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HYDERABAD | WEDNESDAY | 2 DECEMBER 2020

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WEATHER
Max: 29.8°C
Min: 17.2°C
RH: 49%
Rainfall: Nil
Forecast: Partly cloudy.
Mist or haze likely.
Max/Min temp. 30/17°C

COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+35,994)	(+481)
94,98,721	1,38,129
covid19india.org	
STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS	
(+502)	(+3)
TS: 2,70,318	1,461
(+685)	(+4)
AP: 8,68,749	6,996

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

6,38,77,889
DEATHS
14,80,081
COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES

218

worldometers.info/coronavirus/

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Kartika Bahula
Vidya till 6.19 pm

Star: Mrigasira till 10.35 am

Varjyanam: 7.35 pm to 9.18 pm

Durmuhurtam: 11.43 am to 12.27 pm

Rahukalam: 12 pm to 1.30 pm

HIJRI CALENDAR

Rabbi-ul Aakhir 16, 1442 AH

PRAYERS

Fajr: 5.26 am

Zohar: 12.15 pm

Asar: 4.04 pm

Maghrab: 5.46 pm

Isha: 6.58 pm

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.31 AM**SUNSET TODAY** 5.40 PM**MOONSET TOMORROW** 8.00 AM**MOONRISE TODAY** 7.19 PM

If the situation continues like this, all the film stars will have to join politics!

COUNTER POINT

SCREEN 4
JAILOR
PATNIKANTI POLITICAL PARTIES

If the situation continues like this, all the film stars will have to join politics!

INSIDE

- CITY... PAGE 3**
Liquor shops had longer queues than poll booths
- BUSINESS... PAGE 11**
GST collections cross ₹1 lakh crore in Nov.

PASS | THE BUCK City blames it on missing names, votes already cast

Many voters stay off elections

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC
HYDERABAD, DEC. 1

Voters had many reasons to explain why they did not take part in the GHMC elections on Tuesday.

While the BJP blamed the TRS for the low turnout, the voters said they stayed away because they had no holiday, the fear of the Coronavirus or because their names were missing from the voter list. Some of them turned up to vote but

Poor turnout gives TRS hope

POLLING AGAIN TODAY AT OLD MALAKPET

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 1

Citing a printing error in the ballot paper, the State Election Commission on Tuesday decided to conduct fresh polls for Old Malakpet (Ward 26) on Wednesday from 7 am to 6 pm.

The ballot paper interchanged the symbols of the CPI and the CPI(M).

Full report on Page 2

Sources said that the ground reports as of Tuesday night indicated that the TRS had a clear edge in 75 divisions. TRS leaders spoke of the general political belief that a low voter turnout always favours the incumbent.

In the BJP camp, leaders appeared concerned that the leaders against making any claims with regard to the numbers till the party reviews the situation with more data at hand.

Page 2: BJP remains worried over turnout

found that their vote had been cast by someone else. Sreeharsha and mother Padmaa Thanneeru, voters from V.V. Nagar, Kukatpally, said: "Our names were not in the voter list even during the Assembly elections, and that continued for these elections too. We are not sure why they were deleted earlier, when both my mother and I have our voter ID cards."

Sreeharsha added that he did try to re-register as a voter, but because it didn't go through he decided to give up. "One reason could be that when the officials came to verify at our house, we may have been out for work, and they cancelled our names," he said.

Razia Fatima Sultan from Ramanauspura complained she stood in the queue but when she entered the booth she was told that her vote had been cast by someone else.

"The polling officers

asked me to vote in someone else's name, which I refused to do. The officials there were openly telling voters that they can cast as many votes as they want. Do they want everyone to cheat," Fatima asked.

This reporter observed that several voters did not download the e-slips sent as an SMS, which created confusion.

Page 2: New poll booths confuse voters

Centre, farmers fail to find common ground, talks fail

SANJAY KAW and BHASKAR HARI SHANKAR | DC
NEW DELHI, DEC. 1

As the farmers' agitation completed six days on Tuesday, there seemed to be no resolution in sight at ending the crisis as both the sides remained adamant on their demands. While the government wants the farmers to end their protest and join a committee of experts to sort out issues related to the three recently enacted farm laws, farmers' leaders say they want the new laws withdrawn or they will intensify their agitation.

With the marathon meeting between farmers' leaders and the government remaining inconclusive on Tuesday, a second meeting is now scheduled to take place on December 3.

A delegation of 35 farmer unions, who held a meeting with three Union ministers on Tuesday, rejected the Central government's offer to nominate their five members to a committee of experts to sort out issues

related to the farm laws and said they would continue their agitation at the Delhi-Haryana border until their demands are fully met.

Union agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar, who led the meeting which was also attended by commerce and industry minis-

ter Piyush Goyal and minister of state for commerce and industry Som Parkash, said the government will continue its dialogue with the protesting farmers on Thursday.

"The meeting was good and we have decided that the farmers to suspend their protests and come for the talks," Tomar said.

Farmers stage a protest at the Tikri border during their ongoing Delhi Chalo agitation against the Centre's new farm laws, in New Delhi on Tuesday. — PTI

TRUDEAU WADES INTO FARM STIR, GETS SLAMMED

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, DEC. 1

India on Tuesday criticised the remarks by Canadian PM Justin Trudeau on the farmers' protests in Delhi without naming him directly, saying these were "ill-informed and unwarranted". This came after Trudeau expressed concern about protests and that Canada always backed the right to protest peacefully.

Full report on Page 7

December. We wanted a small group to be constituted but farmers' leaders wanted that the talks should be held with everyone, we do not have a problem with it... We have requested the farmers to suspend their protests and come for the talks," Tomar said.

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SHORT TAKES

**BJP REMAINS
WORRIED OVER
TURNOUT**

From Page 1

Sources revealed that the low turnout may put paid to the party's hopes of increasing its seat share to 50. The estimate at this time is 15 to 20 seats.

TRS leaders said that the election-eve dharna of BJP activists, who alleged that its state president Bandi Sanjay had been attacked at MS Maktha had only served to highlight the nervousness ahead of polling day.

The Congress feared that those who voted might get swayed by the communal-centric poll campaign of the BJP, TRS and the MIM. The Congress leaders hoped to win eight to 10 seats based on their focus on development.

In the Old City, the voting appeared to continue to be one-sided. The MIM leaders felt that if more people had turned out to vote, there would have been scope for a keen contest. That did not happen, and the party hopes to retain its 44 division it won in 2016.

TS HALTS FREE SUPPLY OF COVID-19 RICE

DC CORRESPONDENT
NIZAMABAD, DEC. 1

Rice that was supplied free of cost during the Covid-19 pandemic through the Public Distribution System (PDS), has been halted in Telangana state. The quota of rice will also decrease, and from December 1 rice will be supplied at the regular price through the Fair Price (FP) shops.

Consumer affairs, Food and Civil Supplies Department has made arrangements in this regard. To help ration cardholders during the pandemic, the Central and state governments jointly supplied rice free of cost. During the lockdown, 12 kg of rice per head (unit) was supplied free of cost to ration cardholders from April to July. From August to November, per head got 10 kg rice.

Drastic steps needed to lure voters, feel RWAs

KANIZA GARARI | DC
HYDERABAD, DEC. 1

many areas.

The RWAs said that despite their efforts to involve people in the civil works, many backed off when it came to showing their strength in numbers. C.S. Chandrashekhar from Sainikpuri said, "The low polling percentage means that something drastic needs to be done to influence, motivate and dictate citizens to increase the voting percentage."

RWAs played a major role in drawing the attention of the GHMC to the civic problems in their areas, taking up follow up action with officials and elected representatives and ensuring that the promises are implemented.

Given the dismal response of the residents,

RWAs fear that they may be ignored when they go to the corporator with their problems. In the municipal offices too, their representations will not be taken seriously and officials will not be ready to listen to their complaints.

There were some areas where the voting percentage was good but in a majority of places there were challenges, B.T. Srinivasan of the United Federation of Resident Welfare Associations said.

"There are 43,000 resident welfare associations with us, and we have seen that a section has exercised their right to vote. The problems were faced by people whose polling booths were located far away from

their homes." It was observed that areas which had problems like garbage dumping, leaking of sewage drains and non-cleaning of roads by the GHMC staff saw less voting. Perhaps put off by the poor state of affairs, the votes appeared to have stayed away.

It was also feared that this could be a warning sign of the people giving up on their democratic functions.

A resident on condition of anonymity at Begumpet said, "Why should we vote? Every political party is the same. They all say different things but when it comes to governance they are the same. Why should we waste our time."

GHMC officials blame booth mapping

From Page 1

roads, sanitation, drinking water facilities, drainage system and health. There is a disconnect between what people want (and what the parties are offering)," he said.

Prof. Nageshwar said the political parties have "killed" local democracy. "Though the mayor's post is reserved for women, none put women in the forefront or announced a mayoral candidate. The parties have replicated the Assembly and Lok Sabha poll model for the GHMC. The people have voted twice in the last two years, and parties did not give the people a good reason why they should come out and vote."

Polling began on an extremely dull note. At 9 am, the polling percentage was 3.95, and it grew slowly to 11.62 by 11 am, 20.35 by 1 pm, 29.76 by 3 pm and 36.73 per cent by 5 pm according to data issued by the SEC.

The elderly, the specially-

abled and very few middle-class voters participated in the voting. Non-distribution of voter slips by the GHMC and the SEC kept many people from voting since they could not download it from the internet.

Students stood away for multiple reasons right from lack of development to a busy weekend.

V. Prakash, political analyst and Prof. Jayashankar Research Foundation founder, said the pandemic had forced a lower turnout in the IT corridor since most of the people were working from home and had gone to their hometowns.

Guest workers from Nalgonda, Mahabubnagar, Sriakulam and other places never came back, fearing the Coronavirus.

"Political parties and GHMC did encourage the middle class and young voters to vote. There are multiple reasons like not providing voter slips, change of polling booths,

providing e-voter slip through mobile applications," he added.

The corporators elected in 2016 seemed to have added to the disenchantment by not resolving local grievances. Despite warning by the TRS, the corporators continued in their corrupt ways during.

A GHMC official said that the prime reason for the low turnout was mapping of polling stations.

The GHMC mapped polling stations in a different pattern, unlike during the Assembly polls and Lok Sabha polls. This led to many voters not finding their names in the voter list and believing that they had been deleted.

Since the polling agents and other staff were deployed at short notice, they did not guide the voters properly.

Through the day, celebrities, NGOs and politicians cutting across party lines continuously encouraged voters to step out and vote.

Happy to vote



A girl is all smiles and shows her inked finger while leaving the booth after casting her vote for the GHMC elections at FNCC on Tuesday.

— R. PAVAN

Location of new poll booths confuse voters

From Page 1

fied it with the staff on the ground, but to no luck."

He said the voter enrollment team had visited there for registration, and he had provided all documents, but it seems that didn't help. Rohith added that he had not received any e-slip.

Syed Mohammed said that he went around to other booths to check if his name was placed in the surrounding polling stations, but found it missing and could not vote. Varun, a voter from Padmaraonagar, said that despite living in Hyderabad for 20 years, his mother Adbhuta Rani hadn't received her voter ID card.

He and three members of his family couldn't vote because their names were missing.

"We didn't raise this issue with anyone, though we were not being able to

vote for the general elections too. But I remember someone coming to our place and taking our details and documents before the elections. So we had expected that the names would be on the list," he said.

Jesu V., a senior citizen, said she had stepped out after three months to cast her vote, only to find out that her name was deleted from the list. She had been staying at home due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Speaking on the issue, Arun Daniel, founder, Youngistaan Foundation, said, "The attitude of the people is, 'why should we get involved'. There is a need for a proper platform with government participation to increase awareness of the public, especially the youth. More involvement in constructive form will encourage many of them to come out and participate."

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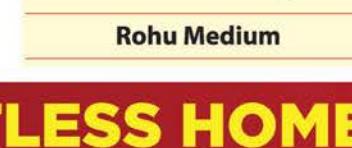
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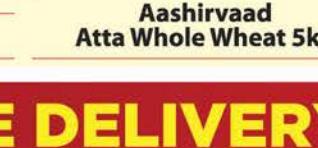
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SHORT TAKES

EC ISSUES REVISED SCHEDULE FOR GRADUATES POLL

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 1

Even as the elections process to the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) Council is yet to be completed, the civic body on Tuesday has to work for the Legislative Council graduates constituency elections.

The Election Commission has issued the revised schedule for denovo preparation of electoral rolls for the election to the Mahabubnagar-Ranga Reddy Hyderabad graduates constituency. According to the revised schedule, the draft electoral rolls are to be published on December 8 and final publication will be made on January 22.

As per the schedule issued by Election Commission of India earlier, final publication of electoral rolls was to be made by January 18. Applications on Form-18 for enrollment of voters were received up to November 6. The draft publication of electoral rolls was due on Tuesday but has now been postponed.

SAJJANAR THANKS VOTERS FOR PEACEFUL POLLS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 1

Polling for the GHMC elections went off peacefully in the Cyberabad commissionerate on December 1, police commissioner V.C. Sajjanar said, adding that he had personally visited several polling stations. A total of 51,000 personnel have been deployed in the Hyderabad, Cyberabad and Rachakonda commissionates.

Sajjanar said the police had received reports of minor altercations in areas like Kukatpally and Alwal but nothing major was reported in any of the commissionates.

"Though we are happy that things went peacefully, we are disappointed that the percentage of people showing up was so less. Huge amounts of taxpayers money was used to conduct the elections and the fact that only around 42-45 per cent of the voters showed up in Cyberabad was disappointing," Sajjanar said.

A person who is not responsible enough to vote has no right to seek welfare schemes from the government, he said.

Rights without responsibility cannot be sought, said the official, who was upset with the outcome of GHMC elections 2020 polling day.

Sajjanar was accompanied on his inspection visit by DCPs Prakash Reddy Shamshabadi Venkateshwari (Madhapur) and P.V. Padmaja (Balanagar), CAR Headquarters Additional DCP Manik Raj, SOT Additional DCP Sandeep, Additional DCP Kavitha, Kukatpally ACP Surender, Balanagar ACP Purushottam and inspectors.

Democracy in full play



(Clockwise from top) Voters stand in a queue to cast their votes for GHMC elections at Parsigutta. A family walks hand in hand to cast their votes at Musheerabad. A specially-abled person is all smiles as he shows his inked finger after casting his franchise at a polling station in Bandlaguda. A man brings his elderly mother to a polling station in Gowlipura on Tuesday.

— S. SURENDER REDDY, P. SURENDRA, GANDHI

Angry flood victims skip civic body polls

Residents are upset that they did not get compensation

KANIZA GARARI | DC
HYDERABAD, DEC. 1

The residents had lost their voter ID and other identity cards in the floods.

Those who could have gone did not turn up as they had lost everything and were unwilling to go by the promises made by different parties.

Mohammed Aslam of Al-Jubail Colony said, "People are not interested to vote as they found that the promises are not fulfilled. The work of cleaning and clearing our homes was done by non-government organisations. Why should they vote for a politician who comes once in a while?"

Near Lower Tank

Bund, people were not interested as they were scared of Covid-19. Senior citizens were not keen to go out for health reasons and their children did not want them to risk their lives by voting.

In areas like Saroornagar, Trimulgherry, Kapra, RK Puram and Alwal, where people were affected by floods, they were upset that the causative factors such as encroachment around lakes had not been addressed.

These areas have been regularly inundated every year and are upset that no alternative

arrangement has been made despite representations being given to the authorities. For this reason, they stated that voting in the GHMC elections would not help.

M.B. Raju at RK Puram lake said, "What is so different that the new set of councillors will do? Will they be able to resolve our long-pending problems? There is no reason to cast our vote."

Areas where there are issues noted from time to time have left people in a dismal state and the recent floods have added an assault to their memory.

Paper ballot gives voters a blast from the past feeling

SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL | DC
HYDERABAD, DEC. 1

Citizens of Hyderabad exercised the right to choose their representative in a public body using a paper ballot almost after two decades. Tuesday's polling in 150 wards of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation evoked nostalgia among many senior voters.

This was even though it took them longer than the electronic voting machine (EVM) to vote — looking for the symbol, stamping it, folding the ballot paper and putting it into the metal ballot box.

Economics professor Lakshmi Reddy from Osmania University, who is 88 years' old, cast her vote at the Oil Seeds Corporation building in Hima-yatnagar. She presented herself at the venue by 7:30 a.m. itself.

"I have been voting almost from the first general election in India. The ballot paper reminded me of those times, when the voted paper had to be meticulously folded before being deposited into the ballot box," Prof. Lakshmi Reddy remarked. She went on to say she is indeed saddened over finding very few voters at the booth. "Youngsters should realise the precious

Clashes between oppn parties spark tension

ATHER MOIN | DC
HYDERABAD, DEC. 1

value of the vote and democracy. It is for Right to Vote that people fought in the past and many laid down their lives," she reminded.

Farhana Khan, educationist, and her husband voted at the Anjuman Boys School in Musheerabad. Both went on a nostalgic trip over using the ballot paper. "It was nice to see the paper ballot again, and marking on the paper," they maintained.

Syeda Nusrath Fatima, a lecturer in an engineering college, exercised her right to vote at Hyderabad Scots School in Attapur. Though she has voted for many times in elections during the past, using the ballot paper was a first-time experience for her. "I find this type of voting is much safer; though manual counting may take more time. This will leave no doubts among voters that their votes polled through EVMs may be tampered with."

V. Surya Teja, a B.Tech third-year student is a first-time voter. "I have not experienced the EVM. This has been the first opportunity in my life to elect a public representative. I felt like a true responsible citizen of this nation," he said with pride.

