


DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
VIJAYAWADA | SATURDAY | 14 NOVEMBER 2020

WEATHER



Max: 32.0°C

Min: 25.0°C

RH: 81%

Rainfall: 1.8mm

Forecast: Partly cloudy.

Max/Min temp.

32/25 °C

COVID-19 CUNT

CASES

(+44,876)

87,72,776

DEATHS

(+535)

1,29,221

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+ 997)

(+4)

TS: 2,55,663

1,397

(+1,593)

(+10)

AP: 8,51,298

6,847

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

5,34,94,241

DEATHS

13,05,908

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES

217

worldometers.info/

coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana

Tithi: Nijja Ashwiniyaya Bahula Chaturdasi till 2.17 pm

Star: Swati till 8.08 pm

Varjyam: 1.04 am to 2.29 am (Sunday)

Durmuhurtam: 6.24 am to 7.54 am

Rahukalam: 9 am to 10.30 am

HILJRI CALENDAR

Rabbi-ul Awwal 27, 1442 AH

PRAYERS

Fajar: 5.40 am

Zohar: 1.30 pm

Asar: 4.30 pm

Maghrib: 5.45 pm

Isha: 8.15 pm

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.10 AM

SUNSET TODAY 5.33 PM

MOONRISE TODAY 4.59 AM

MOONSET TOMORROW 5.48 PM

COUNTER POINT



SHORT TAKE

India test-fires QRSAM missiles

New Delhi: India successfully test-fired on Friday the Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air Missile (QRSAM) system at an integrated test range in Chandipur off the Odisha coast, officials said. The successful test-firing of the QRSAM, having a range of around 30 km, paves the way for its commercial production, they said. It directly hit a Banshee pilotless target aircraft at medium range and medium altitudes. The test firing took place at 3:50 pm off the Odisha coast. The officials said the missile is propelled by a single-stage solid propellant rocket motor and uses all indigenous subsystems.

Biden finally gets China's congrats

Beijing: China on Friday shed its initial hesitation and congratulated US President-elect Joe Biden and his deputy Kamala Harris for their victory in the 2020 US presidential election, saying Beijing respects the choice of the American people. "We respect the American people's choice and we extend congratulations to Biden and Harris and we understand that the result of the US Presidential elections will be determined following the US laws," said Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin.

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Kodiyeri quits as CPM Kerala chief

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Zuckerberg first tech leader to greet Biden

SPORTS | 7

Verstappen fastest at Turkish GP practice

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DC wishes its readers a happy and prosperous Diwali



Devotees light earthen lamps on the banks of Saryu river during Deepotsav celebrations in Ayodhya on Friday. A world record 6,06,569 diyas were lit in addition to a laser and sound show for the event. — PTI

HOLIDAY NOTICE | The offices of *Deccan Chronicle* will remain closed today for Diwali. There will be no edition on Sunday, Nov. 15, 2020

State eases rules for sand sale

MD ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 13

The state government has issued orders easing the new sand policy norms, providing for both online and offline sale of sand. Further, villagers living near sand reaches can take sand free of cost in their bullock carts. Sand excavation on patta lands will, however, be banned. In addition, the Special Enforcement Bureau has been given powers to check illegal excavation, storage and transportation of sand. These are some of the salient features of new sand policy unveiled by

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy following recommendations made by a Group of Ministers. Accordingly, G.O. MS 78 has been issued by principal secretary (Mines) Gopal Krishna Dwivedi. As per the latest policy, customers can check the quality of sand at any stockyard or sand reach, pay money on the spot and take the sand that they like. However, they will have to make own arrangements to transport the sand. The government proposes to delegate responsibility for sand excavation, storage and sale to central

government agencies and Central PSUs on nomination basis. Companies will have to pay the prescribed amount to the state government in addition to synergy and other taxes. However, if CPSUs and central agencies do not come forward, the state government will finalise minimum tender prices for sand through technical and commercial bids, before selecting companies for sale of sand. For the purpose, the 13 districts of AP will be divided into three packages. The first will cover Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam,

and East Godavari; second West Godavari, Krishna, Guntur, and Prakasam; and the third will include Nellore, Anantapur, Krishna, Kurnool and Kadapa district. Rules related to AP Walta and AP Minor Mineral Concession will be amended to enable sand mining, storage and sale. Sand excavation on patta lands will, however, be stopped. Dredging will be carried out near Prakasam and Dhavaleswaram barges to increase sand availability. This will be done with departments of underground mines and water resources collaborating with each other.

DOODH DURONTO CROSSES 4 CR LITRE MARK

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, NOV. 13

Doodh Duronto special trains, introduced during the lockdown period between Renigunta and Hazarat Nizamuddin for transporting milk to fulfil the needs of the country's capital, have crossed the 4-crore-litre mark of supplying milk to Delhi on Thursday. Prior to the lockdown, milk from Renigunta used to be transported to New Delhi through milk tankers, which were attaching to mail and express trains. Due to Covid-19 pandemic, all these trains had got cancelled, resulting in heavy shortage of milk in the national capital. Following this, South Central Railway (SCR) came up with the initiative of running Doodh Duronto as a special milk train from March 26, 2020. The train runs on par with mail and express trains, covering a distance of 2,300 km between Renigunta and H. Nizamuddin within 34 hours. Milk transported by this special train is being collected from more than 3,000 points spread over 13,000 villages in and around Chittoor district. The train, which ran only on alternate days, started operating daily from July 15, 2020. The train runs with six milk tankers, with each tank having a capacity of 40,000 litres, totalling to 2.4 lakh litres per train. So far, Doodh Duronto special trains have made 167 trips, transporting 4-crore litres milk, a record of sorts.

■ Page 2: SCR GM pats Guntakal division staff

LoC flares up, 4 security men, six civilians killed

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR, NOV. 13

The hostility between Indian and Pakistani troops along the Line of Control (LoC) flared-up again on Friday, leaving at least 10 persons, including three Indian soldiers, a BSF official and six civilians, dead and about two dozen others injured. The Indian Army accused the Pakistani troops of "deliberately" targeting the civilians areas with mortars and other weapons and claimed that it has, in retaliation to "unprovoked ceasefire violations" in multiple sectors along the LoC, caused substantial damage to Pakistan Army's infrastructure besides inflicting casualties among its men. "Several ammunition dumps, FOL dumps and multiple terrorist launchpads across the LoC have been damaged," it said. Late Friday evening, Pakistan's Inter-Services



Pakistan bunkers being hit by Indian Army artillery shell at Uri along the LoC on Friday.

Public Relations (ISPR) in a statement admitted that one Pakistani soldier was killed and five others were injured in the Indian firing and shelling. Defence spokesman Colonel Rajesh Kalia said that suspicious movement was observed by the Indian troops at the forward posts along the LoC's Keran sector early Friday but the "suspected infiltration bid was foiled by alert troops".

"This was accompanied by initiation of an unprovoked ceasefire violation (CFV) by Pakistan along the LoC in Keran sector by firing mortars and other weapons. A befitting response is being given," Col. Kalia said. The Army and J&K police sources said that the cross-LoC firing and shelling in this sector started at around 1.40 pm and continued as reports last came in.

BREAK | DOWN **Company claims new conditions of Vizag Port are not economical to accept**

Bangla firm abandons ship on Vizag beach

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 13

Citing cost overruns in salvaging a stranded ship, Bangladesh shipping firm Advance Shipping Ltd has decided to abandon its stranded cargo ship, which ran aground at Vizag. The company sent a mail to its shipping agent, insurers P & I Club and Hull and Mechanics, informing its decision late Thursday evening. In the mail, the company's executive director

Sheik Shahikul Islam said "Having arranged all measures to salvage the vessel complying with all the requirements of Visakhapatnam Port Trust authorities and negotiating and finalising salvage contract with Resolve Marine, the company has received further requirements from Visakhapatnam Port to comply with certain conditions before, at the time of salvage and after refloating of the vessel. These requirements are extremely hard to comply with and



The Bangla ship stranded on the Vizag beach.

would require huge amounts thus making the entire salvage operation

WHO picks India for global centre

Global Centre of Traditional Medicine to help countries on policies for alternative medicine

SANGEETHA G. with agency inputs
CHENNAI, NOV. 13

In a move that provides international recognition to Ayurveda and makes India a hub for traditional medicine, the World Health Organisation on Friday said that it would set up the Global Centre of Traditional Medicine in the country. "I am pleased to announce that we have agreed to open a WHO Global Centre of Traditional Medicine in India to strengthen the evidence, research, training and awareness of traditional and complementary medicine," said WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus in a video message, at an event organised to mark the fifth Ayurveda Day.

"This new centre will support WHO's efforts to implement its traditional medicine strategy 2014-2023 which aims to support countries in developing policies and action plans to strengthen the role of traditional medicine as part of their journey to universal health

I AM CONFIDENT that just like India has emerged as the pharmacy of the world, in the same manner, this centre for traditional medicine will become the centre for global wellness

NARENDRA MODI,
Prime Minister

coverage and a healthier, fairer and safer world," he said. The WHO defines traditional medicine as "the sum total of the knowledge, skills, and practices based on the theories, beliefs, and experiences indigenous to different cultures, whether explicable or not, used in the maintenance of health as well as in the prevention, diagnosis, improvement or treatment of physical and mental illness". Globally, each culture has evolved its own system of medicine using herbs, animal products or inorganic chemical compounds. The prominent traditional systems of medicine include those evolved by Indians,

Europeans, Persians and the Chinese. India has two types of traditional medicines — Ayurveda and Siddha. Reacting to the announcement, the Prime Minister said, "It is a matter of pride for all Indians that the WHO has chosen India for establishing its Global Centre for Traditional Medicine. Now work will be done in this direction from India." "I am confident that just like India has emerged as the pharmacy of the world, in the same manner, this centre for traditional medicine will become the centre for global wellness," Modi said. He said Ayurveda is India's heritage whose expansion entails the welfare of humanity and all Indians will be happy to see that the country's traditional knowledge is enriching other countries. Pointing out that during the Coronavirus period the demand for Ayurvedic products increased all over the world, he said exports of Ayurvedic products increased by 45 per cent in September compared to the previous year.

Most ignore call to burst only green crackers

VADREVU SRINIVAS | DC
KAKINADA, NOV. 13

Despite a call by the National Green Tribunal for buying green crackers in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic, people are buying regular fireworks to celebrate Diwali unaware of their ill-effect.

Activists, who are spearheading efforts to make people shift to green crackers, claim that most people have little understanding about the concept. "They don't know that green crackers are the fireworks that have low sulphur content and generate only light but not sound and smoke."

Though the activists have been promoting green crackers for long, the NGT has stepped in this time because toxic air generated by crackers could make people suffering from Covid-19, especially elderly, have severe respiratory problems. East Godavari district collector D. Muralidhar Reddy said Diwali should be celebrated as the 'festival for lights' but not that of sound and smoke. Voluntary organisations like Jana Vignana Vedika

● **RETAILERS**, however, are not impressed with the footfall. They claim that sales have fallen by at least 50 per cent compared to the last year figure

and others have been trying to sensitise people about the dangers of having too much toxic content in the air. But people are queuing up at fireworks shops in large numbers to buy crackers as usual. Retailers, however, are not impressed with the footfall. They claim that sales have fallen by at least 50 per cent compared to the last year figure and that only a last-minute surge in sales can save them from financial loss. "We were not able to sell even 50 per cent crackers by Friday evening. Wholesale dealers who purchased crackers from other states like Tamil Nadu, and other places could sell their crackers, but retailers are unhappy with sales" said Cracker Manufacturer Association founder-president V.V. Satyanarayana.

