

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA  
ANANTAPUR | WEDNESDAY | 4 NOVEMBER 2020



**NATION | 4**

**Modi mocks at Cong's shrinking MPs tally**



**BUSINESS | 7**

**Future files caveat against Amazon plea**

**SPORTS | 8**

**Sachin wants helmets compulsory for batsmen**



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## WEATHER

**Max:** 35.0°C  
**Min:** 20°C  
**RH:** 42%  
**Rainfall:** Nil  
**Forecast:** Cloudy sky. Misty morning. Max/Min temp. 35/20 °C

## COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+48,187)	(+554)
83,10,665	1,23,579
covid19india.org	
STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS	
(+1,536)	(+3)
TS: 2,42,506	1,351
(+2,849)	(+15)
AP: 8,30,731	6,734

### CASES AROUND THE WORLD

**4,76,06,115**  
**DEATHS**  
**12,15,485**  
 COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES **215**  
worldometers.info/coronavirus

## ASTROGUIDE

**Sarvari:** Dakshinayana  
**Tithi:** Nija Ashwauja Bahula Chavithi till 5.14 am (Thursday)  
**Star:** Mrigasira till 4.49 am(Thursday)  
**Variyam:** 8.37 amto 10.22 am  
**Durmuhurtam:** 11.36 am to 12.22 pm  
**Rahukalam:** 12 noon to 1.30 pm  
**HILARI CALENDAR**  
**Rabbi-ul Awwal** 17, 1442 AH  
**PRAYERS**  
**Fajar:** 5.31 am  
**Zohar:** 12.26 pm  
**Asar:** 4.28 pm  
**Maghrib:** 6.05 pm  
**Isha:** 7.21 pm  
**SUNRISE TOMORROW** 6.08 AM  
**SUNSET TODAY** 6.25 PM  
**MOONSET** 8.46 AM  
**MOONRISE** 9.03 AM

## COUNTER POINT



According to this online survey, 30% support Republicans, 31% Democrats, 28% JD(U), 25% RJD...

## SHORT TAKES

## No hike in bank charges: Centre

**New Delhi:** The finance ministry on Tuesday said that there has been no increase in service charges by any public sector bank even as Bank of Baroda decided to withdraw changes made with regard to the number of free cash deposit transactions in a bank account per month. BoB had made certain changes with effect from November 1, 2020, with regard to the number of free cash deposits and withdrawals per month, a finance ministry statement said. "BoB has informed that in the light of the Covid situation, they have decided to withdraw the changes," the finance ministry said in the statement.

## Ola talks to states on e-scooter plant

**New Delhi:** Ola is in talks with various state governments to set up India's largest e-scooter manufacturing plant, according to sources. Sources close to the development said Ola Electric, the EV arm of the ride hailing company, has been engaging with state governments, including Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra, to set up an e-scooter manufacturing plant with an annual capacity of about 2 million units. The facility is proposed to be set up on a 100-acre land. — PTV



Samantha Jones, left, and Peter Vina take selfies near the Michael Jordan statue on US Election Day on Tuesday, in the atrium of the United Center, transformed into a super voting site in Chicago. — AP

# Americans begin to vote to choose new President

**Scranton/Washington, Nov. 3:** After a rancorous presidential campaign that exposed the depth of the political divisions in the United States, Americans streamed to the polls on Tuesday to choose either incumbent Donald Trump or challenger Joe Biden to lead a pandemic-battered nation for the next four years. Voters lined up around the country to cast ballots, with no signs yet of disruptions at polling places that some had feared after a protracted campaign marked by provocative rhetoric. Ahead of Election Day, just over 100 million voters cast early ballots either by mail or in person, according to the US Elections Project at the University of Florida, driven by concerns over crowded polling places during the pandemic as

● **THE MOST** closely watched results will start to trickle in after 7 pm EST (5.30 am IST, Wednesday), when polls close in states such as Georgia

well as extraordinary enthusiasm. Biden, the Democratic former vice president who has spent a half century in public life, has held a consistent lead in national opinion polls over the Republican president. But Trump is close enough in several election battleground states. Supporters of both candidates appeared to agree the election was a referendum on Trump and his tumultuous first term. Among the most closely contested states that are expected to determine the outcome are Florida, Pennsylvania, North Carol-

ina, Wisconsin, Michigan, Arizona and Georgia, with Democrats hoping that Biden may even threaten Trump in states that once seemed like Republican lands such as Ohio, Iowa and Texas. Voters on Tuesday will also decide which political party controls the US Congress for the next two years, with Democrats narrowly favoured to recapture a Senate majority and retain their control of the House of Representatives. The most closely watched results will start to trickle in after 7 pm EST (5.30 am IST, Wednesday), when polls close in states such as Georgia. But it is possible that it could be days before the result is known, especially given the massive surge in voting by mail. — Reuters

■ Full coverage on Page 5

## PREZ DECLINES TO MEET PUNJAB CM ON FARM BILLS

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 3

Protesting over President Ram Nath Kovind's refusal to meet him over the Centre's new farm laws, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh will lead a "relay dharna" of Congress MLAs from his state at Rajghat in the capital on Wednesday. Mr Singh had sought an appointment with the President to seek his assent to the agriculture Bills passed by the Punjab Assembly which, if passed would negate the Centre's farm laws. But the state government said that the Rashtrapati Bhavan has declined his request for an appointment. Following this, the chief minister decided to hold a relay dharna at Rajghat.

# IS sympathiser kills 5 in Vienna

**Vienna, Nov. 3:** Five people died, including an assailant, and 17 others were wounded in a shooting in the heart of Vienna, hours before a coronavirus lockdown started, Austrian authorities said on Tuesday. The dead attacker was a 20-year-old Austrian-North Macedonian dual national who had a previous terror conviction. The suspected attacker was shot and killed by police. Vienna's hospital service said seven people were in life-threatening condition on Tuesday after the attack. Meanwhile, world leaders voiced their condemnation over the multiple shootings in Vienna that killed four people. Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted that he was "deeply shocked and saddened

by the dastardly terror attacks in Vienna". US President Donald Trump said, "These evil attacks against innocent people must stop. The US stands with Austria, France, and all of Europe in the fight against terrorists." "The fight against assassins and those who instigate them is our common struggle," said Chancellor Angela Merkel's spokesman. "We French share the shock and sorrow of the Austrian people," President Emmanuel Macron stated. Russian President Vladimir Putin "strongly condemned the cruel and cynical crime which once again confirmed the inhumane nature of terrorism", the Kremlin said.

■ More reports on Page 5

**SPREADING | WINGS**

**ITDA and Velugu to assist tribals to market their products across country**

# Agency bamboo items to national, thanks to Trifed

**VADREVV SRINIVAS | DC**  
KAKINADA, NOV. 3

Sunnampudu, a non-descript village in the protected agency area of East Godavari district, is going to get national recognition: Courtesy its Bamboo products. The tribal village produces various items made of Bamboo such as candle boxes, flat oversized diyas, water bottles, and agarbathis. In an attempt to

provide nationwide reach for the products, the Central government has directed Tribal Co-operative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited (Trifed) to market the products across the country. Following the direction, the Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) is going to provide marketing facilities for 10,000 units (each unit contains five varieties) of bamboo prod-

ucts, manufactured by the tribal people through Vandan Vikas Centres on the occasion of upcoming Diwali festival. ITDA project officer Adhithya Praveen requested government officials to purchase bamboo products during Diwali to support the tribal people in their economic growth. According to sources, two Vandan Vikas training centres in the agency area, consisting of 300 members

each, have been training the tribals through their master trainer. Initially, the products manufactured by one centre will be given marketing facilities. Velugu assistant project director Y. Satyam Naidu said Trifed has released ₹12.5 lakh to create infrastructural facilities and procure raw material. He said during the upcoming Hindu month of Karthika, there will be great demand for these

products, which are highly aesthetic and could attract women easily. He said the Vandan Vikas training centre members would make agarbathis also using waste material of bamboo. The Velugu assistant project director said ITDA and Velugu want to eliminate middlemen and ensure the tribals fully benefit from selling their craft to customers. Trifed, he said, also plans

to sell the products through major malls. Devarapalli Vandana Vikas Training Centre president K. Vijayalakshmi said tribals used to depend on the processing of rubber products for their livelihood earlier, but now they are focusing on both bamboo and rubber products. She hoped that the support of state and central governments could help them double their income.

■ Page 3: Students isolated after staff tested positive

**Telangana awaits result of hotly contest bypoll**



Voters queue up to cast their vote in the byelection for Dubbak Assembly constituency in Dubbak town in Telangana on Tuesday. — DC

# HC finds all is not well between govt, poll panel

**SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC**  
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 3

The Andhra Pradesh High Court on Tuesday observed that "all is not well" between the State Election Commission (SEC) and the state government. A single-judge bench of the High Court headed by Justice Battu Devanand held a hearing on a writ petition filed by the State Election Commission on

Tuesday alleging that the state government was not responding properly to the requests for assistance in the discharge of its duties, including conduct of elections in a free and fair manner. The court observed that the prevailing relationship between the SEC, a constitutional authority, and the state government, appeared to be "very unfortunate" and said that everybody should keep in mind that

institutions are permanent while persons holding the posts are temporary. The court said the duty of the SEC is to discharge its functions as per the provisions of the Constitution and as per the relevant laws and felt the need on the part of state government to extend cooperation to the SEC to help it discharge its functions.

■ Page 2: HC orders CS to comply with its order

## OFFICIALS SCREEN STUDENTS, TEACHERS FOR CORONAVIRUS

**DC CORRESPONDENTS**  
VIJAYAWADA/KAKINADA/  
ANANTAPUR/NELORE/  
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 3

State government health officials on Tuesday said that they have been screening teachers and students over the last few days to ensure a Covid-free school environment. They also said several teachers and students, who were tested positive for the disease during this period, have also recovered.

Health officials maintain that they are conducting Covid-19 tests on both the teachers and the students and will continue until they complete all the targeted number of teachers and students to ensure that no infected person spreads the virus to others. In East Godavari, district health authorities conducted Covid-19 tests on nearly 14,000 teachers in the last 15 days. Out of them, only nine teachers were tested positive for the disease. However, as all infected teachers underwent medical treatment and recovered, they were allowed to attend the schools since November 2. All 2,000 students from Classes 9 and 10 tested negative for Covid-19 and have been attending the classes. East Godavari district educational officer S. Abraham said, "We are taking up thermal screening of both teachers and students before allowing them to enter the schools. If anyone is found with fever and other symptoms of Covid-19, we are seeing them for the Covid-19 test. Apart from complying with norms like social distancing, wearing a facemask and the use of sanitisers, we are also creating an awareness among children on Covid-19, so that they could remain safe."



## OTHER STORIES

## CM to attend event in Eluru today

**Eluru:** Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy will visit Eluru in West Godavari district on Wednesday. He will reach Alluri Seetharamaraju Stadium by 10.30 am and will go to VV Nagar Bailey Bridge Centre to inaugurate infrastructure development works at a cost of Rs 330 crore and later he will attend a private function. He will leave for Tadepalli by 11.22 am.

## HC ORDERS CS TO COMPLY WITH ITS ORDER

From Page 1

The court observed that the state government has been unresponsive and non-cooperative thereby posing serious hurdles to the functioning of the SEC. As the grievances raised by the petitioner SEC involve several departments to redress them, the court suo motu impleaded the chief secretary as one of the respondents to the writ petition for proper adjudication of the issues raised by the SEC.

The court while issuing interim directions asked the State Election Commission to submit details of all required cooperation and financial and non-financial assistance from the state government within three days. It directed the state government to provide all necessary cooperation and assistance to the SEC forthwith.

The court directed the chief secretary to take steps to ensure both the respondents comply with its order and submit the status report to it within 15 days.

As the SEC asked for release of additional funds to clear the bills of senior counsel who appeared for former state election commissioner justice Kanagaraj as he was impleaded in the writ petitions as respondent in his personal capacity, the court expressed surprise and observed that it was nothing but causing loss to the public exchequer.

## YSRC CADRE'S TIRADE AGAINST PARTY MLA

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, NOV. 3

In an embarrassing development for the ruling YSRC, the differences between the party cadres and party Gudur legislator V. Vara Prasad came to the fore after some party workers resorted to heated arguments with the MLA at his residence in Gudur on Tuesday.

The partymen alleged that the legislator was ignoring the candidates recommended by them for various posts and encouraging other party cadres. However, the MLA defended his stance on the issues raised by them.

