

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM | SUNDAY | 1 NOVEMBER 2020

WEATHER

Max: 33.0°C
Min: 23.0°C
RH: 79%
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Mostly Cloudy.
Max/Min temp.
33/23 °C

COVID-19 C

CASES (+46,808)

DEATHS (+443)

81,79,250 1,22,071

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+1,445) (+6)

TS: 2,38,632 1,336

(+2,783) (+14)

AP: 8,23,348 6,690

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

4,62,10,349

DEATHS

11,97,805

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES

215

worldometers.info/coronavirus

COVID-19 C

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ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana

Tithi: Nija Ashwayuja Bahula Padyami till 10.49 pm

Star: Bharani till 8.55 pm

Variyam: Sessa Variyam up to 6.32 am

Durmuhurtam: 4.10 pm to 4.55 pm

Rahukalam: 4.30 pm to 6 pm

HIJRI CALENDAR

Rabbi-ul Awwal 14, 1442 AH

PRAYERS (ROYAL MOSQUE)

Fajar: 5.00 am

Zohar: 1.30 pm

Asar: 5.00 pm

Maghrib: 6.35 pm

Isha: 8.30 pm

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.01 AM

SUNSET TODAY 5.31 PM

MOONRISE TODAY 6.10 PM

MOONSET TOMORROW 7.13 AM

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COUNTER POINT



Our campaign is very dull... our rival candidate gets more EC notices than us!

SHORT TAKES

New norms for MBBS colleges

New Delhi: In a major move, the newly constituted National Medical Commission has removed the provision of requirement of minimum five acres of land for setting up a medical college and its affiliated teaching hospitals. The NMC has come out with a detailed list of requirements applicable for setting a new college, and for established medical colleges proposing to increase their annual MBBS intake from 2021-22, the health ministry said. The requirement for the number of beds in a medical college hospital was reduced from 530 to 430 for a 100-seat college, and from 930 to 830 for a 200-seat college.

IIM Calcutta girl found dead

Kolkata: A student of IIM Calcutta was found dead inside her hostel room on Saturday, police said. The body of 28-year-old Payel Khandelwal was found hanging from the ceiling of her room on the third floor of the hostel building on the institute's Joka campus, they said. The door was booted from inside and had to be broken open, a police officer said. Though no suicide note was found, all angles, including the possibility of the student killing herself, are being explored, he said. The body was sent for post-mortem examination, the officer said.



NATION | 5

Nirmala wanted me out of FinMin: Garg

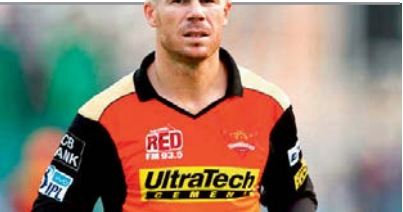


WORLD | 7

Biden, Trump chase votes in Midwest finale

SPORTS | 8

Hyderabad stay alive in Playoffs race



CONGRESS STARTS PROCESS TO HOLD ELECTION FOR PARTY PRESIDENT

SREEPARNA CHAKRABARTY | DC
NEW DELHI, OCT. 31

The Congress has finally begun the process of electing a new president, more than a year after Rahul Gandhi quit following the party's disastrous performance in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls. The party's chief election authority, headed by Madhusudan Mistry, has written a letter to all Pradesh Congress Committee chiefs and general secretary in-charges of various states informing them that an AICC session would soon be called and the process of registration for the same should begin.

In the Congress hierarchy, only AICC members have voting rights in case of any elections. In the letter, Mistry has asked all states to send the list of names along with photographs for registration.

Sources said that the revision of the AICC rolls has begun at state level.

The AICC session is being planned for early next year in the month of January or February.

Earlier, the party had decided to hold a plenary in April in Udaipur. However, due to the Covid-19 outbreak, it was put on hold.

SHAH TO CAMPAIGN IN BENGAL, NADDA VISIT CANCELLED

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC
KOLKATA, OCT. 31

On getting an adverse report on the law and order situation in West Bengal from Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar, Union home minister Amit Shah will embark on a two-day visit to the state from November 5 to take stock of the ground realities and review the party's preparations for the Assembly elections next year.

With this, the West Bengal tour of BJP chief J.P. Nadda has been cancelled. Shah's move comes a day after Dhankhar briefed him in New Delhi on October 29 about the poor state of affairs under Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's rule.

On the Governor's role behind Shah's visit, Bengal BJP general secretary Sayantan Basu said, "Shah is one of the senior most leaders in our party. He was our party president for a long time. Guided by him, we became successful in the state."

He added, "But it is also a fact that Shah is the Union home minister. He is getting complaints of daily killings of our workers while the police acting at the behest of the TMC. It is likely he wants to understand the situation. His visit is to do a reality check."

Cool ride



People drive through the dense fog that enveloped the Araku valley on Saturday. The region saw low temperatures over the weekend. — P.N. MURALIKRISHNA

Pak boast on Pulwama exposes Oppn: Modi

Kevadiya (Gujarat), Oct. 31: Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the truth of last year's Pulwama attack, in which 40 CRPF personnel were killed, has been accepted in Pakistan Parliament.

His statement comes two days after Pakistan's science and technology minister Fawad Chaudhry admitted his country's

role in the Pulwama attack during a debate in their National Assembly.

Modi said that when the entire nation was mourning the brave soldiers' death in Pulwama attack, some people indulged in "dirty politics" for their political gains.

He was speaking at Kevadiya in Gujarat's Narmada district after

paying tributes to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel at the Statue of Unity on his 145th birth anniversary.

"The country cannot forget the unwarranted statements made after the Pulwama attack. Dirty politics laced with selfishness and arrogance was at its peak when the country was suffering from immense pain," he said.

Golden moment



The Golden Temple illuminated ahead of the 486th birth anniversary of the fourth Sikh Guru Ramdas in Amritsar, on Saturday. — PTI

37 booked for grabbing church land

HOSKOTE NAGABHUSHANAM | DC
ANANTAPUR, OCT. 31

Bengaluru police registered cases against 37, persons including a former minister and leaders from various political parties of Kadiri town, in connection with fabricating false evidence and producing forged documents to grab prime land of Ceylon and India General Mission (CIGM) in various parts, including here and in Bengaluru.

Dr Tyagaraj , chairman

of CIGM lodged a complaint with Pulakeshi Nagar police station on October 6. The total value of the properties usurped by leaders was at least ₹75 crore in the present market causing extensive loss to CIGM, he said.

He observed the rich lands were swindled by the group of persons. The properties were to be developed for social purposes like orphanages and schools but the fraudsters had misled courts by submitting forged documents after suppressing material

facts. "It clearly shows that they relied on the strength of an alleged agreement of sale purported to have been executed in their favour by late A. Jayaraj and every case has been filed subsequent to the death", Tyagaraj said.

The Mission is a company which controls and monitors approximately 130 churches, schools,

boarding homes and other properties throughout the country. In 1991, a general power of attorney was executed by the erstwhile directors of the company

in favour of A. Jayaraj and the said document was registered as No.667/1990-91 at the office of sub registrar of Shivajinagar in Bengaluru city.

Through such GPA, Selvaraj was empowered to convey the properties owned by CIGM to further the interests of the Mission, he said. Jayaraj expired in 1999.

Tyagarj said that B. Elisha Hemanth Kumar was the mastermind behind the conspiracy to usurp various properties owned by CIGM.

Parents want fees from Class VIII to Inter cut

VADREVU SRINIVAS | DC
KAKINADA, OCT. 31

As schools and colleges reopen from November 2, parents are not only anxious about the second wave of Covid-19 but also the high fees being charged by educational institutions, especially for students from Class VIII to Intermediate.

Even though the government has issued an order that instructs educational

institutions to offer a 30 per cent cut in the last year's fee, many institutions are not ready to do so. Parents are demanding that the reduction of fee should be 60 per cent.

They have placed some proposals before Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, asking that a fee reimbursement scheme should be applied to Intermediate students.

Former Amalapuram MP G.V. Harshakumar

also demanded that the government introduce a fee reimbursement scheme for Intermediate students, which could sort out the problem of high fee structures.

According to sources, there is an anomaly in the Intermediate fee structure. There is one type of fee structure for first year courses and another for the second year. The government should rationalise the fee structure.

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 31

The state government is taking all precautions and strictly adhering to the safety measures as schools reopen on November 2 and the academic year 2020-21 is extended up to April 30.

As the schools reopen in phasas, officials are making changes, from day-to-day schedules to mid-day meals, in order to adhere to safety protocols in the pandemic.

Commissioner of School Education V. Chinna Veerabhadru stated that steps are being taken to ensure a safe environment in compliance with the Covid-19 standard operating procedures (SOP) issued by the Centre.

Although the schools start functioning from November 2 for Classes 9 and 10, students will be attending on alternate days and classes will be held till noon, said Veerabhadradru, adding that each classroom is limited to 16 students, following social distance protocols.

"Wearing masks, washing hands and maintaining physical distance are mandatory which should be followed by every student as well as teacher. Every day, the students will be undergoing orien-

tation on Covid-19 precautions. Classes start from 9.15 am and will go on up to 1.45 pm, followed by midday meals. In the afternoon hours, the students who did not turn up for school will have online classes. The academic year 2020-21 is extended up to April 30, totalling 180 working days."

Alternative arrangements are being made for students opting to stay at home and pursue online education by bringing dedicated mobile apps like Abhyasa and Diksha, along with Doordarshan classes and YouTube channels, based on the student's accessibility to the technology, said Veerabhadradru.

As far as the residential schools are concerned, hostel facilities will be made available any time between November 2 and 23, prioritising students who don't have any alternate option for accommodation.

Schools were also provided with grants to acquire equipment like thermal scans and sanitisers to maintaining a safe and clean environment. SOPs from the medical and health and transport departments were also sought and the school SOP will be decided on November 1 after discussing with parent committees.

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CM seeks PM nod on Polavaram rate

New estimate put at ₹55,656 cr, says Jagan

MD ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 31

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi requesting approval of the Polavaram revised cost estimate (RCE).

He said that the RCE recommended by the Central Water Commission (CWC), technical advisory committee (TAC) and revised cost committee (RCC) was ₹55,656.87 crore as per 2017-18 price levels with latest quantities, He requested that this sum be approved.

The CM recalled that the Centre at the time of the bifurcation of the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh had promised in the AP Reorganisation Act, in Section 90 that the Polavaram irrigation project was declared as national project.

He said that under the promise the Centre said it would execute the project and obtain all requisite clearances, including environmental, forests and rehabilitation and resettlement norms. He stated that the expenditure of ₹5,135.87 crore incurred by the combined

‘CENTRE MUST BEAR COST OF POLAVARAM’

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 31

The state government has claimed that the responsibility of construction and rehabilitation with regard to Polavaram project belongs to the Centre.

Minister for water resources, P. Anil Kumar Yadav said the Centre had categorically assured to complete it as part of AP Reorganisation Act 2014.

■ Full report on Page 2

state of AP on the Polavaram irrigation project till April, 1, 2014 was considered as the share of the state government.

Reddy stated that the original project cost as per the 2005-06 price level was ₹10,151.04 crore, accepted by the TAC of the ministry of water resources (MoWR). Thereafter, the first RCE was accepted by the TAC as ₹16,010.45 crore, following the 2010-11 price level.

The RCC recommended

the cost of the project as ₹28,919.95 crore, following 2013-14 price levels. The CM said that it is evident here that as time goes by the project cost is bound to increase. He mentioned that the project was accorded investment clearance for the first RCE vide letter dated May 8, 2017, by the MoWR with a condition that while 100 per cent of balance cost after April 1, 2014 shall be borne by the Centre, the balance cost of the irrigation component at latest price level shall be borne by the state government.

This ad hoc decision of the ministry of finance in a way was a total negation of the provisions of the AP Reorganisation Act, 2014, on Polavaram, as it virtually added an additional burden on the government of AP though the state's share had already been spent and accepted.

The CM lamented that the then government of Andhra Pradesh failed to bring this complete ad hoc departure from the gazette notification of May 28, 2014, to the notice of the Centre.

■ Page 2: ₹17,656 cr public money spent on project

Schools get set for November 2

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 31

The state government is taking all precautions and strictly adhering to the safety measures as schools reopen on November 2 and the academic year 2020-21 is extended up to April 30.

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IN BRIEF

Annabhishekam
at temple

Nellore: TTD organised the grand Annabhishekam at the Sri Kapileswara Swamy Temple on Saturday in ekantham given the Covid-19 restrictions. After morning suprabatha seva Abhishekam was performed. In the noon after Shuddhodaka abhishekam, the holy Annabhishekam was conducted for the Mula Murti (Maha lingam) of Sri Kapileswara Swamy. Nearly 150 kg of cooked rice was used in the abhishekam. As part of the ritual, the Annaprasadam is removed, and another abhishekam was performed with scented perfumed waters to the Maha lingam in the evening.

One killed in
house collapse

Kadapa: One person was killed and two others injured when two houses near Subedar Mandi in Rayachoti collapsed in the early hours of Saturday. The deceased has been identified as Ashraf Ali, 64. Police rushed to the spot and sent the injured to hospital for treatment. When the information reached the Chief Whip Gadikota Srikanth Reddy, went to the spot and consoled the victim's family. He assured them to extend government help to the family. Meanwhile a person murdered his own brother at Rayachoti. Financial disputes lead to this murder. According to Rayachoti urban police Inspector G.Raju, the two cousin brothers Mari muttu and Murali were staying in a room at Rajula colony of Rayachoti.

₹200cr sanctioned
for Pushkarams

Kurnool: Finance minister Buggana Rajendranath Reddy announced that the AP government has released ₹200 crore for holding Tungbhadra Pushkarams in Kurnool district. The money sanctioned will be utilised to construct permanent infrastructure like roads, bathing ghats, streetlights, and other facilities, so that pilgrims can conveniently have a holy dip in the river. Speaking to media after visiting Sankalbagh Pushkar ghat and reviewing ongoing works, Rajendranath said visitors have, however, been advised not to come in large groups at a time, but schedule their visits while complying with Covid-19 restrictions. "Government is making all arrangements but visitors too must follow rules," he said.

VILLAGERS
RANSACK
POLICE STATION

**DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, OCT. 31**

Some residents of Yanamala village vandalised the Vedurukkuppam police station in Chittoor district on Saturday during a protest to demand action against the sub-inspector for his alleged high-handed behaviour against some locals for performing a child marriage two days back.