GROUNDWATER LEVELS SEE A STEADY DECLINE

AVINASH P. SUBRAMANYAM | DC
TIRUPATI, NOV. 13

Fluctuation in groundwater levels over the past few years reveals that Andhra Pradesh is facing a steady depletion of groundwater stores, driven by human-caused climate change and over-extraction. Data from AP Water Resources Information and Management System (APWRIMS) shows that the groundwater levels in the state has decreased from 12.20 metres below ground level (bgl) on November 12, 2019, to 12.85 metres bgl on November 12, 2020. In coastal AP, the water levels were decreased from 8.78 metre bgl to 10.02 metre bgl, while Rayalaseema witnessed a slight increase from 16.82 metres bgl to 16.73 metres. An analysis of the data of the last three months shows that there were fluctuations in groundwater levels in the state. The groundwater level in the state on September 30, 2019, was 14.79 metre bgl, while in the same period this year it was 10.66 metres bgl — an increase of 4.13-metre bgl.

■ **Page 2: Experts blame rising temperature**

OTHER STORIES

CHANDRABABU'S
CAR STOPS ON
VJD-HYD HIGHWAYDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 13

Leader of the Opposition N. Chandrababu Naidu's car gave trouble on the Vijayawada-Hyderabad National Highway on Friday while he was returning to Hyderabad from Vijayawada. The bulletproof car developed a technical snag in Narketpalli in Telangana state.

Mr Naidu's convoy came to a halt for about 20 minutes on the busy Vijayawada-Hyderabad National Highway 65. Later, Mr Naidu boarded another bulletproof car in the convoy and proceeded to Hyderabad.

According to the reports, the problem arose as the clutch plates of the vehicle had worn out. The clutch plates have to be replaced for every 20,000 km, and already the main bulletproof vehicle in which Mr Naidu travels has travelled 60,000 km. TD leaders and cadres lamented that the non-replacement of the clutch plates gave the technical problem and said that this is the second time that Mr Naidu's car was stopped on the Vijayawada-Hyderabad highway.

SCR GM PATS
GUNKATKAL
DIVISION STAFF

From Page 1

SCR general manager Gajanan Mallaya has appreciated consistent efforts of staff and officers of Guntakal division for mobilising milk that caters to the needs of nation's capital. As a result, there has been neither shortage of milk nor hike in prices of the commodity in Delhi.

SCR is contemplating to continue Doodh Duronto specials. Sources in National Dairy Development Board say, in addition, special trains could also be run to other states where there is demand for milk.

AP is capable of supplying additional milk with its four huge milk grids at Thambalapalle, Srikalahasti, Satyavedu and Nagari, where milk can be stored and preserved.

TD DEMANDS
WHITE PAPER ON
SAND REVENUEDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 13

The Telugu Desam party alleged that YSR Congress government introduced a new sand policy to benefit their henchmen to loot thousands of crores through sand.

TD senior leader and MLA Gorantla Butchaiah Chowdary on Friday accused the ruling YSRC MLAs, MPs and their henchmen of committing unchecked irregularities in sand mining and transportation by causing huge loss of revenue to the state government till now.

He demanded the YSRC government to publish a white paper on the facts of how much revenue it had got from sand mining, sale and transportation and also from the seigniorage charges all over the state in the past 17 months.

Mr Butchaiah Chowdary alleged that from day one, the ruling party leaders looted the sand resources in the state rivers in an indiscriminate manner and transported the same to Hyderabad, Chennai and Bengaluru to make easy money.

He claimed that the latest new sand policy is a cover for the YSRC ulterior plans to loot sand systematically. He stated that no Central institution would come forward to do sand mining under the present suffocating and stifling atmosphere under the Jagan Reddy regime.

He deplored that the construction industry in the state collapsed after the YSRC came to power. Construction workers were thrown on the roads with no work.

He alleged that the sand rates were increased from ₹50 to ₹525 per tonne at the level of sand reaches and boatmen societies, and this was being done to help the YSRC henchmen and leaders to loot more from sand mining.

● **MR GORANTLA** Butchaiah Chowdary on Friday accused the ruling YSRC MLAs, MPs and their henchmen of committing unchecked irregularities in sand mining and transportation by causing huge loss of revenue to the state government till now.



Youngsters along with their family members decorate a rangoli with earthen lamps on the eve of Diwali in Visakhapatnam on Friday.

— K. MURALI KRISHNA

Covid and weather make
2020 Diwali a damp affair

APPCB issues orders for sale of only green crackers

MD. ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 13

Coronavirus-related financial difficulties, time limitation of only two hours for bursting firecrackers, expected bad weather, and threat of polluted atmosphere spreading Covid-19 has dampened the spirit of Diwali among people of Andhra Pradesh.

Majority of people are lacking liquid cash due to the financial instability brought in by the prolonged Covid-19 pandemic. People are also holding back money, as it might be required in case the virus strikes. Thus, a large number of people are not interested in celebrating the festival in the traditional manner by splurging on crackers.

Private employees B. Narendra and T. Varaprasad said majority of private companies, firms and institutions have slashed salaries from 10-40 per cent, due to which families are already in trouble.

They said every year, they used to purchase firecrackers worth ₹3,000 to ₹5,000. But now, they have decided to buy crackers for only ₹500, that too only for their children, they added.

They said liquid cash is important in this Corona crisis for emergency purposes. Hence, majority people are reluctant about spend huge money on fire crackers.

Every year, as many as 100 cracker shops would set up in Swarajya Maidan in Vijayawada. But this time, there are only 40 shops.

A cracker shop owner D. Krishna, who has been in the Diwali cracker business for 10 years, says, "Last year, I had done ₹7 lakh business. But this festival season, it will be difficult to sell stocks worth even ₹3 lakh, as 80 per cent of people have no money for celebrations."

The same state of affairs is prevalent in all 13 districts of the state.

Environmental organisations too have been campaigning to celebrate Diwali only with lamps in view of the Corona crisis. Otherwise, they say, air pollution will turn health condition of the people



People buying Firecrackers at Swaraj Maidan on the occasion of Diwali celebrations in Vijayawada on Friday.

— C. NARAYANA RAO

Sale of crackers to dip by
60-70% in AP for DiwaliSAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 13

Sale of firecrackers in Andhra Pradesh is expected to dip by 60-70 per cent this Diwali festival with the state government permitting only green crackers, that too only for two hours from 8 pm to 10 pm on Saturday, the festival day.

The state government's orders came following directives of National Green Tribunal to limit burning of crackers this Diwali, so as to check air pollution, which could aggravate respiratory problems among Coronavirus patients.

Given these reasons, a good number of people are hesitating to purchase crackers while some have reduced the amount of fireworks they normally purchase on the occasion.

AP mostly imports firecrackers from Sivakasi in Tamil Nadu, though it used to earlier also get them at far cheaper rates

● **PETTY TRADERS** set up shops by purchasing firecrackers from wholesale dealers. Due to uncertainty this time, only a few traders have set up stalls, that too with a limited number of firecrackers.

From China. The Chinese imports have, however, stopped following strained relationships between the two countries.

With Covid-19 pandemic prevailing, wholesale traders have played it safe by ordering only for limited quantities of firecrackers from Sivakasi. Some of them even decided not to order any crackers. Greater Vijayawada Municipal Corporation district fire officer T. Srinivas disclosed, "The number of cracker traders seeking fire NOC for setting up shops has come down to 40 unlike 70-80 earlier.

worse, particularly those suffering from Corona virus.

Telugu Desam woman leader Kesineni Swetha

has also released a video appealing to people that they celebrate Diwali only with traditional lamps. Several other people and

Vijayawada police commissioner B. Srinivasulu said, "We have issued an order asking people to burst only green crackers during the stipulated hours from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. If anyone flouts the order, we will book cases against them for violation of the City Police Act."

State police have threatened that they could book cases even under provisions of Disaster Management Act, 2005, and section 188 of IPC, which provide for more stringent punishment.

AP Chambers of Commerce and Industry Federation state president V. Bhaskara Rao said, "We are expecting the sale of fireworks to be only 30-40 per cent of the normal because of Coronavirus and restrictions put in by authorities. Normally, the volume of Diwali sales would run into hundreds of crores. But it will come down drastically during this season," he added.

organisations are also promoting environment-friendly Diwali with lamps, sweets and Lakshmi pujas.

Jagan greets Governor,
appraises him of sopsDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 13

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy with his wife Y.S. Bharati met Governor Biswa Bhushan Harichandan on Friday and conveyed Diwali wishes. The CM presented a replica of Lord Venkateswara to Harichandan.

According to the sources, Reddy appraised the Governor about the welfare schemes being implemented in the state. He briefed the Governor about the Covid-19 status and mentioned about the possible consequences due to conducting of local body election in the present scenario. Reddy discussed conducting of winter Assembly sessions in the last week of November or first week of December and further about the bills which the government is planning to introduce in the winter Assembly sessions. Further the CM appraised Harichandan about the progress of Polavaram and implementation of Centre-sponsored schemes in AP.

Governor Harichandan conveyed wishes to people of AP for a prosperous Diwali.

The Governor wished that the divine light of Diwali festival would bring in peace, prosperity and happiness to all while extending warm greetings to the people in the state.

In a release from Raj Bhavan here on Friday, the Governor said that the festival of Diwali would signify the victory of good over evil and wished that



Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy presents a replica of Lord Venkateswara to Governor B.B. Harichandan at Raj Bhavan in Vijayawada on Friday.

— DC

the occasion would inspire all to conquer the calamities to build a society filled with peace amity and communal harmony.

The Governor appealed to the people to take all precautions like wearing a mask, washing hands, maintenance of social distance to avoid spread of Covid-19 while celebrating the festival.

To mark the Children's Day to be celebrated on Nov. 14, the Governor underlined the need to nurture and groom the children to become worthy in all aspects. He said that children are the real strength of a country and opined that the responsibility lies with children to protect their motherland and to build a bright future for themselves.

The Chief Minister extended his greetings to the Telugu people on the occasion of Diwali. He

said the Diwali, the festival of lights, marks triumph of good over evil. He wished that the divine light of Diwali would bring in peace, prosperity and happiness to all.

Leader of Opposition N. Chandrababu Naidu extended his heart-felt Diwali greetings to all sections of people. He said that Diwali marks the day when the good triumphed over the evil forces in society. It was a day when a final end was put to all forms of demolitions and destruction. He sought that everybody should celebrate Naraka Chaturdasi and Diwali with their families while duly following Coronavirus guidelines.

TD national general secretary Nara Lokesh, in a separate statement, extended his good wishes that the festival brings joy and happiness into every household in Telugu states.

Vizag likely to
convert mv Maa
into a hotelK.M.P. PATNAIK | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 13

After missing out on converting decommissioned aircraft carrier *INS Viraat* into a floating hotel, the state tourism and the Visakhapatnam Metropolitan Region Development Authority (VMRDA) have now got another opportunity in the form of Bangladesh commercial vessel *mv Maa*, which ran aground at Tenneti Park on Visakhapatnam Beach road and was abandoned by the management on Friday.

