

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

KARIMNAGAR | MONDAY | 23 NOVEMBER 2020



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**Milk instead of 'egg' to fight malnutrition in MP**



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**Rohit ready to bat anywhere in Test**



## BJP opens new office in Filmnagar



BJP workers welcome Union minister for information and broadcasting Prakash Javadekar during the inauguration of the party's new office at Filmnagar on Sunday.

— S. SURENDER REDDY

# First Covid vaccine for healthcare workers: CM

S.A. ISHAQUI | DC  
HYDERABAD, NOV. 22

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao on Sunday declared that whenever a vaccine was made available for Covid-19, it would first be given to frontline healthcare workers.

Chief Minister Rao directed officials to take all preventive measures needed to keep Covid-19 under check in Telangana as the number of Coronavirus cases was again increasing in some states. While reviewing the Covid-19 situation in the state in the backdrop of a sudden surge of Covid cases in Delhi, Rajasthan, Maha-rashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, Karnataka and other states, he said that all required action and measures will be taken to meet any eventuality in case the state was hit by a second wave of the pandemic.

There could be a second Covid wave in the country, he warned.

■ Page 4: Officials told to be ready for second wave



Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao meets members of the film industry at Pragathi Bhavan on Sunday.

— DC

## Will rescue Covid-hit Tollywood, says KCR

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, NOV. 22

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao on Sunday assured captains of the Telugu film industry including megastar K. Chiranjeevi and A. Nagarjuna that

Telangana Rashtra Samiti would include measures being taken for the benefit of Tollywood in the TRS party's manifesto for the GHMC elections.

■ Page 4: Concessions to be given to industry: KCR

## REGISTRATION OF NON-AGRI LAND FROM NOV. 25: CM

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, NOV. 22

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao told officials to be ready to start registration of non-agriculture properties from November 25.

■ Report on Page 4

# Muslims, MIM party not related, says Kishan

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, NOV. 22

Union minister for state G. Kishan Reddy said that the AIMM led by Asaduddin Owaisi was a family-run party and has no relation with Muslims. Addressing a Meet-the-Press event organised by Hyderabad Press Club here on Sunday, he appealed to the people of Hyderabad to question the TRS leaders why they will vote for the party in the ensuing GHMC elections.

Seeking votes for BJP to ensure overall development, Kishan Reddy charged the MIM with having a history of "harassing" poor Muslims and "grabbing" their assets using mafia. He said, "as far as the Majlis party is concerned, BJP is very clear. There is no relation between the Majlis party and Muslims. They are different from one another."

He said that BJP sees MIM as a political party which inherited the ideology of Razakars — private

militia organised by Qasim Razvi during the rule of Nizam — and supported terror activities by extending financial and legal aid to some of them.

Alleging that the TRS was not fulfilling its poll promises prior to the previous GHMC elections, Kishan Reddy pointed out, "They promised construction of one lakh double bedroom houses but they failed. They promised Hyderabad would be developed as Dallas and Istanbul, but they failed."

## On poll trail



TRS president K.T. Rama Rao greets the crowds during a poll campaign in Hyderabad for the GHMC elections on Sunday.

— DECCAN CHRONICLE

# US allows new drug for Covid

Washington, Nov. 22: US health officials have agreed to allow emergency use of a second antibody drug to help the immune system fight Covid-19, an experimental medicine that President Donald Trump was given when he was sickened last month.

The Food and Drug Administration authorised use of the Regeneron Pharm-aceuticals Inc. drug on Saturday to try to prevent hospitalisation and worsening disease from developing in patients with mild-to-moderate symptoms.

The drug is given as a one-time treatment through an IV. The FDA allowed its use in adults and children 12 and over who weigh at least 40 kg and who are at high risk of severe illness from

Covid because of age or certain other medical conditions. Emergency authorisation allows use of the drug to start while studies are continuing to establish safety and effectiveness.

Early results suggest the drug may reduce Covid-related hospitalisation or emergency room visits in patients at high risk for disease progression, the FDA said. Regeneron said that initial doses will be made available to roughly 300,000 patients through a federal government allocation programme. Patients will not be charged for the drug but may have to pay part of the cost of giving the IV.

Initial supplies will likely be vastly outstripped by demand as the U.S. has surged past 10 million reported cases.

— AP

## TN | ELECTIONS

## Emissaries sent to meet top BJP leader during his visit to Chennai

# Rajini, Alagiri in touch with Shah

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR and D. SEKAR | DC  
CHENNAI, NOV. 22

After the long night of meetings and tete-a-tetes that Union home minister Amit Shah had with state BJP functionaries and others after his official meeting at Kalaivanar Aranganam on Saturday, actor Rajinikanth's message was conveyed to Shah by the auditor and magazine editor S. Gurumurthy.

The same was the case with M.K. Alagiri, the DMK strongman in Madu-

rai and son of the late former chief minister M. Karunanidhi. Alagiri is said to have sent a message through K.P. Ramalingam, an ousted DMK leader who joined the BJP earlier on Saturday. The Shah visit is being seen as a major success both by the BJP and the AIADMK, which announced that their poll tie-up would continue in the 2021 state Assembly polls. The BJP had left no stone unturned to have Shah greeted warmly in the city. According to sources, Gurumurthy was

closeted with Shah for over two hours. Rajinikanth is said to have told Gurumurthy what his plans were for the next Assembly elections when the two of them met very recently.

However, Shah did not seem to have missed meeting Rajinikanth, going by his remarks at a party meeting. Shah said that the party should not be dependent on celebrities and should be built on the strength of its ideological moorings.

Prior to addressing party members, Shah met lead-

ers from the AIADMK, PMK and DMDK and reportedly settled the seat sharing question with them. The AIADMK leaders, O. Panneerselvam, Edappadi K. Palaniswami and D. Jayakumar, had agreed to give 20 to 25 seats to the BJP, another 25 to the PMK and 15 to the DMDK, which would also be given a Rajya Sabha nomination.

Though none of this information was confirmed by any of the leaders involved in the talks, sources say that the

AIADMK is keen on contesting close to 165 of the 234 seats in the Assembly as it wants to form a government on its own without support from allies. They had also promised to give more seats to the BJP in the Lok Sabha elections, citing it as "MGR formula" that gave the Congress more MP seats and less MLA seats in the past.

Shah had stressed on the need to weaken the DMK for them to win the elections and told the cadre not to give up on their efforts in building the party.

## CBI ARRESTS EX-MINISTER IN PONZI SCANDAL

Bengaluru, Nov. 22: Former Congress minister R. Roshan Baig was arrested by the CBI here on Sunday in connection with the multi-crore I-Monetary Advisory (IMA) ponzi scam, the agency sources said.

Baig, who was disqualified as a Congress MLA after he revolted against the party last year, was summoned to the CBI office on Sunday morning and "based on material evidence, he has been arrested," they said.

— PTI

## WEATHER

Max: 31.5°C  
Min: 18.6°C  
RH: 51%  
Rainfall: Nil  
Forecast: Cloudy sky.  
Haze, mist likely.  
Max/Min temp. 31/19 °C

## COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+47,216)	(+530)
91,39,560	1,33,750
covid19india.org	
STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS	
(+873)	(+4)
TS: 2,63,526	1,430
(+1,121)	(+11)
AP: 8,62,213	6,938

## CASES AROUND THE WORLD

5,87,72,521  
DEATHS  
13,90,958  
COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES  
218  
worldometers.info/coronavirus

## ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana  
Tithi: Kartika Shudda Navami till 12.34 am (Tuesday)  
Star: Satabhisam till 1.06 pm  
Varjyam: 8.09 pm to 9.55 pm  
Durmuhurtam: 12.24 pm to 1.09 pm; 2.37 pm to 3.22 pm  
Rahukalam: 7.30 am to 9 am  
HIJRI CALENDAR  
Rabbi-ul Akhir 7, 1442 AH  
PRAYERS  
Fajar: 5.21 am  
Zohar: 12.12 pm  
Asar: 4.03 pm  
Maghrib: 5.45 pm  
Isha: 6.56 pm  
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.26 AM  
SUNSET TODAY 5.39 PM  
MOONSET TODAY 12.35 AM  
MOONRISE TOMORROW 1.30 PM

## COUNTER POINT



No pollution, no Covid...  
I don't need no rescue!

## SHORT TAKE

## Power outage hits bank operations

New Delhi: Operation of some banks like HDFC Bank were hit on Saturday due to power outage at Dhirubhai Ambani Knowledge City, in Mumbai which has data centres of several firms. However, power was later restored and banking services were functioning normally, sources said. According to sources, banking operations are now up and running.

## UP to test all Delhi travellers

Lucknow: The Uttar Pradesh government will test all travellers from Delhi for coronavirus, an official said on Sunday. Uttar Pradesh Chief Secretary R.K. Tiwari said the state government is also considering restrictions on the number of people at weddings and other social programmes. Tiwari said infection cases have increased in UP districts bordering Delhi. It seems the second Covid has hit the national capital, he said, pointing to a spurt in cases there. So, we are testing everyone coming from Delhi, be it by air, train or bus, he said. When asked about what kind of curbs that may be imposed at social gatherings, Tiwari said the decision will be taken on the prevailing situation.

— PTI





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OTHER STORIES

MAN WEARING  
EARPHONES HIT  
BY TRAIN, DIES

DC CORRESPONDENT  
WARANGAL, NOV. 22

A 28-year-old painter, A. Sunil, a resident of Chandravadan colony in Chintal died on the spot while crossing the railway tracks at Chintal railway gate on Sunday. Though pedestrians and motorists warned him of the approaching train, he could not hear them as he was wearing earphones and got hit by the train.

Warangal GRP, inspector V. Vinay Kumar said that the railway gate guard and motorists shouted at Sunil warning him that a train was coming, but he did not hear and went ahead to cross the track without checking for the train.

The body was shifted to the MGM hospital mortuary for post mortem and later handed over to his family members.

ADIVASIS  
REMEMBER  
VEDMA RAMU

DC CORRESPONDENT  
ADILABAD, NOV. 22

Adivasis and non-Adivasis paid rich tributes to the Vedma Ramu, cultural propagator, on his 33rd death anniversary in Adilabad town on Sunday. Vedma Ramu is remembered for his contribution as a propagator of the Komaram Bheem's fight for the rights on Jal , Jangal and Jameen.

After paying tributes to Vedma Ramu, Adilabad Municipal chairman Jogu Premender said that Adivasi youth should carry forward Vedma Ramu's thoughts by preserving their Adivasi culture. Adilabad Thudum Debba district president Godam Ganesh said, "Adivasis are being denied their constitutional rights, even 70 years after Independence."

Kolam Seva Sangham leader Kodapa Sonerao said, "The state and Central government should focus on the welfare and development of the Kolams and Thotis, considered to be Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)."

DASYAM ADDS  
GREEN TOUCH TO  
CM'S RELIEF

DC CORRESPONDENT  
WARANGAL, NOV. 22

Chief Whip Dasyam Vinay Bhaskar while celebrating his birthday on Sunday, presented saplings along with the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) cheques to beneficiaries at his camp office in Hanamkonda as part the 'Chettu-Chekku' (sapling-cheque) programme. He said, "I hope this initiative gains recognition among the people apart from encouraging them to plant more saplings and protect the environment. Every beneficiary in Warangal West constituency under the CMRF will receive a sapling along with a cheque henceforth."

Cheques amounting to ₹22 lakh were handed over to 14 beneficiaries in the constituency, undergoing treatment and facing financial difficulties.

The kin of two members, (Aruna and Shiva) who had taken ill received a letter of credit (LOC) of ₹6 lakh for treatment at NIMS Hospital.

GEAR UP FOR  
SECOND WAVE,  
OFFICIALS TOLD

From Page 1

Adding that Telangana is in a position to withstand a second wave but for this, officials should be alert and make necessary arrangements."

Advising people to be cautious and observe self-protection guidelines, the Chief Minister said, "maintaining personal and preventive safety is the best medicine for Covid. There is an un-lockdown process going on now, so people should be cautious, wear masks and follow all Covid guidelines."

Rao further said, "The situation is returning to normalcy in the state. Covid cases are declining in Telangana. Despite a high increase in number of tests conducted, positive cases are fewer than 2.1 per cent.