The protesters shattered the windows of the police station and damaged the furniture, besides destroying some documents. As the protesters outnumbered the police and went berserk, the few policemen present in the station allegedly fled the scene.

According to D. Muralidhar, Puttur DSP, said that one Pushapa Raju, 36, of Harijanawada in Yanamala had married a 13-year-old girl from the same village on October 29.

"Based on the information given by the officials of the Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS) on the incident, the SI interacted with the village elders and chided the bridegroom while counselling him on the ill-effects of child marriage," said Muralidhar.

On Saturday, as many as 50 persons, including women, rushed to the police station and resorted to a protest to cover up the child marriage issue. Muralidhar said police are identifying the persons who created the ruckus to take action against them for preventing the police from executing their duties.

Stressing that they have launched a comprehensive probe into the episode, Muralidhar said that they also came to know that some villagers are involved in the illicit production of arrack in the habitation while pointing to the plans to take legal action against them.

Private schools
miffed over fee

**SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN I
DC
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 31**

Managements of more than 15,000 private schools are unhappy with the state government for failing to address the issue of the clearance of arrears of last term's fee worth crores of rupees from students, even though it issued an order reducing tuition fees by 30 per cent for the current academic year.

They say that since Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave a nation-wide call to observe the 'janata curfew' to curb the spread of Covid-19 on March 22, all schools have remained closed and in due course of time, students from Classes I to X were promoted to the next class without conducting annual exams.

They say that during every academic year, they complete the syllabus early and take up revision during March to enable students to appear for the annual exams scheduled to be held in April-May. They wonder how they can forgo their fee arrears for the last term of the academic year as it involves many working months.

Referring to the AP High Court's recent judgment, they maintain that even the court permitted them to collect the fee arrears of last academic year from the students.

There are nearly one crore students in Classes I to X in the state. Of them, 55 lakh are enrolled in government schools while the rest are in private schools. The government spends ₹40,000 to ₹60,000 on each student per academic year in government schools, providing infrastructure and recruiting teachers to teach the students.

Private schools say that though they are saving huge amounts of money to the state government as nearly 45 lakh students are enrolled in their schools, they get no support from the state government.

They are critical of the government for failing to impose curbs on the spending of financial assistance of ₹15,000 given to each student under the Amma Vodi scheme as the amount is misused by the parents, majority of whom are not

● Nearly six lakh teaching and non-teaching staff are working in 15,044 private schools in AP.

● State reduced tuition fee by 30 per cent in the current academic year in comparison with the fees collected in the last academic year.

● Private schools say nearly 45 lakh students are enrolled in their schools

using that money to pay school fees, causing further financial strain on private schools.

The state government's recent decision removing the need for the submission of a transfer certificate to take admission in a new school up to Class VIII also drew criticism from private schools as they say that some students have enrolled in new schools without clearing financial dues.

Moreover, the state's decision empowering deputy district education officers and mandal education officers to delete the names of students from the state government's web portal 'Child Info' enables them to enrol in new schools without taking a transfer certificate or clearing dues. This has caused immense trouble to private schools.

Private school managements say that they have huge overheads to attend to like paying rentals for school buildings, wages to teaching and non-teaching staff, whether in part or full, meeting operational costs, irrespective of whether or not they are running the schools. They wonder from where they are meant to meet such expenditure if the students are allowed to go free without clearing fee dues to the schools.

They have appealed to the state government to come to their rescue by fixing the fee structure in private schools based on certain parameters like infrastructure, quality of faculty and others and allow them to function, as they are providing education to the students, mainly from low and middle income families, and also providing employment to professionally qualified teachers.

AP records 2,783 Covid cases

East Godavari the worst hit with 1,15,744 followed by 81,840 in W. Godavari

**DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 31**

Andhra Pradesh recorded 2,783 new Covid-19 cases increasing the overall tally to 8,23,348 and 14 deaths taking the toll to 6,690 in the last 24 hours.

The Covid-19 bulletin released by the state health authorities on Saturday said that 82,045 samples were tested. Of the total 80,28,905 samples tested so far, 7,92,083 patients were discharged after recovery while 24,575 active patients are undergoing treatment in various hospitals across the State.

West Godavari topped among new cases with 469 followed by 425 in Krishna, 371 in East Godavari, 351 in Chittoor, 324 in Guntur, 169 in Kadapa, 170 in Anantapur, 169 in Kadapa, 134 in Prakasam, 113 in Visakhapatnam, 86 in Nellore, 70 in Vizianagaram and 34 in Kurnool.

With regard to cumulative confirmed coronavirus cases, East Godavari was the worst hit with 1,15,744 followed by 85,727 in West Godavari, 78,342 in Chittoor, 67,220 in Guntur, 64,606 in Anantapur, 59,496 in

Nellore, 59,468 in Kurnool, 59,401 in Prakasam, 55,813 in Visakhapatnam, 52,080 in Kadapa, 43,932 in Srikakulam, 39,324 in Krishna, 39,300 in Vizianagaram, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

The rate of recovery was best in East Godavari with 1,10,657 followed by 81,840 in West Godavari, 75,068 in Chittoor, 63,117 in Guntur, 62,896 in Anantapur, 58,790 in Nellore, 58,580 in Kurnool, 57,490 in Prakasam, 53,381 in Visakhapatnam, 50,282 in Kadapa, 42,776 in Srikakulam.



Teenager wearing mask in Vijayawada on Saturday. — DC

Education minister: No shortage
of seats in intermediate in state

**DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 31**

Education minister Adimulapu Suresh has refuted allegations that seats are unavailable for intermediate students to do their plus 2 courses in Andhra Pradesh.

Addressing media here on Saturday, he said 5,83,580 seats available in various intermediate courses. "A propaganda has been launched about unavailability of seats, which is totally false. Though sufficient seats are available in colleges, the state government has issued a notification to start 561 new junior colleges," Mr Suresh said.

The minister explained that the government had to initiate disciplinary action against 613 colleges for violation norms in 13 districts of the state. These colleges did not provide even the basic essential facilities. Even some famous corporate colleges are holding classes in tiny rooms without basic amenities, despite collecting huge fees that is in violation of norms.

Mr Suresh said schools for Class IX and X, apart from second year Intermediate classes will restart from November 2. Classes for first year intermediate students will begin from November 16, while all residential and Gurukul colleges will start functioning from November 23. Classes for first to fifth standard stu-

Inter II year classes
from Nov. 2 in AP

**DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 31**

Classes for intermediate second year students to commence from November 2 in all junior colleges in the state.

Board of Intermediate Education Secretary V. Ramakrishna in a statement issued here on Saturday said permission was accorded for reopening of all junior colleges in the state for second year students with effect from November 2.

The secretary also permitted to make on TC admission and re-admission into second year courses as usual as per BIE norms.

However, as the online admission process is in progress for the first year intermediate students, classes will commence to them from November 16.

The BIE secretary directed all the principals to follow Covid-19 guidelines and also health and

● The government had to initiate disciplinary action against 613 colleges for violation norms in 13 districts of the state.

● Classes for first year intermediate students will begin from November 16

● The minister said the government has decided to open all higher educational institutions, including university and their affiliated colleges across the state, from Monday

● Principals to follow Covid-19 guidelines and also health and safety protocols recommended by the Centre while reopening the junior colleges

safety protocols recommended by the Centre while reopening the junior colleges.

dents will commence from December 14.

The minister said the government has decided to open all higher educational institutions, including university and their affiliated colleges across the

state, from Monday, with classes being held on all six days of the week. Classes for first year professional and non-professional undergraduate courses will commence from December 1, he said.

RICH TRIBUTES
TO VALLABHBHAI
PATEL

**DC CORRESPONDENT
ELURU/RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM, OCT. 31**

West Godavari superintendent of police, K. Narayana Nayak, said that Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel is an ideal and inspirational personality for the youth of today and they should inculcate the great leader's courage and patriotism.

Paying rich tributes to Patel on his 145th birthday celebrations at Eluru in West Godavari on Saturday, Nayak said that Patel was the first deputy prime minister of India and the first home minister and he brought the country under one umbrella by eliminating uncertainty and inequality with his intellectual prowess.

565 self-governing princely states had been released from British suzerainty by the Independence Act of 1947 and Patel persuaded almost every princely state to accede to India.

His commitment to national integration in the newly independent country was total and uncompromising, earning him the sobriquet "Iron Man of India."

West Godavari district additional superintendent of police, A.V. Subba Raju, reserve inspector I. Krishnam Raju, police officers' association president, R. Nageswara Rao and others were present.

BJP Rajahmundry rural mandal activists and leaders observed Patel's birthday celebrations at Bommuru.



Monthly Pournami Garuda Seva was observed inside the Srivari Temple in Tirumala on Saturday.

Murder accused arrested in 2 days

**DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, OCT. 31**

Naguluppalapadu police in Prakasam district have apprehended an accused in the murder of a man within two days after the murder.

The accused identified as Tella Koteswar Rao, 25, of Budavada village in J. Ponguluru mandal eliminated Katuri Yalamandaiah, 26, of

Ammanabrolu village on October 29 assuming that he was responsible for the suicide of his sister.

According to the police, Koteswar Rao's sister Gurajala Anusha committed suicide following harassment by her husband Gurajala Elisha in the month of March last year in Ammanabrolu.

The murder victim Yalamandaiah is a friend of Elisha and was alleged-

ly polluted the mind of Elisha against the character of his wife Anusha.

The allegations resulted in a conflict between the couple and Anusha ended her life by consuming rat poison unable to bear the torture of her husband.

After coming to know about the role of Yalamandaiah behind the death of his sister, Koteswar Rao decided to kill him. He waited for an

opportunity and stabbed Yalamandaiah 17 times when the latter came to collect water from a well in Kummariakunta in Ammanabrolu during the early hours of October 29.

A police team formed by the SP Siddharth Kaushal under the supervision of Ongole DSP K.V.N.V. Prasad, Ongole rural CI P. Subba Rao and N.G. Padu SI Sasi Kumar investigated the case.

POURNAMI GARUDA SEVA
OBSERVED AT TIRUMALA

**DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, OCT. 31**

The monthly Pournami Garuda Seva was observed inside the Srivari Temple in Tirumala on Saturday evening.

The well-decorated utsava idol of Sri Malayappa mounted on Garuda

vahana was placed at the Ranganayakula mandapam in ekantham as per state and central Covid-19 guidelines.

Tirumala pontiffs Sri Pedda Jeeyarswamy and Sri Chinna Jeeyarswamy, DyEO Venkatayya and Potu Peishkar Srinivasulu were present

VALMIKI JAYANTI CELEBRATED

**VADREVV SRINIVAS I DC
KAKINADA, OCT 31**

The BC welfare minister, Ch. Srinivasa Venugopalakrishna, praised the Chief Minister, Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy here on Saturday during the celebrations of Maharshi Valmiki Jayanti.

The YSRC government under the leadership of Jagan has set up 56 corporations for BCs and appointed 672 directors, mostly women, to run them, said Venugopalakrishna. Maharshi Valmiki had authored the Ramayana and taught dharma to the people of the world. "Following in his footsteps, Jagan is providing great leadership to the state, specially focusing on the welfare of BCs, said Venugopalakrishna.

He said that Jagan had conducted the padayatra when he was opposition leader all over the state and the results and the fruits are now being enjoyed by the people of the state.

East Godavari district collector, D. Muralidhar Reddy, said that anybody can develop with education and it was proved by Maharshi Valmiki. He said that taking inspiration from this, Jagan is giving utmost importance to education and taking up several programmes like Naadu-Nedu, Mana Badi and others to give good education to the people.

Earlier, Venugopalakrishna, Muralidhar Reddy, joint collectors and others garlanded the photo of Maharshi Valmiki and the iron man of the country.

Srivari Sevaku.

The TTD VGO Manohar said the theme of the vigilance week this year is Apramatha Bharat.

He said every citizen must fight corruption and

misuse of office which deters all-round development of the country.

Discipline transformed family and society in general, he said and urged the TTD employees to serve devotees.

KCR hits bullseye with story of the Rama baan

That Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao can weave a story is well-known. After quite a long gap, KCR was in

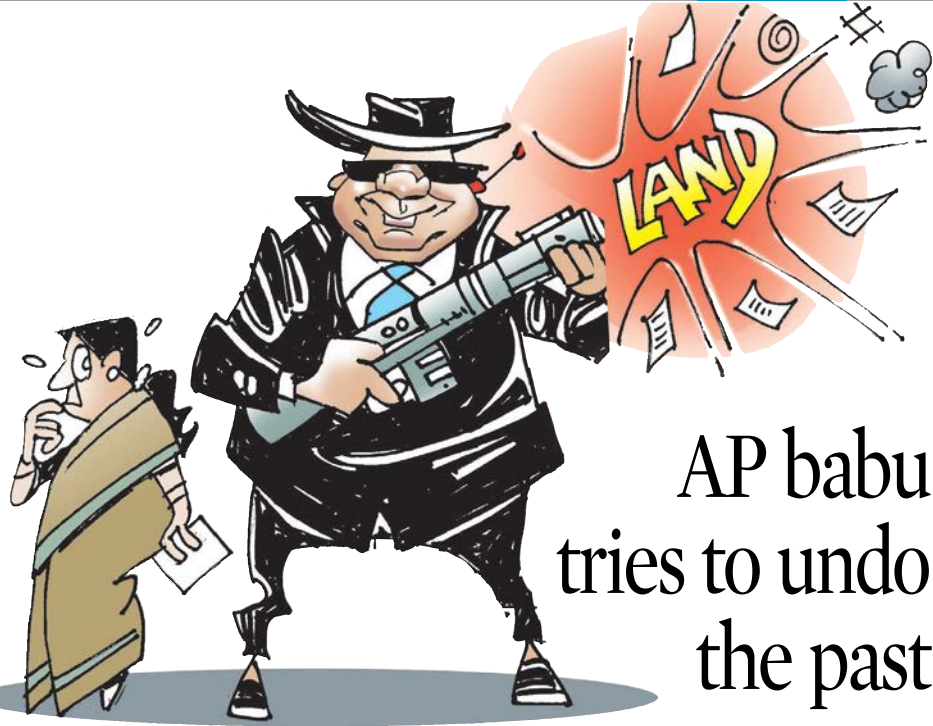
full flow while speaking at the launch of the Dharani portal. He started off by mentioning

kirikiri gallu (troublemakers), his favourite term for Opposition leaders and anyone he takes a dislike to. Then he paused and asked the audience at Mudu Chintalapalli whether they wanted him to narrate a tale of *kirikiri gallu*. The crowd roared back in anticipation, thinking he

would take off on political leaders. But KCR tracked back to the Ramayana. He told them that Lord Rama, in the battle against Ravana, had used the Rama baan to quell the demonic forces. The weapon lay the enemy low, and the battle was won. When it was all over, KCR told his audience, a group of demons appeared before Lord Rama. They

told him that they had been given a life of 100 years, but it was cut short by Rama using the baan. They asked Lord Rama to bless them so that they could live out the rest of their life. KCR continued with a smile: Lord Rama blessed them that in Kaliyuga, three or four of them would be born in each village.