CANDIDATES OF different parties alleged bogus voting by their opponents. Muslim women complained in Kishanbagh, Ghansi Bazaar and other areas that they were asked to remove their veil to show their identity in Asad Baba Nagar of Kishanbagh at the instance of TRS workers.

Police used mild force to disperse the protesters.

Rein Bazaar TRS candidate Mohammed Abdul Jaweed was attacked by unidentified persons near Islamia High School. MIM workers allegedly attacked Rashed Khan, husband of Inaya Fatima, the Congress' Vijayanagar Colony candidate after a clash. His driver was wounded.

In Azampura division, MIM and MBT workers levelled allegations of bogus voting against each other. From Azampura, Asma Khatoon wife of MBT spokesperson Amjadullah Khan, is contesting. Polling was disturbed for a few minutes at Taha School and Old Malakpet ground when workers of both parties gathered.

Police seized six autorickshaws on the allegation that they were being used by the candidate for carrying voters to the polling booths.

In Hussaini Alam College, the BJP candidate's agent reportedly objected to the presence of Charminar MLA Mumtaz Ahmed Khan. Later, the BJP complained to the State Election Commission complaining that the MLA tried to influence the voters by threatening their polling agents in certain stations of Puranapuri ward.

Candidates of different parties alleged bogus voting by their opponents. Muslim women complained in Kishanbagh, Ghansi Bazaar and other areas that they were asked to remove their veil to show their identity in Asad Baba Nagar of Kishanbagh at the instance of TRS workers. In Nanalnagar MIM and TRS workers confronted each other. In Kurmaguda division, police detained two youths at Lal Darwaza when BJP leaders complained alleged that they were not voters of the division.

LIQUOR SHOPS WITNESS LONGER QUEUES THAN POLLING BOOTHS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 1

Tipplers formed long queues in front of liquor shops which opened at 6 pm, at the end of voting for the GHMC polls. The shops had been closed in view of the polls.

It appeared clear at most places that, as was said in a viral meme, "whatever there is, is 'no recourse' Basis and a total of 107 liquor outlets available at Nizamabad are available at Ongole, Nizamabad, Chintalpet, Tikkal Garden Complex, Nizamabad, each with a revenue of



PINK PEN WITH KCR PHOTO CREATES FUREO AT VIVEKANANDANAGAR BOOTH

Hyderabad: Tension prevailed at Vivekanandnagar division in Kukatpally after Opposition activists accused the polling officers of using pink pens with the photograph of Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao on it.

A video shared on Twitter purported to show the pens with the officials. An

Opposition activist was seen demanding action from the police personnel and other officials.

When asked about it, Kukatpally inspector T. Narsing Rao said he had deputed a sub-inspector but the situation was normal and no such pen was seen anywhere.

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GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA OFFICE OF THE DIST. COLLECTOR, NIZAMABAD Date: 01-12-2020

E-AUCTION TENDER NOTIFICATION FOR SALE OF SCRAP CARS

Quotations are invited for sale of scrap vehicles which are under possession of Collector & District Magistrate, Nizamabad, on "as is where is" "as is what is" "whatever there is" "no recourse" Basis and a total of 107 scrap vehicles are available at Ongole, Nizamabad, Chintalpet, Tikkal Garden Complex, Nizamabad, each with a revenue of

The auction of scrap vehicles will be in Lots and each Lot will have an upset reserve price. Lot wise details of all the Scrap Vehicles with reserve price and Terms and Conditions of the e-Auction are available on the website www.e-auction.telangana.gov.in. Hard Copy of the same is available at the Auction Sites: The Schedule for the e-Auction is as below:

1. Date of Notification : 03-12-2020

2. Date of Inspection on site : 06-12-2020 to 09-12-2020 (10.30 AM to 2.00 PM)

3. Last date of online registration with KYC documents and proof of EMD : 10-12-2020 (up to 5.00 PM)

4. Date of e-Auction : 16-12-2020 10.30 AM

5. Last date of payment of bid amount : 17-12-2020 10.30 AM

6. Delivery of Lots : 18-12-2020 to 23-12-2020

For any Query, please contact Sri Y. Sudeshan, Administrative Officer, Collectorate, Nizamabad, Ph: 9491036912 and Sri C. Karthik, Additional Collector, Nizamabad, Ph: 7373409202. Sd/- Additional Collector, Nizamabad

R.O. No: 4122-DP/CL/Advt/1/2020-21

RAIL COACH FACTORY, KAPURTHALA

On-line bids are invited by PCMM, RCF on behalf of President of India for following items:-

Sr. Tender No. & Date	Description	Qty (Nos./Sets)	EMD (₹)
1. 17201494 23/12/2020	Set of Seats and Berths with PU Foam & Fire Barrier Cloth for LHB SCN EG Coaches.	40 Sets	16,60,760/-
	Seat and Berth set with PU Foam and Fire Barrier Cloth for LWACCN.	40 Sets	
2. 01201168A 22/12/2020	Set of Pins for LHB Bogies	1266 Sets	1,24,220/-
3. 07201379 28/12/2020	Ball Valve 1/2"	8250 Nos.	NIL

1. For details and making On-line tenders, visit Website <http://ireps.gov.in>, drawings/specifications, wherever required can be downloaded from RCF Website <http://www.rcf.indianrailways.gov.in>, Class II digital signature certificate required for on-line bidding, can be obtained from licensed certifying agencies listed at <http://www.cce.gov.in>. 2. Tenders will close at 14.25 Hrs. on due date and will be opened at 14.30 Hrs. Tenders S.r. No. 1 will be opened at RCF Kapurthala and S.r. No. 2 & 3 will be opened at Tilak Bridge, New Delhi. 3. For queries, contact IREPS Helpdesk at 011-24102855, 011-24105180 or RCF Helpdesk at 011-2337655.

Note: GST Number of RCF is 03AAAGM0289C1ZT. All the suppliers are advised to quote this in dispatch documents for the products made by them. All above mentioned tenders are e-tenders and all tenderers are requested to submit their bids on-line through the IREPS website at <https://www.ireps.gov.in>. For more details regarding the above mentioned tenders and other suppliers tenders please visit IREPS website.

PCMM

The following amendment is authorized against Tender mentioned below:-

(1) Tender No. 17201354 for the supply of Lettering Outside/Marking Diagram/Stickers for LHB coaches due date to be read as 2.12.2020 instead of 25.11.2020. (2) Tender No.: 12201268A for procurement of WINDOW (4 TYPE) due date to be read as 3.12.2020 instead of 23.11.2020. (3) Tender No.: 17201473 for the supply of FRP Drop down modular toilets for LHB Coaches due date to be read as 11.12.2020 instead of 25.11.2020. (4) Tender No.: 05201420 for Roof Arch (2 Types) due date to be read as 04.12.2020 instead of 27.11.2020.

All other terms & conditions of the tender will remain unchanged.

PCMM

T. No.: G-122-01/Store/093/2020-21

Dated: 01.12.2020

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi - 110016 Educational Survey Division NATIONAOL TALENT SEARCH EXAMINATION

The Schedule of NTSE-2020-21

State	Area	Tentative Dates
Stage-I (State)	Last Date for Submission of Application Form	To be notified by the respective State/UT. May vary from State to State
	Examination in Mizoram, Meghalaya, Nagaland and A & N Islands	12th December, 2020 (Saturday)
	Examination in all other States and Union Territories	13th December, 2020 (Sunday) (All other remaining States/UTs except above mentioned States/UTs)
State-II (National)	Examination in all States and Union Territories	13th June, 2021 (Sunday)

For eligibility and other details visit

IN BRIEF

SEC erred to mention ballot box numbers

Hyderabad: Former Congress minister Marri Shashidhar Reddy said that the State Election Commission had erred in not mentioning ballot box numbers in Form 21, which is given to party agents who are in polling booth. In a video message, he asked why the SEC had not mentioned the ballot box number and also which box belonged to a certain booth. This, he said, has given rise to suspicions. He wanted an immediate inquiry into the matter.

Woman has a fall at polling station

Hyderabad: Rachakonda police commissioner Mahesh M. Bhagwat provided first aid to a woman who had sustained injuries on Tuesday after slipping and falling at a polling station. He ensured she was given further treatment in hospital. The incident occurred around noon when a middle-aged woman who had come to cast her vote at a polling station in Chiknagar in Uppal slipped at the entrance and suffered injuries to her left hand. Bhagwat was present there to review security arrangements.

COPS ATTACKED PARTY WORKERS, CLAIMS BJP

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 1

Bharatiya Janata Party workers alleged that an inspector had attacked them with a lathi which left some of them injured, on Monday. They were protesting at the BJP office in MCH Colony area in Chaitanyaupuri on Tuesday.

The incident was triggered by TRS workers who alleged that the BJP men were distributing money to the public.

A senior police official denied the allegations and said that the inspector had only used the lathi to scare them away. A short video was circulated on social media showing Chaithanyaupuri inspector Ravi Kumar chasing TRS and BJP activists away using a lathi while a patrol van of the Rachakonda police can be seen in the background.

LB Nagar ACP P. Sreedhar Reddy said, "A BJP worker sustained injuries on his face during the brawl with the and TRS activists. To gain sympathy, they are claiming that the police official injured them." He said cases were booked against both the groups.

Meanwhile, the BJP has written to the State Election Commission (SEC) seeking action against the TRS workers who they claimed had attacked the party's Chaitanyaupuri ward office and damaged it. They also wanted action to be taken against inspector Ravi Kumar.

TD BLAMES TRS, BJP FOR LOW VOTER TURNOUT

DURGAM SRINIVAS I DC
HYDERABAD, DEC. 1

The Telugu Desam has blamed the TRS and the BJP for the low turnout of voters in the GHMC elections. These two parties created panic with their comments while ignoring the people's issues which should have been the main agenda of the campaign for the civic body polls, said TD president L. Ramana.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, Ramana said the comments of both parties and that of the MIM leaders had created a fear psychosis among most of the voters. This fear had kept them at home instead of turning up to vote. Ramana said that it was unfortunate that the TRS, BJP, Congress and MIM ignored public issues in the campaign and fought the elections on religious and divisive lines. He asked what was the relevance of surgical strikes, destruction of VIP memorials, Osama bin Laden, Dawood Ibrahim and Donald Trump to the GHMC polls.

Ramana also said the SEC had failed to conduct free and fair elections.

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Ballot time for leaders

AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi, MLC Kavitha Kalvakuntla cast their votes for GHMC elections on Tuesday; CPM state secretary Tamineni Veerabhadram expresses disappointment and leaves the polling station after he finds his name missing from the electoral rolls.

— P. SURENDRA, R. PAVAN, GANDHI

Bandi slams SEC on GHMC polls

Says that poll percentage reduced only because of inefficient officers

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 1

BJP state president Bandi Sanjay alleged that the State Election Commission had failed in conducting the GHMC election in a proper manner. He held Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao responsible for the low polling percentage which he said had created panic among the people.

Sanjay was speaking to mediapersons along with Union minister of state G. Kishan Reddy to protest the alleged attack on Sanjay on Necklace Road on Monday night. Kishan Reddy and Sanjay offered them lemon water to call off the strike.

Sanjay alleged that the poll percentage had reduced only because of inefficient officers. He said the party will lodge a complaint against the State Election Commission (SEC) with the Centre. He alleged that police personnel had personal

ly distributed money to voters, and the election was held under the direction of the CM. He accused DGP M. Mahendar Reddy of backing the TRS leaders and giving full powers to policemen distribute money and liquor illegally.

Sanjay claimed that the lotus symbol of the BJP was not printed clearly on the ballot papers, whereas the TRS' car symbol was clearer. He was confident that the people had voted for the BJP and thanked them.

Kishan Reddy said the TRS government must be "ashamed" for the low poll percentage and alleged that the ruling party had used the SEC

for its selfishness. He appealed to the intellectuals to ponder over why the polling percentage was low. He alleged that one of the reasons was the TRS' hurry to conduct the polls.

Kishan Reddy pointed out that the poll percentage in Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday was 54 per cent while it was lower in Hyderabad. The polling percentage had decreased due to the comments of the Chief Minister, he alleged.

He also said that no election had been conducted without teachers, and accused the Chief Minister of insulting them by not drafting them for election work.

Strike called off with lemon juice

MoS for home G. Kishan Reddy and BJP state president and MP Bandi Sanjay offer lemon juice to party leaders D.K. Aruna, Dr K Laxman and other leaders who were on strike protesting against what they called TRS government's high handedness in the GHMC polls, at the BJP office on Tuesday in Hyderabad. —DC

UTTAM KUMAR CONDEMNED FAKE REPORT ON SOCIAL MEDIA

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 1

Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee president N. Uttam Kumar Reddy on Tuesday condemned a report which was circulated on social media asking the cadre to vote for the TRS in the GHMC elections.

On coming to know of this, the TPCC chief released a statement informing the cadre that they should vote for the Congress, and teach the TRS and the BJP a fitting lesson.

He alleged that these parties were spreading false news with their social media teams against him and the Congress to garner a few votes.

The TPCC chief said that the TRS and BJP's governance in the state and at the Centre was being done in an unfair manner. He said that the Congress was the only party fighting for justice for people.

He expressed his condolences over the death TRS MLA Nomula Narasimhaiah earlier on Tuesday.

Women try to rig votes, caught

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 1

A group of burqa-clad women allegedly went to a polling booth with petroleum jelly to wipe off the ink mark and rig votes, it was claimed on Tuesday. The police recorded their statements before letting them off.

According to Majlis Bachao Tehreek (MBT) spokesperson Amjad Ullah Khan, the women arrived in six autorickshaws at Booths No. 16

and 17 of Azampura. The women when quizzed by the local police were unable to prove their credentials," Khan alleged. The MBT also alleged that the electoral rolls contained fake names which, it

claimed, had been inserted by the AIMIM. MBT has fielded Asma Khatoon, wife of Amjad Ullah Khan, from Azampura against Ayesha Jehan Naseem of the AIMIM.

Several photos were shared on social media platforms which appeared to back the claims made by the MBT spokesperson.

The Hyderabad police rejected the claims made by the party DCP, East Zone, M. Ramesh, said

that the claims were inaccurate and false. "These women were going in an autorickshaw when they were stopped and MBT workers alleging that these are women casting bogus voters. The women were let off after verification."

The DCP said that polling stations have women staff who will verify the credentials of women voters in burqas. "There is no scope of bogus voting," said the official.

MBT said women came in autorickshaws at Azampura. Photos were shared on social media which appeared to back the claims made by the MBT

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IN BRIEF
GSI workshop sees 15,000 participants

Hyderabad: The 140 e-training programmes set up by the Geological Survey of India (GSI) during the lockdown witnessed the participation of over 15,000 from the city. The GSI Training Institute has been training people at the Hyderabad headquarters for the last 44 years.

STATE RECORDS
502 NEW COVID-19 CASES, 3 DEATHS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 1

There were 502 new Covid-19 cases and three deaths recorded in the state on Monday. In all, 46,597 samples were tested on Sunday. This is the lowest number of daily cases unerathered since June 20, when 546 cases were discovered.

The total cases are now 2,70,318 and toll due to Covid-19, 1,461.

The state had 9,627 active cases, the Covid-19 bulletin of the state health department said, of which 7,586 are under treatment at home or institutional care. The GHMC recorded 101 cases, Medchal Malkajgiri 46 and Ranga Reddy 32. Government has asked people to follow the safety protocols of masks, hand washing and social distancing.

APOLLO HOSP DOCS CONDUCT CRITICAL CARDIAC SURGERY

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 1

In a milestone achievement, a team of cardiologists at the Apollo Recovery Clinic performed a critical cardiac procedure, trans aortic valve replacement, on an 83-year-old Covid-19 survivor from West Godavari district.

The elderly man had developed lung fibrosis, leading to breathlessness, palpitations and extreme fatigue, despite recovering from Covid. He was rushed to the hospital considering the deteriorating condition due to pre-existing severe aortic valve disease coupled with the post-Covid difficulties, on November 25.

Dr A. Sreenivas Kumar, who led the team of cardiologists on the surgery, said, "The procedure on an octogenarian Covid-19 recovered patient is a milestone. It sends a strong message to patients with pre-existing cardiac disease who have recovered from Covid that there is no need to postpone seeking medical care for critical ailments."

ADMIT NAIDU TO ASYLUM, JAGAN TELLS SPEAKER

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 1

Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy in State Legislative Assembly suggested to Speaker Thammneni Seetharam that Leader of Opposition (LOP) N. Chandrababu Naidu be admitted in a mental hospital "as the latter was speaking about irrelevant matters".

This statement of CM Jagan came as the LOP tried to pick faults in functioning of the state government while taking part in a short discussion on house sites and Tidco houses. While speaking, Naidu repeatedly insisted on the Speaker to provide him more time to continue the discussion and spoke on issues unrelated to Tidco houses and house sites.

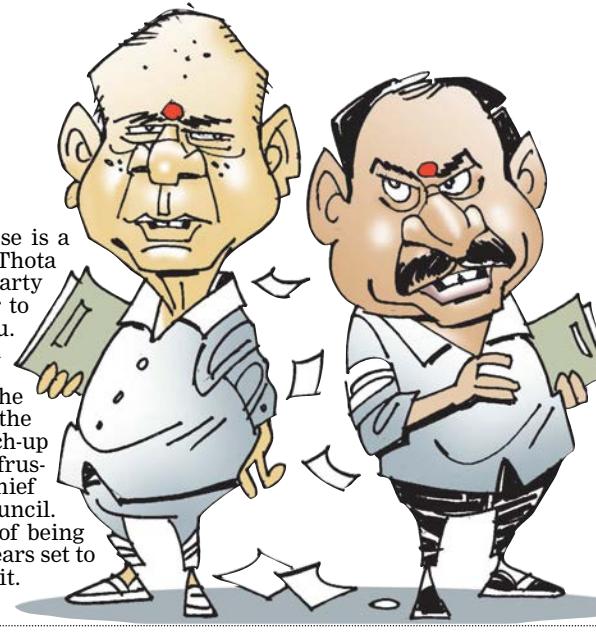
At this stage, Jagan advised Thammneni Seetharam that Naidu be given another two to three minutes to wind up his statement, so that he (CM) could make his statement on the issue. Jagan said people are eagerly waiting to know what the Chief Minister will say on the housing scheme. The CM even advised the Speaker to suspend TD MLAs who were disrupting proceedings in the House.