Meanwhile, YSRC senior leader and industrialist Kodavalur Dhanunjaya Reddy alleged that the legislator was working against the interests of the party and the partymen.

Speaking to this newspaper, he said the legislator ignored the party loyalists and local leaders and gave the B-forms pertaining to the elections to local bodies to those who got nothing to do with the party.

He said the party will suffer setbacks in the election unless remedial steps are taken now.

## KOIL ALWAR TIRUMANJANAM AT TIRUCHANOOR

AVINASH P SUBRAMANYAM  
DC  
TIRUPATI, NOV. 3

Ahead of the annual Brahmotsavam of Goddess Padmavathi Ammavaru, slated to be held from November 11 to 19, the TTD has organised Koil Alwar Tirumanjanam, the temple cleansing ceremony, at Tiruchanoor temple on Tuesday morning.

Speaking on the occasion, TTD JEO P. Basant Kumar said, blessings of Goddess Padmavathi was sought for the successful conduct of annual Brahmotsavam being held in ekantham inside the temple with only temple staff and archakas in view of Covid-19 guidelines. He said special prayers were held for the complete eradication of Covid-19 and relief to global humanity.

Earlier, the temple premises were cleansed as per the agama traditions. The significance behind this fete is to waive off the sins committed either knowingly or unknowingly by employees, religious staff, devotees etc and purify the temple premises with herbal amalgamation called parimalam.

## Testing for Covid-19



Schoolchildren get thermal scanned by the school staff before entering their classrooms at Queen Mary's Girls High School as a preventive measure for Covid-19 pandemic, in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday. — K. MURALIKRISHNA

## Govt to focus on economic activity, speed up projects

Officials told to tie up with Indian, foreign firms to train students

MD ILYAS | DC  
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 3

The AP government has plunged into action focussing on restarting economic activity and promptness of projects after eight months of the Covid-19 pandemic. Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy conducted review meetings on airports, aviation projects, IT policy and planning to introduce sea-plane tourism. Further, the boat operations in the state will resume as the officials were directed to restore all 195 boats with fresh licences after conducting a full-fledged fitness check.

Tourism minister Muttamsetti Srinivas Rao said that all the boats under the tourism department would start their operations soon based on the flood levels in rivers. He said the boating operations have started in Visakhapatnam and East Godavari regions and once flood levels recede, boating in Bhavani Island, Nagarjunasagar and Srisailem shall resume. He said that of the total 195 boats, 56 small 12-seater boats were given licences and 112 boats with higher capacity are yet to get licences.

Mr Srinivas Rao further reviewed the possibilities for increasing revenue generation in the tourism sector, especially in the



During a review meeting on airports and aviation projects across the state, Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy directed the authorities to focus on the land acquisition for expanding Gannavaram and Kadapa airports.

coming four months. He stressed on introducing sea-plane tourism connecting Visakhapatnam-Vijayawada-Hussainsagar, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated one such project in Gujarat. The CM also told the officials that the Airport Authority of India is showing interest in the Water-Drome project near Prakasam Barrage.

The tourism minister stated that new boats will be purchased either by the department or through Public-Private partnership and will be operated in potential routes to boost the revenue. He stated that in addition to these, as a measure to avoid boat accidents, nine Command Control Rooms had been set-up. He stated that there are 38 restaurants run by the department and during the Covid-19 lockdown, all these restaurants supplied food to Covid-19 centres and earned a revenue of ₹22.5 crore. He further stated that a new ship

restaurant in Visakhapatnam and setting up of 5 and 7-star hotels are at the proposal stage.

Regarding sports, the minister said that a new stadium in Prakasam district and a shopping complex which were built with an expenditure of ₹2.2 crore and ₹1 crore respectively would be inaugurated on Thursday. He mentioned that construction of six more stadiums in East Godavari, Guntur and Prakasam are underway. He said that the state would receive ₹3 crore funds through Centre's initiative Khelo India, for YSR Sports School in Kadapa. The minister said the state accorded permission to run individual sports institutes for 10 sports events, including archery, badminton and tennis under unlock 5.0 from Thursday.

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy during a review meeting on IT policy said an IT high-end Skill University would be set up in Visakhapatnam and training in advanced

subjects like Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Robotics should be included with job orientation. He told the officials to tie up with Indian and foreign companies for training students and to develop their skills and prepare the required human resources to suit the requirements of IT companies. At least 2,000 students should be trained at the University in Visakhapatnam, and the certificates of training programmes should get international recognition, the CM reportedly said.

The Chief Minister said to start degree or diploma courses in tune with the demand of the IT industry and directed the officials to start the works of IT high-end skill university in Visakhapatnam at the earliest.

During a review meeting on airports and aviation projects across the state, the CM directed the authorities to focus on the land acquisition for expanding Gannavaram and Kadapa airports. Regarding the B h o g a p u r a m International Airport, the officials informed that 98 acres of land is yet to be acquired for construction of the airport. Similarly, land acquisition has to be done for Kurnool airport in Kurnool district and Dagadharthi airport in Nellore district.

## YSRC govt is causing loss to people: Naidu

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 3

Telugu Desam chief N. Chandrababu Naidu on Tuesday accused the YSRC government of causing irreparable loss to the people of Andhra Pradesh by following thoughtless and illogical policies in all aspects of governance. He commented that Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy is more dangerous than Coronavirus and the criticism against the TD was only aimed at diverting attention from YSRC failures.

Addressing a video conference with party's elected representatives and in-charges of 175 Assembly segments, the TD chief said the Polavaram works were stopped in the name of reverse tendering and false allegations were made about corruption in the change of estimates. He lamented that his entire focus was placed on mudslinging the Opposition but not on continuing the works to complete the project at the earliest. He claimed that Jagan has seized AP like a dangerous

Coronavirus and was using fake news to whip up divisive feelings among the people along caste and religion.

Mr Naidu pointed out that during the YSR rule, just ₹400 crore was spent on Polavaram works. The TD regime spent ₹11,000 crore in its five-year rule and completed 71 per cent works and overall, the TD government spent ₹64,000 crore on the irrigation projects during its previous regime.

Stating that owning a house would be every poor family's dream, Mr Naidu said that Jagan has committed a breach of trust by not giving even the completed houses to the beneficiaries concerned. He demanded that the YSRC government hand over the houses to the already selected beneficiaries by the Sankranti festival and warned that otherwise, the eligible families would take forcible possession of their houses on their own.

Mr Naidu gave a call for an agitation with the slogans 'My House My Right' and 'My House Site My Right' all over the state.

## GALLA ALLEGES SCAM IN PADDY PROCUREMENT, COMPLAINS TO CENTRE

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 3

The Opposition Telugu Desam lodged a complaint with the ministry of consumer affairs, food and public distribution, alleging ₹500 crore to ₹700 crore scam in the paddy procurement and sought immediate inquiry by the national agency.

TD MP Jayadev Galla said that paddy procurement by the Government of India through Food Corporation of India (FCI) serves twin purposes of providing minimum support price (MSP) to the farmer and ensuring

food security. In the complaint letter, the TD MP stated that as a part of the second crop, Nellore district had witnessed a paddy production of eight lakh tonnes under which only three lakh tonnes has been procured through various procurement centres in the district.

He alleged that around 60 per cent of the paddy procured was done in collusion between miller/middlemen and local procurement officials leading to a huge scam with connivance between local officials, millers and middlemen.

## Anil Kumar blames TD for delay in allotting house sites

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, NOV. 3

Pointing to the need for 350 acres to allot house sites to the poor in Nellore City segment, water resources minister Dr Anil Kumar Yadav hit out at the Opposition leaders for criticising the government for delay in allotting house sites even after obtaining court stay against the distribution of the sites.

Speaking to the media during a visit to Yalamadinne area in 13th Division at Nellore City on Tuesday, he alleged that the TD leaders were obstructing

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's plans to offer sites and construct houses to the downtrodden.

The water resources minister lambasted the TD leaders for maintain-



Water resources minister Dr Anil Kumar Yadav inspects the surroundings during a visit to the 13th Division in Nellore on Tuesday. — DC

ing silence when ₹3 lakh was charged for each home built in 300 sq.ft during the TD regime.

Dr Anil Kumar claimed that they have spent ₹1.5 crore for the development of 13th Division and ₹2

## YSRC GOVT GIVING PRIORITY TO BCs, SAYS RANGANATHA

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 3

Minister for housing Ch. Ranganatha Raju said the YSRC government was giving top priority to BCs in the government. He said that the Telugu Desam government used BCs as vote banks, but Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy was fulfilling his promises given during the election campaign on for the development of BCs through numerous welfare programmes.

Speaking at the YSRC conducted BC meeting Jayahoy Jagananna at Guntur, the minister said Jagan had appointed BCs, including women, to the recently formed BC Corporations.

He asked the newly-appointed chairpersons and directors of the BC Corporations to work for the development of BCs by implementing the welfare schemes transparently without giving any chance for corruption.

## BCs ACCORDED SELF-RESPECT BY JAGAN: MINISTER

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KAKINADA, NOV. 3

BC welfare minister Ch. Srinivasa Venugopalakrishna said Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has accorded self-respect to the Backward Classes in the state by forming 56 BC Corporations for the welfare of the BCs. Attending as chief guest at a felicitation programme for the corporation chairpersons and directors here on Tuesday, Mr Venugopalakrishna said Jagan has given priority to the BCs and provided power to them in several sectors.

## Stage set to give facelift for ancient shrine

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, NOV. 3

Facelift is being given to the 300-year-old Sri Prasanna Chenna Kesava Swamy shrine at Ongole as part of a programme to renovate the old temples across the state.

Energy minister Balineni Srinivasa Reddy and education minister Adimulapu Suresh have disclosed about the government plans to carry out repairs for ancient holy places after laying the foundation stone for the development works at the temple on Tuesday.

The development works include construction of a new marriage hall, dining hall, tank, steps to the north entrance, dome and office building. Speaking on the occasion, the ministers have appealed to the philanthropists to donate liberally for protection of the historical temples.

They said that the marriage hall will be provided to the poor and middle class for a reasonable rent to perform wedding func-



Energy minister Balineni Srinivasa Reddy and education minister Adimulapu Suresh at the launch of development works for Sri Chenna Kesava Swamy shrine in Ongole on Tuesday.

tions of their children. Kanigiri and Markapuram legislators Burra Madhusudhan Yadav and K. Nagarajuna Reddy, Temple Trust Board members

K. Prasad Babu, K. Kiran, P.V. Ramakrishna Charyulu and chairman of Ongole Market Yard Kotari Ramachandra Rao were present among others.

● The development works include construction of a new marriage hall, dining hall, tank, steps to the north entrance, dome and office building.

## Cash remitting agency staff arrested

DC CORRESPONDENT  
TIRUPATI, NOV. 3

A major case of defraud by employees hired by a private cash remitting agency to load cash into ATMs of various banks has been unearthed by the Central Crime Station (CCS) police of Chittoor city on Tuesday.

Seven employees of Writer Business Services Ltd, a cash remitting agency, were arrested after the company found that they had siphoned off approximately ₹1.17 crore in a short span of time. The police also recovered ₹39.40 lakh from the possession of the arrested employees and sent them to remand.

Disclosing the case details to the media, DSP V.V. Girdhar said the senior officials of the cash remitting agency approached the CCS police after they conducted an internal audit and found a large amount of cash missing from ATMs,

for which cash was being loaded by the custodians, appointed by the agency.

"The company has appointed a route leader and custodians to load cash into 110 ATMs of various banks. They usually go to the banks concerned every day and collect the cash as per the intent, which they further load into the ATMs. Around seven employees of the agency were found to have diverted some cash for the personal needs by taking advantage of technical defects in the ATMs", the DSP explained.

During the inquiry, it was found that the custodians identified as G. Naveen Kumar, Ganeswar Rao, T. Uday Kumar, K. Kishore Kumar, T. Suresh Kumar, Y. Arul Raj and S. Jyothi Kiran, who had been given the duty to load cash into ATMs, had defrauded ₹1.17 crore. CCS circle-inspector Ramesh led the team who arrested the accused.



