Manjhi, said the former chief minister should ask Prime Minister Narendra Modi about the issue.

Paswan jr. said Modi used to call him up every day to inquire after his late father when he was sick and hospitalised, sometimes to even inform him about the LJP founder's condition after talking to doctors attending to him.

"I request the prime minister to order a judicial probe into the death of Ram Vilas Paswan to unravel the dubious role of Chirag Paswan in the matter," Manjhi said.

HAM spokesman Danish Rizwan also wrote a letter to Modi backing the demand while citing a video of Chirag rehearsing before issuing a video message a day after the death of his father where he was purportedly seen joking with the people present and even talking about the texture of his hair.

Chirag Paswan accused

● **CHIRAG PASWAN**, in an angry retort to Manjhi, said the former chief minister should ask Prime Minister about the issue.

● **BOTH THE HAM** and the LJP draw strength from Dalit voters, and Manjhi was not on good terms with Ram Vilas Paswan when the two were partners in the NDA in the 2015 election.

Nitish Kumar of "scripting a plot to settle political scores with him" and instigating the HAM to rake up an emotional issue to blunt the LJP's campaign to prevent him from becoming the chief minister once again.

Manjhi wanted to know who ordered the hospital to not issue regular health bulletins of Paswan, who was "such a big leader".

Manjhi also claimed people were prevented from meeting the Dalit leader when he was hospitalised. Chirag had informed people about the death of his father through a tweet on October 8. Manjhi claimed it was being speculated that the LJP leader had died 2-3 days ago.

"When he had telephoned me when my father was in hospital, I told him everything. He neither called me again nor visited Papa in the hospital," Chirag Paswan told a press conference.

Hit by Covid crisis, family of 5 ends life

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, NOV. 2

A couple along with their three daughters committed suicide by hanging themselves in their residence at Tulsibil Bazaar near Gossaigaon in western Assam's Kokrajhar district on Monday.

Kokrajhar police said that the head of the family Nirmal Paul, his wife and their three daughters have been found dead in their house on Monday. The deceased family is suspected to have been going through a huge financial crisis after the Covid-19 lockdown. The other members of the family, who were found hanging in their house, have been identified as Nirmal Paul's wife Mollika (45), their daughters Puja (25), Neha (17) and Sneha (15).

Police said that neighbours, who did not see any members of the family in the morning, went to their house and found all of them hanging and reported the incident to local police. Police said, "It appears to be a suicide case. Preliminary investigation has found that Nirmal Paul, who ran an

LPG outlet in Tulsibil market, had a financial burden of ₹25-30 lakh. His eldest daughter was a private school teacher."

Pointing out that Nirmal Paul was running his family as a sub-agent of Bharat Gas at Tulsibeel market, the locals claimed that the deceased had a debt of ₹25-30 lakh and was under tremendous pressure to return it.

Indicating that the family took the extreme step under the pressure of accumulating loan as during the Covid-19 crisis his entire business had collapsed, locals demanded a high level probe into the tragic.

Paul's eldest daughter Puja was serving as a teacher at Tulsibeel Jatiya Vidyalaya and his second daughter, Neha was a student of the higher secondary second year. Sneha was studying in Class X.

Locals also claimed that Paul had collected a huge sum of money from people to provide LPG connections but failed to deliver on his promise case. Preliminary investigation has found that Nirmal Paul, who ran an

TS numbers fall below 1,000 on lower testing

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, NOV. 2.

Telangana recorded a sub-1,000 number for fresh Covid-19 cases on Sunday, thanks to what now appears to be an established pattern of fewer tests during the weekends resulting in a corresponding low number of new Covid-19 cases being detected.

For Sunday, the health department said that only 922 cases were recorded in the state with only 25,463 samples being tested between Saturday and Sunday evenings. The department collates data for each day for a 24-hour period starting from 8 pm of a day to 8 pm the next day. The 922 cases reported in Monday's Covid-19 bulletin for Sunday were those found between 8 pm Saturday and 8 pm Sunday.

K'taka reports 2,576 cases: Karnataka on Monday reported 2,576

fresh cases of Covid-19 and 29 deaths taking the tally and cumulative fatalities to 8,29,640 and 11,221 respectively. The state has been showing steady decline in cases and mortalities in recent days from an alarming over 10,000 infections and around 200 fatalities a day about a month ago, the health department said. The state also reported 8,334 recoveries, taking the total number of recoveries to 7,73,595 and the recovery rate to 93.24 per cent. The state's Covid mortality rate stands at 1.35 per cent. At present, there are 44,805 active cases in the state.

1,916 cases in AP: Andhra Pradesh on Monday registered 1,916 new Covid-19 cases scaling up the tally to 8,27,882 and 13 deaths taking the toll to 6,719 in the last 24 hours.

The state health authorities said 64,581 samples were tested in the last 24

hours, and the state has cumulatively tested 81,82,266 samples. While 98,625 patients were discharged after recovery, 22,538 patients are still active with the virus and are undergoing treatment at various hospitals in the state.

Kerala numbers ease a bit: Kerala, which has been seeing a spike in new Covid-19 cases had some reason on Monday to be relieved as it recorded 7,108 recoveries against 4,138 fresh cases. The state, however, recorded 21 fatalities, taking the toll to 1,533. As many as 3.55 people lakh have recuperated from the disease while the total caseload touched 4,31,329 with the addition of the new cases which showed a dip. The number of samples tested also declined to 33,345, compared to over 50,000 in the previous few days. A total of 86,681 people are presently undergoing treatment.

Poet Munawwar Rana booked over remarks on French killings

Lucknow, Nov. 2: An FIR has been registered against Urdu poet Munawwar Rana for allegedly defending the recent killings in France over a caricature of Prophet Muhammad, police said on Monday. Rana had made the controversial comments in an interview to a news channel after three people were killed in a knife attack at a church in Nice last week.

A few weeks ago, an assailant had decapitated a French middle school teacher who showed caricatures of Prophet Muhammad for a class on free speech.