These are the *kirikiri gallu*, he said, even as the audience burst out in laughter, and advised them against falling into the trap of the troublemakers.



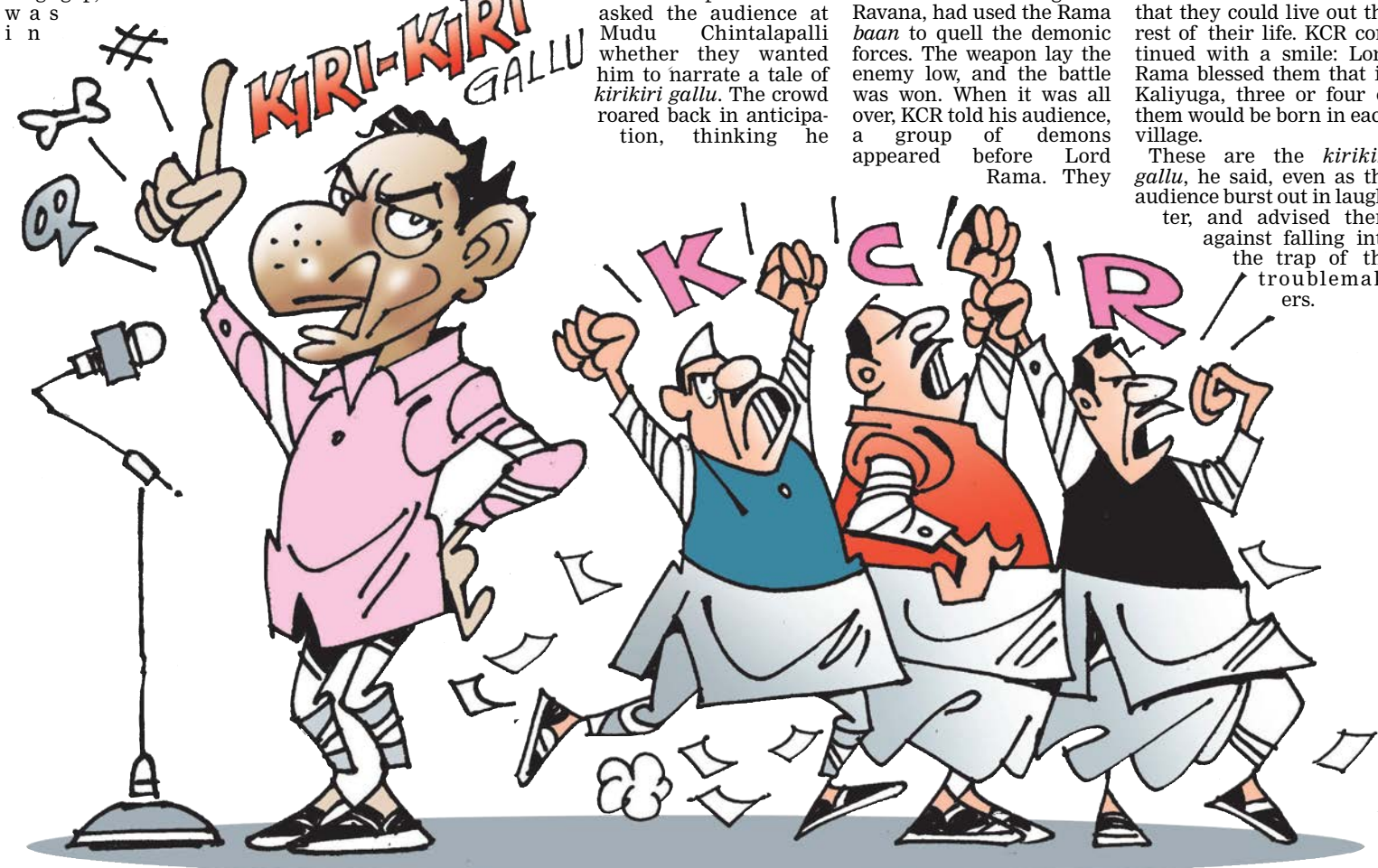
AP babu tries to undo the past

If memories are sweet Land cherished by some, they haunt others as is the case with a senior bureaucrat. She is not a high-profile officer but has earned a reputation of being a 'silent killer' in terms of making good money wherever she is posted, without much fuss and attracting attention.

In one of her postings in a department that deals with land, she issued orders converting government land of considerable extent near the temple

town of Srikalahasti in Chittoor district into private land and gifted it to her close relatives who apparently are her benamis. Though the issue came to the notice of her higher-ups sometime ago, they didn't take cognisance of it. The issue was believed to have been given a silent burial.

ial till a recent resurrection. The poor lady is being forced to do several things, however illogical and against rules they are, in her current post. Needless to say the past deeds or rather misdeeds are forcing her to do such things.

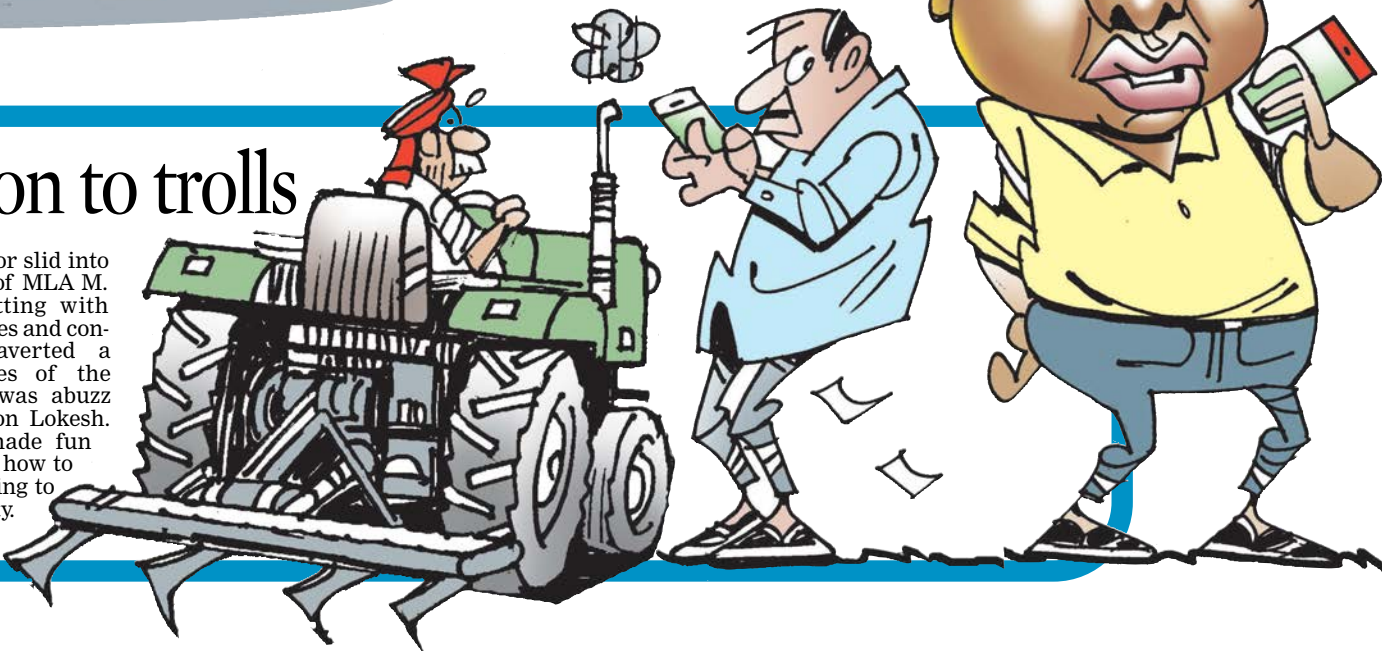


Lokesh's teetering tractor gives traction to trolls

Rahul Gandhi and Nara Lokesh are perhaps two politicians worst-hit by their image portrayal on social media as being less efficient among the contemporary politicians. They are badly trolled and, to their bad luck, land up in situations from time to time where their rivals can keep making fun of them. The other day Lokesh, criticised for remaining indoors in Hyderabad fearing the Coronavirus,

added a few places to his itinerary other than Amaravati. He went to West Godavari district to console the farmers who had been affected by rains. As is a common feature among leaders and cadre to hype such visits to impress their bosses, a huge tractor rally was organised. Lokesh got tempted by the possibility of a photo op, as he would be wading through floodwaters, and took the wheel of a tractor. He suddenly

lost control and the tractor slid into the drain. The alertness of MLA M. Ramaraju, who was sitting with him, in applying the brakes and controlling the tractor averted a mishap. Within minutes of the incident, social media was abuzz with memes and jokes on Lokesh. Ruling party leaders made fun asking him to first learn how to steer a tractor before trying to do the same with his party.



REGION

SHORT TAKES



African lioness Sirisha gets adopted at Nehru Zoological Park, in Hyderabad on Saturday.

AFRICAN LIONESS GETS ADOPTED AT ZOO

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT. 31

An African lioness at the Nehru Zoological Park (NZP) was on Saturday adopted by Venkatesh, a resident from the city, for three months. Venkatesh presented a cheque for ₹25,000 for adopting the lioness, named Sirisha, to zoo deputy curator A. Nagamani. The lioness was born in the zoo four years ago. Venkatesh said the NZP was one of the best zoos in the country, and a place and he and his family like to visit often. Nagamani thanked Venkatesh and his family for their gesture and appealed to people and corporates to come forward and adopt animals and be a part in conserving wildlife.

TS did a good job in curtailing virus: Min

Etala instructs officials to stay alert

BALU PULIPAKA | DC
HYDERABAD, OCT. 31

The state health department is bracing itself for a possible surge in Covid-19 cases following Bathukamma and Dasara that saw people gather in groups, sometimes in large numbers, across the state as they celebrated the festivals earlier in October. A meeting of top department officials chaired by health minister Etala Rajendar on Saturday concluded that with people coming out and meeting in large numbers, it was likely that Covid-19 might have spread faster and among more people.

The meeting reviewed the rapid increase in cases in Kerala and Delhi and the way these surges occurred in the two states. The meeting also discussed the possibility of Coronavirus spreading further among the people with the winter slowly setting in over the state. There was no option other than people maintaining physical distance and wearing masks while out in public areas, the meeting concluded. It urged the people to follow these norms strictly to save themselves and others around them from Covid-19. Rajendar said that, so far, Telangana state had done a good job in containing

COVID DATA

Covid-19 death rate in TS: **0.6%** (all-India 1.5%)
Positivity rate in TS: **5.6%** (all-India 7.8%)
Testing locations in TSL 64 RT-PCR labs, 1,076 Rapid Antigen Test locations
Isolation beds: **25,574**
Oxygen beds: **10,849**
ICU beds: **5,381**
ICU+Ventilator beds: **3,510**
Oxygen storage: **500.24 tonnes**
Oxygen demand: **141.4 tonnes**

the disease and he expected that this trend will continue. He also said that while it is generally understood that viruses spread more and faster during winter, the copious rains that the state experienced this year may play a role in keeping the winter season mild. This in turn might help in controlling spread of viral diseases as well as Covid-19.

The minister said that the government was fully geared up in terms of facilities to treat Covid-19 cases with adequate staff, beds and other facilities at its hospitals should the need arise. He instructed officials not to let their guard down and stay alert to how the disease is behaving in

NALGONDA SEES SUDDEN RISE IN COVID-19 CASES

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT. 31

Nalgonda district has seen a sudden uptick in Covid-19 cases with the health department reporting on Saturday that the district recorded 102 new cases on Friday, up from 74 on Thursday. Overall, Telangana state recorded 1,445 new cases of Covid-19 even as it reported six more deaths from the disease, taking the toll to 1,336 and the caseload to 2,38,632 as on Thursday at 8 pm, the health department said.

There were 18,409 active Covid-19 cases of whom 2,970 were receiving treatment in government and private hospitals. The highest number of cases on Friday were from the Greater Hyderabad area, at 286, followed by 122 in Medchal-Malkajigiri, 107 in Ranga Reddy, 90 in Bhadrachalam-Kothagudem, and 77 in Khammam districts.

the state, as also water- or mosquito-borne seasonal diseases and respond quickly.

HC DENIES BAIL TO SA WOMAN FOR DRUG SMUGGLING

VUJJINI
VAMSHIDHARA | DC
HYDERABAD, OCT. 31

The Telangana High Court declined bail to a South African national in judicial remand for the last five years for offences committed under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1975.

The allegation against her was that she was carrying about 427 grams of cocaine, concealed within her body. On 30 August, 2015, she had arrived at the Shamshabad airport and was intercepted by the authorities. On inquiry, she had admitted that she was carrying some narcotic drugs concealed within her body.

Doctors of Osmania General Hospital examined her and retrieved several capsules from her body through a medical procedure. The main capsules were 15x7 cm in size, containing a white powder. The capsules, with their covers, weighed around 199 grams. The powder was cocaine.

The other small capsules measuring 5x4 cm, retrieved from her body each weighed 13.5 gm, including the cover. The total weight of all 20 small capsules recovered from the body of petitioner was around 270 grams.

NCB officials recovered a total of around 427 grams of cocaine from her. The cocaine was seized under the panchanama and she was sent to judicial custody.

As five years lapsed and no trial was concluded at the court, she approached the High Court for regular bail until the case was finalised. The court rejected her petition stating that the allegations against her were most heinous and asked the trial court to complete the trial as soon as possible.

● **DOCTORS OF Osmania General Hospital examined her and retrieved capsules from her body through a medical procedure.**

Polluted road



The atmosphere at Uppal road turns dusty due to the construction work on Saturday. The visibility at times drops making driving difficult.

— DEEPAK DESHPANDE

Talks on restarting RSS shakhas held

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT. 31

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) sarsangchalak Mohan Bhagwat on Saturday exhorted office-bearers to address the challenges that have arisen due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Addressing the two-day dakshina madhya kshetra (south central region) meeting of the RSS that concluded on Friday at Annojiguda of Shamshabad in the city, Bhagwat indicated that initiatives would need to be taken for counselling and upskilling people so that they can be self-employed in new avenues post the pandemic.