Former chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu had grandiose plans to convert *INS Viraat* into a floating hotel with 500 rooms after it was decommissioned in 2016. But the plan never took off due to various reasons. "Since the location where the ship ran aground is under VMRDA jurisdiction, we will explore all possibilities to convert the vessel into a worthy tourist spot," said commissioner P. Koteswara Rao.

Talking to this correspondent, he said the location also has the most-visited places in the city like Tenneti Park and Kailasagiri hill top and this would add value to the place.

Praveen Kumar, managing director of AP Tourism Development Corporation and CEO of AP Tourism Authority, said he would work on a

● **VISAKHAPATNAM** already has the *INS Kursura* Museum and the *TU 142* transport aircraft at RK Beach and a Sea Harrier is planned for these two museums.

plan after getting clarity on the abandonment.

The city has the *INS Kursura* Museum and the *TU 142* transport aircraft at RK Beach and a Sea Harrier is planned for these two museums. If the commercial vessel at Tenneti Park is taken over and converted into a floating restaurant, then Vizag will become a true maritime museum city, said a former merchant navy captain.

K. Vijay Mohan, Tours and Travel Association of Andhra Pradesh president, said the state government should explore all possibilities to take over the vessel and convert it into a floating restaurant.

He said the cargo chamber could be used for conferences and meetings and the open deck for the restaurant. The crew rooms with value addition could be converted into rooms. "It is will be ideal for marriages and conferences," Mr Vijay Mohan said and added that Mumbai, Goa and Kerala are running floating restaurants successfully.

EXPERTS BLAME
RISING
TEMPERATURE

FROM PAGE 1

The state has also reported a slight decrease in groundwater table from 12.19 metres bgl on October 31, 2019, to 12.97 on the same date this year.

Experts blame rising temperature and over-pumping of groundwater as the main reasons for the depletion in groundwater levels. They request the state government to improve water literacy among people in the state and discourage over-exploitation of groundwater.

Royalaseema appears to have slightly improved its groundwater level by recording an average increase of 7.48 and 0.09 metre increase in September and November this year when compared to the same corresponding period last year. However, this region has recorded a steep decrease of 8.2 metres bgl in the month of October as against the same period last year.

It may be noted that AP has recorded an actual rainfall of 914.79 mm as on Thursday as against the normal rainfall of 782.57 and the deviation has been recorded at +16.90 per cent. Though the state recorded a decent rainfall, the fluctuations in groundwater stores has been attributed to increase in the use of groundwater for meeting demands, and erratic rainfall in previous years and also the lack of a robust groundwater regulatory mechanism in the state.

CHEATING | RACKET

Farmers belonging to Reddy community were shown as 'weavers' in Dommaranandyala

Bogus beneficiaries galore in Netanna Nestam scheme

D. SIVA RAMI
REDDY | DC
KURNOOL, NOV. 13

It does not matter if you do not know how to weave cloth on a handloom. You just have to show you have a handloom in your house when officials come to record whether you are a weaver or not.

"This is how many bogus beneficiaries have managed to corner ₹24,000 per annum under YSR Nethanna Nestam," explained Kadapa Handloom and Textiles assistant director Srirangam. The racket has

been going on with panchayat raj officials colluding with unscrupulous elements in siphoning off crores of public money in Kadapa district.

As per earlier rules, a weaver must have worked on a handloom for at least one year to become a beneficiary under the Nethanna Nestam. But later, the rule was relaxed. Even if a person showed that s/he has a handloom, the person would be included in the beneficiary list.

This loophole has been exploited to the hilt by villagers of Dommaran-

● **MOST OF** the families earlier living on handlooms had shifted to power looms long ago. But they showed to officials their old handlooms to claim the benefit under the Nethanna Nestam in an illegal manner.

dhyala in Mylavaram mandal of Kadapa district. Most of the families earlier living on handlooms in this village had shifted to power looms long ago. But

they showed to officials their old handlooms to claim the benefit under the Nethanna Nestam in an illegal manner. There have also been instances of the pension amount being cornered by farmers, carpenters, and other sections of the society.

Assistant director Srirangam disclosed that during their latest inspection, they have weeded out 70 bogus persons in Dommaranandyala village.

Kadapa district joint collector Saikanth Varma assured that he would take immediate action if ineli-

gible beneficiaries are identified at any place or complaints are received in this regard.

Dommaranandyala village in Mylavaram mandal of Kadapa district has around 900 beneficiaries, which is humongous compared to any other village in the district. The joint collector has personally visited the village to assess the situation.

Officials say bogus claimants had sprung up as third parties had been involved in choosing the beneficiaries of Nethanna Nestam. It is stated that

mandal development officer of Mylavaram Ramachandra Reddy, in collusion with village secretaries, prepared a "bogus list" of weavers, which was forwarded and accepted by the Handloom and Textiles Department. Each bogus beneficiary paid ₹6,000 to the MDO.

Details of Aadhaar cards were also fudged in the process. Non-eligible persons were shown as being under below poverty line. Farmers belonging to Reddy community were shown as "weavers" of the village.

In the first phase of Nethanna Nestam 9,473 beneficiaries have already sanctioned ₹22.34 crore. Of these Dommaranandyala alone accounted for close to 1,100 beneficiaries. They managed to illegally corner benefits during the second phase too in June 2020.

In the process, Dommaranandyala has already cornered ₹5 crore in the first two phases. Only a strict resurvey will reveal how much of money has been siphoned off in this particular village.



Prestige

SHUBHUTSAV

TILL 28th NOV 2020

**THIS FESTIVE SEASON
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NON-STOP HAPPINESS.**

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SHORT TAKES

STOP VINDICTIVE POLITICS, SAYS APRESA

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 13

The AP Revenue Employees Services Association (APRE-SA) alleged APJAC of employees, teachers, workers and retired employees chairman Bopparaju Venkateswarlu trying to create disputes among employees associations and sought to stop vindictive politics.

APRESA leaders V. Samuel Diwakar, B. Suguna, J. Srinivasulu and S. Srinivas addressing a press meet on Friday alleged that Venkateswarlu never worked to resolve the employees' issues and he caused a divide among the associations for self-promotion. Recalling the statement of Venkateswarlu that there is no association to APRESA to AP Government Employees Association, the leaders refuted the claim and said that they are working under the leadership of APGEA president K. Suryanarayana. The leaders claimed that VRAs, VROs, tahsildars and sub-collectors vexed with the anti-employees policy of Venkateswarlu had formed AP Revenue JAC and affirmed that APRESA has the support of all associations and union and working towards resolving the employees' problems and issues.

ANNUAL KARTIKA BRAHMOTSAVAMS AT TIRUCHANOR

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, NOV. 13

On the third day morning of the ongoing annual Kartika Brahmotsavams in the Tiruchanor temple on Friday, Goddess Padmavathi Devi in the guise of Venmuddada Krishna blessed devotees on the Muthyapu Pandiri Vahanam.

As per the legend, this vahana seva symbolises peace, tranquillity and serene love. The Goddess, who loves her children, graces on the pearl-studded canopy vahanam, which was tastefully decorated for the occasion, to shower her benign blessings.

The Pearl is a metaphor for something rare, fine, admirable and valuable.

APSRTC WILL RUN SPECIAL BUSES TO PANCHARAMAS

DC CORRESPONDENT
RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM, NOV. 13

During the auspicious Karthika Masa, APSRTC Rajamahendravaram Region will run special buses to Pancharama Kshetras on every week i.e November 15, 22, 29, December 6 and 13 from every depot.

The RTC regional manager R.V.S. Nageswara Rao told the reporters on Friday that the special buses will start by 7 pm every Sunday and return by 8 pm the next day to ply the devotees to Amaravati, Palakollu, Bhimavaram, Draksharamam and Samalkot.

He said that special buses would run for Sabarimala on a hire basis if the Ayyappa Devotees place an order for it. On the auspicious of Karthika Pournami, special buses would run to Annavaram from October 29 and 30. He requested the devotees and the people to make use of these services for their happy journey.

The RTC Deputy Chief Traffic Manager N.V.R. Varaprasad, Rajamahendravaram depot Manager Mr Murthy, Personnel Officer Mr Prasad and others were present.

Bus fare from Amalapuram (670 Kms):

Adult: ₹995 (super luxury), ₹970 (Ultra Deluxe) and ₹820 (Express) Child: ₹765, ₹740 and ₹620.

From Gokavaram (630 Km): Adult: ₹920, ₹895 and ₹745, Child: ₹710, ₹680 and ₹570.

Rajamahendravaram (580 kms): Adult: ₹870, ₹820 and ₹695, Child: ₹660, ₹630 and ₹530.

Ravulapalem (600 kms): Adult: ₹920, ₹870 and ₹745, child: ₹695, ₹670 and ₹565.

Razole (630 kms): Adult: ₹920, ₹870 and ₹745, Child: ₹695, ₹670 and ₹525.

Eleswaram (630 kms): Adult: ₹945, ₹895 and ₹770, Child: ₹720, ₹690 and ₹585.

Kakinada (620 kms): Adult: ₹920, ₹870 and ₹745.

Ramachandrapuram (630 kms): Adult: ₹945, ₹920 and ₹770. Child: ₹730, ₹695 and ₹590.

Tuni (700 kms): Adult: ₹1025, ₹995 and ₹820, Child: ₹770, ₹755 and ₹640.

Vizag walk



People take part in "We Support Vizag Walk" on the Beach Road in Visakhapatnam on Friday.

— DC

Admissions begin into MBBS, BDS courses

Candidates asked to submit applications via online

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 13

The NTR university of health sciences issued notification inviting single online application form for admission into undergraduate medical, dental and Indian system of medicine and homoeopathy courses for seats available under Compete Authority Quota in the colleges affiliated to the university for the academic year 2020-21 from November 13 to 21.

The university in its notification issued on Friday invited applications online from eligible candidates into undergraduate MBBS, BDS, BAMS, BHMS, BNYS and BUMS courses for seats available under Competent Authority Quota in government, private, unaided and minority medical, dental Ayurveda, homoeopathy, Unani and naturopathic and yogic sciences colleges affiliated to Dr NTR UHS, Vijayawada and also for MBBS course in Sri Padmavathi Medical College for Women, Tirupati.

The eligible candidates are asked to submit their

BIE TO ANNOUNCE REVISED DATE FOR INTER FIRST YEAR SOON

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV.13

Andhra Pradesh Board of Intermediate Education to announce the revised date for commencement of classes for first-year intermediate courses for the academic year 2020-21 shortly.

applications through online mode along with uploading the scanned copies of original certificates and images or photo/signature because of the Covid-19 pandemic. The same application will be considered for all the round of counselling, including MOP-UP and also for stray vacancies.

The notification is for determining State merit position for admission into CAQ seats which means the seats remaining after contributing 15 per cent to All India Quota and also 126 seats in Sri Padmavathi Medical College for Women, Tirupati.

The minimum cutoff score in NEET UG-2020

The BIE secretary, V. Ramakrishna, in a release issued on Friday said that though the first year inter classes were supposed to commence from Nov. 16 onwards as per the earlier schedule, they were going to announce the revised schedule for commencement.

for admission into medical, dental and ISMH courses include general category including EWS-50th percentile-147/720; SC/ST/BC categories including persons with disability (BC/SC/ST)-40th percentile-113/720 and persons with disability (OC) including EWS-45th percentile-129/720.

The schedule for registration of online application form and uploading scanned original certificates commences from November 13 at 4.00 pm to November 21 up to 4.00 pm by NEET All India Rank category and also other categories.

