

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
KARIMNAGAR | WEDNESDAY | 18 NOVEMBER 2020

WEATHER

Max: 31.2°C
Min: 19.9°C
RH: 35%
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Cloudy sky.
Haze, mist likely.
Max/Min temp. 30/17 °C

COVID-19 CUNT

CASES
(+38,201)
89,11,576

DEATHS
(+922)
1,30,988

covid19india.org
STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+ 952)
TS: 2,58,828
(+1,395)
AP: 8,56,159

(+3)
1,410
(+9)
6,890

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

5,56,71,441

DEATHS
13,37,982

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES
217

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari; Dakshinayana
Tithi: Kartika Shuddha Chaturthi till 11.20 pm
Star: Moola till 10.43 am
Varjyam: 9.13 am to 10.43 am; 7.54 pm to 9.26 pm
Durmuhurtam: 11.39 am to 12.23 pm
Rahukalam: 12 noon to 1.30 pm
HILIRI CALENDAR
Rabbi-ul Akhir 2, 1442 AH
PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.19 am
Zohar: 12.11 pm
Asar: 4.04 pm
Maghrib: 5.46 pm
Isha: 6.56 pm
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.22 AM
SUNSET TODAY 5.39 PM
MOONSET TODAY 8.48 PM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 9.20 AM

COUNTER POINT

Where were all your one million followers? You got only 100 votes in the elections!

SHORT TAKE

India tests-fires missile system

New Delhi: India on Tuesday successfully test-fired the Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air Missile (QRSAM) system at an integrated test range in Chandipur off the Odisha coast, the defence ministry said in a statement. It said the missile "accurately and successfully" neutralised an airborne target. It was the second successful test firing of the missile in the last five days. "The flight test, second in the series, was conducted today at around 3.42 pm from the integrated test range, Chandipur, off the coast of Odisha," said the defence ministry statement.

WED | LOCK

Forced conversions to attract 5 years imprisonment

MP plans law to stop ‘love jihad’

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, NOV. 17

No case of alleged “love jihad” has so far been reported in Madhya Pradesh and yet the BJP-led government in the state is all set to bring a legislation in the ensuing winter session of the Assembly making “love jihad”, a term coined by rightwing politicians to attack interfaith marriages, a cognizable and non-bailable offence.

The Bharatiya Janata Party and several rightwing, Hindutva outfits have been targeting young couples and interfaith marriages, alleging that they are done with the intention to convert Hindu girls.

The proposed legislation in Madhya Pradesh provides rigorous imprisonment of up to five years for “forcible marriage, seduction and forced conversions”.

“The draft bill for the proposed legislation, christened

Madhya Pradesh Dharma Swatantra Vidheyak, 2020, is ready. The Bill will be tabled in the coming winter session of the Assembly,” Madhya Pradesh home minister Narottam Mishra told reporters here on Tuesday.

Mr Mishra’s announcement comes in the wake of a stern warning issued by Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan a couple of weeks ago that *jihad* (religious war) in the name of love would not be tolerated

in Madhya Pradesh.

The draft Bill proposes to declare forced marriages and conversions null and void. It has provision to treat the collaborator in the forced marriage at par with the main accused.

Madhya Pradesh is the third BJP-ruled state after Uttar Pradesh and Haryana that proposes to introduce a law to curb alleged forced conversions of Hindu girls in some interfaith marriages, particularly with Muslim boys.



WORLD | 5

France mulls ban on police images



SPORTS | 8

Olympic champion turns delivery boy

TABLOID

Curbing a streaming flow



deccanchronicle.com, facebook.com/deccannews, twitter.com/deccanchronicle

Vol. 83 No. 319 Established 1938 | 16 PAGES | ₹6.00

GHMC polls on Dec. 1, results Dec. 4

Nominations begin today, last day Nov. 20; no EVMs, votes to be cast on ballot papers

BALU PULIPAKA | DC HYDERABAD, NOV. 17

Elections to the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) Council will be held on December 1, and the counting of votes will be taken up on December 4. Voting will be on ballot papers and no electronic voting machines will be used, State Election Commissioner V. Parthasarathi announced on Tuesday.

Addressing a press conference, Parthasarathi said with the announcement of the election schedule, the model code of conduct came into immediate effect in the GHMC limits.

The term of the GHMC Council ends on February 10, 2020. As per the law, elections for a new Council can be held at any time three months before the expiry of the term of the Council.