In addition to the expansion of the RSS shakhas, swayamsevak should have a special focus on weekly family meetings where-

● **WEEKLY FAMILY meetings on environmental issues must be held says Bhagwat**

in social and environmental issues should be discussed, Bhagwat said.

According to Tippe-swamy of the RSS, 37 state executive organisers of the Dakshina Madhya Kshetra of the RSS, including state president, secretary and organising secretary, participated from Telangana state, AP and Karnataka.

During the two days, the service activities during the lockdown run by the RSS were discussed. Talks were held regarding restarting the shakhas with Covid-19 protocols. Office-bearers would also be re-starting their tours albeit keeping the special situation in view.

2 COUPLES HELD FOR TRADING NEWBORN BABY

Hyderabad: The Nacharam police arrested two couples for trading in a newborn boy through a mediator on Saturday. They had been booked on Friday. The boy, who was rescued on Friday, was handed over to the child welfare committee for care.

According to Nacharam inspector T. Kiran Kumar, even before the baby was born, his parents, Meena and Venkatesh, entered into an agreement with Rajeshwar, a GHMC outsourced employee, and his wife Nag-eeni, through one Janaki, a GHMC sweeper to give away the infant immediately upon delivery for ₹1 lakh.

Meena had given birth to girls in her first two deliveries, both of whom had died soon afterwards. Fearing that she would deliver another girl child, the couple decided in the fourth month of her pregnancy to sell the baby. "Meena delivered the boy in June. As per the agreement, the baby was handed over to Rajeshwar and Nageeni.

Woman held for illegal gaming

NAVEEN KUMAR | DC
HYDERABAD, OCT. 31

The West Zone Task Force apprehended a gaming house organiser, M. Padmaja, 58, from Venkatagiri, Jubilee Hills, and seized ₹3.45 lakh from her on Saturday.

The police had received information about gambling at the premises.

"It was revealed during the inquiry that Padmaja was or-

● **IN ANOTHER raid, 14 persons were caught by the Special Operations Team (SOT) of Cyberabad police for gambling at an apartment in Miyapur on Saturday. The police seized ₹5.92 lakh cash, mobilephones and cards from them.**

ganising illegal gaming by taking commissions for each game from the players.

We seized ₹3.45,600 and playing cards from the possession of the accused," said P. Radhakrishna Rao, DCP, Commissioner's Task Force.

The accused and seized material were handed over to Jubilee Hills police.

In another raid, 14 persons were caught by the Special Operations Team (SOT) of Cyberabad police for gambling at an apartment in Miyapur

on Saturday.

The police seized ₹5.92 lakh cash, mobilephones and cards from them.

The organiser, Yeruvu Nagi Reddy, was caught along with 13 others who were playing the three-card game.

"He was organising gambling by collecting commission," said the police. The 14 persons were handed over to Miyapur police station for further action.



IN BRIEF

ODISHA SCHOOLS TO PARTIALLY REOPEN SOON

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, OCT. 31

The Odisha government on Saturday announced its Unlock 6 guidelines which allowed partial reopening of schools and certain relaxations for marriage ceremonies and conduct of last rites of a deceased.

As per the new guidelines, all schools will remain closed till November 30. However, classes for Class IX to X will be allowed with a Standard Operating Procedure which will be announced later.

“Secretary of the school and mass education department has been asked to prepare an SOP. As per the SOP, schools will reopen for Class IX and X,” said school and mass education minister Sameer Ranjan Dash.

The minister added that all required steps will be taken for ensuring that Covid-19 infections did not happen to students and teachers.

As regards opening of the temples and religious shrines, the new guidelines said all places of worship will open with permission from the local administration. The local administration will grant permission considering the Covid-19 conditions in the locality.

The guidelines allowed gathering of 200 people in a marriage ceremony and permitted participation of 50 persons in the last rites of a deceased person.

OVER 10 CR COVID SAMPLES TESTED SO FAR

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 31

With 48,648 new cases, country’s Covid-19 caseload rose to 81,37,119 on Saturday, while the number of recoveries crossed the 74-lakh mark, pushing the recovery rate to 91.34 per cent.

According to the Union health ministry data, death toll climbed to 1,21,641 with 551 new fatalities.

A total of 74,32,829 people have recuperated from Covid-19 so far, taking the national recovery rate to 91.34 per cent. The case fatality rate has dropped to 1.49 per cent.

The number of active Covid-19 cases remained below 6 lakh for the second consecutive day. As per data, there are 5,82,649 active cases of coronavirus in the country, which comprise 7.16 per cent of the total caseload.

India’s Covid tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh on August 23 and 40 lakh on September 5. It went past 50 lakh on September 16, 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11 and crossed 80 lakh on October 29.

According to the Indian Council of Medical Research, a total of 10,87,96,064 samples had been tested for Covid-19 till October 30.

PARIS BEHEADINGS CONDEMNED

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT. 31

Over a hundred prominent Indians from diverse backgrounds have issued a statement condemning the Paris beheadings and deploring the outrageous statements by Muslim religious and political leaders. Among other things the statement read, “No God, gods, goddesses, prophets or saints may be invoked to justify the killing and/or terrorising of fellow human beings”.

The statement says, “We the undersigned unequivocally and unconditionally condemn the recent killings in France by two fanatics in the name of faith. We are deeply disturbed by the convoluted logic of some self-appointed guardians of Indian Muslims in rationalising cold-blooded murder and deplore the outrageous remarks of some heads of state.”

Among the signatories to the statement are Abdul Aziz Lokhandwala, Industrialist, Mumbai, Anand Patwardhan, Documentary filmmaker, Mumbai, Feroz Abbas Khan, Writer-director, Mumbai, J.S. Bandukwala, social activist, Vadodara, Krishnaswamy Kumar, Rtd Prof, Coimbatore, Mallika Sarabhai, Theatre personality, Ahmedabad, and Sandhya Gokhale, Feminist activist, Mumbai.

EC BANS MP MINISTER FROM CAMPAIGN

New Delhi, Oct. 30: The Election Commission on Friday reprimanded Madhya Pradesh minister Mohan Yadav for using “intemperate language transgressing the limits of decency” and barred him from campaigning in the state bypolls for a day on October 31.

The Commission also issued a notice to BJP candidate Girraj Danotiya for allegedly making objectionable and threatening remarks against former state chief minister Kamal Nath.

He made the remarks in an interview and had been asked to respond to the notice within the next 48 hours.

In its order, the poll panel said it was not satisfied with Yadav’s response to its notice.

“The Commission is satisfied that the statements therein amount to use of intemperate language transgressing the limit of decency,” it said.

The order stated, “The Election Commission hereby, reprimands you for violating the provisions of General Conduct of Model Code of Conduct and use of intemperate language transgressing the limits of decency and expects that you, being an responsible political leader, shall not repeat such indecent utterances during election time.”

— PTI

Remembering Sardar Patel



Prime Minister Narendra Modi takes salute of the Ekta Diwas Parade at the Statue of Unity on the occasion Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel’s birth anniversary, in Kevadia on Saturday. Modi also launched a seaplane service between the Statue of Unity near Kevadiya in Gujarat’s Narmada district and Sabarmati Riverfront in Ahmedabad.

— PTI

Nirmala wanted me out of finance ministry, says Garg

Ex-finance secy says she had some pre-conceived notions about him

New Delhi, Oct. 31: Subhash Chandra Garg, the former finance secretary who was shunted out of the finance ministry within three weeks of Modi-2.0 government’s first budget last year, on Saturday alleged that new Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman got him transferred out.

Garg, who took voluntary retirement soon after being moved from the finance ministry — where he handled the Department of Economic Affairs — to power ministry, said Sitharaman, unlike her predecessor Arun Jaitley, had “a very different personality and knowledge endowment”.

Both Ministry of Finance and Sitharaman’s office refused to comment on the blog Garg wrote on the day he said he would have in normal course retired from the government service but for the VRS.

Garg said he “did not share a good and productive working relationship” with Sitharaman, who came to the finance ministry “with some pre-conceived notions about me”.

“She did not seem to have confidence in me. She was not quite comfortable working with me as well,” he said adding differences over surplus RBI should

give as dividend to the government and dealing with problems of non-banks had surfaced within months of her takeover.

“Serious difference also developed on some key issues like economic capital framework of RBI, a package for dealing with problems of non-banks, resolution of non-banks, partial credit guarantee scheme, capitalization of non-banks like IIFCL and other financial entities and the like.

“Very soon, not only had our personal relationship soured, but the official working relationship also became quite unproductive,” he wrote.

Sitharaman wanted him out in June 2019, ahead of the July 5 budget presentation, he said but did not say why her request wasn’t immediately accepted by the government.

Garg was transferred out on July 24, 2019, as Secretary, Ministry of Power and he applied for voluntary retirement within half an hour of receiving the order.

“Mrs. Sitharaman asked for and insisted on my transfer from the Ministry of Finance in June 2019 itself, within one month of her taking over as FM,” wrote Garg, who exited the government after serving the mandatory notice

● **SITHARAMAN WANTED him out in June 2019, ahead of the July 5 budget presentation, he said but did not say why her request wasn’t immediately accepted by the government.**

● **GARG WAS transferred out on July 24, 2019, as Secretary, Ministry of Power and he applied for voluntary retirement within half an hour of receiving the order.**

period on October 31, 2019.

Praising her predecessor Jaitley for his deep knowledge and understanding of the economy, he said his successor “Mrs. Nirmala Sitharaman, has a very different personality, knowledge endowment, skill-set and approach for economic policy issues and also for the officers working with her.

“It became quite apparent very early that working with her was going to be quite difficult and it might not be conducive to undertaking necessary reforms for the attainment of the objective of building a USD 10 trillion economy of India.”

The former finance secretary alleged that Sitharaman, for reasons not very clearly known to

him, came with some pre-conceived notions about him. “Very soon, not only had our personal relationship soured, but the official working relationship also became quite unproductive.”

Garg recalled he made up his mind in June 2019, much before the Budget was presented, that he would take voluntary retirement from the service to be able to work on the wider economic reform agenda outside the government. “I drafted my months’ notice for voluntary retirement sometime in the fourth week of June after going through the rules relating to voluntary retirement and decided to seek it from October 31, 2019,” he said.

Garg also said that he had discussed with the then Additional Principal Secretary in the Prime Minister’s Office, PK Mishra about his relationship with Sitharaman on a few occasions.

“Both of us agreed that the best course would be for me to make way for the new FM to ‘function smoothly’. Mishra offered me to choose any job in the government or outside the government in regulatory bodies or elsewhere,” Garg said. The former finance secretary, however, informed Mishra that he

had already made up his mind to seek voluntary retirement.

“I filed for voluntary retirement on July 24, the day I was transferred to the Ministry of Power instead of October 31, 2019, the date I had originally intended,” he recalled.

Garg, however on July 26, 2019, had asserted there is no connection between his transfer from the high profile Finance Ministry and decision to take voluntary retirement, saying he had already discussed the retirement matter with the Prime Minister’s Office on July 18.

The 1983 batch IAS officer of Rajasthan cadre, Garg came to the Center in 2014 and was appointed Executive Director in the World Bank where he stayed till 2017 when he was appointed DEA Secretary in June 2017. In March 2019, he was elevated as the Finance Secretary.

Jaitley, he said, was “a mastermind with an uncanny ability to sift through massive amounts of information and government files to discover the pith and substance of the public policy issue involved. He also had the right temperament and ability to forge consensus.”

— PTI

Indo-Nepal border to have ‘laser walls’

VIKRAM SHARMA | DC
HYDERABAD, OCT. 31

As India is fast-tracking the construction of its border infrastructure in view of increasing threats from hostile neighbours, the 1,751 km long Indo-Nepal border will soon have ‘laser walls’ or infrared fencing to maintain effective vigil.

The infrared fencing will be in place around the Sonauli checkpoint on the Indo-Nepal border in Uttar Pradesh and will be extended to the border areas in Uttarakhand.

The Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) that guards the Indo-Nepal border, has taken a cue from the Border Security Force (BSF) which has installed infrared fencing along the India-Pakistan international border in Punjab to keep an effective vigil on terrorists and narcotics.

Sources in the SSB told *Deccan Chronicle* that though the work to install infrared fencing was supposed to commence early this year and completed, the project could not take off due to the Covid-19 induced lockdown. Now that the lockdown has eased, the work is likely to commence soon.

Since the India-Nepal border is open under the international friendship treaty, it witnesses hectic activity as people do not require a visa or other documents to cross it. All that they need is an ID proof which facilitates easy movement. The porous border also enables hassle-free entry and exit to illegal immigrants, terrorists, human traffickers and those involved in narcotics smuggling.

The blueprint was prepared a couple of years ago and senior SSB offi-

● **SASHASTRA SEEMA BAL (SSB), a paramilitary force, guards the Indo-Nepal and Indo-Bhutan borders. The personnel are also involved in operations in Maoist-affected states like Bihar and Chhattisgarh besides counter-insurgency operations in Jammu and Kashmir.**

cial was given a demonstration of infrared fencing and other state-of-the-art electronic surveillance gadgets at the SSB headquarters in New Delhi.

“The India-Nepal border is porous and there is a need to have effective surveillance mechanisms. The growing friendship between Nepal and China has a huge bearing on our internal security,” they said.

Explaining its functioning, sources said that the invisible laser walls has sensors that are monitored through a satellite-based signal command system. It also has night and fog operability tools.

“It can detect intrusions and relay information to the border guarding force. The latest laser walls can monitor large swathes of territory,” they said adding that the force was looking for non-obtrusive checking mechanisms.

Besides laser walls, the SSB personnel will also be provided with the state-of-the-art explosive-cum-narcotic detectors, fibroscope (a flexible fibre optic bundle with an eyepiece on one end and a lens on the other which is used to examine and inspect small, difficult to reach places like the insides of machines) besides other equipment to check smuggling.

Raj tables Bills to negate impact of Centre’s farm laws

Jaipur, Oct. 31: The Rajasthan government on Saturday introduced three Bills in the Assembly to negate the impact of the farm laws enacted by the Centre recently.

The move comes after the Punjab Assembly earlier this month adopted a resolution against the farm laws and unanimously passed four Bills to counter the Centre’s contentious legislations.

