

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM | TUESDAY | 1 DECEMBER 2020



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WEATHER

Max: 30.0°C
Min: 19.0°C
RH: 73%
Rainfall: NIL

Forecast: Partly Cloudy.
Max/Min temp.
30/19 °C

COVID-19 CUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+32,003)	(+496)
94,62,727	1,37,648

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+593)	(+3)
TS: 2,69,816	1,458
(+381)	(+4)
AP: 8,68,064	6,992

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

6,33,28,744

DEATHS

14,69,684

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES

218

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana

Tithi: Kartika Shuddha Pournami till 2.57 pm

Star: Rohini till 8.28 am

Varjyam: 2.34 pm to 4.18 pm

Durmuhurtam: 8.46 am to 9.31 am; 10.47 pm to 11.39 pm

Rahukalam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm

HJRI CALENDAR

Rabbi-ul Akhir 15, 1442 AH

PRAYERS (ROYAL MOSQUE)

Fajar: 5.30 am

Zohar: 1.30 pm

Asar: 4.15 pm

Maghrib: 5.38 pm

Isha: 8.30 pm

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.16 AM

SUNSET TODAY 5.27 PM

MOONRISE TODAY 6.16 PM

MOONSET TOMORROW 7.45 AM

COUNTER POINT

Believe me, these are local elections not Lok Sabha!

SHORT TAKE

Cibil data hints at people buying

Mumbai: Banks' requests for information on credit card borrowers or 'credit card inquiries' in October surpassed the same in the year-ago period, a credit information company said on Monday. This phenomenon suggests consumer economic activity has materially improved since the easing of Covid-19 lockdown measures, Transunion Cibil said. It can be noted that the festivities, coupled with pent-up demand, had resulted in improvement in many economic indicators in October. However, many observers are skeptical whether the same will continue ahead.

Indian made Bata global CEO

New Delhi: International footwear major Bata Shoe Organisation on Monday announced the elevation of its India CEO Sandeep Kataria to the post of global CEO Bata Brands. Kataria thus becomes the first Indian to be elevated to global role of the footwear major, Bata said in a statement. He takes over from Alexis Nasard, who is stepping down after almost five years in the role, it added. Kataria, who joined Bata India as CEO in 2017 had earlier worked with Unilever, Yum Brands and Vodafone in India and Europe.



Farmers gather at the Singhu border during their ongoing Delhi Chalo protest against Centre's new farm laws, in New Delhi, on Monday. — PTI

Modi says Cong misled farmers for several years

Denies any intention to deceive farmers

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 30

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, facing nationwide protests by farmers across the country against the recently introduced farm laws, on Monday blamed the Opposition's sustained misinformation campaign which, he said, was making farmers suspicious of the reformist laws introduced by his NDA government.

Attacking the previous Congress-led governments for misleading farmers over the years, Mr Modi, while inaugurating the six-lane project of Varanasi-Allahabad highway in Varanasi, where he was on a day-long visit, said, "I know that decades of falsehood do put apprehensions in the minds of farmers. I want to say this from the bank of Mother Ganga — we are not working with the intention of deceiving. Our intentions are as holy as the water of river Ganga."

Mr Modi's clarification has come at a time when farmers from several states have launched massive protests against the three farm laws, demanding that they be scrapped.

Alleging that these laws are anti-farmers and pro-corporate, thousands of farmers have been camping outside the five entry

Farmers all for decisive battle

SANJAY KAW and BHASKAR HARI SHARMA
NEW DELHI, NOV. 30

Refusing to budge, the farmers protesting against the Centre's new laws on agricultural reforms at the Delhi-Haryana border said on Monday that they were in the nation's capital for a "decisive battle" and that their agitation will continue until their demands are met.

Thousands of protesters who have been spending cold nights at the Singhu and Tikri borders for the past five days got a shot in the arm with some Haryana khap panchayats deciding to join their agitation from Tuesday.

The farmers' protests have not only affected vehicular movement across

the Delhi-NCR region, but also hit the supply of essential commodities to the national capital.

Soon after Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke in defence of the farm laws in Varanasi, a representative of the protesting farmers said they want him to listen to their "mann ki baat". "Our demands are non-negotiable," he added. The representative went on to say that the ruling party "will have to pay a heavy price" if it does not pay heed to their concerns. "We have come here to fight a decisive battle," he said.

Farmers' leader Gurnam Singh Chaduni said around 31 cases have been registered against the protesters so far to "suppress" their agitation.

points of the national capital as a mark of a peaceful protest against the laws even as home minister Amit Shah and agriculture minister Narendra Tomar have been holding parleys to end the crisis.

The farmers, who refused

to accept Mr Shah's proposal to meet in Delhi's Burari ground, have threatened to gherao Delhi if the laws are not scrapped, and said that the government should not speak to them with "preconditions".

Biden suffers fracture on foot while playing with his dog

Washington, Nov. 30: US President-elect Joe Biden has hairline fractures in his mid-foot and will likely require a walking boot for several weeks, his doctor said, after the Democratic leader slipped while playing with his dog.

Biden twisted his ankle on Saturday when he slipped while playing with Major, his two-year-old German shepherd.



Biden, who celebrated his 78th birthday on November 20, is set to be the oldest president in US history when he is inaugurated on January 20.

To avoid disrupting regularly scheduled appointments on Monday, arrangements were made for Biden to receive an X-ray and then an additional CT scan on Sunday.

US President Donald Trump, a Republican, who has not yet conceded the November 3 presidential election, tweeted, "Get well soon!" — PTI

BRIGHT | HOPE

US biotech firm to seek approvals for emergency sale of its vaccine, gets ready 2 crore doses

Moderna claims its vaccine works 100% for severe Covid

New York, Nov. 30: US biotechnology company Moderna said on Monday that it will request the United States and European regulators to issue an emergency authorisation for its coronavirus vaccine, which it said is 100 per cent effective against severe Covid-19 cases.

Moderna said the primary efficacy analysis of the Phase-3 study of its vaccine candidate mRNA-1273 conducted on 196 cases indicates a vaccine efficacy of

94.1 per cent. While the vaccine efficacy against Covid-19 was 94.1 per cent, vaccine efficacy against severe Covid-19 was 100 per cent, the company said.

"This positive primary analysis confirms the ability of our vaccine to prevent Covid-19 disease with 94.1 per cent efficacy and importantly, the ability to prevent severe Covid-19 disease. We believe that our vaccine will provide a new and powerful tool that may change the course of this

pandemic and help prevent severe disease, hospitalisations and death," Moderna CEO Stéphane Bancel said. Bancel said the company "will file today for an Emergency Use Authorisation from the US FDA and continue forging ahead with the rolling reviews that have already been initiated with several foreign regulatory agencies."

Moderna anticipates that the shipping of the vaccine to designated distribution points throughout the US

● **BASED ON prior analysis, the most common side effects for Moderna vaccine included injection site pain, fatigue, headache, and redness at the injection site.**

will occur shortly after an Emergency Use Authorisation is granted.

The company has already initiated the rolling review process with other global regulatory bodies such as

Health Canada, Swiss-Medic, the UK Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency, Israel's health ministry, and Singapore's Health Sciences Authority and intends to seek prequalification and/or Emergency Use Listing with the World Health Organisation.

The Phase 3 study, known as the COVE study, enrolled more than 30,000 participants in the US. The company said efficacy was consistent across age, race

and ethnicity, and gender demographics.

The 196 Covid-19 cases included 33 older adults (ages 65+) and 42 participants identifying as being from diverse communities (including 29 Hispanic or Latin, six Black or African Americans, four Asian Americans and three multiracial participants).

Based on prior analysis, the most common side effects included injection site pain, fatigue, headache, and redness at the

injection site. The company will submit data from the Phase 3 study to a peer-reviewed publication.

Moderna is working with US and global stakeholders to be prepared for distribution of the vaccine in the event that it receives approvals. By the end of 2020, it expects to have two crore doses of the vaccine available in the US and remains on track to manufacture 500 million to 1 billion doses globally in 2021.

— PTI

AP passes seven Bills in first House session

Jagan accuses TD of making needless fuss over PR Bill

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 30

The State Legislative Assembly passed as many as seven Bills during its first session on Monday amid walkout by members of main opposition Telugu Desam Party over passage of the Andhra Pradesh Panchayat Raj (Amendment) Bill – 2020.

TD legislators contended that the Bill cannot be passed as the AP Legislative Council had returned the Bill. Before their walkout, TD legislators, including TDLDP deputy leader K. Atchannaidu, rushed to the podium and raised slogans objecting to passing of the Bill.

They sought fresh discussions on it.

Amid the pandemonium, Assembly Speaker Tammineni Sitaram declared that the Panchayat Raj Amendment Bill has been passed by voice vote. At this, Opposition TDP members walked out of the house.

Earlier, Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy intervened pointing out that the Bill had earlier been passed by the Assembly and sent to the council, which returned it with some amendments.

"This is the second time the Bill is being tabled in the House and its passage is now just a formality," he pointed out, accusing the Opposition of needlessly making it an issue.

The Chief Minister explained that the Panchayat Raj Amendment Bill has provisions to check malpractices in elections, including use of money power, besides expediting the schedule of elections.

Earlier, panchayat raj minister Ramachandra Reddy explained the

CBN suspended for 1st time ever

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 30

Telugu Desam supremo and Opposition leader N. Chandrababu Naidu got suspended for the first time in his career when he squatted in the podium of the Assembly along with 14 Telugu Desam legislators and created a ruckus on the first day AP Assembly's Winter Session Monday.

They did not listen to Speaker Tammineni Sitaram's repeated requests to return to their seats prompting Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to accuse the Opposition leader of deliberately disrupting the House. "I also worked as Opposition leader but never tried to disrupt the House," Jagan said.

Naidu turned edgy during a short discussion on release of compensation to farmers and objected to statements made by agriculture minister Kurasala Kannababu and other YSRC legislators before rushing to the podium to

protest.

The TD legislators accused the YSRC of not letting them speak about flood relief to farmers. Initially, TD MLA Nimmala Rama Naidu was allowed to speak on cyclone Nivar flood damages and relief but he faced constant counter-attack from the Treasury benches. When TD MLAs objected to this, it created a flutter. Intervening on the issue, the CM clarified that the officials were asked to complete the enumeration of losses by December 15 and pay compensation by December 31.

Naidu then asked the Speaker to give him the mic to counter the CM but it was denied as Rama Naidu was speaking. Other TD legislators demanded Mr Naidu be allowed to speak but the same was once again denied.

■ **Page 2: CM slams TD for 'rowdiness' in House**

■ **Page 2: Angry Naidu breaks Assembly traditions**

Aquaculture Seed (Quality Control) (Amendment) Bill 2020, AP Fisheries University Bill, 2020 and AP Animal Feed (Regulation of Manufacture, Quality Control, Sale and Distribution) bill 2020. Home minister M. Sucharita tabled the AP Gaming (Amendment) Bill 2020 while municipal administration minister Botsa Satyanarayana

NO FARMER WILL CRY DURING MY GOVERNANCE: CM

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 30

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy extended input subsidy to farmers affected by rain and assured that no farmer will have to cry for government support.

He also promised to release insurance claims worth ₹12,027 crore on December 15.

Explaining the relief being extended to farmers affected by cyclonic storm Nivar in the Assembly here on Monday, the CM said that it was for the first time ever that relief and input subsidy was being provided to affected farmers in the same season unlike the earlier practice of doing so after a long time.

He also announced procurement of discoloured and sprouted paddy from farmers by paying them appropriately.

Jagan said the Cyclone Nivar damaged crops and infrastructure in the state.

■ **Page 2: Relief to farmers by December 31: CM**

introduced the AP Municipal Laws (Second Amendment) Bill 2020.

All the bills introduced were passed.

In the morning, the BAC decided that the AP Assembly winter session will be restricted to only five days as many of the legislators are in the age group of 60-70 years and precautions needed to be taken in view of the Coronavirus pandemic.

AP relieved, Cyclone Burevi not to cause damage in state

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 30

Andhra Pradesh breathed a sigh of relief as the tropical system in the Bay of Bengal which is very likely to turn into a cyclonic storm (Burevi) in the next 24 hours, is moving towards the South of Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka. Earlier, it was projected that the storm will hit Tamil Nadu-Puducherry coast bringing heavy rains to most of the places in South AP.

However, the latest forecast has predicted heavy rain in isolated places over south Coastal Andhra Pradesh on December 2 and 3. IMD

● **THE LATEST forecast has predicted heavy rain in isolated places over south Coastal Andhra Pradesh on December 2 and 3. The depression coupled with a cyclonic circulation is pulling away from the Nicobar Islands.**

gives red alert only to Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

According to weather experts at IMD, depression over South East Bay of Bengal moved West NorthWest wards and lay centered over the same region, about 680 km east-southeast of Trincomalee. The system is very likely to intensify further into a

deep depression over the next 12 hours and into a cyclone during the subsequent 24 hours.

Once the system intensifies into a cyclone, it will be named 'Burevi' as per the naming guidelines set by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO). Unlike Nivar, Burevi may not turn into a very severe cyclone as the Bay of Bengal lacks the energy to feed the system further. However, the system is likely to reach a maximum intensity of 60-70 kmph gusting to 80 kmph and bring very heavy rains across southern Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka.

The depression coupled with a cyclonic circulation is pulling away from the Nicobar Islands. The system will progress west-northwest ward toward Sri Lanka and cross the island country's coast by Wednesday night. It will travel over enough warm water to become a cyclone and start to influence Tamil Nadu coast from Wednesday onwards bringing isolated heavy rain and thunderstorms.

Burevi will be the fifth cyclone over the North Indian Ocean this year, after Amphan, Nisarga, Gati and Nivar. It is expected to be the least destructive of all if the projections hold true.

OTHER STORIES

CM RELEASES
BROCHURE ON
WOMEN'S MARCHDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 30

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy released a brochure on the 100-day Women's March in his cabin at AP Legislative Assembly here on Monday.

The march, initiated by the AP Women Commission, to create awareness about government programmes, will be held for 100 days till March 8.

During the march, the women will organise various programmes to create awareness on the warfare schemes of state, which include Navaratnalu, liquor prohibition in phases, Disha App and the like. The Commission will hold awareness seminars on cyber crimes for college students in all districts across the state for 100 days.

Women and child welfare minister Thaneti Vanitha, DGP Gautam Sawang, Andhra Pradesh Women's Commission chairperson Vasireddy Padma, APIIC chairperson R.K. Roja, Agriculture Special Chief Secretary Poonam Malakondaiah, Women and Child Welfare Chief Secretary A.R. Anuradha, Women's Commission Director R. Suyaz were present at the event.

POLICE START
INTERROGATION
OF DR RAMESHDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 30

The police have started inquiring Ramesh Hospitals managing director Pothineni Ramesh Babu on the first day of three days permitted by the AP High Court to find out a series of issues including the circumstances leading to the fire mishap at Swarna Palace hotel claiming the death of 10 patients and causing injuries to several patients.

The custodial interrogation of Dr Ramesh Babu is being done under the supervision of additional DCP Ch. Lakshmi-pathi.