## IN BRIEF

## Lord Krishna idol damaged

**Vijayawada:** An idol of Lord Krishna was damaged at a temple atop Sivagiri hill in Moghalrajapuram in Vijayawada on Tuesday by some unknown persons. VHP representatives expressed concern over the demolition of Lord Krishna idol. Sevakeshtra seer Siva Swamy said that demolition of idols in temples was an evil act. He visited the temple and examined the damaged idol and later spoke to the media persons and said that miscreants attacked 60 Hindu temples across the state. He said that the police are saying that mentally unstable miscreants are behind the attacks on temples if that was true why they are targeting only Hindu temples, he questioned. Siva Swamy said that despite the state government having such a mechanism, culprits are not being caught which gives scope for suspicion. He alleged that the attacks were carried out by the involvement of foreigners and that the government was negligent in taking action. Continuous attacks on the temples are hurting the sentiments of the Hindus across the country. He questioned the government, which was using the money of Hindu temples, did not care to protect them. He said that the CM review and take action to put an end to the attacks on temples else would protest against the government in a big way. The Swamy appealed to the people to celebrate the Diwali festival happily and told the government to cooperate without imposing any restrictions.

## Stale meat destroyed

**Vijayawada:** The food safety department officials along with Vigilance and Enforcement department officials, jointly conducted surprise checks on Barbeque Nation restaurant in Vijayawada on Tuesday afternoon. The officials found that the restaurant was violating food safety norms and further not following the Covid-19 guidelines as prescribed by the state government to run the restaurant.

## SEX WORKERS SEEK COVID RELIEF

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 3

Sex Workers forums "VIMUKTI" and "Me and My World" who are striving for the Rights of Sex Workers and their welfare in the state have demanded the Government to distribute Covid relief support without asking for any identity cards as directed by the Supreme Court. State Convener for VIMUKTI S. Haseena and State Secretary of Me and My World P. Devi stated that the Covid effect completely devastated their lives without work and earning where they are starving even for a fistful of food for them and their children as well as their family members.

The duo leaders deplored that during the Covid epidemic many hidden sex workers have been unable to support their families since they were unable to come out and claim emergency relief which was provided for self-identified sex workers. They stated that sex workers are not willing to come forward and acknowledge their identity and access services provided by government. They further stated that during the Covid-19 undocumented migrant sex workers have reported being at high risk of violence, within their homes as well as from the land/house owner of residences, either they give rent or else vacate premises. The duo demanded Covid relief support including ration shall be distributed to all the sex workers without asking to submit identity proofs and other testimonials. The Government shall provide relevant identity proofs and enable the sex workers to open bank accounts through Dept of WD&CW to access the COVID relief support through banks under GO No. 1/2003. They demanded the support services be extended to the sex workers who are in Swadhar and Ujwala.

# Ambedkar memorial to be ready within 14 mths: CM

Jagan conducts a review meeting on iconic memorial works in camp office

MD ILYAS | DC  
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 3

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy instructed the officials that the ambience of the landscape Ambedkar memorial park to be developed at Swaraj Maidan in Vijayawada should be pleasant.

Mr Jagan conducted a review meeting on iconic Ambedkar memorial works in CM Camp in Tadepalli on Tuesday. He directed the officials to finalise the location to set up the statue focusing on a grand look for the statue. He further directed the officials to order for the statue immediately and start the works and complete it within 14 months.

The Chief Minister told the officials that high standards should be maintained in the construction of Ambedkar Statue at Swaraj Maidan and the structure should



Proposal and plan of Ambedkar Smruthivanam at Swaraj Maidan in Vijayawada.

have glow and spark and the ambience of the landscape to be developed at the Memorial Park should be pleasant. He instructed the officials to display the life and times

of Dr B.R. Ambedkar at Memorial Park in addition to setting up of Library, Museum and a Gallery.

The Chief Minister suggested to display the

quotes of Ambedkar in the park and also to widen the road and attractively develop the walkway.

The officials had shown two plans in a

PowerPoint presentation of Ambedkar statue and Memorial Park. The officials had shown country-wide models, which include Ambedkar Deeksha Bhoomi (Nagpur), Chaitya Bhoomi (Mumbai), Ambedkar Memorial (Lakhanpur) and Prerana Sthal (Noida). The presentation focused on the design of the gallery and auditorium. The work is slated to be completed within 14 months, the officials said.

The Ambedkar memorial park will be at the heart of the Vijayawada city in Swarajya Maidan which is popularly known as PWD grounds and it is renamed as Dr B.R. Ambedkar Swarajya Maidan after laying the foundation stone by the Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on July 8. A library, memorial hall, a study centre and open theatre will be established by April 14, 2022.

## TRAINING TO SECRETARIAT STAFF

**Vijayawada:** Village and Ward Secretariat employees were instructed to provide services to people in the scheduled timeframe and warned about stern action for showing negligence.

The two-day training programme on e-seva services to master trainers of village and ward secretariats started in KL University on Tuesday. Village and ward secretariats commissioner G.S. Navin Kumar said that phase wise training is offered to provide good services to people. He directed the employees to behave politely and respectfully with people in the village and ward secretariats. He instructed the employees to learn code of conduct as work during the probation period is most important as misconduct would lead towards the dismissal of employees.

Mid Meal making employees distribute the food to students after reopening of the school at One Town in Vijayawada on Tuesday.

— C.  
NARAYANA  
RAO

## Serving Mid Day meals



# AP records highest GST growth in Oct.

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC  
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 3

Andhra Pradesh recorded a 26 per cent Goods and Services Tax (GST) growth in October, highest among the mainland states in the country.

Andhra Pradesh collected ₹2,480 crore in October, 2020 over ₹1,975 crore in the corresponding periods in 2019. Chhattisgarh, which takes the second place, recorded a GST collection of ₹1,974 crore in October 2020 as compared to ₹1,570 crore in the same month in 2019. Telangana recorded 5 per cent growth with ₹3,383 crore collected in October 2020 compared to ₹3,230 crore in October 2019.

An overwhelmed AP industry minister Mekapati Goutham Reddy said State GST revenue increased by 26 per cent and hoped that festive season will also spur growth and both are positive signals for a full recovery soon.

With the Diwali and

other festivals like Christmas and the biggest festival of Makar Sankranti may further boost the economy for the state.

The gross GST revenue collected in the month of October, 2020 is ₹1,05,155 crore of which CGST is ₹19,193 crore, SGST is ₹25,411 crore, IGST is ₹52,540 crore (including ₹23,375 crore collected on import of goods) and cess is ₹8,011 crore (including ₹932 crore collected on import of goods). The total number of GST-3B Returns filed for the month of October upto October 31, 2020 is 80 lakh.

Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh recorded a hike of 5 per cent at ₹15,799 crore and 17 per cent at ₹2,403 crore, while Gujarat and West Bengal reported 15 per cent increase in the GST collection each at ₹6,787 crore and ₹3,738 crore respectively. Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Kerala registered 7 per cent increase each at ₹5,471 crore, ₹1,010 crore, and ₹1,665 crore

respectively.

The government has settled ₹25,091 crore to CGST and ₹19,427 crore to SGST from IGST as regular settlement. The total revenue earned by Central Government and the State Governments after regular settlement in the month of October, 2020 is ₹44,285 crore for CGST and ₹44,839 crore for the SGST.

The revenues for the month are 10 per cent higher than the GST revenues in the same month last year. During the month, revenue from import of goods was 9 per cent higher and the revenues from domestic transactions (including import of services) are 11 per cent higher than the revenues from these sources during the same month last year. The growth in GST revenue as compared to that in months of July, August and September, 2020 of -14 per cent, -8 per cent and 5 per cent respectively clearly shows the trajectory of recovery of the economy and, correspondingly, of the revenues.

# 4 of a family end lives

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KURNOOL, NOV. 3

Four of a family including a woman committed suicide at Panyam and their bodies were crushed under a goods train on Tuesday.

Their bodies were found on the railway track at Bupanapadu-Kavulur village under Panyam police station limits. The deceased were identified as Abdul Salam, 42, resident of Nandyal town, his wife Noor, 36,

daughter Salma, 14, and son Khalandar, 10.

The police said that the deceased came in an autorickshaw from Nandyal and parked it at the Bavanapadu side of the train track. The bodies were found heart-rendering as the son huddled father while the daughter in hands of her mother. Even after the train crushed them, they were found in the same positions, said Panyam CI Jeevan Ganga Babu. The death occurred between 11 am and 1

pm on Tuesday, he said.

It was learnt to have known that, the head of the deceased family Abdul Salam was accused in a gold shop theft case that happened recently at Nandyal town and this case is likely getting to conviction soon. In the meantime, the family has been feeling guilty and went into depression for the last few days. Nandyal DSP Chidananda Reddy said that the reasons the cause to the deaths were not yet known.

# Teachers told to include Covid awareness class

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, NOV. 3

In the backdrop of few positive cases detected among students in some schools, teachers have been told to take a class for 20 minutes to enlighten the students to protect themselves from the virus. In addition to this, ANMs and Asha workers have been directed to hold awareness programmes in the schools to prevent the spread of Covid virus in the schools.

District Collector of Nellore, K.V.N. Chakradhar Babu disclosed this during a surprise visit to KNR Corporation High School at Nellore on Tuesday.

He elicited information from the students on the use of masks and sanitisers besides observing other precautionary measures such as maintaining social distance.

According to Mr Chakradhar Babu,

schools are opened for Class IX and X students in 4,657 schools across the district from Monday, November 2, after arranging thermal scanners and sanitisers.

Mr Chakradhar Babu advised the teachers to impart skills to the students to study all the subjects in a short period of time in view of only 150 days available for the exams to cover the syllabus which was reduced to 70 per cent due to time constraints.

He also verified whether the Jagananna Vidya Kanuka kits containing school bags, notebooks, masks and gloves are distributed to all students and directed the headmaster to supply the kits for those who have not received them yet.

He instructed the school managements to sanitise classrooms after every session and allow students only with the permission of the parents.

**SAVE | CHILDREN** DGP gave gifts and study kits to the rescued

# 13k kids rescued under Muskan

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 3

DGP Gautam Sawang said that 13,000 boys and girls were rescued during Operation Muskan and asked the parents to care for their children.

He interacted with the children who were rescued during Operation Muskan in Good Shepherd Karunamayi Home in Tadepalli and offered study kits.

As part of the ongoing Operation Muskan programme, the state DGP, Gautam D. Sawang visited an orphanage on Tuesday

● The street children and child labourers were evacuated to Child Welfare Homes. He said that the parents would be given counselling before handing over the children to them.

● The government has set up special schemes for the education of poor children.

and showered his kindness over the inmates of the orphanage.

The DGP gave the children gifts and study kits to the rescued boys and girls along with children. On

# AP records 2,849 news Covid cases

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN |  
DC  
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 3

AP registered 2,849 new Covid-19 cases rising tally to 8,30,731 and 15 deaths taking the toll to 6,734 in the last 24 hours in the state.

State health authorities released Covid-19 bulletin on Tuesday reporting that out of 84,534 samples tested, 2,849 persons were found infected with Covid-19. Out of a total of 82,66,800 samples tested for Covid-19 so far, 8,02,325 patients were discharged after recovery while 21,672 patients are still active with the virus.

Among the daily cases of Covid-19, Chittoor topped the state with 436 followed by 421 in Krishna, 394 in East Godavari, 386 in West Godavari, 277 in Guntur, 185 in Prakasam, 169 in Kadapa, 145 in Visakhapatnam, 142 in Anantapur, 93 in Nellore, 88 in Srikakulam, 78 in Vizianagaram and 35 in Kurnool.

East Godavari continues to be the worst hit with the highest number of cumulative confirmed cases with 1,16,783 followed by 86,835 in West Godavari, 79,322 in Chittoor, 68,063 in Guntur, 64,977 in Anantapur, 60,019 in Prakasam, 59,778 in Nellore, 59,565 in Kurnool, 56,148 in Visakhapatnam, 52,515 in Kadapa, 44,183 in Srikakulam, 40,141 in Krishna, 39,507 in Vizianagaram, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

The rate of recovery of Covid-19 infected patients is good in East Godavari with 1,12,041 followed by 84,199 in West Godavari, 76,396 in Chittoor, 64,191 in Guntur, 63,154 in Anantapur, 59,100 in Nellore, 58,806 in Kurnool, 57,981 in Prakasam, 53,883 in

● Among the daily cases of Covid-19, Chittoor topped the state with 436 followed by 421 in Krishna, 394 in East Godavari, 386 in West Godavari, 277 in Guntur, 185 in Prakasam, 169 in Kadapa, 145 in Visakhapatnam, 142 in Anantapur, 93 in Nellore, 88 in Srikakulam, 78 in Vizianagaram and 35 in Kurnool.