Rajasthan’s Parli-amentary Affairs Minister Shanti Dhariwal introduced the Essential Commodities (Special Provisions and Rajasthan Amendment) Bill 2020, the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services (Rajasthan Amendment) Bill 2020 and the Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation and Rajasthan

● **THE PUNJAB Assembly earlier this month adopted a resolution against the Central farm laws .**

Amendment) Bill 2020.

He also introduced the Code of Procedure (Rajasthan Amendment) Bill 2020 on the first day of the Assembly session.

A number of provisions to protect the interests of farmers, including sale or purchase of a crop under farming agreement on a price equal or greater than minimum support price and imprisonment of three to seven years for harassment of farmers, have been included in the Bills.

The Congress leadership has suggested that states where it is in power should pass laws of their own to counter the central legislations that had triggered farmers’ protests in several parts of the country.

Tejashwi alleges scam in Bihar, shares Prime Minister’s old video

NAYEAR AZAD | DC
PATNA, OCT. 31

RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav, who is contesting Bihar polls as the face of grand alliance on Saturday targeted Chief Minister Nitish Kumar led government alleging that in the past 15 years there have been over 60 scams in the state.

To prove his point he also shared an old video of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the social media listing over 30 scams linked to his government.

“Over 60 scams happened during Nitish Kumar’s tenure as Chief Minister. Out of these 33 scams were mentioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi five years ago”, RJD

leader Tejashwi Yadav said in a tweet while sharing Prime Minister’s five-year-old speech.

However, it’s not clear where the Prime Minister was speaking and which government he was referring to in his speech.

When asked about the video, RJD leaders in Patna said that the Prime Minister’s old video being circulated by Tejashwi Yadav on the social media is of 2015 assembly elections when Nitish Kumar was part of the grand alliance and contested against the BJP.

Besides, Tejashwi Yadav and the other grand alliance partners, LJP Chief Chirag Paswan had earlier created a flutter in Bihar politics by alleging

a major scam in state government’s ‘Saat Nischay’ (seven resolves) scheme and promised to send all those found guilty to jail including Bihar CM Nitish Kumar if his party is elected to power.

He had also targeted Chief Minister’s pet project liquor prohibition by calling it a breeding ground of mafias and corruption in the state.

The opposition coalition has been trying to reach out its voters in Bihar with unemployment, poor law and order and development as an agenda against Nitish Kumar.

Blaming the state government of being involved in scams may heat the poll scenario in the state ahead of the crucial second and

the third phase of polls.

While responding against the NDA’s “15 years of good governance versus 15 years of jungle raj” narrative being built against his party RJD, Tejashwi Yadav said that “We want to make our present and future better, but it seems that our Chief Minister wants to keep referring to the past”.

He further blamed Nitish Kumar of avoiding real issues like “Padhayi (education), Kamai (employment), Sichai (irrigation), Dawai (health)” during his public meetings and said that the election being fought in Bihar is a movement to wipe out unemployment, inflation and poverty.

DECCAN Chronicle

1 NOVEMBER 2020



Shreya Sen-Handley

Off the beaten track

Winter upon us, so's the 'season of scapegoating'

Winter is coming." Long before *Game of Thrones*' Ned Stark starkly uttered this now famous line, the almost-as-famous William Shakespeare had put a rather more poetic spin on it, "Now is the winter of our discontent". Or, season of smogs and frigid fruitlessness, as Keats might have added, had he lived to write his *Ode to Winter*.

Here, in Sherwood Forest, it's already arrived, with the snuffing out of the fading autumn sun, as British Summertime ends and clocks go back, reducing daylight to a flash in the midday pan. In creeps the icy damp, searching for the elderly to chill to the bone, to find them already gone in this year of devastating loss. No season of cheer for the depressed either, huddled around their UV lamps, waiting for the lifting of the black fog. Only mildly depressed currently. I have eschewed mine for cake, Coke (the drinking kind, and my lockdown addiction- please send barrels) and my capering kids who keep my spirits high.

But this hard-hit year, there will be five million fewer English children frolicking, because going hungry instead, as the greedy Tory government denies them food aid, will keep them on their toes. If you've been following British news however, you'll know there's a streak of silver lining called Marcus Rashford, Manchester United striker, who has come to their aid once more, with a raft of British organisations and individuals rallying around him to feed impoverished children in their school holidays because the UK government won't.

Yet how many Marcuses will it take to change the planet? With winter's approach, we have more to worry about than George R.R. Martin's White Walkers. We have a pandemic. Coronavirus was not just the sting in last winter's tail, but the seasonal gift that keeps on giving. On its march across the globe, it has infected 44.5 million, killed 1.17 million, and left legions jobless, grieving, physically wasted, and mentally ill. In arriving in India later, it lulled many into a false sense of security, but now shows no signs of abating, with a predicted peak early next year when the deadly winter smog has the country in its grip, quickening the spread of the virus and increasing its severity to sufferers.

If it ever went away in Europe, with our chance to catch our breath, as infections and death tolls fell, briefer even than the English summer, it is back with coldblooded vengeance. In much of England, the contagion is now more widespread than at its zenith in late spring, forcing us to return to a harsh lockdown with its attendant hardships again. But BoJo's government is too busy lining its pockets to care, handing out crucial pandemic-constraining contracts worth millions to their friends and family, as they deflect, distract, spin and scapegoat their way out of scandals, when caught red-handed again and again.

What better time of the year for that than winter? 'Tis the season for scapegoating. For fake news and whitewashing. If Herod spreading heresies so he could get his nippers on his nemesis Baby Jesus wasn't enough, Ravana and Guy Fawkes are victims of spin too. For Dussehra, we burn giant effigies of the demon Ravana to symbolically slay evil and side with good, while in Britain, huge bonfires are lit on Bonfire Night, to commemorate the capture and execution of Guy Fawkes, alleged ringleader of the Gunpowder Plot to blow up the English parliament.

Yet modern interpretations of the history of Ravana, the Dravidian King of Lanka, suggest it wasn't as black and white as the legend would have us believe. Sita may not have been abducted, and Ravana, not the villain of the piece after all. Apparently a feint by the Aryans to start a war for new territory, the ten-headed, snarling Ravana might well be the ancient world's first fake news victim. Because history is, of course, written by the victors, and when they aren't whitewashing, they are wasp-white Anglo Saxon Protestant-ing. As Catholic Guy Fawkes discovered when, despite being neither assassination plot kingpin nor even conspirator, he was executed by King James I in 1606, as a cautionary example to Catholic opponents of Protestant power.

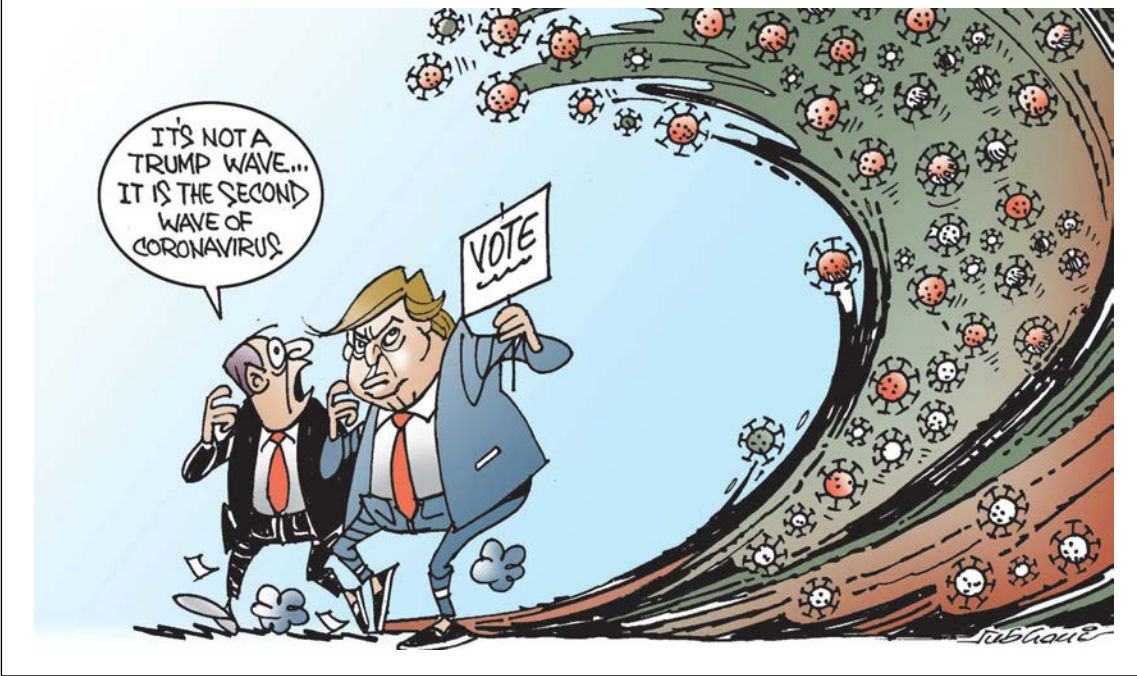
Not only do we gleefully revisit their torment every year, we are still being duped into hounding the wrong people. This summer, India concentrated all its energies on harassing an innocuous young actress called Rhea Chakrabarty, even as its government failed to contain the pandemic, salvage the economy, or keep women and children safe, while Britain after Corbyn continued its search for a suitable fall guy. You'd think it would be tax-dodging, law-breaking, extra-constitutional authority Dominic Cummings, but it will, as always, be immigrants instead.

Persecuting minorities is not a seasonal activity anywhere in the world, but a perennial favourite. In the US, Donald Trump's return to power this month will see scapegoats dragged in the mud behind him. Many of them immigrants, with "filthy" (as he called us recently) Indians amongst them. Will Democratic veep candidate, half-Indian, half-black Kamala Harris face the full force of his monstrously immature wrath when she's vanquished? That derision and degradation reserved for women when they challenge mainstream male power? Would that shock you, or that Trump might regain the White House, considering these nationalist demagogues, these selfish crooks, think nothing of twisting the law to their own ends?

Winter is nearly here, and will be a long litany of horrors, unless we act to prevent them.

Shreya Sen-Handley is the author of the recently published *Strange: Stories, the award-winning Memoirs of My Body, and a forthcoming book of travel misadventures*. Her Twitter and Insta handle is @shreyasenhana.

Subhani



India must set example of pluralism, tolerance



Pavan K. Varma

Chanakya's View

Two weeks ago, an 18-year-old Chechen headed a teacher in Paris for having shown to his students caricatures of Prophet Mohammad. He was taking a class on freedom of expression. Just days ago, a knife attack inside a church in the French city of Nice by a 21-year-old Tunisian, brutally killed three people and injured several more. The gruesome attacks rightly created worldwide outrage. French President Emmanuel Macron vowed to fight this mindless terrorism. India did the right thing in supporting his stand. Ruthlessly violent organisations like the Al Qaeda and the ISIS, which misuse religious sentiment to justify the worst form of violence, are a scourge that the world must defeat. Terrorism in any form is unacceptable, and must be unambivalently condemned.

Turkish President Recep Erdogan, Pakistan PM Imran Khan, and Malaysia's former PM, Mahathir Mohamad, however, attacked Macron for unleashing 'Islamophobia'. Erdogan is seeking to wrench the leadership of the Islamic world by adopting radical Islam. Imran Khan, facing rising unpopularity within Pakistan, is falling back on the old card of catering to the conservative domestic mullah lobby. And, Mahathir, is somehow trying to keep himself relevant. Nothing can justify their failure to categorically denounce such violent cruelty in the name of religion. Not Macron, but the funda-

mentalist Islamic elements that plan and execute such despicable crimes, should have been decried by them.

France has the largest number of Muslims in Europe. They constitute the 'ethnic debris' that floated over the years to French shores from the countries they had earlier colonised and subjugated. The French colonial empire included many Muslim countries, especially in Northern Africa. Many European countries, who had once enslaved large parts of the world, now have to face the challenge of adopting a multiculturalism that assimilates different ethnic, religious and cultural groups from their colonies.

Different countries have adopted different strategies to deal with this task, but it is not an easy one, and religious fealty is an emotive issue for people of all faiths. The West was right in opposing — in the name of freedom of expression — the ban on Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, and India was wrong in imposing the ban. But, many Western countries have showed great intolerance to the derogatory display of Jesus. Filmmaker Scorsese's irreverent *The Last Temptation of Christ* provoked public outrage unprecedented in the history of religious films. Militant Christians castigated Universal Pictures, abused Lee Wasserman, chairman of the company, and forced movie chains not to show the film. Similarly, they took to the streets when Christ was portrayed as a charlatan in *The*

Passover Plot. The film was hounded out of cinema halls and never seen again. It is also perhaps less known that while the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* published a dozen cartoons of Prophet Muhammad in 2005, its editor had earlier turned down cartoons of Jesus as too offensive.

The French president Nicolas Sarkozy actually took up with then PM Manmohan Singh, when the latter was on an official visit to France in October 2008, his "anguish" about the "massacre of Christians in India". Over 40 Indians of the Christian faith had been killed when suspected Hindu extremists resorted to violence in the states of Odisha and Karnataka, ostensibly to protest against perceived missionary activism in converting Hindus to Christianity. The reprehensible killings were condemned by every political party, including the BJP. Police reinforcements were sent to the disturbed areas; the chief ministers of both states, as well as national leaders, personally met with the heads of the Church to reassure them about their safety and that of their flock. And yet, Sarkozy, the head of a country that prides itself in keeping matters of religion out of matters of state, considered it fit to take up an aberrational incident about the well-

being of Christians in India during a summit political meeting. On its part, France does not allow the wearing of turbans by Sikh children and headscarves by Muslim girls. However, there is no ban on the wearing of the Christian cross.

For India, both as a Republic where the Constitution expressly espouses religious harmony, and as a civilisation that has completely rejected violence on religious grounds, radical and violent Islam is abhorrent. In fact, India's civilisational history presents the best example of a plural society. Hinduism was never a proselytising religion; it did not conduct crusades. In ancient times, Hindu kings patronised both their own temples and Buddhist viharas. The Jews lived peacefully in India before they did anywhere else. Muslim traders from the Arab countries practiced their faith undisturbed in Kerala more than a thousand years ago. The Parsis came in the seventh century and the Christians in the fourth to harmoniously become a part of the national fabric.

While supporting President Macron in his stand against the savage bigotry of certain fundamentalist Islamic groups, and renewing its commitment against all kinds of terrorism, India can and should strive to present to the world its own civilisational legacy of respect for all religions, and the ability of people of different faiths to live in harmony and peace. Our condemnation of what happened in France recently will resound even more globally when we ourselves reiterate and demonstrate afresh that India is the best example of a plural and tolerant society.