Sources say that the doctor is responding to the queries being raised by the police on several issues including those on sending some patients to the Covid Care Centre set up at Swarna Palace hotel and failing to keep a proper vigil on their safety, allegations of overcharging patients and details of the agreement between the hospital and the hotel to run Covid Care Centre and others. The custodial interrogation will continue up to December 2 at 5 pm.

SOMIREDDY FOR
₹25K RELIEF FOR
WEAVERS, FARMERSDC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, NOV. 30

TD politburo member and former minister Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy demanded that the government should pay ₹15,000 compensation to the paddy farmers and ₹25,000 to horticulture farmers while pointing to crop damages in 12 lakh acres across Andhra Pradesh state due Cyclone Nivar.

He said there was large scale damage to horticulture crops such as banana, betel leaves plantation and vegetables among other related crops apart from paddy while justifying his demand.

Speaking to media persons here on Monday, the senior TD leader said that farmers in the state had suffered a loss of ₹8,000 crore this year.

He rebuked the legislators of SPSPR Nellore district for their failure to explain the ground realities to the CM to obtain suitable compensation for the farming community.

"No officials were found on the field for assessing the crop losses in the district, and there is an urgent need to increase the compensation keeping the MSP in view. Even the NDRF guidelines for provision of funds are not being followed," alleged Mr Reddy.

He has also demanded financial assistance of ₹25,000 and 25 kg of rice to handloom weavers as well as the people who lost their livelihood due to the heavy rainfall in the state.

The former agriculture minister also explained that the farmers in the district had suffered crop damages and loss in disposing of the harvested paddy to the extent of ₹400 crore. He pulled up the irrigation officials for their failure to monitor the situation at the Somasila reservoir. He alleged that they have failed to alert the administration before releasing huge volumes of water from the reservoir.

Assembly resolves to take action against Naidu

Ruling party members objected to the sit-in protest within the well of the House by the former CM

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 30

Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy and other members of the ruling party vehemently protested against the conduct of Leader of Opposition (LOP) N. Chandrababu Naidu in the State Legislative Assembly on Monday.

The ruling YSRC went on to adopt a resolution in the Assembly seeking action against the former chief minister.

Trouble started during a discussion on agriculture with the leader of Opposition rushing to the podium and staging a sit-in within the well of the House during the discussion. Ruling party members objected to this behaviour which, they said, is objectionable and disturbs the decorum of the House.

At one stage, CM Jagan said, "We are sending a wrong message by letting such behaviour continue. It has been his (Naidu's) habit to somehow create ruckus to hog the headlines in his friendly media. He is trying the same trick even now when every farmer is eagerly waiting to hear about the measures the government is taking for their welfare. Naidu has gone on to use even foul language," the CM remarked. Such behaviour is unbecoming for a Leader of Opposition, he maintained.

"Even I was the Leader of Opposition in this House. I never disrespected the House in such a manner," the CM remarked.

Ethics Committee chairman Ambati Rambabu intervened to say such conduct by a person with 40 years of public life is highly objectionable. Steps should be taken to prevent such scenes in the future, he stated.

Minister for legislative affairs Buggana Rajenderanath then moved a resolution on the objectionable conduct of Chandrababu Naidu saying a strong measure is needed to ensure that such situations do not recur.

The resolution was then adopted, though Speaker Tammineni Sitaram kept his ruling reserved.

"The resolution has been adopted. It will be considered at an appropriate time," the Speaker announced before adjourning the House for the day.



Rayadurgam MLA Kapu Ramchandra Reddy, Railway Koduru MLA, and Government whip G. Srinivasulu address the media conference outside the Assembly premises at Velagapudi in Guntur district on Monday.

Angry Naidu breaks
Assembly traditionsMD ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 30

N. Chandrababu Naidu, the longest serving Chief Minister of the combined Andhra Pradesh and Telugu Desam national president, claimed at a press conference that he got suspended from the Assembly because he was fighting for the interests of farmers.

Though he admitted that he made certain comments and turned edgy he did not express regret for his behaviour. However, he felt anguished for getting suspended from the Assembly for the first time in his political career that spanned over four decades. "I did not lose my cool even during the debate on Paritala Ravi's murder when Rajasekhara Reddy was Chief Minister," he added.

The Opposition leader, whoever it might be, will stand from his seat while other Opposition members register their protest which sometimes include squatting in the podium. The tradition is that the LOP walks away from the House when other members are suspended. "Frequent interruptions by the treasury benches angered me so much that for the first time I went into podium," he told mediapersons.

He stated that I still don't understand why Chandrababu gets aggressive unnecessarily. In that order, after Jagan made these comments, all the YSRC MLAs burst into laughter.

Mr Jagan during the BAC meeting in a lighter mood, pointing out the

CHANDRABABU
FACES SUSPENSION
FOR FIRST TIMEDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 30

For the first time in his career Telugu Desam chief N. Chandrababu Naidu faced suspension due to his first time protest in the Podium by sitting on the floor.

Besides Mr Naidu, TDLP deputy leader K. Atchannaidu, TD MLAs Payyavula Kesav, Gorantla Butchiah Chowdary, Nimmala Rama Naidu, Adireddy Bhavani, Velagapudi Ramakrishna, Dola Bala Veeranjanya Swamy, Mantena Rama Raju, Yeluri Sambasiva Rao, Gadde Rammoohan, Jogeswara Rao, Anagani Satya Prasad and Bendalam Ashok were suspended from Assembly for one day.

The first day of the Winter Session of the state Assembly began on a stormy note with the TD members protesting against delay in starting the session. Against the regular time of 9 am, the session began 25 minutes late. Though Speaker T. Sitaram did not offer any reason for the delay,

● The first day of the Winter Session of the state Assembly began on a stormy note with the TD members protesting against delay in starting the session. Against the regular time of 9 am, the session began 25 minutes late.

● Though Speaker T. Sitaram did not offer any reason for the delay, Naidu alleged that delay in starting the session was due to late arrival of the Chief Minister. "We never expected a day will come when the House had to wait for the Chief Minister to commence its proceedings," he pointed out.

At one stage, Naidu lost his cool and used unparliamentary language against Kurnool YSR Congress MLA Hafeez Khan for making some gestures. Information and transport minister Perni Nani at a press conference later in the day took strong objection to Naidu's behaviour.

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MINISTERS, TD
MLCS CHALLENGE
EACH OTHER ON
NAIDU'S REMARKSDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 30

AP Legislative Council witnessed challenges and counter challenges when the ministers tried to corner the TD legislators on former CM N. Chandrababu Naidu's remarks on agriculture and free power on the first day here on Monday.

When TD MLC B.T. Naidu found fault with the YSR Congress government for failing to come to the rescue of rains and cyclone Nivar affected farmers, minister for municipal administration Botsa Satyanarayana and minister for finance and legislative affairs Buggana Rajenderanath Reddy objected by saying that it was former CM N. Chandrababu Naidu who said that agriculture was waste and free power was impractical as it would mean to dry clothes on power lines. They also asked whether TD MLC N. Lokesh was aware of agriculture.

The ministers also slammed the former CM for failing to clear dues for relief on crop damage, input subsidy and power arrears for so long and claimed credit as their government was clearing all such dues.

TD MLC N. Lokesh and another TD MLC Janardhan objected to referring to the name of former CM Naidu in the Council as he was not present in it. They also asked to show proof as to when Mr Naidu said that agriculture was waste.

They said that if the proof was presented about Naidu's statement, all TD MLCs would quit the Council and challenged whether minister Botsa Satyanarayana would quit if he failed to show the proof.

Responding to it, both the ministers said that such remark was found in the book titled 'Manasulo Mata' written by Chandrababu Naidu and it was shown in the Assembly sessions held in combined AP. They even challenged the TD legislators whether they could make Chandrababu Naidu come up with a statement disowning such remarks.

● When TD MLC B.T. Naidu found fault with the YSRC government for failing to come to the rescue of rains and cyclone Nivar affected farmers, ministers objected by saying that it was former CM N. Chandrababu Naidu who said that agriculture was waste and free power was impractical as it would mean to dry clothes on power lines.

Relief to farmers
by Dec. 31: CM

From page 1

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy said that clear instructions were given to enumerate the extent of loss due to cyclone Nivar, especially to the crops, by December 15 so that relief for the affected farmers could be given by December 31. He promised seeds at 80 per cent subsidy to the affected farmers to help them raise crops again.

He took potshots at the previous TD regime led by N. Chandrababu Naidu for delaying relief payments, input subsidy and settlement of insurance claims of affected farmers by one-and-half-years and said that their government cleared arrears worth of crores of rupees pending even from 2014 as they were committed to welfare of the farmers.

He said that beyond the poll promises, their government was committed to extend financial help to the farmers to the tune of ₹13,500 per annum for five years unlike the earlier plan of giving only ₹12,500 for four years under Rythu Bharosa Scheme and added that in the last 18 months alone, they spent ₹13,000 crore under the scheme.

The CM stated that they had started drilling borewells and fixing electric motors for farmers with a target to complete 50,000 per annum at a total estimated cost of ₹4,000

crore. He faulted the TD regime for failing to clear power arrears of farmers worth ₹8,655 crore, paddy procurement arrears of ₹960 crore, seed subsidy arrears of ₹384 crore and farm loan arrears since 2014 worth of ₹1,030 crore and said that all such arrears were cleared by the YSR Congress government.

He promised to ensure supply of quality power for nine hours during day time for farmers as they had enhanced the capacity of power feeders at a cost of ₹1,700 crore. The CM said that their government had paid ₹510 crore as the farmers were given interest free crop loans by bankers to raise crops for kharif in 2019 of and added that ₹1,030 crore insurance premium was paid on behalf of the farmers for kharif crop of 2019 as each beneficiary farmer paid only ₹1.

Explaining about a series of efforts being taken by his government for the benefit of farmers from dairy and aqua sectors, the CM said that their government always wanted to provide benefit to the farmers unlike the practice of previous TD regime to exploit them.

The CM slammed Chandrababu Naidu for shedding crocodile tears by not providing any kind of help to the farmers and described his act of squatting in the well of the house as unprecedented.

Assembly condoles
deaths of leadersDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 30

The AP Legislative Assembly condoled the demise of former President Pranab Mukherjee, popular playback singer S.P. Balasubramanyam and former members of the legislature, who passed away during the intervening period of the Assembly sessions.

Immediately after the House assembled on Monday, Speaker Tammineni Sitaram read out the names and their contribution and the House observed a two-minute silence as a mark of respect to the departed leaders and personalities.

The condolence motion moved by the Speaker Sitaram said, "This House places on record its deep sense of sorrow at the demise of Pranab Mukherjee, former President of India and conveys its deep sense of sympathy to the bereaved family members."

The services of multifaceted Pranab Mukherjee during his five-decade public life under various capacities were recalled. The country's highest civilian award Bharat Ratna was conferred on him besides international

awards, and he had a place in international agencies IMF, World Bank, and other such institutions, the House observed.

This House also expressed its sorrow at the demise of S.P. Balasubramanyam, famous singer who won six national awards and was a prolific singer par excellence in various facets of cinema and conveyed its deep sense of sympathy to members of the bereaved family.

The House also expressed its sorrow and conveyed condolence to the family members of Tirumala Srinivasulu, MLC besides former members of the legislature Janardhan Thatraja (Kurupam), Dr Ravindranath (Bapatla), K. Venkatachandra Mohan Rao (Pitapuram), P. Manikyal Rao (Tadepalligudem), D. Rajagopal Reddy (Darsi), P. Ammi Raju (Kadiyamp), B. Narayanaswamy (Tekkali), K. Veeraraghavendra Rao (Penugonda W.G.), B. Durgaprasada Rao (Gudur), who was also elected to Tirupati LS in 2019), P. Mangapati Rao, Dronamraju Srinivas, Mocherla Johar (Achanta), K. Sivananda Reddy (Kadapa), Y.T. Raja (Tanuku) and D.A. Satyaprabha (Chittoor).

CYCLONE | AFFECT

Leaders demand release of compensation to the farmers

CM slams TD for
'rowdyism' in House

From page 1

The CM slammed the TD members for resorting to "rowdyism" in the House and accused the TD legislators of speaking without comprehending the issue. He affirmed that the government was determined to distribute input subsidy to affected farmers by the end of December.

"People were eagerly waiting to listen to what the government has to say with regard to flood relief when TD MLAs resorted to bulldozing tactics and threatening gestures," the CM pointed out.

Speaker Sitaram said that the short discussion on agriculture was taken up as decided in the Business Advisory Committee and asked why members of the Opposition were disrupting proceedings.

● After suspension, TD legislators remained in the House resulting in Marshals being called to have them taken out from the Assembly.

Minister for I&PR Perni Venkataramaiah introduced the motion to suspend 14 members including Mr Naidu from the house for one day and Mr Sitaram asked them to leave and announced the suspension.

However, TD legislators remained in the House resulting in Marshals being called to have them taken out from the Assembly.

Later, Naidu and his MLAs squatted in front of the Assembly main gate for some time objecting to the suspension orders.

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 30

Opposition Telugu Desam party staged protest rally up to Assembly from Venkatapalem on Monday demanding the immediate release of compensation to the farmers who suffered huge crop losses due to rains and Nivar cyclone.

The TD legislators holding damaged paddy crop alleged that Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy only interested in aerial survey and not in providing compensations.

The TD leaders including TD AP president K. Atchannaidu, Nara Lokesh, Nimmakayala China Rajappa and others demanded that the government should give compensation immediately so that it would help the farmers to take up the Rabi crops without any difficulty.



Former chief minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu, MLAs and MLCs take out rally with damaged paddy crop outside Assembly Hall at Velagapudi in Guntur district on Monday.

The main Opposition party MLAs and MLCs held damaged plants and corn in their hands during the rally to underscore the gravity of the cyclone

impact. They accused the YSRC of destroying all the systems and institutions in the state. Lamenting that the farmers lost the Central government share

of crop insurance and also the state government share, they commented that a rule by betrayers was going on in the state under which all sections of

— DC

SHORT TAKES

28-year-old man falls under train

Kakinada: A 28-year-old man Dulapalli Srinu died after falling under Tirumala Express train near Pithapuram Railway Station on Monday. According to sources, Srinu is residing at his in-laws' house and he recently came to his house in Jaggayya Cheruvu as his father died. The locals said that he expressed resentment that his wife has not come along with him for living together. The Samalkot Railway Station Sub-Inspector Mr Lova Raju registered a case.

Special drive on traffic

Eluru: The Eluru Traffic police in West Godavari District organised a special drive on traffic on Monday to create awareness on traffic rules among the people, in particular vehicle drivers. Eluru Traffic Sub-Inspector B. Srinivasa Rao said that the two-wheeler drivers should wear helmets and car drivers and its passengers should wear seat belts compulsorily. He said that wearing a mask has become compulsory and the vehicle owners should have their vehicle registration, licence and other documents along with them. He said that cellphone driving is very dangerous and also a crime. He gave counselling to several cellphone driving persons during the programme.