The recovery rate is 94.03 per cent. Though people with Covid are suffering, the mortality rate is low."

"The government is on high alert and is taking all necessary precautions. About 10,000 beds with oxygen facility were kept ready across the state," he said.

5204 paddy variety fails  
to make farmers smile

Farmers to incur losses of at least ₹100 cr due to pest attack

RAVINDRA SESHU | DC  
KHAMMAM, NOV. 22

Farmers who raised the 5204 paddy variety instead of 1010 and 1064 varieties in Khammam district are finding it tough to sell their produce.

Heavy rains caused massive damages to paddy production because of attacks by pests like brown plant hopper (BPH), rice hispa beetle and meal bug.

Paddy is raised on 2.90 lakh acres in the district and they have sown 5204 variety seeds in 90 per cent of them.

Earlier, they raised 5204 variety and 1010 and 1064 on 70:30 ratio. The State government encouraged the farmers to go for 5204 (sannarakam) rather than 1010 (doddurakam).

The 1010 and 1064 can withstand attacks by pests and the yield would not be disturbed.

Heavy rains damaged more the 5204 paddy variety and production came down by 30 per cent.

Farm expert N. Rambabu said, "The farmers, who raised 5204 managed to produce 25 bags instead of 35 of normal yield. Pests adversely impacted the yield. The farmers, who opted for 5204 variety may lose one lakh tonnes of paddy this year and they may lose at least ₹100 crore".

GHMC POLLS: ₹11K  
WORTH LIQUOR  
SEIZED IN HYD

BALU PULIPAKA | DC  
HYDERABAD, NOV. 22

After seizing large amounts of cash in the first six days after the model code of conduct for the GHMC Council elections came into force, the seizures effected by the police on Sunday in the GHMC limits were limited to liquor.

In four different cases, the authorities seized liquor worth ₹11,000 on Sunday, taking the total value of liquor bottles caught since November 18 to ₹25,000.

The liquor seized on Sunday included 189 bottles of IMFL (Indian-made Foreign Liquor), beer and whisky.

As on Saturday, the authorities had seized ₹1,35,87,450 in cash. All the money seized will be handed over to the income-tax department for processing and further investigations into this unaccounted for cash will commence.

Meanwhile, the taking down of posters, flexis, party flags and other publicity material continued with the authorities saying that on Sunday they had removed 2,124 such items. So far, 20,766 items have been taken down.

According to a GHMC official, the goal was to remove all posters, flexis or other advertising materials relating to political parties or their leaders, within 24 hours of them being put up illegally.

However, nothing much can be done regarding the banners advertising political parties that have been erected on bus shelters, Metro Rail pillars or on newly constructed public toilets as all of these facilities are operated by private parties which also possess advertising rights and can lease their spaces to anyone who approaches them.

■ THE TAKING down of posters, flexis, party flags and other publicity material continued.

■ AUTHORITIES on Sunday removed 2,124 such items. So far, 20,766 items were taken down.

■ NOTHING CAN be done regarding banners erected on bus shelters, Metro Rail pillars etc.



P. Disender, a farmer from Nelakondapalli in Khammam district lights fire to his paddy crop destroyed by pests.

■ THE FARMERS were asked by the paddy lifting agencies to dry the produce and remove empty ears of corn before bringing the produce for selling. With this, the costs of removing empty ears of corn and drying are adding to input costs.

There is not much difference between sannarakam and doddurakam paddy prices. The government is paying ₹1,888 as MSP for sannarakam and ₹1,868 for doddurakam. The farmers, who raised doddurakam, are happily selling

their produce while those who went for sannarakam are languishing.

Bomma Rajeswara Rao, Rice Millers Association president who runs a rice mill in Khammam said, "Some of the millers in

Miryalaguda bought rice from other states where the price is less. Later, the government intervened and stopped import of paddy".

The farmers were asked by the paddy lifting agencies to dry the produce and remove empty ears of corn before bringing the produce for selling.

With this, the costs of removing empty ears of corn and drying are adding to input costs.

Anything for a quick buck



Police seized 410 quintals of ration rice priced at ₹10 lakh in the open market being transported illegally in two lorries. They apprehended the drivers Thota Ravi Kumar and Bitra Pulla Rao at Thallada on Sunday. Wyra DCP Satyanarayana said that the mafia collected ration rice from beneficiaries at a lower price and would transport it to Kakinada from Khammam.

Vemulawada yet to begin revenue services

PULI SHARATH  
KUMAR | DC  
VEMULAWADA, NOV. 22

The government issued a GO Ms. No. 80, notifying Vemulawada in Rajanna Sircilla as a separate revenue division. However, six months after the announcement, the government is yet to begin revenue services in the division. Presently, the RDO of Sircilla, T. Srinivas Rao, is

rendering additional services from Sircilla town to the people of Vemulawada revenue division.

The state government decided that Vemulawada will be a separate revenue division to provide better revenue services to people living in rural areas. It issued a preliminary notification - GO No. 228 in February 2020. After clearing doubts, in July 2020, Vemulawada became

a new revenue division. Including, Vemulawada urban and rural mandals, Konaraopet, Rudrangi, Boinipally and Chandurthi mandals, include 109 villages.

Congress Vemulawada assembly segment in-charge, Aditi Srinivas said, "The purpose of a separate revenue division is to provide better revenue services to the people living in rural areas."

He questioned, "With no new revenue office or a RDO, what is the use of an announcement?. The government must appoint a divisional-level revenue officer and allot a full-fledged revenue building in the division to provide RDO-level revenue services to the people, he said. Srinivas Rao said, "The works of establishing a new revenue-building are under the supervision of

the Vemulawada tahsildar. It will be set up soon."

Adi Srinivas said, "On several occasions, we staged dharnas and held rasta rokos, demanding Vemulawada be made a separate revenue division. Last year, in December, along with TPCC working president Ponnamp Prabhakar, a representation was given to the Chief Secretary, our efforts paid off."

20-YEAR-OLD  
BOOKED FOR  
DRUNK DRIVING

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD NOV. 22

A 22-year-old B.Tech student was booked for driving under the influence of alcohol and crashing his Mercedes Benz into a cab, injuring the passenger and the driver late Saturday night in the Banjara Hills area.

The accused, M. Akhil, was allegedly out partying with his friend and classmate Ashok Reddy on Saturday night in Banjara Hills. "At about 12.30 am, Akhil, on his way back home, crashed his car, (TS07 ED 0888), into a cab parked on the roadside at Road No. 3, injuring the passenger Saurabh Jain, a businessman, and the driver, Srinivas Reddy," said Banjara Hills sub-inspector Ram Babu.

As per sources, there were four people, including a woman and another man, along with Akhil during the time of the mishap. Officials claimed that Akhil and Ashok were the only two in the vehicle.

PILLALAMARRI  
SRINIVAS | DC  
ADILABAD, NOV. 22

Irregularities have surfaced in the Kalyana Lakshmi and Shaadi Mubarak scheme being implemented in the Adilabad district.

More than 100 applications with fake documents got approved for financial assistance under the two schemes, and the 'benami' candidates withdrew the amounts. The Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) personnel have initiated an investigation into the alleged scam along with the district police.

It is not the first time that irregularities in the Shaadi Mubarak and Kalyana Lakshmi implemented in Adilabad district surfaced. In 2016,

irregularities, in the Shaadi Mubarak scheme, were exposed. Some women and men involved in the crime were arrested and jailed.

The allegations are a) the documents and signatures, of officials and MLAs, were forged on the applications. b) The staff are not verifying the documents attached to the applications properly, and are approving the applications created on names and residences of other people deliberately. Some of the applications that were approved and received the amounts had a resident certificate of another district and a different caste certificate attached.

Krishnakanth from Adilabad said, "The state government has made it

mandatory that the local MLA must approve the application after frequent irregularities came to the fore. But the scamsters are now forging the signatures of the local MLA to get the fake applications approved."

It alleged that staff from the lower to the higher cadre in the revenue department, are hand in glove with the scamsters. They target innocent people and promise to get their applications sanctioned, for a certain percentage from the total amount.

The question is, how, did the revenue staff from the lower cadre forge signature of the respective local MLAs?, and what steps will the MLAs take against the persons and revenue officials involved in the scam?

FAMILY'S TRIP TO  
YADAGIRIGUTTA  
TURNS TRAGIC

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, NOV. 22

A weekend visit to Yadagirigutta temple turned fatal for a family from Bengaluru when their car collided with a lorry.

A 11-month-old girl and her mother were killed in the accident and three others were injured early on Sunday morning.

Police said enquires revealed that the driver of the car allegedly fell asleep at the wheel, which led to the car crashing into the lorry.

According to Abdullapurmet police, Ravi, along with his wife Triveni, 11-month-old daughter Trinisha, and his parents, started from Bengaluru to Yadagirigutta at 9 pm on Saturday. Triveni, 26, was carrying the infant in her lap and was sitting in the seat adjacent Ravi who was driving.

"At 6.45 am on Sunday, they reached Peddamberpet when Ravi allegedly fell asleep and crashed the car (KA05 MD 0856) into the lorry. The mother and daughter were killed on the spot while the others sustained injuries," said inspector V. Swamy of Abdullapurmet. He said a police team reached the spot and shifted the injured to the hospital.

The bodies of the victims were shifted to Osmania General Hospital mortuary for the post-mortem examination. A case has been registered and investigation is on.

■ A 11-MONTH-OLD girl and her mother were killed in the accident and three others were injured early on Sunday morning.

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## IN BRIEF

## Raja Singh accuses Bandi of 'cheating'

**Hyderabad:** Making a sensational accusation, BJP MLA Raja Singh alleged that the party state president Bandi Sanjay had cheated him over allocation of tickets in the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) elections from his Assembly constituency. He said he was dissatisfied with the state leadership, which would demoralise the cadre.

On Sunday an audio containing the outburst was leaked and went viral in social media. He stated that he would complain against the state leadership to the party high command that they were taking unilateral decisions and ignoring his consent on issues pertaining to his constituency.

## 3 YEMINIS HELD FOR SMUGGLING NARCOTICS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, NOV. 22

Three Yemen nationals were arrested with possession of MDMA, marijuana and other narcotics by the Excise District Task Force on Sunday.

The officials seized 30 grams of MDMA, 300 grams of khat leaves, 1.1 kilos of dry marijuana, and four ganja plants from Abdullah Mohammed Abdullah Giyash and Mohd Abdullah Ahmed Alawar Ali, said K. Karuna, Prohibition and Excise Inspector of District Task Force. They also seized three vehicles from the accused.

They were caught near a theatre in Tolichowki. "Based on the information given by the duo, we apprehended Abdul Rehman Mohammed Abdullah Haddad from a flat in Aravind Colony of Tolichowki. Their associate Ali Al Qafeai Salem Ali Salem, who is absconding, is conducting the business," the task force said. The accused persons, along with case papers and seized contraband, were handed over to Golconda police for further investigation.

## VIJAYASHANTHI CALLS TRS, MIM AS SIAMESE TWINS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, NOV. 22

Actor-turned-politician Vijayashanti on Sunday termed the TRS and the MIM as Siamese twins and said that the MIM's 'threat' of dethroning the TRS government was part of the 'match fixing' between the two parties.

She asked if the MIM was trying to dethrone the TRS government by triggering communal violence as it had only seven MLAs in the Assembly which was insufficient. In a press statement, she alleged that the TRS and MIM had conspired to defeat the RJD-Congress alliance in the Bihar elections so that it will appear to the minorities that the Congress will not come in power at the Centre in the future.

Vijayashanti alleged that both the parties had tried to encash such situations and establish a grip on various states. There was a feeling in political circles that the TRS had funded the MIM to defeat the RJD-Congress alliance.

She said that after the Bihar election results there was talk in political circles that the MIM and TRS were facing a threat of minorities distancing themselves from the combo.

To convince the minorities, Vijayashanti alleged, MIM president Asaduddin Owaisi and TRS boss and Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao had prepared a plan. As part of this, the CM was issuing statements against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and promising to meet leaders of non-BJP parties to form an anti-BJP platform.