The university authorities maintain that it takes two weeks for

● The university invited applications online from eligible candidates into undergraduate MBBS, BDS, BAMS, BHMS, BNYS and BUMS courses for seats available under Competent Authority

them, for preparation of the state merit position of the eligible candidates who applied online based on their NEET UG-2020 score and rank and other eligibility criteria. They also have written a letter to Medical Counselling Committee with a requisition to defer the second phase of counselling for All India Rank category of NEET UG-2020 as it scheduled to commence from November 18 to avoid eligible candidates from AP to lose their option for choosing a better college for admission based on their state rank.

The university issued notification for submission of applications from eligible candidates as the state government issued GO RT No. 159 on Friday on implementation of reservations for SC/ST/BC candidates in higher educational institutions.

AP to touch one crore mark of samples tested for Covid-19 soon

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 13

AP to touch one crore mark in several samples tested for Covid-19 soon as it had already tested 90,21,225 so far.

According to Covid-19 bulletin issued by the state health authorities on Friday, out of 80,737 samples tested, 1,593 persons were found infected with Covid-19. The state recorded 10 daily death cases of Covid-19 patients, taking the toll to 6,847.

Among daily cases of Covid-19, East Godavari recorded the highest number of 259 followed by 225 in Chittoor, 202 each in Guntur and Krishna, 188 in West

Godavari, 105 in Anantapur, 93 in Nellore, 89 in Visakhapatnam, 58 in Srikakulam, 51 in Prakasam, 45 in Kurnool, 43 in Kadapa and 42 in Vizianagaram.

East Godavari has been the worst affected, where the cumulative cases of Covid-19 are 1,20,050 followed by 89,855 in West Godavari, 81,791 in Chittoor, 70,596 in Guntur, 66,023 in Anantapur, 60,828 in Prakasam, 60,792 in Nellore, 59,896 in Kurnool, 57,143 in Visakhapatnam, 53,497 in Kadapa, 44,921 in Srikakulam, 42,819 in Krishna, 40,192 in Vizianagaram, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

East Godavari counties to lead with the highest number of active cases at 5,192 followed by 2,391 in Guntur, 2,292 in West Godavari, 1,493 in Visakhapatnam, 1,487 in Chittoor, 940 in Nellore, 775 in Anantapur, 748 in Srikakulam, 745 in Prakasam, 590 in Kadapa, 357 in Vizianagaram and followed by 296 in Kurnool. The total number of active cases is 20,262 in the state.

The state recorded a recovery of 8,24,189 Covid-19 infected patients so far. Among daily cases of death of Covid-19 infected patients, three in Krishna, two in Visakhapatnam and one each in Chittoor, Guntur, Nellore, Vizianagaram and West Godavari.

PUNISH POLICE OFFICERS, SAYS VICTIM'S KIN

DC CORRESPONDENT
KURNOOL, NOV. 13

There was a steady stream of visitors for the mother-in-law of Abdul Salam, who had committed suicide along with his two children and wife by jumping in front of a running train on November 3 near Panyam in Kurnool district. While Chief Minister granted an ex gratia of ₹25 lakh, some minority leaders lent moral support to Mabunnisa who is now saying she wants justice and punishment to the police officers accused of perpetrating the suicide of Abdul salam family. She said, "What do I have to do with the money? I want peace for the dead souls who will only be satisfied when justice is done to them."

The deceased, Abdul Salam, used to work in Nimishamba Jewelers for nearly 25 years and never had any bad remark, the family members said. It was only in 2019 that a theft case was foisted on him alleging that he stole 3 kg of gold. A YSRC leader who was in close contact with the crime constable Gangadhar, the accused in the suicide case and brought pressure on the deceased to accept that he had committed the theft. It was his torture that had taken away the life of my son-in-law, said Mabunnisa to a visiting fact-finding team from Humann Rights Forum on Friday.

Meanwhile, TD leader N.M.D. Farooq demanded a CBI inquiry into the mass suicide of a minority family.

Another youth committed suicide in Nanyal on Friday under the Nandyal Two Town limits. He tied his hands and legs and committed suicide, said the police.

2 ELECTROCUTED IN SEPARATE INCIDENTS

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, NOV. 13

A 35-year-old man was allegedly electrocuted to death at the new Indira Nagar on DR Mahal road in Tirupati on Friday morning while urinating near an electric transformer.

According to the police, the deceased was identified as Ramesh, a local taxi driver. On Friday morning, police got information that a man had died due to electrocution. They immediately rushed there and came to know that he had gone to urinate near an electric transformer at Indira Nagar where he got electrocuted and died on the spot. The police shifted the body to the government hospital for post-mortem and registered a case.

In another incident, a 33-year-old man identified as Sheikh Jaffer was electrocuted to death while trying to erect a tent for a crackers sale point near Mulakalacheruvu in the district on Friday. The SI I. Rama Krishna reached the spot and shifted the body to the local government hospital for post-mortem.

Elephant kills farmer, 2nd incident in Komarada

Emergency jumbo rescue centre soon

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIZIANAGARAM, NOV. 13

A wild elephant killed a farmer in Parisirampuram under Komarada mandal in the district on Friday morning.

The deceased was identified as R. Lakshmu Naidu and this is the second incident in Komarada mandal in the last 15 days. A few days ago, the same elephant herd trampled to death a 25-year-old farmer Yerra Narayana near Gumpa under Komarada mandal in the district.

The police said that Lakshmu Naidu along with his cousin Sanyasi Naidu went to their farm field for harvesting. While the duo was in the farm, the lone male elephant attacked Lakshmu Naidu trampling him to death in the field.

Sanyasi Naidu had no scope to save his cousin and managed to escape from the spot.

The farmers in parts of Komarada mandal have been facing sleepless nights as the wild elephants have been creating havoc in the region by destroying the standing crops.

The locals said that one male elephant which strayed away from the herd has been attacking the farmers. In Kurupam constituency of Vizianagaram, the elephants have killed six people in the past two years.

Expressing displeasure over the loss of crops and lives due to

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 13

The forest officials of both Srikakulam and Vizianagaram launch a hunt for the rogue male elephant that became aggressive under musth and killed two farmers in Komarada mandal of Vizianagaram district within 15 days.

Chief conservator of forests (wildlife) Mr Rahul Pandey said that the testosterone in an elephant in musth could be on an average 60 times to even 140 times the normal elephant. Even the most peaceful elephants become highly violent toward humans and other elephants during that period that generally happens between August and November.

"This particular male elephant got separated from the herd and after causing destruction joining back the group and remaining calm," Mr Pandey said.

He said to prevent further loss of life and destruction to crops, and the department is plan-

ing to construct an emergency rescue and rehabilitation centre close to a perennial water stream as elephants require plenty of water.

The conservator of forests from Visakhapatnam K. Rama Mohan Rao and divisional forest officer from Srikakulam Sandeep Kurpakar Gundala are presently in Komarada to take stock of the situation and to find a suitable location for setting up of the shelter.

"We have tentatively selected Chandadingi in Vizianagaram district close to a reservoir where we might build the rescue centre," DFO Sandeep told this correspondent. He said a kral would be built and mahouts would be appointed to train the rescued elephants.

He said he led a team to Karnataka to study the model shelter which was built for the aggressive elephants. The department will get a clear picture of the project in a day or two and finalise the shelter.

phants to the forest area. They also urged the government to announce ₹20 lakh compensation to the family members of the deceased persons.

LIC HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED

D.No. 6-21-21, Ground Floor, 9/2, Arundelpet, Gogula House, Guntur -522002. Ph : 0863-2254743

POSSESSION NOTICE

SARFA & ESI ACT 2002 (APPENDIX — IV) See Rules 8(1) SARFA & ESI ACT 2002.

The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the LIC Housing Finance Ltd., under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(2) of the said Act, issued a Demand Notice Date: 13-03-2020 calling upon the Borrowers : 1) Sri Venkata Rama Krishna Gungunta (Applicant), Flat No.3, Second Floor, Door No. 3-29-14/4, Oak Dale Apartment 16, D.No.44/E,31/C,Kundula Road, Krishna Nagar, Guntur, Municipal Corporation, Guntur - 522002.A.P., 2) Sri Chinniah Gungunta (Co-Applicant), Flat No.3, Second Floor, Door No.3-29-14/4, Oak Dale Apartment 16, D.No.44/E,31/C, Kundula Road, Krishna Nagar, Guntur, Municipal Corporation, Guntur - 522002.A.P. and 3) Sri Venkata Ramana Gungunta (Co-Applicant), Flat No.3, Second Floor, Door No.3-29-14/4, Oak Dale Apartment 16, D.No.44/E,31/C, Kundula Road, Krishna Nagar, Guntur, Municipal Corporation, Guntur-522002. A.P. to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs.31,64,124.01 (Rupees Thirty One Lakhs Sixty Four Thousand One Hundred Twenty Four and One paise only) as on 13-03-2020 together with future interest and costs from 14-03-2020 within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. Loan A/c No. 710800003974.

As the Borrowers have failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken SYMBOLIC POSSESSION of the property mortgaged to the LIC Housing Finance Limited, in exercise of powers conferred on them under section 13(4) of the said act read with Rule No.8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, on 10-11-2020.

The Borrowers in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealing with the property will be subject to the charge of the LIC Housing Finance Ltd., for an amount of Rs.31,64,124.01 (Rupees Thirty One Lakhs Sixty Four Thousand One Hundred Twenty Four and One paise only) and applicable future interest and cost thereon till realization.

The borrowers attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

SCHEDULE OF THE PROPERTY

Property Address Schedule A: All the piece and parcel of the Property bearing Registered Document No.939/2016, Gunur Dist, Nallapadu Sub Division, Guntur City, Krishna Nagar, Nallapadu Gramam, D.No.44/E, 4-50 Cents, D.No.31/C, 1-85 Cents, 6.35 Cents, D.No.3-29/14/4, Old Assessment No.2941/B/1 Ru, Present Assessment No. 10879, 16 Plot an extent of 418 Sq.yards of site upon which an undivided share of land, 83.6 Sq.yds of land, Oak Dale Apartment, Theron bounded as follows: **East** : Property of Savaram Subba Rao Naidu, **South**: Property of Mikkilineni Basavaiah, **West** : Property of M.Sitaravamma, **North** : Kundula Road.

Schedule B: Oak Dale Apartment, 2nd Floor, Flat No.3, 2050 Sq.ft (Plinth+common area+car Parking) Bounded as Follows: **East**: Open area in Ground, **South**: Open area in Ground, **West**: Open area in Ground, **North**: Common lift and Municipal Road attached, open area in ground.

Place: Guntur

Date: 14-11-2020

Sd/- Authorised Officer

LIC HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED

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SHORT TAKES

NCB GRILLS ARJUN RAMPAL IN DRUGS PROBE

SAURABH JOSHI | DC MUMBAI, NOV. 13

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) on Friday grilled actor Arjun Rampal, days after grilling his girlfriend Gabriella Demetriades, in connection with the Bollywood drugs consumption and peddling probe. The questioning went on till late in the evening after it started at around 11 am. The actor allegedly submitted a medical prescription to the NCB in support of the tablets that were seized from his residence.