SIMHAPURI EXP RESTORED FROM DECEMBER 3

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, NOV. 30

Much to the relief of the people of Nellore and Prakasam district, South Central Railway has restored train 02710 operating between Secunderabad to Gudur from December 3 and its pairing train No 02709 running between Gudur and Secunderabad from December 4.

The train services were suspended along with other trains during lock-down after the breakdown of Covid-19 since March 2020. It was the most sought after the train for the people of Prakasam and Nellore to go to Telangana capital, Hyderabad.

SCR announced the restoration of the daily train in a press release related to 20 special trains being run by SCR from December 1.

SPECIAL TRAIN SERVICES EXTENDED

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 30

The railways decided to extend the running of festival special trains originating from East Coast Railway jurisdiction up to December end.

A release on Monday said Bhubaneswar-Tirupati-Bhubaneswar weekly special leaving from Bhubaneswar and Tirupati in return direction would run-up to December 27.

Bhubaneswar-Chennai-Bhubaneswar weekly special will run up to January 1.

Bhubaneswar-Bangalore Cant-Bhubaneswar weekly up to December 29, Bhubaneswar-Puduchery-Bhubaneswar weekly up to December 30, Bhubaneswar-Rameswaram-Bhubaneswar weekly up to December 27, Puri-Chennai-Puri special up to December 28.

Visakhapatnam-Nizamuddin-Visakhapatnam bi-weekly special up to December 30, Visakhapatnam-Nizamuddin-Visakhapatnam special up to December 31, Visakhapatnam-Chennai-Visakhapatnam special up to December 29, Visakhapatnam-LTT-Visakhapatnam special up to December 29.

Visakhapatnam-Gandhidham-Visakhapatnam train up to January 3, Visakhapatnam-Cuddapa-Visakhapatnam daily special up to December 31.

Some special express trains timings are going to be revised with effect from December 1 for which notification has been issued and updates notified in the official railway website of Railways, the release added.

● Bhubaneswar-Tirupati-Bhubaneswar weekly special leaving from Bhubaneswar and Tirupati in return direction would run-up to December 27.

Special gift



Gurusingh Sahadharma Prachara committee members offer memento to Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy at Gurudwara on the occasion of Guru Nanak birth anniversary celebrations at Guru Nanak Colony in Vijayawada on Monday.

AP RECORDS 381 COVID CASES, FOUR DEATHS

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 30

AP recorded the lowest ever Covid-19 daily cases of just 381 and death of four Covid-19 infected patients in the last 24 hours.

The state health authorities released Covid-19 bulletin on Monday reporting that out of 40,728 samples tested, 381 persons were found infected with Covid-19 and out of a total number of 1,00,57,854 samples tested so far, 8,68,064 persons were found infected with the virus and out of them, 8,53,232 were recovered, while 7,840 are still active with the virus.

Among daily Covid-19 cases, West Godavari reported 74 followed by 70 in Krishna, 45 in East Godavari, 35 in Guntur, 31 in Chittoor, 26 in Kadapa, 21 in Anantapur, 20 in Vizianagaram, 19 in Nellore, 12 in Kurnool, 11 in Visakhapatnam, 10 in Srikakulam and seven in Prakasam.

With regard to the total Covid-19 active cases, Krishna topped the state with 1,307 followed by 1,230 in Guntur, 1,133 in East Godavari, 788 in Visakhapatnam, 714 each in West Godavari and Nellore, 554 in Chittoor, 373 in Prakasam, 277 in Srikakulam, 216 in Anantapur, 184 in Vizianagaram, 181 in Kurnool and 169 in Kadapa.

Among the daily cases of Covid-19 deaths, Anantapur, Chittoor, Krishna and Visakhapatnam registered one each. Chittoor recorded the highest number of cumulative deaths of Covid-19 infected patients with 827 followed by 649 in Guntur; 637 in Krishna, 636 in East Godavari, 589 in Anantapur, 577 in Prakasam, 541 in Visakhapatnam, 524 in West Godavari, 495 in Nellore, 486 in Kurnool, 450 in Kadapa, 346 in Srikakulam and 235 in Vizianagaram.

The state health authorities discharged 934 Covid-19 infected patients after recovery.

AP conducted Covid tests on 1,88,340 samples per one million.

POLLUTION | FEAR

DC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, NOV. 30

The controversy over establishment of a pharma unit by Divis Laboratories at Thondangi mandal in East Godavari district has come to the forefront once again, with the YSR Congress government giving a clearance on reviving of the project. As a result, people of the region have once again decided to launch an agitation against the unit in their area.

Most of the people in the region belong to fishermen, Yadava, Periki, schedule caste and other communities. They are afraid that their future would be at stake if a

Court cancels bail of 2 cops

They were allegedly named by Salam

DC CORRESPONDENT
ANANTAPUR, NOV. 30

Nandyal Additional District Judge Court, on Monday, cancelled bail for the Nandyal circle inspector Somasekhhar Reddy and head constable Gangadhar in connection with the suicide case of auto driver family. The court also directed the circle inspector and head constable should appear before the court by December 2.

It may be noted that Abdul Salam, 45, his wife Noorjahan, 38, son Dada Khalandar, 10, and daughter Salma, 14, died by suicide by falling under a train on out skirts of Nandyal town in Kurnool district on November 3 blaming police over harassment in connection with jewellery shop theft case.

The family in a selfie video accused the circle inspector and head constable.

The government acted in all seriousness in the sensational case and suspended both Nandyal one town circle inspec-

tor Somasekhhar Reddy and head constable based on allegations made by auto driver family. They were also arrested. The circle inspector and head constable got bail on the same day of their arrest. However, the organisations were taken up agitations across the state demanding justice for the family. The police department acted swiftly and filed petition in the Third Additional District Judge court in Nandyal in Kurnool district seeking cancellation of bail for both officials.

The 3rd Additional District Judge M.Suvarna Raju issued orders cancelling bail for both circle inspector and a head constable.



Contract nursing staff stage protest against the government demanding to regularisation of their jobs near GVMC Gandhi Statue junction in Visakhapatnam on Monday.

ANC POSITIVITY IN HIV PREGNANT WOMEN DECREASED

DC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, NOV. 30

The positivity of Antenatal Clinic (ANC) Surveillance has been decreased to 0.07 per cent during 2019-20 from 0.09 per cent with 59 positives in 2018-19 with 87 in pregnant women. According to District Aids Control Society

officials, when 89,612 ANC tests have been conducted, 59 positives were found. They said that the percentage of positivity among pregnant women is gradually decreasing from the year 2014. The positivity in non-ANC (general) registered 2.49 per cent with 2,474 cases against 2,913 in 2018-19 with 2.4 per

cent. The Additional Medical and Health officer Dr Ramesh said that the life span of the HIV patients have been increased due to multi-ART drugs and other factors and also the adverse effects of the drugs have also been reduced. He said that the death rate has also decreased.

ACTIVISTS DEMAND REPEAL OF UAPA, RELEASE OF 16

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 30

Activists and representatives of various mass organisations and Left parties demanded the repeal of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and release of 16 activists who were put in jail in Bhima Koregaon case.

They also demanded the withdrawal of UAPA and AP Securities Act under which cases were filed at Munchingput and Piduguralla against V.S. Krishna of Human Rights Forum, T. Srirama Murthy of AP Civil Liberties Committee, K.S. Chalam, K. Annapurna and Kondaparthi Padma.

The dharna was held near Mahatma Gandhi statue near RTC Complex on Monday, and the leaders said the cases were false and it was aimed at silencing the human rights activists who have been fighting against violation of rights.

Most of the arrested persons were Dalits, minorities and women, the protesters said.

K. Venkateswarulu of IFTU, M. Lakshmi, representative of POW, K. Vamana Rao of AITUC and CPM district secretary K. Lokanadham were present at the dharna, and they later submitted a memorandum to the collector to withdraw the cases registered under UAPA.

FARMERS STAGE STIR AT ONGC GCS STATION

DC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, NOV. 30

The farmers in Tatipaka and Nagaram villages in Razole mandal staged a stir at the ONGC GCS station, expressing concern over inundation of their paddy fields due to the activities of the corporation. The agitators led by the CPM leader P. Ramachandra Rao said that the corporation closed the drainage and the water is not flowing freely into outlets. It caused them to inundate their fields. They requested the government to sort out their problem and save their crops from the inundation.

6-YEAR-OLD GIRL DROWNS IN WATER SUMP

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, NOV. 30

A six-year-old girl was drowned in a water sump in their house at Balaji Nagar in Tirumala following an accidental fall while playing on Monday. Her parents Bhanu Prakash and Jayanthi noticed the girl identified as Sasikala in the sump when they were looking for her sometime after she fell in the water sump. The shocked parents rushed her to Aswini Hospital.

6 MEMBERS OF A FAMILY RESCUED FROM A MAROONED HOUSE BY COPS

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, NOV. 30

Nawabpeta police in Nellore led by the Circle Inspector K. Vema Reddy rescued six members of a family including a two-month-old baby from their marooned home close to Nallakaluva in Venkateswarapuram during the early hours of Sunday.

The team rushed to the spot when they received a call from the head of the family S.K. Sheriff around 2 am that their house is surrounded by floodwaters and the water level is increasing. Vema Reddy and his team reached the house in five-feet deep water and shifted the family members of Sheriff, including his child and aged parents.

NELLORE POLICE RECOVERS 22 BIKES FROM HABITUAL OFFENDER

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, NOV. 30

The Nellore police led by Tiruchanoor Circle Inspector M. Sudhakar Reddy recovered 22 motorbikes and a luggage auto rickshaw from a habitual offender after he attempted to give a skip to police during vehicular checks by the police at NTR House in Tiruchanoor on Monday.

The accused was identified as S.K. Masthan of Puttur in Chittoor district. According to Tirupati East DSP T. Murali Krishna, Tiruchanoor Police led by Circle Inspector took Masthan into custody when he tried to give a skip when

they were inspecting the vehicles at Tiruchanoor.

The accused confessed that he stole 22 motorbikes and one luggage auto along with two others in various parts of AP and Tamil Nadu and sold five of them.

The accomplice of Masthan has been identified as Rammurthy Suresh from Vellore in Tamil Nadu and Manikanta from Bakrapeta.

The accused kept 17 vehicles in an isolated place in NTR houses in Tiruchanoor town limits after disposing five bikes to another person. Masthan was arrested in the case, and a search was launched to arrest the other two accused, the DSP said.

227 stolen mobile phones recovered

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, NOV. 30

Technical Analysis Wing (TAW) of Chittoor Police has recovered 227 mobile phones worth ₹40 lakh, which were stolen across the district in the last one year, within a month after jumping into action.

The TAW team consists of some B. Tech and M. Tech qualified constables and they were hand-picked by the Chittoor SP S. Senthil Kumar for special training on an investigation using the latest technology.

The team proved their mettle by tracing and recovering the lost phones from five states including Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala.

According to Mr Senthil

17-YEAR-OLD DROWNS IN RIVER PENNA WHILE TAKING A SELFIE

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, NOV. 30

In yet another incident of madness to take selfies putting their lives in danger, a 17-year-old youth was washed away in Pennar river, which is in spate, near Nellore on Monday.

The incident took place

when the youngster attempted to take a selfie along with friends standing on the bridge above the river near Bhagath Singh Colony in Nellore on Monday evening.

The youth identified as Vikranth belongs to Yanamala Dinne area in Chintareddypalem near Nellore.

Loss to power sector put at ₹3.80 crore in Nellore

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, DEC. 30

AP Southern Power Distribution Company has suffered loss to the extent of ₹3.80 crore in Nellore circle because of heavy rains and floods under the influence of cyclone Nivar.

Superintending Engineer of APSPDCL, K. Vijayakumar Reddy disclosed this while addressing the media persons here on Monday.

According to the SE, as many as 3,556 poles pertaining to 33 KV, 11 KV and Low Tension were uprooted and 408 feeders of 33 KV, 11 KV and LT have been damaged because of the cyclone. Field staff restored 318 feed-

ers and 1,706 poles so far.

Power conductor to the extent of 86 km was damaged due to the strong gales and floodwater. Similarly, 420 transformers were either fell on the ground or washed away in the floods.

As part of restoration of power, APSPDCL has rearranged 380 new transformers till now.

SE said that 10 teams of workers from Anantapur and Kurnool have reached the district for taking up restoration works.

He said now 60 teams of staff are working in the district for handling all the power related issues. Executive Engineer-Technical J. Ramana Devi was present with the SE.

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CONTRACTS DEPARTMENT

Tender Enquiry No: HQ/Contracts/INSP/O&MR/MHS/A/1 **Dated:** 01.12.2020

NMDC Limited, A "NAVARATNA" Public Sector Company under Ministry of Steel, Govt. of India, invites online bids from experienced domestic bidders for "Operation and Maintenance (O & M) of Coal & Coke Handling Area (A1) of Raw Material Handling System (RMHS) for a period of 2 years for 3.0 MTPA Integrated Steel Plant at Nagarnagar near Jagdalpur, Chhattisgarh State".

The detailed NIT and Bid documents can be viewed and / or downloaded from NMDC website <http://www.nmdc.co.in>, Central Public Procurement portal <http://www.eprocure.gov.in/epublish/app> and MSTC portal <https://www.mstcecommerce.co.in> from 01.12.2020 to 21.12.2020.

For accessing the bid document from MSTC, bidders to visit website and search Tender No. NMDC/HQ/46/20-21/ET/552.

The Bidders on regular basis are required to visit the NMDC's website / CPP Portal / MSTC website for corrigendum, if any, at a future date.

For further clarification, the following can be contacted:

Chief General Manager (Contracts), NMDC Limited, Hyderabad
Fax No. +91-040-23534745, Tel. No. +91-040-23532800,
email: steelcontracts@nmdc.co.in

Chief General Manager (Contracts)

हर एक काम देश के नाम
इस्पाती इरादा

SHORT TAKES

SOCIAL WORKER SHEETAL AMTE ENDS LIFE

DC CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, NOV. 30

Sheetal Amte, a renowned social worker and granddaughter of legendary Baba Amte, on Monday committed suicide by injecting poison. She was in the news recently after she made allegations against trustees and activists of the leprosy service committee of Anandwan. Her family had refuted allegations and said she was suffering from depression.

Dr Sheetal, daughter of social worker Dr Vikas Amte, was reportedly under stress for the last few days. According to reports, a few days ago, she had made serious allegations about the work, trustees, and activists of the leprosy service committee in Anandwan through a Facebook Live.

Within two hours, the Facebook Live was deleted. Later, a statement issued by the Amte family refuted the allegations. Dr Sheetal had been serving leprosy patients with her husband and family for the past several years.

Three generations of the Amte family are into social work in the far-flung rural and tribal areas of Chandrapur through the Anandwan Ashram and Hemalkasa Ashram in Gadchiroli, tending to people deprived of medical facilities in the Maoist-infested areas.

Dr Sheetal completed her degree from Government Medical College, Nagpur. After becoming a doctor, she joined her family at Anandwan. In addition to her MBBS degree, she also had completed her masters from Tata Institute of Social Sciences. In January 2016 Dr Sheetal was selected by World Economic Forum as 'Young Global Leader 2016' and later was selected as a Member of World Economic Forum Expert Network on Humanitarian Response.