Visakhapatnam, 50,924 in Kadapa, 43,210 in Srikakulam, 38,982 in Vizianagaram, 36,563 in Krishna, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

The daily cases of death of Covid-19 infected patients, Anantapur and Guntur, registered three each followed by two each in Chittoor and Krishna and one each in East Godavari, Nellore, Prakasam, Srikakulam and West Godavari.

Chittoor topped the state by registering 787 cases of death of Covid-19 infected patients followed by 625 in Guntur, 614 in East Godavari, 575 in Krishna, 573 in Prakasam, 568 in Anantapur, 510 in Visakhapatnam, 501 in West Godavari, 487 in Nellore, 482 in Kurnool, 440 in Kadapa, 342 in Srikakulam and 230 in Vizianagaram.

The state health authorities discharged 3,700 Covid-19 infected patients after recovery from several hospitals in the state.

AP conducted Covid-19 tests on 1,54,809 samples per one million population and registered Covid-19 positive rate at 10.05 while Maharashtra tested 72,579 with a positive rate at 18.62 and Telangana tested 1,10,669 with a positive rate at 5.54.

# Students isolated after staff tested +ve

FROM PAGE 1

In West Godavari, nearly 2,410 out of a total number of 12,347 teachers underwent Covid-19 tests. However, only 80 were tested positive in the last few days. While 33,557 out of 5,42,364 students underwent Covid-19 tests, only 230 were tested Covid-19 positive.

In Guntur, 23,692 students and 7,825 teachers were subjected to Covid test. But only 140 students and 72 teachers were found to have been infected with Coronavirus.

Out of 72 infected teachers, 40 have recovered and started attending the schools.

In Krishna district, 10 teachers tested Covid-19

positive in the last few days in the district. In Nellore district, 6,659 students and 5024 teachers underwent Covid-19 test. But only 27 students and 38 teachers tested positive for the disease. In Visakhapatnam district, nine teachers tested Covid-19 positive so far in the district. In Anantapur, 10 teachers tested positive for Coronavirus.

At Kakinada, a midday meal worker working at Zilla Parishad High School at Gangalakurru village of Ambajipeta mandal in East Godavari, was tested Covid-19 positive on Tuesday. However, as she served food to 17 students in the school on Monday, all the students were sent to quarantine as a precautionary measure.

# Three killed as bus overturns

DC CORRESPONDENT  
TIRUPATI, NOV. 3

Three persons were killed on the spot and several others were injured when a private bus veered off the road and overturned, on Madanapalle-Punganur road near Bandakindapalle of Madanapalle mandal in Chittoor district on Tuesday.

According to the report reaching here, the deceased were identified as 65-year-old Gangulappa of Erraballi

village, 19-year-old Somu Naidu of Bandakindapalle and 29-year-old Mallikarjuna of Adavipalle village.

The incident happened on Tuesday afternoon when the bus was going towards Adavipalle village from Madanapalle when the bus hit a rock boulder and veered off the road, before turning turtle. As many as 25-30 passengers were on board the bus, all hailing from different places in Madanapalle mandal.

ated to Child Welfare Homes. He said that the parents would be given counselling before handing over the children to them.

DGP Sawang said that the government has set up special schemes for the education of poor children and appealed to them to take advantage and send their children to schools. Operation Muskaan was launched in July to trace the missing and needy children and reunite them with their parents. Those children with no parents would be provided shelter in the Child Care Institutions (CCIs).



IN BRIEF

PROXY WRITER  
IN JEE MAINS  
SCAM HELD

MANOJ ANAND | DC  
GUWAHATI, NOV. 3

In a breakthrough in the investigation, police arrested the proxy writer in the Joint Entrance Examination (Mains) scam but the National Testing Agency (NTA), which conducted the Joint Entrance Examination (Mains), is yet to respond to the communication by Guwahati police in connection with the scam.

Informing that proxy writer Bhargav Deka, the owner of a city-based coaching institute Global Edu Light, has been arrested, sources said that the police has requested the NTA to give details about the procedures used in the examination and the possible ways that might have been used by the proxy candidate to appear in the examination on behalf of Neel Nakshyatra Das.

Though NTA officials without thorough probe in the scam claimed that it took place only in the specific examination centre located at ION Digital Zone in the Azara area of the city and nowhere else in the country, sources admitted that the NTA was reluctant to hold any nation-wide probe into the scam as any competent investigation by any competent agency may open Pandora's box.

Pointing out that from the examination centre, the police have already seized several documents security sources said that the NTA has hardly taken any note of the scam as the centre was allowed to function and on November 4, National Eligibility Test will be held at the centre.

COVID CASES  
LOWEST AFTER  
OVER 100 DAYS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 3

Central government officials on Tuesday said that a steady decline in daily fresh cases in India has been noted but a large part of the country's population is still susceptible to the coronavirus infection. On Tuesday, 38,310 new cases were detected which was lowest after over 100 days.

The national Covid-19 recovery rate is now 91.96 per cent.

"It is satisfying that there is an improvement in overall cases and there is a consistent decline in active cases. However, in some states it is a reverse trend and there is a rise in fresh cases. In Kerala, West Bengal, Delhi and Manipur we are noticing rise in cases. In neighbouring cities of Delhi - Gurgaon and Faridabad - there is a sharp increase in new cases," said NITI Aayog member (Health) Dr V.K. Paul.

"We are susceptible to a very large extent and the situation in America and Europe is showing (that). We don't know the behaviour of the virus completely. So, we need to save the gains that we have earned in our fight against the pandemic till now," Mr Paul said.

BJP MLA FOR  
ACTION AGAINST  
BACHCHAN

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC  
MUMBAI, NOV. 3

The *Kaun Banega Crorepati* (KBC) show on the Sony TV has courted yet another controversy. A Maharashtra BJP MLA has accused veteran actor Amitabh Bachchan and the makers of the popular TV show of allegedly hurting Hindu sentiments.

Abhimanyu Pawar, BJP legislator from Ausa in Latur district, on Tuesday filed a complaint at Latur police seeking action against Mr Bachchan and Sony Entertainment Television, the makers of KBC, for a question about religious text Manusmriti.

On October 30, in the Karamveer special episode of KBC, Mr Bachchan, the host of the show, had asked contestants activist Bezwada Wilson and actor Anup Soni: "On 25th December 1927, Dr BR Ambedkar and his followers burned copies of which scripture?" The options given to the contestants were: Vishnu Purana, Bhagavad Gita, Rigved and Manusmriti.

Mr Bachchan said the answer was Manusmriti and then explained Ambedkar's actions, the BJP MLA said that all the four options of the question pertained to the Hindu religion. "It is clear that the motive behind this question was to hurt the sentiments of Hindus," he alleged.

# Record 89.8 per cent vote in Nagaland

Moderate to high voting in bypolls for 54 Assembly seats across 10 states despite Covid fears



Voters stand in long queues to cast their votes at a polling station during the second phase of Assembly elections at Diyara in Danapur on Tuesday.

— PTI

## 70.45% VOTE IN ODISHA BYPOLLS

AKSHAYA KUMAR  
SAHOO | DC  
BALASORE, NOV. 3

The bypolls for two Assembly constituencies in Odisha passed off peacefully on Tuesday, barring a few stray incidents of attempt to influence and bribe voters.

The Election Commission of India said at least 70.45 per cent of voters turned out to cast their ballots by 6 pm.

In Balasore, the police detained a woman for allegedly distributing money among voters at Adivasi Sahi in Ward 1 when voting for the bypoll to the Balasore Sadar constituency was underway.

The locals gheraoed the woman when she was distributing cash alongwith her supporters. They later informed the police about the incident.

The woman hailing from the neighbouring Mayurbhanj district was questioned by cops regarding her act.

Chief Electoral Officer S.K. Lohani said the police questioned the woman and she was later let free after due to want of concrete proof.

"I talked to the Balasore district collector and local police there. They were probing into the matter. However, they said no concrete evidence with regard to distribution of money was available," the CEO said.

In Balsore town, tension prevailed as a policeman engaged in security duty was found circulating chits which contained the image of conch, the party symbol of the ruling Biju Janata Dal.

The CEO said the concerned police man and Booth Level Officer were replaced immediately resumed without any further hiccups.

The two constituencies went to bypolls as the sitting lawmakers died in July due to illness. While BJP represented the Balasore Sadar seat, the BJD held Tirtol seat.

In Balasore, the BJP has fielded lawmaker Madan Mohan Dutta's son Manas Kumar Dutta, ostensibly to cash in on sympathy factor. Similarly, the BJD has fielded Bijaya Shankar Das, son of MLA Bishnu Charan Das.

The Congress which was relegated to third position in the 2019 assembly elections, is also tying its luck in both the constituencies. The party has fielded Mamata Kundu in Balasore Sadar and Himansu Mallick.

The results will be declared on November 10.

## Nitish attacked with onions

NAYEAR AZAD | DC  
PATNA, NOV. 3

While campaigning for the third phase of polls, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar was attacked with onions and stones in Madhubani on Tuesday.

The incident occurred when he was talking about the state's development and employment during his public meeting.

According to reports from Madhubani a group of youths present in the rally got angry with his comments and started throwing stones at him. This is probably the first time that stones and onions were thrown at the CM during an election campaign.

"You can keep throwing stones at me. But I ask you to beware of such people who have been promising 10 lakh jobs as they don't know anything about governance. I can tell you that they have no knowledge about the ABC of governance and cannot do anything. I also ask you not to indulge in all these anti-social activities otherwise nobody will be able to save you", Nitish Kumar warned those who were throwing stones at him.

Later when his security personal tried to intervene and detain people who were involved in the attack, the CM stopped them and said, "Let them

do it. They are being misled by people who have done nothing for the state. I have already told you that I am working hard to create opportunities here so that people don't go out to other states for work. They got the opportunity for 15 years but they didn't give any jobs".

Nitish Kumar whose party is an ally of the BJP in Bihar has been facing criticism from the opposition parties including LJP Chief Chirag Paswan. On Tuesday Mr. Paswan while talking to reporters had said that "Nitish Kumar will not return as CM of Bihar. I can give you in writing as people are angry with him for not doing anything for the state".

Criticizing the grand alliance for the incident JD(U) leader Sanjay Jha in a statement said that "everybody is aware how Chief Minister worked hard for the development of the state. Such kind of incident is not good for the democracy".

The BJP also condemned the attack on the CM. Party spokesperson Sanjay Tiger in a statement said that "attack on CM during the campaign should be condemned. Violence has no place in democracy and those who are indulging in such activities should understand that they have the power of voting".

minister Lois Marandi of the BJP in Dumka.

**NAGALAND:** A total of 84.41 per cent votes were

cast in the 22 polling stations under Southern Angami-I constituency in Kohima district while

## Modi mocks at Congress' shrinking tally in House

NAYEAR AZAD | DC  
PATNA, NOV. 3

While Bihar voted for the second phase of polls, Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed rallies in Araria and Saharsa and urged voters to "choose NDA for the overall development of the state".

During his speech at both the rallies, he also dismissed speculations about anti-incumbency against Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and his government and said that "last decade was spent in meeting the needs of the people. In the next the NDA will fulfil all the aspirations of people".

He also used the occasion to mock at the shrinking tally of the Congress party in both the houses of parliament. He said that the current state of Congress shows how people have rejected the party.

"Look at the condition of the Congress today. Even if they combine the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha they won't find even 100 MPs. They are in such a state because people are not happy with them. Now they are trying to save the party by tagging with others," Modi said at a rally in Forbesganj.

During his public meetings, he also reminded people of the "jungle raj" and poor law and order scenario during the 1990s when the RJD was in

● **DURING HIS** speech at both the rallies, he also dismissed speculations about anti-incumbency against Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and his government and said that "last decade was spent in meeting the needs of the people.

power. He said that the turnout during the ongoing elections shows the mood of the voters in Bihar.

"Reports show what Bihar wants. The message is clear that people have rejected 'Rangbazi' and 'Rangdari' and development is winning. They have also rejected the dynasts and want only those to remain in power who work for the welfare of people", he said.

This was the Prime Minister's fourth tour of Bihar for the ongoing assembly elections. Besides, Forbesganj in Araria he also addressed a rally in Saharsa where he listed the NDA government's achievements and urged people to be "vocal for local".

According to political analysts here, his public meetings in Araria and Saharsa hold significance as both the districts in Seemanchal are considered a stronghold of RJD led grand alliance. Forbesganj in Araria is a Muslim bastion while

Saharsa in Kosi is a Yadav stronghold.