The case against Rana has been lodged at the Hazratganj police station in Lucknow on Sunday under various Indian Penal Code sections, including 153A (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion and doing acts prejudicial to mainte-



Urdu poet Munawwar Rana poses for a photograph at his residence in Lucknow on Monday, after an FIR was registered against him. — PTI

nance of harmony), 295A (deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings), an officer said. The poet has also been booked under IPC Section 505 (statements conducing public mischief) and Section 66 of the Information Technology Act, the officer said.

Police have lodged the FIR taking cognisance of the TV interview and a

probe is on, the officer said. In a purported video clip of the interview that went viral on social media, Rana can be heard saying: "If any person makes such a bad cartoon of my father or mother, then I will kill him."

Asked if he is supporting the entire incident, he said, "I will kill him..." When contacted by PTI, Rana said the comments were misconstrued and it

was made in the context of India.

"If anyone makes an indecent and vulgar picture of our gods and goddesses — Lord Ram, Goddess Sita and Saraswati, and the person making it is a Muslim or anyone else, I will kill such person as he is spreading hatred," he said.

"And it requires immense courage to kill a person hailing from your family or community. The person who made the cartoon (in France) had done a wrong act and the person who murdered the cartoonist did an extremely wrong act," Rana said.

The poet asserted that he did not endorse murders taking place anywhere in the world, pointing out that in the Ballabgarh case in Haryana, he had tweeted that both the youths should be shot at the same place where they had shot dead a 21-year-old woman last week. — PTI



HILLARY CLINTON @HILARYCLINTON

However you're turning out the vote for Biden-Harris over the next four days, thank you for doing it. Future generations will ask what we did to affect the outcome of this pivotal election.



BARACK OBAMA @BARACKOBAMA

You could be the difference between someone making it out to the polls or staying home. And many states could be decided by a handful of votes. Join me and make some calls for Joe.



LADY GAGA (@LADYGAGA)

HEY TIM HEY @realDonaldTrump SO HAPPY IM GLAD TO BE LIVING RENT FREE in your HEAD. #BidenHarris. Heeeeey Donald... #WINNING (also, what is a fracking?)

US on edge as 77% fear violence

Last-minute scramble for votes by Trump and Biden; no clarity on timing of the result

POLL LINGO: NAKED BALLOTS TO A RED MIRAGE

WILMINGTON, Del. (Reuters) - Every U.S. presidential election has its own lingo, like the "hanging chads" on voting cards in Florida that led to a landmark court battle in 2000. Below is some of the jargon used in the days leading up to the Nov. 3 election pitting President Donald Trump against his Democratic challenger Joe Biden.

NAKED BALLOTS

Sixteen states require voters to return mail ballots in a special "secret" envelope. Ballots that don't arrive in the envelope will be considered "naked" and might be disqualified. Celebrities including Naomi Campbell, Chris Rock and Sarah Silverman disrobed in a video to promote proper voting procedures, "the least sexy thing a completely naked person can say," according to actor Josh Gad, who also stripped for the video by activist group Represent.Us, which has promoted anti-graft resolutions, says it does not endorse either candidate.

RED MIRAGE/BLUE SHIFT

Fearing crowded polling places amid the coronavirus pandemic, a record number of Americans, particularly Democrats, cast mail-in ballots this year, and counting them could take days. As a result, initial results on Election Day may show Republicans, indicated by red on election maps, holding large leads in battleground states, which counts mail-in ballots received three days after Nov. 3. As ballots are tallied in the ensuing days, that "red mirage" could fade, giving way to a "blue shift." Experts see a possible "blue mirage" and "red shift" in Florida and North Carolina.

SPOILED BALLOTS

Ballots that are improperly marked can be rejected as spoiled. Trump said in a tweet the phrase "can I change my vote" was trending on Google and urged Americans to submit a new ballot for him. Some states allow voters to request a new absentee ballot but first they have to request their original ballot be marked as spoiled.

DUELLING ELECTORS

The Electoral College allots electors to states based on population, and the candidate who wins the popular vote gets its electors. But legal experts say Trump could try to convince Republican lawmakers in closely contested states to approve the Republican slate of electors based on early vote tallies. As more ballots are counted, Biden might be certified as the winner. The result: Duelling electors and an outcome that could be determined by Congress.

COURT PACKING

Republicans confirmed Amy Coney Barrett as a Supreme Court justice on Oct. 26 to replace the late Ruth Bader Ginsburg, a hero to many for her advocacy for women's issues. Democrats had argued Ginsburg's seat should be filled after poll. Some have suggested that a Biden Administration could expand the court beyond its traditional nine justices. Biden has said he will establish a bipartisan commission to consider changes to the court system, which he said is "getting out of whack."

POLL WATCHERS

The Republican National Committee is mobilizing thousands of supporters to monitor early voting sites and ballot drop boxes, looking for irregularities such as people dropping off multiple ballots in states where that generally is not allowed. This marks the first presidential election in nearly four decades in which the Republicans can engage in "ballot security" activities without prior review and approval from the Department of Justice.

Washington, Nov. 2: The US presidential campaign enters its final day Monday with a last-minute scramble for votes by Donald Trump and Joe Biden, drawing to a close an extraordinary race that has put a pandemic-stricken country on edge.

But while campaigning will halt and voters will have their say on Tuesday, many questions remain over how soon a result will be known due to a flood of mail-in ballots and possible legal challenges.

About three-quarters of Americans are concerned about riots and violence after election day, according to a new poll by JL Partners-Independent.

Almost three out of four voters (72%) describe themselves as "very or very concerned about post-election violence", according to the survey. Concerns are greater among President Trump's supporters - 77% said they fear violence and unrest. Among former Vice President Biden's supporters, 73% described these concerns.

Those factors, along with an unprecedented convergence of social justice protests, coronavirus precautions and President Trump's fear-mongering campaign, have led to apprehension over whether unrest could erupt.

Taking no chances, businesses in some cities have boarded up windows, while across the country the harsh political climate has led to fierce debate, in some cases even dividing families.