'JUSTICE FOR PARI' FIGHT SHIFTS TO DELHI

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, NOV. 30

The fight for justice for five-year-old girl Amrita Sneha Sahoo alias Pari which began in the Jadupur village in Nayagarh district reached to New Delhi on Monday with the BJP national spokesperson Dr Sambit Patra submitting a memorandum to the National Commission for Child Rights Protection (NCCPR) for an independent inquiry into her kidnapping and murder.

"I prayed to the Commission for an independent probe and asking the Nayagarh SP to appear before the child rights body to apprise the progress of the investigation so far. I also briefed the Commission how Pari's parents — Ashok Sahoo and Soudamini Sahoo — were harassed by the police and local goons while seeking justice for the brutal murder of their daughter.

Pari was kidnapped on July 14 while playing in the courtyard of her house and her skeletal remains were found in the backyard of her house seven days after on July 23.

PROF. RESCUES TURTLE FROM FISH MARKET

Guwahati, Nov. 30: A turtle belonging to a vulnerable species has been saved from being sold in a fish market in Assam on Monday, thanks to the initiative of an academician, an official said.

Head of the Life Science and Bioinformatics department of Assam University Sarbani Giri had gone to the fish market when she noticed a man putting up an Indian peacock soft-shell turtle (Nilssonina hurum), which was alive, for sale.

He wanted to cut the turtle into pieces and sell it but Giri immediately stopped him from doing so and offered to buy it alive for ₹4,000, a forest official said. Her gesture moved the man and he gave her the turtle.

After bringing it home, Giri called up the Cachar Forest Division in Silchar to release it in its natural habitat, the official said.

Personnel of the forest department took the turtle from the professor and thanked her for saving the life of the turtle. The forest department has decided to team up with the fisheries department to create awareness among fishermen about turtles.



A 60-year-old Covid-19 patient in critical condition being airlifted for treatment to Chennai, at the airport in Indore on Monday.

— PTI

Elementary schools in Assam to reopen from January 1

The government will soon release detailed Standard Operating Procedure

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, NOV. 30

In a significant move, Assam education and health minister Himanta Biswa Sarma here on Monday announced that the state government has decided to re-open classes for students of nursery to class VI from January 1, 2021. The detailed Standard Operating Procedure (SOPs) regarding the opening of elementary school will be released soon.

Informing that in view of the significant improvement in the Covid-19 scenario, all the temporary Covid testing centres have been closed, the minister told reporters that state government has decided to reopen schools from classes nursery to VI for both government and private schools but it will be left to parents if they want to send their children to school or not.

Earlier, this month the state government had allowed schools to be reopened for students of Class 6 and above. To minimise the risk, schools were asked to follow an odd-even system. The education de-

Delhi govt reduces RT-PCR test price to ₹800 from ₹2,400

New Delhi, Nov. 30: The Arvind Kejriwal government on Monday ordered all private laboratories to reduce the price of RT-PCR tests in the national capital to ₹800 from ₹2,400.

According to an order issued by the health department, private laboratories have been asked to charge ₹800 for testing samples collected by government teams and collected from collection sites by private sector labs as requisitioned by districts and hospitals. However, the testing of samples collected through home visit will cost ₹1,200.

All labs and hospitals have also been asked to display the revised rates at a prominent place within 24 hours. The private laboratories have also been asked to process samples, share the reports with the client (government or individual) and update all reports on the Indian Council of Medical Research portal within 24 hours of collection of samples.

Health Minister Satyendar Jain had earlier said that labs were finding it

difficult to release the results of all tests within a day. Earlier in the day, the Kejriwal said that he had issued directives to reduce the price of the RT-PCR test in the national capital, saying it will help those going to private labs for Covid-19 tests.

"I have directed that the rates of RT PCR tests be reduced in Delhi. Whereas tests are being conducted free of cost in govt establishments, however this will help those who get their tests done in pvt labs," Kejriwal tweeted.

— PTI

partment has decided that students of classes 6, 7, 9 and 12 will have classroom teachings on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays of every week while those of classes 8, 10 and 11 will come to school on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

The state government said that students of Class 6 and above can attend school, but only after consent from their parents. The minister also announced that the state government has also allowed the college hostels to re-open from December 15 but only the final year students can come to the hostel.

Pointing out that instructions have been given to

the college principals to clean the hostels which were closed due to Covid19 the minister said that the decision to reopen elementary schools from Nursery standard to Class VI with effect from January 1, 2021 was taken after discussions with the Prathamik Sikshak Sammilani (Primary teachers association).

— PTI

BJP MLA DIES AFTER TESTING COVID POSITIVE

Jaipur, Nov. 30: BJP leader and MLA from Rajsamand in Rajasthan Kiran Maheshwari, who had tested positive for Coronavirus, died at a hospital in Gurgaon. She was 59.

Maheshwari, a three-time MLA from Rajsamand, was undergoing treatment at Medanta hospital for the past few days. She passed away late Sunday night.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, Assembly Speaker CP Joshi, BJP state president Satish Poonia and other leaders condoled her demise.

"Saddened to know of the untimely demise of BJP leader & Rajsamand MLA Kiran Maheshwari ji. My heartfelt condolences to her family members & supporters in this most difficult time," Gehlot tweeted.

— PTI

PM to hold 2nd all-party meet on Coronavirus

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, NOV. 30

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will hold a discussion on the Covid-19 pandemic situation in the country with the floor leaders of all political parties of both Houses of Parliament on Friday.

The parliamentary affairs ministry is coordinating the meeting, which will be held virtually on Friday from 10.30 am. This will be the second all-party meeting called by the government to discuss the Covid-19 situation since the pandemic's outbreak. The first one was held April 20 amid a nationwide lockdown to curb the spread of the virus.

The government is likely to brief parliamentarians about various steps it has taken to deal with the pandemic and may also touch on the advances in vaccine development and distribution.

India till Monday had a total of 91.32 lakh coronavirus cases, of which 38,772 were detected in the past 24 hours. The total deaths due to the virus have crossed 1.37 lakh, out of which 443 fatalities were new.

Kerala, Maharashtra, Delhi and West Bengal continue to report a high number of cases. The cases in Delhi have started reducing a bit after the government enforced stringent measures and increased RT-PCR testing.

The Centre has, meanwhile, also asked states/UTs to identify healthcare workers, including doctors, pharmacists as well as MBBS and BDS interns, who will carry out a Covid-19 inoculation drive once a vaccine is available.

In a letter to the states and UTs, the Centre said MBBS and BDS doctors and interns, staff nurses, auxiliary nurse midwives and pharmacists will be considered as potential vaccinators, provided that they are actively involved in day-to-day provision of clinical care and have experience in administering injections.

"Further, the states may also consider retired personnel from these categories that may be utilised to meet the demand for vaccinators," the letter written earlier this month by health ministry additional secretary Vandana Gurnani said.

The health ministry has said the recovery rate in the country is good as 45,333 fresh recoveries were recorded in the last 24 hours, ensuring a net reduction of 7,004 active cases.

"The contraction of India's active caseload has ensured India's present active caseload of 4,46,952 consists of just 4.74 per cent of India's total positive cases. The difference in new recoveries outnumbering new cases has also improved the recovery rate to 93.81 per cent today. The total recovered cases stand at 88,47,600. The gap between recovered cases and active cases, that is steadily increasing, stands at 84,00,648 -- 19.8 times active cases," the health ministry said in a statement.

MODI INTERACTS WITH MORE TEAMS WORKING ON VACCINE

New Delhi, Nov. 30: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday held a virtual meeting with three teams working on developing and manufacturing Covid-19 vaccine, and urged them to take extra efforts to inform people in simple language about the vaccine and related matters such as its efficacy.

These teams were from Gennova Biopharmaceuticals Ltd, Pune; Biological E Ltd, Hyderabad; and Dr Reddy's Laboratories Ltd, Hyderabad.

A statement from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said that Modi also asked the companies, represented by these teams, to come out with their suggestions and ideas regarding regulatory processes and related matters.

"The PM advised all the departments concerned to engage with the manufacturers and seek to resolve matters so that the efforts by these companies bear fruit in order to serve the needs of the country and the entire world," it said.

The Prime Minister appreciated the efforts being taken by scientists in these companies to come out with a vaccine solution to tackle Covid-19.

— PTI

TAMIL NADU LIKELY TO FACE ANOTHER STORM

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, NOV. 30

The depression over the Bay of Bengal is very likely to intensify into a deep depression over the next 12 hours and then further intensify into a cyclonic storm, named Burevi, during the subsequent 24 hours, Regional Meteorological Centre stated in Chennai.

The Met on Monday forecast isolated rain and thunderstorms in south Tamil Nadu and isolated rain in the north of the state. "The depression lay centred at 11:30 hrs IST of today over the same region near Lat. 7.8° N/Long. 87.4°E, about 680 km east-southeast of Trincomalee (Sri Lanka). Very likely to intensify further into a deep depression during next 12 hours and into a CS (cyclonic storm) during subsequent 24 hrs," read a tweet by the IMD.

The storm is likely to cross Sri Lanka during the evening/night of December 2. "It is very likely to move nearly westwards thereafter and emerge into the Comorin area on December 3 morning," stated the bulletin.

The system will bring heavy to very heavy rainfall at a few places with isolated extremely heavy falls very likely over south Tamil Nadu, on December 2-3, stated IMD.

Tractor-trolleys turn into shelters for farmers

Sonipat, Nov. 30: Tractor-trolleys and key farm equipment have turned into temporary shelters for thousands of farmers who have assembled at the borders of the national capital to protest against the Centre's new farm laws.

The ongoing protests by thousands of farmers entered the fifth day on Monday, with the protesters threatening to block all five entry points to Delhi.

As temperatures have dipped, the farmers demanding that the laws be repealed are spending the chilly nights inside their tractor-trolleys covered with tarpaulin, which they have turned into temporary shelters.

Night temperatures over the last few days have been settling in the range of around 9 degrees Celsius. The tractor-trolleys have occupied over a 10-km-long area in this Haryana district which lies along the Ambala-Delhi national highway. Among the protesters are several men and women, some of them aged over 70 years.

Flags of various farmers' outfits from Punjab and Haryana can be seen fluttering atop the tractors, some of which are fitted with loudspeakers and used by the leaders of peasants' bodies to address the gatherings. The protesting farmers say they will force the Centre to repeal the anti-farmer laws.

Having gathered here in thousands amid the coronavirus pandemic, they claim adverse conditions do not affect them as they are used to various challenges anyway while working in the fields.

Most of the farmers have brought at least two trolleys with each tractor with one of them carrying ration and other essentials and the other being used to accommodate the protesters.

Stubble or crop residue, disposal of which otherwise becomes a major challenge for the farmers, is also coming in handy as many have cushioned their trolleys with layers of straw and laid mattresses over it to protect them from the cold.

Night temperatures over the last few days have been settling in the range of around 9 degrees Celsius.

The tractor-trolleys have occupied over a 10-km-long area in this Haryana district which lies along

the college principals to clean the hostels which were closed due to Covid19 the minister said that the decision to reopen elementary schools from Nursery standard to Class VI with effect from January 1, 2021 was taken after discussions with the Prathamik Sikshak Sammilani (Primary teachers association).

— PTI

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If these laws are implemented, farmers will be destroyed, said Trilok Singh, a farmer from Amritsar as he sipped freshly prepared tea with some bread and biscuits.

Protesting farmers have said that they have come prepared for a long stir and have stocked themselves with ration, clothes, cooking gas cylinders, quilts and other essentials.

We will rest only when these laws are scrapped. In Punjab, we peacefully sat in protest for two months, but our plight did not move the Centre, now they will have to listen to us because our livelihoods are at stake, said another farmer Lakhwinder Singh from

— PTI

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— PTI

Moga district.

When asked that Centre claims these laws will benefit them and give them wider choice to sell their crops, Lakhwinder Singh said, The one who is going to eventually benefit are the big corporates, we don't see much gain for farmers.

Another farmer Kuldeep Singh said, When the Centre first brought ordinance before these laws were passed, did they consult farmers at any stage. When farmers don't want these reforms, why are these being thrust upon us? The farmers said that they would not return to their homes, till their demand for scrapping of three farm laws was accepted.

— PTI

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— PTI

WILL RECONSIDER RLP'S SUPPORT TO NDA: BENI WAL

Jaipur, Nov. 30: Nagaur MP Hanuman Beniwal, an alliance partner of NDA, on Monday said he will have to reconsider his party's support to the Centre if the new agricultural reform laws are not withdrawn.

Beniwal appealed to Amit Shah to withdraw the three farm laws immediately.

"RLP is an alliance partner of NDA, but its strength lies in youth and farmers, and if prompt action is not taken in this matter in the interest of farmers, I will have to reconsider on being part of the NDA," he tweeted.

— PTI

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— PTI

LONG | WAIT

The superstar refuses to answer big question of whether he would enter politics or not

Rajinikanth's political plans remain a mystery

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR & D. SEKAR | DC CHENNAI, NOV. 30

Nothing emerged from the closed door meeting that actor Rajinikanth had with around 45 top level functionaries of Rajini Makkal Mandram, including 38 district secretaries, as the super star refused to answer the big question of whether he would enter politics or not.

Following the news of the meeting leaking to the media on Saturday night through a copy of a letter

to the police department seeking protection for the event, the media went berserk with speculations on Rajinikanth's political plans.

Apart from articles in newspapers and discussion on television channels, even social media was agog with posts.

The media hype also gave rise to hope among his supporters, fans and followers. Many of them turned up outside the Raghavendra Kalyana Mandapam in Kodambakkam, where the

meeting was scheduled to be held at 10 am on Monday.

Leaving his Poes Garden residence at around 9.30 am, Rajinikanth arrived at the venue ahead of time to a cheerful welcome from the fans outside the hall, who hailed him as 'future chief minister', and also showered him with flowers.

Inside the hall, where the chairs were arranged according to Covid-19 protocol with sufficient gaps between them, the actor is said to have listened to the

participants without committing himself to joining politics.

He elicited their views but did not reveal much about his plans.

The actor reviewed the working of the Mandram district branches and gave his opinion on the working of the secretaries.

Only 18 of the secretaries, according to his assessment, had done exceedingly well, while 12 had just done what was told to them and eight had performed below par. The secretaries had been

entrusted with the tasks of enrolling more members, setting up booth committees and also doing social service in the times of the pandemic.

The secretaries' performance was reportedly assessed based on these parameters.

No one was allowed to take mobile phones inside the meeting hall and the private security of the actor threw a ring around him. He left the hall at around 12.10 pm.

Speaking to the media outside the gates of his

residence, he said the district secretaries had assured him that they would abide by his decision, which he had not taken so far.

He would take the decision soon and convey it to them.

However, a pall of gloom descended among the gathering of fans and supporters outside the Kalyana Mandapam.

They had come expecting their matinee idol to make a dramatic announcement on his political entry.