Parthasarathi said nominations from candidates for the 150 wards in the GHMC will be accepted from Wednesday. While November 20 is the last date for filing of nominations, their scrutiny has been scheduled for November 21. The last date for withdrawal of nominations is November 24, he said.

The state election commissioner said the reservations that were in force during the last GHMC elections in 2016, will continue this time around. “The decision on reservations of wards is up to the state government,” he said, adding that the voter lists for the GHMC polls will be based on the lists used for the last Assembly election. Anyone who attains the age of 18 years as on January 1, 2020, will be eligible to vote in the civic polls.

■ Page 2: Nominations can be filed online, says SEC



A man arranges election campaign material of different parties in Hyderabad on Tuesday, after the State Election Commission announced the GHMC elections.

— S. SURENDER REDDY

Snap poll, shorter time for campaign raise eyebrows

MADDY DEEKSHITH | DC HYDERABAD, NOV. 17

The State Election Commission (SEC) issuing the GHMC election notification along with the poll schedule has come as a shocker for political parties as well as civic activists. They have charged SEC with “making a mockery of democracy by following directions of the state government”.

Terming announcement of the poll schedule and the time it provides as absurd, prominent civil society members claimed it is blatant misuse of power and provisions of the law, as sufficient time has not been given for even filing and withdrawing nominations.

TPCC election coordina-

How can the SEC ask candidates to file nominations by November 21 when the updated final list of electoral rolls will be published the same day? The Election Commission seems to have no regard for democracy and, I think, it does not believe in free and fair election

— MARRI SHASHIDHAR REDDY, Congress

tion committee chairman Marri Shashidhar Reddy said, “How can the SEC ask candidates to file nominations by November 21 when the updated final list of electoral rolls will be published the same day? The Election Commission seems to have no regard for democracy and, I

think, it does not believe in free and fair election,” Shashidhar Reddy remarked.

He pointed out that voters have been denied their basic right of check their names in the electoral list in several divisions. “Like it happened in the Legislative Assembly polls, the SEC commissioner will once again say sorry for deletion of names from the electoral list. Is there any rationale to cut the election duration from 21 days to 14,” the Congress leader asked.

Civic activist M. Padmanabha Reddy pointed out that the city has not yet completely recovered from the Covid-19 or the floods.

■ Page 2: What’s hurry to complete polls, ask activists

CENTRE PERMITS TS TO BORROW ₹5,017 CRORE

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, NOV. 17

The Centre on Tuesday gave the state government permission to borrow an additional ₹5,017 crore — 0.5 per cent of the state’s gross state domestic product (GSDP) — through a special window after it accepted Option 1 of the Centre’s borrowing proposal to meet GST revenue shortfall.

The Centre had offered two options to all states. Under Option-1, besides getting the facility of a special window for borrowings to meet the shortfall, states are also entitled to get unconditional permission to borrow the final instalment of 0.50 per cent of GSDP out of the 2 per cent additional borrowings permitted under Atmanirbhar Abhiyaan. This is over and above the special window of ₹1.1 lakh crore.

Under Option-2 the state governments have to borrow to meet the revenue shortfall.

State officials said that Telangana had opposed Option-2 and demanded that the Centre borrow and led to the states. The Centre had accepted the demand and the state had given its consent to the Centre under Option-1.

According a press release from the Union finance ministry, TS has joined 22 other states who have opted for Option-1. “Telangana state will receive the funds through this window, and it is likely to be released on November 23,” it said.

KCR’s move takes Oppn by surprise

S.A. ISHAQUI | DC HYDERABAD, NOV. 17

TRS supremo and Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao clearly took Opposition parties by surprise by opting for the GHMC polls sooner rather than later. The GHMC Council only needs to be formed in February next year but elections are being held nearly two and a half months before the due date.

The BJP and the Congress, reading signals from TRS leaders, had anticipated the polls in the second week of January. The State Election Commission scheduling the polls on December 1 took them by surprise.

The Opposition parties are now left with little



tisme to finalise the list of contestants as nominations have to be filed by November 20.

The sudden announcement of the election schedule along with the poll notification confined the Opposition to their party offices till late night, figuring out poll strategies to tackle the ruling party.

■ Page 2: Parties struggle to finalise candidates

KCR firms up plan to retain GHMC

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, NOV. 17

TRS boss and Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao had set the ground for retaining power in the GHMC much in advance. He will reveal his mind at a meeting of the party’s parliamentary and legislative wings on Wednesday.

Rao is said to have instructed party leaders to propagate information regarding the development and welfare activi-

ties that the state government has taken up, apart from the financial assistance it has provided to victims of floods in the city which no previous government has so far done anywhere in the country.