As proof of how much Americans have been galvanized - and perhaps frightened by the pandemic - a record of more than 93 million people have cast early ballots, including in-person and mailed votes, according to the nonpartisan US Elections Project.

— Agencies

Will host meet of democracies: Joe

Fayetteville (US), Nov. 2: Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden has said that if elected, he will convene a global summit of democracies in the first year of his presidency to counter the "rising authoritarianism" in the world and address issues of election security and human rights.

Biden accused President Donald Trump of "embracing" every autocrat in the world which he said has undermined America's credibility. "One of the things that have hurt us so badly, is that this president has embraced every thug and every

autocrat in the world, in ways that have undermined our credibility," he said during a conference call.

"I'll energise the community of democracies to counter the rising authoritarianism we see in the world. In my first year, we're going to host a summit of the democracies to address election security, human rights, etc," Biden said.

Responding to questions on China, he said trade, human rights and security are the three main issues. Criticising President Trump's policies toward China, he said, "Trump caved to Chinese leaders every time. He let them off the hook, started a trade war, etc."

"Trump gave them the green light to put millions of Chinese Uighurs in concentration camps," he said. His campaign has termed the alleged HR violations of Uyghur Muslims in China's Xinjiang region as "genocide" and called for a global effort to make a united stand against the "oppression". — PTI



US President Donald Trump arrives for a Make America Great Again rally at Fayetteville Regional Airport in Fayetteville, North Carolina on Monday. — AFP

Biden names 800 major fundraisers

Washington, Nov. 2: Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden has released the names of major fundraisers, including Indian-Americans, who helped him raise at least \$100,000 for his election campaign this year.

The list, released on Sunday, contains the names of 800 major donors, including a few dozen Indian-Americans.

Topping the list of Indian-Americans are well known community leaders Swadesh Chatterjee, Rameshk Kapoor, Shekar N. Narasimhan, R. Rangaswami, Ajay Jain Bhutoria and Frank Islam.

Among other prominent Indian-American bundlers are Neil Makhija, Rahu, Prakash, Deepak Raj, Raj Shah, Rajan Shah, Radhika Shah, Jill and Raj Singh, Nidhi Thakar, Kiran Jain, Sony Kalsi and Bela Bajaria. Indian-American Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal has also been listed as a bundler.

Given that the list of bundlers includes all those

who have raised more than \$100,000, the number of Indian-Americans in far less than those of former presidents Barack Obama and Bill Clinton campaigns. Some of the traditional Indian-American Democratic donors like hotelier Sant Chatwal are missing from the list. According to *The Wall Street Journal*, the list of "bundlers" includes the who's who of Democratic

politics, including former and current governors, senators, Cabinet secretaries and big names from Hollywood. Film producer Jeffrey Katzenberg, writer and director Lee Daniels, LinkedIn co-founder Reid Hoffman; media mogul Haim Saban and former US Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker are on the list, the daily said.

— PTI

FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY



1 93 million Americans have already cast ballots

1 11 precincts in New Orleans could still be without power on Tuesday

1 1,100 prominent members of the Asian-American community endorse Joe Biden, Kamala Harris

1 300 lawsuits already have been filed over the election in dozens of states across the country



127,000

1 127,000 ballots cast at drive-thru voting places in the Houston area not to be tossed out after the Texas Supreme Court on Sunday denied a Republican-led petition

Idli and any kind of 'Tikka' fav Indian dishes: Kamala

New York, Nov. 2: Democratic Vice Presidential nominee Kamala Harris has listed Idli with a "really good Sambar" and "any kind of Tikka" as her favourite Indian dishes. Born to a Jamaican father and an Indian mother, Harris, is the first Indian-origin and first Black woman to be picked by a major American political party for the top post. Harris, responding to a question on what her favourite Indian dishes are, said: "So South Indian, it would be Idli with... a really good Sambar, and then North Indian — probably

any kind of Tikka".

The 56-year-old California senator, after being chosen by Democratic Party's presidential candidate Joe Biden as his running mate in August, reflected on her proud Indian heritage during her maiden address to the Indian-American community and recalled how her mother Shyamala Gopalan always wanted to install in her a "love for good idli".

She had taken a trip down the memory lane, mentioning her "long walks" in Madras (now Chennai) with her grandfather who would tell her about the

"heroes" responsible for the birth of the world's largest democracy. In a video posted on Twitter on Sunday, Harris answered some questions asked by Instagram users. On what she is doing to take care of her mental health on the campaign trail, she said that she works out every morning, speaks with her kids and loves to cook. Asked what her plan is to ensure a sustainable and eco-friendly future for the coming generations, Harris said Biden and she are prepared to make commitments with timelines to achieve zero emissions by 2050. — PTI

ELECTION | EVENT

Drive-in car rallies are very selective in nature

Honking gets new meaning

Fayetteville (US), Nov. 2: Honking has got a new meaning in the US politics with the annoying sound replacing clapping, cheers and even boos in election campaigns, in particularly the drive-in car rallies of Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden and his running mate Kamala Harris. Drive-in car rallies have become a signature election event of the Democratic Party which has taken the innovative path

wherein a select group of supporters gather in a parking lot to be addressed by the party's top leadership as part of its efforts to maintain social distancing due to the Coronavirus.

Both Biden, 77, and Harris, 56, ask their supporters sitting in their cars to honk to express their sentiments. In fact, honking in the election rallies of the Democratic Party has replaced all kinds of emotion in election rallies. In the election rallies of Republican incumbent President Donald Trump, thousands of his supporters cheer, clap and

chant slogans like "We Love You" and "Four More years." Most of these drive-in car rallies are very selective in nature and they are not publicised. In their rallies, it's all honking.

The level of honking reflects the sentiments, happiness and anger of their supporters. On Sunday at a drive-in rally attended by less than 100 cars, invited by the local campaign officials, every time Harris' supporters got excited with her remarks, they honked. Every time she was critical of Trump, they honked. Every time she spoke about

"Black Lives Matter", they honked. It was once in a while that some of the supporters peeked out of their car windows. Those who were standing outside their cars ensured that they were maintaining social distancing as they clapped.