SHORT TAKES

NEPAL INTEGRITY
SAFEGUARD GETS
CHINA THUMBS UP

Beijing, Nov. 30: China's Defence Minister Gen. Wei Fenghe has lauded Nepal's leadership for resolutely pursuing the 'one-China' policy and offered firm support to the Himalayan country in safeguarding its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, the defence ministry said here on Monday.

Wei, who is also a State Counsellor, met Nepal PM K P Sharma Oli and exchanged views on matters of mutual interest and held talks with Army chief Gen. Purna Chandra Thapa on ways to resume military cooperation and training impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic during his one-day visit to Nepal on Sunday.

According to a Chinese defence ministry statement, Wei told the Nepalese leaders that China highly appreciates Nepal for resolutely pursuing the 'one-China' policy, and also firmly supports Nepal to safeguard its national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. Under the 'one-China' policy, Beijing emphasises other countries to recognise Taiwan and Tibet as part of China, the statement said.

As China firmed up its ties with Nepal, which shares borders with Tibet, with heavy investments besides loans and financial assistance, Beijing wants Kathmandu to stop the free-flow of Tibetans to travel to Dharamshala in India to meet Tibet's highest spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, the statement said.

EXTRADITION
HEARING FOR
RANA ON FEB. 12

Washington, Nov. 30: A US court has set February 12 as the date of hearing for extradition of Pakistani-origin Canadian businessman Tahawwur Rana, who has been declared a fugitive by India for his involvement in the 2008 Mumbai terror attack case. Rana, 59, a childhood friend of David Coleman Headley, was re-arrested on June 10 in Los Angeles on an extradition request by India for his involvement in the 2008 Mumbai terror attack in which 166 people, including six Americans, were killed.

Rana was earlier arrested in October 2009 by US police soon after Headley's arrest at Chicago O'Hare airport. US District Court Judge in Los Angeles Jacqueline Chelonian said in her order on November 13 that the Extradition Hearing in this case is scheduled for February 12, 2021, at 10:00 am. Rana has time till December 21 to file his opposition to the request for extradition. The United States Government will have another month's time to file its reply.

In its motion on September 28, the US government supported Rana's extradition to India where he has been charged with the offences of conspiracy to wage war, commit a terrorist act, the waging of war, the commission of murder, and a terrorist act. Rana has argued that the US decision not to extradite his co-conspirator, David Headley, to India is inconsistent and bars his extradition.

FORCES KILL
GHAZNI ATTACK
MASTERMIND

Kabul, Nov. 30: Afghan forces have killed the Taliban mastermind of a suicide car bomb attack that left at least 30 security personnel dead, officials said Monday. Hamza Waziristani was killed in an air strike overnight in the eastern province of Ghazni where the bomber struck an Afghan military base on Sunday.

"The mastermind behind yesterday's terrorist attack on the (Ghazni) base was killed along with seven other terrorists," the defence ministry said in a statement. Ministry spokesman Fawad Aman said that Waziristani was a Taliban militant from the Pakistani border region of Waziristan. The attack was one of the deadliest in months targeting government forces in Afghanistan, where violence has surged since the start of peace talks between President Ashraf Ghani's administration and the Taliban in Qatar. No group has claimed the attack.

The insurgents have launched near daily attacks against Afghan forces, primarily in rural areas, since signing a deal with Washington in February that paved the way for the withdrawal of foreign troops by May 2021.

Health officials in Ghazni said 30 people died in Sunday's attack, but the defence ministry — which is known to downplay tolls in attacks against its forces — said 10 were killed.

China, Pak talk
regional security

Islamabad, Nov. 30: China's Defence Minister Gen. Wei Fenghe on Monday held talks with Pakistan Army chief Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa and discussed regional security issues and signed an agreement to deepen defence cooperation between the all-weather allies.

"During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, regional security and enhanced bilateral defence collaboration were discussed," said the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the media wing of Pakistan's Army, after the meeting between the two generals.

An MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) was also signed for enhancement of defence cooperation between both the Armies," the statement said. The details of the MoU were not shared.

Gen Bajwa thanked Gen Wei for China's unwavering support to Pakistan on all key issues at regional and international forums, saying that the Pakistan Army greatly values the "time-tested and brotherly relations" with China.

● **GEN WEI** acknowledged and appreciated the Pakistan Army's sincere efforts towards maintaining regional peace and providing a secure environment to the \$60 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor projects.

"We have been standing together all along, and our relations will be no different in wake of future challenges," Gen Bajwa said.

Gen Wei acknowledged and appreciated the Pakistan Army's sincere efforts towards maintaining regional peace and providing a secure environment to the \$60 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor projects, the ISPR statement said.

Earlier on arrival at GHQ, Gen Wei laid a floral wreath at Yadgar-e-Shuhada. The Pakistan Army presented a Guard of Honour to the visiting dignitary.

— PTI

Navalny poisoning
pressure on Russia

The Hague, Nov. 30: Russia came under renewed pressure Monday to explain the nerve agent attack on opposition figure Alexei Navalny as the annual meeting of the global chemical weapons watchdog got underway amid measures aimed at reining in the spread of Covid-19.

Navalny fell ill on August 20 during a domestic flight in Russia, and was flown to Germany for treatment two days later. His allies accused the Kremlin of poisoning its fiercest opponent.

Tests carried out by labs in Germany, France and Sweden and by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons established that Navalny was exposed to a Soviet-era Novichok nerve agent.

The organisation's director-general, Fernando Arias, told Monday's meeting that according to the Chemical Weapons Convention, "the poisoning of an individual through the

use of a nerve agent is a use of a chemical weapon." A group of 56 nations issued a statement as the start of the annual meeting of the OPCW's member states urging Moscow to disclose "in a swift and transparent manner the circumstances of this chemical weapons attack."

Russia, which denies involvement in Navalny's poisoning, reacted bullishly in its written statement to the conference.

"Instead of trying to look into what had happened, Germany and its allies resorted to megaphone diplomacy, unleashed a mass disinformation campaign against Russia and started to demand some 'independent international investigation' under the auspices of the OPCW," Moscow's statement said.

In October, Moscow asked for OPCW experts to visit Russia to provide "technical assistance" in its investigations.

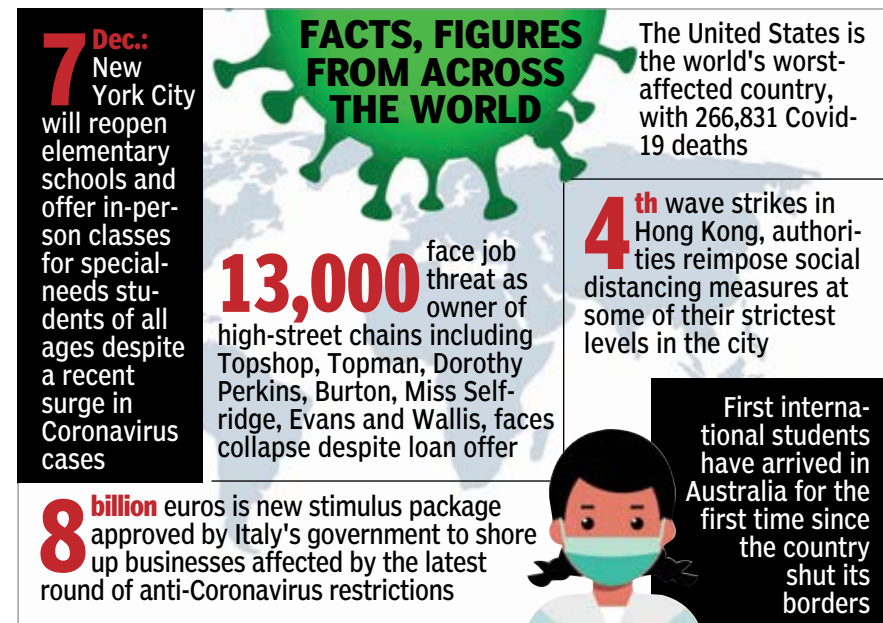
— AP

Lankan prison riot: Eight inmates killed, 37 hurt

Colombo, Nov. 30: At least eight prisoners were killed and 37 others injured when a riot broke out on Sunday at a prison on the outskirts of Sri Lanka's capital when some inmates tried to force open a door and escape, prompting the authorities to use force, police said on Monday.

Police spokesman Ajith Rohana said inmates created "unrest" at the Mahara prison located about 15 kilometres north of Colombo and prison officials took steps to control the situation. The incident comes as pandemic-related unrest has been growing in Sri Lanka's overcrowded prisons.

Inmates have staged protests in recent weeks in several prisons as the number of confirmed Covid-19 positive cases spiked in the country's overcrowded jails. "The incident was started by a set of remand prisoners when they tried to force open a door and



escape following which the authorities had to use force," Rohana said. He said during the entire incident at least 37 more, including two jailors, were

Yellen is Biden's Treasury
Secy, Tanden head of OMB

Prez-elect announces economic team members, to introduce them today

Washington, Nov. 30: US President-elect Joe Biden on Monday named Janet Yellen as his Treasury Secretary and Indian-American Neera Tanden as Director of Office of Management and Budget, as he announced key members of his economic team. If confirmed by the US Senate, Yellen, 74, will be the first woman to lead the Treasury Department in its 231-year history, and the first person to have served as Treasury Secretary, Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers, and Chair of the Federal Reserve. She has previously been confirmed by the Senate on four separate occasions. Tanden, 50, if confirmed by the Senate, would be the first woman of colour and first Indian-American to lead the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

Tanden's career has focused on pursuing policies designed to support working families, foster broad-based economic growth, and curb rampant inequality. "Another proud day for Indian Americans to see Neera Tanden be nominated for a Cabinet level position in the next administration. This position at OMB is a wide-ranging role with broad powers to manage trillions of dollars of the US budget. If anyone had any doubts that our community has arrived politically, this election cycle is proof enough," Indiaspora founder M R Rangaswami, and an eminent philanthropist and venture capitalist, said.

Announcing key members of his economic team, Biden also named Wally Adeyemo, as Deputy Secretary of the Treasury; Cecilia Rouse as Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers; and Jared Bernstein and Heather Boushey, as members of the Council of Economic Advisers. Biden would formally introduce his team on Tuesday. This crisis-tested team will help Biden administration lift America out of the current economic downturn and build back better — creating an economy that gives every single person across America a fair shot and an equal chance to get ahead, the transition said.



Neapolitan nativity statuettes artisan Gennaro Di Virgilio shows one of the latest addition to his gallery of figures: President-elect Joe Biden, in his shop in San Gregorio Armeno, Naples, on Monday.

Completed Wisconsin recount
confirms Biden's win over Don

Madison (US), Nov. 30: Wisconsin finished a recount of its presidential results on Sunday, confirming Democrat Joe Biden's victory over President Donald Trump in the key battleground state. Trump vowed to challenge the outcome in court even before the recount concluded.

Dane County was the second and last county to finish its recount, reporting a 45-vote gain for Trump. Milwaukee County, the state's other big and overwhelmingly liberal

county targeted in a recount that Trump paid \$3 million for, reported its results Friday, a 132-vote gain for Biden.

Taken together, the two counties barely budged Biden's winning margin of about 20,600 votes, giving the winner a net gain of 87 votes.

"As we have said, the recount only served to reaffirm Joe Biden's victory in Wisconsin," Danielle Meli, who led Biden's campaign in Wisconsin, said. Trump campaign spokeswo-

man Jenna Ellis said in a statement that the Wisconsin recounts have "revealed serious issues" about whether the ballots were legal, but she offered no specific details to validate her claim.

"As we have said from the very beginning, we want every legal vote, and only legal votes to be counted, and we will continue to uphold our promise to the American people to fight for a free and fair election," Ellis said.

— AP

INAUGURAL COMMITTEE: ALLEN CEO,
VARGHESE IS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Washington, Nov. 30: President-elect Joe Biden is taking the first formal preparations for his January 20 inauguration, unveiling the inaugural committee that will lead arrangements for the day he and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris assume their posts.

Biden is naming Delaware State University president Tony Allen to serve as chief executive officer of his presidential inaugural committee and campaign chief operating officer Maju Varghese as the group's executive director.

— AP

NOVEL CORONAVIRUS MAY ENTER
BRAIN THROUGH NOSE, STUDY SAYS

Berlin, Nov. 30: The novel Coronavirus may enter the brain of people through the nose, according to a study published on Monday that may help explain some of the neurological symptoms observed in Covid-19 patients, and inform diagnosis and measures to prevent infection.

The research, published in the journal *Nature Neuroscience*, noted that SARS-CoV-2 not only affects the respiratory tract but also impacts the central nervous system (CNS), resulting in neurological symptoms such as loss of smell, taste, headache, fatigue and nausea.

Although recent research has described the presence of viral RNA in the brain and cerebrospinal fluid, it remains unclear where the virus enters

and how it is distributed within the brain. The researchers from Charité – Universitätsmedizin, Berlin, Germany examined the nasopharynx — the upper part of the throat that connects to the nasal cavity — a likely first site of viral infection and replication, and the brains of 33 patients — 22 males and 11 females — who died with Covid-19.

The median age at the time of death was 71.6 years, and the time from onset of Covid-19 symptoms to death was a median of 31 days, they said. The researchers said that they found the presence of SARS-CoV-2 RNA, the genetic material of the virus, and protein in the brain and nasopharynx, adding intact virus particles were also detected in the nasopharynx.

— PTI

VIRUS | EFFECT Deadly term started trending in Jan. when 1st US deaths, ship outbreaks happened

Merriam-Webster's top '20 word: Pandemic

New York, Nov. 30: If you were to choose a word that rose above most in 2020, which word would it be? Ding, ding, ding: Merriam-Webster on Monday announced "pandemic" as its 2020 word of the year. "That probably isn't a big shock," Peter Sokolowski, editor at large for Merriam-Webster, said.

"Often the big news story has a technical word that's associated with it and in this case, the word pandemic is not just technical but has become general. It's probably the word by

which we'll refer to this period in the future," he said. The word took on urgent specificity in March, when the Coronavirus crisis was designated a pandemic, but it started to trend up on Merriam-Webster.com as early January and again in February when the first US deaths and outbreaks on cruise ships occurred.

On March 11, when the World Health Organisation declared the novel Coronavirus outbreak a global pandemic, lookups on the site for pandemic spiked

hugely. Site interest for the word has remained significantly high through the year, Sokolowski said.

By huge, Sokolowski means searches for pandemic on March 11 were 115,806 per cent higher than lookups experienced on the same date last year. Pandemic, with roots in Latin and Greek, is a combination of "pan," for all, and "demos," for people or population. The latter is the same root of "democracy," Sokolowski noted.

The word pandemic dates to the mid-1600s, used

● **ON MARCH 11**, when the World Health Organisation declared the novel Coronavirus outbreak a global pandemic, lookups on the site for pandemic spiked hugely.

broadly for "universal" and more specifically to disease in a medical text in the 1660s, he said. That was after the plagues of the Middle Ages, Sokolowski said. He attributes the lookup traffic for pandemic not entirely to searchers

who didn't know what it meant but also to those on the hunt for more detail, or for inspiration or comfort. "We see that the word love is looked up around Valentine's Day and the word cornucopia is looked up at Thanksgiving," Sokolowski said.