Jagan Mohan Reddy had recalled speeches he made during his padayatra that TD regime was giving houses of 300 square feet each costing ₹6 lakh in which ₹1.5 lakh each paid by both the state and central government while the remaining ₹3 lakh had to be raised as bank loan by the beneficiary, who would need to pay ₹3,000 per month for a period of 20 years.

When the Chief Minister said he had given an assurance that he would waive off the beneficiaries' contribution, Naidu tried to pick a fault in the statement. Jagan then suggested to the Speaker that the LOP be sent to a mental asylum.

YSRC MP is an angry man these days

Former AP minister and Rajya Sabha member P. Subashchandra Bose is a frustrated soul these days. First he vented his anger on arch rival Thota Trimurthulu, also a former MLA who switched sides to the ruling party after the Telugu Desam got a drubbing. Bose wrote to the home minister to expedite trial in a case of alleged tonsuring of a Dalit youth by Trimurthulu. A few days later, Bose picked an argument with fellow MLA from Kakinada D. Chandrasekhar Reddy and the latter, known for his aggression and no-holds-barred approach, hurled abuses against Bose for his comments that the housing scheme is marred by largescale corruption. The ugly fight drew the attention of Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy who ordered a patch-up photo event and forced Bose to call on Reddy and announce a truce. Bose's frustration is understandable because he lost his ministerial post, deputy chief ministership to be precise, when Jagan decided to scrap the Legislative Council. Though he was immediately accommodated in the Rajya Sabha, the power of being a minister is altogether different. More frustrating is that the Council appears set to remain as the ruling party is in no mood to pursue the resolution to scrap it.



KCR keeps babu's prowess in reserve

Telangana state Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao's handling of bureaucratic matters puzzles babus and the case of V. Seshadri is no exception. After making the honest and straightforward officer his secretary, a crucial post in the Chief Minister's Office, KCR did not allocate him subjects. The normal procedure is that secretaries and officers on special duty in the CMO are allotted departments and it's their responsibility to coordinate between the CM and the heads of departments. It was rumoured that Seshadri will be given revenue, given his experience as collector of Ranga Reddy and Visakhapatnam districts in the combined state, which are notorious for land disputes.

However, even two months after landing at the CMO from the Prime Minister's Office, where he had a five-year stint Seshadri is waiting for a role. In the meantime he is busy setting the house in order for Dharni, the land registrations portal and a pet project of the Chief Minister.



Owaisi's humour comes as antidote during civic polls

The threat of a surgical strike and destruction of memorials of VIPs during the just-ended campaign for the GHMC elections fouled up the atmosphere, and made people tense. It was left to MIM president Asaduddin Owaisi to use his trademark humour to lighten the mood, speaking late at night, as is his wont, to admiring audiences in the Old City. When every party was attacking the MIM, Owaisi came up with this gem: "Ghareeb ki biwi sab ki bhabhi (A poor man's wife is eye-candy for all)" and "Razia phas gayi gundo mein (a woman has been cornered by rowdies)". He punctured the BJP's claims with the famous Hyderabad line, "Baigan ke baatan nakko karo (don't talk rubbish)." Then he picked up a BJP publication that did not have a picture of Prime Minister Narendra Modi but featured Owaisi. "They do not have a picture of Modiji but have one of dulhe raja (bridegroom)," referring to himself. He had the audiences rolling with laughter and carried on in a mocking manner saying the picture made him look "handsome". Not without reason, the video has gone viral. At the end of the meetings, where Owaisi mixed up serious topics and humour, the audience would certainly have felt it was worth their while.

MLA Nomula passes away

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 1

TRS legislator Nomula Narsimhaiah from Nagarjunasagar died of a heart attack in the early hours of Tuesday in Hyderabad. He was 64 and is survived by his son and two daughters. Family sources said Narsimhaiah complained of chest pain at about 3 am at his residence in Old MLA Quarters in Hyderabad and was shifted to a corporate hospital in Hyderguda where he died while undergoing treatment.

Narsimhaiah, born on January 9, 1956, in Palem of Nakrekal mandal in Nalgonda district, was a law graduate and practicing lawyer. A Marxist since his student days, he entered active politics by successfully contesting the election to the Nakrekal mandal parishad of Nalgonda district in 1987 from the CPM. He held the post for two terms.

He was elected to the Assembly in 1999 and 2004 from Nakrekal constituency, the Chief Minister said. He conveyed his condolences to the members of the bereaved family.

The last rites of Narasimhaiah will be performed at his farmhouse in Palem on Saturday evening.



Nomula Narsimhaiah

CPM and lost. In 2014 he joined the TRS after the CPM denied him a ticket from the Huzurnagar constituency. He contested from Nagarjunasagar in 2014 and lost to the Congress' K. Jana Reddy. In the 2018 Assembly elections, he defeated Jana Reddy by 7,771 votes.

Expressing grief at the sudden demise of Narsimhaiah, Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao said the legislator would be remembered as a leader who worked for the welfare of the people. His death was a big loss to the TRS as well as the people of Nagarjunasagar constituency, the Chief Minister said. He conveyed his condolences to the members of the bereaved family.

The last rites of Narasimhaiah will be performed at his farmhouse in Palem on Saturday evening.

IMA to protest on Dec. 8 against nod to Ayush to do surgeries

Plans to withdraw non-Covid services from all hospitals; to approach court

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 1

The Indian Medical Association (IMA) plans to carry out a public demonstration on December 8 and withdraw non-Covid services from hospitals from December 11 to protest the permission given to Ayush doctors to perform surgeries.

The Central Council of Indian Medicine (CCIM) had issued orders last

week that Ayush doctors must be trained for six months in modern science hospitals and they must be allowed to carry out surgeries.

The IMA has strongly objected to this and plans to approach the court.

The IMA has asked 20 participants to demonstrate, while adhering to Covid-19 protocols, from 12 noon to 2 pm on December 8 against what it calls "mixopathy", or mixing

AS A NEXT step of the protest, non-essential services will be withdrawn between 6 am and 6 pm on December 11. Only emergency services of casualty, labour and emergency surgeries will function.

two streams of medicine. The objective of the demonstration is to

demand withdrawal of the CCIM order. The IMA is also demanding withdrawal of four committees of the NITI Aayog on mixing all systems of medicine.

As a next step of the protest, non-essential services will be withdrawn between 6 am and 6 pm on December 11. Only emergency services of casualty, labour and emergency surgeries will function.

The inpatient services of intensive care unit

and critical care will also function.

There will be no outpatient departments and no elective surgeries scheduled for December 11.

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and critical care will also function.

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Dr Rajan Sharma, national president of the IMA, says, "We are going to seek support from medical college teachers association, government doctors, hospital associations and medical students in our fight to protect modern medicine."

MAN ATTEMPTS SUICIDE AFTER GIRL REJECTS PROPOSAL

DC CORRESPONDENT
NIZAMABAD, DEC. 1

A man attempted to take his life in front of his girlfriend's residence at Aryanagar in Nizamabad after she refused his marriage proposal.

According to sources, Ananth Kumar, 28, of Vanasthalipuram, Hyderabad, and Raval (name changed), 27, were working in private company in Hyderabad and fell in love. Ananth Kumar came to Nizamabad on Monday evening to discuss the proposals with her family. Reportedly, Raval's family did not agree as he belonged to a different community.

Ananth Kumar poured petrol on himself and set himself on fire in front of Raval's residence. The neighbours called the ambulance and police. Kumar was shifted to the Government General Hospital in Nizamabad and later to the Gandhi Hospital in Hyderabad as his condition turned serious.

Speaking to Deccan Chronicle, IV Town sub-inspector Laxmaiah the police did not receive any complaint from Kumar's family but registered a suo motu case. Police has begun investigating.

ANANTH KUMAR poured petrol on himself and set himself on fire in front of Raval's residence. The neighbours called the ambulance and police. Kumar was shifted to the Government General Hospital in Nizamabad.



Streets at Charminar and MJ Market wore a deserted look on Tuesday as the state government announced a holiday for GHMC polls. Despite the holiday there the poll percentage was at a abysmal low.

— GANDHI

MAN VS | WILD

Shortage of water may bring both the tigers and the people to the same water sources

Residents of Asifabad district fear water scarcity

PILLALAMARI SRINIVAS | DC ADILABAD, DEC. 1

It seems like tough summer days are ahead for tigers and as well as the people of interior villages who will share scare water resources in Komaram Bheem Asifabad district.

It is feared that the shortage of drinking water may bring both the tigers and the people to the same water sources. Tigers may also come close to the villages in search of water.

The people of the interior villages are experiencing sleepless nights with the increased tiger movements and the killing of two persons within 20 days in separate incidents in Dahegaon and Penchikalpet mandals.

Farmers are not going to their fields for cotton picking, fearing an attack by the tiger.

It was stated that this is the time for the forest department to develop water bodies inside the forests for the tigers so that they do not cross paths with humans.

While tiger attacks were unknown for 20 years, the situation has changed with more tigers migrating into the erstwhile Adilabad dis-

tinct from bordering Maharashtra.

While forest officials were happy about the migration of tigers, the two deaths have had a sobering effect.

Farmers are not active these days in the areas

where the tigers are moving but may become active and cause harm to the tigers by taking the advantage of the summer season when the big scat scour the dry forests for water, or the panic situation prevailing among the people and push the blame on the villagers.

Again, people of Hattighat, Tamsi (K) in Bheempur mandal informed forest officials two days ago that they saw a tiger movement in the cotton fields of their villages along the river Penganga in the Adilabad district.

It was found that tigers are migrating into Adilabad district borders from the Tippeswar tiger reserve of Maharashtra by crossing the river Penganga.

Forest officials found the pug marks of the tiger at various places. Cameras are being fixed in the forests to track the movements of the tiger. Officials were also deploying forest staff patrols to track the tiger.

If the big cat decide to stay in the forests of Bhadrak district, the safety of locals including farmers who move out to tend to their land, people moving in the area and cattle has to be ensured. On hearing the news of the entry of the tiger, incidents like a tiger attacking locals in Adilabad district were recalled by the residents of Bhadrak district.

DC CORRESPONDENT
KOTHAGUDEM, DEC. 1

Forest officials said that a tiger had entered the forests of Kanakarajutta in Aswapuram mandal of Bhadrak Rothagudem district. The tiger reached the place by walking through the Sitarama irrigation project canal and other areas, and it is suspected he may make his home in the forests.

Forest officials found the pug marks of the tiger at various places. Cameras are being fixed in the for-



DECCAN Chronicle

2 DECEMBER 2020

Regulators amiss in not probing vaccine 'effect'

India, which has the world's second largest total Covid-19 caseload, has been an active participant in the global effort to find a vaccine against the coronavirus. Several Indian manufacturers are in tie-ups with foreign pharma majors and laboratories for conducting clinical trials here, while some others are developing their own vaccines. If one were to go by the optimism they exude, then we have a solution to the pandemic in the weeks ahead, or months.

Vaccine production is a complex process, which involves science, technology, protocol, practice and ethics. World over, regulators have been willing to relax some norms, primarily administrative in nature, so that the process can be expedited and a vaccine comes out at the earliest. However, none has ever been willing to compromise on core protocols.

India, a major player in the manufacture of vaccines, has not been that active in their development, though. There are allegations that clinical trials conducted in India, whether for vaccines or for other medical formulations, are less than transparent and that international norms and protocols are not observed in the full. There have been different views about the information passed on to participants before their consent was taken in many such trials.

It is in this background that reports of the Serum Institute of India, one of the leading players with a global reputation in the field of vaccine manufacturing, planning to sue a participant who flagged a serious adverse event that occurred during the trial for Covid vaccine must be seen. A more thorough investigation was warranted considering the importance of the vaccine projects.

There are many issues involved here. The immediate one is the response of the regulatory authorities. The global practice has been, even in the midst of the pandemic, to halt the trial, study the event when one is reported, and then decide whether to go ahead with it or not. Most leading vaccine candidates for Covid-19, too, have reported such instances. It is not yet clear if India, too, has followed the pattern; we have not heard about the government or a regulator ordering a halt to the trial. The scientific and regulatory bodies involved in the process, such as the Indian Council for Medical Research or the Drugs Controller General of India, have also been silent. This is unacceptable.

The safety of the participants of the trials is another major concern. It should not be left to the participant to take up the issue; there must be independent institutions that must go to the bottom of such charges and come up with the truth. While genuine complaints must be addressed with all seriousness, those with ulterior motives, if any, must be dealt with accordingly.

The Prime Minister has reportedly directed various government agencies to work with vaccine manufacturers and sort out the issues they face. This is a welcome move. At the same time, the government must also look for regulatory deficiencies and meet them on par with global practices. It should not allow expediency to get the better of ethical practices in the name of the pandemic.

Is Rajini under pressure?

After a series of false starts since 1996, actor Rajinikanth almost made it clear in late October that he was not game for politics. Though his fans show desperation in seeing him as a political leader and, in due course, chief minister, the superstar displayed no inclination of joining politics and even cited his health as one impeding reason. So even after that bunch of ardent fans who turned up at his Poes Garden residence to persuade him to change his mind was sent off and it almost became clear that Rajinikanth would keep off the humdrum of politics, why did he call for a meeting on Monday?

While it's a totally different matter if Rajinikanth would provide clean governance, as his fans tout, or bring about a change in Tamil Nadu or not, why is his impending arrival, or the lack of it, on the political scene engendering palpable anticipation. Are some political parties like the DMK and the AIADMK, which trace their lineage to the Dravidian tradition that Rajinikanth purportedly abhors, wary of fighting him electorally, as his supporters see it? No, those parties show no sign of fright.

Then, does he hope to turn a Pied Piper leading the masses on a so far untrodden garden path and turn the affairs of the state upside down, thus unsettling existing social structures and disconcerting cultural mores? Does he have a plan and an agenda for revolutionary changes that would go against the status quo, upending socio-political systems for a better future? Of course there have been no such indications.

So, what is beckoning him? What's that that makes him go back-and-forth, repeatedly? If it is the clarion call from fans, he would have easily said "no" and quit. So, the call emanates from somewhere else, suddenly evolving into a command, as someone believes that he alone can break the State's electoral stranglehold.

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Congress in crisis, but India needs strong Opp.

Parliamentary government, as it is understood in the UK, works by the interaction of four essential factors: the principle of majority rule; the willingness of the minority for the time being to accept the decisions of the majority; the existence of great political parties divided by broad issues of policy, rather than by sectional interests; and finally the existence of a mobile body of political opinion, owing no permanent allegiance to any party and therefore able, by its instinctive reaction against extravagant movements on one side or the other, to keep the vessel on an even keel. In India none of these factors can be said to exist today," the British Parliament's joint committee on constitutional reform observed in 1933-34.

These words, as a pretext for denying independence as well as a slur, offended Indians.

Today, it is hard to deny the truth of these observations. India has done remarkably well in many spheres, yet its one glaring failure lies in the political sphere. It has failed to evolve

a vibrant political system in which political parties alternate in occupying power. Instead, the pattern has been one of monolithic power that drives others to forge a coalition, which falls apart shortly after it comes to power.

Jawaharlal Nehru governed as Prime Minister from August 1947 till he died in May 1964. In this moment of trial, Congress leaders failed the nation. The correct procedure was to hold a leadership election. However, no one wanted the hated but ambitious Morarji Desai. So Congress president K. Kamraj met the MPs individually and declared the consensus: Lal Bahadur Shastri.

When he died in January 1966, an election was held for the first time. Indira Gandhi defeated Desai by 355 votes to 169. In the 1967 election, the Congress was re-elected and elected Indira as leader. She appointed Desai as deputy prime minister, but he did not reconcile himself to his defeat.

This came to be known as the so-called "Congress culture" — democratic in form but barren of the spirit of democracy. Indira's opponents

selected a presidential candidate who would checkmate her as Prime Minister. She split the party and her faction swept the polls in 1971. She ruled autocratically till 1977. To defeat this monolith, the Opposition parties united in a bid for power — only to break up in ego.

Indira Gandhi returned to power in 1980. On her assassination in 1984, her son Rajiv Gandhi became Prime Minister and presided over a corrupt, authoritarian regime. Once again, a coalition of egos united to oust him, only to fall apart.

This pattern continues. A monolith opposed by a conglomeration whose leaders cannot unite. A naked contest for power on both sides, with one difference — the monolith is led by a strong leader; the conglomerate is a house divided by a clash of egos. Certain features stand out. There is no internal democratic working in any political party. Cabals rule them all.

The BJP, the political front of the RSS, came to power under Atal Behari Vajpayee, a liberal. It lost the 2004 election to a Congress-led coali-

tion that ruled till 2014. As Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh won international and domestic acclaim. But his second term was torn apart by internal conflict, corruption and Sonia Gandhi's baleful influence as Congress president.

The situation changed in 2014. The BJP returned to power, but under the leadership of autocrat Narendra Modi. He consigned the old guard to the shelf, starting with L.K. Advani, who had opposed Mr Modi's claim to be Prime Minister. He foisted his henchman of Gujarat days, Amit Shah, upon the party as its president.

There is no one to challenge it. The Congress is like a duke in reduced circumstances. Its president no longer commands the respect she once did. Imitating Indira, Sonia promoted her son Rahul.