Party sources said the Chief Minister will ask his entire Cabinet, all MPs, MLAs, and MLCs to campaign in all the 150 divisions of the GHMC.

■ Page 2: KCR to campaign online for GHMC polls

IN JUST A YEAR, COVID-19 SHAKES UP THE WORLD

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, NOV. 17

Exactly a year ago, a viral infection spread to humans in the Chinese city of Wuhan that went to take the lives of over 13 lakh, and counting, across the world.

The first case, according to the *South China Morning Post*, can be traced back to November 17, 2019 when a 55-year-old individual from Hubei province was infected with a virus, which later on was identified as a Novel Coronavirus, also dubbed 2019-nCoV. Chinese authorities, however, officially identified the first case only on December 8, 2019 and identified the cause on December 31, 2019.

■ Full report on Page 5

LVB WITHDRAWALS RESTRICTED TO ₹25K BY RBI

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, NOV. 17

Minutes after placing beleaguered Lakshmi Vilas Bank (LVB) under moratorium and superseding its Board of directors, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Tuesday announced a draft scheme of amalgamation to merge the ailing lender with DBS Bank India.

The 30-day moratorium, which caps deposit withdrawals to ₹25,000, would end on December 16, 2020, according to statements from RBI and the government. Depositors, however, can withdraw above ₹25,000 for unforeseen expenses.

■ Full report on Page 7

B’day honour: Seer ends row

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 17

The controversy over extending “temple courtesies” to Swami Swaroopanandendra Saraswati, seer of the Sri Sarada Peetham in Visakha-patnam, ended on Tuesday with the seer withdrawing his request to the government for the privilege.

Temple courtesies include presenting of “teertha prasadam and sesha vas-tram” to the seer on his birthday on Wednesday by

the archakas from temples of prominence.

A controversy has been made out of the annual ritual, which is in vogue for the last 12 years, with the Opposition Telugu Desam linking it to Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy who turns to Swami Swaroopanandendra for spiritual guidance.

Following a memo from the endowments department to prominent temples to extend courtesies to the seer, a public interest litigation was filed in the AP

High Court. S.S. Prasad, senior counsel representing the Sarada Peetham, informed the court about the seer withdrawing his request. The court disposed of the matter after recording the submissions made by the Peetham counsel.

Sources said the seer baffled over the issue being politicised and had decided to end the controversy. Prominent temples had been presenting sesha vas-tram for more than a decade irrespective of the party in power,” sources said.

Nizam kin goes to cops against Mukarram Jah

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD NOV. 17

Najaf Ali Khan, grandson of the seventh Nizam Osman Ali Khan, lodged a complaint with Hyderabad police chief Anjani Kumar, seeking registration of an FIR against his cousin Mukarram Jah for using an invalid certificate of succession in the United Kingdom High Court in a case pertaining to the Nizam funds.

Najaf Ali Khan also named Esra Berjin Jah, Mukarram Jah’s ex-wife and general power of attorney, and his brother Muffakham Jah in the complaint.

The case relates to the deposit of £1 million belonging to the Nizam in 1948 in the National Westminster Bank. It may be recalled that last year, the High Court of England and Wales ruled in favour of India and Mukarram and Muffakam Jah in a

case relating to whom the money belongs.

The bank froze the funds following an objection from the Nizam to the transfer of the money by Nawab Moin Nawaz Jung, then finance minister, to Habib Ibrahim Rahimtoola, then high commissioner of Pakistan in the United Kingdom.

India, Pakistan, and the two grandsons of the Nizam lay claim to the funds which increased in value to ₹35 million (₹307 crore) by the time the judgment was delivered last year.

Najaf Ali Khan alleged that the economic offence involves cheating, fraud, forgery, misrepresentation and giving false and fabricated evidence resulting in misappropriation of funds belonging to the Nizam. He said the Government of India had issued a certificate to Mukarram Jah dated 27-02-1967 recognising him as the sole successor to his grandfather

Nizam VII.

However, after the 26th Amendment Act, 1971 of the Constitution by the insertion of Article 363A, the certificate issued to Mukkaram Jah had become null and void.

Mukkaram Jah along with other accused fraudulently used the certificate in order to cause wrongful gain to themselves and wrongful loss to the rest of the legal heirs of the last Nizam, Najaf Ali Khan alleged.

He alleged with the 1971 amendment, Mukarram Jah was no longer a ruler of Hyderabad in succession to his grandfather and was like any ordinary citizen.