There were no cheers at all. Same was the case with shouting slogans. Unlike the Trump rallies, which are publicised locally much in advance and people are encouraged to participate, the car drive-in rallies of Biden and Harris are by invitation only.

— PTI



Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden hugs his granddaughter Finnegan Biden during a canvassing kick-off event in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on Sunday. — AFP

DECCAN Chronicle

3 NOVEMBER 2020

‘Love jihad’ is a diversion, enforce rule of law in UP

If Uttar Pradesh with its 20.4 crore people were a country, it would have been the seventh-most populous in the world. It is number two among Indian states when it comes to ease of doing business but languishes at the bottom in terms of governance, based on a transparent Public Affairs Index-2020, prepared by a non-governmental organisation headed by former ISRO chairman K. Kasturirangan. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanadh came to power with the promise of maintaining rule of law but reports of him undermining administration of criminal justice through encounter killings are plenty; data says more than 125 persons have been killed in more than 6,476 encounters in the last three years of his rule. The gang-rape and murder of a teenager and the inhuman treatment meted out to the girl even after her death and to her family has earned the state administration universal condemnation.

Such stark realities and contradictions notwithstanding, Adityanath has discovered a new enemy of his state: ‘love jihad’, the derogative term used by the right wing for the marriage between Muslim men and Hindu women. The Chief Minister has even promised to bring in a law to fight such marriages. If that won’t suffice, he has threatened those who “play with our sisters’ respect: If you don’t mend your ways your ‘Ram naam satya’ (chant associated with Hindu funerals) journey will begin.” The Chief Minister has a judicial verdict to bank on: A single bench of Allahabad high court said conversion for the sake of marriage is not admissible before the law. The

Chief Minister of Haryana, a state which has the worst sex ratio betraying the poor rights women enjoy in the state, has joined hands with his Uttar Pradesh counterpart and is contemplating introducing a law to curb ‘love jihad’.

The right to freely profess, practise and propagate one’s religion is a fundamental right guaranteed by India’s Constitution. Marriages in India are legalised by civil laws governing various communities and religions. Then there is the Special Marriage Act, 1954, that allows any two people to marry irrespective of their religious affiliations. Marriage, in the eye of the law, is a civil contract between two consenting adults and there are enough legal tools to punish fraudsters who enter into it with ulterior motives. The state has, and should have, very little role in what two adults do; it definitely has no business playing ‘father’ and ‘brother’ of damsels in distress.

The Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister is not only known for his headline Hindutva ideology but also for his pro-business policies and actions. The state’s ascent to the top in terms of ease of doing business is no accident. He has time and again talked about the importance of attracting investment, domestic and foreign. If he means business, then he would rather focus on creating an open and liberal environment that welcomes multi-nationals than plunging his state into the dark ages with its archaic mind-sets. It cannot afford to be a paradox any longer.

Economy: Hope, with caution

The Goods and Service Tax (GST) collection for the month of October — one of the two festive months for the Hindu community — has been on expected lines with the GST Council reporting a gross collection of a little over ₹1 lakh crore. The fact that the gross GST collection in October this year at ₹1,05,155 crores was 10 per cent more than ₹95,379 crore collected in the same month last year is very heartening. Other economic indicators such as the sale of automobiles and industrial growth have been promising. Major car-makers such as Maruti Suzuki and Hyundai Motors have reported highest-ever monthly sales in October. The two-wheeler segment, which was considered to be badly affected by Covid-19 pandemic, appears to be wriggling out of comma, with Hero MotoCorp posting all-time high monthly sales in October.

IHS Markit India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers’ Index (PMI), which tracks the manufacturing sector in the country, reported a historically-sharp monthly expansion in production by companies in October. This is the consecutive third month of expansion in industrial production and suggests a revival of animal spirits among the manufacturing sector as the severity of Covid-19 infections begins to wane in the country. Data from power consumption too validate the reports of economic revival. According to Power System Operation Corporation Limited, India’s power consumption rose by 13 per cent in October 2020 to 110.94 billion units (BU) compared to 97.84 billion units in October 2019.

While all economic indicators paint a rosy picture of India’s economic revival, the government must not get complacent in its efforts to support the economy in getting on its feet. Since the spike in demand is still driven by retail consumption, it could as well be a pent-up demand being released during the festive season. The government must, therefore, remain cautious and hold its horses till it hopefully sees a similar growth curve in the non-festive months.

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As US votes today, the world holds its breath



K.C. Singh

Late Tuesday afternoon in India is when the United States begins voting to decide whether President Donald Trump gets a second term or, like in his episode ending line in serial Apprentice, people say “you are fired”. The stakes are high both for America and the world as the policy schism between Democrats and Republicans has never been wider in decades, on a slew of domestic and global issues.

Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt in How Democracies Die devise four core behavioural warning signs in politicians that endanger democracy. These are when ruling politicians (1) reject, in words or action, the democratic rules of the game; (2) deny the legitimacy of opponents; (3) tolerate or encourage violence; or (4) indicate a willingness to curtail the civil liberties of opponents, including the media. Alexander Hamilton, a founding father of the United States, wrote in the Federalist Papers: “History will teach us, of those men who have overturned the liberties of republics, the great number have begun their career by paying obsequious court to the people: commencing demagogues, and ending tyrants”.

President Trump has displayed all these symptoms and with the Supreme Court now in his pocket, with a 6-3 majority of conservative judges, he is likely to unravel the liberal-compassionate socio-economic order evolved since the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt in late 1930s.

American Presidents are elected indirectly by an Electoral College, created with graded advantage for smaller states, disproportionate to their population. The US hav-

ing been formed as a union of independent states, the smaller units negotiated checks on the power of the larger states. India’s states, contrariwise, were carved out from a unitary India, while merging en masse quasi-independent states under rulers, after Independence. In fact, a major reorganisation of states occurred only after 1956 on a linguistic basis. This process continued till last year when Jammu and Kashmir was reorganised.