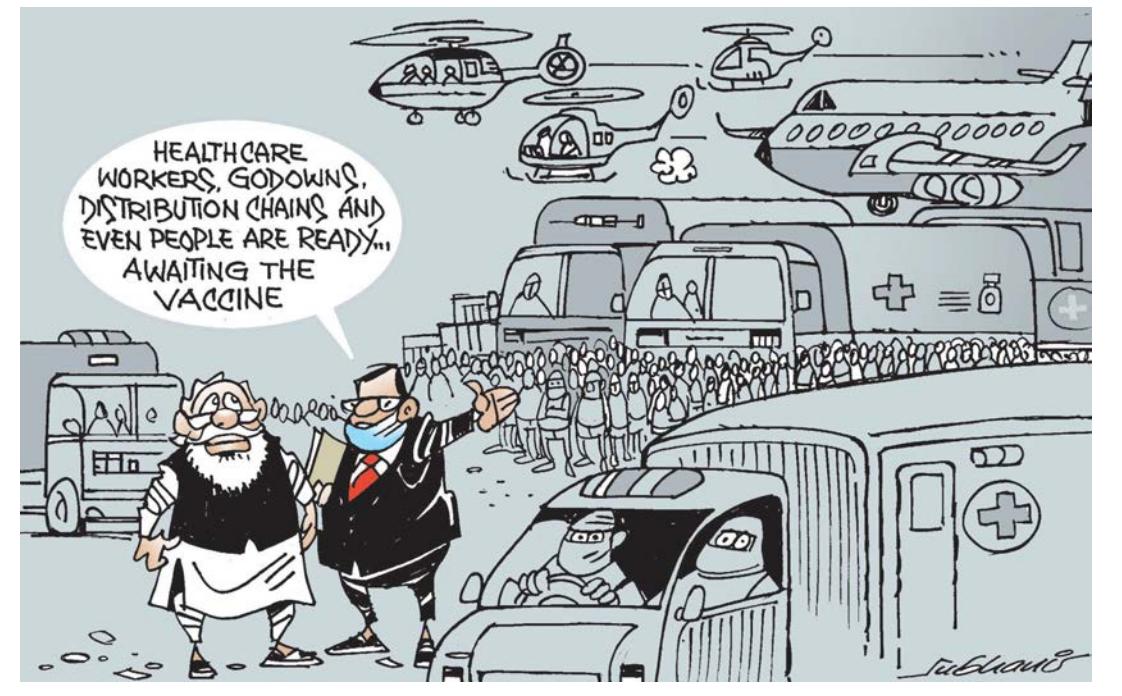
Three of the tallest leaders in the Congress have demanded "reforms", specifically elections to the party's committees and posts, including president. The chickens have come home to roost. The "strong" leader no longer commands the respect she once did. Leaders are only followed

so long as they can get the party elected and provide jobs for the minions. Sonia Gandhi has two fatal defects — her anointed heir is not respected or liked. And she has no contribution to make to ideology or programmes. Worse, she has reduced the Congress to the level of a "B-team" of the BJP. Sonia and Rahul ostentatiously pay obeisance at temples, devotion neither revealed till recently. On Ayodhya, Kashmir and similar issues, the Congress supports the BJP. Designed to compete for the Hindu vote, this cheap stratagem has done the Congress no good. It is in a stage of decline.

Yet it would be tragic and dangerous for India's democracy if the Congress were to pass into oblivion. India needs a powerful opposition to the Narendra Modi government's arbitrary and rabidly communal ways.

The writer is an author and lawyer, and one of India's top constitutional experts
By arrangement with Dawn

Subhani



Are America's days over as world's moral arbiter?



Indranil Banerjee

around the world again, and to unite us here at home".

But all that is easier said than done. America remains totally polarised, like never before, and having once slipped from the top of the global hierarchy, it might be difficult if not impossible to crawl back. Mr Biden's

democratic credentials, statements and world-view hark back to an era forever lost. The old days of American hegemony are not lamented by the world. Internally too, Mr Biden will find it hard to restore those values so missed by liberal, egalitarian Americans.

The world will take a lot of convincing to believe that the core values of democracy, liberty and equality that America once preached is indeed being practised there again. Faith once lost is always difficult to restore. Like Sisyphus's rock, it keeps rolling down.

The implications for the global order are profound. With moral authority came power and the United States unabashedly wielded it. Toppling regimes became acceptable worldwide if it was seen as a benevolent act by the United States for the greater glory of democracy and liberty.

Iraq's Saddam Hussein could be hunted down and hanged as he was a despot responsible for killing opponents and threatening democracy. This disguised the real reason for the killing, which was the dismantling of the Ba'athist regime in Iraq and forever destroying that country's strategic capabilities in the Middle East. By hanging Saddam and bombing Iraq to the ground, Washington ensured Iraq would never again pose a threat to its allies and interests in the region.

Not surprisingly, the US could similarly get away with helping repressive regimes, like the Shah's Iran, Gen. Pervez Musharraf's Pakistan

and the dozens of dictatorships it supports the world over.

In other words, the torch of liberty and democratic values has been used as a weapon of coercion, cajolment and manipulation by Washington in the post-World War II era. The most powerful use of these values was the vilification and undermining of enemy regimes that don't necessarily adhere to them.

Thus, the democratic ideal and values of personal freedoms played a large part in undermining and ultimately bringing down the Soviet empire. This was a huge strategic victory, which demonstrated the advantage of holding the moral high ground and espousing a value system eagerly sought after by people from other cultures and nations.

The US has for long used its democratic credentials to further its geopolitical aims and civilisational narrative which equated good with the American way of life. This narrative has broken down. The breakdown of this dynamic is bound to have severe repercussions around the world.

The world will take a lot of convincing to believe that the core values of democracy, liberty and equality that America once preached is indeed being practised there again. Faith once lost is always difficult to restore. Like Sisyphus's rock, it keeps rolling down.

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LETTERS

LISTEN TO FARMERS

Using water cannons and tear gas on protesting farmers at New Delhi is not democratic. The issues of farmers must be discussed by the government. The plight of farmers in India is being discussed by the international media which lowers the image of the country. Let us respect our food supplier. Government must listen to their voice.

G. Thirupathaiah
Hyderabad

STRONG OPPOSITION

Democracy is unthinkable without a strong opposition party and obviously this time the voters will not flip a coin to make a voting decision between the TRS and the MIM. For them, it is the fear of a party like the BJP who will criticise the government and keep them on track and also be a choice for voters for an alternative political force.

Mansoor Dashti
Secunderabad

BALLOT PAPER

Telangana State Election Commissioner C. Partha Sarathi has taken a wise decision — opting for ballot paper instead of the EVM for the GHMC elections. As the ballot paper is visible and will be in black and white there will be less scope of criticism by the losing candidates. Though ballot paper counting is time consuming, it is worth it because of transparency.

K. Kailash Ditya
Hyderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

Foreign offers pour in to make small car

NEW DELHI, DEC. 1. Collaboration offers for manufacture, in the public sector of small car are understood to have been received yesterday by the Ministry of Industrial Development from Fiat of Italy and Ford Motor Company.

The proposals are in addition to the offer received earlier this month of Renault of France which has proposed manufacture of one of its latest models, R-26, exhibited at the October Car Festival of Paris. Though November 30 was the last date for receipt of collaboration proposals from automobile manufacturers the world over the Ministry is expecting some more offers to be received in the course of this month. Two Japanese firms Nissan and Mazda, have also evinced interest in the project.

SHORT TAKES

KAMAL WANTS PM TO HAVE DIALOGUE WITH FARMERS

Chennai, Dec. 1: Makkal Needhi Maiam chief and actor Kamal Haasan on Tuesday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi should have a dialogue with farmers agitating in Delhi and redress their grievances.

Addressing a press conference here to announce former IAS official Santhosh Babu joining his party, Haasan, answering a question, said a dialogue with farmers was overdue.

"All he (Prime Minister) has to do is look at my farmers. Have a dialogue, it is long overdue. You must have a dialogue. Because it is very important for the nation. You also believe in the good of the nation. Agriculture must be taken care of. This is not a request," Haasan said. Party lines should blur in matters like these and efforts must be taken to address the concerns, he said.

The MNM chief said it was not good for the country to allow more and more voices to support protesters, apparently indicating that before the agitation intensified further, government should intervene and redress the grievances of farmers.

On the Modi government's handling of the farmers agitation, he said, "I like the sound of the violin. But not now. You can't be playing the violin now, when Rome is aflame."

Thousands of farmers were camping at various Delhi border points for the sixth consecutive day on Tuesday protesting against the new farm laws, which they fear would dismantle the minimum support price system and corporatise farming.

BILKIS DADI TURNED AWAY FROM BORDER

New Delhi, Dec. 1: Bilkis Dadi, the octogenarian who was the face of the months-long anti-citizenship law protest in the national capital and featured in the *Time* magazine, was on Tuesday stopped by Delhi Police personnel at the Singhu Border where thousands of farmers have been demonstrating against the centre's new farm laws, officials said.

Bilkis, popularly known as the Shaheen Bagh Dadi, had expressed her willingness to join the farmers' protest at the Delhi-Haryana border at Singhu.

Soon after she reached the border point to extend her support to the agitating farmers, she was stopped by Delhi Police personnel at the border.

"She was stopped at the Singhu Border and was escorted by the police back to her home in southeast Delhi," a senior police officer said.

Bilkis shot into limelight last year during the months-long anti-citizenship law protest at Shaheen Bagh here and was also recognised by the American weekly *Time* magazine as one of the 100 most influential people of 2020 alongside Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bollywood actor Ayushmann Khurana.

During the protest which began in December last year, the 82-year-old sat under a tent with hundreds of women and children, braving the extremely cold weather.

DELHI GOVT NOTIFIES ONE FARM LAW

New Delhi, Dec. 1: The Delhi government has notified one of the three central farm laws and is examining the remaining two, officials said on Tuesday. The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Ordinance, 2020, was notified on November 23, said a senior Delhi government official.

"The remaining two laws are under examination by the development department of the Delhi government," he said.

The ruling AAP said the notification allows farmers to sell their crop anywhere, including outside mandis. Selling of fruits and vegetables was already de-regulated in Delhi many years ago; now this holds for grains too, it said.

The party has openly supported the farmers demands to scrap the laws. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had also demanded withdrawal of the laws in a protest by AAP at Jantar Mantar last month.

Officials said that vegetables and fruits were deregulated in 2014 enabling trading beyond agricultural produce marketing committee managed mandis. The notified law adds food-grains and poultry to the list, they said.

Sportspersons to return awards

On Dec. 5, Kartar Singh, Sajjan Singh Cheema & Rajbir Kaur will join agitation

Chandigarh, Dec. 1: Several former sportspersons including Padma Shri and Arjuna awardees have extended their support to the agitating farmers and said they will return their awards in protest against the "force" used against the peasants en route to Delhi.

Among them are Padma Shri and Arjuna awardee wrestler Kartar Singh, Arjuna awardee basketball player Sajjan Singh Cheema and Arjuna awardee hockey player Rajbir Kaur.

They said they will proceed to Delhi on December 5 and will place their awards outside the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

They slammed the Centre and Haryana government for using water cannons and teargas against the protesting farmers to stop them from going to Delhi.

"We are the children of farmers and they have been holding peaceful agitation for the last several months. Not even a single incident of violence took place."

"But water cannons and teargas shells were used against them when they were going to Delhi. If turbans of our elders and brothers are tossed, then what will we do with our awards and honour? We are in support of our farmers. We do not want such awards and that is why we are returning the same," said Cheema on Tuesday.

Farmers had faced water cannons and teargas when they were heading towards the national capital as part of their 'Delhi Chalo' march against the farm laws. Singh said several former players will go to Delhi on December 5 and will return their awards.

"If farmers do not want such laws, then why the central government was imposing on them," asked Singh, who has retired as Inspector General in the



Farmers eat a meal during their 'Delhi Chalo' protest against new farm laws, at Ghazipur Delhi-UP border, New Delhi on Tuesday.

Punjab Police. He said that former players would also join farmers' stir at the Delhi borders on December 5.

Singh said they are also trying to contact former players in Haryana for coming out in support of farmers agitation.

Cheema said several former players including Kaur and Arjuna awardee (shotput) Balwinder Singh

have backed them. Thousands of farmers from Punjab and Haryana have stayed put at various Delhi border points for the sixth consecutive day on Tuesday protesting against the new farm laws, which they fear will dismantle the minimum support price system, leaving them at the "mercy" of big corporates.

- PTI

SHOW RESTRAINT, CENTRE TELLS SECURITYMEN

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, DEC 1

Even as intelligence inputs suggest that the number and strength of agitating farmers on outskirts of Delhi could increase substantially in the coming days, the Home Ministry has categorically asked all security forces deployed all along the borders of the national capital to "show utmost restraint and sensitise their security personnel accordingly."

Sources claimed that Home Ministry wants the security forces to adopt a "humane approach" towards the farmers and ensure that no force, even in terms of use of water cannon or tear gas should be used against the farmers.

"We want to have a humanitarian approach towards the protesting farmers as it has been peaceful so far. Even if there is slight or some small provocation from them, the security forces have been asked to handle the situation with a lot of restraint," a senior Home Ministry official said.

Meanwhile, inputs from multiple agencies available with the Centre suggests that the number of agitating farmers is likely to increase substantially in the coming days as farmer organisations and unions from Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh too will join the ongoing agitation.

Further more farmer from Punjab and Haryana are expected to join the agitation as they will try and block all major highways and entry and exit points from Delhi.

As many as 500 tractor trolleys are expected to reach Delhi border over the next two to three days, officials claimed.

We will always stand by farmers: Hooda

As the farmer protests intensifies, former Chief Minister of Haryana and Leader of Opposition in Haryana Mr. Bhupinder Singh Hooda speaks to *Ashar Khan* over the crisis.

How do you see these protests by farmers on the borders of Delhi?

Let me at the outset state clearly that until the farmers win this battle, we stand firmly with their demands. The attitude adopted by the government to crush the movement is completely undemocratic as every citizen and every class has the right to demonstrate peacefully for their just demands in democracy. We have been trying to bring to the notice of the government that there are serious lapses in these three bills that have now become laws but the government is refusing to listen to their woes.

There are questions being raised that the farmers are being instigated by vested interests? Also, that they are being fed false information about the laws. Your comments?

This is blatantly false. There is no such thing like this happening. The farmers of Haryana have been agitating against the three agricultural laws for many months and I have repeatedly urged the government to withdraw these laws or bring in a new law to guarantee minimum support price (MSP) for farmers.

Similarly, we have seen in neighboring states also there have been protests for long but the central government and the BJP just refused to see and acknowledge the unease and injustice being met out to farmers. Also Mr. Khattar should tell us whether he does not consider the agitating farmers as residents of Haryana? If the farmers of Haryana are not part of the movement, then who did the government lathi-charge in Pipli? Who are the people who were detained by the Haryana Police before their Delhi march? Who where are the thousands of farmers against whom the Haryana government has filed cases. They are just trying to deflect attention from the real issue.

The way the farmers were stopped from marching to Delhi because water cannon was used, tear gas was fired and roads were dug up. What is your response?

The government's job is to keep the roads and highways open, not to close them down. The government's job is to make roads but this government blocked roads and dug roads to stop the farmers. The government has completely lost the trust of the farmers and this is why the farmers do not believe in the assurances given by it and now wants a law that guarantees MSP. I don't understand why is it so difficult for the political leadership to hear out the grievances of the farmers. Till now the entire agitation of the farmers has been peaceful.

But the Haryana government's role in the entire movement has been negative.

What are the issues that you have with these three laws?

The three anti agricultural laws, as I would call them, will give vested interests the opportunity to grab the ₹20-25 lakh crores agriculture commodities market by subverting and subjugating the interest of farmers, farm labourers, the small grain merchants, the labourer work and the employees working in the grain markets across India. It tantamounts to finishing forever the Minimum Support Price Mechanism which will be a death knell for the interest of the farmer.

The laws have provisions which have an overriding effect on the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee and MSP regime.

Q&A

Bhupinder Singh Hooda



to their demands, then they should be ready for a bigger movement. It is strange that why the Agriculture Minister in the first instance gave a date so far away to have a conversation. The government should understand that farmers are on roads there grievances should immediately be heard and their issues dealt with.

We have heard the government saying that these laws are not anti-farmers and the farmers say that they are so now what happens next?

I feel that the farmers have made up their mind on this issue. The government should know that the farmers of Haryana and Punjab have stood shoulder to shoulder in this movement. They are also getting support from farmers of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and other states. Ignoring them is an insult to those who work hard to put food on our tables. As a responsible Opposition, we fully support the demands of the farmers. Until the farmers win this battle, we stand firmly with the demands of the farmers. Again I do not understand what is the problem in passing a law that makes adhering to MSP compulsory? High handedness in all these issues will not get us anywhere. The government should adopt a humane approach and ensure that the issue is resolved at the earliest instead of putting conditions and giving future dates.

What will the Congress do in all this?

Obviously we will stand with the farmers. The Congress has taken a principled stand on this since the monsoon session of parliament when this issue came up. We were not allowed to put our points across and the government brazenly passed all legislation.

The government's job is to keep the roads and highways open, not to close them down. The government's job is to make roads but this government blocked roads and dug roads to stop the farmers. The government has completely lost the trust of the farmers and this is why the farmers do not believe in the assurances given by it and now wants a law that guarantees MSP. I don't understand why is it so difficult for the political leadership to hear out the grievances of the farmers. Till now the entire agitation of the farmers has been peaceful.

But the Haryana government's role in the entire movement has been negative.

What is your demand from the government?

The government should care about the farmers. They should at once keep these three laws in abeyance. Then the Prime Minister should call a delegation of the farmers and hear them out. Also cases that have been filed against the farmers in Haryana, almost 12,000 of them, should be immediately taken back. I would like to appeal to my farmer brothers that if the Centre does not listen

India fumes as Trudeau backs farmers

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC
NEW DELHI, DEC 1

India on Tuesday slammed remarks made by Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on the raging farmers' protest in some states of northern India without naming him directly, saying these were "ill-informed and unwarranted" and pertained to the "internal affairs of a democratic country".