The four districts in Seemanchal - Purnea, Kishanganj, Katihar and Araria have 24 assembly seats while Kosi region has three districts comprising of Saharsa, Madhepura and Supaul. There are 13 assembly segments in the region.

The JD(U) is trying its luck on 20 seats and its ally BJP has fielded 13 candidates in the region. The NDA partner VIP is also contesting 3 seats and Jitan Ram Manjhi's party HAM has fielded one candidate from the region.

"The double engine government has brought speed in the progress of the state and it will continue to do so after the NDA is elected back to power", Modi said while addressing voters in Saharsa.

He also mocked at the grand alliance chief ministerial face Tejashwi Yadav and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi by repeating his "double Yuvraj" jibe and said that, "people have rejected all those who are responsible for jungle raj in the state".

Adding further he said that, "some people have problems with the NDA winning elections. They keep asking why Modi win elections. The answer is simple Modi wins because he works for poor people, mothers and sisters. They bless me".

There were complaints from both Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party and Naga Peoples

Front under Southern Angami-I seat but it didn't disturb the polling, officials said.

— PTI

## CRUCIAL | MOVE China confirms another round of Corps Commanders meeting on Ladakh issue

# India, US, Japan, Aus kickstart Malabar exercise

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 3

India and three other 'Quad' countries — US, Japan and Australia — on Tuesday started the naval exercise 'Malabar' in Bay of Bengal. Meanwhile, China confirmed another round of Corps Commanders meeting on Ladakh standoff and a mutual agreeable date is being worked out.

While India is trying to peacefully resolve the six month military stand-off with China through negotiations, it is also forming up strategic alliances with other nations.

This is reflected by India's invitation to Australia to participate in Malabar Naval exercise and signing Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-spatial Co-operation with the US last week.

This is a signal to China that India will not bow down to any pressure, even as it wants peace in the region.

The Indian Navy, United States Navy, Japan Maritime Self Defence Force, and Royal Australian Navy on Tuesday carried out anti submarine warfare operations, cross deck landings and seamanship manoeuvres at sea.

Indian Navy ships Ranvijay, Shivalik, Shakti, Sukanya, and submarine Sundhraj are exercising with USS John S McCain, HMAS Ballarat, and JMSDF Ship JS Onami.

China said on Tuesday that it hoped that the quadrilateral Malabar exercise would be conducive to the regional peace and stability instead of the contrary.

"We hope that relevant countries' military opera-

tions will be conducive to peace and stability in the region instead of the contrary," said Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin.

India, US, Japan and Australia are part of the 'Quad' alliance, which Beijing considers as an anti-China grouping.

While Australia wanted to be part of the Malabar exercise for some time now, India had been hesitant to invite it to avoid any angry reaction from China.

During the 7th round of Corps Commanders meeting, India and China on October 12 had agreed not to turn differences into disputes and jointly safeguard peace and tranquility in the border areas.

Both sides had agreed to maintain dialogue and communication through military and diplomatic channels.



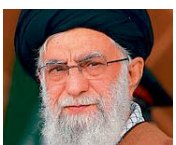
The four-day-long first phase of the Malabar naval exercise is seen as a prelude to future military cooperation among the member nations of the Quad Coalition.





The incumbent president, who is supposed to hold the elections, says this is the most-rigged US election throughout history. His opponent says Trump intends to widely cheat. This is American democracy.

— AYATOLLAH ALI KHAMENEI, Iran's supreme leader



I certainly won't do that (comment on vote) one day before the election in the United States. You know that simply because of my education as a physicist I naturally attribute great weight to scientific advice, and make use of it myself

— ANGELA MERKEL, German Chancellor

# US votes: Long lines seen outside polling stations

## Mail-in votes count to take time; result not out soon

Washington, Nov. 3: Americans were voting in large numbers on Tuesday in one of the most divisive bitter presidential elections in decades in which incumbent Republican Donald Trump is challenged by Democrat Joe Biden.

Amidst a resurgent Covid-19 pandemic, nearly 100 million people have already cast their ballots in early voting, putting the country on course for its highest turnout in a century. Some 239 million people are eligible to vote this year. The mail-in ballots

could take days or weeks to be counted in some states - meaning a winner might not be declared in the hours after polls close on Tuesday. There is an estimated four million Indian-American population of which about 2.5 million are potential voters in the November 2020 presidential elections.

Over 1.3 million Indian-Americans are voters in key battleground states, including Texas, Michigan, Florida and Pennsylvania. The timing of the start of the polling differs

from State to State, mainly due to the different time zones. People mostly in the East coast started trickling down to the polling stations as many States opened up the polling stations at around 6 am (4.30 pm IST). These States include Virginia, New York, New Jersey, and Maine. Polling in California starts at 7 am (8.30 pm IST).

Initial reports indicated an early large turnout. In the battleground State of Pennsylvania, hundreds of people were seen outside polling booths even before

the start of the polling. Trump who returned from campaigning in the wee hours of Tuesday urged Americans to vote for him. "VOTE, VOTE, VOTE!" Trump said in a tweet with a short video of him dancing at election rallies.

"Vote like your freedoms, your livelihood, and our future depends on it... Because they do!" said Trump, who is seeking to avoid becoming the first incumbent president to lose a re-election since George H.W. Bush in 1992. Biden also tweeted urging

people to vote. "It's Election Day. Go vote, America!" he tweeted.

"In 2008 and 2012, you placed your trust in me to help lead this country alongside Barack Obama. Today, I'm asking for your trust once again this time, in Kamala and me. We can heal the soul of this nation — I promise we won't let you down," Biden tweeted. His running mate, Kamala Harris, urged voters to not to "allow anything to come between you and your vote".

— PTI

## ELECTION FIGURES FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY

### 100m

Americans had already cast ballots by Tuesday



● 6 crore likely to vote on the real election day on Tuesday

● 16 crore casting votes in a presidential election is a record in itself in terms of turnout after 1900

● 23.9 crore people are eligible to vote, according to the US Election Project

● 90 per cent of their 2016 turnout has been crossed by North Carolina, Georgia, New Mexico, Nevada and Tennessee

● 90 per cent of their 2016 turnout has been crossed by North Carolina, Georgia, New Mexico, Nevada and Tennessee

## WHAT'S 270? THE MATH GAME BEHIND POLL

Washington, Nov. 3: What's all this hubbub about 270? It's not about the 270 whales stranded this fall on Australia's island state of Tasmania. It's not about congestion on Interstate 270 feeding commuters into Washington, D.C. It's about who's going to sit in the White House for the next four years.

### IT'S THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

Nearly 2.9 million more people voted for Hillary Clinton in 2016, but she still lost. Donald Trump won because he took the Electoral College, under a system set up in the US Constitution and refined through the centuries. This is where the magic number comes into play. To win the White House, a candidate must win at least 270 electoral votes. That's a majority of the 538 that are up for grabs in the 50 states.

**THE NUMBERS:** Each state is allotted a different number of electoral votes, based on how many representatives it has in the House, plus its two senators. California has the most electoral votes with 55. Texas is next with 38 electoral votes. The candidate who wins New York or Florida can pocket 29 electoral votes toward the race to get 270. Illinois and Pennsylvania each have 20. Rounding out the top 10 list of states with the most electoral votes is Ohio with 18.

**TRUMP'S BEST PATH:** Trump has several paths to 270, but his best route hinges on winning Florida and Pennsylvania. If he wins both states and holds onto North Carolina and Arizona, which he narrowly carried in 2016, and also Georgia and Ohio, which he won in 2016 but is now competitive, he will win. With 29 electoral votes, Florida is arguably the most crucial state for Trump.



Alkent Pozhegu works on an image of Joe Biden made with grain and seed in Gjakova, Kosovo.

**WHAT BIDEN NEEDS:** Democrat Joe Biden's campaign is laser-focused on the states in the Midwest and close by that Trump flipped in 2016 - Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania. He's also making a big play for Arizona, a state that hasn't backed a Democratic presidential candidate since 1996. Biden is also redoubling his focus on Florida, the biggest prize among the perennial battles.

— AFP

## SECURITY UPPED AS RETAILERS BOARD UP THEIR STORES

Washington/New York, Nov. 3: Security has been tightened at the White House and major commercial avenues across the US, with retailers boarding up their stores to head off any damages as America braced for possible unrest and violence in a bitter and divisive presidential race.

Vital government installations are on high alert while the Secret Service has fortified the White House. A "non-scalable" wall has been temporarily erected around the sprawling presidential complex ahead of the voting on Tuesday. About 600 National Guard troops have also been designated to help respond to protests around the country if requested. On election eve, contractors were seen busy boarding up major stores and businesses from New York and Boston in the north to southern Houston to Washington DC and Chicago in the east to San Francisco in the West.

Stores along the posh 5th Avenue in Manhattan as well as across the New York City boarded up and workers were seen drilling plywood onto the stores' facade amid fears that Election Day could bring violence, looting and clashes like during protests over the death of George Floyd. New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio said he has spoken with Police Commissioner Dermot Shea and there is no specific report or threat of violence.

— PTI

## KEEPING TRADITION: 2 NEW HAMPSHIRE TOWNS CAST VOTES AFTER MIDNIGHT

Dixville Notch (US), Nov. 3: Two tiny New Hampshire communities that vote for president just after the stroke of midnight on Election Day have cast their ballots, with one of them marking 60 years since the tradition began.

The results in Dixville Notch, near the Canadian border, were a sweep for former Vice President Joe Biden who won the town's five votes. In Millsfield, 12 miles (20 kilometers) to the south, President Donald Trump won 16 votes to Biden's five. Normally, there

would be a big food spread and a lot of media crammed into a small space to watch the voting, Tom Tillotson, town moderator in Dixville Notch, said last week. But that's no longer possible because of the Coronavirus pandemic.

It's also hard to observe the 60th anniversary of the tradition, which started in November 1960. "Sixty years — and unfortunately, we can't celebrate it," he said. A third community with midnight voting, Hart's Location, suspended the tradition this election.

— AP

## AMERICA CANNOT AFFORD FOUR MORE YEARS OF TRUMP, ASSERTS HARRIS

Washington, Nov. 3: Attacking Donald Trump on the eve of the US presidential election, Democratic vice presidential nominee Kamala Harris said that the president has failed to lead the country and America can no longer afford four more years of him. "We've seen who we are. The country we love. And that is why I know

77-year-old rival campaigned in Pennsylvania and Ohio, urging Americans to back them in the race for the White House.

"To all of our supporters: Thank you from the bottom of my heart. You have been there from the beginning,

and I will never let you down. Your hopes are my hopes, your dreams are my dreams, and your future is what I am fighting for every single day!" Trump tweeted past mid-night.

"A vote for Sleepy Joe Biden is a vote to give con-

— PTI

trol of government over to Globalists, Communists, Socialists, and Wealthy Liberal Hypocrites who want to silence, censor, cancel, and punish you. Get out and VOTE #MAGA tomorrow!" the president wrote in another tweet, attacking Biden.

The Republican Party in a tweet said, "Let's Make America Great Again and re-elect our fantastic president!" "We made history together four years ago, and tomorrow we're going to make history once again," the ruling party said. Biden, the former US vice president, said he was "running as a proud Democrat, but I will govern as an American president."

"I will work with Democrats and Republicans, and I'll work as hard for those who don't support me as for those who do."

— PTI



Voters check in with election officials before receiving their ballots at Ballard High School in Louisville, United States on Tuesday.

— AFP

## Dems back mail ballot delivery

Philadelphia, Nov. 3: Down to the wire with the threat of court battles looming, supporters of former US vice president Joe Biden scrambled on Monday to rally swing-state voters to drop off ballots, visit precincts in person and ensure that their votes are counted.

As months of President Donald Trump undercutting the legitimacy of mail-in votes gave way to promises he would challenge them in court, both sides made a final push to ensure their supporters turned out, even with the lingering threat of lawsuits aimed at invalidating ballots.

"Do not put ballots in the mail. Hand-deliver

your mail ballot to your county election office, satellite election office or other designated drop box or drop-off location," Pennsylvania's top election official, Secretary of State Kathy Boockvar, a Democrat, said. "Do it today. Do not wait."

With about 700,000 of some 31 lakh requested mail ballots in Pennsylvania still outstanding, some voters like 57-year-old Daniel Pigott took the warning to heart. Pigott stood in a line of dozens of voters, waiting to cast his vote after being alerted that there was a problem with his mail-in ballot. "In a normal election, would I do all this?" asked Pigott.