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

While supporting President Macron in his stand against savage bigotry, India can and should strive to present to the world its own civilisational legacy of respect for all religions and the ability of people of different faiths to live in harmony

LETTERS

BRAZEN CALL

Pakistan minister Fawad Chaudhry's outcry is sheer imprudence (*Pak brags about Pulwama attack, DC, Oct. 30*). As a representative of an Islamic country he has completely forgotten the five core pillars of beliefs and practices of his pious religion, i.e., Shahada (profession of faith) salat (prayer), zakat (alms) saawn (fasting) and haj (pilgrimage). Then, where did he get the principle of "terror" killing soldiers in a timid way? I pray for wisdom to dawn on leaders of Pakistan.

U. Rama Chandra Rao
Yeleswaram, East Godavari

SUN GOD IDOL

It is good to hear that the 10th century sun god idol was found in Kalugodu village, Gummagatta mandal, of Anantapur district as it has got vast significance historically (*10th century sun god idol found, DC, Oct. 31*). This kind of sculptural style of the sun god mirrors the style of Nalanda Pallavas of the 10th century, helping in promotion of AP tourism nationally and internationally. The APTDC should use the advantage of this development to publicise tourism and for the development of the sector.

P. Govardhana Rao
Kankipadu, Krishna district

FREEDOM TO COPS

The police department is one of the most misused and AP is no exception. The political executive that has the power of superintendence and control over the police, misused the power resulting in the latter following suit. Like many other states, AP also witnessed a situation wherein police are taking political stance at every given opportunity and neglecting the common man and their interests. The Telugu Desam made it an institutionalised affair and almost made the police its pocket burrow. As a result of this we have seen umpteen cases of harassment, etc, hitherto unheard of. The present government is trying a different outlook in this regard and seems to have initiated an approach that should usher in a new era in Indian policing. Kudos to AP CM and HM for the initiative.

Govardhana Myneedu
Vijayawada

50 YEARS AGO IN

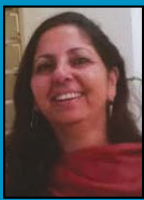
DECCAN Chronicle

13 killed, 83 injured near Madras

MADRAS, OCTOBER 31
Thirteen passengers were killed and 83 others injured when the Madras-Mangalore Mail rammed into the rear of the stationary Madras-Cochin Mail at Perambur station, near here, tonight.

Fifty-eight of the injured passengers were removed to the Perambur Railway Hospital and six other to the Government General Hospital. The Mangalore Mail, which left Madras Central station at 20-00 hours, rammed into the rear of the stationary Cochin Mail at 20-10 hours. A medical relief special train has left for the scene. Southern Railway sources said as a result of collision the rear-most coach of the Cochin Mail, a composite first and third class compartment, from Madras to Coimbatore, and the next coach derailed and capsized.

Anita Katyal
Political Gup-Shup



Gehlot 'friend' Nath picks Pilot; RJD hope rests on savarna pitch

Rashtriya Janata Dal's chief ministerial candidate Tejashwi Yadav has made a concerted effort in the ongoing Bihar Assembly polls to expand the support base of his party beyond its core Muslim-Yadav vote bank. Not only has the RJD given a large number of tickets to upper caste candidates but Tejashwi makes it a point to hammer home this point during his campaign. The RJD leader ensures he is flanked on either side by the party's Bihar chief Jagdanand Singh and Rajya Sabha MP and party spokesperson Manoj Jha at his major rallies. Singh is a Rajput — in fact, he was the first upper caste leader to be given charge of the RJD's state unit. Jha is a Brahmin and is said to be Tejashwi's right-hand man. The upper castes in Bihar have never voted for the RJD as they have a special aversion to Lalu Prasad Yadav's brand of politics. It is to be seen if the course correction attempted by Tejashwi will work to

his party's advantage.

Former Madhya Pradesh chief minister Kamal Nath enjoys a good rapport with his party colleague and Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot. But when it came to picking a campaigner for the Madhya Pradesh bypolls, Nath chose Sachin Pilot, who is not exactly Gehlot's favourite person. Nath apparently made several phone calls to Pilot requesting him to campaign in the Gwalior region which has a large Gujar population. The veteran leader is also believed to have told Pilot that he was the only one who could do justice in this belt. Pilot has since addressed several election rallies in Madhya Pradesh but if Nath was hoping to pit the young Congress leader against his bete noire Jyotiraditya Scindia, he must have been disappointed. Pilot avoided attacking his former colleague Scindia in his speeches and instead went full throttle against Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan. As for

Pilot, this invitation is an opportunity to send out a message to his detractors that he has national appeal and cannot be ignored.

Candidates who were hoping to be nominated by the Bharatiya Janata Party for the Uttar Pradesh Rajya Sabha elections spent several sleepless nights last week because of the delay in the announcement of the final list. Urban development minister Hardeep Puri was among those who went through some tense moments before the official list came out. His staff worked the phones endlessly to find out the status of the nominations. Puri had a truncated first stint in the Upper House as he was elected two years ago in place of Manohar Parrikar who resigned his seat when he went back to Goa as chief minister. Though there was no doubt that he would be re-nominated, Puri was on tenterhooks primarily because there was a buzz that another former diplomat, known to be the Prime Minister's favourite, was likely to be

inducted into the government. In the end, all's well that ends well as Puri was very much among the eight candidates on the BJP list.

Punjab chief minister Amarinder Singh contemplating an early Assembly poll? Though the next election is only due in 2022, there is a growing view in the Singh camp that it might be a good idea to dissolve the Assembly and call for an early poll, preferably along with the Assam and Kerala elections next year. This section believes that Singh is currently on a strong wicket, especially after the tough stand he took on the farm laws passed by the Centre. His detractors in the party are currently in no position to pose any serious challenge. Similarly, the Shiromani Akali Dal, which recently parted company with BJP, is still in the process of putting its house in order. Not only were the Akalis mauled in the last Assembly election but they have also been facing serious internal dissensions. Given more time, there's every possibility that the

Akali Dal will recover lost ground while Amarinder Singh's stock may slump by then.

A seemingly minor bye-election in the Assembly segment of Baroda in Haryana has acquired immense significance as political pundits believe the result will reflect the popularity or otherwise of the BJP-led state government. Several disgruntled legislators from the Dushyant Chautala-led JJP do not want their party to continue its alliance with the BJP because of its stand on the farm laws which are being opposed by farmers in the state. They have been mounting pressure on their party leadership to snap ties with the saffron party but to little avail. These legislators are looking for greener pastures but they have decided to await the bypoll result before upping the ante. However, their defiance could well come to a nought if the BJP wins this election.

Anita Katyal is a Delhi-based journalist

IN BRIEF

Saudi rams car into Mecca Masjid

Riyadh: A Saudi man rammed a car at high speed into the outer walls of Mecca's Grand Mosque, Islam's holiest site, authorities said on Saturday. Guards chased the driver as he crashed through two barriers before hitting one of the southern entrances of the mosque late Friday, according to officials in the holy city and videos on social media. Mecca authorities did not name the man but said he appeared to be in an "abnormal condition". He was referred to the public prosecutor to face possible charges, they added. Earlier in October, Saudi Arabia opened the Grand Mosque for prayers for the first time in seven months, and expanded the umrah pilgrimage to accommodate 15,000 worshippers from within the kingdom as it relaxed coronavirus curbs.

2 killed in blast at pipeline in Iraq

Baghdad: An explosion targeting a gas pipeline in southern Iraq killed two children Saturday after a blast in the north this week forced the closure of another pipeline, authorities said. An investigation had been launched into the latest explosion in Muthanna province, south of Baghdad, that killed "two children and wounded 28 people", state media said. The attack came after a blast targeted an oil pipeline in the north of the country, according to a statement by the Kurdistan Regional Government released late Friday. The statement said oil exports had been suspended after "terrorists" attacked the pipeline crossing the autonomous region to the Turkish port of Ceyhan on Wednesday evening.

New Berlin airport officially opens

Berlin: Nine years late and far above its original budget, Berlin's new airport is finally opening on Saturday with little ceremony and, thanks to the Coronavirus pandemic, few passengers. Construction of the Berlin Brandenburg Airport Willy Brandt, named after the former West German chancellor though better known as BER, started in 2006 and it was initially slated to open in October 2011. But a string of technical and planning problems forced officials to abandon six opening dates, most embarrassingly, in 2012, just four weeks before flights were supposed to start. That propelled the project to the status of a national joke as airport managers struggled to get a grip on various problems, including a complex fire safety system that long caused headaches. The airport has cost some 6 billion euros (USD 7 billion), about three times what was originally planned. It is finally opening at a time when air traffic has been hobbled by the pandemic.

MILLION TONS OF U.S. PLASTIC TRASH GO ASTRAY

Washington, Oct. 31: More than a million tons a year of America's plastic trash isn't ending up where it should. The equivalent of as many as 1,300 plastic grocery bags per person is landing in places such as oceans and roadways, according to a new study of US plastic trash. In 2016 — the last year enough data was available and before several countries cracked down on imports of American waste — the United States generated 46.3 million tons (42 million metric tons) of plastic waste, by far the most in the world. Between 2.7 per cent and 5.3 per cent of that was mismanaged — not burned, placed in landfills or otherwise disposed of properly, according to a study in Friday's journal Science Advances. Between 1.2 million and 2.5 million tons (1.1 million to 2.2 million metric tons) of plastic generated in the US were dropped on land, rivers, lakes and oceans as litter, were illegally dumped or shipped abroad then not properly disposed of, the study found. If you took nearly 2.5 million tons (2.2 million metric tons) of mismanaged plastic waste — bottles, wrappers, grocery bags and the like — and dumped it on the White House lawn, "it would pile as high as the Empire State Building," said co-author Jenna Jambeck, an environmental engineering professor at the University of Georgia.

US logs 1 lakh cases a day

Record surge in Coronavirus pushes hospitals closer to brink of capacity

Washington, Oct. 31: A record surge of Coronavirus cases in the United States pushed hospitals closer to the brink of capacity and drove the number of infections reported on Friday to an ominous new daily world record of 1,00,000, four days before the US presidential election.

The United States also documented its 9 millionth case to date on Friday, representing nearly 3% of the population, with almost 2,29,000 dead since the outbreak of the pandemic early this year, according to a Reuters tally of publicly reported data.

With the country facing the final stretch of a tumultuous presidential campaign dominated by the coronavirus pandemic, US health authorities on Friday also confirmed that 1,00,233 more people had tested positive for Covid-19 over the past 24 hours.

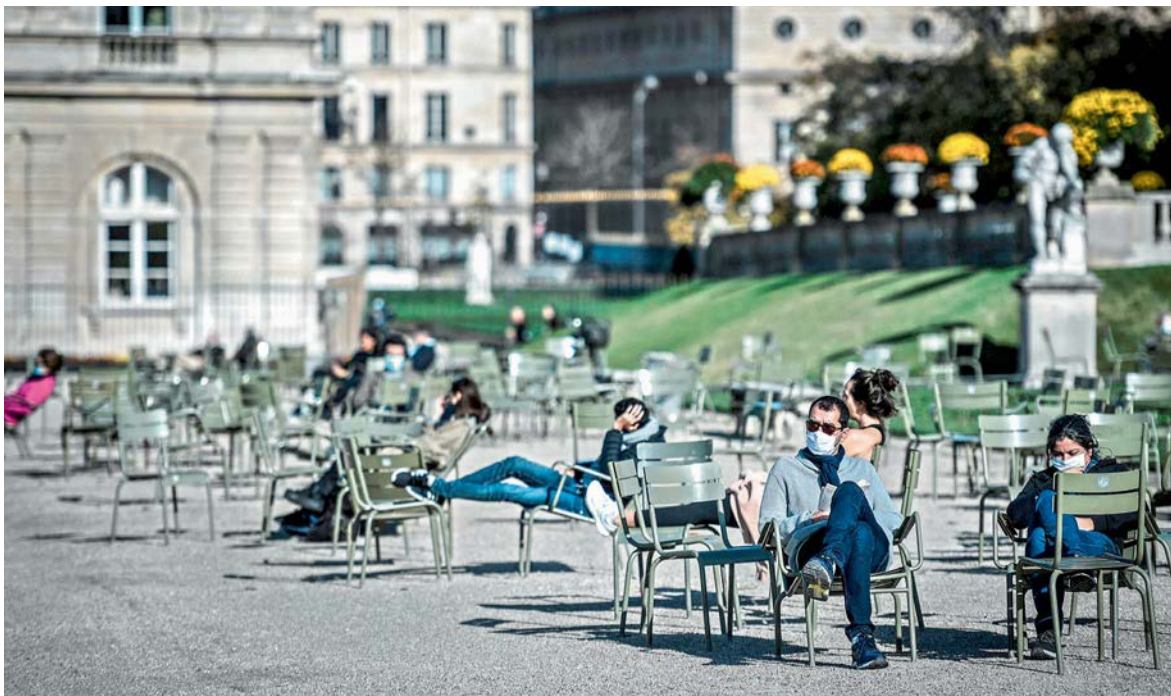
Friday's tally set a new single-day record in US cases for the fifth time in the past 10 days, surpassing the previous peak of 91,248 new infections posted a day earlier.

It also represented the world's highest national daily toll during the pandemic, exceeding India's 24-hour record of 97,894 set in September.

The accelerating pace of US infections continued as data trickled in on Friday, with at least a dozen states individually reporting a record number of new daily cases.

Serious cases of Covid-19 were on the rise as well, as hospitals in six states reported having the most patients suffering from the disease since the pandemic started. The number of hospitalised Covid-19 patients has risen over 50% in October to 46,000, the highest since mid-August.

Among the hard-hit states are those most hotly contested in the campaign between Republican President Donald Trump and Democratic challenger Joe Biden, such as Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania and



People enjoy the Jardin du Luxembourg on Saturday in Paris on the second day after France entered a second lockdown aimed at curbing the spread of Covid-19.

700km traffic jam in France ahead of second lockdown

Paris, Oct. 31: Parisians fleeing for the countryside jammed the roads ahead of France's lockdown to slow the spread of resurgent Coronavirus infections, and there was only a sprinkling of people hurrying along city sidewalks on Friday as the nationwide restrictions went into effect.