New Delhi also said "diplomatic conversations" should "not be misrepresented for political purposes". The reaction came after the Canadian PM said the protests were "concerning" and that Canada always backed the right to protest peacefully, adding that the Canadian Government had raised the issue with Indian authorities.

In remarks made while wishing the large Canadian Sikh community in his country on the occasion of the Gurupurab, Mr. Trudeau said, "I would be remiss if I didn't start off by recognising the news coming out of India about the protests by farmers. The

situation is concerning and we're all very worried about family and friends ... Let me remind you.

Canada will always be there to defend the right of peaceful protest. We believe in the importance of dialogue and that's why we reached out in multiple means directly to the Indian authorities to highlight our concerns."

India hit back sharply with the Ministry of External Affairs stating, "We have seen some ill-informed comments by Canadian leaders relating to farmers in India. Such comments are unwarranted, especially when pertaining to the internal affairs of a democratic country. It is also best that diplomatic conversations are not misrepresented for political purposes."

With fringe elements in the Canadian Sikh community often raising the issue of Khalistan, India has been uncomfortable with the perceived reluctance of the Trudeau Government in cracking down hard on such pro-Khalistan radical elements. In fact, the week-long visit of Mr. Trudeau to India in 2018, had been marred by controversy.

Up in arms



A farmer holds a flag, with a picture of Shaheed Bhagat Singh printed on it, as they stage a protest at Singhu border during their Delhi Chalo march against the Centre's new farm laws, in New Delhi on Tuesday.

- PTI

TWO VOICES

Rahul backs farmers, others concerned over Khalistani angle

Differences in Cong over stir

**DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, DEC 1**

As the farmers' protest continued for the sixth day on Tuesday, differences surfaced within the Congress on the nature of the agitation. While Congress top brass led by former party president Rahul Gandhi came out in full support of the protests, a certain section of Congress leaders in Punjab expressed apprehension about the agitation being hijacked by rogue elements.

The party has openly supported the farmers demands to scrap the laws. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had also demanded withdrawal of the laws in a protest by AAP at Jantar Mantar last month.

Officials said that vegetables and fruits were deregulated in 2014 enabling trading beyond agricultural produce marketing committee managed mandis. The notified law adds food-grains and poultry to the list, they said.

Khalistanis. Mr. Gandhi began the day by asking the government to wake up and shed "arrogance" to provide protesting farmers their rights.

Observing that everyone

was indebted to the farmers for their hard work, he said this debt could be repaid only by giving them justice.

"Wake up and come down from the chair of arrogance and think of giving the farmers their rights," he added.

Rahneet Singh Bittu, Congress MP from Ludhiana, came out in the open and said that rogue elements including Khalistanis entering the agitation remained a concern.

Sources said that Punjab

Congress Chief Sunil Jakhar held a meeting with Chief Minister Amarinder Singh over this.

It might be recalled that Haryana Chief Minister M L Khattar had been the first to claim that the agitation had been infiltrated

by Khalistanis. The Centre had invited agitating farmer unions for talks on December 3 but looking at the seriousness of the issue and in view of Covid pandemic and cold, the meeting was preponed to Tuesday.

The stir by farmers

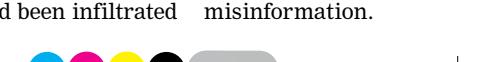
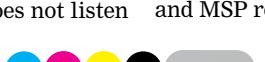
appeared to intensify despite a strong defence of the legislation by the government and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has accused the opposition of "playing tricks" on farmers again through misinformation.

The Centre had invited agitating farmer unions for talks on December 3 but looking at the seriousness of the issue and in view of Covid pandemic and cold, the meeting was preponed to Tuesday.

What is your demand from the government?

The government

should care about the farmers. They should at once keep these three laws in abeyance. Then the Prime Minister should call a delegation of the farmers and hear them out. Also cases that have been filed against the farmers in Haryana, almost 12,000 of them, should be immediately taken back. I would like to appeal to my farmer brothers that if the Centre does not listen



SHORT TAKES

85-YEAR-OLD HELD FOR RAPING 5-YEAR-OLD

AKSHAYA KUMAR
SAHOO | DC
KENDRAPARA, DEC. 1

An octogenarian man in Kendrapara district was on Monday night arrested for allegedly raping a five-year-old girl.

According to police, Sunakar Patra (85), a grocery shop owner, allegedly raped the child on Sunday evening after luring her inside the shop with chocolates.

"The accused was arrested after the girl's parents lodged a police complaint. During interrogation, the accused confessed to the crime," inspector S.K. Pradhan, said.

The girl was medically examined, the officer said.

The accused Patra was booked under sections 376 AB (punishment for rape on woman under twelve years of age), 294 (obscene acts), 341 (wrongful restraint) and 506 (criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code.

Besides, sections 4 and 6 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 were also slapped on him.

"Soon after his arrest, the accused was produced in a local court. The court sent the accused Sunakar Pradhan to judicial custody for 14 days," the inspector informed.

NAVY TESTS ANTI-SHIP VERSION OF BRAHMOS

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, DEC. 1

Indian Navy on Tuesday successfully test-fired the anti-ship version of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile. This comes on heels of India on last Tuesday test-firing land attack version of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands territory. Last week's test was conducted by the Indian Army which has atleast three BrahMos regiments.

These slew of tests are being conducted when India is involved in a military stand off with China in Eastern Ladakh. India has already deployed BrahMos missiles in Ladakh and North-East. All the three services — army, Navy and Air Force — have deployed BrahMos missiles.

"Brahmos anti-ship missile was successfully launched by INS Ranvijay striking the target ship at maximum range with pinpoint accuracy in the Bay of Bengal," said Indian Navy on Tuesday.

BrahMos supersonic cruise missile, whose range has been extended from the existing 298 km to around 450 km, carries conventional (non-nuclear) weapon and flies almost three times the speed of sound.

China has been conducting tests of anti-ship ballistic missiles into the South China Sea which have range of upto 4,000 kilometres. Chinese test is primarily targeted at USA which has been sending its nuclear powered aircraft carriers in South China Sea to challenge Chinese hegemony in the sea.

NAGA GOV REJECTS SEPARATE FLAG, CONSTITUTION PLEA

MANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, DEC. 1

Nagaland Governor R.N. Ravi who is also the interlocutor for Naga peace talks has outrightly rejected the demand of NSCN (I-M) for separate flag and constitution for Nagaland.

Ravi in his address on the 58th anniversary of the state's formation said, "The Indian National Flag and Constitution are the pride of the people of India. The Government of India is absolutely clear that there is and there shall be only one National Flag and Constitution in India. Anyone talking anything contrary is peddling preposterous lies. They are trying to confuse and mislead the people."

In what was a clear message for the NSCN (I-M) insisting on a separate flag and constitution for Nagaland, Ravi asserted, "The territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Union of India is supreme. The Government of India has never even talked, much less negotiated with anyone on the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the country. Any misadventure to disintegrate this great nation shall not be tolerated."

The Governor went on saying that the Central government has already recognised the uniqueness of the Nagas".



Never spoke about inoculating entire country with vaccine: Govt

Kerala, Delhi, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh have recorded decline in active Coronavirus cases

DC CORRESPONDENT
with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, DEC. 1

There was never any talk of inoculating the whole population of the country with Covid-19 vaccine, the Centre said on Tuesday

Responding to a question at a press briefing, ICMR Director General Balram Bhargava said the purpose of the Covid vaccine drive would be to break the chain of viral transmission.

"Our purpose is to break the chain of virus transmission. If we are able to vaccinate a critical mass of people and break the chain of transmission, then we may not have to vaccinate the entire population," he said.

"The role of masks is also vitally important and that will continue even after the vaccination. Because we are starting with a small group of population at a time and therefore masks will be protective and continue to be used so as to help in breaking the chain of viral transmission," Bhargava said.

Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said there was never a talk about inoculating the whole population of the country with Covid-19 vaccine.

"I just want to make this clear that the government has never spoken about vaccinating the entire



Medics from Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation take swab samples of commuters for Antigen and RT-PCR Test for Covid-19 at Nerul Railway Station in Navi Mumbai on Tuesday.

decline in the active case-load in the past 24 hours, states like Uttarakhand, Gujarat, Assam and Goa have reported an addition to their caseload.

The ICMR has said that the initial findings into an 'adverse event' allegedly suffered by an Oxford Covid-19 vaccine trial participant in Chennai did not necessitate halting of the trials and it is the role of drug regulator to ascertain or refute if any causal link between the event and the intervention.

On allegation of the 'adverse event' in a Serum Institute of India trial, the government said it will not affect vaccine timelines in anyway.

A 40-year-old man who was a volunteer in the third phase of the "Covidshield" vaccine trial in Chennai has alleged serious side effects, including a virtual neurological breakdown and impairment of cognitive functions.

He has sought ₹5 crore compensation in a legal notice to Serum Institute and others, besides seeking a halt to the trial. However, the SII has rejected the charges as "malicious and misconceived" and said it will seek damages in excess of ₹100 crore.

ICMR Director General Balram Bhargava said adverse events occur with drugs or vaccines or any other health intervention.

ED ISSUES NEW SUMMONS TO SENA MLA

SAURABH JOSHI | DC
MUMBAI, DEC. 1

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Tuesday issued a fresh summons to Shiv Sena MLA Pratap Sarnaik to appear in connection with the ongoing money laundering probe.

Sarnaik is likely to appear before the agency on Thursday, after completing a self-imposed Covid-19 quarantine after returning from Goa.

His son Vihang is also summoned by the ED to be questioned in the probe involving their security agency.

The agency had shot summons to him asking him to appear for questioning, however, Sarnaik went into a quarantine and his daughter-in-law was also hospitalized, for which he sought more time to join the probe. With his quarantine completed, the ED officials issued another summons to him. "The summons are for him and his son to be questioned in the money launder probe," said an officer.

POET SAYS POEM SHARED BY SHIVRAJ IS HER'S

RABINDRA NATH CHOWDHURY | DC
BHUPAL, DEC. 1

A melancholic poetry — an ode to a father by her daughter — has dragged Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan into an 'unnecessary' controversy with the 'author' ticking him off for not giving her the credit line. Chouhan had uploaded a poem on social media, saying that his wife, Sadhna Singh, has expressed her feelings towards her father who passed away last fortnight through a poem.

"The bonding between a father and his daughter is the most precious relation in the world. The relation is purely selfless," he tweeted.

Later, one Bhumiya Birahare responded to Chouhan's tweets saying that the poem was penned by her in praise of her father and she was upset that some changes were made in the poem.

"This poem is written by me and is dedicated to my father. It is being shared by people on social media. Request you to kindly keep the authenticity of the same & keep in mind to give me the courtesy. Don't change the title to Babuji, Baaji or papa", she tweeted.

Didi lashes out at PM for misusing Central agencies

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC
KOLKATA, DEC. 1

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee lashed out against the Narendra Modi government for misusing Central agencies to "bulldoze" the nation's federal structure, and urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi not to vilify her government, asking him to explain where the money deposited in the PM-Cares fund had gone. The PM-Cares fund was set up by the Centre during the Covid-19 pandemic, and Banerjee also asked why it was not subject to audit.

Speaking at a press conference after a Cabinet meeting, the CM said, "The Centre is lecturing us. But what have they given us to combat the Covid pandemic?" Banerjee also mocked Union home minister Amit Shah for his recent campaigning for the BJP in the Greater Hyderabad municipal polls, and wondered if he wanted to become a "municipal commissioner", leaving his Cabinet job.

"The country's home minister doesn't take care of the border. He plays politics in everything. He even campaigns in a municipal election. Let him be made municipal commissioner if he wants to run a municipality. Or let him become chief minister if he can handle a state," she said.

Banerjee accused the Centre of targeting West Bengal as elections are approaching and claimed law and order was better in West Bengal than in many other states. "The Centre is using agencies to bulldoze and threaten us. We are not afraid of them. They (BJP) are not a political party but garbage of lies," she said.

The West Bengal Assembly elections are due in April-May next year.

Referring to PM-Cares, she said there was a lack of transparency by the Centre, and asked Modi: "You do not have accounts of several lakh crores of money. Where are the donations of several lakh crores for the PM-Cares going? How many lakh crores were deposited in PM-Cares?"

The Odisha government has already put a nine-day ban on entry of tourists into the Park from January 5 to January 14 to facilitate smooth conduct of the census.

The census, according to state forest department sources, will take place for nine days — from January 5 to January 14.

Known for its unique flora and fauna, Bhitarkanika boasts of having a strong crocodile population, hundreds of bird species, reptiles and amphibians.

According to the DFO,

I am people-made star, says Urmila

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC
MUMBAI, DEC. 1

Former Congress leader and Bollywood actress Urmila Matondkar joined the Shiv Sena on Tuesday in the presence of Maharashtra Chief Minister and the party president Uddhav Thackeray at his residence 'Matoshri' in Mumbai.

Matondkar said that she is not a "media-made star" but a "people-made star". She also said that Kangana Ranaut, who has crossed sword with Shiv Sena, has already got a lot of "unnecessary publicity". The Sena has already sent Matondkar's name to Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari for a member of Legislative Council last month.

More than a year ago, Matondkar had quit the Congress citing "petty in-house politics". She was defeated by a huge margin in Lok Sabha election 2019 from North Mumbai seat by BJP's Gopal Shetty.

After her induction in



Rashmi Thackeray ties a thread on the wrist of actor-turned politician Urmila Matondkar as she joins Shiv Sena in Mumbai on Tuesday.

Shiv Sena, Matondkar said that there is no need to give unnecessary importance to Bollywood actress Kangana Ranaut, who compared Mumbai with Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (PoK) following the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput in June this year. "We have already given so much importance to her (Kangana Ranaut)."

comment on her (Kangana Ranaut)," she added. When asked about her resignation from the Congress, 46-year-old Bollywood actress said she had quit that party but not politics. "I am impressed by the leadership of Shiv Sena president Uddhav Thackeray and his work. Hence I decided to join the party. I had received a call from

Thackeray himself before joining the party. I have been told that my name is recommended (to Governor) for the post of MLC. I wish to work for women's issues in my political life," Matondkar said.

When asked about the recent arrests from the film industry in drug cases and the bad publicity received by the industry, Matondkar said that Bollywood people need to do something for themselves. "People like us will help them. I have stood behind Bollywood in the past and will do so in future too. I have been asked in the past too why did they (Bollywood industry people) not speak?" she added.

Praising Thackeray's leadership in the state, Matondkar said that Maharashtra has faced difficult times in the last 10 months of Covid-19. "The MVA government performed well during this difficult time. Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray has led Maharashtra very well," she said.

49% vote in J&K's DDC elections 2nd phase

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR, DEC. 1

The second phase of Jammu and Kashmir's first ever District Development Council (DDC) elections recorded around 49 per cent voter turnout on Monday.

J&K's state election commissioner K.K. Sharma, while addressing a press conference here said that like the first one, the second phase of DDC elec-

tions has been conducted "successfully" with 48.62 per cent of the electorate using their right of vote in 43 constituencies.

"The polling has been peaceful in all 43 constituencies, having a total of 3,77,401 voters including 2,01,792 male and 1,75,609 female," he said.

He also said that Jammu division recorded an average voter turnout of 65.54 per cent with frontier dis-

trict of Poonch registering the highest percentage of 75.07 per cent followed by Jammu district with 69.97 per cent.

The lowest turnout in Jammu division was in Kathua, another border district, which recorded 60.10 per cent.

The Kashmir division recorded 33.34 per cent voter turnout with Bandipora district recording highest polling at 69.66 per cent followed by

down to grassroots level. Meanwhile, the J&K administration on Monday placed its seven officials under suspension for alleged dereliction of election duties till further orders.

The officials in question had failed to report on poll duties in the second phase of DDC elections in Beerwah area of central district of Budgam, an official spokesman said here.

22 groups have been formed for the census set to take place for nine days from Jan. 5

Bhitarkanika National Park all set for crocodile census

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, DEC. 1

The Odisha government has already put a nine-day ban on entry of tourists into the Park from January 5 to January 14 to facilitate smooth conduct of the census.

Bikash Ranjan Dash, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) of Rajnagar Wildlife region, on Tuesday said as many as 22 groups have been formed to count the crocodiles in the 27 creeks and rivers within the park and its nearby areas.

The forest department will also deploy nine boats for the census.

According to the DFO,



A crocodile basking in the sun at Bhitarkanika National Park.

— Dr Sandeep Tripathi, Principal Chief Conservator of Forest, Odisha

the restrictions on the visitors are meant to prevent noise pollution during

counting of the reptiles in the park. "The headcount drive of the endangered estuarine crocodiles will be conducted under the supervision of wildlife personnel. The enumerators assisted by trained local forest staff and some herpetologists, including noted crocodile researcher Dr Sudhakar Kar, would cover Bhitarkanika river system besides innumerable creeks, water inlets and nullahs, Dash said.

The engaged team members will scout the rivers and other water bodies of the park and its nearby areas to count the crocodiles while wearing masks and adhering to social distancing norms.

"All the team members will follow Covid-19 guidelines during enumeration," the DFO said.

In last census conducted on January 3, 2020, the population of the saltwater or estuarine crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*) in the water bodies of Bhitarkanika Park in nearby areas in Kendrapara district had increased, with forest officials counting 1,757 individuals. In 2019, they had counted 1,742 crocodiles in the area.

As many as 22 teams were formed in January

this year to count the crocodiles in all the creeks and rivers within the park and its nearby areas.