It is worth mentioning here that the ground is set for Vijayashanti to leave the Congress and join the BJP. Sources close to her disclosed that Vijayashanti was waiting for a call from Union home minister Amit Shah to join the party. She would likely join the BJP in the next couple of days.

● **IN A PRESS statement**, she alleged that the TRS and MIM had conspired to defeat the RJD-Congress alliance in the Bihar elections so that it will appear to the minorities that the Congress will not come in power at the Centre in the future.

## All 132 crore Indians must file chargesheets against PM: KTR

KTR says BJP failed to give ₹25k to rain-affected families as promised

S.A. ISHAQUI | DC  
HYDERABAD, NOV. 22

TRS working president K.T. Rama Rao on Sunday spit fire at Union environment and information and broadcasting minister Prakash Javadekar for releasing a chargesheet with 132 charges against the K. Chandrashekar Rao-led state government.

Rama Rao said, "Over 132 crore chargesheets should be filed against the BJP for failing to give ₹15 lakh to each Indian, as had been promised during the run-up to the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. Another 12 crore chargesheets should be filed against the BJP by youth of this country for not creating two crore jobs each year, as promised." While addressing mammoth gatherings at multiple roadshows in Khairatabad and Jubilee Hills constituencies, he asked the BJP, "Why will you file chargesheets on us? Will you file chargesheets for setting up Annapurna canteens, setting up CCTV cameras, installing LED lights or for resolving power issues and solving water problems, or for bringing investments to Hyderabad?" Rao said that TRS leaders stood by people during Covid and the recent floods while BJP and Congress leaders were busy elsewhere.

Stating that a financial assistance of ₹10,000 was given to 6.5 lakh families in rain- and flood-affected areas in the city, he alleged that the Opposition had written letters to the Election Commission and stopped the programme.

He said, "After December 4, we will continue the program and ensure financial assistance reaches families, which did not receive the aid. For this, we need your support."

Criticising the BJP leaders for promising to give ₹25,000 to rain-affected families, he said, "I don't know what is stopping them from delivering the promise today."

Reminding people that the TRS had narrowly missed scoring a century in the previous GHMC



TRS president K.T. Rama Rao gives a thumbs up at a roadshow in Zaheernagar in Hyderabad on Sunday. He held road shows in the Khairatabad and Jubilee Hills Assembly constituencies.

elections, he appealed to people to vote for them, saying, "This time, we want to hit a century with your support. Elect TRS candidates and let development continue."

● **WHILE ADDRESSING** huge gatherings at multiple roadshows in Khairatabad and Jubilee Hills constituencies, TRS working president K.T. Rama Rao asked the BJP, "Why will you file chargesheets on us? Will you file chargesheets for setting up Annapurna canteens, setting up CCTV cameras, installing LED lights or for resolving power issues and solving water problems, or for bringing investments to Hyderabad?"

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## KTR: TRS needed to keep Hyderabad's growth going

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, NOV. 22

TRS working president and IT minister K.T. Rama Rao on Sunday claimed that their government had delivered on promises without any discrimination.

Rama Rao said, "what matters is whether we make a difference to society or not. Unless you do things with passion, you will not be able to deliver. That is what I believe in."

He was speaking on Hyderabad's global image, inclusive growth, IT ecosystem and future plans for the city at the 'Brand Hyderabad: Future Ready' session at the HICC in the city.

Talking about the city's development, he said, "Rome was not built in a day. See the intent and sincerity of our government. We have started a journey. We have taken up a lot of development activities and we have a lot more to do."

He stated that Telangana was India's most successful start-up state. "We fought hard for the state and have delivered on many counts. Our government has been an enabler and facilitator. Rest of the credit is to the young talent pool available here."

He said top five most valued companies like Apple, Google, Amazon, Facebook and Microsoft have made Hyderabad their second home.

Stating that other than IT and life sciences, in which Telangana state will continue to be a leader, Rao said, "we are looking forward to electronics, e-vehicles, textiles and logistics sector in the next decade for our growth."

Talking about development works in Hyderabad, he said that with SRDP, link roads, the comprehensive road management program, the city's road infra has improved. "Our sewerage system couldn't handle

the cloudburst, which is the highest since 1916. With SNDP, I promise that such a situation won't occur in Hyderabad again," he said.

He said, "Elections will come and go but the culture we are promoting is important. Trying to disturb communal harmony for an election is a cardinal sin. To stall growth of the city is idiocy."

The TRS government treats everyone equally, Rama Rao said, adding that great cities are built with great governance. Delivering promises without any discrimination helped Hyderabad to remain as an investment magnet, he claimed.

Bharani Aroll, president, HYSEA, anchored the talk, which concluded with Rao saying, "Hyderabad continues to attract people from across the world. Blessed with natural advantages, the city just needs a progressive government as an enabler."

## GHMC poll campaign preparation



A vehicle done up with TRS electioneering paraphernalia is parked at Golnaka in Hyderabad on Sunday. Similar vehicles will be used by party activists to campaign for the December 1 GHMC elections.

— P. SURENDRA

## TS records 873 new Covid infections

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, NOV. 22

The state recorded 873 new Covid-19 cases and four deaths from the disease on Saturday, taking the total so far to 2,63,526 and the fatalities to 1,430.

The highest number of daily cases continued to come from the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) area, with the state health department saying on Sunday that 152 fresh cases were found in the urban conglomeration of which Hyderabad city forms a major part.

The second and third highest number of cases were reported from Medchal-Malkajgiri district, which had 78

cases, and Ranga Reddy district, which had 71, respectively.

According to the health department, the GHMC area, as on Saturday night, had 63 Covid-19 containment zones.

Sixteen of these were in Charminar zone, while the Khairatabad zone had 19, Serilingampally 16, Kukatpally 10 and Secunderabad one containment zone.

According to the health department, 1,296 persons were declared recovered from the disease in the 24-hour period ending 8 pm on Saturday.

There were 11,643 active Covid-19 cases of whom 9,345 were in isolation either at home or were receiving treatment in hospitals.

## In rare move, MIM MLA slams TRS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, NOV. 22

A war of words is slowly erupting between the AIMIM and the TRS, two political parties that have been for long allies on many issues. The crossing of verbal swords, that has resulted from the the Telangana Rashtra Samiti deciding to contest from all the 150 GHMC wards for the civic body's Council elections on December 1, made itself felt in no uncertain terms on Sunday.

AIMIM MLA from Charminar constituency Mumtaz Ahmed Khan on Sunday warned that his party "knows how to put someone in power and

## Talasani cautions MIM over attack

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, NOV. 22

The comments made by MIM MLA Mumtaz Khan on TRS working president K.T. Rama Rao drew quick reaction from the ruling party on Sunday.

"Before commenting on KTR, the MIM leaders

also get them out of it." During his campaign for his party's candidates for the GHMC polls, Mumtaz Khan said if the

must see the crowds coming to his road shows and then comment. The MIM may make controversial statements but we will not fall into their trap," said minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav. Bodhan MLA Shakeel also criticised Mumtaz Khan for his remarks.

AIMIM decided to do so, it can remove the TRS from power in a matter of two months. But his choicest criticism was

reserved for the TRS working president and minister K.T. Rama Rao, who is leading the TRS' efforts to retain power in the GHMC Council.

"KTR to tota hai (KTR is just a parrot)," Mumtaz Khan said, indicating that Rama Rao is merely parroting during his campaigning what he has been taught to say and repeating the same things time and again.

The AIMIM MLA said many in the past have predicted doom for MIM and the same things are being said about it now. His party has proved such claims wrong in the past and will do so in the future as it works for the people and their progress.

## IMMUNISATION AGAINST COVID TOUGH TASK: DOC

**Hyderabad, Nov. 22:** Immunisation against Covid-19 involves several challenges, including logistics and supply chains for distribution of the vaccine. Till that is done, there cannot be any lowering of guard on Coronavirus prevention measures, an expert has said.

While the government would do its job on procurement and distribution of the vaccine, the focus should be on keeping the virus spread under check, said Dr Rakesh Mishra, director of the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB). — PTI

## Kavitha ridicules BJP 'chargesheet', mocks at Centre

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, NOV. 22

TRS MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha slammed Union minister Prakash Javadekar and the BJP over their alleged 'chargesheet' against the GHMC Council which is currently ruled by the TRS.

Interacting with reporters on Sunday, she pointed out the basic template the BJP follows in every election where it is not in power is to level accusations against political opponents. She said the TRS owes no explanation to the BJP over the latter's accusations but the Chandrashekar Rao-led TRS heads a democratically elected government and levelling such allegations against the party would imply questioning people's mandate."

The former MP mentioned

about the hypocrisy and behavioural practices that are preached by BJP towards states where it was not in power. She said that the extent of discrimination could be felt when considering that there was no additional funding for Telangana, which was carved only six years ago. Such step-motherly treatment was witnessed during the recent floods, while the Centre released over ₹600 crore to Karnataka, nothing was given to Hyderabad.

The BJP did not support Telangana state and its people and in the upcoming GHMC elections, Hyderabad will also not support the BJP, she said. Kavitha said that the people of GHMC will bring the TRS Party back with a greater number and cross the 99-seat mark. Report on K. Kavitha meeting.

## Non-farm land registration from Nov. 25, says CM

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, NOV. 22

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao on Sunday instructed officials concerned to be prepared to commence registration of non-agriculture properties across the state from November 25.

Though Chief Minister Rao had earlier announced that registrations would be re-started from November 23, the state government decided to delay the commencement of the process in view of the High Court questioning the uploading of non-agriculture properties on Dharani Portal. The matter is coming up for hearing on November 23.

Chief Minister Rao on Sunday reviewed steps being taken to start regis-

trations across Telangana with senior officials in Pragathi Bhavan. He instructed them to take decisions based on the outcome of the court hearing.

Rao said, "the government is absolutely ready to start the process. We have already given an explanation over the issues raised by the Telangana High Court in this regard. Since the case comes up for hearing on November 23, the administration should be ready to start the registration process from November 25."

Rao made it clear that stamp duty will be collected based on existing market price of lands in towns, cities and villages. He emphasised that nobody has any discretionary powers to change land values which have been fixed.

## Concessions to be given to film industry: KCR

From Page 1

Chandrashekar Rao assured the delegation led by the two stars that the state government will take all measures required to protect and support the industry in a meeting held at Pragathi Bhavan.

Addressing the film fraternity in the meeting, Rao said concessions and exemptions would be given to support the industry and its workers, since they had suffered losses due to the suspension of film shootings and closure of theatres on account of the lockdown following the Covid pandemic.

Representatives of the Telugu Film Chambers detailed for Chief Minister Rao the losses incurred by the industry due to the lockdown and sought his support.

Reminding them of the various measures taken by the government to attract industries to the state, he asked in such a scenario, will the government keep quiet when an existing industry is in trouble?

Rao said, "Hyderabad is the centre of a very large film industry like in

Chennai. Lakhs of people are employed in it and are dependent on it. The pandemic had hit the film industry hard, just as it had done in other sectors too."

Maintaining that everyone had the responsibility to save and protect the film industry, the Chief Minister said, "both the government and film personalities should make joint attempts to tackle this crisis. We will take all necessary measures. We will include in the TRS GHMC poll manifesto measures we will take for the benefit of the Telugu film industry."

Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar, Film Chamber president and general secretaries Narayan Das Narang, K. L. Damodar Prasad, Producers' Council President C. Kalyan, distributor Niranjan Reddy and others also participated in the meeting.

It was decided that another meeting of the industry representatives would be held at Chiranjeevi's house soon to discuss the matter threadbare before reverting to the government with concrete proposals.

## CHRISTIANS SEEK SUPPORT

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, NOV. 22

While extending support to Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao, the Telangana United Christians and Pastors Association on behalf of the community raised certain demands to the state government on Sunday.

Considering that the Christians are the second largest minority, the association requested the Chief Minister to accommodate eligible candidates from the community in nomination

posts. They also requested the CM to offer a solution for church constructions that are being obstructed even after the Church Building Construction Act 1965, Section 230 has been omitted.

The association members requested the government to allot burial places in district headquarters and mandals and hand them over to the local committees. They demanded granting marriage licences with minimum requirements to the pastors to solemnise Christian marriages.