Dystopian images of logjams that stretched for 435 miles (700 kilometers) at one point on Thursday evening — exacerbated by the upcoming long holiday weekend — were a grim sign of a return to the dark days of the spring, when virus cases first swelled in Europe and many countries kept their

citizens inside for weeks on end. With infections hitting record levels in some countries, many are now resorting to severe restrictions again.

In France, concerns were growing that rising infections would swamp the country's health system, so authorities ordered another four-week lockdown beginning on Friday.

Many areas of the French capital resembled a regular lazy weekend morning — on what would normally have been a bustling weekday. Those who were out frequently clutched permission forms proving they had an exemption that allowed

them to be on streets.

The only places that were busy were grocery stores and markets as people stockpiled food and other necessities.

All of France's 67 million people have been ordered to stay at home at all times with no visitors, or risk steep fines or prosecution. There are a handful of exceptions, such as being allowed out for one hour of exercise a day within a half-mile (1 kilometer) of home, to go to medical appointments, to a place of work, or to shop for essential goods. Restaurants and cafés are shuttered, apart from those that offer takeout.

— AP

WHO: OFFICIALS MET WITH CHINA FOR FIRST TIME

Geneva, Oct. 31: The World Health Organization said on Friday that international experts had held their first meeting, albeit virtually, with their Chinese counterparts in order to investigate the animal origins of the Covid-19.

The WHO has for months been working to send a team of international experts, including epidemiologists and animal health specialists, to China to help probe the animal origin of Covid-19 and how the virus first crossed over to humans.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a virtual press briefing Friday that the UN agency was continuing "to establish the origins of the virus to prevent future outbreaks." "Today, a group of international experts had their first virtual meeting with their Chinese counterparts," he said.

— AFP

Trump, Biden chase votes in Midwest finale

Des Moines, United States, Oct. 31: President Donald Trump and challenger Joe Biden waged pitched battles for the American Midwest on Friday, chasing every last vote with four days to go in a region that propelled the Republican to victory in 2016.

Trump and Biden are each barnstorming three heartland states, with a resurgent Coronavirus passing the alarming milestone of nine million cases as they hit the stump — highlighting their differences in a race overshadowed by the pandemic.

Trump, heralding a "big day" of campaigning as he left the White House, held a rally in Michigan before heading to Wisconsin and Minnesota.

"We just want normal," Trump told supporters — many of them unmasked — at an outdoor "Make America Great Again" rally near Detroit as he pushed states to relax public health restrictions and resume daily life.

He again bucked his own administration's health experts as he downplayed the Covid-19 threat, saying "if you get it, you're going to get better, and then you're going to be immune." Covid-19 has killed 2,30,000 people in the US, which is experiencing worrying surges in most states as the winter flu season threatens to throw kerosene on the fire.

The outbreak has ravaged the economy, and

● Trump flipped Iowa, Michigan and Wisconsin from the Democrats to clinch his shock victory four years ago. Now polls show Biden leading in all three, albeit narrowly in Iowa.

while there have been signs of recovery, millions remain jobless.

Biden was also stumping in Wisconsin and Minnesota, after the Democratic rat's first stop of the day, in Iowa, where he flayed Trump over his handling of the pandemic.

"Donald Trump has given up (and) waved the white flag," Biden told a drive-in rally with more than 300 cars in Des Moines.

Biden, tailoring his speech to the Iowa crowd, also bashed the president for saying America's farmers were "doing better now than when they had a farm," after Trump's administration began paying billions of dollars in federal subsidies to farmers amid a trade war with China.

Trump flipped Iowa, Michigan and Wisconsin from the Democrats to clinch his shock victory four years ago. Now polls show Biden leading in all three, albeit narrowly in Iowa. It is his first time in Iowa since his inauspicious campaign start in February, when he finished a dismal fourth in the opening Democratic nominating contest.

— AFP

Crowd joins LGBT pride rally in Taiwan

Taipei, Oct. 31: Tens of thousands of revellers joined a gay pride rally through the streets of Taiwan's capital on Saturday in a colourful celebration of equality made possible by the island's successful vanquishing of the Coronavirus.

Taiwan is at the vanguard of the burgeoning gay rights movement in Asia and became the first place in the region to allow same-sex marriage in May 2019 after a bruising political fight.

It has also achieved remarkable success against the Coronavirus, recording more than 200 days in a row without a single local infection.

As a result there are few of the social distancing measures currently in place across much of the globe, allowing crowds to gather on the island.

Rainbow coloured flags and balloons were carried

through Taipei under blue skies on Saturday afternoon.

Drag queen Wu Po-sung was wearing a hand-crafted red "wedding banquet" dress — the traditional colour of marriage in Taiwan — complete with table settings.

"Gay marriage is now in its second year," Wu said. "I was hoping to be able to attend all of my friends' wedding banquets and that's why I am dressed like a wedding banquet." Saturday's parade came a day after two same-sex couples joined a mass wedding hosted by the military for the first time in another gay rights landmark in Asia.

Over 4,000 gay couples have registered their marriages since the law change took effect last year when Taiwan became the first place in the region to allow same-sex nuptials.

— AFP

Macron seeks to calm tensions over cartoons

Paris, Oct. 31: President Emmanuel Macron said that he could understand if Muslims were shocked by cartoons of the prophet Muhammed, as French authorities on Saturday sought to ascertain if a young Tunisian suspected of killing three people in a knife rampage inside a Nice church had outside help.

France is on edge after the republication in early September of cartoons of the prophet Mohammed

ORTHODOX PRIEST HURT IN FRENCH SHOOTING, ASSAILANT FLED: POLICE

Paris, Oct. 31: An orthodox priest has been injured in a shooting in the French city of Lyon and the assailant has fled, a police source said on Saturday.

The priest was fired on twice at around 4pm local time as he was closing the church, and was being treated on site for life-threatening injuries, the source said.

— Reuters

by the Charlie Hebdo weekly, which was followed by an attack outside its for-

mer offices, the beheading of a teacher and now the attack in Nice.

Macron sparked protests in the Muslim world after the murder earlier this month of teacher Samuel Paty — who had shown his class a cartoon of Mohammed — by saying France would never renounce its right to caricature.

But in an apparent bid to reach out to Muslims, Macron gave a long interview setting out his vision to Qatar-based TV channel Al-Jazeera, seeking to strike a softer tone.

"I can understand that people could be shocked by the caricatures but I will never accept that violence can be justified," he said. "I consider it our duty to protect our freedoms and our rights," he added in an extract of the interview to be broadcast from 1600 GMT.

France is still reeling from the latest attack in Nice which Macron has already described as "Islamist" terror.

— AFP

SCREEN ICON

World of entertainment mourns loss of global sensation who passed away in sleep

Tributes pour in for Scottish James Bond actor

Commanding screen presence for 40 yrs

From page 1

A commanding screen presence for some 40 years, Connery was in his early 30s and little known when he starred in the first Bond thriller, 1962's Dr No, based on the Ian Fleming novel.

Condemned as immoral by the Vatican and the Kremlin, but screened at the White House for Bond fan John F. Kennedy, Dr No was a box office hit and helped Bond become a franchise that long outlasted its Cold War origins.

For decades, with actors from Connery to Daniel Craig in the leading role, filmmakers have loved the outrageous stunts, vicious villains and likable, roguish hero who enjoyed a life of carousing, fast cars, gadgety weapons, elegant clothes and vodka martinis (always shaken, not stirred).

For many, Connery was the definitive James Bonds, his character's introduction among the most famous in movie history. He is seated at the blackjack

table of an upscale casino, seen first from the side and the back. After he wins a couple of hands against a glamorous young woman, she asks for more money to gamble. "I admire your courage, Miss, uh ..." we hear him tell her as the camera shows his hands removing a cigarette from a slender case. She introduces herself as "Trench, Sylvia Trench," tells him she admires his luck and asks his name. His reply remains a catchphrase decades later. "Bond," he says, his face finally revealed as he lights a cigarette. "James Bond."

United Artists couldn't wait to make more Bond movies, with ever more elaborate stunts and gadgets, along with more exotic locales and more prominent co-stars, among them Lotte Lenya and Jill St. John.

Connery continued as Bond in "From Russia With Love," "Goldfinger," "Thunderball," "You Only Live Twice" and "Diamonds Are Forever," often performing his own stunts.

INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT SCOTTISH JAMES BOND ACTOR

THE FOLLOWING ARE SOME OF THE LITTLE KNOWN FACTS OF THE LEGENDARY STAR SEAN CONNERY, ACCORDING TO THE SCOTSMAN NEWSPAPER. CONNERY EPITOMISED AUTHOR IAN FLEMING'S SUAVE 007 AGENT IN SEVEN JAMES BOND MOVIES. THE ACTOR DIED ON SATURDAY AGED 90.



25-08-1930 TO 31-10-2020

● Despite being known as Sean, the actor's first name is Thomas, and he was referred to as Tommy in his youth.

● His first job was as a milkman with the St Cuthbert's Co-Operative Society in Edinburgh.

● Sir Sean worked as a coffin polisher before going into acting.

● He reportedly was placed third in the Mr Universe contest in 1953 although there is some dispute over whether he finished third in the Junior class, or failed to place in the 'Tall Man' classification.

● He turned out for Edinburgh junior side football Bonnyrigg Rose in his youth.

● He has a tattoo reading 'Scotland forever' which he got at the age of 16 when he enrolled in the Royal Navy.

● He donated his \$250,000 salary from his role as King Richard in 1991 film Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves to charity.

"When I last spoke to him it was clear even then that his health was failing but the voice, the spirit and the passion that we all loved so well were still there. I will miss him. Scotland will miss him. The world will miss him. My thoughts and condolences are with Micheline, their children and all the family. RIP Sir Sean Connery," she added.

In a statement, posted on Twitter, Bond producers Michael G. Wilson and

Barbara Broccoli said they are "devastated" by Connery's death.

"He was and shall always be remembered as the original James Bond whose indelible entrance into cinema history began when he announced those unforgettable words.

"The name's Bond... James Bond" — he revolutionised the world with his gritty and witty portrayal of the sexy and charismatic secret agent. He is undoubtedly largely

responsible for the success of the film series and we shall be forever grateful to him," they said.

The family of actor Roger Moore, who had succeeded Connery as James Bond, also condoled the actor's death.

"How infinitely sad to hear the news Sir Sean Connery has passed away. He and Roger were friends for many decades and Roger always maintained Sean was the best ever James Bond. RIP," read the

tweet from Moore's official account, which is run by his family.

Hollywood stars Hugh Jackman and Sam Neill also paid tributes to the veteran actor.

"I grew up idolizing #SeanConnery. A legend on screen, and off. Rest In Peace," tweeted Jackman.

Neill, who starred with Connery in 1990 spy thriller "The Hunt for Red October", reminisced about working with the Scottish star.

— PTI

SHORT TAKES

Amit, Sanjeet bag gold in France

New Delhi: World silver-medallist Amit Panghal (52kg) and Sanjeet (91kg) struck gold in their first competition after a coronavirus-forced break, claiming the top honours at the Alexis Vastine International Boxing Tournament in Nantes, France. Amit defeated American Rene Abraham 3-0 with a dominating performance on Friday night. Sanjeet, a former India Open gold-medallist, too put up a clinical show to get past Frenchman Soheb Bouafia in his summit clash and secure a gold. In the 75kg category, Asian silver-winner Ashish Kumar also claimed a gold after his opponent, American Joseph Gerome Hiks, gave him a walkover due to injury. — PTI

Bottas clinches Imola GP pole

Imola, Italy: Valtteri Bottas snatched pole position for Sunday's Emilia Romagna Grand Prix from his Mercedes team-mate Lewis Hamilton with a dramatic late lap in qualifying at Imola on Saturday. The Finn, who is 77 points adrift of series leader and six-time champion Hamilton with five races remaining in this year's title, grabbed the prime grid position by a tenth of a second. Hamilton, who was fastest in the only practice in the morning, had been on top through most of the qualifying session and took provisional pole on his first run in Q3 before Bottas beat him in the final seconds. Max Verstappen was third for Red Bull. — AFP

Sonego upsets Djokovic in Vienna

Vienna: Novak Djokovic won just three games in a lackluster quarterfinal performance at the Erste Bank Open, losing 6-2, 6-1 to 42nd-ranked Lorenzo Sonego. It was only Djokovic's third loss of the year, after being disqualified for hitting a line judge with a ball at the U.S. Open and losing the French Open final to Rafael Nadal. "I came here with the intention to try to earn more points and secure the No. 1 in the end of the year. I have done that, so I move on," Djokovic said. "I am happy, I am healthy, and hopefully I can have a strong finish (at the ATP finals) in London." Djokovic lacked power in his groundstrokes and produced a string of mistakes from the start. He soon dropped 4-0 behind, winning just five points on Sonego's serve in the opening set. — AP

Gayle fined 10 per cent of match fee

Abu Dhabi: Chris Gayle has been fined 10 per cent of his match fee for breaching the IPL's code of conduct during KXIP's match against RR here. The IPL did not specify the exact incident for which he was penalised but it is understood the Jamaican was penalised for throwing his bat away in disgust after getting out for 99 on Friday night. Gayle has admitted to the offence and accepted the sanction. Requiring a run to complete his century, Gayle was cleaned up by a Joffa Archer yorker in KXIP's last over and reacting to his dismissal, he tried to hit his bat on the ground in frustration but the willow slipped from his hand and landed a few metres across the pitch. — PTI

Live on TV

CRICKET

IPL: Chennai Super Kings vs Kings XI Punjab from 3.30 pm; Kolkata Knight Riders vs Rajasthan Royals from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

Women's Big Bash League: Melbourne Renegades vs Sydney Sixers from 8.15 am on Sony Six

FORMULA ONE

Imola Grand Prix: Main race from 5.35 pm on Star Sports Select 2 HD, Star Sports 3

FOOTBALL

English Premier League: Aston Villa vs Southampton from 5.30 pm; Newcastle United vs Everton from 8.30 pm; Manchester United vs Arsenal from 10 pm; Tottenham Hotspur vs Brighton & Hove Albion from 12.45 am (Monday) on Star Sports Select 2

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Mumbai on Cloud 9

MI thrash Delhi by nine wickets, ensure top-two spot

Dubai, Oct. 31: Mumbai Indians ensured a top-two finish in the IPL league table with a clinical nine-wicket decimation of an already battered Delhi Capitals, who wilted under relentless pressure from Trent Boult and Jasprit Bumrah. While Boult (3/21 in 4 overs) dealt telling opening blows, Jasprit Bumrah (3/17 in 4 overs) broke the backbone of the Delhi Capitals middle-order, choking them to 110 for 9.