During the last census, the enumerators sighted 620 hatchlings, 325 yearlings, 288 juveniles, 185 sub-adults (six to eight feet long) and 339 adults (more than 8 feet long).

Similarly in 2019, the enumerators had sighted 619 hatchlings, 347 yearlings, 273 juveniles, 178 sub-adults and 325 adults. They had also sighted around 12 albinos and four giant crocodiles of more than 20 feet long.



SHORT TAKES
GERMANY BANS FAR-RIGHT, PRO-NAZI GROUP

Berlin, Dec. 1: Police raided homes in three German states early Tuesday after the German government banned a far-right group, a spokesman for the interior ministry said.

The homes of 13 members of the far-right group Wolfbrigade 44 were searched in Hesse, Mecklenburg-West-Pomerania and North Rhine-Westphalia to confiscate the group's funds and far-right propaganda material, the German news agency DPA reported.

"Whoever fights against the basic values of our free society will get to feel the resolute reaction of our government," Interior Minister Horst Seehofer said, according to his spokesman, Steve Alter. The group's goal is to re-establish a Nazi dictatorship, according to security officials. The 44 in their name stands for the fourth letter in the alphabet, DD, and is an abbreviation for Division Dirlewanger. Oskar Dirlewanger was a known Nazi war criminal and commander of a Nazi SS special unit. The far-right group was founded in 2016. It is known for possessing illegal weapons and members have participated in far-right protests. Earlier this year, the German government banned other far-right groups, including the Combat 18 and the Nordadler.

Tainted rice wine kills 7 in Cambodia

Phnom Penh, Dec. 1: Seven people died and more than 130 others were hospitalised in Cambodia after drinking rice wine that health authorities believe was adulterated with a toxic substance.

The Health Ministry said the incident happened Saturday in a remote rural area of central Cambodia's Kampong Chhnang province, where villagers drank the wine at a funeral ceremony. It said a toxic substance in the wine was the cause of the deaths. Most of the people who were sickened are recovering, with some already released from the hospital, it said in a statement Monday.

Dangerous cheap but powerful alcoholic drinks are a perennial problem in Cambodia's poor rural areas, and several accidental poisonings are reported each year. Often the alcohol is not distilled properly and contains methanol, which can kill even in small amounts.

Rice wine is typically homemade and is popular at social gatherings, although in at least one case the tainted wine was a bottled brand made in the capital, Phnom Penh, that had been sold in provincial markets for several years without incident.

The Health Ministry said it sent three experts to the village on the day of the incident to investigate the situation and make sure sales and consumption of the wine were immediately stopped. In one of the worst incidents, 14 villagers died and more than 200 others were sickened in the province of Kratie in May 2018.

BIDEN, HARRIS GREET ON GURU NANAK B' ANNIV

Washington, Dec. 1: US President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris have greeted the Sikh community on the 551st birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev, emphasising that the timeless and universal message of compassion and unity from the founder of Sikhism can inspire and help Americans heal as people and as a nation.

In a joint statement issued by the offices of Biden and Harris, the two leaders said that for more than five centuries, Guru Nanak's teachings on spiritual enlightenment, service to humanity and moral integrity have endured and embodied each day by Sikhs in America and around the world. "For more than five centuries, Guru Nanak's teachings on spiritual enlightenment, service to humanity, and moral integrity have endured and are embodied each day by Sikhs in America and around the world, as we have seen during this challenging year," Biden and Harris said.

"We are grateful to all of the Sikh Americans who continue to stand by their neighbours as essential workers of the pandemic, and who open their hearts and community kitchens in their gurdwaras to prepare, serve, and deliver countless meals for people most in need," they said. "During the summer of protest, we saw Sikhs of all ages marching peacefully for racial and gender equality, religious pluralism, and fidelity to truth and justice — core tenets of the Sikh faith," they said.

Euphoria in Azerbaijan



Azerbaijani soldiers hold national flags and a portrait of Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev as they celebrate the transfer of the Lachin region to Azerbaijan's control, as part of a peace deal that required Armenian forces to cede the Azerbaijani territories they held outside Nagorno-Karabakh, in Aghjabadi, Azerbaijan, on Tuesday. Azerbaijan has completed the return of territory under a Russia-brokered peace deal that ended six weeks of fierce fighting over Nagorno-Karabakh.

US opposes release of Tahawwur Rana

Washington, Dec. 1: The US government has moved a motion in a federal court in California opposing the release of Pakistani-origin Canadian businessman Tahawwur Rana, who has been declared a fugitive by India for his involvement in the 2008 Mumbai terror attack, in which 166 people, including six Americans, were killed.

Rana, 59, a childhood friend of David Coleman Headley, was re-arrested on June 10 in Los Angeles on an extradition request by India for his involvement in the 26/11 Mumbai terror strike in which 166 people, including six Americans, were killed.

Pakistani-American LeT terrorist Headley was involved in plotting the 2008 Mumbai terror attack. He was made an approver in the case, and is currently serving a 35-year prison term in the US for his role in the attack. Rana is a declared fugitive in India. His extradition hearing is scheduled for February 12. In a motion filed before

the US District Court Judge in Los Angeles Jacqueline Cheronian on Monday, US attorney Nicola T Hanna urged the court to deny Rana's motion for release for failure to prove that he is not a flight risk or that special circumstances exist and continue to detain him pending resolution of this extradition proceeding.

Hanna's motion comes in opposition to the latest effort of Rana to avoid detention pending extradition, by capitalising on the developments of the Covid-19 pandemic. Rana's attorney has argued that pandemic warrants his release from custody. Hanna said a fugitive facing extradition is entitled to bail only if he can demonstrate that he is not a flight risk, is not a danger to the community, and that "special circumstances" warrant his release from custody.

Rana in his court filing has said the Bureau of Prison (BOP) was unable to manage the Covid-19 pandemic and as such he should be released from custody. Hanna argued that BOP is committed to fighting Covid-19 and protecting the inmates in its custody. "In addition to ignoring the BOP's ability to manage the pandemic, Rana ignores the significant increase of Covid-19 cases in the population in which he wishes to be released," Hanna said, adding, unlike the BOP, Rana will not have immediate access to frequent Covid-19 testing, and should he test positive, treatment.

Following the increase of Covid-19 cases, Metropolitan Detention Centre Los Angeles began testing inmates, including Rana. MDC-LA has not received the results of his Covid-19 test conducted on November 27. Accordingly, it has placed Rana in isolation, pending confirmation that he is not positive for Covid-19. In denying Rana's initial motion for release in July, the court had said he constituted a flight risk. — PTI

Vaccine: Europe agency to decide on Dec. 29

It will convene meet to find efficacy for it to be approved

Trump Coronavirus adviser Atlas resigns

Washington, Dec. 1: US President Donald Trump's controversial special adviser on the Coronavirus, Dr. Scott Atlas, has resigned. During his four months in the role, Atlas, who had no formal experience in public health or infectious diseases, questioned the need for masks and other measures to control the pandemic that has killed over 268,000 people in America.

While questioning the usefulness of masks he was against lockdowns and promoted the idea of herd immunity. The 65-year-old the Stanford University neuroradiologist resigned on Monday at the end of his 130-day temporary assignment, according to US media reports.

Atlas tweeted a photo of his resignation letter on Monday. In the letter, he said his "advice was always focused on minimising all the harms from both the pandemic and the structural policies themselves, especially to the working class and the poor."

"I sincerely wish the new team all the best as they guide the nation," he wrote. — PTI

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VIRUS: BIBLICAL BETHLEHEM LOSES CHRISTMAS CHEER

Bethlehem, Dec. 1: The Coronavirus has cast a pall over Christmas celebrations in Bethlehem, all but shutting down the biblical town revered as Jesus' birthplace at the height of the normally cheery holiday season. Missing are the thousands of international pilgrims who normally descend upon the town. Restaurants, hotels and souvenir shops are closed.

The renowned Christmas tree lighting service will be limited to a small group of authorised people, as will church services on Christmas Eve. "Bethlehem is dead," said Maryana al-Arja, owner of the 120-room Angel Hotel on the outskirts of Bethlehem.

The hotel was the site of the West Bank's first Coronavirus outbreak — when a group of Greek tourists came down with the virus last March. She kept her 25 workers on staff for several months but ultimately couldn't continue to pay them.

Al-Arja, who herself was infected with the virus, said she has been forced to close the hotel and lay off the entire staff because there is no sign of the pandemic ending or tourists visiting anytime soon. — AP

London, Dec. 1: UK Parliamentarians on Tuesday are set to vote on the government's tier-based Coronavirus lockdown as the country's health minister said the Covid-19 situation was "back under control" but vigilance was necessary. UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock attempted to rally lockdown sceptics at a Downing Street briefing on Monday evening, reiterating the need for a regional system of tiers, which come into force in England's current nationwide lockdown imposed in wake of Covid-19.

Wednesday. "While we can let up a little, we can't afford to let up a lot," said Hancock. "We've reduced pressures on the NHS (National Health System), we've brought down the number of Coronavirus cases, we've got this virus back under control... The success of our collective efforts means that from Wednesday, everyone in England, even those in tier three, can have some greater freedoms — but we don't have much headroom," he said. — PTI

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Trafficking up: Nobel winner

United Nations, Dec. 1: Nobel Peace Prize laureate Nadia Murad said the Coronavirus pandemic has increased trafficking of women and gender-based violence, leaving the health and safety of women "on the line." The 27-year-old activist, who was forced into sexual slavery by Islamic State fighters in Iraq, said curfews, lockdowns and travel restrictions imposed by governments to slow the spread of the virus "have had unintended consequences on women worldwide."

"Rather than reducing human trafficking and gender-based violence, the pandemic has increased the risk of exploitation and brutality against those most vulnerable," she said. "Numerous countries have seen increases in

reports of domestic violence since Covid began." She said domestic tensions have intensified in confined living spaces, and stay-at-home orders "are increasing human trafficking farther underground, out of sight of law enforcement." "The few resources for prevention, rescue and rehabilitation are being stretched thin," she said. — AP

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"Rather than reducing human trafficking and gender-based violence, the pandemic has increased the risk of exploitation and brutality against those most vulnerable," she said. "Numerous countries have seen increases in

Biden gets access to Prez Daily Brief

Wilmington, Dec. 1: Joe Biden on Monday got his first look as president-elect at the President's Daily Brief, a top secret summary of US intelligence and world events — a document former first lady Michelle Obama has called "The Death, Destruction, and Horrible Things Book." Biden has already had eyes on different iterations of the so-called PDB, which is tailored to the way each president likes to absorb information. More than a decade ago, Biden read President George W Bush's PDB during Biden's transition into the vice presidency.

After that, he read President Barack Obama's PDB for eight years. Now, after a four-year break, he's reading President Donald Trump's PDB. — AP

"The briefers almost certainly will be asking Biden what he prefers in terms of format and style," said David Priess, author of "The President's Book of Secrets," a history of the PDB. "At a minimum, they're seeing what seems to resonate most with him so that when they make the book his book, they can tailor it to him."

Obama's PDB was a 10-to-15-page document tucked in a leather binder, which he found waiting for him on the breakfast table. Later in his presidency, he liked reading the ultra-secret intelligence brief on a secured iPad. "Michelle called it 'The Death, Destruction, and Horrible Things Book,'" Obama wrote in his recently released book, "A Promised Land." — AP

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Novel system can extract oxygen, fuel from Mars water

Washington, Dec. 1: A team led by an Indian-origin scientist in the US has developed a new system that can extract oxygen and hydrogen fuel from the salty water on Mars, and may radically change the logistics of future missions to the Red Planet and beyond.

The researchers noted that Mars is very cold, and water that is not frozen is almost certainly full of salt from the Martian soil, which lowers its freezing temperature. Using electricity to break the briny

water down into oxygen and hydrogen fuel requires removing the salt, which is a cumbersome and a costly endeavour in a harsh, dangerous martian environment, they said.

The team, led by Vijay Ramani, a professor at the Washington University in the US, examined the new system in a simulated Martian atmosphere at minus 36 degrees Celsius. Our Martian brine electrolyser radically changes the logistical calculus of missions to Mars and beyond.

In the journal *Proceedings of the National Acad-*

useful on Earth where it opens up the oceans as a viable oxygen and fuel source," said Ramani.

In 2008, NASA's Phoenix Mars Lander "touched and tasted" Martian water, vapours from melted ice dug up by the lander. Since then, the European Space Agency's Mars Express has discovered several underground ponds of water which remain in a liquid state thanks to the presence of magnesium perchlorate salt.

emy of Sciences (PNAS), the researchers noted that in order to live — even

temporarily — on Mars, not to mention to return to Earth, astronauts will need to manufacture some of the necessities, including water and fuel, on the Red Planet.

NASA's Perseverance rover is en route to Mars, carrying instruments that will use high-temperature electrolysis. However, the Mars Oxygen In-Situ Resource Utilisation Experiment (MOXIE) will be producing oxygen only from the carbon dioxide in the air. The system developed in Ramani's lab can produce

high performance," he said. The careful design and unique anode allow the system to function without the need for heating or purifying the water source, the researchers said.

"Paradoxically, the dissolved perchlorate in the water, so-called impurities, actually help in an environment like that of Mars," said Shrihari Sankarasubramanian, a research scientist in Ramani's group and joint first author of the research paper on the study. — PTI



NIRAV REMAND EXTENDED, FINAL HEARINGS IN '21

London, Dec. 1: Nirav Modi, wanted in connection with the estimated \$2-billion Punjab National Bank (PNB) scam case, was further remanded in custody on Tuesday by a court in London hearing India's extradition request for the diamond merchant.

The 49-year-old appeared on Tuesday via video-link from Wandsworth Prison in south-west London, dressed in a maroon sweater and sporting a full beard, for his regular 28-day "call-over hearing" at Westminster Magistrates' Court, where Chief Magistrate Emma Arbuthnott extended his remand for another 28 days until December 29.

"It will be another short video-link call-over hearing and then there is just over a week before closing submissions in the case," she told Modi, who spoke only to confirm his name and date of birth. The final hearings in the extradition case are scheduled over two days, on January 7 and 8 next year, when District Judge Samuel Goozee is scheduled to hear closing arguments from both sides before he hands down his judgment a few weeks later.

At the last hearing in the case on November 3, Judge Goozee heard the arguments for and against the admissibility of certain witness statements provided by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and Enforcement Directorate (ED) and ruled that the evidence to establish a prima facie case of fraud and money laundering against the fugitive diamantaire is broadly admissible. — PTI

SHORT TAKES

4 KILLED, 6 HURT IN SOUTH KOREA APARTMENT FIRE

Seoul, Dec. 1: A fire broke out at an apartment building near the South Korean capital on Tuesday, killing four people and injuring six others, officials said.

The blaze on the 12th floor of the 25-story building in Gungpo took firefighters about 30 minutes to extinguish, said Kwon Hyo-ju of the Gyeonggi Provincial Fire and Disaster Headquarters.

One of the six residents who was injured in the fire was in critical condition, while the others were being treated for minor injuries and smoke inhalation, he said.

Chin Young, South Korea's Minister of the Interior and Safety, convened an emergency meeting where he called for officials to fully support the families of those injured or killed and thoroughly investigate the cause of the fire. Kwon said the fire may have been sparked while workers were repairing one of the apartments.

THOUSANDS FLEE AS INDONESIA VOLCANOES SPIKE

Jakarta, Dec. 1: Indonesian authorities are closely monitoring several volcanoes after sensors picked up increased activity in recent weeks, prompting the evacuation of thousands of people.

Hot ash tumbled as far as 3,000 meters (9,800 feet) down the slopes of Mount Semeru early Tuesday, triggering panic among villagers, said Raditya Jati, the National Disaster Mitigation Agency spokesman. Falling ash and sulfur blanketed several villages around its slopes.

The 3,676-meter (12,060-foot) mountain in Lumajang district is the highest volcano on Indonesia's most densely island of Java. Jati said authorities are still trying to evacuate about 550 people living on the mountain's slopes.

There were no reports of injuries or serious damage, he said. Indonesia's Volcanology and Geological Hazard Mitigation Center did not raise Semeru's alert status, which already was at the third-highest level since it began erupting in May. Villagers and tourists are advised to stay 4 kilometers (2.4 miles) from the crater, the agency said.

Tuesday's eruption came two days after Mount Ili Lewotolok shot out columns of hot clouds as high as 4,000 meters (13,100 feet) into the sky. More than 4,600 people were evacuated from the slopes of the mountain, located on Lembata island in East Nusa Tenggara province.

ACTIVISTS TAKE SHELL TO COURT OVER EMISSIONS

The Hague, Dec. 1: A group of environmental organisations backed by thousands of Dutch citizens is launching a civil case on Tuesday against the energy giant Shell, asking a court to order the multinational to commit to reining in its carbon emissions by 45 per cent by the year 2030.

The legal battle led by Milieudefensie, the Dutch arm of Friends of the Earth, is the latest in a string of cases around the world in which activists are using the courts as a venue to fight for action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from governments and companies.

A victory for climate activists in a Dutch courtroom could spur even more legal challenges. "Everybody needs to pitch in if we are to tackle the climate crisis, especially big polluters like Shell. But Shell and its shareholders are not taking their responsibility, that's why we are taking legal action," said Nils Mollema of ActionAid Netherlands, another group involved in the case.

Ahead of the opening of hearings at The Hague District Court, Shell said that it agrees with Friends of the Earth that action is needed to cut emissions and has already invested billions of dollars in low-carbon technologies from wind power to electric vehicle charging. But it said the company cannot do it alone.

"What will accelerate the energy transition is effective policy, investment in technology and changing customer behaviour. None of which will be achieved with this court action," Shell said. The company said it has set "an ambition to be a net zero emissions energy business by 2050, or sooner."