— AP

## TRUMP CLAIMS HARRIS WANTS TO BE PRESIDENT

Washington, Nov. 3: Claiming that Democratic vice presidential candidate Kamala Harris wants to be the first woman president of the United States, President Donald Trump told his supporters that this is one "good reason" not to vote for his challenger Joe Biden.

"This wonderful woman, she wants to be your first female president. I don't think so. You know, that's a good reason not to vote for sleepy Joe too, right? You don't want to do that," Trump, a Republican, said at a political rally in Kenosha in Wisconsin, a key battleground state on the eve of Tuesday's presidential election. "Biden and Kamala! Does anybody know who Kamala is?" Trump said.

Trump said this in almost all of his election rallies on the last day of his campaigning for the Tuesday presidential elections.

The President has been claiming that if 77-year-old Biden wins Tuesday's elections, his running mate Harris will take over as president in a month's time.

— PTI

## Khamenei mocks US election

Tehran, Nov. 3: Iran's supreme leader mocked America's presidential election Tuesday in a televised address, quoting President Donald Trump's own baseless claims about voter fraud to criticize the vote as Tehran marked the 1979 US Embassy hostage crisis.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei reiterated a long-standing Iranian position that it didn't matter whether Trump or Joe Biden wins the vote, but the stakes couldn't be higher for the

Islamic Republic. Another four years could see Trump's maximum-pressure campaigns further expand as it crushes the Iranian economy and stops Tehran from openly selling its crude oil abroad. Biden meanwhile has said he would consider re-entering Tehran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, providing possible relief to the beleaguered Iranian rial.

"If you look at their own situation, it's lovely to watch. The incumbent

president, who is supposed to hold the elections, says this is the most-rigged US election throughout history," Khamenei said, not acknowledging that individual US states run the vote. "Who says this? The sitting president who is arranging the elections himself. His opponent says Trump intends to widely cheat. This is American democracy," Khamenei added that the result of the vote "is none of our business".

— AP

## ISLAMIST | TERROR

As precaution, UK raises terror threat level from 'substantial' to 'severe' after attacks in Austria, France

# 5 dead in Vienna attack; assailant had previous conviction

Vienna, Nov. 3: Five people died, including an assailant, and 17 others were wounded in a shooting in the heart of Vienna hours before a coronavirus lockdown started. Austrian authorities said Tuesday. The dead attacker was a 20-year-old Austrian-North Macedonian dual national who had a previous terror conviction.

The UK's terror threat level was raised from "substantial" to "severe" on Tuesday, the second-highest alert level which means an attack is now judged to be "highly likely". UK Home

Secretary Priti Patel described the action as a "precautionary measure" following terror attacks in France last week and in Austria this week.

Two men and two women died from their injuries in the attack Monday evening, Chancellor Sebastian Kurz said. The suspected attacker was shot and killed by police. Vienna's hospital service said seven people were in life-threatening condition Tuesday after the attack, the Austrian news agency APA reported.

In total, 17 people were

being treated in hospitals, with gunshot wounds but also cuts. "It is now confirmed that yesterday's attack was clearly an Islamist terror attack," Kurz said. "It was an attack out of hatred — hatred for our fundamental values, hatred for our way of life, hatred for our democracy in which all people have equal rights and dignity."

Interior Minister Karl Nehammer later told APA that the dead assailant, who had roots in the Balkan nation of North Macedonia, had a previous conviction

under a law that punishes membership in terrorist organisations. The attacker, named as Kujtim Fejzulaj, was sentenced to 22 months in prison in April 2019 because he had tried to travel to Syria to join the Islamic State group.

He was granted early release in December under juvenile law. Fifteen house searches have taken place and several people have been arrested, he added. The attacker, he said, "was equipped with a fake explosive vest and an automatic rifle, a handgun and a

machete to carry out this repugnant attack on innocent citizens."

Authorities were still trying to determine whether further attackers may be on the run. People in Vienna were urged to stay at home if possible on Tuesday and children did not have to go to school. Some 1,000 police officers were on duty in Vienna on Tuesday morning. Among those wounded in the attack was a police officer, said Nehammer.

The 28-year-old officer was in the hospital but was no longer in a life-threatening

condition. The shooting began shortly after 8 p.m. (1900 GMT) Monday near Vienna's main synagogue as many people were enjoying a last night of open restaurants and bars before a month-long coronavirus lockdown, which started at midnight. Vienna police chief Gerhard Puerstl said the attacker was killed at 8:09 p.m.

Chancellor Sebastian Kurz said that "we are victims of a despicable terror attack in the federal capital."

— AP



Armed police arrive at the first district near the state opera in central Vienna following a shooting.

— AFP



## DECCAN Chronicle

4 NOVEMBER 2020

### Need to reform mindset of politicians and judges

The nation got a rude jolt, and deservedly so, when Attorney-General of India K.K. Venugopal stood up in the Supreme Court on Monday and told a three-member bench that judges in the trial courts and High Courts must be sensitised on gender justice and the judgments of the apex court in this regard must be taught in judicial academies. Judges should be educated on the necessity of focusing on facts when imposing bail conditions in sexual harassment cases. The country's top law officer made the plainspeak before the bench hearing an appeal against a Madhya Pradesh High Court order granting bail to an accused in a molestation case on the condition that he requested the victim to tie a "rakhi" on his wrist. The A-G was unequivocal in condemning the ritual as "drama" in that context.

Every civilised society revisits the way sexual assaults are treated in such a way that women's rights and gender sensitivity take precedence.

**Both the suggestions of Mr Ramachandran a six-time Lok Sabha member and a former Union minister of state for home and agriculture, carry trouble: if he thinks that a woman can avoid the circumstances that lead to the crime, then the former junior home minister displays criminal ignorance of our social realities**

That this awakening is not reflected in the judiciary is the point the A-G was trying to make. We have judges who think such offences are compoundable; some even direct the marriage between the perpetrator of the crime and the victim, thus sentencing the latter to life-long trauma. As the A-G was speaking in the apex court, the Kerala High Court was forced to defer the trial in the actor assault case after the victim complained that the trial court was biased, hostile and partisan. The silver lining in the whole episode is that the A-G's words carried sufficient weight that the bench assured him that gender sensitisation will be part of its order.

It is not just the judiciary or officialdom that is at fault when it comes to gender sensitivity. The political class is equally or more guilty. It is not long before Kamal Nath, Congress leader, former chief minister and a Union minister for several terms called a woman minister an "item". The latest in this series has come from Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee president Mullappally Ramachandran who said women who have been raped should either commit suicide or avoid circumstances that can lead to the repeat of the crime. Both the suggestions of Mr Ramachandran a six-time Lok Sabha member and a former Union minister of state for home and agriculture, carry trouble: if he thinks that a woman can avoid the circumstances that lead to the crime, then the former junior home minister displays criminal ignorance of our social realities. And if he thinks a rape victim must commit suicide, then his insensitivity is nothing less than criminal. For rape is a crime which takes no mitigating circumstances. Anyone who thinks that the blame, or part of it, can be shifted to the victim is an apologist for the crime and a potential rapist, and must be treated accordingly.

It was a rare moment in our history that the A-G spoke up on the need to reform the judicial mindset, and one hopes for action to follow. The political class, too, must feel the heat, and take early steps to reform itself.

### A win for diversity

She is no longer a Chennaite, nor a Keralite, neither an Indian. Ernakulam native Priyanka Radhakrishnan holds a New Zealand passport only. Yet the elevation of the left-leaning Labour Party leader to the post of minister for diversity, inclusion and ethnic communities in the new Jacinda Ardern government, which also placed its first Maori woman in the shape of foreign minister Nanaia Mahuta as well as half-Maldivian Ayesha Verrall, gladdens Indian hearts. It is the magic of democracy manifest in the brave, new post-globalised world.

Old-timers like to see the 41-year-old Radhakrishnan as a chip off the old block. Her maternal great grandfather, C.R. Krishna Pillai, was a doctor and a communist. He helped shape the political and cultural sensibilities of the people of Kerala and contributed to the formation of the Kerala state. Born to an IIT Kanpur alumnus and a cardiologist, both high achievers, Ms Radhakrishnan went to school in Singapore and proceeded to New Zealand to get her master's degree in development studies from Wellington's Victoria University. She joined politics while in university and stayed on to pursue it, proving her commitment to the welfare of her adoptive community. After entering the Labour Party in 2006, she became an MP first in 2017, then in 2020, from Maungakiekie constituency, entering the New Zealand parliament via the mixed member proportional representative system. She went on to serve as private secretary to Jenny Salesa, former ethnic communities minister. Ms Radhakrishnan's current portfolios also include youth, and community and voluntary sector. She is associate minister for social development and employment.

Ms Radhakrishnan has spent her public life advocating the cause of those whose voices often go unheard — migrant workers and victims of domestic violence in Indian-origin families. She is a votary of gender, race and income equality and community-based decision-making. The trust and responsibility vested in her by the people of her country of choice is a win for diversity and defeat for atavism and narrow identity politics. Welcome the newest kid on the desi diasporic block.

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**KAUSHIK MITTER**  
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DECCAN CHRONICLE offices are located at:

**Hyderabad:** 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad - 500 003, Ph: 040-27803930-4; Fax: 040-27805256  
**Vijayawada:** No.C-3 & 4 Patamata, Industrial Estate, Auto Nagar, Vijayawada (A.P.), Ph: 0866-2555284/2555287; Telefax: 0866-2555234

**Visakhapatnam:** Survey No.1/3A Beach Road, Near Kailasgiri Ropeway, Sector-9 MVP Colony, Visakhapatnam - 530 017 (A.P), Ph: 0891-2552333/2552334; Fax: 0891-2755285

**Rajahmundry:** Vemagiri, Dhawaleswaram Rd, Rajahmundry, Ph: 0883-2417618/2417208; Telefax: 0883-2417208

**Anantapur:** Thapovan colony, Bangalore By-Pass Road, Anantapur - 515004, Ph: 08554-276903; Fax: 08554-276904

**Karimnagar:** Survey No.1341, Vavilapally Colony, Jagityala Road, Karimnagar - 505 001, Ph: 0878-2228908; Telefax: 0878-2220433

**Nellore:** Survey No.527/2, Burrupur Village, Venkatachalam (M), Chennudugunta Panchayat, Nellore, Ph: 0861-2348581/82; Telefax: 0861-2348580

**Chennai:** SP-3 Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, Ph: 044-22254747/ 48/50/51; Advt Fax: 22254765/22254766/42305325

**Coinbatore:** 77, Vivekananda Road, Ramnagar, Coinbatore - 641 009, Ph: 0422 2231255  
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Subhani



## Will Biden win in US, but Trump still be President?



Mohan Guruswamy

The American presidential election is possibly the most widely and closely watched electoral contest in the world. Like Americans, most of the world believes that the US President is the most powerful person in the world. A good part of that notion is attributable to the authority conferred by what is generally believed to be a free and fairly won mandate. But American presidential elections are not without controversy. It is widely believed the 1960 elections that saw John F. Kennedy getting elected by a plurality of less than 100,000 votes was because Chicago mayor Richard Daley, an old-fashioned Democratic party boss, with a wide network of friends in the labour unions and organised crime "stole" the election by ballot stuffing. A popular cry in Chicago in those days was "vote early and vote again and again".

Closer to our times George W. Bush is generally believed to have won in 2000 when a combination of voter fraud, deliberate miscounting and judicial intervention giving him the state of Florida by 537 votes. The state's secretary of state, Kathleen Harris, who was responsible for oversight of the state's elections and certification of the results, had also served as a co-chair of the Bush campaign in Florida. Further, Florida governor Jeb Bush was George W. Bush's brother. Between them they ensured that over 12,000 voters were excluded from the voter list on the grounds that they were all ex-felons. When the Florida Supreme Court ordered a recount in all 67 counties, a conservative leaning US Supreme Court overrode that order and ordered the election be declared. That gave Florida's 25 electoral votes to George W. Bush, winning him the presi-

dency in the Electoral College 271 to 266. This did not become a point of contention though the popular vote was with Al Gore, who got 48.4 per cent while Mr Bush received 47.9 per cent, losing by over 540,000 votes.