Rampal was grilled from 11 am to 6 pm by a team of NCB at their Ballard Pier office. The investigators said that Rampal was initially summoned by the NCB on Wednesday but he turned up on Friday. While the officials grilled the actor, his friend who is also a foreign national, Paul Giryard was arrested by the NCB officials, on Thursday. He was summoned and grilled by the NCB following which he was placed under arrest. Prior to the questioning of Rampal, the NCB grilled his girlfriend for two consecutive days.

KUNAL KAMRA REFUSES TO SAY SORRY

New Delhi, Nov. 13: A petition was on Friday filed in the Supreme Court seeking initiation of criminal contempt proceedings against stand-up comic artist Kunal Kamra for his alleged scandalous tweets against the apex court.

The plea was filed a day after Attorney General K.K. Venugopal granted consent for initiation of criminal contempt proceedings against Kamra, saying the tweets are in bad taste and it is time that people understand that attacking the apex court brazenly will attract punishment under the Contempt of Courts Act, 1972.

The consent of either the Attorney General or the Solicitor General is necessary, under section 15 of the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971, for initiating contempt proceedings against a person.

Kunal Kamra on Friday refused to retract his controversial tweets against the Supreme Court or apologise for them, saying he believes they speak for themselves.

"The tweets I recently put out have been found in contempt of court. All that I tweeted was from my view of the Supreme Court of India giving a partial decision in favour of a Prime Time Loudspeaker, he said in a statement addressed to Venugopal and the judges on his Twitter page. My view hasn't changed because the silence of the Supreme Court of India on matters of other's personal liberty cannot go uncriticized. I don't intend to retract my tweets or apologise for them. I believe they speak for themselves, he added.

Festive spirit at its peak



Devotees decorated Kedarnath temple with 10 quintals of flowers in Kedarnath on Friday on the eve of Diwali festival. President Ram Nath Kovind on Friday asked people to take a resolve to become a lamp of hope and prosperity for the poor, destitute and needy this Diwali by sharing happiness.

— PTI

Delhi reports over 7k Coronavirus cases

Home ministry is monitoring the sharp increase in cases

DC CORRESPONDENT With agency inputs NEW DELHI, NOV. 13

With 44,879 fresh cases, India's overall tally of Coronavirus reached 87.28 lakh on Friday. However, the number of active cases are 4,84,547 and the total recoveries have crossed 81.15 lakh taking country's recovery rate to 92.97 per cent.

The death toll has reached 1,28,668 after 547 more fatalities were reported in the last 24 hours as case fatality rate declined to 1.47 per cent. "India continues to report a trend of steadily declining active cases. For the third day after the active cases dropped below the 6 lakh mark after nearly three months, progressive decline has been maintained. The active cases have dropped to only 6.97% of the total positive cases of the country demonstrating a steady falling percentage of the total cases," Union health ministry officials said.

Officials added with the consistent decline in the active cases, the cases per million in India is among the lowest in the world. India's average cases per million stand at 5,930.

With over 7,000 cases in a day, Delhi is one of the epicenters of the virus followed by Kerala and West Bengal. However, northern states like Haryana and Rajasthan that have seen a drop in new cases are once again reporting a surge in fresh cases.

The home ministry which is closely monitoring the sharp increase in Coronavirus cases in the national capital is of the view that the cases would start coming down and the situation would once again return to normalcy within the next 8 to 10 days.

Delhi has been recording more than 7,000 cases on average over the last few days in view of the ongoing festive season, increased pollution and onset of winter.

In fact, in the last 24 hours there have been 100 deaths due to Coronavirus in the capital.

This has forced home secretary Ajay Bhalla to personally take charge of the situation and hold regular review meetings on the issue.

"We have done our own internal assessment and are of the opinion that the situation should once again return to normal within the next 8 to 10 days. By normal we mean that the number of cases being reported daily would once again drop drastically to less than a 1,000 daily," a senior home ministry official said.

Ministry officials claimed that the medical facilities in the city were adequate. Even in private hospitals, officials added the situation was under control with adequate beds being available even in the ICU.

Both Delhi government and the ministry have already reserved a large number of beds in private hospitals for the

Coronavirus patients.

Officials admitted that Delhi was witnessing a "third wave" of Coronavirus, but it had already reached a peak and the situation would stabilise over the next few days.

The home ministry in a statement also emphasised that Metro rail travel should be carefully regulated as per Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

"The recent surge in the number of active cases was attributed to the festival season, which has witnessed greater movement of people, accompanied by laxity in adhering to the basic principles of safe Covid-19 behaviour," the statement said.

The strategy to contain the spread of Covid-19 in Delhi, especially keeping in view the festival season and decreasing temperatures accompanied by rising pollution, was discussed at length with representatives of the health ministry and experts.

WB REGISTERS RECORD RECOVERY OF 4,468 COVID-19 PATIENTS

Kolkata, Nov. 13: West Bengal on Friday reported the highest single-day recovery of 4,468 Covid-19 patients, taking the total number of cured people to 3,85,617, the health department said in a bulletin.

The discharge rate went upto 90.80 per cent on Friday from 90.57 per cent on Thursday.

The Covid-19 death toll in the state rose to 7,557 with 51 more people succumbing to the disease, the bulletin said.

North 24 Parganas district registered 17 fresh deaths, followed by Kolkata at 10. The remaining fatalities were reported from sever-

al other districts.

As many as 3,835 fresh cases were reported from different parts of the state, pushing the tally to 4,24,675. The percentage of positive cases out of samples tested stood at 8.27 per cent, it said.

Since Thursday, 44,312 samples have been tested in the state and the number of active cases stood at 31,501 on Friday, it said.

A total of 51,36,012 samples have been tested in West Bengal so far, the bulletin said.

A total of 51,36,012 samples have been tested in West Bengal so far, the bulletin said.

— PTI

MP minister asks people to defy babu's order on crackers

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, NOV. 13

A minister in the Shivraj cabinet was locked in a battle with a district collector in Madhya Pradesh, who is also his son-in-law, over bursting of firecrackers on Diwali, which falls on Saturday.

State home minister Narottam Mishra on Friday literally called upon people to defy the order by Bhopal district collector Avinash Lavania, imposing a specified period from 8 pm to 10 pm for use of crackers by the revelers on Diwali.

The district collector on Thursday issued an order under Section 144 of the CrPc, making use of firecrackers other than green crackers on Diwali an offence. The order also restricted bursting of firecrackers to the specified period.

The district collector's order was in accordance

with the directive by National Green Tribunal (NGT) in this regard.

"He (the district collector) may have issued the notification as per NGT directive. But, there is no need to observe the time limit imposed for bursting of crackers. This is our festival. One should enjoy the festival to the hilt and burst crackers as long as one desires", Mishra told reporters here.

He, however, called upon the people to follow the Covid-19 guidelines while celebrating the festival of lights.

The minister's remarks have created a flutter in the political as well as official circles here.

"The minister has made a mockery of law by exhorting people to ignore the district collector's order. He has forgotten that he is home minister of the state and is bound by Constitutional obligations to ensure strict enforcement

of law. But, he overlooked his Constitutional responsibilities by asking people to ignore the order for cheap popularity", former minister and MP Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) vice-president Raja Pateria said.

Former chief secretary of MP K.S. Sharma has expressed dismay and shock over the minister's remarks.

"It is very strange and shocking that a minister is appealing to the people to ignore the order issued by a district collector of his state. It is not appropriate for a minister to make such an appeal to the people. A government functionary cannot nullify an official order unless the government adopts change in the policy", he observed.

Mishra had earlier sparked a row when he chose to defy Covid-19 guidelines by not wearing a face mask in public. Incidentally, he held the health portfolio then.

Kodiyeri quits as CPM Kerala chief

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, NOV. 13

Kerala CPM's powerful state secretary Mr Kodiyeri Balakrishnan on Friday stepped down from the post citing health reasons a day after his son Bineesh Kodiyeri who is an accused in money laundering case linked to a drug racket, was sent to Parapana Agrahara jail in Bengaluru.

LDF convener A Vijayaraghavan has been given the additional charge of party state secretary for the time being.

An official statement issued by CPM state secretariat here said that Mr Balakrishnan's request for leave to undergo medical treatment had been accepted by the party leadership.

LDF convener A Vijayaraghavan will officiate as state secretary in his absence, the party release said.

However, the period of leave has not been mentioned. Kodiyeri's leave comes close on the heels of investigating agencies including the Enforcement Directorate tightening their noose around Bineesh Kodiyeri.

The damning revelations being made by ED in connection with the money laundering case had made Kodiyeri's continuation in the post untenable.

Though the state and cen-

● KODIYERI'S LEAVE comes close on the heels of investigating agencies including the Enforcement Directorate tightening their noose around his son Bineesh Kodiyeri.

● THE DAMNING revelations being made by Enforcement Directorate in connection with the money laundering case had made Kodiyeri's continuation in the post untenable.

● begun. So in a way Kodiyeri's exit has come as a relief to the cadres who would have otherwise faced hostile questions during the campaign apart from the scathing attack from the opposition parties.

The CPM is also under severe attack from the Opposition parties over the arrest of chief minister Mr Pinarayi Vijayan's former principal secretary M Sivasankar in connection with his alleged links in gold smuggling and money laundering cases.

Though the CPM has tried to distance itself from Sivasankar's alleged illegal activities and the government had placed him under suspension, the opposition wants the chief minister to be held accountable for the "anti national" acts like gold smuggling and money laundering which were carried out by his staff members right under his nose.

While Koidiyeri's decision to step down may have brought some relief to the CPM, with investigating agencies not only digging deep into the gold smuggling and money laundering cases but also as the Marxists allege "playing politics by selectively leaking out probe details to the media at the behest of BJP led government at the Centre" the ruling LDF is undoubtedly faced with a daunting task this poll season.

Didi reaches out to Adhikari to stop him from quitting

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, NOV. 13

Within hours of foiling Trinamul Congress MLA Becharam Manna's exit from the party, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday evening reached out to her rebel cabinet colleague, Shubhendhu Adhikari through her election strategist Prashant Kishor with offers of talks and post in her desperate bid to stop his defection to the BJP ahead of the next year's Assembly election.

Adhikari, however, remained out of her radar. Revolting against the Trinamul supremo's style of leadership at various rallies under apolitical banner, the Nandigram MLA has been maintaining distance from her and the ruling party for the last several months.

The heavyweight minister with three key portfolios was also conspicuous by his absence in the recent cabinet meeting chaired by

Banerjee at the state secretariat.

At around 8.30 pm Kishor alongwith three members of his IPAC team visited Adhikari's residence at Shantikunja in Contai of East Midnapore.

The TMC heavyweight and his brother, Dibyendu Adhikari, a TMC MP from Tamluk were not at home then. But their father, Sisir Adhikari, also a TMC MP from Contai and a former union minister, was present there.

Kishor spoke to him for nearly an hour during which he wanted to have a word with Shubhendhu from his father's mobile to open the party's channel of talks with him, according to sources.

But Shubhendhu refused to speak to Kishor after his father called him up. A proposal of a meeting between the CM and Shubhendhu with an offer of a key post for him in the party was given to Sisir then before Kishor left with his team, sources said.

BJP will not come to power in Maha for 25 years: Raut

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC MUMBAI, NOV. 13

Upset over BJP leader Kirit Somaiya's allegations of corruption against the Thackeray family, Shiv Sena's Sanjay Raut on Friday said that his party will ensure that the BJP remains out of power in Maharashtra for next 25 years. Another Sena leader Gulabrao Deokar said that Somaiya has mental problems and needs to be given "electric shock".