## SHORT TAKES

**BHARTI SINGH, HUSBAND SENT TO JUDICIAL CUSTODY**SAURABH JOSHI | DC  
MUMBAI, NOV. 22

A day after the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) arrested comedian Bharati Singh, the officials arrested her husband Harsh Limbachiya following his 15-hour long marathon grilling. The NCB produced the couple before the court on Sunday and they were remanded to judicial custody till December 4. The comedian was arrested on Saturday following raids at their Versova residence.

The NCB officials had seized 86.5 gram of cannabis from the couple's residence. The officials took them for questioning at the NCB office where the couple revealed they procured and consumed the banned substance. The agency subsequently arrested Singh stating that her place was searched based on the information given by one of the peddlers who was arrested during the drugs probe.

"The duo was questioned in connection with the ongoing probe. They have been remanded to judicial custody. The magistrate's court would hear the bail pleas on November 23," said an officer.

During the court proceedings, the officials sought Limbachiya's custody but did not seek Singh's as she was questioned by the NCB ahead of the arrest.

**TARUN GOGO'S HEALTH CONDITION REMAINS CRITICAL**MANOJ ANAND | DC  
GUWAHATI, NOV. 22

Veteran Congress leader and former Assam chief minister Tarun Gogoi's health condition continues to remain critical despite minor improvement in his health parameters on Sunday.

The 86-year-old was admitted to Guwahati Medical College Hospital (GMCH) on November 2 following breathing problems because of post-Covid-19 complications.

The superintendent of Guwahati Medical College and Hospital Dr Abhijit Sarma on Sunday told reporters that he is on a mechanical ventilator with multi-organ dysfunction (MOD) and is experiencing difficulty in passing urine normally.

"Since Saturday, there has been no deterioration in his health and his laboratory parameters have improved marginally. But his condition is still critical and we will observe him closely for another 48 hours," he said.

"At present, he is passing around 100-120 ml of urine in 24 hours. It would be good if the quantity increases. A large group of specialists from various disciplines are constantly monitoring his health and we are also in touch with experts from AIIMS, Delhi, and they are satisfied with the treatment protocol," he added.

**MERCURY DIPS IN MOST PARTS OF NORTH INDIA**

New Delhi, Nov. 22: Minimum temperatures dipped in most parts of north India on Sunday with Srinagar recording a low of minus 3 degrees Celsius, while a cold wave swept parts of Delhi which recorded its coldest November morning since 2003.

The national capital's minimum temperature dropped to 6.9 degrees Celsius while the air quality remained "poor" and government agencies said it is likely to deteriorate further due to unfavourable meteorological conditions.

"The Safdarjung Observatory which provides representative data for the city, recorded a minimum of 6.9 degrees Celsius. It is Delhi's lowest minimum temperature in the month since November 2003, when the city recorded a low of 6.1 degrees Celsius," said Kuldeep Srivastava, the head of the India Meteorological Department's (IMD) regional forecasting centre.

For the plains, the IMD declares a cold wave when the minimum temperature is 10 degrees Celsius or below and is 4.5 notches less than the normal for two consecutive days.

Jammu and Kashmir's summer capital Srinagar recorded the coldest night of the season as the minimum temperature dropped several degrees below the freezing point across Kashmir region, while the weather department predicted a spell of wet weather in the Valley from Monday.

**Central teams visit high Covid risk states**

Efforts on to strengthen containment, surveillance, testing, infection prevention and control measures

SANJAY KAW | DC  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 22

With Covid-19 caseload in the country crossing the 91 lakh mark, high-level central teams were on Sunday deputed to Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh to support them in response and management of the virus. These states have been either reporting a rise in the number of active cases — those who are hospitalised or are in home isolation under medical supervision, or demonstrating a rise in the daily new cases of Coronavirus infections. Earlier, high-level teams were sent to Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Manipur and Chhattisgarh.

A senior health ministry official said that these three-member teams will visit districts reporting a high number of Covid-19 cases and support the state efforts towards strengthening containment, surveillance, testing, infection prevention and control measures, and efficient clinical management of the positive cases. He said that the teams will also guide in effectively managing the challenges related to timely diagnosis and follow up.

With 45,209 fresh Covid-19 cases reported in the last 24 hours, the infection tally in the country has mounted to 90,95,806. The death toll has also gone up to 1,33,227 with 501 more fatalities. The silver lining is that the total recoveries have surged to 85,21,617, pushing the national recovery rate to 93.69 per cent. Even the Covid-19 case fatality rate has declined to 1.46 per cent. There are now 4,40,962 active cases in the country, which comprise 4.85 per cent of the total caseload.

The country's Covid-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh on August 23 and 40 lakh on September 5. It went past 50 lakh on September 16, 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, and surpassed 90 lakh on November 20.

According to the ICMR, over 13.17 crore samples were tested up to November 22 with 10,75,326 samples being



Visitors walk beside closed shops in Shimla on Sunday after authorities ordered closure of markets due to spike in the Coronavirus cases. — PTI

tested on Saturday.

Of the 501 new fatalities, 111 were reported from Delhi, 62 from Maharashtra, 53 from West Bengal, 25 each from Kerala and Haryana, 24 from Uttar Pradesh, 23 from Punjab, 22 from Chhattisgarh and 20 from Karnataka. Total 1,33,227 deaths reported so far in the country include 46,573 from Maharashtra followed by 11,641 from Karnataka, 11,586 from Tamil Nadu, 8,270 from Delhi, 7,976 from West Bengal, 7,524 from Uttar Pradesh, 6,927 from Andhra Pradesh, 4,595 from Punjab and 3,846 from Gujarat. The health ministry stressed that more than 70 per cent of the deaths occurred due to comorbidities.

At 3.2 per cent, Punjab's fatality rate is the maximum among all states and UT. Maharashtra (2.6 per cent), Sikkim (2 per cent), Gujarat (2 per cent), West Bengal (1.8 per cent), Puducherry (1.7 per cent), Madhya Pradesh (1.6 per cent) and Uttarakhand (1.6 per cent) have recorded more deaths per 100 confirmed cases than Delhi.

**Don't create scarcity of beds, pvt hosps told**

Ahmedabad, Nov. 22: Amid a spike in Covid-19 cases in Gujarat's Ahmedabad city, the local civic body on Sunday warned private hospitals not to create an artificial shortage of beds for treatment.

Ahmedabad city currently has 2,906 active cases, led by its west zone with 479, and followed by 464 in north-west and 457 in south-west.

The Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation said there was no need to panic as 1,500 beds were available and it was in the process of requisitioning another eight to ten hospitals to enhance the numbers further.

It said some private hospitals were admitting Covid-19 patients who did not require hospitalisation in a bid to fill up beds and create "artificial scarcity".

The civic body said it had reached out to private hospitals across the city after a review meeting was chaired by additional chief secretary Rajiv Gupta, who is the special officer for Covid-19 in Ahmedabad city, and directed them to stop any such "unscrupulous and illegal practice".

The AMC said the office-bearers of Ahmedabad hospitals and nursing homes association have been intimidated about this issue as well.

The civic body also told providers of 108 ambulance service to ensure, as much as possible, that members of a family are admitted in the same hospital and not different ones. On Saturday, the city witnessed 354 new cases, among the highest single-day additions since the outbreak began in March, and five deaths. — PTI

**GEHLOT ACCORDS TOP PRIORITY TO SAVE LIVES**

Jaipur, Nov. 22: Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Sunday reviewed the Covid-19 situation in the state and reminded officials of the government's top priority to save lives and ensure strict compliance of anti-pandemic precautions by people.

Holding an extensive meeting to review the #Covid19 situation across the state. Taking stock of the prevailing conditions & ongoing efforts to contain the virus. Our top-most priority is to save lives, provide adequate treatment & encourage people to strictly follow health protocols, Gehlot tweeted. Reviewing arrangements to contain the infection, ensure compliance of decisions including that of the night curfew & also to make sure that people are not inconvenienced, he said. — PTI

**FORMER K'TAKA MINISTER BAIG HELD IN IMA SCAM**VINAY MADHAV | DC  
BENGALURU, NOV. 22

Former Karnataka minister R. Roshan Baig, who had resigned as Congress MLA and joined the BJP, which helped Chief Minister B.S. Yeddyurappa form government, has been arrested by the CBI in I Monetary Advisory (IMA) gold scam.

On Sunday morning, the CBI took Baig for questioning. Late in the evening, the agency produced him before a CBI special court judge and Baig was remanded to judicial custody for 14 days. He was taken to the Parappana Agrahara jail.

IMA director Mansoor Ali Khan had started a gold investment scheme and collected over ₹4,000 crore from over 40,000 investors and cheated them.

The state government had handed over the investigation to the CBI, after Khan spilled the names of politicians and bureaucrats, including two IPS officers, as being beneficiaries.

**TMC says it is rectifying its mistakes ahead of polls**RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC  
KOLKATA, NOV. 22

Following the BJP's fierce campaign of misrule against Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, the Trinamul Congress said on Sunday that its government has started "rectifying" its mistakes ahead of the next year's Assembly elections. It however acknowledged that securing the total satisfaction of all the people is difficult for any ruling party, either at the Centre or in the states.

TMC spokesperson Kunal Ghosh said, "the BJP or its leader Kailash Vijayvargiya does not have anything to say against the TMC because of the work that has taken place here. But it is difficult for any party in the country, be at the Centre or the state, to make all the people 100 per cent happy. Somewhere, errors and dissent exist. This government is identifying them, working on them and rectifying them."

The former TMC Rajya Sabha MP also pointed to

● **THE TMC admits that it is difficult for any party in the country, be at the Centre or the state, to make all the people 100 per cent happy. Somewhere, errors and dissent exist. This government is identifying them, working on them and rectifying them.**

● **TMC SPOKESPERSON Kunal Ghosh also points out the dynasty politics and nepotism in the BJP.**

the dynasty politics and nepotism in the BJP to counter the saffron party's "bhatija (nephew)" jibe about the CM's nephew Abhishek Banerjee's clout in the TMC.

"I dare Vijayvargiya to publicly take the name of the person he calls bhatija. Otherwise, he should stop character assassination of our youth leader who is a two-time MP. Can't there be another person from a politician's family, be in politics?"

Doesn't the BJP have a similar history? They have many family members in the Rajya Sabha, Lok Sabha and the Union Cabinet. Who is Akash Vijayvargiya? He is an MLA in Madhya Pradesh who had hit municipal workers with a bat and was arrested in the case. Mukul Roy's son Shubhrangshu Roy (Bijpur MLA) is also in their party," he said.

Training guns on the BJP on corruption charges, Ghosh, a key accused arrested by the CBI in the Saradha chit fund scam earlier, demanded the arrest of Roy in the Narada sting operation case.

"Is the BJP a washing machine? In the Narada case, arrested IPS officer S.M.H. Meerza's statement under Section 161 of CrPC should be considered and Roy must be arrested by the CBI because Meerza spoke about the money he handed over to Roy. I am also ready to face Roy at a joint interrogation in Saradha case," he added.

**Azad: People, Cong delinked for long**DC CORRESPONDENT  
with agency inputs  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 22

There is a huge disconnect between the people and Congress leaders and "five-star culture" has crept into the party, veteran leader Ghulam Nabi Azad said Sunday as he called for an overhaul in the party organisation. Azad was one of the 23 senior leaders who had written to Sonia Gandhi seeking major changes in the Congress organisation.

His remarks come after the Congress' debacle in the Bihar Assembly elections, in which the party won only 19 of the 70 seats it contested.

"There is an urgent need to overhaul the party structure by conducting elections from block to district and state level," Azad said, saying Congress leaders at all levels should "shed five-star culture, at least during elections".

In West Bengal, meanwhile, the Congress, after its disastrous performance in Bihar, is facing

pressure from its Left alliance partners to become "more realistic" and settle for fewer seats in order to restrict the BJP and the Trinamul Congress in the state.

Differences have also cropped up over the West Bengal Congress' desire to project its chief Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury as the face of the alliance with the CPI(M).

Leaders of the Left are hopeful that the Congress would not place such a demand on the table to protect the alliance.