The defending champions coasted to victory in 14.2 overs, taking their points tally to 18 and will have two shots in the play-offs to get into the final. Delhi Capitals, who had won seven out of their first nine games, have now lost four on the bounce and with a match left are in danger of missing out on the play-offs with an ever deteriorating net-run rate of minus 0.159.

While batting, Delhi Capitals consumed 62 dot balls, which effectively meant that more than half of their stipulated 20 overs had

gone without scoring. A target of 111 can't be defended nine out of 10 times and the pocket dynamo Ishan Kishan scored 72 not out off 43 balls to make the chase look like a walk in the park.

Not for once did Delhi Capitals looked like being in control as they made the Dubai strip and the Mumbai Indians bowling attack look doubly menacing with some of the best batsmen abdicating their responsibilities of playing fearless cricket.

Boult was brilliant upfront removing openers Shikhar Dhawan (0) and Prithvi Shaw (10 off 11 balls) in the powerplay which pegged the Delhi Capitals back.

Captain Shreyas Iyer (25 off 29 balls) and Rishabh Pant (21 off 24 balls) then compounded their team's worries as they failed to regain the lost momentum.

The duo, for the umpteenth time, looked like playing for themselves and the intent was missing which affected the morale of the batsmen coming down the order. — PTI



Jasprit Bumrah of Mumbai Indians celebrates the wicket of Rishabh Pant of Delhi Capitals in an Indian Premier League match in Dubai on Saturday. — BCCI

SCORECARD

Delhi Capitals: Prithvi Shaw c de Kock b Boult 10, Shikhar Dhawan c Yadav b Boult 0, Shreyas Iyer st de Kock b Chahar 25, Rishabh Pant lbw b Bumrah 21, Marcus Stoinis c de Kock b Bumrah 2, Shimron Hetmyer c Krunal b Coulter-Nile 11, Harshal Patel lbw b Bumrah 5, Ravichandran Ashwin c Krunal b Boult 12, Praveen Dube (not out) 7, Kagiso Rabada (run out) 12. Extras (lb-3 w-2) 5. **Total (for 9 wts, in 20 overs) 110.**

FoW: 1-1, 2-15, 3-50, 4-57, 5-62, 6-73, 7-78, 8-96, 9-110. **Bowling:** Trent Boult 4-0-21-3, Krunal Pandya 3-0-13-0, Jayant Yadav 3-0-18-0, Jasprit Bumrah 4-0-17-3, Nathan Coulter-Nile 2-0-14-1, Rahul Chahar 4-0-24-1.

Mumbai Indians: Ishan Kishan (not out) 72, Quinton de Kock b Nortje 26, Suryakumar Yadav (not out) 12. Extras (w-1) 1. **Total (for 1 wkt, in 14.2 overs) 111.**

FoW: 1-68. **Bowling:** Ashwin 4-0-18-0, Rabada 3-0-27-0, Nortje 2.2-0-25-1, Stoinis 1-0-4-0, Dube 3-0-29-0, Patel 1-0-8-0.

Royals look to ride momentum

Dubai, Oct. 31: They have just given their play-offs qualification hopes a lift and Rajasthan Royals will look to sustain the momentum against Kolkata Knight Riders in another must-win IPL game here on Sunday.

Besides a victory in their last league game, the inaugural edition winners will also need other results to go their way if they are to make the playoffs of the lucrative event, in its 13th edition now.

The best-case scenario for RR would be Kings XI Punjab losing their last match and Sunrisers Hyderabad winning no more than one in their last two outings.

In that case, RR will go through with 14 points, without net run rate coming into play.

However, RR's first task is to do what is within its control — win the match against the Knight Riders and then hope for the best. Given the tight situation, the bigger the margin of win, the better it will be for the Steve Smith-led side.



The Royals can certainly look forward to their batting at the Dubai International Stadium. Their talismanic England all-rounder Ben Stokes has just won a man-of-the-match award, having made a breezy half century after picking up two wickets, in the team's win over KXIP on Friday.

The 2019 World Cup final hero getting his mojo back, at such a crucial juncture of the tournament, is great news for

the Royals. And, needless to say, a bad one for KKR as the leading all-rounder can singlehandedly influence the outcome of a game.

Sanju Samson rediscovering his touch must have also gladdened the hearts of the RR team management.

The wicketkeeper-batsman had started the tournament on an explosive note before going off the rails midway, only to come back all guns blazing

NUMBERS GAME

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL:
● Matches: 21 ● Kolkata: 11
● Rajasthan: 8 ● Tied: 2
(Rajasthan Royals won both tied matches against Kolkata Knight Riders in Super Overs.)

MEETING IN 2019

● KKR beat RR by 8 wickets in Jaipur.
● RR beat KKR by 3 wickets in Kolkata.

MEETING IN 2020

● Kolkata beat Rajasthan by 37 runs in Dubai.

FOR THE RECORD

● Sanju Samson with 26 sixes in 13 innings is leading the chart this season.
● Nitish Rana, who has smashed 47 sixes in 39 innings, needs three more to become the sixth batsman to complete a half-century of sixes for Kolkata Knight Riders.

— S. PERVEZ KAISER

ing against KXIP.

Skipper Smith can play according to the situation and opener Robin Uthappa can put any attack to the sword on his day. — PTI

KINGS XI FACE CHENNAI IN A DO-OR-DIE TIE

Abu Dhabi, Oct. 31: Their play-off chances hanging in balance, KXIP will leave no stone unturned as they take on CSK in a must-win IPL game here on Sunday.

KXIP's chances of a top four finish took a serious hit after RR handed them a seven-wicket loss, snapping their impressive five match-winning streak.

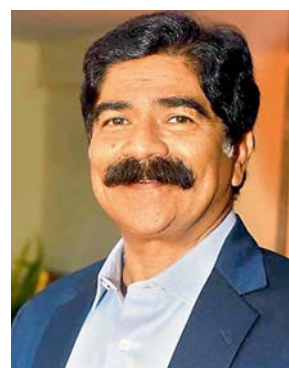
The defeat means KXIP's fate is not solely in their hands as even a win against CSK will not ensure them a play-off spot. The Punjab outfit will need other results to go their way.

On the other hand, CSK, already out of the reckoning for the first time ever, will aim to end their dismal campaign on a positive note.

The Mahendra Singh Dhoni-led team, languishing at the bottom of the points table, head in to the clash after notching up back-to-back wins over RCB and Kolkata Knight Riders. — PTI

TT official Sultan dies of Covid-19

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT. 31



S. M. Sultan

S. M. Sultan, a name synonymous with Table Tennis administration in Telugu States, succumbed to Covid-19 at a hospital in Vijayawada on Saturday. He was 61 and is survived by a son and a daughter.

His son Javed too is battling the dreaded Coronavirus and is said to be critical.

Sultan's family has been severely affected by the infamous virus. His mother passed away 10 days ago and his wife Lubna breathed her last on Friday. Sultan, a practicing advocate, was one of the senior vice presidents of the Table Tennis Federation of India and Secretary of Andhra Pradesh TT Association.

Sultan promoted padlers in a big way and stood out with his distinct bushy moustache as well as his contribution to table tennis.

"Sultan jee, who will clap for our kids from now on? Who will share pure, broad smile with all of us henceforth?? We badly miss you, Sir RIP," wrote Ramu Suravajjula, father of

● **Sultan's family has been severely affected by the infamous virus. His mother passed away 10 days ago and his wife breathed her last on Friday. His son too is battling the dreaded Coronavirus and is said to be critical.**

Hyderabad's international Table Tennis player SFR Snehit.

The Table Tennis fraternity in the country also mourned the untimely demise of Sultan.

SRH stay alive in play-off hunt

Sharjah, Oct. 31: Sunrisers Hyderabad defeated Royal Challengers Bangalore by five wickets to stay in the race for the IPL play-offs, here on Saturday.

Chasing 121, SRH reached the target in just 14.1 overs with Wriddhiman Saha (39), Jason Holder (26 not out) and Manish Pandey (26) guiding them home.

Opener Josh Phillip top-scored for RCB, making 32 runs while Sandeep Sharma and Holder took two wickets apiece for SRH.

Earlier, SRH produced a brilliant bowling effort to restrict a batting-heavy Royal Challengers Bangalore to a modest 120 for seven.

SRH strangled RCB by picking up wickets at regular intervals after opting to bowl.

Young Devdutt Padikkal (5) and skipper Virat Kohli (7) departed in quick succession, falling to Sandeep (2/20). Sandeep has now dismissed Kohli seven times in IPL.

AB de Villiers made a run-a-ball 24 before perishing and then Josh Phillip (32) again got a start but failed to capitalise. He was caught by Manish Pandey off Rashid Khan (1/24) in

SCORECARD

Royal Challengers Bangalore: Josh Philippe c Pandey b Khan 32, Devdutt Padikkal b Sandeep 5, Virat Kohli c Williamson b Sandeep 7, AB de Villiers c Abhishek b Nadeem 24, Washington Sundar c and b Natarajan 21, Gurkeerat Singh Mann (not out) 15, Chris Morris c Warner b Holder 3, Isuru Udana c Mohammed Siraj (not out) 2. Extras (b-1, lb-2, w-8) 11. **Total (for 7 wts, in 20 overs) 120.**

FoW: 1-13, 2-28, 3-71, 4-76, 5-106, 6-113, 7-114. **Bowling:** Sandeep Sharma 4-0-20-2, Jason Holder 4-0-27-2, T Natarajan 4-0-11-1, Shahbaz Nadeem 4-0-35-1, Rashid Khan 4-0-24-1.

Sunrisers Hyderabad: D. Warner c Udana b Washington Sundar 8, W. Saha st de Villiers b Chahal 39, M. Pandey c Morris b Chahal 26, K. Williamson c Kohli b Udana 8, Abhishek Sharma c Gurkeerat Singh b Saini 8, J. Holder (not out) 26, Abdul Samad (not out) 0. Extras (w-6) 6. **Total (for 5 wts, in 14.1 overs) 121.**

FoW: 1-10, 2-60, 3-82, 4-87, 5-114. **Bowling:** C. Morris 2-0-19-0, Washington Sundar 3-0-21-1, N. Saini 2-0-30-1, Mohammed Siraj 1-0-12-0, Y. Chahal 3-1-0-19-2, I. Udana 3-0-20-1.

the next over as RCB slumped to 76 for four in 11.4 overs. — PTI

IPL POINTS TABLE

Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
Mumbai Indians	13	9	4	0	18	+1.296
Royal Challengers Bangalore	13	7	6	0	14	-0.145
Delhi Capitals	13	7	6	0	14	-0.159
Sunrisers Hyderabad	13	6	7	0	12	+0.555
Kings XI Punjab	13	6	7	0	12	-0.133
Rajasthan Royals	13	6	7	0	12	-0.377
Kolkata Knight Riders	13	6	7	0	12	-0.467
Chennai Super Kings	13	5	8	0	10	-0.532

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

Proliferation of English players add more glitter to IPL



Ayaz Memon
Over The Top

On Friday, a tweet by @englandcricket, the "official home of all of the England Cricket teams on Twitter", caught my attention. The tweet read, "Good luck to our lads in today's huge IPL game!" and accompanied a photograph of Ben Stokes and Joffa Archer in Rajasthan Royals colours.

Former England captain Kevin Pietersen (@kp24) retweeted this tweet with a pithy observation. "Just imagine, IMAGINE, this tweet 8/9 years ago...I'm so happy these guys are bene-

fitting positively from the IPL".

Pietersen, was derided for chasing madmen when he embraced the IPL with unbridled enthusiasm about a decade back, starting with Delhi Daredevils and later representing Royal Challengers Bangalore and Pune Rising SuperGiants.

He was among the most highly paid overseas professionals in the league, and his public appreciation of the IPL did not sit too well with fellow players and critics back home.

English players were few in the IPL, one part because the second half of the league's season coincided with the start of their home season, but secondly also because of snobbery.

There are 10 top English players in IPL2020: Eoin Morgan, Sam Curran, Tom Curran, Jos Butler, Johnny Bairstow, Chris Jordan, Moeen Ali, Tom Banton, Joffra Archer, Ben Stokes.

Had Chris Woakes not pulled out at the last minute, it would have been 11 of the best white ball players from the country, a far cry from the times when Pietersen's participation in the IPL was seen so skeptically.

The mainstreaming of the IPL was, of course, not dependent on how many English cricketers played the league.

From inception, the best Australian, Kiwi, South African, West Indian, Sri Lankan, Bangladeshi — and in the first couple of years even Pakistani — players were seen in action.

The proliferation of English players, however, makes the IPL's influence in the sport comprehensive.

Importantly, English players are now negotiating with their counties to give them larger 'windows' for playing in this league.

Just how significant and influential the IPL has become for players, member countries of the ICC is evident from how things have panned out in 2020, year of the Covid pandemic.

Just the other day I read a report about how Steve Smith has decided to skip

this year's Big Bash League because he did not fancy spending more time in the bio-secure bubble.

David Warner, the other Australian batting stalwart and pace ace Pat Cummins are similarly inclined. The mental toll that being in the bio-secure bubble is taking of players is becoming an important issue.

But it is pertinent to note that none of these players decided to miss the IPL, having been in the bio-secure bubble in England for bilateral ODI and T20 series before the league commenced in the UAE.

All three Aussies are high value acquisitions for their franchises. The lure and attraction of playing in the IPL, however, is not just the money though that undoubtedly plays a huge part.

It is also about rubbing shoulders and competing with the best players in the world and reaching out to the largest audience. In all three aspects — money, talent, audience — the IPL is several times larger than any other T20 league.

Size of the audience defines the revenues for the IPL. Since inception in 2008, these have been super normal, making not just the BCCI very rich, but consequently also helping make the coffers of other boards heftier.

This allowed the BCCI to leverage the IPL even against the ICC's T20 World Championship which was scheduled for October this year, and finally scrapped in August-September with host country Australia tilting in favour of the Indian league.

The pandemic disrupted the calendar for most sports. However, IPL2020 survived on demand from various stakeholders — players, boards, broadcasters — even if played six months later than usual.

Widely touted as the fifth or sixth most valued sports property in the world, the IPL has the potential to get into the top three if the huge audiences (TV only) for this season are anything to go by.

This will not come only by hosting the tournament, and milking profits though. The BCCI has to be proactive, perhaps add a few more teams (12-16 to allow for two groups), with a relegation/promotion system in place to make it more competitive, and thereby more compelling to watch.