Raut also termed Somaiya "enemy of Maharashtra" and said that no matter how much Somaiya prattles on, the MVA government will remain in power for the next five years and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) would sit in opposi-

tion for 25 years. BJP leader Kirit Somaiya has alleged that Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray's wife had done 21 land transactions with Anvay Naik, who had committed suicide in the year 2018.

Last week, editor-in-chief of Republic TV Arnab Goswami was arrested for abatement of suicide of Naik.

The BJP leader has claimed that he has official papers of the transitions, which are "suspicious".

Rebutting the allegations, Raut said that Somaiya is free to go anywhere be it Enforcement Directorate (ED), Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) or Interpol for probe into the land dealings.

Raut further said that

PM'S DREAM TO MAKE AYODHYA VEDIC RAMAYANA CITY: ADITYANATH

Ayodhya (UP), Nov. 13: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday said it was Prime Minister Narendra Modi's dream to development Ayodhya as "Vedic Ramayana City" and it should be the most beautiful city.

"Our generation is not only fortunate to see the start of the construction of a Ram temple here but we also attended the historic event. In the struggle of 500 years, many saints passed away with a dream to see the start of construction. I thank PM Modi who is the one who implemented the ideology of Ram Rajya," Adityanath said while addressing the fourth 'Deepotsav', an event to mark Diwali here.

The Prime Minister had performed the 'bhoomi puja' of a Supreme Court-mandated Ram temple in Ayodhya on August 5 this year, bringing to fruition the BJP's 'mandir' movement that defined its politics for three decades and took it to the heights of power. The Chief Minister said when he used to come here for development work, those who met him only used to say, "Yogiji Ram mandir nirman kar-waive (Yogiji get the construction of Ram temple done)." "I used to only ask them to trust Modiji," he added.

"It is the dream of PM Modi to develop Ayodhya as Vedic Ramayana City and it should be the most beautiful. We are here to seek support of you all as to how it can be developed that it has glimpse of a Vedic city," the Chief Minister said.

"He (PM) himself" came for starting that work of construction of Ram temple following Covid-19 protocol and gave strength to the concept of Ram Rajya, in which there is no discrimination on the bases of caste, creed, religion, language, region area etc. There is honour and security for all. He gave schemes such as Ayushman Bharat, free cylinders, power connection, toilets for the poor and showed the way for development," Adityanath added.

— PTI

DECCAN Chronicle

14 NOVEMBER 2020

Brainstorm revival steps to take in the short term

Announcing the third tranche of the stimulus package on Thursday, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the government's focus was on bringing back the economy on the growth path. The stimulus package was estimated to be ₹2.7 lakh crore, which translates to 1.4 per cent of the GDP. The package touches upon all key segments of the economy, such as industry, agriculture, employment generation, real estate and infrastructure, among others. Reforms address some of the long-pending demands of the industry, such as production-linked incentives, which could potentially attract companies that want to diversify their supply chains.

Notwithstanding its goal, the package does not give the economy and the people what they need right now: Revival of demand. Most of the announcements on Thursday were of the medium-term nature. They are, no doubt, good, but they won't provide any solution to the current problem, which is sagging demand. The Covid-19 pandemic has made several contact-intensive industries to shut or operate at abysmally low capacities, which resulted in massive retrenchments. While this had eliminated the enormous purchasing power that these people collectively wielded, the reluctance of those having cash to splurge in these uncertain times has further mauled the demand in the Indian economy.

Retail inflation continued to be high, which, unless addressed immediately, could affect people's lives and also slow down India's economic recovery

Though there have been encouraging signs of demand revival as suggested by the collection of GST, one cannot say if it is a normal demand revival or the pent-up demand, which was released ahead of the festive season. The revival of demand, therefore, should have been the focus of the government. However, it continues to ignore the advice of the economists and appears keen on letting the economy heal itself — a course that would be painful for most of the population. Despite its claims of providing a combined stimulus, whose size is 15 per cent of the GDP, experts claim that the actual fiscal component — the money spent by the government — would be less than two per cent of the GDP. Further, the government expects no additional borrowing. In the backdrop of falling tax revenue, no additional borrowing means the government would be diverting other budgeted expenditure for spending on the stimulus package, which means it won't spend any extra money.

Incentives offered for real estate, and housing could improve home sales and have a spill-over effect on other businesses, such as furnishing and building products, and create employment in the construction sector. This alone, however, cannot restore the demand in the economy. If one goes by data of inflation and industrial production (IIP), there is nothing to cheer about as yet. The demand for capital goods, which indicates a booming economy, continues to be in the negative territory. Retail inflation continued to be high, which, unless addressed immediately, could affect people's lives and also slow down India's economic recovery. The government should, therefore, also focus on immediate short-term steps to revive the economy, without losing focus on medium-term and long-term economic goals, because as famous economist John Maynard Keynes said, "In the long term, we are all dead."

Owaisi's reach is growing

The Hyderabad-based All India Majlis-e Ittehadul Muslimeen (or Muslim Unity Party) and its leader Asaduddin Owaisi have lately drawn analytical attention. Were it not for this party being in the fray in the recent Bihar Assembly polls in a Muslim-preponderant region, many think the NDA might have lost to the Mahagathbandhan, the Opposition coalition of the RJD, Congress, and Left parties. The AIMIM won five seats and 1.24 per cent of the votes, but this percentage would be higher if voting for only the Seemanchal region is considered. If the AIMIM had received just half a per cent fewer votes, the anti-NDA parties could have made it.

But it is clear that Mr Owaisi has every right to contest elections where he wishes. It is for the anti-BJP parties (the so-called secular forces typically) to open political channels to the AIMIM. This is not likely to be easy, though. To begin with, Mr Owaisi aims for Muslim votes. Therefore, the parties that attract his ire in an election are those that have traditionally attracted Muslim votes. This is why, politically, he does not go for the BJP and its allies, giving them an easy ride. In that sense Mr Owaisi's forays in Muslim areas are useful to the BJP. But what appears evident is that Mr Owaisi is doing his best to grow the AIMIM as an all-India Muslim party, inasmuch as the BJP is a Hindu party. In 2015, his party drew a blank in Bihar but this time round it has won as many as five seats. In Maharashtra Assembly too it has won seats and also has an MP from that state. Now the AIMIM leader has announced his intention to fight in West Bengal and UP. The continued existence of caste and religious parties is not healthy for the spread of the democratic ethos in this country. Identity-based electoral and political consolidation is a complex phenomenon but in part it derives from the failure of centrist forces represented by the Congress or the Janata Party earlier, or even the Left.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

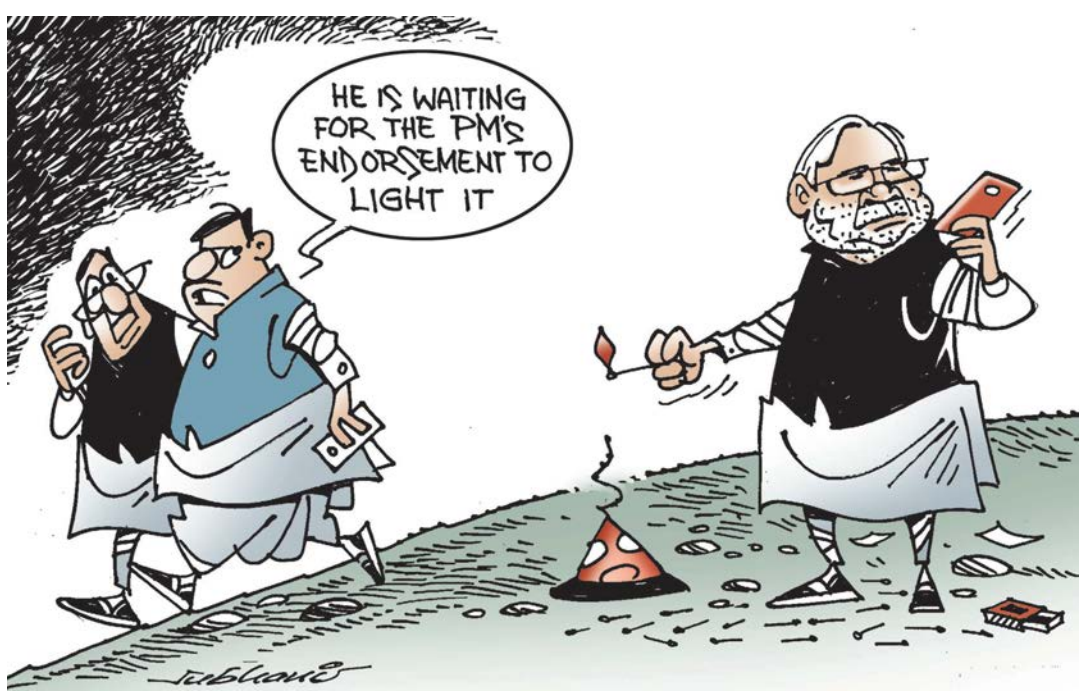
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Subhani



How to be a good loser... Don needs crash course



Shobhaa De

This year, Dhanteras was celebrated on what the West deems an ominous day — Friday the 13th. Well... ominous for some is auspicious for someone else. India is lighting diyas, and let's not spoil the fun. I know I should be focusing on momentous events, closer to home — like the Bihar elections. But a timely meme said it all. It showed a super glamourised image of actor Ratna Pathak (bouffant hair, cat eyeglasses) advising her beta not to discuss the Bihar elections, since it is so "middle class". Such is the dilemma faced by us urban idiots, we did indeed follow the American presidential race pretty breathlessly, while being pretty indifferent to what was going on in *hamara* Bihar. Well, that's also because we kinda knew what would happen in Bihar — and it did! Whereas the bitterly fought battle for the White House, between Orange Hair and Boring Biden, provided more *mazaa*.

If you ask me, the guy who really won the White House back for his party (the Democrats) is the guy who never wanted to leave it in the first place — Barack Obama. It was this man's solo crusade that did the trick for Boring Biden. Because, in truth, the average American is not all that different from the average Indian — we happily fall for "BS". Besides, Donald Trump did indeed bag eight million more votes this time! Had it not been for the most charismatic living politician (Obama) working relentlessly for Boring Biden and Coma-la, Orange Hair would have cruised back in *aaram se*. This is the thing about democracies (please note: India still counts itself as one), the lowest common denominator generally leads the rally. Barack Obama galvanised the troops and tapped into the seething rage generated by #BlackLivesMatter, as he went after Donald Trump in a campaign that should serve as the ultimate master class in astute politicking.

Back home, we have become accustomed to the BJP winning — whatever, whenever, and however! Anything else comes as a jolt. Nitish Kumar has been lording it over Bihar for 15 long years. He really doesn't give a flying off about dull issues like the future of migrant workers or how to deal with Covid-19. His gameplan is simple — to stay put. Finished. But aha —how can we overlook the Owaisi factor? What was that? Should we take it at face value? Is it just a simple case of a shrewd tactician playing his cards expertly? Or... or... or! Politics is all about "setting" and "jugaad". Owaisi did his numbers well. Cannot take that away from this wily fox who can out-talk even the most garrulous anchors and panelists on television "debates". With Bihar behind us, the IPL over, and Covid still around, everyone is wondering what to do during this festive season. The "no *patakas*" ruling (thank God!) in most

Nobody expects grace or courtesy from Donald Trump — the most boorish American President in history. And he is not ready to make that concession speech either. Take that, Boring Biden.