"We see a word like surreal spiking when a moment of national tragedy or shock occurs. It's the idea of dictionaries being the beginning of putting your thoughts in order," Merriam-Webster acted quickly in March to add and

update entries on its site for words related to the pandemic. While "Coronavirus" had been in the dictionary for decades, "Covid-19" was coined in February. Thirty-four days later, Merriam-Webster had it up online, along with a couple dozen other entries that were revised to reflect the health emergency. "That's the shortest period of time we've ever seen a word go from coinage to entry," Sokolowski said. "The word had this urgency."

— AP

MASSACRE IN
NIGERIA LEAVES
OVER 100 DEAD

Maiduguri, Nigeria, Nov. 30: At least 110 people were killed in a weekend attack on farm workers in northeast Nigeria blamed on jihadists, the UN humanitarian coordinator in the country said on Sunday, making it the deadliest raid on civilians this year.

The attack, in a state gripped by a jihadist insurgency for more than 10 years, took place the same day as long-delayed local elections in the state.

"I am outraged and horrified by the gruesome attack against civilians carried out by non-state armed groups in villages near Borno State capital Maiduguri," Edward Kallon said in a statement.

"At least 110 civilians were ruthlessly killed and many others were wounded in this attack," Initial tolls indicated 43 and then at least 70 dead from Saturday's massacre. Some locals blamed the attack on Boko Haram fighters, but Bulama Bukarti, an analyst with the Tony Blair Institute, said the rival IS-affiliated Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) were more active in the area.

"ISWAP is the likely culprit," he tweeted. Kallon, in his statement, said: "The incident is the most violent direct attack against innocent civilians this year."

"I call for the perpetrators of this heinous and senseless act to be brought to justice," he added.

One pro-government anti-jihadist militia said the assailants tied up the labourers and slit their throats.

— AFP

DECCAN Chronicle

1 DECEMBER 2020

Mend ties in region, try to counter China

We are glad of the flurry of in-person, “non-virtual” diplomacy effected by India in recent weeks in order to pay greater attention to neighbourhood contours that have been allowed to languish of late for want of foresight, although it is time to ponder how this will be rated on the adequacy scale.

India’s immediate neighbourhood is “Saarc Plus” if we take into account Myanmar to the east, China to the north, and Iran and the Gulf Arab states to the west. Of these, the prickly or difficult ties have traditionally been with Pakistan and China, which too need engagement of another kind. Regrettably, however, for some time we have lost sight of the value of ties within Saarc, Afghanistan being the exception, and the neighbourhood too if Iran and the Gulf are excluded.

The relationship with Beijing has now grown tense, with China having militarily encroached into our territory in Ladakh this summer, with India responding to save face by amassing forces inside our own borders to face the People’s Liberation Army. Our northern neighbour’s repeated attempts to encircle us on the Bhutan and Sikkim side has added gravity to the way we think about China.

China’s military incursion into Indian territory adds many layers of complexity to an already complicated dynamic, whose key characteristic was persistent Chinese efforts over a fairly long period to cut us off from our South Asian neighbours, one by one, by lavishing vast sums of money on these countries in the form of investments and infrastructural installations, besides buildup of defence facilities. It’s no exaggeration to say that Beijing has got pretty far in that game, and it is to this reality that the Narendra Modi government has finally woken up.

Thus, we had the foreign secretary heading to Bangladesh in August. A few weeks later, in early October, he was in Myanmar along with the Army Chief. In October-November there has been a cluster of visits. The external affairs minister headed to Bahrain, the UAE and Seychelles in the Indian Ocean. The Army Chief and the RAW chief showed up in Kathmandu, followed up by the foreign secretary. Relations with Nepal have dipped with Kathmandu eating into Indian territory, redrawing boundary maps and getting this endorsed by its legislature. There is considerable lost political ground to cover even as India is going about promising development aid for infrastructure, connectivity and education. The national security adviser was in Colombo for the fourth meeting of the India, Sri Lanka, Maldives trilateral maritime security conference, which had been dormant for some time.

On the whole, however, there is a sense that these are bit moves to compensate for lost time in which the Chinese have made deft manoeuvres. Even as our foreign secretary left Kathmandu, the Chinese defence minister landed there for follow-up action. Our eastern Himalayan neighbours are extremely valuable in dealing with the Chinese. In the Narendra Modi government’s six years, foreign policy has mainly meant being worshipful of the US to the extent of showing partisanship with President Donald Trump in domestic US politics. This is not just amateurish but also harmful. The neglect of neighbours, breaching the first principles of diplomacy, has been another feature of our recent policy. It is time to rethink priorities and have a few good, grand ideas in a rapidly changing environment.

A long way still to go

India’s economy, according to a set of numbers released by the government last week, has shrunk by 7.5 per cent in the quarter that ended on September 30. The contraction in the size of the economy for the second successive quarter has technically got the Indian economy into recession for the first time in its history. A decline in economic growth for two consecutive quarters indicates a recession, or economic stagnation. The silver lining, however, was that the degree of contraction in the economy has reduced in the July-September quarter, compared to the April-June quarter.

While economic activity picked up pace in the second quarter of financial year 2020-21, there is no consensus about the durability of this economic growth. Industrial activity witnessed in the July-September quarter could be to address pent-up demand during the festive season. While people have slowly started resuming their normal activities, business transactions in the touch-heavy sectors have still not reached their pre-Covid levels — a key prerequisite for India’s economic growth re-entering the positive territory.

According to data released by the ministry of statistics, key indicators such as cargo handled at seaports and airports, production of cement, sale of commercial vehicles, and exports continued to underperform and remain in a two-digit contraction. The inter-city movement of people — as shown by data of airports and the railways — has not reached normal levels yet. Unless such a big component of the GDP does not resume its activity, the real economic growth will not be seen.

The government, which was expected to step in to restore demand normality in the economy, has in fact reduced its revenue expenditure. The government’s final consumption expenditure, according to the ministry of statistics, has come down by over ₹1 lakh crore at ₹3.62 lakh crores in the second quarter of fiscal 2020-21 compared ₹4.65 lakh crores in the second quarter of fiscal 2019-20. In a scenario, where the government tries to escape its responsibility by blaming an act of God, one could only hope that God gives Indians strength to beat the coronavirus and help them resuscitate the ailing economy.

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Subhani



Will our farmers force arrogant govt to yield?



Parsa Venkateshwar Rao Jr

The march of the Punjab farmers to New Delhi, accompanied by their counterparts from Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and other parts of northern India, despite all the attempts by the BJP-ruled Haryana government, and the refusal of the leaders of the farmers’ unions to abide by the conditions laid down by Union home minister Amit Shah to move to a specified protest site before talks with the government could begin, and more basically rejecting the home ministry’s intervention and insisting that the talks will be held with the agriculture ministry, is a clear rebuff to the self-righteous and arrogant Narendra Modi government one-and-a-half years into its second term. The farmers are not willing to buy the spin of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Cabinet and party colleagues that the three farm reform laws rushed through the two Houses of Parliament during the Monsoon Session in September through a voice vote was to strengthen the position of farmers.

The issue is no longer about the merits and demerits of the laws shaking off the shackles of the local mandis and apparently freeing the farmers to sell where they choose, of giving a backdoor entry to corporates into engaging farmers to grow what they need for their commercial purposes and lifting the “essential commodities” tag from food-grains and other commodities, enabling corporate groups to store the produce.

There is enough to discuss there, and the government may have a point or two, but it does not matter if the people affected by them remain suspi-

cious and hostile, and the government do not have any convincing arguments.

What is at issue is the Modi government’s conviction that it can do no wrong, and that the farmers in this case should grasp the good being done for them. The attitude is not that of a democratically elected government, but that of a paternalist state which believes that people should accept the government’s decisions in good faith and not raise impertinent questions.

The Modi government has been getting its way in the last six-and-a-half-years, but now it has come up against the farmers’ formidable barricades. The Haryana and Delhi police, with the latter falling under the Union home ministry, have tried to barricade the farmers’ march but there was no stopping the farmers. The Union government had to get off its high horse, and Mr Shah was forced to plead with the farmers that the government was ready to talk to them and that they should move to the Nirankari Grounds at Burari on the outskirts of the national capital. It appears that Mr Shah has no option but to yield further ground.

There is of course the fact that this is also a political tussle between the BJP and its erstwhile ally in Punjab, the Shiromani Akali Dal. The farmers form the core

By freeing the mandis, the Centre is not enabling the farmers to sell their produce where they want to because 90 per cent of them are marginal farmers

There is enough to discuss there, and the government may have a point or two, but it does not matter if the people affected by them remain suspicious and hostile, and the government do not have any convincing arguments.

constituency of the Akali Dal, and it is alleged that the Agriculture Produce Marketing Committees (APMC), or the mandi committees in the state, are controlled by the first family of the party, Prakash Singh Badal and his son Sukhbir Singh Badal.

The BJP under Mr Modi has been on the warpath of weakening its allies in the National Democratic Alliance — the Shiv Sena in Maharashtra, the Akali Dal in Punjab, and Janata Dal (United) in Bihar. The Shiv Sena and Akali Dal have sensed the danger and they are hitting back, though the JD(U) is not in a position to do so now.

Prime Minister Modi seems to have miscalculated the horse sense of the farmers. The hard-nosed men and women of the soil are not going to be overwhelmed by the PM’s rhetoric and sweet talk. His “one nation, one farm market” idea does not fool them.

They know their problem is different from that of their counterparts in other parts of the country, and they know the problems they face on the ground more than any government which pretends that it knows best. The issue of minimum support price is only one part of the problem. By freeing the mandis or grain markets, the Centre is not enabling the farmers to sell their produce where they want to because 90 per cent of them are small and marginal farmers owning not more than two acres of land, but it is enabling the corporates to enter the mandis.

The Prime Minister’s

positive spin turns out be a bluff, and the farmers have seen through this. The Prime Minister and the government have been forced on to the backfoot. They will have to take greater pains to explain the hidden benefits to the farmers that would flow from the new laws, or they will have to promise to address the concerns of the farmers and incorporate them into the laws through necessary amendments.

More than anything else, Mr Modi and his colleagues need to learn, quickly, that they are not infallible, that they mean to do the right thing but yet go wrong, and that even without any evil intention they may do things that harm people more than benefiting them. Their desire to change the country overnight based on a parliamentary majority reveals political immaturity. Farm reforms may be necessary but for them to be successful it is not enough to pass new laws. There is need to connect with the people and win their trust and consent, or at least of a majority of them. The BJP has come to believe in the mantra of “Modi hai toh mumkin hai”. It is not. Even Mr Modi must persuade and convince the people. He cannot simply have his own way. Mr Modi and the BJP might chomp at the reins of democratic controls exerted by the people. But they must learn to hold back and reconsider all issues. There is an urgent need to change the style of governance from that of the presidential to the parliamentary. Had the government sent the bills for review by a joint select committee, as the Akalis and the Opposition parties had so vociferously urged, there would have been time and scope enough to respond to the concerns of the farmers and to incorporate the necessary changes before they became law.

The writer is a Delhi-based commentator and analyst

LETTERS

FARMERS PROTEST

The apprehensions of farmers are not unfounded. The Centre cannot treat them as politically driven. Thousands of farmers are continuing to protest in Delhi by braving cold, Covid and restrictions, an indication of insecurity in their minds. If the government is not against continuation of MSP, why doesn’t it commit itself to that in letter?

Dr D.V.G. Sankararao
Vizianagaram

AP ASSEMBLY

Former CM N. Chandrababu Naidu forgets his misdeeds against social media activists when he was the CM. He never bothered to even comment against the recent gag order of APHC on the FIR concerning capital land deals. If Speaker has ‘imposed’ restrictions on media coverage of Assembly/Council proceedings, it should be condemned. If the TD is indulging in misinformation campaign, it is for the ruling party to clear the air.

Govardhana Myneedu
Vijayawada

PM’S STATURE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi unwilling to have Telangana Chief Minister receive him as a courtesy is below his stature. They may be political rivals but courtesy demands following protocol. His meeting the CM does not change political permutations. On the contrary it would have enhanced his stature.

D.S.P. Rao
Kakinada

Big blaze at Guruvayur temple

KOZHIKODE, NOV. 30

Large portions of the famous Sri Krishna temple at Guruvayur in central Kerala were gutted by a fire which broke out in the early hours of this morning.

A spokesman of the temple told PTI on trunk telephone that the sanctum sanctorum was not affected. The

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle spokesman said the debris were being

removed and poojas would commence only after “Sudhi Kalasam” (purification ceremony)

He said the fire was first noticed on the western side at about 0200 hours. Soon it spread to other parts. It took over three hours to extinguish the fire by the fire brigade, requisitioned from Ponnani.

Aakar Patel



Looking at the future in fear as economy goes into ‘de-growth’

India’s economy had contracted for another three months, we were told late last week. Meaning that, as a nation, we produced less in goods and services than we did in the same period last year. Meaning also that Indian families in the numbers of lakhs and perhaps crores got pulled into poverty. India’s economy has contracted for six months since Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for the harsh lockdown in the world. This has brought the nation into what economists call a recession, whose definition is two straight quarters of de-growth.

We know we are in a recession because of the media.

The Prime Minister has not tweeted out the numbers his government has put out. The finance minister has not done so either. The Niti Aayog’s head says he was “pleasantly surprised” that the numbers were not worse than had been expected. The chief economic adviser professes “cautious optimism” about the data. He had previously predicted growth in the two quarters from April to September. It turned out that instead of growth we had a contraction of 23.9 per cent. He describes himself as inter-

ested in “deep thinking and research”. In the economic survey, he used Wikipedia as a source. News about the third quarter is not good. Bank credit is lower in the current period than it was in the one when the economy contracted. The core sectors (steel, cement, electricity, coal, oil, refining and fertilisers) shrunk in October. If you do not know this, it might be because the Prime Minister and the finance minister have not tweeted about it. If they ignore something, then it doesn’t exist. The data is all from the corporate sector. We have no idea what is happening to the unorganised and small sectors where most Indians are employed. The weak and the poor cannot “work from home”. They must toil every day to eat. We do know that the lockdown, like the earlier demonetisation, like GST, has taken work away from the small and the poor and given it to the corporate sector. The stock market is at a historic high for this reason.

Elsewhere, the capital of our nation is facing farmers’ protests. They want the government to take back the laws that will gut procurement and affect their livelihood. The government’s agents have said

the protesters are anti-national and separatists. The standard line that is used for anyone — academics, minorities, farmers, dissident industrialists — who points out that what the government is doing is wrong. It is like children and name-calling. That is the level of maturity in our national debate.