Describing the Congress as a "big letdown" for the Grand Alliance, CPI(ML) Liberation general secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya hoped the party would adopt a "more realistic" approach during its seat-sharing talks with the Left Front in West Bengal.

Bhattacharya said the Congress too would be reviewing its poor show in Bihar and be reasonable while sealing a seat-sharing deal in politically sensitive Bengal, where the BJP is making all efforts to clinch power.

added. Slamming the BJP over the demand to unlock everything, Thackeray said that some people demand to start all the activities but if the state opens everything, would they be ready to take responsibility for it?

Meanwhile, deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar said that the lockdown will be decided after taking a review of the situation in the next 8-10 days. He said that a second wave of Covid-19 is expected.

The health department said on Sunday said the state's overall infection count increased to 17,80,208.

A total of 4,060 patients were discharged during the day. With this, as many as 16,51,064 patients have recuperated across the state till date. There are 81,512 active cases in the state at present. Maharashtra's recovery rate is now 92.75 per cent, while the fatality rate is 2.62 per cent. Of the 5,753 total cases reported on Sunday, 1,135 were detected in Mumbai alone, which took the city's case count to 2,75,714, while 19 deaths pushed the toll to 10,675.

**INDIAN NAVY PARTICIPATES IN SITMEX-20**DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 22

As part of effort to strengthen India's strategic maritime, Indian Navy participated in trilateral maritime exercise SITMEX-20, with Singapore and Thailand on November 21 & 22 in Andaman sea.

The 2020 edition of the exercise is being hosted by Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN). This exercise comes soon after multilateral Malabar Naval war game in which Indian, US, Australian and Japan navies conducted complex and exhaustive exercises. Indian Navy (IN) ships including insignously built ASW corvette Kamorta and missile corvette Karmuk participated in the second edition SITMEX.

The first edition of SITMEX, hosted by Indian Navy, was conducted off Port Blair in September 2019.

The SITMEX series of exercises are conducted to enhance mutual interoperability and imbibing best practices between Indian Navy, Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN) and Royal Thai Navy (RTN).

RSN is being represented by the 'Formidable' Class frigate 'Intrepid' and 'Endurance' Class Landing Ship Tank 'Edeavour' and RTN by the 'Chao Phraya' Class frigate 'Kraburi' in the exercise.

**MID-DAY | MEALS**RABINDRA NATH  
CHOUDHURY | DC  
BHOPAL, NOV. 22

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Sunday reiterated his government's decision to not introduce the egg in the mid-day meal provided to children in schools and anganwadi centres in the state to combat malnutrition among them.

Chairing the first meet-

ing of the Cabinet committee on protection of cattle, christened 'Gau cabinet', Chouhan said milk, instead of egg, would be introduced in the menu to tackle malnutrition.

"Cattle resource development will be the cornerstone of the self-reliance policy being implemented by the government. The move will give a fillip to milk production. This will make the proposal to introduce milk in midday meal

● **CHILD RIGHT activists have been demanding introduction of eggs in the midday meals.**

● **THE BJP claims that any attempt to change the dietary habits of children belonging to a particular section of communities may lead to cultural conflict.**

a viable proposition", he said.

Child right activists have been demanding introduction of eggs in the midday meals.

The BJP has been maintaining that any attempt to

change the dietary habits of children belonging to a particular section of communities by adding egg to the menu may lead to cultural conflict.

"The BJP has always maintained that suitable

alternatives to eggs should be made available for children so as not to hurt religious sentiments. Milk is a good alternative to egg for the purpose," BJP spokesman Rajneesh Agrawal said here.

Child health experts have expressed apprehensions over feasibility of the proposal to introduce milk. "The availability and self-life of milk raise question mark over feasibility of the proposal,"

said child health expert Sachin Kumar Jain.

As many as 72,87,819 children including around 1 lakh tribal children are enrolled in 97,135 anganwadi centres in the state.

Madhya Pradesh has 42 per cent stunted, 18.6 per cent severely stunted, 25.8 per cent wasted, 9.2 per cent severely wasted, 42.8 per cent underweight and 14.3 per cent severely underweight children under the age of five.



# DECCAN Chronicle

23 NOVEMBER 2020

## Avoid partisan approach, apathy to conquer Covid

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was spot on, calling Covid-19 the biggest threat to humanity after World War-II, as nations across the globe stare at the possibility of another wave of the pandemic. India is no exception; several states have started showing signs of a new wave. It is welcome that the Union government, realising the threat, has launched a series of measures to lessen its impact.

The work has started right in the national capital, which is in the throes of a third wave, and the Union and the state government have promised to work in tandem. The Delhi government has no plans to reintroduce a lockdown but will tighten the rules and rigorously enforce them. It has decided to keep a special watch on markets where more people congregate, and will hike the fine for not wearing a mask from ₹500 to ₹2,000. And most importantly, there will be a house-to-house survey for testing.

The Union government has sent expert teams to several states, which are now witnessing a new surge in the number of infections. The government had done so in the past, too, but it faced the allegations that there were political motives behind it. The teams' behaviour in several states ruled by parties opposed to the BJP had given credence to the allegations, too. Hopefully, the government has learnt its lessons and would not use the opportunity for politicking this time around. The teams should limit themselves to helping the local administration benefit from their expertise.

We have said in these columns earlier, too, that public health is a matter of concern for the public first, and that a government can do only so much without its cooperation. Reports say people have started taking it easy. Festivals, markets, public transport and entertainment avenues have been flooded. Even political leaders, elected representatives and senior bureaucrats appear in the public either with no masks or wearing them in the wrong way. Such callous attitude will undo all the good work done so far. There must be better awareness among all ranks of the people about the need to follow Covid-appropriate behaviour such as maintenance of social distancing, washing of hands and wearing masks.

The best lesson the micro-organism has taught humanity is that it can be stopped only by the joint efforts of all of its victims; a partisan approach helps it thrive. The United States, which is facing another dreaded run of the virus, is an example.

Back home, the Kerala experience tells a similar story. The state, which performed remarkably in the first phase in containing the pandemic, failed the moment partisan politics took over. Onam was not the only culprit; anti-government agitations too contributed to the spread with the result that the state today contributes more than 10 per cent of the country's total daily caseload.

Concerted efforts by all the stakeholders is the need of the hour, for there are no human enemies in this war.

## BJP's pointless exertions

In the popularity sweepstakes, the two top honchos of Tamil Nadu, Edappadi K. Palaniswami and O. Panneerselvam, gained nothing from turning up early at the Chennai airport to personally receive the Union home minister Amit Shah on Saturday. In fact, they were only trotted for breaking a convention and seen as kowtowing to a Big Brother political ally for no apparent collective common cause. If the two AIADMK leaders had any genuine reason for appeasing the BJP leader by going the extra mile and even hailing him as "Chanakya", they have not yet revealed it to the people of the state.

The people might ask about it when the time comes — perhaps, when they would go to them to seek their votes in 2021. But prior to that, what will be the fallout of the much-hyped visit of Amit Shah, for whom it was an extraordinarily long night with BJP functionaries and other visitors till 2.30 am on Sunday?

The BJP cadre who stayed awake listening to one of their most prominent leaders may have returned home enthused over their party's projected future prospects in the state where their candidates have been generally vying with Neta in the vote count.

But beyond that what did the state BJP gain? In the run-up to the visit, the state leadership had said that the news of Mr Shah coming to town itself was sending shivers down the spines of Opposition leaders. Whatever he meant by that, a "Go Back" hashtag trended on Twitter for a day and even a man was arrested for hurling a placard towards the visiting dignitary from the welcoming crowd.

Nothing, however, interfered with Mr Shah's engagements and nothing helped the BJP's popularity to soar either. For, more than visitors, it's local leaders who need to gain people's confidence, which definitely can't be done by taking out disruptive marches carrying spears, even if they are blunt.

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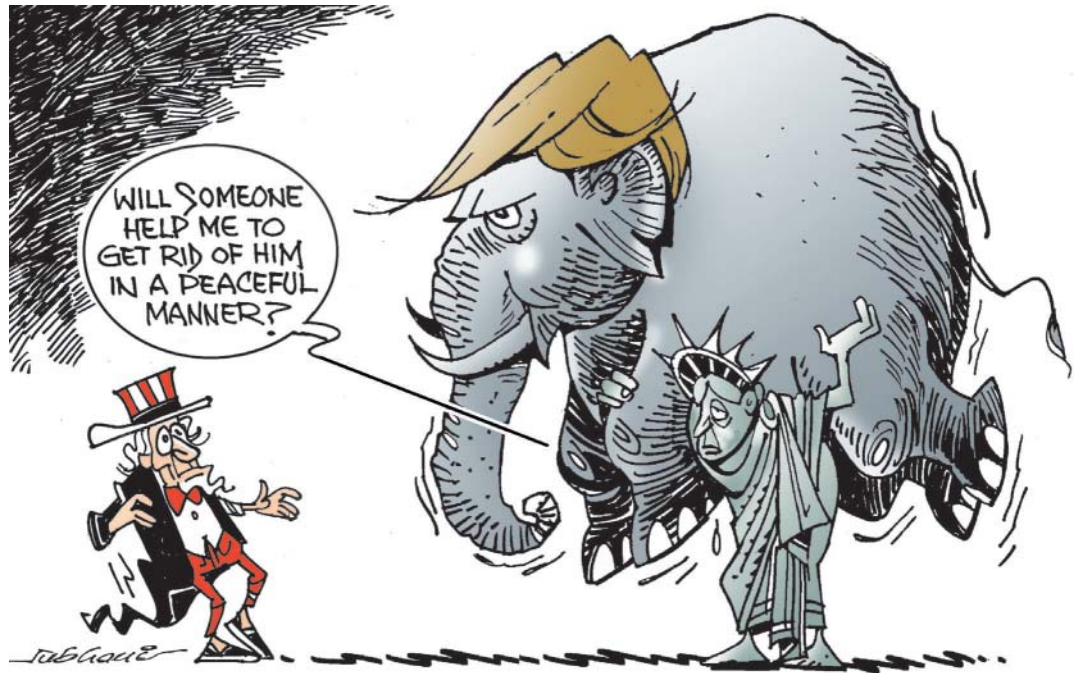
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Subhani



## Theatres of the New Cold War



Manish Tewari

State of the Union

What would the new Cold War look like as China attempts to achieve its misconceived trust with the destiny of becoming the world's pre-eminent power by 2049, completing one hundred years as a modern Communist state albeit with capitalist characters?

Where then would China's push points lie? The first and obvious one — is the Western Pacific. China has been now for decades trying to break out of the first and the second island chains as well as surmount the Malacca dilemma effectively.

What are these island chains and do they serve any strategic purpose today in containing or constraining China? The first one embraces Kuril Islands, main Japanese archipelago, Okinawa, northern part of the Philippine archipelagos, Malay Peninsula and Taiwan. The second one comprises the islands of Japan stretching to Guam and the islands of Micronesia. China has so far succeeded in establishing a robust presence through its grey zone actions in the first island chain only. In the Spratly and Paracel Island chain in the South China Sea, China is growing land to augment its entitlement to the waters of the region. It is landfilling submerged reefs building artificial islands that are being fashioned into outlier military bases.

Herein lies the rub. These two island chains are strategically significant for the US and its hub and spoke security relationships from Japan all the way down to Australia. As General Douglas MacArthur, in his farewell address to the US Congress as far

back as 1951, explained, "All this was changed by our Pacific victory, our strategic frontier then shifted to embrace the entire Pacific Ocean which became a vast moat to protect us as long as we hold it. Indeed, it acts as a protective shield for all of the Americas and all free lands of the Pacific Ocean area. We control it to the shores of Asia by a chain of islands extending in an arc from the Aleutians to the Mariannas held by us and our free allies. From this island chain we can dominate with sea and air power every Asiatic port from Vladivostok to Singapore and prevent any hostile movement into the Pacific..." Maybe not so much militarily but geo-politically this thesis is as relevant today as it was in 1951. For the Chinese, therefore, it is equally important to break through this perimeter if they want to become a serious blue water power.