America's Presidents are, however, are chosen by the Electoral College, a system in which "electoral votes" are assigned to states based on their population and then awarded as a lump sum to the winner of the popular vote in that state — currently, it takes 270 electoral votes to win. In 2016 Democrat Hillary Clinton took the popular vote by almost 2.9 million votes, with 65,844,954 (48.2 per cent) to Mr Trump's 62,979,879 (46.1 per cent), but Mr Trump won the Electoral College votes 306 to 232.

That is why the US Senate's approval of Amy Coney Barret as a Supreme Court judge and tilting the balance heavily towards the conservatives 6-3 is significant. In 2016, under similar circumstances, the Republican-dominated Senate blocked the appointment of Merrick Garland, Barack Obama's nominee, a full 10 months before his term ended. Republican majority leader Senator Mitch McConnell then argued the elections were close and the people must decide. This time he argued just the opposite. Most observers believe like Bush vs Gore, this year's elections will also end up before the

**In 2016 Democrat Hillary Clinton took the popular vote, but Mr Trump won the Electoral College votes. That is why the US Senate's approval of Amy C. Barret as a Supreme Court judge is significant.**

**The likely outcome that worries observers is this: That the voting boxes and machines may reveal an early Trump lead, but as the postal ballots keep getting counted that lead will start whittling away**

Supreme Court over challenges by a losing President Trump to the huge numbers of postal ballots. Mr Trump has not hidden his views on postal ballots. Time and again he has called them "very dangerous for our country" and "a catastrophe", even calling 2020 the "greatest rigged election in history". The US has about 240 million eligible voters. As of Sunday, over 91 million Americans had already cast their ballots. Surveys have also revealed that almost 60 per cent of Democrats prefer to vote by postal ballot, while in sharp contrast only about a quarter of Republicans were willing to do so.

The likely November 3 outcome that worries observers is this: That the voting boxes and machines may very likely reveal an early Trump lead, but as the postal ballots keep getting counted that lead will start whittling away. This will be keenly watched in borderline states like Texas, Georgia and Florida, which had favoured Mr Trump in 2016. The Trump operatives are expected to scrutinise each and every postal ballot and challenge many. It is estimated that close to 1.3 per cent of postal ballots are rejected on various technicalities. This suggests nearly 110,000 rejected postal ballots. Remember, in Florida in 2000, just 537 votes decided the outcome by requiring the Florida electoral votes to go to George W. Bush. This time, hundreds of Trump lawyer operatives have fanned out and the electoral process can expect to get slowed down by the sheer weight of challenges. Mr Trump has been quite blatantly signalling his troops to hobble the postal ballot count.

Postal ballots will have plenty of flaws for the Trump lawyers to seize upon. For instance, if a voter gives a different address, or a different version of his name such as Joe for Joseph or Richie for Richard, or if there is a variation in signature, any one of them can become a ground for dispute. Now here comes the catch. The states are required to finalise the appointment of the 538 Electoral College members by December 8. The Electoral College has to formally meet by December 14 to "elect" the President. The big question now is what next?

The US and even the world is accustomed to choosing the Electoral College by popular vote, but nothing in the US Constitution says it has to be that way. Article II, Section 1 states: "Each State shall appoint, in such Manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a Number of Electors, equal to the whole Number of Senators and Representatives to which the State may be entitled in the Congress."

Republicans control the governorships and state legislatures in Texas, Georgia and Florida. Thus, these states can, in the absence of a popular vote, appoint the electors. If that happens, given the predicted "red" states voting for him, Donald Trump might very well be deemed to have been elected, or decide he is still the elected US President. The matter will almost certainly have to be resolved by the Supreme Court. But its tendencies are well understood.

Whatever be the Supreme Court's final decision, that is unlikely to come in time before January 20, 2021 when the US traditionally swears in the new President on the steps of the Capitol in Washington D.C.

If that doesn't happen, the world will have to live with President Donald Trump for some more time.

*The writer, a policy analyst studying economic and security issues, held senior positions in government and industry. He also specialises in the Chinese economy.*

#### LETTERS

##### SCHOOLS REOPENING

I do not agree that 42 per cent of student attendance so poor in schools and colleges on reopening of very first day after a gap of seven months that too during the Covid-19 pandemic situation (*Poor turnout seen in schools, colleges in state, DC, Nov. 3*). Even teachers attendance was also very good. The fact is that the fear of Covid-19 is still in the minds of parents as infections are being reporting daily in thousands. I am sure that the attendance of students will gradually improve.

**Bommadevara Sitapati Rao**  
Vijayawada

##### AIR POLLUTION

It's an established fact that the air pollution directly affects the respiratory system and causes an increase in respiratory diseases. The second wave of Coronavirus spread in Europe and America is directly linked to the air pollution levels. More number of cases are concentrated in cities with high levels of pollution. India should take cue from the experiences of the West. The government should dissuade people from bursting crackers. Instead they should be encouraged to light traditional lamps as the act doesn't add to any pollution.

**Bhavani Sishtla**  
Hyderabad

#### 50 YEARS AGO IN

## DECCAN Chronicle

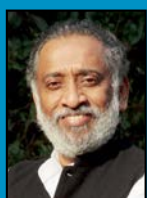
### LIC to give housing loans to policy holders

NEW DELHI, November 3. The Life Insurance Policy holders who want to own flats will be able to get loans from the LIC when a Bill submitted to the Centre goes through Parliament. LIC Chairman T.A. Pai told a news conference here today that he had already sent a draft Bill to this effect to the Union Housing Ministry and the State Government for their consideration.

LIC at present could advance loans only against plots or constructed houses but not against flats.

Mr Pai explained that proposal was to mitigate the sufferings of a number of houseless persons in congested cities like Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Delhi. Under the Bill the national title to the land on which the flat is constructed would be given to LIC to enable it to advance loans.

Dilip Cherian  
Dilli Ka Babu



### Crunch time for officials preparing Budget 2021

The countdown to the annual Budget for 2021-22 has started amid the urgency to push economic growth badly mauled by the Covid-19 pandemic. There is already talk of a third stimulus soon, going by the recent utterances of the finance minister, Nirmala Sitharaman. The Budget-making babus led by finance secretary Ajay Bhushan Pandey have their work cut out. Sources say that the first meeting of the budget preparing exercise took place with officials of the department of financial services as well as MSME, housing, steel and power ministries in attendance. The almost one-month long exercise to finalize the Revised Estimate (RE) for 2020-21 and Budget Estimate for 2021-22 will conclude on November 12 after the expenditure secretary, T.V. Somanathan, completes discussions with other secretaries and financial advisors.

This year, however, due to Covid, the number of participants for the pre-budget meetings may be restricted to a maximum of 5 officers for each meeting from a ministry/department, not below the rank of director.

For the Modi sarkar, the next Budget will be crucial since it will have to deal with the impact of the pandemic on revenue collection, disinvestment, expenditure, export and food prices. The indications are gloomy with the IMF forecasting that the economy will shrink by 10.3 per cent. Even the Reserve Bank of India has similarly opined that it will shrink by 9.5 per cent. The Budget will have to address critical issues pertaining to growth contraction and subdued revenue collection due to the pandemic.

**MAHARASHTRA'S BIG IPS MUDDLE**  
As many as 36 IPS officers in

Maharashtra are awaiting new postings and the unprecedented delay has given the Opposition BJP a handle to criticise the state chief minister Uddhav Thackeray. Among the officers on the "wait" list are 15 SP-rank officers besides high-profile top cop Devan Bharti.

Mr Bharti, a 1994-batch officer has not been assigned a new posting but continues as ADG (Anti-Terrorism Squad) since he has not been relieved despite being transferred!

Sources say that this situation has created unease in the force, since the state government's refusal to clear the air, has only led to more rumours.

It is well-known by now that Mr Thackeray wasn't too pleased with the transfer of cops effected by the Mumbai Police Commissioner in July when he reshuffled 10-DCP rank officers in consultation with the government. Later, the trans-

fers were put on hold. Clearly, there is uncertainty and perhaps sharp differences on the issue within the government, even as the wait grows longer.

The government says the "exercise" will be completed soon, but that may be little relief to the cops forced to cool their heels waiting for a decision.

#### IAS VS OTHERS IN HARYANA

The tussle between the IAS and other services is a constant factor in any government. The resignation of Jagdeep Dhandha, president of the Haryana Civil Service Officers' Association, has blown the lid off the resentment among a section of Haryana IAS officers. They feel that the Manohar Khattar government is allowing the "usurping" of IAS cadre posts by other services. Sources inform that Mr Dhandha resigned to express his resentment over the appointment

of HCS officers in the state transport department.

This feeling has peaked after the latest round of transfers issued by the state government. While an IPS officer was posted as the principal secretary and another was given the charge of managing director of one of the two power utilities in the state, an IFS officer was also posted as the principal secretary. Further, the state government has posted DSPs and employment officers against the post of district transport officers (DTOs), causing heartburn among officers of the state civil services.

Apparently, after confabulations, a senior officer has been deputed to write to the chief minister on posting officers of other services against IAS cadre posts.

*Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@Twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect.*



## quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	40,261.13	1.27
Nifty 50	11,813.50	1.24
S&P 500*	3,375.99	1.99
Dollar (₹)	74.40	0.04
Pound Sterling (₹)	96.25	-0.47
Euro (₹)	86.77	-0.23
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	50,735.55	0.10
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	39.74	0.77
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.898	0.008
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.877	0.029

\* As of 8:30 PM IST

## Exports dip 5.4%, trade deficit narrows by 25%

With sharp decline in shipments of petroleum products, gems and jewellery, and leather, India's merchandise exports fell 5.4 per cent to \$24.82 billion in October from \$26.23 billion a year ago. Imports also fell 11.56 per cent to \$33.6 billion. "India was thus a net importer in October 2020 with a trade deficit of \$8.78 billion, as compared to trade deficit of \$11.76 billion, an improvement by 25.34 per cent," the government said.

## Zydus Cadila files Covid drug application



Drug firm Zydus Cadila said it has filed the investigational new drug (IND) application for its small molecule candidate ZYL1, positioned for management of critically ill Covid-19 patients. "Following up on its initiatives to fight Covid-19 with diagnostics, vaccines and therapeutics, the company is now focussing on cutting edge research to bring targeted therapies," Zydus Cadila said in a regulatory filing.

## Future Retail files caveat in Delhi High Court

Kishore Biyani led-Future Group has filed a caveat before the Delhi High Court requesting it to be heard if any plea is filed by Amazon over its ₹24,713 crore deal with Mukesh Ambani-led RIL. Anticipating a move by Amazon, which had got an interim arbitration award in its favour, the Future Group firm has moved the Delhi High Court. Let no order of any kind be passed...without due notice," it urged the court.

## Singapore to discontinue S\$1,000 notes

Singapore will discontinue the circulation of 1,000 Singapore dollar (SGD) notes from the beginning of next year to counter money laundering and terror financing risks. A limited quantity of SGD 1,000 notes will be made available each month from now until December 2020, said the Monetary Authority of Singapore. Existing SGD 1,000 notes in circulation will remain legal tender and can continue to be used.



## ■ Gets in-principal nod for signing deal Adani set to develop Lanka's port terminal

ARCHANA CHAUDHARY, P. R. SANJAI & ASANTHA SIRIMANNE NOV. 3

Adani Group is the front-runner to develop Sri Lanka's stalled East Container Terminal in Colombo port, people with knowledge of the matter said, helping billionaire Gautam Adani expand his port business overseas. Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd and a local partner received an in-principle approval to sign a deal with Sri Lanka Ports Authority, which will hold majority stake in the project, the people said, asking not to be identified, citing rules for speaking with the media.

Details of the stake holding are still being worked out after a review of the project following labour protests that had stalled the deal before parliamentary elections in August, they said.

India's foreign ministry and the Adani Group didn't respond to requests seeking comments. Adani, India's biggest ports and logistics company, had signed a preliminary agreement for the project last year.

Work on reviving the project, being jointly developed by Sri Lanka, India and Japan, comes at a time of rising regional tensions with China. Both India and Japan are members of the informal Quad grouping that along with US and Australia is seen as a counter to Beijing's influence in the Indo-Pacific region.



## APSEZ Q2 NET PROFIT UP 32%

New Delhi, Nov. 3: Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Limited on Tuesday reported a 31.57 per cent increase in its consolidated profit to Rs 1,393.69 crore for the second quarter. Its total consolidated income rose to Rs 3,423.16 crore against Rs 3,326.90 crore in the year-ago period. —PTI

While the deal was agreed upon last year, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa had announced a review after protests by labour unions who feared foreign control over the strategic project, according to reports. The island nation had earlier depended heavily on China for its infrastructure development in the first half of this decade, creating tensions with New Delhi.