On the Ladakh front, China has refused to go back from the spaces they have occupied on our border and the Indian Army has to spend the winter in spaces that have not been prepared for such an eventuality. Our jawans were issued sleeping bags that have been previously found to be “unfit for use in glacier and super higher altitude areas”. But they must make do because the political establishment has decided it does not want to deal with the problem. The Prime Minister tweeted that he had an “excellent discussion with my friend Boris Johnson”, the British Prime Minister, about climate change and other matters. He has not found the time to have a discussion with his friend Xi Jinping about his Army going back from our borders. Again, if you don’t talk about the problem, it doesn’t exist. His right hand man, the home

minister of India, has said that the implementation of his pet project, the Citizenship Amendment Act, has been postponed for now. He says this is because of Covid-19 and he will only implement the CAA after the pandemic ends. Why Covid-19 should affect India’s giving citizenship to those non-Muslims who came to India illegally before December 2014 is not known. No other law has been paused because of it. But after an aggressive campaign against those he called “termites”, Amit Shah is now hesitant to take India down the road of religious discrimination. It might help to understand why by looking at what our ambassador in the United States is up to.

He has spent the last two weeks sweet talking those American leaders who had previously condemned India’s actions on the CAA, the National Register of Citizens and on Kashmir.

He has been tweeting out the details of the meetings without saying why India was now engaging with those who did not like the actions of the Narendra Modi government. The reason of course is that Mr Modi’s friend Donald Trump has been defeated in the

presidential election and a Democrat will become America’s new President in two months’ time. The Democratic Party has been very vocal about its concern that India is heading in the wrong direction under Mr Modi and is damaging itself by indulging in overt majoritarianism and harassing and bullying its own minorities. We will see what the effect of India’s outreach to the Democrats is soon enough.

Meanwhile, there has been no let-up in the conduct of the ruling party. In Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and elsewhere, laws have been passed that will jail Muslim men for 10 years if they marry Hindu women. In Hyderabad, the BJP has said in the campaign for the local elections that a vote for Muslims is a vote against India. Ten years ago, this would have produced outrage, but today it is normal and is accepted because it has become normalised. This is what is going on in our country today. It is hard to see any of it without a sense of dread and fear for what is happening and what may lie ahead.

The writer is a columnist and a senior journalist

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	44,149.72	-0.25
Nifty 50	12,968.95	-0.14
S&P 500*	3,612.84	-0.70
Dollar (₹)	74.03	-0.19
Pound Sterling (₹)	98.84	-0.12
Euro (₹)	88.14	-0.23
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	47,483.142	0.29
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	47.53	-0.65
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.911	0.039
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.847	0.005

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Penalty for QR code violation waived till March

A CBIC notification has waived the penalty for non-compliance with QR code provisions for B2C invoices generated by businesses for four months till March 31, 2021. Business with a turnover exceeding Rs 500 crore would have to issue B2C invoices with dynamic QR code from April 1, 2021 to avail of this penalty waiver. The rule requiring printing of dynamic QR code on B2C invoices is being implemented from December 1.

Ex-GM executive to head Ola's global electric biz



Ola said it has appointed former General Motors executive Jose Pinheiro, who managed 16 GM industrial complexes in nine countries, as head of global manufacturing and operations for its electric business. In this role, Pinheiro will spearhead Ola's ambitions to build world-class manufacturing facilities, starting with the world's largest scooter factory, and then expanding to multiple such facilities across India.

China's factory output surges to 3-year high

An official gauge of activity in China's manufacturing sector rose faster than expected in November, suggesting the economy's recovery is gathering pace toward the end of the year. The manufacturing purchasing managers' index rose to 52.1 in November from 51.4 in October, data released by the National Bureau of Statistics showed. That was the highest since September 2017 and beat analysts' estimates.

Yotta lays stone for ₹7,000-cr data centre park

Hiranandani Group firm Yotta Infrastructure laid the foundation of a 20-acre Delhi-NCR data centre park in Greater Noida amid the virtual presence of UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath. The firm had earlier announced plans to invest Rs 6,000-Rs 7,000 crore in this facility. The park will consist of six interconnected data centre buildings, which will offer 30,000 racks capacity and require 200 MW of power.



All-stock deal biggest after Refinitiv's S&P to acquire IHS Markit for \$39 bn

MATTHEW MONKS, ISHIKA MOOKERJEE & VIREN VAGHELA
NOV. 30

S&P Global Inc has agreed to buy IHS Markit Ltd for about \$39 billion in stock, a deal that accelerates the wave of consolidation among Wall Street's biggest data providers.

S&P is offering 0.2838 shares for each IHS Markit share, at about 4.7 per cent premium to IHS Markit's last close. After the deal, S&P shareholders will own about 67.75 per cent of the combined company on a fully diluted basis.

The tie-up of S&P with IHS Markit, a research firm with more than 5,000 analysts, data scientists, financial experts and industry specialists, is part of a race for scale as the industry's largest players try to capitalise on surging demand for data and analytics in increasingly computerised financial markets. This follows London Stock Exchange Group Plc's \$27 billion agreement last year to acquire Refinitiv.

A statement said Douglas Peterson, chief executive officer of S&P, will serve as CEO of the combined company. Lance Uggla, CEO of IHS Markit, will stay on as a special advisor to the company for one year after the deal is closed.

The acquisition has an enterprise value of about \$44 billion, including the assumption of \$4.8 billion in net debt.

"This is a huge consoli-



S&P RETAINS FY21 GROWTH AT -9%

New Delhi, Nov. 30: S&P Global Ratings on Monday retained its forecast of 9 per cent contraction in the Indian economy for the current fiscal, saying though there are now upside risks to growth but it will wait for more signs that Covid infections have stabilised or fallen.

—PTI

dation of financial databases and services," said Gary Dugan, chief executive officer of the Global CIO Office, an investment firm in Singapore. "S&P probably gathered that expansion incrementally wouldn't work and instead has gone for a major acquisition, which will deepen their product range and relevance."

Bloomberg LP, the parent of Bloomberg News, competes with IHS Markit and S&P Global in providing financial analytics and information.

The deal would be the world's second-largest

acquisition of 2020, second only to the \$56 billion set of transactions among China's biggest oil and gas companies to sell their pipeline networks to a new national carrier, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

Markit was famously founded in a UK barn by Uggla, a Canadian who spotted an opportunity to provide pricing for the opaque world of credit default swaps just as trading of the derivatives was taking off in the early 2000s. Uggla built up the company through a break-neck series of acquisitions, culminating in the 2016 merger with IHS. A 2014 IPO of Markit valued it at about \$4.5 billion.

Regulatory scrutiny could pose one risk for the tie-up, given the overlap between the firms' data offerings, according to Craig A. Huber, founder of Huber Research Partners. The LSE is still negotiating with EU regulators over its deal for Refinitiv, with competition authorities expressing concerns over how some companies' control of data can make them gatekeepers for an industry.

—Bloomberg

Trump to add SMIC, CNOOC to defence blacklist

ALEXANDRA ALPER, HUMEYRA PAMUK
WASHINGTON, NOV. 30

The Trump administration is poised to add China's top chipmaker SMIC and national offshore oil and gas producer CNOOC to a blacklist of alleged Chinese military companies, according to a document and sources, curbing their access to US investors and escalating tensions with Beijing weeks before President-elect Joe Biden takes office.

Reuters reported earlier this month that the Department of Defense (DOD) was planning to designate four more Chinese companies as owned or controlled by the Chinese military, bringing the number of Chinese companies affected to 35. A recent executive order issued by President Donald Trump would prevent US investors from buying securities of the listed firms starting late next year.

It was not immediately clear when the new tranche, would be published in the Federal Register. But the list comprises China Construction Technology Co Ltd and China International Engineering Consulting Corp, in addition to Semi-conductor Manufacturing International Corp (SMIC) and China National Offshore Oil Corp (CNOOC), according to the document and three sources.

—Reuters

Upward revision in growth to force rate pause this time

FALAKNAAZ SYED
MUMBAI, NOV. 30

Early economic recovery amidst stubbornly high inflation may make the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to keep interest rates on hold on Friday while continuing with an accommodative monetary policy stance. Economists have ruled out a rate cut for the remaining part of the fiscal and expect the central bank to revise up the GDP and inflation numbers for the rest of the year.

The six-member rate setting panel headed by RBI governor is scheduled to meet for two days starting December 2, and the resolution of which would be announced on December 4. This is the fourth bi-monthly monetary policy for the current financial year and the second meet under the newly formed MPC.

The country's economic growth outturn so far has evolved much stronger than the RBI projections (of -9.8 per cent year-on-year in Q3 and -5.6 per cent in Q4). The GDP growth rate was (-) 7.5 per cent in Q2 FY21, a notable improvement from the (-) 24 per cent fall in Q1 FY21, suggesting that the resumption of economic activity has been gathering pace. Economic growth was however sharply lower than the 4.4 per cent growth in Q2 FY20, being in the negative zone. The gains in the domestic economy in Q2 FY21 was powered by the manufacturing, electricity, and agriculture sectors, all of which witnessed positive growth rates.



On the other hand, inflation has also surprised on the upside, remaining above the upper tolerance level of 6 per cent every month (barring March 20) this year, accompanied by sticky core inflation. Food added the most to the headline, however, it was not the only source of price pressures. Inflation was high mainly due to supply-side factors, such as unseasonal rains (resulting in high prices for vegetables and pulses), labour shortages, higher services prices, higher oil, and higher taxes. Retail inflation rose to a nine-month high of 7.6 per cent in October 2020, supported by a sustained broad-based increase across the various segments of the Consumer Price Index. Core inflation (excluding food and fuel) for October stood at 5.7 per cent, which was the highest level in two years and 16 basis points higher than month ago.

"In light of this upside surprise, we expect the RBI to revise up its inflation projection by more than one percentage point to 5.5-6.9 per cent in H2 FY21 (from 4.5-5.4 per cent) and a new H1 FY22

forecast of 4.2-4.8 per cent. In view of these upward revisions, the MPC is likely to vote unanimously to remain in wait-and-see mode. Despite the growth recovery, we expect the RBI to adopt a cautious tone, flagging uncertainty about the resilience of demand after the festive season and downside risks due to rising infection cases in developed economies and parts of India," said Sonal Varma chief India economist at Nomura Holdings.

"We now expect the RBI to stay on hold through 2021 (vs our previous forecast of a 50 bp cut), as inflation has remained stubbornly high, closing the window for policy easing...we expect the RBI to revise upwards both its growth and inflation projections, but retain the dovish forward guidance," added Varma.

"Rates are likely to be on hold in rest of FY21. We expect the RBI MPC to stay focused on anchoring rates through reiteration of strong forward guidance and path ahead for open market operations, including for state developmental loans," said DBS India.

IIT Madras sees growth in pre-placement offers

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, NOV. 30

Notwithstanding the pandemic impact, Indian Institute of Technology Madras continued to see a growth in pre-placement offers this year.

Ahead of phase-1 of campus placements starting on December 1, as many as 182 pre-placement offers were received by IIT Madras students this academic year compared to 170 offers last year. IIT-M students have been witnessing a rising trend in pre-placement offers for the past few years. The pandemic did not disturb that.

In 2017-18, the institute saw PPOs almost doubling to 114 against 73 in the previous year. In 2018-19, it further grew to 135.

Information Technology accounted for 46 per cent of PPOs, core sectors and R&D, 29 per cent, analytics, consulting and finance, 19 per cent and FMCG, 6 per cent.

Texas Instruments, Microsoft, Qualcomm, Goldman Sachs and

American Express are some of the key companies that offered higher numbers of PPOs.

According to IIT Madras, a major factor behind the rise in PPOs is the internship programme, which was conducted completely online this year, for the first time in its history, to overcome the logistical restrictions.

"We have been observing a direct correlation between internships and pre-placement offers ever since the internship office was created. Internships provide an excellent opportunity for students to understand the working culture and expectations of the companies that they work for and for the companies to realise the potential of our students during that short period. When interests and expectations of interns and companies match, it culminates in pre-placement offers," said N.V. Ravi Kumar, advisor (internships), IIT Madras.

As many as 93 companies had provided 415 offers for internships this year.

A new bond route opens for polluting firms

TOM FREKE
NOV. 30

The next thing in green investing is a new kind of debt designed to help fund the trillions of dollars needed to wean the world from carbon.

Transition bonds are being developed for fossil-fuel companies and other heavy corporate emitters, which have largely been shut out of a booming green market. So-called brown industries would have to use proceeds from the sales to fund their clean-energy transformation.

Next year "will be a ramp-

up phase for transition instruments," said Marisa Drew, Credit Suisse Group AG's chief sustainability officer. "We'll have some experimental issues that the market and then we'll see many investors lining up."

The UN estimates the cost to decarbonise the world will be \$35 trillion, and capital markets will have to play a role. Corporations such as Citigroup Inc and Verizon Communications Inc and governments from Chile to Sweden raised a record \$235 billion this year in green bonds, used to fund environmentally friendly

projects.

Such financing is likely to get another boost next year from the European Union's plans to start green bonds and from US President-elect Joe Biden's prioritisation of climate policies. The coronavirus pandemic is also spurring an explosion in social bonds to fund projects that benefit society as a whole.

Behind the scenes, bankers and investors are now writing rules for transition finance.

Heavy polluters are facing the threat of tougher rules, as countries try to meet long-term emissions targets. Many banks and

investors are planning to cut financing for laggards, likely raising their cost of capital.

Transition bonds aim to provide a solution by tying funds to strict targets, aligning borrowers' interests with wider policies such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on climate change.

Only a handful of companies have so far sold transition bonds, given the lack of consensus on what they should be. One of the first was from a Brazilian beef producer, Marfrig Global Foods, which said proceeds from the \$500 million bond

would be used to buy cattle from ranchers in the Amazon who comply with non-deforestation and other sustainable criteria.

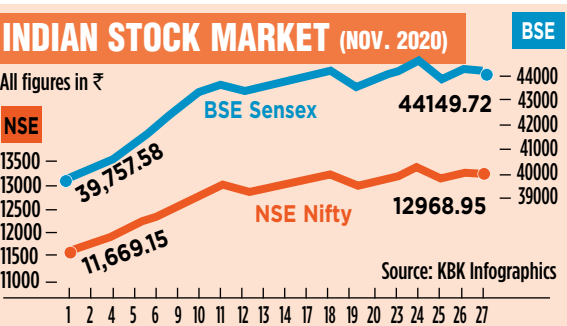
Other deals include a 500 million-euro (\$595 mn) bond from Italian gas pipeline operator Snam SpA. Total, France's largest oil company, announced plans last month to sell a "very large" transition bond. LafargeHolcim raised 850 million euros of sustainability-linked bonds earlier this month that will pay a 0.75 per cent higher interest rate if the company misses a carbon-emissions target.

—Bloomberg

Equity investors take stock of best month ever

London, Nov. 30: World shares paused on Monday to assess a record-breaking month as the prospect of a vaccine-driven economic recovery next year and yet more free money from central banks eclipsed immediate concerns about the coronavirus pandemic.

At the same time, oil, industrial commodities and other risk assets have surged, with emerging-market currencies posting their largest gains in almost two years, while safe-havens such as the



dollar and gold slipped. "It has been a very, very strong month for mar-

kets'," said Rabobank's head of macro strategy, Elwin de Groot.