“Therefore, the personal law of inheritance is applicable for the matter of inheritance,” Najaf Ali Khan said, adding that the police commissioner assured to look into the petition and refer it to the legal team for further action.



SHORT TAKES

NOMINATIONS
CAN BE FILED
ONLINE: SEC

From Page 1

Of the 74,04,400 electors in the GHMC limits, 52.09 per cent are men, 47.90 per cent women, he said. The security deposit for candidates from the general category will be ₹5,000, and ₹2,500 for candidates from the Scheduled Castes and Tribes, and Backward Class communities.

Nominations, Parthasarathi, said can be filed online by the candidates. No candidate can spend more than ₹5 lakh towards election expenditure including campaigning costs and the expenditure details must be filed with the SEC within 45 days after the declaration of results. Failure to do so, Parthasarathi said, can result in disqualification of the candidate for three years.

While 48,000 polling personnel are expected to be deployed for polling and election-related duties, anywhere between 25,000 and 30,000 police personnel are expected to be pressed into service for security and bandobast duties. Special check-posts and pickets will be set up and rowdy sheeters will be bound over, he said.

The sale of liquor in the GHMC limits will not be allowed beginning 48 hours before the start of polling on December 1, he said.

WHAT'S HURRY
TO COMPLETE
POLLS: ACTIVISTS

From Page 1

"The current decision of SEC is unjustified. What is the need for completing the election process 70 days prior to dissolution of the current GHMC body when lakhs of people are still suffering from flooding and the corporation is yet to rehabilitate them," he asked.

He questioned the need for reducing the period for filing nominations to three days when usually one week is given. Likewise, only one day has been given for the withdrawal of nominations instead of three. "What will 150 sitting corporators and 150 elected corporators do for 70 days period prior to their oath," he wondered.

Political and civic rights activists said SEC seems to be considering GHMC polls as though they are US presidential elections. "What is the hurry in completing the election process 70 days prior to dissolution of the GHMC council when the city has not seen normalcy from both Coronavirus and floods," they asked.

PARTIES YET
TO FINALISE
CANDIDATES

From Page 1

BJP senior leaders including Bandi Sanjay, Union minister of state G. Kishan Reddy, Dr K Laxman and others were busy at the BJP's office in Kacheguda.

TPCC president N. Uttam Kumar Reddy, CLP leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, working presidents Ponnann Prabhakar, A. Revanth Reddy and Kusum Kumar, senior leaders Mohammed Ali Shabbir, Dr J. Geetha Reddy were closeted at Gandhi Bhavan and the CLP office.

A senior Congress leader said it was not easy to finalise candidates for 150 divisions in a matter of hours and the leaders have to spend sleepless nights till the last candidate files the nomination on November 21. He pointed out, "We have to concentrate on selecting the right candidates as well as take care to protect them from poaching by the TRS or the BJP." Another leader in the Congress said, "We have a tentative list of candidates but finalising the names within a short time is difficult. Doing it in such a hurry may dent our prospects."

A senior leader in the BJP said they had not faced any difficulty in finding candidates. "We have many aspirants within the party and some from the Congress and the TRS are also looking at the BJP. They could even rush to us at the last minute. But accommodating such winning horses at this short notice may cause some difficulty."

Another burden was the extremely short campaign of just 10 days after the last date for withdrawal of nominations. The ruling party obviously has an advantage of moving a step ahead against the Opposition as it was well in advance with its poll strategies.

2 years gone, TS women's
commission still headless

Crime against women has risen and the govt is indifferent, say activists

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC
HYDERABAD, NOV. 17

Two years and four months after it became headless after the then chairperson Tripurana Venkataratnam demitted office, the Telangana State Women's Commission remains headless, and this could prove to be a serious irritant for the TRS government in the upcoming GHMC elections, scheduled for December 1.

Women activists and citizen collectives leading the movement towards appointing a chairperson for the Women's Commission have expressed anger over what they claim is the government's negligence of

women issues and the need for policies to safeguard women.

Several members of the non-partisan citizen collective 'Women Commission Matters', who are also first-time voters, have said that they will not vote for the TRS in these elections. The group is active on Twitter and has launched a petition on change.org to draw support for their cause and is hoping that more women will see this issue as an important one, worth weighing a voting decision on.