The neighbours began rebuilding trade and investment ties before the coronavirus pandemic struck. In July, India extended a \$400 million currency swap facility to Colombo to assist with post-pandemic economic recovery. The two countries also discussed deferring of debt repayment during Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa's first high-level virtual meeting since his re-election with India's Narendra Modi in September.

Sri Lanka—which emerged from a three-decade civil war in 2009—was known for taking Chinese loans to fund vast infrastructure projects, including ports and highways, which eventually became part of Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative. Its appetite for Chinese cash waned after rising debt forced it to sell the Hambantota port back to China Merchants Port Holdings. —Bloomberg

## Abu Dhabi fund first to get 100% tax exemption

New Delhi, Nov. 3: Abu Dhabi's sovereign wealth fund (SWF)—MIC Redwood 1 RSC—has been granted 100 per cent income tax exemption for investments to be made in specified infrastructure sectors, the finance ministry said on Tuesday.

With this, the income from interest, dividend and long-term capital gains for the SWF's investment in India's priority sectors has been exempted, the ministry said in a statement.

MIC Redwood 1 RSC has become the first foreign SWF that has been notified and granted 100 per cent income-tax exemption for the long-term investments to be made in the specified priority sectors in India, the ministry said.

India has gradually opened up the economy for FDI, except for a few sectors, and also extended tax concessions for sovereign funds to attract long-term investments in the infrastructure sectors.

A tax official said that to expedite foreign investment in India's priority areas during the pandemic, the process of notification of MIC Redwood 1 RSC was completed in a record time.

To incentivise long-term investment by SWFs in the priority sectors, the government through the Finance Act, 2020, had granted a 100 per cent income tax exemption to notified SWFs on investment made in the specified infra sectors. —PTI

## PSBs won't raise deposit, withdrawal charges: Govt

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, NOV. 3

Public sector banks will not be raising bank charges in the near future in view of the Covid-19 pandemic, the government informed the public on Tuesday. The government quashed media reports claiming a steep increase in service charges by state-owned banks.

The finance ministry, in a press release, cited the RBI guidelines which allow all banks, including public sector banks, to levy charges for their services in a fair, transparent and non-discriminatory manner on the basis of the costs involved. However, the ministry said that all the public sector banks have said that they do not propose to raise bank charges in the near future considering the Covid-19 pandemic.

Alluding to media reports of steep increases

## STIMULUS SOON, SAYS SECY

New Delhi, Nov. 3: Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman will soon announce the next set of stimulus package, economic affairs secretary Tarun Bajaj said.

The finance ministry is looking into suggestions received from various sectors, he said in a virtual media conference on Tuesday. "We have received a lot of requests and comments from various sectors and we are looking into it. Very soon it will be unveiled. The finance minister will come out and speak to you on that," he said. —PTI

in service charges by public sector banks, the ministry issued a "factual position".

"There have been several media reports alluding to steep increase in service charges by certain public sector banks (PSBs). In this context, the factual position is as follows: No service charge is applicable on the 60.04 crore Basic Savings Bank Deposit accounts, including 41.13 crore Jan Dhan accounts opened by the poor and unbanked segments of society, for the free services prescribed by RBI," said the ministry.

The government clarification comes close on the heels of Bank of Baroda announcing on Sunday that it will be charging customers for deposits, withdrawals above certain limits, which would be effective November 1, 2020. However, the ministry on Tuesday said that owing to the ongoing coronavirus situation in the country, the state-owned lender has "decided to withdraw the changes".

## Lockdown hurts new investments

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, NOV. 3

The pandemic-induced lockdown led to a sharp fall in new investments in the first half (H1) of the current fiscal year (FY21). New project investment announcements plunged by 69 per cent at Rs 1.5 lakh crore compared with Rs 4.8 lakh crore during the same period last year, Care Ratings said.

Though Andhra Pradesh had the highest share of 23 per cent in the capex project

announced in H1FY20, totalling Rs 1.1 lakh crore, the state slipped to No. 2 spot after Tamil Nadu in FY21, with a share of 11 per cent of the investments proposed.

Investments announced for new projects have been falling for the past five years for the April-September period with the exception of H1 FY19 where it rose by 29 per cent year-on-year.

"As the enterprises were faced with Covid-19 induced challenges, they

focussed on survival. Hence the decline in capex investments (in H1 FY21) was somewhat expected," Care Ratings said.

"Companies for now seem to be focussing on normalising their business operations. Hence, it is expected that capacity expansion may not be in the pipeline soon."

There was an 81 per cent decline in projects announced by government, to Rs 0.6 lakh crore in H1 FY21 from Rs 3.2 lakh crore in H1 FY20.

## World's best-performing airline stock is Jet Air

ANURAG KOTOKY & NUPUR ACHARYA NOV. 3

All airlines are feeling the coronavirus pinch but one that hasn't flown since April 2019 after collapsing under a pile of debt is the world's best performing—at least from a share price point of view.

The stock in Mumbai-listed Jet Airways India Ltd has surged almost 150 per cent this year versus a 42 per cent plunge in the 27-member Bloomberg World Airlines Index, which comprises the globe's biggest carriers.

The stock has hit a 52-week high of Rs 71.85 per share on the BSE on Tuesday, rising gradually from its 52-week low Rs 13.

Its runaway gains have market watchers scratching their heads, especially since Jet Air is undergoing bankruptcy proceedings, has almost 17,000 creditors seeking claims of around \$3.4 billion and has had most of its landing slots confiscated. It doesn't have any employees to speak of, either.



A panel of creditors did approve a resolution plan last month, bringing the recovery of any dues one step closer, but that doesn't guarantee a resumption of flights.

Retail investors are the last ones to get anything out of a bankruptcy, yet some are buying in the hope Jet Airways will successfully emerge from a restructuring, said Ajay Srivastava, MD of advisory firm Dimensions Corporate Finance Services. The airline isn't being thought of as a going concern, but a shell containing assets that may be sold, he said.

The resolution plan for Jet Airways was submitted by two individuals, Murari Lal Jalan and Florian Fritsch, exchange filings show. Jalan is a businessman with investments in India, Russia and Uzbekistan. Fritsch is the chairman of Kalrock Capital Management Ltd, a London-based financial advisory and alternative asset manager. The filings don't state how the men plan to restructure the airline.

Other investors may be hoping Jet Airways goes "the Ruchi Soya way," Srivastava said, referring to the stock that rocketed on thin volumes after an insolvency plan was approved.

Ruchi Soya Industries Ltd was acquired by a consortium led by Baba Ramdev's Patanjali Ayurved Ltd late last year. The founders held 99 per cent of Ruchi Soya's capital as of March 31. Its shares surged almost 500-fold on tiny volumes before paring gains. —Bloomberg

## Govt investment in weather forecast pays off: Survey

New Delhi, Nov. 3: Investments of nearly Rs 1,000 crore on the National Monsoon Mission and the High Performance Computing programme of the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) over the past five years have generated economic benefits worth Rs 50,000 crore for farmers, livestock rearers and fishermen, a survey has shown.

The study conducted by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) was based on a face-to-face survey of 6,098 respondents—3,965 crop farmers, 757 marine fishermen and 1,376 livestock owners. Responses from over 2 lakh farmers were also collected through an interactive voice response system.

"The report provides an estimated income gain of nearly Rs 13,000 crore per year for agricultural and livestock farmers and an incremental benefit of nearly Rs 48,000 crore," the ministry said.

The report was launched by earth sciences minister Harsh Vardhan at an event here on Tuesday.

A total of Rs 551 crore



Harsh Vardhan minister

was spent on the National Monsoon Mission while Rs 990 crore was incurred on the High Performance Computing programme to better weather forecast.

For every rupee invested in the National Monsoon Mission and high-performance computing facilities of the ministry, the country has gained benefits worth Rs 50, resulting in 50-fold gains, it said.

"On adding the economic gain accruing to agricultural households and fisher households, the present value of benefits accruing to the BPL households to rain-fed areas works out to be Rs 50,447 crore."

"The current level of investment is far less in comparison to the realisable benefits over the period of five years," the report said. —PTI

## PERFORMANCE STREET

### SUN PHARMA Q2 NET PROFIT UP 70%

Sun Pharmaceutical Industries reported a 70.36 per cent jump in its consolidated net profit to Rs 1,812.79 crore for the September 2020 quarter against Rs 1,064.09 crore a year ago, mainly on robust sales and exceptional tax gains. Consolidated revenue from operations stood at Rs 8,553.13 crore versus Rs 8,123.35 crore. "Tax gain (exceptional) for the quarter ended September 30, 2020, is on account of creation of deferred tax asset amounting to Rs 288.28 crore," the firm said.

### GODREJ PROPERTIES Q2 NET DROPS 78%

Godrej Properties reported a 78 per cent fall in its consolidated net profit at Rs 7.10 crore for the September quarter on lower income. Its net profit stood at Rs 31.57 crore in the year-ago period. Total income fell to Rs 250.23 crore from Rs 395.11 crore. Sales bookings stood at Rs 1,074 crore during the quarter compared to Rs 1,446 crore a year ago.

### DEEPAK FERTILIZERS NET PROFIT SOARS

Deepak Fertilizers and Petrochemicals posted an over three-fold jump in its consolidated net profit to Rs 80.55 crore for the second quarter against Rs 25.50 crore posted in the year-ago quarter. Net income rose to Rs 1,418.47 crore from Rs 1,181.47 crore.

### MUTHOOT FINANCE Q2 NET RISES 2.5%

Muthoot Finance reported a 2.5 per cent rise in consolidated net profit at Rs 930.80 crore for Q2 versus Rs 908.54 crore a year ago. Total income grew 17.4 per cent to Rs 2,824.19 crore from Rs 2,406.39 crore. Consolidated loan assets under management grew 29 per cent to Rs 52,286 crore. Standalone net profit rose to Rs 894.39 crore.

## NUTRITIOUS | STAPLE

## 28,000 mills need to be equipped with blending machines

# Mills to be roped in for fortified rice supply

## HOW RICE IS FORTIFIED

Fortification is done to increase the content of an essential micronutrient, i.e. vitamins and minerals in a food, so as to improve the nutritional quality of the food supply. Fortified rice kernels are produced by passing a mixture of rice flour and micronutrients through an extruder or pasta-making machine. The kernels are then

added to traditional rice, usually in a ratio of 1:100. Fortified rice looks, cooks and tastes like normal rice.

Rice kernels can be fortified with several micronutrients, such as iron, folic acid and other B-complex vitamins, vitamin A and zinc as part of public health strategy. —FC Bureau

It was felt that "there is a need to scale up the supply of fortified rice kernels (FRK), whose availability currently is at a meagre quantity of 15,000 tonnes per annum."

"FCI has been asked to tie up with the rice mills in different regions for necessary investments in this regard," the ministry said. The operational readiness of FCI would help in scaling up procurement and supply of fortified rice in a phased manner from 2021-22 onwards, it added.

The meeting also discussed supply chain and other logistics requirements to scale up the scheme to cover the Integrated Child Development Scheme

(ICDS) and Mid Day Meal (MDM) scheme in aspirational districts' first.

It was felt that covering 112 aspirational districts for PDS, ICDS and MDM scheme would require nearly 130 lakh tonnes of fortified rice for which FRK supply capacity in the country needs to go up to nearly 1.3 lakh tonnes.

If the entire rice supplied through PDS, which comes to 350 lakh tonnes, is to be fortified, there has to be an uninterrupted supply pipeline of FRK from the industry of about 3.5 lakh tonnes.

Further, there are nearly 28,000 rice mills in the country which need to be equipped with blending machines for mixing FRK with normal rice. —PTI

New Delhi, Nov. 3: The government on Tuesday said the Food Corporation of India (FCI) has been asked to tie up with rice mills for increasing supply of fortified rice via ration shops and other welfare schemes.

Currently, out of the 15 states identified for the 'Central scheme on fortified rice and its distribution via public distribution system (PDS)', five states are implementing the scheme in one district each.

Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Chhattisgarh have started distribution of fortified rice in their identified districts.

The way to scale up the central scheme was dis-

cussed in a meeting held on Tuesday between Niti Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant and Department of Food and public distribution secretary Sudhanshu

Pandey and other stakeholders like Tata Trust, World Food Programme, Nutrition International, among others, the food ministry said.