Had it not been for the most charismatic living politician (Obama), Orange Hair would have cruised back in. This is the thing about democracies, the lowest common denominator generally leads the rally.

states indicates that it may be a far quieter Diwali. With luck, this ban on toxic *patakas* fumes will also reduce lung damage. *Khair*... what got me going far more than Rohit Sharma's MI win (tell us something we can't predict) was a letter which did the rounds after Trump was trumped (though it ain't over till it is over [and] the fat lady sings). It was a handwritten note from George H.W. Bush Jr to his successor in the White House, Bill Clinton, in 1993. Read it! That's called a class act. It is a friendly, man-to-man handwritten note which strikes the right balance — it is not "chummy", it is not condescending, and it is anything but whiney. This is how seasoned politicians/statesmen/ statesw omen accept defeat. Losing is an art. A sore loser goes down in history as a pathetic, insecure person, who is unable to move on and concede the top spot to the next, more deserving individual. Nobody expects grace or courtesy from Donald Trump — the most boorish American President in history. And he is not ready to make that concession speech either. Take that, Boring Biden.

In the international sports arena, there are no better examples of greats who display exemplary character traits as one another's biggest rivals than Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal. Their goodwill looks genuine, they clearly share a comfortable sense of bonhomie, and one can sense mutual respect of the highest order! This level of professional public relations

cannot be manufactured by managers and agents. It is so evident that these two all-time great tennis champions possess the one quality that separates the men from the boys — an abundance of confidence. Compare them to the Joker with his tantrums on and off the court, and one can easily see who wins the popular vote.

It is said true character gets revealed not when you win big but when you lose even bigger. Some of our superstars in Bollywood and cricket need to remind themselves of this aspect of competition — films flop, someone else gets the role, heartbreaks happen, box office records are broken, more wickets are taken, and the spotlight shifts to the next one and the next one and the next one. True achievements never tarnish. In India, we have any number of sterling examples — men and women, who inspire generations to put the best foot forward and not obsess over "legacy".

There is something truly hideous about boastfulness, especially during a time like this, when the whole world is dealing with stress and confusion. Chest thumping is easy — watch an alpha male gorilla to figure out how it's done. But when the prevalent and dominating political culture in the country actively advocates belligerent egotism and steps in with unseemly alacrity to "save" a particularly obnoxious television anchor who has made a career out of bulldozing opponents and fabricating narratives, it is best to say "*Hari Om*!", and remind ourselves that even the mighty eventually fall with a thud despite all the cushioning provided by powerful mentor-sponsors. You can be the biggest loser on earth while foolishly believing you have won! BTW, the biryani in Taloja remains top class.

Readers can send feedback to www.shobhaade.blogspot.com

LETTERS

SANITISER IN DIWALI

Due to Covid-19, everybody is habituated to use alcohol-based sanitizer. During Diwali, that sanitizer must not be used before lighting crackers or candles. They can easily catch fire. Therefore, those sanitizers must be kept at a safe point. Instead of carrying sanitizers everywhere, one can consider carrying water and paper soaps.

N.V.U. Chandra Mouli
Visakhapatnam

STIMULUS MEASURES

The Centre's Atmanirbhar Bharat 3.0 stimulus will bring cheers for developers and buyers. For over seven months the realty business and other businesses took a beating unheard of in history of India. With 135 crore people and a still developing economy, India is going through the toughest of times since Independence. The US' consumer-based economy is a good example of money management. I think the FM is taking a cue from the US to take steps to refuel our economy.

Govardhana Myneedu
Vijayawada

DIGITAL CENSOR

The Centre is right to bringing the OTT platforms under I&B ministry. It's a timely intervention before any damage is caused. As far as violation of Article 19(1) of the Constitution is concerned, the judiciary shall take care of it whenever such exigencies arrive.

K. Nehru Patnaik
Visakhapatnam

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

300 killed in E. Pak tidal wave

CALCUTTA, Nov. 13 About 300 people were feared killed in today's cyclone in the coastal areas of Khulna district of East Pakistan. Deputy High Commissioner of Pakistan A.K Choudhury told UNI here tonight.

He said the reports he had received said Khulna district bore the brunt of the storm.

He said weather reports indicated that another cyclone was likely to hit parts of East Pakistan tonight.

A tidal wave, apparently started by a hurricane, has hit the island of Dubla in the Bay of Bengal and is feared to have washed away several thousand Hindu pilgrims.

Farrukh Dhondy
Cabbages & Kings



"Why do we in temperate India Read about poetic snous Which foreign poets celebrate In metaphors none of us knows? Yes, we sing hymns to the monsoon, The downpours which each year Bring promises of renewal When thunderous clouds appear. — From Godrej to Road Rage by Bachchoo

Dear Narendra Saheb, Pradhan Mantri,

I address you as a petitioner on a matter which has, I am sure, occupies the minds of millions in our constantly changing world. I mean, as you can see from global reports, particularly in the last weeks from France and Vienna, that there have been murders and terrorist attacks in the name of Islam in Europe. After the beheading of a schoolteacher in France and the murder of people in the Notre Dame cathedral of Nice, President Emmanuel Macron declared his policy of war on Islamist terrorism. He was, commendably, careful to say that his offensive was not against the religion but against those that interpret it as an injunction or licence to

murder the innocent.

He has declared a relentless campaign by the French state to eliminate terrorism emanating from this particular interpretation of Islam which, according to very many scholars and to the philosophy of many schools of the religion, is anti-Islamic and amounts to the ideas of deviant savants who instituted death-cults and insisted they were the authentic religion.

President Macron's declared offensive is fraught with difficulty as the French police say they have 20,000 individuals whom they need to keep under surveillance as they have indicated in one way or another their adherence to or sympathy for the ideas of the contemporary death-cult. Mr Macron's initiative is welcomed by the citizens of France but his efforts and that of the French state, or that of the Austrians, British, other Europeans, Americans or even the Pakistani state (which has been ambivalent towards this phenomenon) will obviously not solve what is now a universal occurrence. The Trump administration of the US didn't seem to distinguish between Islam and the Islamicist death-cults. Mr Trump

and his aides perhaps didn't understand any distinction and declared bans on citizens of certain parts of the globe.

The reason is that Islam today is a universally divided house. In the states which call themselves Islamic, the factions of Sunnis and Shias fight and kill each other in terror attacks as in Pakistan, or in factional armies, supported by foreign powers, as in Syria, or as opposing national states with deadly foreign-manufactured-and-marketed weapons as in the Yemen. ISIS, declaring itself heir to the world, began its murderous campaigns in Islamic countries, fighting Muslims in the name of Islam.

No country, no state, has gone any distance to set any sort of example to bring peace where there is war and hope where there is the underlying despair that leads to the murder of innocents. The wisest world opinion has concluded that only Muslims can bring about this peace or defeat of death cults in the Islamic world. That's as obvious, gentle reader, as the nose on your face (apologies to Surpanakha of the *Ramayan* who had hers cut off by Lakshman). But can they? Unlike Christianity, Islam

has no Pope or archbishop to make a ruling. The fatwas abound, the killing continues

And yet Narendraji, there is one country that can offer examples of an attitude, a policy, strategies towards the future and set patterns and ideals for the rest of the world. Yes, *Pradhan Mantri*, that country is *Bharat Mata*.

The theology of Islam didn't come to India in the shape of Muslim conquest. It came in the guise of the Sufi evangelists, the Chishtis and the Olyas. A scholar and prince such as Dara Shikoh, the brother of the bigoted Aurangzeb, recognised the closeness of Sufi Islam to the philosophical Advait Vedant of Shankara.

Every religion has beliefs and writings from the past which the modern worshipper discards and is forced, by sheer common sense and humane values, to neglect as things which have outlived their origins. No Christian should act on the dictates and punishments that Leviticus prescribes in his book in the Bible. Just so, there are passages in the Hindu scriptures about castes and the status of women which don't accord with the democracy that brought your party and you to power. Of

course, all the modern movements of Hinduism understand that.

Millions of our citizens go to temples to worship and also make a pilgrimage to Ajmer to the shrine and presence of a Sufi saint.

Yes, as my late friend V.S. Naipaul insisted, we should tell the truth about the atrocities that were visited by conquerors on the Indian population. Nothing should be swept under the carpet, including the atrocities, through thousands of years, of the ruling upper castes against those born as lower.

In the moments of the Black Lives Matter *morchas* in the United States and Britain we saw whites and blacks saying let us, while acknowledging it, put the history of division behind us.

I address this to you, Narendraji, as being uniquely placed in the world to lead a country with a unique history to put the divisions of that history behind us and discover, recognise the inevitability of and anoint the avatar of the future India... of freedom from the devils of conflict. *Jai Hind!*

Ever,
Farrukh Dhondy

IN BRIEF

'Yorkshire Ripper'
UK killer dies at 74

London: A notorious British serial killer dubbed the "Yorkshire Ripper" after murdering 13 women across northern England between 1975 and 1980 died on Friday aged 74. Sutcliffe was convicted in 1981 of 13 murders and seven more attempted murders after a reign of terror that is still seared on the public memory. He received 20 life sentences and was ordered to serve at least 30 years in prison, but in 2010 a High Court judge ruled that he should never be freed. Sutcliffe had tested positive for Covid-19 but according to British media reports this week had refused treatment. No immediate cause of death was given. Boris Johnson's spokesman said the prime minister's thoughts were with the victims, survivors and their families, calling Sutcliffe "a depraved and evil individual".

RISHI SUNAK
LIGHTS DIWALI
CANDLES

London, Nov. 13: UK Chancellor Rishi Sunak marked the festival of Diwali by stepping out of his No. 11 Downing Street home in London to lay out a rangoli decoration and light four diyas at the doorstep. The 40-year-old Indian-origin finance minister, who is married to Akshata Murthy – the daughter of Infosys co-founder Narayana Murthy, has spoken about being a "proud Hindu" over the years.

His celebratory gesture on Thursday night marks a first for Downing Street, which annually sees the UK Prime Minister host a Diwali gathering and an Annakut, or spread of festive food, from London's Swaminarayan Mandir next door at No. 10. Sunak's message this Diwali was for British Hindus to follow the lockdown rules and refrain from the usual tradition of getting together with friends and family.

Hesitant China finally congratulates Biden

Chinese foreign ministry is more forthcoming on Harris' win

Beijing, Nov. 13: China on Friday shed its initial hesitation and congratulated US President-elect Joe Biden and his deputy Kamala Harris for their victory in the 2020 US presidential election, saying Beijing respects the choice of the American people.

"We have been following reactions on the US elections from both within the US and the international community," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told a media briefing here when pointed out that more world leaders as well as United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres have congratulated 77-year-old Biden.

"We respect the American people's choice and we extend congratulations to Biden and Harris and we understand that the result of the US presidential elections will be determined following the US laws and procedures," Wang said.

China initially hesitated to congratulate Biden, a Democrat, after Republican incumbent President Donald Trump refused to concede. On November 9, Wang had declined to congratulate Biden on his victory, saying the outcome of the American election should be determined by the country's laws and procedures. He, however, was more forthcoming on the victory of Harris as the first woman Vice-President-elect. When reminded about Chinese President Xi Jinping's statement calling for greater gender equality in a recent UN conference on women and does China have any comment on Harris, Wang quoted a Chinese saying which states women hold half of the sky.