The US system worked fine till the white working and middle classes felt threatened by demographic changes, and perceived loss of their way of life, and economic stagnation caused first by the oil crisis of the 1970s and then by globalisation of the deindustrialisation of vast areas. These states, now referred to as the Rust Belt, are like Michigan, the old car manufacturing hub of the US, or the steel industry in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, which produced one-third of the national steel output in the 1920s but collapsed in the mid-1980s. This caused a geographical bipartisan split in national politics, creating a wall of so-called “red” (Republican) and “blue” (Democratic) states, with more or less pre-determined voting preferences. For instance, California, with the largest haul of 55 electoral college votes, is home to technology innovation and a growing Latino population, swung to the Democrats in 1992. It has since voted for them in increasing numbers in each successive election. Similarly, the states of the Northeast, including global financial centre New York, favours the Democrats. Large parts of the Midwest and beyond, constituting America’s food bowl, vote Republican.

Thus, presidential elections really boil down to

The US system worked fine till the white working and middle classes felt threatened by demographic changes, and perceived loss of their way of life

the “swing states”, which can tilt either way and impact the election result. In 2016, Mr Trump managed his 304 Electoral College votes, crossing the 270 required for a win, with 46.1 per cent of the popular vote. He did this by carrying Michigan (16), Wisconsin (10) and Pennsylvania (20) by narrow margins, which in the past were pro-Democrat. In addition, he swept Florida (29) and North Carolina (15). But the election this time, conducted under the shadow of Covid-19, has seen almost 100 million people, nearly 70 per cent of the 2016 vote, do early voting. In-person early voting is fine but mailed votes have led to disparate rulings about their receipt deadlines. Emboldened by his sway over the higher courts, Mr Trump is preparing to tie up postal ballots in legal challenges if he emerges ahead in votes cast in-person in crucial states.

Joe Biden needs to wrest one, or more, swing state early to stymie Mr Trump. Three states — North Carolina, Florida and Ohio — will be reporting early with their postal and in-person votes. A win in one of them can signal a change in the popular mood against the incumbent and the game is over. Three more states that Mr Trump carried in 2016 — Iowa, Arizona and Georgia — are in play this time as demographic changes are altering the electoral map in the so-called Sun Belt states in the South. That explains the Houston hoopla in September 2019 where the “Howdy Modi” rally saw President Trump’s tango with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Texas has almost 125,000 Indian voters. However, a recent YouGov.com poll indicated that over 70 per cent were pro-Biden. The moral is that while the

diaspora may express nostalgic euphoria at essentially Indian political events on their soil, at election time they consider bread-and-butter issues like immigration policies and inclusive politics.

Mr Biden has led consistently in national and crucial state pre-election polls, despite Mr Trump’s aggressive attempt in two debates to kill the challenger’s momentum. The race has narrowed in the last few weeks. Mr Trump’s supporters may intimidate non-white voters on election day to suppress voting. But due to the pandemic or intimidation fears, many Democratic voters may have already cast their votes, as shown by the huge early voting numbers. But if an exceptionally heavy turnout on November 3 swells the overall vote, the outcome is more difficult to guess, as independents’ voting intent is less decipherable.

Interestingly, Bihar’s second polling phase is the same day as the US election. Major department stores in metropolitan cities, including the iconic Bloomindale’s in New York, are shuttering stores fearing possible violence if Mr Trump trails or prematurely claims victory. This is more reminiscent of Bihar’s electoral past than expected in the world’s most powerful democracy. For India, the outcome will be a mixed blessing. Mr Trump, in a second term, may look to moderate his China-baiting, cut deals with Russia over West Asia, increase pressure on Iran and bring trade back to the India-US table. Mr Biden may resurrect old alliances, maintain a positive engagement with India, but also adopt a less confrontational China policy. India may also find his focus on democracy, human rights and the freedom of the media irksome, unless the government here curbs its religious-cultural evangelism. For the next 24 hours, the entire world will be literally holding its breath.

The writer is a former secretary in the external affairs ministry. He tweets at @ambkcsingh.

LETTERS

GST COLLECTIONS

It’s no doubt interesting to note that the gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections crossed ₹1 lakh crore in October 2020 in the country. But, one feels, the government needs to spend this revenue receipt judiciously to enhance the overall economic welfare of the people. If it is used to finance capital projects, then it is imperative that the cost overruns are avoided. Be that as it may, the Reserve Bank of India now can think of reducing the repo rate to infuse more liquidity into the system, instead of rationing money to selective sectors/ industries.

S. Ramakrishnasayee, Chennai

TO BE OR NOT TO BE?

YOUR ANALYSIS of the suspenseful outcome of US presidential race (*A change in Washington to be a test for New Delhi*, Nov. 2) is well balanced and New Delhi has to be sensible to do business with a Republican or Democrat in the White House. Both Trump and Biden have different perspectives on global matters and a status quo or change in near future need to be watched by our foreign minister and finance minister (2+2). Your final advice of where to pitch ourselves in the world need to be well understood to take care of our permanent interests and people’s aspirations. Our border issues with China and Pakistan and job prospects of Indians in the US are to be dealt with an open mind with whoever occupies the White House in the next few days, with fingers crossed.

Parthasarathy Mandadi, Tirupati

BEST BOND EVER

THE EDITORIAL, *The first and best Bond* (Nov.2) on the demise of the legendary Scottish actor, Sean Connery, who donned the enviable role of James Bond 007, is a befitting homage to the actor whose magnetic expressions such as “My name is Bond, James Bond; stirred but not shaken” will hold sway his fans across the globe forever. His sparkling eyes with which he used to egg the villains’ girls, swanky sets for his films, breathtaking chases, brilliant screenplay to name a few, stand nonpareil. It is indeed an undeniable fact that his death has created a void in the tinsel world. Perhaps, he has got an assignment to probe something in the ethereal world.