Brahmaputra flooding to be more frequent, says study

It assembles a chronology of the river's flow for the last seven centuries

Climate goals: Biden expresses urgency

New York, Dec. 1: Destuctive flooding of the Brahmaputra will probably be more frequent than previously estimated, even without factoring in the effects of human-driven climate change, says a new study which assembled a chronology of the river's flow for the last seven centuries.

According to the research, published in the journal *Nature Communications*, the long-term baseline conditions of the river, which flows under a variety of names through Tibet, northeast India and Bangladesh, is much wetter than previously thought.

The scientists, including those from Columbia University in the US, said earlier estimates presumed the baseline of natural variations in river flow mainly based on discharge-gauge records dating only to the 1950s. In the current study, based on the tree rings data, they said the earlier estimates likely fall short by about 40 per cent. "Whether you consider climate models or natural variability, the message is the same. We should

be prepared for a higher frequency of flooding than we are currently predicting," said Mukund Palat Rao, lead-author of the study from Columbia University in the US.

The research noted that in the big flood year of 1998, when 70 per cent of Bangladesh went underwater, this peak discharge more than doubled. The scientists also looked at data from the rings of ancient trees sampled at 28 sites in Tibet, Myanmar, Nepal and Bhutan — at sites within the Brahmaputra watershed. Since the rings grow wider when the soil moisture is high, the researchers could indirectly piece together rainfall and resulting river runoff during these years.

Based on the analysis, they assembled a 696-year chronology, running from 1309 to 2004, and found that the widest rings lined up neatly with known major flood years. Anyone using the modern discharge record to estimate future flood hazard would be underestimating the danger by 24 to 38 per cent, said scientists. — PTI

Washington, Dec. 1: Joe Biden has expressed a clear sense of urgency in advancing climate goals as the US President-elect discussed his decision to rejoin the historic Paris Agreement on his first day in office, the readout stated.

On November 4, the Trump administration formally withdrew from the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change, a decision originally announced three years ago.

In the virtual meeting with national security and climate policy staff on Monday, Biden reiterated his intention to ensure climate change is a core national security priority, according to a readout issued by the Office of the President-elect. He has pledged that his administration would rejoin the historic Paris Agreement on climate change.

Biden was joined by Vice President-elect Kamala Harris during the meeting to discuss ways to meet the president-elect's wide-ranging and ambitious international climate commitments. The

discussions included his decision to rejoin the Paris Agreement on his first day in office, the readout stated.

On November 4, the Trump administration formally withdrew from the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change, a decision originally announced three years ago. The Paris accord committed the US and 187 other countries to keeping rising global temperatures below 2C above pre-industrial levels and attempting to limit them even more, to a 1.5C rise. Biden has pledged that his administration would rejoin the historic Paris Agreement on climate change.

Climate change is among the top four priorities of Biden. "President-elect Biden is leading the world to address the climate emergency," said a policy paper. — PTI

Iran advances bill to stop N-inspections

Tehran, Dec. 1: Iran's Parliament on Tuesday advanced a bill that would end UN inspections of its nuclear facilities and require the government to boost its uranium enrichment if European signatories to the 2015 nuclear deal do not provide relief from oil and banking sanctions.

The bill would have authorities resume enriching uranium to 20%, which is below the threshold needed for nuclear weapons but higher than that required for civilian applications.

It would also commission new centrifuges at nuclear facilities at Natanz and the underground Fordo site.

The bill would require another parliamentary vote to pass, as well as approval by the Guardian Council, a constitutional watchdog.

— AP

Malaria: Maximum cases drop in India

United Nations, Dec. 1: India made "impressive gains" in the global fight against malaria, recording the largest reduction in cases in South-East Asia from 20 million in 2000 to about 5.6 million last year, according to the World Health Organisation. The World Malaria Report 2020, released on Monday, said that in 2019, malaria cases globally numbered about 229 million, an annual estimate that has remained virtually unchanged over the last four years.

Last year, the disease claimed about 409,000 lives, compared to 411,000 in 2018. "Countries in South-East Asia made particularly strong progress, with reductions in cases and deaths of 73 per cent and 74 per cent, respectively. India contributed to the

largest drop in cases region-wide — from approximately 20 million to about 6 million," WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in the report's forward. The report said that the WHO South-East Asia Region accounted for about 3 per cent of the burden of malaria cases globally. Malaria cases reduced by 73 per cent in the region, from 23 million in 2000 to about 6.3 million in 2019.

The WHO noted the "impressive gains" made by India in the fight against malaria, with reductions in cases and deaths of 18 per cent and 20 per cent, respectively, over the last two years. India also recorded a decrease in the number of deaths from malaria between 2000 and 2019. — PTI

"It's certainly the case that there is a chance that we may not get a negotia-

Lebanon in the dumps



The closed Le Grey hotel in Beirut on Tuesday. Lebanon's economy is sinking into a "deliberate depression", the World Bank said on Tuesday in a damning report stressing the authorities' failure to tackle the crisis. The economy started collapsing last year as a result of years of corrupt practices and mismanagement. The crisis was made worse by a nationwide wave of anti-government protests that paralysed the country late last year and the Covid-19 pandemic this year. — AFP

Shiny, triangular pillar protruded 12 feet from the red rocks of southern Utah
US desert's mysterious monolith disappears

Los Angeles, Dec. 1: A mysterious metal monolith found in the remote desert of the western United States, sparking a national guessing game over how it got there, has apparently disappeared, officials said.

The Bureau of Land Management in Utah said Saturday it had received "credible reports" that the object had been removed "by an unknown party" on Friday evening. The bureau "did not remove the structure which is considered private property" but "no

said in a statement. "We do not investigate crimes involving private property which are handled by the local sheriff's office." The shiny, triangular pillar which protruded some 12 feet from the red rocks of southern Utah, was spotted on November 18 by baffled local officials counting bighorn sheep from the air.

After landing their helicopter to investigate, Utah Department of Public Safety crew members found "a metal monolith installed in the ground" but "no

obvious indication of who might have put the monolith there." News of the discovery quickly went viral, with many noting the object's similarity with strange alien monoliths that trigger huge leaps in human progress in Stanley Kubrick's classic sci-fi film "2001: A Space Odyssey."

"This is the 'reset' button for 2020. Can someone please press it quickly?" joked one Instagram user.

"Somebody took the time to use some type of concrete-cutting tool or some-

thing to really dig down, almost in the exact shape of the object, and embed it really well," Nick Street, a spokesman for the Department of Public Safety told the *New York Times*.

"It's odd," he added. "There are roads close by, but to haul the materials to cut into the rock, and haul the metal, which is taller than 12 feet in sections — to do all that in that remote spot is definitely interesting."

Some observers pointed out the object's resemblance to the avant-garde

Benazir's youngest daughter takes political plunge

Karachi, Dec. 1: Aseefa Bhutto Zardari, the youngest daughter of Pakistan's slain prime minister Benazir Bhutto, made her political debut in Multan on Monday at a rally of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), the 11-party Opposition alliance. In her speech, Aseefa called on the crowd to remember her mother's sacrifices for democracy and urged them to support her brother Bilawal Bhutto in his fight for true democracy in the country.

Aseefa, who attended the rally on her brother's behalf, said that the public had given its verdict and the "selected will have to go now". "I have come among you today at a time when my brother, your brother, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari is suffering from Coronaviru. I hope that just like you supported the mother of democracy and the daughter of the east, you will support Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari on PDM's platform. And I promise that I will support Chairman Bilawal and you at every step," she said.

Aseefa also warned the government that if they arrested workers of the Pakistan Peoples Party, their sisters would come out to protest and save the country. Bilawal did not attend the rally as he is isolating after testing positive for Covid-19. Bilawal is the Chairman of the Pakistan Peoples Party. The PDM rally was held on Monday evening at Multan's Ghanta Ghar Chowk after days of conflict between the city administration and the Opposition workers over having the event at a time when the government has warned against large gatherings because of a spike in Covid-19 cases in the country.

The rally was addressed by Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman, PML-N Vice President Maryam Nawaz and Aseefa along with other PDM leaders. — PTI

NEED TO TACKLE URGENT GLOBAL ISSUES: U.S., UN

New York, Dec. 1: US President-elect Joe Biden and UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres have discussed the need for a "strengthened partnership" between Washington and the world organisation to address many urgent global issues, including the Covid-19 pandemic, climate change and upholding peace and security.

Biden spoke with Guterres over the phone on Monday and according to a readout of the call, the president-elect thanked Guterres for his congratulations on winning the US presidential election. "They discussed the need for a strengthened partnership between the United States and the United Nations on urgent global issues, including combatting Covid-19 and building resilience to future public health challenges, confronting the threat of climate change, addressing humanitarian need, advancing sustainable development, upholding peace and security and resolving conflicts; and promoting democracy and human rights," the readout issued by the Biden-Harris Transition team said. Biden also noted his deep concern for escalating violence in Ethiopia and the risk it poses to civilians.

Guterres was "pleased" to speak with Biden "to extend his personal congratulations to the President-elect." — PTI

MIGRANT ISSUE: EU GRILLING FOR FRONTEX CHIEF

Brussels, Dec. 1: The head of the European Union's border and coast guard agency faces a grilling Tuesday by EU lawmakers as pressure mounts over allegations that Frontex was involved in illegal pushbacks aimed at preventing migrants or refugees entering Europe through the Greek islands.

A joint investigation published in October by media outlets *Bellingcat*, *Lighthouse Reports*, *Der Spiegel*, *ARD* and *TV Asahi* said that video and other publicly available data suggest Frontex "assets were actively involved in one pushback incident at the Greek-Turkish maritime border in the Aegean Sea."

The report said personnel from the agency, which monitors and polices migrant movements around Europe's borders, were present at another incident and "have been in the vicinity of four more since March." — AP

quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	44,655.44
Nifty 50	13,109.05
S&P 500*	3,669.50
Dollar (₹)	73.63
Pound Sterling (₹)	98.54
Euro (₹)	88.06
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	48,273.45
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	47.51
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.930
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.914

* As of 8:30 PM IST

UK retailer Debenhams to be liquidated

British department store retailer Debenhams is to be liquidated after failing to find a buyer, administrators FRP Advisory said. It said it would start a wind-down of Debenhams, whilst continuing to seek offers for all or parts of the business. The collapse of Debenhams, which trades from 124 UK stores and employs 12,000, came a day after Philip Green's Arcadia fashion group entered administration.

Sinha to head group strategy at Mahindra



Mahindra Group announced the appointment of Bain & Co. veteran Amit Sinha as president, group strategy. It said Sinha will work with the group businesses to help drive growth and returns. "He will also oversee synergy, risk and economist functions and play a key role in coordinating international synergies between Americas, Asia Pacific and Africa." Sinha will report to Anish Shah, deputy MD and Group CFO.

Paytm waives merchant transaction fee

Paytm said it will waive all charges on merchant transactions, and enable its merchant partners to accept payments from Paytm wallet, UPI apps and RuPay cards at zero charges. Paytm will absorb Rs 600 crore in MDR charges annually by banks and other charges to support MSMEs during the ongoing pandemic, a statement said. This initiative will benefit over 17 million merchants on the Paytm ecosystem.

PLI schemes for drugs, devices get good response

Production-linked incentive (PLI) schemes for bulk drugs and medical devices have received a positive response from the industry, the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers said. For the PLI scheme for bulk drugs, 215 applications have been received from 83 pharmaceutical manufacturers. The PLI scheme for medical devices attracted 28 applications from 23 medical device manufacturers.

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Manufacturing PMI at 56.3 in November GST collections cross ₹1-L crore mark again

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO
NEW DELHI, DEC. 1

Goods and services tax (GST) collections rose for the third month in a row in November, recording a mop-up of nearly at Rs 1.05 lakh crore, government data released on Tuesday showed.

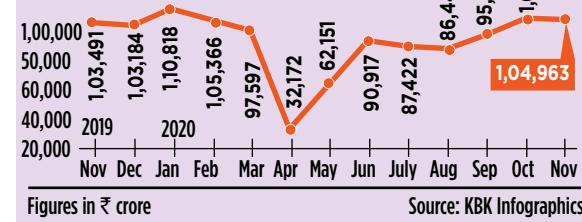
After marking year-on-year contraction during the April-August period, gross GST receipts have been showing a positive trend from September, indicating economic recovery in line with the lifting of lockdown restrictions across the country.

The November 2020 collections of Rs 1,04,963 crore were higher than Rs 1.03 lakh crore recorded in November 2019 but lower by Rs 192 crore compared to October 2020 figures.

In last month's mop-up, the share of CGST was Rs 19,189 crore and SGST was Rs 25,540 crore. IGST and cess amounted to Rs 51,992 crore and Rs 8,242 crore,



GST revenue collection



tion for the fourth month.

"Growth in the Indian manufacturing sector lost momentum in November, but the latest PMI reading was still consistent with a sharp rate of expansion. There were slower increases in factory orders, exports, buying levels and output," the survey noted.

Commenting on the index, Polyanna De Lima, economics associate director at IHS Markit, said, "Although the softening of rates of expansion seen in the latest month does not represent a major setback, since these are down from over decade highs in October, a spike in Covid-19 cases and the possibility of associated restrictions could undermine the recovery. The companies noted that the pandemic was the key factor weighing on growth during November, with Covid-related uncertainty also restricting business confidence."

Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) in October.

As per the survey compiled by IHS Markit, Manufacturing PMI declined to 56.3 in November from October's 58.9, still remaining well above the 50-level separating growth from contrac-

Figures in ₹ crore

Source: KBK Infographics

respectively. The total number of GSTR-3B returns filed for the month was 82 lakh, the finance ministry said in a statement.

However, manufacturing activity showed a decline in November from the decadal high recorded by the Nikkei Manufacturing

respectively. The total number of GSTR-3B returns filed for the month was 82 lakh, the finance ministry said in a statement.

On business outlook, almost half (45 per cent) of the surveyed Indian businesses are optimistic about business growth, far higher than the global average of 29 per cent.

"The overall business sentiment is understandably muted, given the challenges

lenging environment over the course of the year. However, we are witnessing signs of recovery as companies are charting new pathways to recovery," said Rajat Verma, head of commercial banking, HSBC India.

The outlook towards international trade is positive with 93 per cent of Indian firms (against 72 per cent globally). —PTI

Businesses expect quicker return to profitability

New Delhi, Dec. 1: Indian businesses expect a quicker return to pre-Covid levels of profitability than most others, and are positive about international trade, says a survey.

According to HSBC's annual Navigator survey, which covered more than 10,000 companies across 39 global markets, including 350 firms from India, Indian businesses continue

to have an appetite for growth and investment.

As per the survey, 87 per cent of Indian businesses, notably higher than the global average (73 per cent), expect to return to pre-Covid levels of profitability within two years, by the end of 2022.

Besides, 90 per cent of Indian businesses intend to increase financial investment to become

more successful over the next year, notably higher than the global average of 67 per cent.

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lenging environment over the course of the year. However, we are witnessing signs of recovery as companies are charting new pathways to recovery," said Rajat Verma, head of commercial banking, HSBC India.

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Festivals, wedding season aid car sales

MICHAEL GONSALVES
PUNE, DEC. 1

Car sales, an indication of healthy economy, has seen a sharp turnaround from the Covid-19 led slowdown earlier this year; primarily due to a strong boost from festive demand, upcoming wedding season, and soft base due to the overlapping of Diwali in November this year.

Sales in November at Hyundai, India's second biggest car maker sold 9.4 per cent more cars, Tata Motors 108 per cent, Kia Motor 50 per cent, Mahindra and Mahindra 24 per cent and Toyota Kirloskar Motor 2.4 per cent, Honda Cars 55 per cent, MG Motors 28 per cent more cars.

Sales at Hyundai Motor jumped 9.4 per cent at 48,804 units. "Building on the strong sales momentum that was driven by festive demand this year, the recently introduced i20 has helped carry forward the festive momentum even in the post-Diwali period," Tarun Garg, director (sales, marketing and service) at Hyundai Motor India, said.

With demand for air travel getting a boost in the wake of festive season of Navratri, Diwali and Chhath Puja, Mumbai, Patna, Srinagar, Bengaluru, Hyderabad have emerged as the top five domestic destinations, it said. —PTI

largest automaker by revenues, sold whopping 108 per cent more cars at 21,641 units last month, up from 10,400 units it sold last year.

Kia Motors saw 50 per cent year-on-year growth at 21,022 units last month. Kia Sonet sold 11,417 units.

"While there is still a lot of uncertainty in the market due to the pandemic, the overall consumer sentiment has significantly improved... We are expecting the market sentiment to improve more in coming months," Kookhyun Shim, MD and CEO at Kia Motors India, said.

Mahindra and Mahindra sold 24 per cent more cars at 18,212 units last month.

Maruti Suzuki, India's biggest car maker, which sells one out of two cars bought in the country, sold 135,775 units in November.

Sales at Honda Cars shot up 55 per cent at 9,990 units last month while Toyota Kirloskar Motor sold 8,508 units. MG Motor, which overtook Ford in the sales rankings for the first time in November, retailed 4,163 units, a rise of 28.5 per cent.

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, DEC. 1

Passive investment in equity indices-based exchange traded funds (ETFs) have beaten investment skills of all fund managers in the pandemic period, with Sensex and Nifty ETFs giving returns above 70 per cent.

Investment in ETFs by pension funds like the Employee Provident Fund Organisation—which were hard-pressed to pay high interest of as much as 8.5 per cent on contributions in FY20—

are now sitting pretty with market value of their investments hitting all-time highs.

Reports say mutual funds are now getting robust inflows in ETFs while there is profit-taking in other equity funds. This may dent their profitability going ahead as ETFs are cost-effective for investors compared to traditional equity funds where asset management fees are higher.

ETF/index funds continue to gain traction as

Consumer durables set to become costlier

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, DEC. 1

After aggressive price cuts for the online channels during the festive season, consumer durables will soon see prices moving northwards. Prices may go up by 8-15 per cent across categories in a month or two.