It would be instructive to note that China's shipping imperatives traverse the Taiwan Straits, pass through the South China Sea, and into the Indian Ocean via the Malacca Straits. West of the Indian subcontinent, it splits in two. One track skirts the northern tier of the Arabian Sea and transits through the Hormuz Strait into the Persian Gulf. The other lane continues on to the Horn of Africa and cones through the Bab al Mandeb Strait into the Red Sea. From there, it exits through the Suez Canal into the Mediterranean. These crucial sea lanes of communication and Commerce (SLOCs) are China's nemesis as 80 per cent of China's oil imports and crucial minerals flow from Africa and the Middle East, and to the major export mar-

kets of Europe along these waterways.

The North Arabian Sea is therefore a critical area for China. To protect its interests and project power Gwadar in southwest Pakistan seems the obvious answer to its problem. East of Hormuz it is already seen as China's sentinel in the Indian Ocean. Though economically unviable it enables direct transport linkages between China and the Indian Ocean thereby helping it overcome the choke points of the Straits of Malacca.

However, the moment China converts Gwadar into a full-fledged military base it would come in conflict with the entrenched powers in the region namely Iran, GCC countries and most importantly the US whose Fifth Fleet is headquartered in Bahrain and it maintains its biggest concentration of military personnel in the Middle East at the Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar. China will also have to contend with a new dynamic in the region the new-found relationship between the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain and Israel. India that sits on the other side of the Arabian Sea would be a natural antagonist of any Chinese presence in these waters.

The next theatre of the Cold War would be Africa where the Chinese have invested resources much before the formal commencement of the Belt and Road Initiative. China's first internationally acknowledged military facility was established in August 2017 at Djibouti in the Horn of Africa. The Chinese People's Liberation Army Support Base is oper-

**The next theatre of the Cold War would be Africa where the Chinese have invested resources much before the formal commencement of the Belt and Road Initiative**

ated by the Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN). This hub will facilitate the movement of the Chinese Navy across the entire Indian Ocean. However there are traditional powers in that area namely Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Libya, Algeria, to name but a few. They are not going to be comfortable with an alien military presence in their lands. Why would they want China to replace the United States as the outside power balancer in the region? If, therefore, will create multiple friction points for China, were it to flex its muscles.

The most portentous challenge lies in South Asia. China is already in a tense stalemate with India in Eastern Ladakh. Maldives has been targeted by China's voraciousness. Maldives debt to China is estimated to be at least \$1.5 billion that represents more than 30 per cent of its GDP. Under the Abdulla Yameen administration (2013-2018), massive BRI infrastructure loans were taken and contracts subsequently awarded to Chinese companies at inflated prices. Though things seem to look a tad more balanced after Ibrahim Mohamed Solih became President but the debts do remain on the Maldives national balance sheet. Similarly, the cumulative value of Chinese infrastructure investment to Sri Lanka amounts to \$12.1 billion between 2006 and July 2019. Were the Chinese to push these two countries for military concessions and with the US showing an interest in both Maldives and Sri Lanka the Chinese may have to deal with both India and the US in South Asia. This though is not in India's best interests as both these nations are considered within its eminent domain.

*The author is a lawyer, Member of Parliament and former Union information and broadcasting minister. The views expressed are personal. Twitter handle @manishtewari.*

LETTERS

### FUEL PRICES

The Centre has been hiking fuel prices for the last three days just because the global prices of crude have started firming up. They have no right to do so as they did not pass on the benefits of reduction to us in the last 10 months. Even as gas prices went down, we are paying more for a gas cylinder. What was PM Cares for? Excise revenue from petroleum products are audited and published but the fund will not be audited.

Lal Melwani  
Hyderabad

### PENSION PLAN

The TRS poll plank to highlight the condemned contribution defined as the pension scheme for Central government and CPSU employees is the right move (*KCR pension plan to retire BJP early, DC, Nov. 22*). The BJP is following an anti-employee and anti-farmer stance by bringing the new labour code and farm laws.

P.R. Ravinder  
Hyderabad

### ELECTION DUTY

There were reports that teachers from Central and state government schools will not be assigned GHMC elections duties as they are teaching children online. However, it seems like they were not spared. The SEC should understand that most teachers have children or elderly parents to take care or many of them are over 50 or more.

N. Nagarajan  
Hyderabad

### 50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

#### People warned against cycle-theft

HYDERABAD, November 22 From September there has been 91 cases of cycle-thefts from various localities in the city. A majority of them are committed in busy areas like shopping centres, cinema theatres, hotels, and other places where owners left them unattended and unlocked, the police said. The police arrested several criminals and recovered many cycles from them. The bulletin asked people to co-operate with the police by locking their cycles and not leaving them unattended. In some cases criminals who were caught redhanded are being let off after the lost cycles are returned.

Kishwar Desai  
London Diary



## Anti-Semitism is why Meghnad quit; all hope for Christmas shots

Finally — the good news is that a vaccine is coming, hopefully by Christmas! Indeed not just one, but six are running a close race and are likely to touch the finishing tape almost simultaneously. Our own Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine was off to an early start but ran into a few problems. The UK has ordered 100 million of them. No one had foreseen Pfizer/BioNTech would get in ahead. So very quickly, we have ordered 40 million of these. The poor health minister has scrambled together enough money to also order five million of the Moderna vaccine. It looks like we may be vaccinating by late December. Maybe we need to be singing, "On the First Day of Christmas My True Love Gave to Me an AstraZeneca vaccine..."

On the personal front, it was quite a tumultuous week for us, as my husband, Meghnad Desai, left the Labour Party after 49 years! It had been a decision he had been mulling over for while as he felt that the anti-Semitism in the

party had not been dealt with and needed to be rooted out. He has fought against this racism his entire life. And when Jeremy Corbyn was recently readmitted to the Party (most of the trouble over anti-Semitism had been during his tenure as the head of the Labour Party) Meghnad felt enough is enough. Of course, it came after discussions and was not a sudden decision — as he has always been a well-respected member of the Labour Party, and has numerous friends within it. But most of them, even if they don't admit it, will know why he felt it was essential to quit. The irony is that Meghnad's autobiography is out this month — and one wishes he had been able to include a chapter on this very important move on his part! But perhaps he can discuss it now at the book launches.

So look out for some interesting revelations as Meghnad talks about his book, *Rebellious Lord*.

One is never sure if lifting the lockdown is good news or bad news. We now hear that

in early December we will go back to a partial lifting of the various restrictions. Everyone is fighting the big fear that it may be a dull winter, with seven days of Christmas celebrated with no more than six people. Since the government has been (as are other governments) befuddled by the virus and does not know what it is doing or can do, we just have to bump along.

Even Boris is in isolation because Tory MPs have not learnt about distancing. When he met a bunch of them, one of them was infected so "test and trace" pinged Boris and told him to isolate. As he already had Covid, he should be immune and not require isolation. But you can never be too careful. He does seem to enjoy his isolation as he can do his parliamentary business from his flat at the top of Number 11.

Last week we went through a perfect storm as one of Boris' closest advisers, Dom Cummings, was asked to leave along with his second in command. Apparently Carrie Symonds, the

Prime Minister's partner, decided it was time for a Christmas cleanup and took over the reins. She is an environmental activist and suddenly Boris was supporting a Green economy. He announced that all petrol and diesel cars would be gone by 2030 and only electric cars will be allowed. This calls for a reality show called the "Kitchen Cabinet Files" Of course, no one knows what the economy will be like in 2030 — and one wonders why we are still talking about private cars — when we should be discussing more and more public transport.

One always has the fond hope that the UK government would be corruption-free. But the pandemic seems to have brought a sleaze virus into the system. We now hear about a host of scams in which cronies have been given millions in fees and contracts to deliver dubious supplies. The latest to come to light is a contract given to a fashion store in Florida which promised to

deliver three truckloads of PPE suits as the health service did not have enough PPE suits in stock. But the appointed contractor got a subcontractor who did not deliver. It was in a court case in Florida between the contractor and his subcontractor that it was revealed the contractor had collected millions in his fee in addition to the money for the supplies. Of course, in the panic over the pandemic many unfortunate decisions were taken the world over — but it seems these cases may have revealed some deeper malaise. I appeal to Carrie Symonds to cast a glance at this. All our hopes rest with her now... I suggest we start writing "Dear Carrie" letters to Downing Street, and action will undoubtedly be taken.

*Kishwar Desai is an award winning author, and playwright. Her latest book, The Longest Kiss: The Life And Times of Devika Rani, will be published shortly.*



IN BRIEF

MAN DIES IN SHARK ATTACK IN AUSTRALIA

**Sydney, Nov. 22:** A man died Sunday after being attacked by a shark in Western Australia, the eighth fatality in the country this year.

Police were called to Cable Beach, a popular tourist spot on Australia's Indian Ocean coast, at about 8:40 a.m. The 55-year-old was pulled from the water with serious injuries and treated by police before paramedics arrived.

He died at the scene, police said. Park rangers immediately closed the beach. The man was the eighth to die in a shark attack in Australia this year, the highest toll since 1929 when nine died. The introduction of shark nets at popular beaches in the 1930s led to a significant fall in fatal attacks.

14 PRO-IRAN FIGHTERS IN SYRIA KILLED

**Beirut, Nov. 22:** At least 14 pro-Iran militia fighters from Iraq and Afghanistan were killed in air strikes in war-torn eastern Syria, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said Sunday.

The strikes on Saturday night in Deir Ezzor province, on the border with Iraq, were likely carried out by Israeli war planes, the Observatory said.

The Israeli army said it doesn't comment on foreign reports. More than 10 strikes hit positions of Iran-backed militias outside the border town of Albu Kamal, according to the war monitor.

The attack killed eight Iraqis and six Afghan fighters, it said. It also destroyed two bases as well as several military vehicles, the Observatory added.

Iran-backed fighters are heavily deployed in a stretch of territory between the Syrian towns of Albu Kamal and Mayadeen, both former strongholds of the Islamic State group.

Along with Russia, Iran has been a key backer of the Damascus regime in its nine-year-long civil war. Israel has carried out hundreds of air and missile strikes on Syria since the civil war broke out in 2011, targeting Iranian and Lebanese Hezbollah forces.

NINE KILLED IN ISLAMIC STATE AMBUSH IN IRAQ

**Samarra, Iraq, Nov. 22:** Six Iraqi security personnel and three civilians were killed in an ambush Saturday carried out by the Islamic State group north of Baghdad, police and a local official said.

A police source said a roadside bomb hit a car and that jihadists opened fire on a rescue team of policemen and state-aligned paramilitary forces when they arrived at the scene, about 200 kilometres (120 miles) from the capital.

Four members of the Hashed al-Shaabi and two policemen died along with three civilians, Mohammed Zidane, the mayor of Zouiyah, 50 kilometres from the city of Tikrit, told AFP.

He updated an earlier civilian death toll of two.

There was no immediate word of casualties among the assailants, but Zidane said those killed among the Hashed, a coalition of mainly Shiite forces, were Sunni tribesmen.

Both the mayor and police said the ambush was the work of IS jihadists.

NIGERIA AMBUSH TOLL RISES TO 8, 2 BODIES FOUND

**Kano, Nigeria, Nov. 22:** The death toll in a jihadist ambush on a military convoy in northeast Nigeria's Borno state on Saturday rose to eight after two more bodies of soldiers were recovered, security sources said. Three security sources had initially told AFP six people, including five soldiers and an allied militiaman, were killed in the attack.

"The death toll from the ambush is now eight. The bodies of two more soldiers were recovered," said one of the sources. "It is now seven soldiers and one militiaman killed," he said. The toll was confirmed by another source.

Islamic State West Africa Province fighters armed with machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades opened fire on a convoy of soldiers and an anti-jihadist militia in Kwayamti village, 60 kilometres (36 miles) north of the regional capital Maiduguri.

The convoy was on its way to the town of Baga as a security detail for the state governor, Babagana Umara Zulum who flew by helicopter earlier in the day.

England plans tougher tiered steps on Covid from Dec. 2

UK media speculates PM will declare week of freedom around Christmas

**London, Nov. 22:** British Prime Minister Boris Johnson will set out a "Covid Winter Plan" to control the spread of Coronavirus in a speech on Monday, when he is expected to set out some tougher tiered measures to come in as England's lockdown officially ends on December 2. More areas are set to be placed into the higher tiers of tougher movement and household mixing restrictions and some tiers will be strengthened to safeguard lockdown progress to keep the deadly virus under control, Downing Street said.