E.S.Chandrasekaran Chennai

Mail your letters to editor@deccanmail.com

Aakar Patel



Is PM ignoring reality about our economy & Covid handling?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recently given an extraordinary interview to a leading business newspaper. It is confident in outlook, breezy in tone and out of place with our current reality.

He assumes he had done not only the right thing in managing the Covid-19 pandemic but done something other nations have not done. This, according to him, has saved lives in this country. He says: “I am no health expert, but my assessment is based on numbers. I think we should assess our coronavirus fight against the metric of how many lives we are able to save.”

He did not provide any numbers, but he doesn’t need to because they are public. India has the second most infections in the world and currently has the third highest number of fatalities.

The one other nation India is comparable with in terms of population, China, controlled the epidemic in one stroke. Its peak came on one day, February 12, and

then its spread was contained in some way.

Our sister nations around us, like Bangladesh and Pakistan, culturally and geographically comparable, have fared more than twice as well as us both in terms of infections per lakh population and deaths. On what grounds can we assume that the Narendra Modi government has done comparatively well? He seems to think we should compare ourselves to Brazil, Italy and the United States. But why?

He makes the claim that India, the second most infected nation in the world, “is a world model of public participation without any coercive enforcement”. India actually had the worst lockdown in the world, forced on it by the Union government which invoked the Disaster Management Act. People were punished and jailed by the State for going back home without work, food or shelter. People were run over by trains because they had walked on the tracks to avoid the

police on the highways. This is what coercive enforcement is. Perhaps the definition is different in Gujarat.

That unprepared, arbitrary lockdown did not save lives — there is no relation between the spread of infections and the weeks that India spent in forced hibernation — but it did help skewer the economy. The Prime Minister is confident that the August and September data shows that the economy is “back on track”. Back on track to where?

India’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth was in sequential decline for two years before the pandemic hit. It has been falling every quarter for 10 quarters since January 2018. Growth was three per cent before Covid-19 pandemic. What are we getting back on track to?

Also, if he seems to think that we will be back to where we were in February soon, he has the wrong advisers. One quarter of the GDP fell off between April and June. The best we can hope for in the July-

September quarter is that it doesn’t decline further, but it will. Even if it doesn’t, to recover the lost quarter of India’s GDP will take two years. Meaning that, after two years, we may be back to where we were in February this year. That is not “back on track”.

The Prime Minister continues to speak of a \$5 trillion economy. On one hand, this is a banal thing. India’s economy, at whatever pace, will reach there at some point (assuming no magical strokes like demonetisation or lockdowns are forthcoming to slow it down).

But to assume that it will happen in 2024, as Prime Minister Modi does, is to be unaware of what has happened in the past three years. He said in the interview: “Most people who are pessimistic remain in doubt. If you sit among them, you will hear only things of despair and despondency.”

No, it is called being in touch with reality and being able to read the numbers.

It is hard to tell whether the

Prime Minister is unable to confront the reality or whether he is so supremely confident in his abilities that he can convince the rest of us that the reality is different from our perception of it.

If we pretend that China hasn’t occupied the lands that our Army was patrolling till February, then they haven’t crossed the Line of Actual Control.

If we compare ourselves to Brazil and Italy and not China and Pakistan, our coronavirus numbers will look excellent. If we make up meaningless phrases like this one from the interview — “*Atma Nirbhar Bharat* is not just about competition but also about competence, it’s not about dominance but about dependability, it’s not about looking within but about looking out for the world” — then that is a substitute for trying to right an economy that has been in the doldrums for over 30 months.

The writer is a columnist and a senior journalist

SHORT TAKES

Shooter tests +ve but camp to go on

New Delhi: An athlete training in the national capital's Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range has tested positive for Covid-19, the Sports Authority of India said on Sunday but maintained that it will not hamper the ongoing national camp. Last month, SAI had approved a two-month long coaching camp for the Olympic core group shooters from October 15 to December 14. "An NCOE (National Centre of Excellence) athlete training at Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range in the 10 metre range has tested positive for the coronavirus. The athlete who last visited the range on October 28th in the second half of the day, intimated to his coach that his test result had come positive," SAI said in a statement. — PTI

AITA plans camp for elite players

New Delhi: The national tennis federation has decided to invite country's top players for a training camp at the DLTA with an aim to provide a platform for their return to competitive action from next year. The All India Tennis Association (AITA) has laid out a plan for top-20 elite men's and women's players for the camp, which may culminate with a national championship in the singles format among the assembled players in a bio-secure environment. The 21-day camp will first begin for the men's players from November 30. It will be followed by a women's camp from January 4. The camp will be held under the supervision of Davis Cup coach Zeeshan Ali, who will handle the project as Director of High Performance Training Camps (HPTC). He will be responsible for formulating a programme for the camp. — PTI

Lahiri ends T-11 at Bermuda golf

Southampton, Bermuda: Indian golfer Anirban Lahiri was left to rue small errors as he missed out on a top-10 finish, signing off Tied-11th with a four-under 67 in the final round of the Bermuda Championship here. Lahiri tied for most birdies made this week, but he also gave away a lot of bogeys, including a double bogey on the third day. On the brighter side, this season he has made the cut in each of his four starts with one Top-10, a T-11 and two other Top-40 finishes. Brian Gay, 48, claimed his fifth PGA Tour title with a playoff win over Wyndham Clark as he ended a winless streak since 2013. Gay and Clark ended the week on 15-under 269. — PTI

Legend Charlton has dementia

London: Manchester United and England great Bobby Charlton has been diagnosed with dementia. "Everyone at Manchester United is saddened that this terrible disease has afflicted Sir Bobby Charlton and we continue to offer our love and support to Sir Bobby and his family," United said in a statement on Sunday. — AFP

Live on TV

CRICKET

IPL: Sunrisers Hyderabad vs Mumbai Indians from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

Women's Big Bash League: Hobart Hurricanes vs Melbourne Renegades from 9 am on Sony Six