Mark Zuckerberg 1st tech giant head to acknowledge Biden

Washington, Nov. 13: Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg has become the first head of a US tech giant who has acknowledged Democrat Joe Biden as the next president of the country, a media report has said.

Zuckerberg told his employees that the outcome of the November 3 election is now clear and Biden was to take over as the new president of the country, BuzzFeed, which obtained an audio of the meeting, reported on Thursday.

"I believe the outcome of the election is now clear and Joe Biden is going to be our next president," Zuckerberg was quoted as saying in the report on Thursday. The US media

NO EVIDENCE AMERICAN VOTE WAS COMPROMISED, SAYS ELECTION BODY

Washington, Nov. 13: There is no evidence of compromised ballots or corrupt voting systems in the US election, officials said on Thursday, as a top Democrat accused Republicans who refuse to accept President-elect Joe Biden's win of "poisoning" democracy.

Their messages came hours after President Donald Trump once again

cried foul, retweeting a baseless claim that an election equipment maker "deleted" 2.7 million votes for him nationwide.

Biden, who leads by more than five million in the popular vote, cemented his victory late Thursday by winning Arizona, US networks said, flipping the state Democratic for the first time since 1996.

— AFP

has projected Biden, a Democrat, as the winner of the 2020 presidential election. However, incumbent President Trump, a

Republican, is yet to concede defeat, vowing to mount legal fights in several key battleground states.

— PTI

Chinese firms out of bounds in US

Washington, Nov. 13: US President Donald Trump has signed an executive order banning Americans from investing in Chinese firms deemed to be supplying or supporting Beijing's military and security apparatus, earning a sharp rebuke from China.

The order listed 31 companies on Thursday it said China was using for the "increasing exploitation" of US investment capital to fund military and intelligence services, including

the development and deployment of weapons of mass destruction.

US-China relations have deteriorated sharply during Trump's presidency, and this was the latest in a series of executive orders and regulatory actions that have targeted China's economic and military expansion.

On Friday, Beijing lashed out at the US for "abusing state power to arbitrarily oppress Chinese companies".

— AFP

BIDEN CONQUERS ARIZONA TOO, FIRMLY ON TOP

Washington, Nov. 13: Joe Biden has won the state of Arizona, US networks said late Thursday, further cementing his lead in the Electoral College and flipping the state Democratic for the first time since 1996.

NBC, CBS, ABC and CNN declared Biden the winner in the tight race with a lead of more than 11,000 ballots, giving him the state's 11 electoral votes.

— AFP

France remembers 2015 Paris attacks



Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo, left, and French Prime Minister Jean Castex, 2nd left, participate in a wreath laying ceremony, marking the 5th anniversary of the November 13, 2015 attacks outside the Bonne Biere cafe bar in Paris, on Friday. In silence and mourning, France is marking five years since 130 people were killed by Islamic State extremists who targeted the Bataclan concert hall, Paris cafes and national stadium. — AP

Obama recalls Rahul as a 'student eager to impress'

New York, Nov. 13: Former US president Barack Obama says Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has a "nervous, unformed quality" about him like a student eager to impress the teacher but lacking aptitude and passion to "master the subject."

The New York Times reviewed Obama's memoir 'A Promised Land', in which among other issues, the first person of colour American President has talked about political leaders from around the world.

On Gandhi, Obama says he has "a nervous, unformed quality about him, as if he were a student who'd done the coursework and was eager to impress the teacher but deep down lacked either the aptitude or the passion to master the subject," according to The New York Times review.

Gandhi's mother and



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with former US President Barack Obama.

— Twitter

Congress president Sonia Gandhi also appears to find mention in the memoir. The NYT review said in the memoir "we are told of the handsomeness of men like Charlie Crist and Rahm Emanuel, but not the beauty of women, except for one or two instances, as in the case of Sonia Gandhi."

Former US Secretary of

Defence Bob Gates and former Indian prime minister Manmohan Singh both come across as having a kind of impassive integrity, the review states. It added that Russian President Vladimir Putin reminds Obama of the tough, street-smart ward bosses who used to run the Chicago machine.

— PTI

GAMES

SHORT TAKES

Verstappen fastest in Turkey practice

Istanbul (Turkey): Red Bull driver Max Verstappen posted the fastest time Friday in the second practice for the Turkish Grand Prix.

Verstappen was 0.4 seconds quicker than Ferrari driver Charles Leclerc and 0.58 ahead of Valtteri Bottas. Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton was 0.85 back in fourth place on a resurfaced circuit low on grip and which last hosted a Formula One race in 2011.

Hamilton is looking to secure his seventh F1 title and equal Michael Schumacher's record. He is the runaway championship leader and only needs to finish ahead of Bottas on Sunday to win the title. Verstappen's best lap was 1 minute, 28.33 seconds, considerably better than his fastest time of 1:35.077 in the first session. But although times improved as tyres got warmer in the afternoon, Verstappen's leading mark was still three seconds slower than Sebastian Vettel's pole position for Red Bull nine years ago.

Verstappen finished ahead of teammate Alexander Albon and Leclerc, who skidded into a bollard at the pit lane entrance early on. Hamilton took no risks and ended that practice run down in 15th place. — AP

Condolence meet for TT's Sultan

Hyderabad: A condolence meeting in memory of S. M. Sultan, former secretary of the Andhra Pradesh Table Tennis Association (APTTA) and senior vice president of the Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI) was held at Anandnagar Welfare Association Sports Academy in Hyderabad on Friday. The poignant meet was attended by Telangana State Table Tennis Association president A. Narasimha Reddy, secretary P. Prakash Raju, vice presidents A. Narasimha Rao and Amrullah Dasthani, players, officials, parents among others.

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SCOTLAND SOAR

End two decades wait, qualify for prestigious Euro

Belgrade, Nov. 13: Scotland qualified for a first major international tournament since 1998 by reaching Euro 2020 thanks to a 5-4 win on penalties over Serbia after a 1-1 draw in Belgrade.

The Scots' demons of two decades without qualifying seemed set to reappear when Luka Jovic's 90th-minute header sent the game into extra time.

Ryan Christie's opener had deservedly put the visitors in front during what had been a fine performance from Steve Clarke's men.

But just like in a semi-final shootout win over Israel, Scotland kept their cool with five perfect penalties and finally got over the line when David Marshall saved from Aleksandar Mitrovic.

Goalscorer Christie and captain Andy Robertson welled up with emotion as a generation of Scots can look forward to a major tournament for the first time. There is an extra reward of two matches at Hampden against the Czech Republic and Croatia and a clash with England come June.

Victorious Scotland are now unbeaten in nine games stretching back 13 months.

— AFP



Scotland players celebrate after winning the Euro 2020 play-off qualification football match against Serbia at the Red Star Stadium in Belgrade on Thursday.

— AFP

MSK Academy champions

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, NOV. 13

THE RESULTS

Scotland (Christie 52)
Serbia (Jovic 90)

(after extra time, Scotland win 5-4 on penalties)

Hungary (Nego 88, Szoboszlai 90+2)
Iceland (Sigurdsson 11)

Slovakia (Kucka 17, Duris 110)
Northern Ireland (Skriniar 88-og)

North Macedonia (Pande 56)
Georgia

MSK Prasad International Cricket Academy emerged winners of the RVM Cup U-16 tournament played at Countdown Cricket Ground at Gandipet near Hyderabad.

They did it in style, defeating T-11 Cricket Academy by a thumping 106 runs in the final, to remain unbeaten throughout the tournament via dominating performances in all departments of the game.

Batting first in the title round, MSK CA put up a mammoth 275 for 4 in 30 overs courtesy brilliant batting by Yash and Abhinav. Yash made 93 in 70 balls while Abhinav made 78 off 56 balls. Aarya contributed 33.



The MSK Prasad International Cricket Academy team pose with trophies and medals after winning the RVM Cup U-16 tournament in Hyderabad.

In reply, T-11 could not match the might of the MSK bowlers and managed a mere 169 for 8 in their stipulated overs. Atchut was the pick of the bowlers, taking 4 wickets

while conceding 32 runs. Abhinav chipped in with 2 for 4.

Brief scores: MSK CA 275/4 in 30 overs (Yash 93, Abhinav 78, Aarya 33, Aryan Amble 2/19) bt T-11

ARGENTINA HELD BY PARAGUAY

Buenos Aires, Nov. 13: Argentina had to come from behind to draw 1-1 with Paraguay in a World Cup qualifier at La Bombonera on Thursday, and Lionel Messi had what might have been a winning goal disallowed in the second half.

A Nicolas Gonzalez goal brought Argentina back level after Angel Romero's penalty put Paraguay in front at the home of Boca Juniors.

The result ends Argentina's perfect start in their bid to qualify for the 2022 finals in Qatar, after Lionel Scaloni's team claimed narrow wins last month at home to Ecuador and away to Bolivia.

Giovani Lo Celso pulled the ball back for Messi to sidefoot low into the net, but the goal was eventually disallowed by the Brazilian officials for a foul by Gonzalez.

— AFP

Aussie coach on guard vs India

Melbourne, Nov. 13: Australia head coach Justin Langer has hailed India captain Virat Kohli for taking paternity leave during the tour Down Under but conceded that his absence will definitely affect the visitors during the much-anticipated Test series for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

Kohli will return home after the opening Test, which ends on December 21. He has been granted paternity leave by the BCCI to be with his actor wife Anushka Sharma for the birth of their first child in early January.

Langer said he respects Kohli for putting family ahead of cricket.

"Virat Kohli is probably the best player I've ever seen in my life for so many reasons, not only batting but his energy and passion for the game, the way he fields," Langer told reporters by video conference on Friday.

"I cannot believe he displays the energy he does in everything he does and I've got so much respect for him. I've also got respect for him in the sense that he's made this decision (to return for the birth)."

"He's a human being like all of us... if I was giving advice to any of my players I would always say never, ever miss the birth of your children because it is one of the great things you'll ever do," he added.



Of course it will have an impact (his absence), but we also know that India beat us last time (in 2018-19). They're a very, very good team, we cannot get complacent for a second with or without Virat.

— JUSTIN LANGER
Australia head coach

Kohli will miss the Boxing Day Test in Melbourne (December 26-30), New Year's Test in Sydney (January 7-January 11) and the final game at the Gabba (January 15-January 19).

Langer said Kohli's absence will definitely impact India but they cannot afford to lower their guard.

"Of course it will have an impact (his absence), but we also know that India beat us last time (in 2018-19). They're a very, very good team, we cannot get complacent for a second with or without Virat," Langer said.

— PTI

GLITZY IPL IS ALL SET FOR EXPANSION, SAYS DRAVID

New Delhi, Nov. 13: Former India captain Rahul Dravid strongly believes that Indian Premier League (IPL) is "ready for expansion" in terms of number of teams without compromising on the quality as well as quantity of talent available in the country. There are talks that the 2021 IPL will be featuring nine teams instead of eight and will go up to 10 teams by 2023, which has always been the BCCI's long-term plan.

The views of Dravid, who is now the director of National Cricket Academy (NCA), were echoed by Rajasthan Royals co-owner Manoj Badale, who felt that a nine-team IPL in 2021 is "definitely possible".

"I feel IPL is ready for expansion in terms of talent, if you look from talent perspective. There are a lot of talented players who are not getting an opportunity to play," Dravid said, adding if there are more teams, all the talented players could be fitted in and there won't be a drop in quality.

— PTI

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