Ahead of the nearly month-long stay-at-home lockdown, England had been placed in a three-tier system of graded social distancing rules based on the infection rates in particular regions. The government's Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) is expected to publish research on Monday saying that measures in the previous tiers were not strong enough.

More details of the so-called Covid Winter Plan are expected on Monday in a speech to the House of Commons, after Cabinet discussions on Sunday which Johnson will be conducting virtually as he continues to self-isolate following contact with an MP who later tested positive for Covid-19.

Some UK media reports also suggest that Johnson is expected to announce up to a week of freedom from Covid-19 restrictions at Christmas, subject to

an agreement with the devolved governments of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It will involve a UK-wide relaxation of rules, reportedly from December 22 to 28, so that several families can join in one "bubble" to celebrate Christmas on December 25.

"Everyone's efforts during the current national restrictions have helped bring the virus back under control, slowed its spread and eased pressures on the NHS," a Downing Street spokesperson said. "But the Prime Minister and his scientific advisers are clear the virus is still present — and without regional restrictions it could quickly run out of control again before vaccines and mass testing have had an effect. That would put in jeopardy the progress the country has made, and once again risk intolerable pressure on the NHS," the spokesperson said.

Downing Street also said that the Winter Plan will set out how people will be able to see their loved ones at Christmas, adding that ministers will be warning that this will not be a normal festive period. There are reports that the 10 PM curfew for bars and restaurants could be extended by an hour. Last orders would still be called at 10 PM, but people would have until 11pm to finish their food and drink. Johnson faces a rebellion from some MPs from within his own Conservative Party.

— PTI

US surpasses 12 million cases, 2.5 lakh deaths

**Washington, Nov. 22:** The United States surpassed 12 million Covid-19 cases Saturday, according to the Johns Hopkins University real-time tracker. The world's largest economy currently has 12,019,960 cases and 255,414 deaths, both by far the worst global tolls. The new toll comes just six days after the US crossed the 11-million case threshold.

Cases have been surging in the US at an alarming rate, forcing many cities to re-impose punishing lockdown measures. Health authorities have

urged people to stay home for next week's Thanksgiving holiday, when Americans usually travel from coast to coast to be with their families.

New York City has shut down schools for its 1.1 million students, while California began imposing a 10:00 pm to 5:00 am curfew from Saturday.

Chicago — the US third-largest city — has been under stay-at-home orders since Monday.

On Friday, President Donald Trump's eldest son, Donald Trump Jr, announced he had tested positive for Covid-19.

— AFP

CASES IN JAPAN HIT A RECORD FOR FOURTH DAY

**Tokyo, Nov. 22:** The daily tally of confirmed Coronavirus cases in Japan hit a record for the fourth straight day at 2,508, the Health Ministry said on Sunday.

Japan has had fewer than 2,000 Coronavirus deaths so far. Opposition legislators and public flayed the government for being too slow in halting its "GoTo" tourism campaign, which encouraged travel and dining with discounts.

— AP

VIRUS: RUSSIA HEALTH SYSTEM UNDER STRAIN

**Moscow, Nov. 22:** When Yekaterina Kobzeva, a nurse at a preschool in Russia's Ural Mountains, began having trouble breathing, she called an ambulance. It was four days before she managed to find a free hospital bed.

Russia's health care system, vast yet underfunded, has been under significant strains in recent weeks, as the pandemic surges again.

— AP

Don Pennsylvania lawsuit dismissed

**Washington, Nov. 22:** Donald Trump presented "strained" legal arguments without merit and "speculative accusations" that were not supported by evidence, a federal judge has ruled as she dismissed the Pennsylvania lawsuit of his campaign, in a major setback to the US president's efforts to challenge the November 3 election results.

TRUMP CAMPAIGN FOR RECOUNT OF VOTE IN GEORGIA

**Washington, Nov. 22:** The Trump Campaign has filed a petition for recount of votes in Georgia, days after US President-elect Joe Biden wrested the Republican stronghold by a little over 12,000 votes.

Democrat Biden became the first Democrat to have won the key battleground state since 1992 after a hand recount of nearly five million votes, that lasted for several days. Georgia hadn't voted for a Democratic presidential candidate since Bill Clinton in 1992.

In case of a recount, election officials in Georgia will have to re-scan the five million hand-recounted and audited legal ballots. "We are focused on ensuring that every aspect of Georgia State Law and the US Constitution are followed so that every legal vote is counted," the Trump campaign said.

— PTI

when seeking such a startling outcome, a plaintiff would come formidably armed with compelling legal arguments and factual proof of rampant corruption, such that this court would have no option but to regrettably grant the proposed injunctive relief despite the impact it would have on such a large group of citizens," the judge said. Trump has refused to concede the November 3 election and has filed multiple lawsuits.

— PTI

POMPEO MEETS TALIBAN, AFGHAN NEGOTIATORS

**Washington, Nov. 22:** US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has met negotiators from the Afghan government and the Taliban in Doha, amidst signs of progress in their stalled talks and an uptick in violence that threatens to jeopardise the peace push in the war-torn country.

This was the first meeting of the top American diplomat with the Taliban and the Afghans representatives after the US' recent announcement that it will reduce the number of American troops in Afghanistan and Iraq to 2,500 each by January 15 next year. The US currently has a little over 4,500 troops in Afghanistan. "Met with both Taliban and Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's negotiating teams in Doha," Pompeo said in a tweet.

— PTI

Biden admin might engage more with India, says expert

**Washington, Nov. 22:** The incoming Biden administration will have a more deliberate and thoughtful engagement with India, a noted foreign policy expert has said, asserting that there will be an opportunity to work with New Delhi to balance the burgeoning influence of China in the region. Sohini Chatterjee, a faculty member at Columbia University who previously served as senior policy advisor in the Obama administration, said in some cases, there will be a "little bit of consistency" as both US President Donald Trump and President-elect Joe Biden believe that India is an important strategic partner in the region.

But Trump's relationship with India was a bit more short-term and reactive, the Biden administration is likely to have a slightly more deliberate and thoughtful engagement with India, Chatterjee told PTI.

"I think there'll be an opportunity to really work with India to balance the kind of burgeoning influence of China in the region, and structure a dialogue that that seeks, in some ways to counterbalance that burgeoning influence," she said, adding that the QUAD engagement involving Japan and Australia would continue. Chatterjee said for the Biden administration at the minimum human rights will now be "on the table as a critical issue to address."

— PTI

Protesters set ablaze part of Guatemala Congress building

**Guatemala City, Nov. 22:** Hundreds of protesters broke into Guatemala's Congress and burned part of the building Saturday amid growing demonstrations against President Alejandro Giammattei and the legislature for approving a budget that cut educational and health spending.

The protest came as about 7,000 people were

demonstrating in front of the National Palace in Guatemala City against the budget, which protesters say was negotiated and passed by legislators in secret while the Central American country was distracted by the fallout of back-to-back hurricanes and the Covid-19.

Video on social media showed flames shooting out a window in the leg-

islative building. According to media reports, security agents fired tear gas at protesters and there were people injured. Giammattei condemned the fires in his Twitter account Saturday.

"Anyone who is proven to have participated in the criminal acts will be punished with the full force of the law."

— AP

COVID | IMPACT Coronavirus pandemic has reduced the annual gathering of world top leaders into a webinar

Masks, screens, empty chairs at virtual Saudi G20 summit

**Riyadh, Nov. 21:** Mask-clad reporters filed into a Riyadh ballroom-turned-media centre Saturday after mandatory temperature checks, to cover physically a virtual G20 summit originally conceived as a grand coming-out party for host Saudi Arabia.

The media room in the capital's Crown Plaza hotel would have been buzzing with hundreds of international reporters were it not for the Coronavirus pandemic that has reduced the annual gathering of

world leaders into a giant webinar.

As the summit opened, the handful of foreign media present pointed their cameras to a large flickering screen where world leaders popped up in multiple tiny windows — one shuffling papers, another seen calling for technical help and one casually chatting to an aide.

For Saudi Arabia, the first Arab nation to host the summit, the media centre — a cavernous chandelier-studded room

filled with mostly unoccupied work stations — is emblematic of a lost opportunity to showcase its ambitious modernisation drive.

"This is an act of God," said Adel al-Jubeir, the kingdom's minister of state for foreign affairs, referring to the pandemic that made a physical summit impossible.

The austere kingdom has seen a sweeping transformation in the past three years — a driving ban on women has been lifted,

cinemas reopened and social mixing of the genders has become increasingly common as the once-feared religious police were rendered toothless.

"It would have been nice to have thousands of people come to Saudi Arabia, walk the streets, meet Saudi men and women, see the changes that have happened in the country, feel the changes," Jubeir said at a media briefing ahead of the summit.

A physical summit would also have been an

opportunity to highlight the kingdom's tourism potential — the new "white oil" the petro-state is keen to develop to diversify its revenues.

Saudi Arabia is endowed with stunning landscapes, but tourism remains a hard sell in a country with strict social codes and an absolute ban on alcohol.

Still, the government sought to make the most of the physical media centre. Adorned with portraits of Saudi destinations, the centre could be mistaken

for a tourism fair.

Liveried waiters offered four different types of Arabic coffee — each from a different corner of the kingdom.

Coffee table books extolling Saudi culinary delights were placed next to guides on destinations such as the historic city of Al Ula and the mountain resort of Abha — places of immense natural beauty but little known outside the country.

The kingdom hosted a media dinner on the eve of

the summit in the historic town of Diriyah, close to Riyadh and known for its traditional mud-brick architecture.

Dressed in loose fitting traditional thobes and clutching daggers, dancers bobbed and swayed amid the ruins.

To highlight other government projects, journalists were offered official interviews and briefings on the sidelines of the summit that were unrelated to G20.

— AFP



SHORT TAKES

Herrmann parts ways with AFI

**New Delhi:** Athletics Federation of India's High Performance Director Volker Herrmann, whose contract was extended by the Sports Ministry till the end of 2024 Olympics, has relinquished the post, saying he "could no longer meet the self-imposed expectations coming along with the role." An AFI source said that Herrmann resigned a few weeks ago but he did not give any "specific reason". The German was appointed in June 2019 for a term till the end of the postponed Tokyo Olympics in 2021. In September, the ministry extended his contract till the end of 2024 Olympics but AFI sources said he did not sign the new contract. "After one-and-a-half fruitful and inspiring years in India, the day has come when I could not any longer meet the self-imposed expectations coming along with the role of AFI's high-performance director, which is why I resigned from my position three weeks ago," Herrmann wrote on his Facebook page. — PTI

It's Medvedev vs Thiem in final

**London:** Instead of No 1 Novak Djokovic vs No 2 Rafael Nadal for the ATP Finals trophy, it'll be No 3 Dominic Thiem against No 4 Daniil Medvedev. Nadal had won 71 matches in a row when grabbing the opening set, and he served for the victory in Saturday's semifinals when leading 5-4 in the second set. But Medvedev broke at love there and came all the way back to win 3-6 7-6(4) 6-3. That came after Thiem frittered away four match points in his semifinal against Djokovic because he was "tight and nervous" during a second-set tiebreaker. Thiem gathered himself and eventually reeled off seven of the match's last eight points after trailing 4-0 in the last tiebreaker, winning 7-5 6-7(10) 7-6(5). — AFP

Afridi to lead Galle Gladiators

**Karachi:** Former Pakistan all-rounder Shahid Afridi will lead Galle Gladiators franchise in the coronavirus-hit inaugural Lankan Premier League (LPL) Twenty20 tournament to be played in Hambantota, Sri Lanka from November 26 to December 16. Afridi was on Saturday named captain of the Galle Gladiators team, which has been brought by Pakistani businessman, Nadeem Omar who also owns the popular Quetta Gladiators franchise in the Pakistan Super League. Initially, Omar had announced Sarfaraz Ahmed as captain of Galle Gladiators but he had to alter his decision after the wicket-keeper batsman was named in the Pakistan squad for the tour of New Zealand. The inaugural LPL has been in trouble as several leading players withdrew from the event. — PTI

Ronaldo scoring streak continues

**Milan, Nov. 22:** Cristiano Ronaldo continued his scoring streak with another two goals as Juventus won 2-0 against Cagliari to move second in Serie A. Ronaldo has now scored eight goals in his last five matches. "When you have a champion like Ronaldo you can achieve any result, he is an example for everyone and he only has to continue like this," Juventus coach Andrea Pirlo said. Juventus moved a point below league leader AC Milan, which visits Napoli on Sunday. Third-place Sassuolo is a point further back ahead of its match against Hellas Verona. Atalanta and Lazio are among four clubs on 14 points, three fewer than Milan. Lazio won 2-0 at Crotone earlier on Saturday and Atalanta was surprisingly held 0-0 at Spezia. — AP

Live on TV

FOOTBALL

Indian Super League: Odisha FC vs Hyderabad FC from 7:20 pm on Star Sports 2, 3

English Premier League: Burnley vs Crystal Palace from 11 pm on Star Sports Select 1, HD

WWE

Raw: Bouts from 6:30 am (Tuesday) on Sony Ten 1, HD

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RED-HOT SPURS

Tottenham on top of EPL after beating Man City

**Manchester, Nov. 22:** Pep Guardiola admitted Manchester City played perfectly into Tottenham's hands as Spurs shot to the top of the table with a 2-0 win thanks to goals on the counter-attack from Son Heung-min and Giovani Lo Celso.