TENNIS

ATP Paris Masters: Day 2 action from 3.30 pm on Sony Six

FOOTBALL

Champions League: Lokomotiv Moscow vs Atletico Madrid from 11.25 pm on Sony Ten 2; RB Salzburg vs Bayern Munich from 1.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony Ten 3; Real Madrid vs Inter Milan from 1.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony Ten 2; Manchester City vs Olympiacos from 1.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony Six; Atalanta vs Liverpool from 1.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony Ten 1

Regd. No.
TNENG/2010/35692

Printed & Published by
K. Sudhakar on behalf of
Deccan Chronicle Holdings
Limited and Printed at
Deccan Chronicle Press situated at
No 2/22, Sengalipalayam Road,
N.G.G.O Colony Post,
Kurudampalayam Village,
Coimbatore - 641 022. RNI
Registration No: TNENG/2010/35692
Ph No: 2231252, 253, 255, 257 & 358
Editor: KAUSHIK MITTER

WIN-WIN GAME

Delhi beat Bangalore but both teams make play-offs

Abu Dhabi, Nov. 2: Delhi Capitals qualified for the Indian Premier League play-offs at number two position with a six-wicket win over Royal Challengers Bangalore here on Monday.

RCB also entered the play-offs after DC took more than 17.3 overs to complete their chase.

Invited to bat, Royal Challengers Bangalore scored 152 for seven in the stipulated 20 overs. Young Devdutt Padikkal top-scored with a 41-ball 50.

In reply, DC chased down the target with six balls to spare, courtesy calculative knocks from Shikhar Dhawan (54) and Ajinkya Rahane (60).

Earlier, Padikkal, who looked in good nick during his stay in the middle, smashed five fours and shared a 57-run stand with skipper Virat Kohli (29 off 24) for the third wicket.

The Capital pulled things back brilliantly in the middle overs.

Pacer Anrich Nortje (3/33) was the pick of the bowlers for Delhi Capitals, while Kagiso Rabada (2/30) picked up two wickets and Ravichandran Ashwin (1/18) took the important wicket of Kohli.

Padikkal and Josh Philippe (12) were circumspect in the powerplay overs. Rabada provided the Capitals with the early breakthrough off his very first ball, claiming the wicket of the Australian in the fifth over. — PTI



Ajinkya Rahane of Delhi Capitals plays a shot against Royal Challengers Bangalore in an Indian Premier League match at the Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi on Monday. — BCCI

SCORECARD

Royal Challengers Bangalore: J. Philippe c Shaw b Rabada 12, D. Padikkal b Nortje 50, V. Kohli c Stoinis b Ashwin 29, AB de Villiers run out 35, C. Morris c Pant b Nortje 0, S. Dube c Rahane b Rabada 17, W. Sundar (not out) 0, I. Udana c Iyer b Nortje 4, S. Ahmed (not out) 1. Extras (b-1, w-3) 4. **Total (for 7 wickets, in 20 overs) 152.**
FOW: 1-25, 2-82, 3-112, 4-112, 5-145, 6-146, 7-150.
Bowling: Sams 4-0-40-0, Ashwin 4-0-18-1, Nortje 4-0-33-3, Rabada 4-0-30-2, Patel 4-0-30-0.
Delhi Capitals: P. Shaw b Mohammed Siraj 9, S. Dhawan c Dube b Shahbaz Ahmed 54, A. Rahane c Dube b Washington Sundar 60, S. Iyer c Mohammed Siraj b Shahbaz Ahmed 7, R. Pant (not out) 8, M. Stoinis (not out) 10. Extras (lb-3, w-3) 6. **Total (for 4 wickets, in 19 overs) 154.**
FOW: 1-19, 2-107, 3-130, 4-136.
Bowling: C. Morris 2-0-19-0, Mohammed Siraj 3-0-29-1, Washington Sundar 4-0-24-1, I. Udana 2-0-24-0, Y. Chahal 4-0-29-0, Shahbaz Ahmed 4-0-26-2.

IPL POINTS TABLE

Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
Mumbai Indians	13	9	4	0	18	+1.296
Delhi Capitals	14	8	6	0	16	-0.109
Royal Challengers Bangalore	14	7	7	0	14	-0.172
Kolkata Knight Riders	14	7	7	0	14	-0.214
Sunrisers Hyderabad	13	6	7	0	12	+0.555
Kings XI Punjab	14	6	8	0	12	-0.162
Chennai Super Kings	14	6	8	0	12	-0.455
Rajasthan Royals	14	6	8	0	12	-0.569

Tabulated as Played, Won, Lost, No Result, Points, Net Run Rate

‘SHORT RUN’ CAME BACK TO BITE US, SAYS RAHUL

Abu Dhabi, Nov. 2: Kings XI Punjab skipper K L Rahul believes that the "short run" that played a part in their opening IPL loss to Delhi Capitals massively affected their play-off chances despite a remarkable comeback in the second leg of the tournament.

KXIP finished on 12 points after losing their last game against Chennai Super Kings after winning five games on trot to raise visions of a play-off chance.

"It is disappointing. We had a lot of games in our pockets and we couldn't get over the line and we only have ourselves to blame. That short run game too (against Delhi Capitals on September 20), looks like it has come back to bite us,"

Rahul said at the post-match presentation ceremony.

Before that particular match went into Super Over, the TV footage showed that square leg umpire Menon had erred in calling Chris Jordan for a "short run" in the third ball of the 19th over, bowled by Kagiso Rabada.

The TV replays showed that Jordan's bat was inside the crease when he completed the first run, starting from the non-striker's end.

However to KXIP's horror, Menon gestured that Jordan has not completed the run and only one run was added to Mayank Agarwal and the Punjab team's total.

On their loss against CSK, Rahul said that it was all about not batting too well. — PTI

Mumbai stand in between Sunrisers and play-off spot

Sharjah, Nov. 2: Riding high on momentum, resurgent Sunrisers Hyderabad will back themselves to topple the mighty Mumbai Indians and qualify for the IPL play-offs here on Tuesday.