"With higher commodity prices, input cost has gone up by around 15 per cent. Prices of aluminum, zinc, copper have gone up and MDI foam prices are up 200 per cent. While washing machines and air conditioners might see 7-8 per cent price rise, refrigerator and chest freezer prices may go up by even 15 per cent due to higher MDI prices," said Kamal Nandi, president, Consumer Electronics and Appliances Manufacturers Association.

MDI, or methylenediphenyl diisocyanate, is used in the production of polyurethanes. According to Emkay Global Financial Services, on an average, copper prices have increased 20 per cent over last year and 4.5 per cent over the previous quarter. Aluminum prices have inched up 12 per cent and polypropylene prices have also rebounded 8.5 per cent over the previous quarter.

In the next one to two months, prices of consumer durables will move up as the companies have considerably reduced their inventory levels during the festive season. Most of the consumer durable companies had resorted to price cuts for the online channel during the festive season.

According to Emkay, on an average, there has been an 11 per cent price decline in the category against last year, with LG, Panasonic, Lloyd, Daikin and Whirlpool reducing



prices in the range of 12-22 per cent and Voltas by 6.2 per cent.

In washing machines, there were steep price cuts in entry-level semi-automatic washing machines as demand for them has been low. Semi-automatic category, on average, saw 14 per cent price cuts. Voltas Beko had the most aggressive pricing for both categories of washing machine. The fully-automatic segment saw minimal price cuts of 2 to 3 per cent. While all the brands in the front-load category implemented price cuts, Haier went for a price increase of 7 per cent over last year.

According to Eric Braganza, president, Haier Appliances India, without resorting to price cut, the brand saw good growth. "October saw 25 per cent growth in sales over last October and October and November combined grew by 38 per cent. We usually do not go for any price cut as customers see the value proposition," he said.

The refrigerator category witnessed high-double digit demand growth this festive season.

Wockhardt UK lends facility for vaccine supply



RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, DEC. 1

The UK government has reserved one fill and finish production line at Wockhardt UK, a subsidiary of Indian drug maker Wockhardt, for exclusive use for 18 months in order to guarantee the supply of vaccines required to fight against Covid-19.

On November 30, Wockhardt UK hosted a visit at its Wrexham facility in North Wales of the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Boris Johnson, Wockhardt said.

Wockhardt UK specializes in the supply of generic and specialty medicines and is one of the leading suppliers to the National Health Service of the United Kingdom.

Founder chairman of Wockhardt Habil Khorakiwala said, "The visit by the Prime Minister of the UK demonstrates our global strength in sterile injectable facilities."

NEW PRESS SECY FOR RAMGARHIA BOARD

Patiala, Dec. 1: Manmohan Singh, under secretary-public relations, Punjab State Power Corporation Limited, has been appointed as spokesman cum-press secretary, All-India Ramgarhia Board. Mohan Singh, president of the Board, welcomed Mammooh Singh and hoped that he would project the social welfare activities of the Ramgarhia community.

Gas use returns to pre-Covid level

SHWETHA SUNIL &
DEBJIT CHAKRABORTY
DEC. 1

India's natural gas demand has rebounded to above pre-pandemic levels amid the country's drive to boost consumption of the cleanest fossil fuel to rid the skies of toxic smog.

Demand is rising across several sectors, especially city gas, fertilisers and petrochemicals, with long-haul transport poised to start using LNG in trucks, said E.S. Ranganathan, marketing director of Gail India Ltd., the nation's biggest gas utility. Consumption in October was above 2019 levels for the first time since June. The rebound comes as

which will now arrive this month, he said.

Meanwhile, rival Indian gas importers—including Indian Oil Corp. and Gujarat State Petroleum Corp.—have jumped back into the LNG spot market recently, issuing tenders seeking prompt shipments.

India has aggressively auctioned out areas for city-gas supplies covering 70 per cent of its population while starting LNG fuel stations on highways and industrial areas to convert diesel-guzzling trucks and mining vehicles. Oil refineries alone will boost consumption to 50 million cubic meters a day by 2025 from about 10 million now, Ranganathan said. —Bloomberg

Oyo has \$1 billion to fund operations until IPO: CEO

SARITHA RAI

SHORT TAKES
Hamilton tests Covid-19 positive

Sakhir, Bahrain: The Mercedes AMG Petronas F1 Team says seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton has tested positive for Covid-19 and will miss the Sakhir Grand Prix this weekend.

The team issued a statement saying Hamilton was tested three times last week and returned a negative result each time, the last on Sunday afternoon at the Bahrain International Circuit where he won the Grand Prix. "He woke up on Monday morning with mild symptoms and was informed at the same time that a contact prior to arrival in Bahrain had subsequently tested positive," the team said. "Lewis, therefore, took a further test and returned a positive result. This has since been confirmed by a retest. Hamilton is in isolation in accordance with the health protocols in Bahrain. Apart from mild symptoms, he is otherwise fit and well, and the entire team sends him its very best wishes for a swift recovery," the team statement said. — AP

Bach unopposed in bid for 2nd term

Lausanne: Thomas Bach will stand unopposed to serve a second term as International Olympic Committee president, the body said on Tuesday.

Bach, a 66-year-old German lawyer, is set to be confirmed for a second and final four-year term at an IOC session in March in Athens.

Bach was initially elected for an eight-year term as Olympic chief in September 2013, taking over from Belgian Jacques Rogge. If re-elected, Bach's term will end in 2025, a year after the Paris Olympics. The next term for the IOC presidency will start after the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, which will now take place from July 23-Aug 8, 2021, having been postponed because of the coronavirus pandemic. Bach, who won gold for West Germany in the foil fencing team event at the 1976 Olympics, was elected an IOC member at the age of 37. — AFP

Olympic rings back in Tokyo Bay

Tokyo: The five Olympic rings are back in Tokyo Bay. They were removed for maintenance four months ago shortly after the Tokyo Olympics were postponed until next year because of the Covid-19 pandemic. The rings arrived on

Tuesday after a short cruise from Yokohama and are positioned on a barge in the shadow on Tokyo's Rainbow Bridge. The rings painted blue, black, red, green, and yellow are gigantic. They stand about 15 meters tall and 33 meters in length about 50 feet tall and 100 feet in length. The rings will be lighted at night and herald the coming of the Olympics, which are to open on July 23, 2021, followed by the Paralympics on August 24. The rings made their first appearance early in 2020, just a few months before the Olympics were postponed late in March. — AP

Lopez banned 8 years for fixing

London: Spanish tennis player Enrique Lopez was banned for eight years on Tuesday for fixing matches at tournaments in 2017.

The Tennis Integrity Unit said Lopez cannot play in or attend any officially recognized tournament while banned. He was fined 25,000.

The 29-year-old Lopez reached a career high singles ranking of No. 154 in 2018, though never qualified for the main draw at a Grand Slam event. His best doubles ranking was No. 135. The TIU said three charges of match fixing were proven and two charges were not proven. The tournaments Lopez tried to corrupt were not identified. — AP

Live on TV

CRICKET
Australia vs India: Third ODI from 9.10 am on Sony Six, Ten 1, HD

FOOTBALL
Indian Super League: Hyderabad FC vs Jamshedpur from 7.20 pm on Star Sports 2, 3

Champions League: Istanbul Basaksehir vs RB Leipzig from 11.25 pm on Sony Ten 2; Manchester United vs PSG from 1.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 2; Ferencvaros vs Barcelona from 1.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 1; Juventus vs Dynamo Kyiv from 1.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Six; Sevilla vs Chelsea from 1.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 3

Third time lucky?

India look to salvage pride in third ODI against Oz

Canberra, Dec. 1: Left chasing shadows in the first two games, a listless Indian team would most certainly tweak their bowling combination in order to avoid a second successive clean-sweep when they take on Australia in the third and final ODI here on Wednesday.

A 0-3 defeat against Australia would be their second rout in consecutive ODI series having met the same fate in New Zealand earlier this year.

"We are very much determined to go out there to win the next match and see that it's not a clean sweep," top-order batsman Shreyas Iyer said when asked what his team can do to stop Australia's first in 20 years.

"Our bowlers are really positive with their work ethic and we could see that during training, a few of the bowlers practising with certain plans," he added.

The first two games turned out to be run-fests in which Australia outbatted Virat Kohli's men and before they switch over to the T20 series, a win at the picturesque Manuka Oval could do their confidence a world of good.

Skipper Kohli has been the first to admit that they have been "out-played" in the two games and it is expected that some corrective measures will be taken in order to get their campaign back on track.

Navdeep Saini, India's fastest bowler, like a lot of others on his first tour of Australia, has looked clueless.

It could well be possible that one among Shardul Thakur, with an experience of 27 international games, or the 'yorker sensation' rookie left-arm Thangarasu Natarajan will be seen replacing Saini.

In case of Natarajan, it could be his international debut. — PTI



India captain Virat Kohli (left) talks with teammate Mohammed Shami during the second One-Day International match against Australia at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Friday. — AP

Iyer glad that Oz have plan against him

Canberra, Dec. 1: Overwhelmed that the Australians devised a short ball strategy against him, Indian batsman Shreyas Iyer says it can best be tackled by adopting a counter-offensive approach and taking advantage of the field placing.

Josh Hazlewood got Iyer into a tangle with a well-directed bouncer in the first ODI while he gave a better account of himself in the second game where

he scored 38 off 36 balls. "I am really happy that they are coming up with a plan (against me)," Iyer said on the eve of the inconsequential third ODI when asked about the home team peppering him with short-pitched stuff.

"I feel overwhelmed and take it as a challenge. But I thrive under pressure and it motivates me to go against them. I feel it (a short leg and leg gully) helps to take advantage

of Hazlewood got Iyer into a tangle with a well-directed bouncer in the first ODI while he gave a better account of himself in the second game where he scored 38 off 36 balls.

and score more runs and make best use of it."

Playing the short stuff

is all about mind-set for Iyer along with the adjustment while batting at the nets.

"It's all about mind-set that you need to adjust. How you need to place yourself on the wicket. Rather than bending down too much (during stance), you stand upright. It easier to pick up the short one."

"I have set a pattern for myself. Every time I play, I give myself a little bit of time and get set." — PTI

Langer feels Warner paves way for others to grab slot



David Warner

taken "a bit of pressure off".

"No wonder I'm a bit more relaxed. We've won a few games and I don't have to worry about who we're going to pick for the Test side," Langer said.

"We'll work out who's going to play in that game and certainly there's huge opportunities for people to put their hand up." — PTI

here for the third ODI. Australia A will lock horns with India A from December 6 and against senior Indian team on December 11 in Sydney before the Test series.

"I've said it so many times, the hardest part of the job is selecting the teams, but we've got an Australia A game starting in a few days and it'll be a good opportunity for those guys against the Indian A side to put their hand up."

"And then after that is another Australia A game versus the actual Indian Test side at the SCG under lights with a pink ball," Langer said.

"We'll work out who's going to play in that game and certainly there's huge opportunities for people to put their hand up." — PTI

CAPTAIN FINCH STANDS FOR STRUGGLING STARC

Canberra, Dec. 1: Top pacer Mitchell Starc's patchy form is among the few worries for a rampaging Australia in the ongoing series against India but skipper Justin Finch on Tuesday threw his weight behind the seasoned campaigner, saying there is no need to panic just yet.

The left-arm seamer, who has an outstanding record with the new ball in white-ball cricket, has been far from his best in the ongoing series against India. In the two ODIs, Starc has managed to claim just one wicket while giving away 147 runs in 18 overs.

Australia won both the games.

"He hasn't been at his very best, and you have to understand his standards are a lot higher than what you expect from most other people because of how dominant he's been over

the last eight or nine years, especially in the white-ball formats," Finch said.

"He'd love to be swinging the ball and getting it right early on, but the reality is when you're defending big totals and playing against good players, they're coming hard at you," he added.

With star pacer Pat Cummins rested for the final ODI, Finch said there will be discussions on how to use Starc.

"So, there'll be conversations today about what we can do slightly different.

"We'll chat about that today. But, definitely no panic stations here from my point of view," Finch said.

"Since the World Cup last year, Starc has endured a dip in form. The pacer has picked just 12 wickets while bleeding runs at an economy of 6.28 in 11 matches." — PTI

Next year's World T20 could be shifted to UAE

Karachi, Nov. 30: The ICC has awarded the 2021 World T20 to India and Australia will now host the 2022 edition with the 50-over World Cup also scheduled to be held in India in 2023.

2021, Khan said a clear picture would come only by April.

The ICC has awarded the 2021 World T20 to India and Australia will now host the 2022 edition with the 50-over World Cup also scheduled to be held in India in 2023.

Khan also reiterated that the PCB was wait-

ing for a written confirmation from the ICC and BCCI by January on issuance of visas to the Pakistan squad for the World T20 in India.

"Yes Mani Sahab (PCB chief Ehsan Mani) has written to them and requested them that given the state of relations between India and Pakistan, it would be best if the ICC and BCCI gives a written assurance about the visas being issued to us," Khan said.

He also disclosed that an online meeting of the Asian Cricket Council last week had tentatively set June as the time to host the postponed Asia Cup in Sri Lanka. — PTI

SHAH RUKH INVESTS IN USA CRICKET LEAGUE

Kolkata, Dec. 1: Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan's Knight Riders Group, on Tuesday, announced their foray into the untapped US cricket market investing in development of Major League Cricket with a multi-million dollar T20 tournament.

As per the deal, Knight Riders, will join hands with American Cricket Enterprises (ACE) to become a stakeholder in development of the sport in the region.

"For several years now, we have been expanding the Knight Riders brand globally and closely watching the potential for T20 cricket in the USA," Shah Rukh, the principal owner of the Knight Riders group, said in a media statement. — PTI

Mumbai sweep aside East Bengal

Goa, Dec. 1: A thumping 3-0 victory over newcomers SC East Bengal helped Mumbai City FC climb top of the Hero Indian Super League table at the GMC Stadium here on Tuesday.

Hugo Boumous assisted all three goals as a brace from Adam Le Fondre (20', 48') and a strike from Hernan Santana (58') saw Mumbai register their second straight win with SCEB yet to open their account.

Mumbai made four changes from their 1-0 win against FC Goa, with Ahmed Jahouh returning to the eleven. Meanwhile, SCEB made two changes to the side that lost the Kolkatta derby.

SCEB suffered a huge blow early on as defender Daniel Fox was replaced by Mohammad Rafique.

Mumbai had the opportunity to break the deadlock in the 10th minute but they failed to convert.

Six minutes later, Mumbai goalkeeper Amrinder Singh was also called into action, Rafique pounced on a misplaced pass from Jahouh before firing a shot from long range that was kept away by Amrinder. But it didn't take long for Mumbai to grab the lead. Mumbai won the ball outside their own box and Rowlin Borges provided a sublime diagonal ball towards Boumous on the left. The Frenchman displayed brilliant compon-

HYDERABAD FC LOOK TO EXTEND UNBEATEN RUN

Vasco, Dec. 1: Hyderabad FC will look to continue their unbeaten run when they play their third game in 10 days, taking on Jamshedpur FC in an Indian Super League match here on Wednesday.

While the league has seen a series of draws over the weekend, Hyderabad and Jamshedpur are coming into the game on the back of contrasting form.

Hyderabad are unbeaten in two games to be currently placed at the fourth position. Owen Coyle's Jamshedpur are ninth in the table.

JFC played two eventful games so far a season opening 1-2 loss to Chennaiyin FC followed by a 2-2 draw against Odisha FC on Sunday. — PTI

sure in the box to beat his marker and find Le Fondre, who made an easy tap in.

The Islanders continued to dominate the game after taking the lead. — Agencies

PELLEGRINI'S BETIS LOSE AGAIN IN LIGA

Seville, Dec. 1: Eibar defeated Real Betis 2-0 in the Spanish league, handing Manuel Pellegrini's team their fifth loss in six matches.

Japan forward Yoshinori Muto and Esteban Burgos scored five minutes apart early in the second half to give Eibar the away victory.

The Basque Country club moved to 12th place, while Betis dropped to 15th after their third defeat in a row. It was outscored 17-5 in their last six games, with their only win against promoted Elche.

Pellegrini has been trying to rebuild his team without Spain midfielder Sergio Canales, who injured a tendon two weeks ago with the national side and is expected to be out until next year.

Eibar has lost only one of their last seven games. They won in Seville despite playing without defender Paulo Oliveira and forward Quique Gonzlez because of injuries, and without striker Kike Garcia because of a suspension. — AP



Fulham's Ademola Lookman (left) celebrates with Andre-Frank Zambo Anguissa after scoring against Leicester City in their English Premier League match at King Power Stadium in Leicester on Monday. — AFP

Fulham escape relegation zone

London, Dec. 1: The first ballooned over the crossbar. The second was a dreadful attempt at a "Panenka" that flopped into the goalkeeper's arms.

The third flew off target because of an unfortunate slip.

Three embarrassing penalty misses have summed up Fulham's miserable start to life back in the English Premier League, so hopes weren't exactly high when the team was awarded another against Leicester on Monday.

This time, no mistake. Ivan Cavaleiro one of the spot kick culprits from previous matches stepped up and curled his effort high into the net for a goal that ultimately proved the winners at King Power Stadium.

As per the deal, Knight Riders, will join hands with American Cricket Enterprises (ACE) to become a stakeholder in development of the sport in the region.

"That happens in football and the manager just gave me confidence to take it and I did."

A penalty proved to be pivotal in Monday's late match, with Aston Villa striker Ollie Watkins hitting the bar with a second-half effort to allow West Ham to hold on for a 2-1 win at their Olympic Stadium and climb to fifth place. Watkins also had a stoppage-time goal ruled out by the video assistant referee when his outstretched arm was adjudged to have made him offside before he turned in a cross from the left. — AP