Spurs have not won an English top-flight title in 60 years, but showed their title credentials with a defensive resilience to frustrate City's domination of possession and ruthlessly take their chances as they scored with their only two shots on target.

Defeat leaves City already eight points off the leaders, albeit with a game in hand, down in 10th with just three wins from their opening eight games.

The writing was on the wall for the visitors after just five minutes when one simple ball over the top from Tanguy Ndombele caught Joao Cancelo sleeping and Son had the pace and precise finish under Ederson to register his sixth goal in 11 games against City.

"The stats speak for themselves, we were better in many departments but we conceded a goal we cannot concede," said Guardiola.

"It was the perfect scenario for them. We knew (Harry) Kane drops and Son runs in behind. We have to defend better."

Evertton win 3-2

Aided by another embarrassing missed penalty by Fulham, Everton ended their three-match losing streak with a 3-2 win on Sunday as Dominic Calvert-Lewin scored twice.

Two weeks after Ademola Lookman failed with a scuffed, injury-time "Panenka" penalty at West Ham, Ivan Cavaleiro took over spot-kick duties for Fulham but slipped as he attempted his shot, kicked the ball against his standing foot and saw it loop



Giovani Lo Celso (right) celebrates his goal with fellow goalscorer Son Heung-min during their EPL game against Manchester City. — Twitter

RESULTS	
Fulham (Bobby Reid 15, Ruben Loftus-Cheek 70)	2
Everton (Dominic Calvert-Lewin 1, 29; Abdoulaye Doucoure 35)	3
Tottenham (Son Heung-min 5, Giovani Lo Celso 65)	2
Man. City	0
Man. United (Bruno Fernandes 56 P)	1
West Brom	0
Sheffield Utd	1
West Ham (S. Haller 56)	0

over the crossbar. Everton was leading 3-1 at the time and although Fulham set up a tense finale with a second goal in the 70th minute by Ruben Loftus-Cheek, the visitors held on to return to winning ways. — AP

Atletico edge past Barca

**Madrid, Nov. 22:** Atletico Madrid delivered a major boost to their hopes of winning La Liga on Saturday by beating Barcelona 1-0 and consigning their opponents to their worst start to a league season in 29 years.

Yannick Carrasco finished brilliantly from range after mistakes from Gerard Pique and Marc-Andre ter Stegen left the goal gaping but Barca, and a below-par Lionel Messi, failed to respond at the Wanda Metropolitano.

Instead, Atletico recorded their first league victory over Barcelona in 10 years, which puts them three points ahead of Real Madrid, with a game in hand, and second in the table, level on points with early leaders Real Sociedad.

**Like any coach. I am responsible. We know we have to improve the results.**

— RONALD KOEMAN  
Barcelona coach

It also leaves their opponents languishing in 10th, with Barcelona's 11 points from their first eight games their worst tally at this stage since the 1991-92 season.

"Like any coach, I am responsible," said coach Ronald Koeman. "We know we have to improve the results. I continue to trust the players I have."

Real Madrid had earlier been held to a 1-1 draw by in-form Villarreal, another slip-up for the reigning

champions to enforce the sense that this could be Atletico's year.

And beating Barcelona in La Liga for the first time since 2010 — before Simeone arrived as coach — will do wonders for the team's belief and extends what is now a considerable advantage in the table.

It also extends Atletico's unbeaten run in the league to 24 matches.

"Today we were able to win but it absolutely doesn't change anything," said Simeone. "We're working well and I'm excited about this team."

Another disappointing day for Barca was soured further by the sight of Pique hobbling off in tears with what the club said was a "sprained right knee". — AFP

HYDERABAD FC, ODISHA SEEK FRESH START

**Bambolim (Goa), Nov. 22:** A fresh start will be the mantra for both Odisha FC and Hyderabad FC when the two sides clash in the ISL, here on Monday. Both teams had seasons to forget the last time. Hyderabad ended a miserable campaign in which they lost 12 games and conceded 39 goals. And while Odisha did manage to do the double over their opponents, they too did not fare too well overall, letting in 31 goals. But these stats are just a number for Odisha coach Stuart Baxter. — PTI

Rohit ready to bat anywhere in Test

**New Delhi, Nov. 22:** He has enjoyed and revelled in his new role as a Test opener but Rohit Sharma is ready to be flexible about his batting position in the eagerly-anticipated Test series against Australia as per the demands of the team management.

The senior batsman is expected to play a big role alongside Test vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane and Cheteshwar Pujara when skipper Virat Kohli returns to India after the opening Test for the birth of his first child.

"I will tell you the same thing that I have told everyone all this while. I will be happy to bat wherever the team wants me to but I don't know if they would change my role as an opener," Rohit said.

He believes that the team management will have figured out his role in the batting order by the time he would reach Australia after completing the strength and conditioning work at an National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru. He had picked up a minor hamstring injury during the IPL.

"I am sure the guys already in Australia must have figured out what are options when Virat leaves and who are the guys who will open the innings," Rohit said.

"Once I reach there, I will



Rohit Sharma

probably have a clearer idea of what's going to happen. I will be okay to bat wherever they want," added Rohit.

Rohit needs to leave for Oz in 3-4 days: Shastri

India head coach Ravi Shastri has expressed his apprehensions about senior players Rohit Sharma and Ishant Sharma's participation in the upcoming Test series if they don't reach Australia in the next few days.

"He (Rohit) was never going to play the white-ball series, they were just looking to see how long he needed the rest, because you can't afford to be resting for too long," Shastri told ABC Sport.

"If you need to play in the Test series or any red-ball cricket, you've got to be on the flight in the next three or four days. If you aren't, then it's going to be tough."

Shastri said that NCA's medical team is currently assessing Rohit.

— PTI



Cleiton Silva celebrates after scoring a goal for Bengaluru in their ISL match against Goa on Sunday. — ISL

Angulo inspires Goa comeback

**Goa, Nov. 22:** Clever substitutions did the trick for FC Goa as the Gaurs rescued a hard-fought point after an entertaining 2-2 draw against Bengaluru FC in match four of the ISL 7 at the Fatorada Stadium here on Sunday. Cleiton Silva (27') and Juanan Gonzalez (57') put Bengaluru ahead before Goa hit back through a brace from Igor Angulo (66', 69').

Goa dominated possession early on, with Bengaluru happy to sit back and maintain their defensive shape. However, both teams failed to create clear-cut opportunities in the opening quarter.

Bengaluru registered their first shot on goal in the 11th minute when Ashique Kuruniyan cut inside from the left, beating three men, before switching onto his weaker right foot. However, his tame attempt on goal was well collected by Goa custo-

dian Mohammad Nawaz.

Three minutes before the half-hour mark, the visitors got their lead in unusual fashion, a throw-in creating confusion in the Goa box. Harmanjot Khobra's throw from the left was flicked on towards the face of goal after Jorge Ortiz Mendoza's clearance. Silva was the first to react and headed home to hand Bengaluru the lead.

It wasn't until the 45th minute that Goa got their first shot on goal. Seriton Fernandes' cross found Angulo, whose deft flick went straight to Bengaluru keeper Gurpreet Singh Sandhu.

The visitors made one change after the change of ends, with Deshorn Brown replacing Kristian Opseth. Bengaluru soon doubled their lead and it came through a set-piece again, with Juanan getting on the scoresheet — the club's 100th goal in ISL history. — Agencies

Lack of red-ball preparation a concern for India



Hemant Kenkre  
Silly Point

The news coming out of the National Cricket Academy (NCA), Bengaluru, augurs well for Indian cricket, as far as their Test squad is concerned. The first was that India pacer, Ishant Sharma's progress was charted as 'looking good' by those incharge of his recuperation process at the Academy. The Delhi speedster was caught by a video showing him going through the paces under the watchful eye of former India seamer, Paras Mhambrey, the current India Under-19 bowling

coach.

Ishant had checked into the NCA post getting an abdominal muscle tear during the IPL that recently concluded at the United Arab Emirates. The second bit of cheer came from the other Sharma, Rohit, who is also going through a procedure of strengthening exercises at the NCA to toughen his hamstring and get ready to take the fight to Australia in time to walk out to open the Indian innings in the first Test slated for December 17.

Both Rohit and Ishant

are important cogs in India's wheels for their Test campaign. With skipper Virat Kohli being available for the first Test only and leaving on paternity leave post that match, having the wounded warriors back in the squad will bolster the team chances of retaining the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. Having a fully fit team for red ball cricket, a complete deviation from the game that's played with the white ball, is something the team management must be looking forward to.

Facing-off against the number one Test team in the world is always going to be very difficult especially in conditions that are way different from those that the Indians have experienced while playing the IPL. The big issue that Indian boys will face is the

lack of actual match practice which is way different from intra-team matches played by the squad before the real thing. For starters many members of the Test side have not had a chance to get competitive, real-time match practice.

The only opportunity (of actual match practice) they will get will be in the form of a warm-up match against an Australia 'A' team starting six days before the Adelaide Test. The problem the Indian team facing is that a core group of its members have not had a competitive game of cricket since the lockdown. Those who are in the squads for the shorter formats — One Day (ODI) and Twenty20 (T20) Internationals — will have had a bit of time out in the middle unlike a few who last played the IPL (more

than a month before the Test series) and those who have directly joined the team to Australia.

As far as batsmen are concerned, apart from Kohli, KL Rahul, Mayank Agarwal and Shubham Gill, who will get a taste of competitive cricket, the others in Test squad will get an apology of a (warm-up) match before the first Test. Which effectively means Rohit, Prithvi Shaw, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane and Hanuma Vihari — virtually the Indian top and middle order — will be coming in from the cold to face the match-ready Aussies who have been playing the Sheffield Shield from October 10.

Never has the preparation of an Indian team, poised to play the current leaders of the World

Championship of Test Cricket (WTC), has been so bad, thanks to the extreme circumstances caused by a worldwide pandemic. Modern cricketers go from one international series into another without the luxury that players of the past got by playing many serious first-class matches at the start and in-between Test matches in a long (and tough) series. Today, a player will hope and pray that he finds his form from the start as there are no side matches to try and regain the same before the next Test.

The bilateral series and their schedules, that have been prepared over the last decade, are very tight. The reason being the game today is being driven purely by commercial interests and the attention of the authorities is more on the

bottom line than furthering the game per se. Going forward, the new normal will have many more series packed like a can of sardines which will slowly lead to the demise of the game, particularly the long format versions like Test cricket and first-class cricket.

Considering the circumstances, the two cricket boards could have rejigged the ODI or T20 series to accommodate a few practice matches. The good news of the chance of key Indian players being fit and able to play for the Border-Gavaskar trophy is being welcomed by the team's million fans.

The moot point is will they be able to deliver (according to expectations) against the toughest opponent, coming in straight from the cold?