GREEN | FUTURE

New rules require more responsible sourcing of raw materials

EU seeks tougher standards for batteries

EWA KRUKOWSKA
NOV. 30

Europe plans to impose stricter environmental requirements for batteries as it begins a radical economic overhaul set to boost electric vehicles and clean energy.

The European Union will aim at setting a global standard in the fast-growing market when it proposes next month regulations to ensure all batteries marketed in the region are greener throughout their life cycle.

"In our assessment, the EU will become the second-biggest global market for batteries," EU environment commissioner

Virginijus Sinkevicius said in an interview. "The number of batteries placed on the EU market and their importance will only grow in the coming years. Their sustainability should not lag behind."

The EU has already invested billions in its Battery Alliance project to compete with Asia, currently Europe's only provider of EV batteries. The region's battery market value will reach 250 billion euros (\$300 billion) by 2025, with production capacity able to meet auto industry demand, according to European Commission estimated.

Germany and France, home to major car makers,

giant companies such as BASF SE and carmakers BMW AG and PSA Group.

To make batteries greener, the EU will require more responsible sourcing of raw materials, using clean energy in production, cutting the share of hazardous substances, boosting energy efficiency and improving their durability, according to Sinkevicius. The new rules will affect batteries manufactured in the 27-nation bloc and brought from abroad, he said.

"The new framework should apply to all types of batteries and all kinds of battery chemistry, whether sold apart or contained in products," Sinkevicius

are leading the push to roll out a European battery industry. Last year, the EU approved 3.2 billion euros in aid for a project spanning seven nations and including industrial

said. "It will ensure that various battery types are subject to similar but differentiated obligations."

The increasingly electric future of the region is part of the Green Deal. To meet its goal of zeroing-out greenhouse gases by 2050, the EU needs to cut emissions from transport by 90 per cent.

Europe's growing EV market is starting to lure battery makers. China's SVolt Energy Technology Co said this month it will join Contemporary Amperex Technology Ltd in opening a factory in Germany, while Tesla supplier Panasonic Corp may start up a battery business in Norway.

—Bloomberg

E-com to push warehousing, data centre demand in 2021



SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, NOV. 30

Warehousing and data centre demand driven by e-commerce will keep commercial realty market stable in 2021. Co-working segment will support the demand for office leasing space.

Despite the ongoing pandemic, the warehousing sector is expected to remain comparatively less impacted due to rising e-commerce demand, which is expected to grow from \$70 billion in FY19 to an estimated \$160 billion by 2022, finds Knight Frank.

"Logistics and warehousing have shown resilience in the primary and secondary markets. As India at a steady pace adopts the new normal for various businesses, the sentiments of stakeholders and investors are moving in a positive direction across key cities," said Shishir Bajjal, chairman and managing director at Knight Frank India.

SHORT TAKES

NorthEast United frustrate FC Goa

Goa: NorthEast United extended their unbeaten run to three games after frustrating FC Goa in a 1-1 draw in their Indian Super League Season 7 encounter at the Fatorda Stadium on Monday. Goa are yet to record three points this season. Idrissa Sylla (40') scored the opening goal before Igor Angulo (43') equalised just before the break. Brandon Fernandes was handed his first start of the season along with Albanbha Kupar Dohling as Goa boss Juan Ferrando made three changes to the side which had suffered a defeat to Mumbai City FC. Jorge Ortiz Mendoza started with James Donachie benched. NorthEast made as many as five changes to the side which came from behind to hold Kerala in a thrilling 2-2 draw. — *Agencies*

4 Olympic-bound boxers in TOPS

New Delhi: Four Olympic-bound Indian boxers — two men and as many women — have been included in the sports ministry's Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS), the Sports Authority of India said on Monday. World bronze-medallist Simranjeet Kaur (60kg), Asian medallist Pooja Rani (75kg) joined M.C. Mary Kom in the elite group. Asian silver-winner Ashish Kumar (75kg) and Asian Games bronze-winner Satish Kumar (+91kg) have been included in a group which already featured Amit Panghal (52kg), Manish Kaushik (63kg), and Vikas Krishan (69kg) among the Tokyo-bound. Lovlina Borgohain and Kavinder Singh Bisht are also part of the core group. "Nikhat Zareen (51kg), Sonia Chahal (57kg) and Shiva Thapa (63kg) were moved to the TOPS developmental group from the Core Group," the SAI said. — *PTI*

Clash of heads as Wolves win

London: The sound of the thud from a clash of heads just added to concern. The game was only five minutes old when Wolverhampton forward Raul Jimenez and Arsenal defender David Luiz collided while jumping for the ball. Concerns grew as Jimenez appeared motionless and was eventually wheeled off the field with an oxygen mask on. "I knew straight away that something was wrong," Wolves manager Nuno Espirito Santo said. "Everyone called 'red, red,' which means it's a bad situation. You see the panic in their eyes." By the time the game ended with Wolves beating Arsenal 2-1 there was a more encouraging update from the hospital with Jimenez said to be conscious and talking. — *AP*

Liverpool, Man U look to advance

Washington: Chelsea and Manchester City are already through to the Champions League knockout phase with two games to spare. Now it's the turn of Manchester United and Liverpool off the back of a challenging weekend in the Premier League. Liverpool on Tuesday host Ajax, with a two-point advantage on the Dutch club in Group D, with a packed program, fixture scheduling and James Milner adding to the injury headaches. The 2019 European champions were stunned at home last week with a home loss to Atalanta. The visit of Ajax come a day too soon for the return of up to 2,000 fans being allowed at Anfield. — *AP*

Live on TV

CRICKET

Lanka Premier League: Colombo vs Dambulla from 3 pm; Jaffna vs Kandy from 7.30 pm on Sony Six

South Africa vs England: Third T20 from 9.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

FOOTBALL

Indian Super League: Mumbai City vs East Bengal from 7.20 pm on Star Sports 2, 3

Champions League: Shakhtar Donetsk vs Real Madrid from 11.25 pm on Sony Ten 2; Monchengladbach vs Inter Milan; Atletico Madrid vs Bayern Munich; Liverpool vs Ajax; Porto vs Manchester City from 1.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony Ten 1, 2, 3 and Six

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WARNING BELL

Setback for Oz as injured David out of ODI, T20 series

Sydney, Nov. 30: Star opening batsman David Warner faces a battle to be fit for the India Test series after Cricket Australia said Monday he will miss the last one-day international and the three-match Twenty20 series next month.

Warner limped out of Sunday's one-day international against India after straining his groin while fielding as Australia secured the series 2-0 in Sydney.

After a typically swash-buckling innings of 83 on Sunday, Warner fell awkwardly and had to be helped from the field.

Warner will miss Wednesday's final ODI and all three Twenty20 internationals beginning Friday in Canberra to undergo rehab in an effort to ready for the Test series which begins on December 17 in Adelaide.

Opening batsman D'Arcy Short has been called up to the Twenty20 international squad as a replacement.

Cricket Australia also announced that leading pace bowler Pat Cummins will be rested for the remainder of the white-ball matches against India, putting pressure on an out-of-form Mitchell Starc.

"Pat and Davie are critical to our plans for the Test Series," head coach Justin Langer said.

"Davie will work through his injury rehab and in Pat's case it is important all of our players are managed well to keep them mentally and physically fit throughout what is a challenging summer."

"The priority for both is being fully prepared for one of the biggest and most important home Test Series we have played in recent years, especially with World Test Championship points up for grabs."

Left-hander Short plays cricket for Western Australia and was the Twenty20 Big Bash League's leading run-scorer in 2017-18 and 2018-19.

No replacement has been announced for Cummins, with Australia to rely on Josh Hazlewood, Starc and allrounder Marcus Stoinis to provide the main seam bowling options. — *AFP*



Australia's David Warner (centre) is assisted from the Sydney Cricket Ground after injuring himself while fielding during the second one-day international match against India in Sydney on Sunday. — *AP*

Marnus feels Oz have advantage

Sydney, Nov. 30: Australia's rising star Marnus Labuschagne believes that the home team will enjoy a slight advantage going into the Test series against India as most of their top-order players will be coming in after having played a fair amount of first-class cricket.

Labuschagne, who contributed a solid 70 off 61 balls in the second ODI which Australia won by 51 runs on Sunday, has scored two hundreds in three Sheffield Shield matches.

"It definitely helps to have a few games under your belt just to get the pace and the timing of the game from T20s to one-dayers to four-day cricket," he replied to a query from PTI during a virtual media interaction

SMITH SCORED 2ND TON DESPITE ACUTE VERTIGO

Sydney, Nov. 30: Top Australian batsman Steve Smith has revealed that he suffered a "bad dose of vertigo" ahead of the second one-dayer against India and was not sure of playing the game in which he struck a series-clinching hundred.

"I didn't know I was playing today. I had a really bad dose of vertigo this morning and I was struggling until ... I came down early to have a hit and a bit of a run around," Smith told *cricket.com.au* after receiving his second successive Man of the match award.

Smith said it was team doctor Leigh Golding, who relieved him of the symptoms by performing Epley maneuver which involves a series of head movements used to treat benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV), a condition caused by a problem in the inner ear. — *PTI*

facilitated by series' official broadcaster Sony. The Indian players, who

had played IPL and now ODIs, last played red-ball cricket in New Zealand

and will only have two three-day games to get into the groove.

"But a lot of these (Indian) players we're talking about, they've been doing it for a long time, they're not new to the changes of format. I'd be surprised if they didn't shift back into gear very quickly."

"I will say that it's a slight advantage, four out of our top six have been playing Shield cricket and got that rhythm as a batting group."

With David Warner ruled out of the last ODI as well as the upcoming T20 series, Labuschagne won't mind a chance to open the innings if he is asked about it. "Certainly, if I got asked to open the batting absolutely. It's an opportunity that I would enjoy taking." — *PTI*

KIWIS POCKET SERIES AS 3RD T20 CALLED OFF

Mount Maunganui (New Zealand), Nov. 30: New Zealand on Monday claimed the T20 series against the West Indies 2-0 after the third and final match of the rubber was washed out here.

Persistent rain played spoilsport to left-arm spinner Mitchell Santner's debut as New Zealand's T20I captain and the final match of the series was called off after just 2.2 overs.

The Kiwis were without Tim Southee, Ross Taylor and Kyle Jamieson, who had been given a break for the third game and were replaced by Daryl Mitchell, Scott Kuggeleijn and Hamish Bennett.

Sent into bat, West Indies were off to a brisk start with openers Andre Fletcher and Brandon King scoring 12 runs off the first over. — *AFP*

World Cup hero Diop dies at 42

Washington, Nov. 30: Papa Bouba Diop, the tall Senegal midfielder who scored the goal that delivered one of the greatest upsets in World Cup history, has died. He was 42.

"FIFA is saddened to learn of the passing of Senegal legend Papa Bouba Diop," the sport's governing body said on Sunday.

Diop was the hero when Senegal shocked defending champion France 1-0 in the opening game of the 2002 World Cup in Japan and South Korea. It was Senegal's World Cup debut and the win sent the West Africans on a run to the quarterfinals to match the best performance at the tournament by an African team. "Once a World Cup hero, always a World Cup hero," FIFA said in its tribute on Twitter.

Diop was first called up to play for his country at the

● **Papa Bouba Diop was first called up to play for Senegal at the age of 21 and made more than 60 appearances for his country between 2001 and 2008.**

age of 21 and made more than 60 appearances for Senegal from 2001-08.

He played club football in Switzerland, France and Greece and for four teams in England — Fulham, Portsmouth, West Ham and Birmingham.

Diop was 6-foot-5 and nicknamed "Wardrobe" because of his commanding presence. He was loved in Senegal because of that goal against the French, the former colonisers of Senegal, but also for his likeable personality off the field along with his skill on it. — *AP*



Maradona's doc under scanner

Buenos Aires, Nov. 30: Diego Maradona's surgeon responded to the launch of an investigation for involuntary manslaughter by saying he "everything he could, up to the impossible" for an "unmanageable" patient.

Earlier in the day prosecutors in San Isidro, near Buenos Aires, said they were investigating Leopoldo Luque while Argentine television showed police raiding the doctor's surgery and home.

The probe was triggered by concerns raised by Maradona's daughters Dalma, Gianinna and Jana over the treatment he received for his heart condition at his home, judicial sources said.

Maradona was buried on Thursday at the Jardin de Paz cemetery on the outskirts of the Argentine capital.

"Our investigations are ongoing, we are talking to witnesses including members of the family" of Maradona, a source close to the San Isidro inquiry said.

"The clinic had recommended that he go elsewhere to be hospitalised, but the family decided otherwise. His daughters signed for him to be discharged from the hospital," said a family member.

Later in the day, Luque gave an emotional televised news conference. "You want to know what I am responsible for?" the 39-year-old doctor asked

NAPOLI WIN BIG IN A TRIBUTE TIE TO MARADONA

Milan, Nov. 30: Napoli beat Roma 4-0 in an emotional match in the Italian league as the team paid tribute to Diego Maradona.

It was Napoli's first Serie 'A' game since Maradona died. Maradona led Napoli to their only two Serie 'A' titles in 1987 and 1990 and is considered a god-like figure in Naples. "Certainly we played with extra motivation. Today we wanted even more than normal to get a result, for Diego, for our city which is suffering this loss. We dedicate the victory to him," Napoli captain Lorenzo Insigne said.

The win saw Napoli move level with Roma and Juventus, six points below leader AC Milan on points table. — *AP*

between sobs. "For having loved him, for having taken care of him, for having extended his life, for having improved it to the end."

Luque said he did "everything he could, up to the impossible" and considered himself a "friend" of Maradona and saw him "as a father, not as a patient". — *AFP*

New Innings



Andhra Ranji Trophy cricketer D. Naren Reddy is all smiles as he poses with his childhood coach G. Kiran Reddy (left) of the Sarojini Cricket and Fitness Academy at his wedding reception in Hyderabad on Sunday. Naren married Harika Reddy in Siddipet on Friday.

Grosjean to miss next race after fiery crash



A steward reacts as officials put out a fire on Haas F1 driver Romain Grosjean's car following a crash during the Bahrain Grand Prix in Sakhir on Sunday. — *AFP*

Sakhir (Bahrain), Nov. 30: French driver Romain Grosjean will sit out next weekend's Formula One race after escaping a fiery high-speed crash in the Bahrain Grand Prix with just burns to his hands, his team Haas said on Monday.

Grosjean walked away from the wreckage after he collided with Daniil Kyvat's Alpha Tauri on the first lap of Sunday's race, causing the Haas car to split in half and burst into flames as it smashed through the safety barriers at 225kph.

Haas said treatment for the burns that 34-year-old

Grosjean suffered was "going well" and he was expected to be discharged from hospital on Tuesday.

Grosjean escaped alive thanks to the integrity of his car's survival cell, his 'halo' device, which deflected the ruptured Armco metal barriers away from his head, his own presence of mind in remaining calm as he extricated himself and the rapid skilled assistance of F1's medical staff and track marshals.

"Hello everyone, I just wanted to say I'm okay, well, sort of okay," the Frenchman said in an Instagram post. — *AFP*