Thanks to their healthy run-rate, a win against Mumbai Indians should be enough to send Sunrisers into the final four.

After taking a tough call to leave out the dangerous Jonny Bairstow from the playing eleven, Sunrisers have managed to find out the "right" balance.

Wriddhiman Saha has made an instant impact as David Warner's opening partner and the inclusion of Jason Holder has given them an all-round option.

Pacers Holder and Sandeep Sharma were extremely impressive, both upfront and at the death, in the last game against RCB.

NUMBERS GAME

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL:
● Matches: 15 ● Hyderabad: 7 ● Mumbai: 7 ● Tied: 1 (Mumbai Indians beat Sunrisers Hyderabad in Super Over after match ended in a tie)

MEETING IN 2019

● MI beat SRH by 40 runs in Hyderabad.
● MI beat SRH via Super Over in Mumbai.

MEETING IN 2020

● Mumbai beat Hyderabad by 34 runs in Sharjah.

FOR THE RECORD

● David Warner with 444 runs at an average of 37.00 in 13 innings of as many matches is the fourth highest run-getter in this IPL.
● Krunal Pandya, who has scored 986 runs at an average of 25.94 in 57 innings of 68 matches, needs 14 runs to become eighth batsman to complete 1,000 runs for MI in IPL.

— S. PERVEZ QAISAR

Add left-arm pacer T. Natarajan and trump card Rashid Khan to their bowling attack, it makes up for a well rounded attack.

Already assured of the top spot in the points table, Mumbai will be expected to

put up another ruthless show against Sunrisers.

The nature of surface in Sharjah has changed drastically with low-scores replacing 200-plus totals, which was the norm at the start of the season. — PTI

MPL to sponsor Team India kit

New Delhi, Nov. 2: Fantasy gaming platform Mobile Premier League's subsidiary arm 'MPL Sports Apparel and Accessories' is the new kit sponsor of the Indian cricket team for a period of three years.

A member of the Apex Council confirmed the development on Monday that BCCI has inked the apparel and merchandise deal with MPL, replacing Nike.

"Yes, Apex Council has passed the sponsorship deal for apparel of Indian team (men, women, A and U19).

"However the rate per match will be ₹65 lakh per game instead of ₹88 lakh that Nike was giving," the senior official said on conditions of anonymity.

It is learnt that BCCI will also get 10 per cent of the royalty from the sale of merchandise.

"MPL has formed an apparel manufacturing company. They will also pay an amount for merchandise contract. The deal will end in November, 2023," the source added.

● It is learnt that BCCI will also get 10 per cent of the royalty from the sale of merchandise.

While Puma and Adidas had earlier picked up the bid papers for apparel sponsorship, they didn't fill the bid as they felt that the deal needed to be reduced to one third from the original bid.

Nike had a five year deal during which they paid ₹370 crore from 2016 to 2020 with a ₹30 crore royalty.

"No sporting apparel major was ready to pay that kind of money that Nike paid in current economic climate (due to Covid-19).

"One of the major reasons being merchandise items being very costly for common public," the source said.

MPL is currently associated with two IPL franchises (Kolkata Knight Riders and Royal Challengers Bangalore), one CPL franchise (TKR) and the cricket boards of Ireland and the UAE. — PTI

Bale is Tottenham's match winner again

London, Nov. 2: Gareth Bale soared into the air, connected with the ball and powered it into the net.

It's taken more than seven years but Bale was Tottenham's match-winner again. And they have only required three minutes on the field for the substitute to clinch a 2-1 victory over Brighton on Sunday.

A bit of relief and a lot of happiness, Bale said after being set up by Sergio Reguilon, who also switched from Real Madrid in September.

It's an incredible feeling, personally. Obviously you wish the fans were here to be able to celebrate.

Apart from the empty stadium, due to ongoing pandemic restrictions, this was the type of moment Bale imagined producing on his return to Tottenham after seven years.

Not like the effective second debut two weeks ago when Bale came on also with about 20 minutes remaining only to be part of a side that collapsed 3-0 to draw 3-3 with West Ham.

A lead protected this time, Jose Mourinho's side

climbed to second in the Premier League on the day his former club Manchester United lost 1-0 at home to Arsenal.

Arsenal celebrated their first league win at Old Trafford in 14 years thanks to Pierre-Emerick

Aubameyang's penalty Manchester United is reeling from its worst start to a season in 48 years. — AP



Tottenham's Gareth Bale (right) celebrates with Eric Dier after scoring against Brighton & Hove Albion during their Premier League match in London on Sunday. — AP

Ronaldo returns with double in Juve's win

Milan, Nov. 2: Cristiano Ronaldo came off the bench to score a brace on his return from coronavirus as Juventus got back to winning ways in Serie A with a 4-1 victory against promoted Spezia on Sunday.

The champions ended a run of three consecutive draws to move third in Serie A, four points behind leaders AC Milan, who beat Udinese 2-1 earlier in the day thanks to a spectacular late winner from Zlatan Ibrahimovic.

Sassuolo overtook Juventus to reclaim second spot, two points behind Milan, after a 2-0 win over Napoli, their first ever success at the Stadio San Paolo. Ronaldo replaced Paulo Dybala in the 56th minute in Cesena with the match level after Tommaso Pobega had cancelled out Alvaro Morata's opener for Juventus.

But the Portuguese striker put Juve in front just three minutes later.

Adrien Rabiot grabbed a third on 68 minutes, with Ronaldo scoring a second from the penalty spot with 15 minutes to go for his fifth goal in three league games this season.

"Cristiano is back. This is the important thing," said Ronaldo, who had been furious at missing Juventus' Champions League 2-0 defeat in mid-week by Lionel Messi's Barcelona.

IBRAHIMOVIC STUNNER

AC Milan extended their unbeaten streak as Ibrahimovic scored an acrobatic late winner to seal a win over lowly Udinese. The 39-year-old has scored seven goals in four league games having missed the other two after contracting Covid-19. — AP