Spurthi Kolipaka, a social worker and campaign strategist at Women's Commission Matters, said, "The gov-

● **THE GOVERNMENT** was in October, rapped by the Telangana HC, and given a week to respond on how much more time was required to appoint the chairperson for the Women's Commission.

ernment doesn't seem to care about the increasing crimes against women that have only spiked in the last two or three years, all in the absence of a Women's Commission head, the sole body responsible for making policies for a huge population of women. The voter base part of our organisation as well as those we have connected through our collective, has expressed

that this could cost the TRS this election, as it did in case of Dubbak bypolls where the party had fielded a female candidate."

Another women rights activist, R. Kondaveeti Satyavathi, chief functionary, Bhumika Women's Collective, said, "No other state has a non-functional Women's Commission. The commission is a constitutional body, responsible for ensuring safety and addressing grievances of the women population. Several organisations and women activists have been demanding for over two years to appoint a chief for the body, but the government has not taken this issue seriously, and

there has only been growing agitation on the same against the government."

The government was in October, rapped by the Telangana HC, and given a week to respond on how much more time was required to appoint the chairperson for the Women's Commission. However, there has been no response on the same till now. The National Commission for Women has also on several occasions intervened on the issue, and directed the state government to appoint the chair.

The total voter base of women voters in the upcoming GHMC elections is 35,46,847 against 38,56,770 male voters.

KCR TO CAMPAIGN
ONLINE FOR
GHMC ELECTIONS

From Page 1

A minister, an MLA and an MLC will be responsible for a division to coordinate, implement the party's poll strategy and ensure the win of the TRS nominee.

Rao will personally monitor poll management on a day-to-day basis from Pragathi Bhavan, giving instructions to party leaders. Senior leaders close to the CM said that Rao is very confident that citizens within the Greater Hyderabad area will bless the ruling party with a second consecutive victory in the civic body polls, as they were impressed with the projects that have been taken up, and the facelift the TRS administration has given to the capital city since it has come in power in 2014.

Sources said that the citizens of Hyderabad, in view of the visible improvement in civic infrastructure in the city, apart from growth the twin cities have witnessed in the IT and industrial sector in the past six years, will not fall in the trap of the Congress and the BJP, which are indulging in mudslinging politics against the ruling party.

It is understood that party working president K.T. Rama Rao will be spearheading the election campaign for the TRS by holding road shows and group meetings in accordance with the Covid-19 protocol. It is expected that the Chief Minister will campaign online in view of the restrictions on campaigning imposed by Covid-19 prevention guidelines. Incidentally, the state government has relaxed restrictions on gatherings in enclosed places like auditoriums, banquet halls and function halls from 100 to 200 people. This will enable the ruling party to interact with more people and spread its development and welfare agenda towards seeking votes.

TRS had won 99 seats in the 2016 polls. The score turned into a century when the lone Telugu Desam corporator who got elected joined the TRS.

figures'. He said that it was due to the attitude of the TRS and MIM that the people of the Old City could not achieve their dream of Metro Rail service, Kishan Reddy alleged.

The minister was confident that the BJP would win the GHMC polls and grab the mayor's seat. It will also come to power in the next Assembly elections. Dr Laxman said that the party will release the first list of candidates on Wednesday. The manifesto was being drafted by taking the opinion of experts from various sectors.

BJP Mahila Morcha meet



BJP leaders and workers during the BJP Mahila Morcha meeting at the party state office in Nampally on Tuesday. — P. SURENDRA

Why GHMC polls announced
in a hurry, Kishan asks TS govtDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, NOV. 17

Union minister of state for home G. Kishan Reddy alleged that the State Election Commission had colluded with the state government in the matter of issuing the GHMC election notification.

Speaking to the media, the minister asked why the "TRS sarkar" had scheduled elections in a hurry and pointed out only three days were given for filing nominations. "It's purely a conspiracy of the TRS," he said.

Kishan Reddy was confi-

dent that regardless of the conspiracies of the government, the Dubbak byelection result will be repeated in the GHMC polls.

Kishan Reddy and Dr K. Laxman, BJP's GHMC election coordination committee chairman, reviewed with leaders the selection of candidates, the manifesto, the campaign schedule and other issues at BJP city office in Kacheguda. After the review, the leaders addressed the press at BJP state headquarters.

Kishan Reddy asked, "Where is development in Hyderabad." He said there

is no 'Bangaru (golden) Telangana' but only 'Kangaru (anxious) Telangana' because of the neglect of the state government. He appealed to the people to give judgment of the TRS administration of the GHMC.

Reddy said that Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao had adopted the Secunderabad Assembly constituency under Swachh Bharat, but had not conducted a single review regarding development of the place. This is the best example of Chandrashekar Rao's 'matala garadi (juggling of

Cong sets up panels for GHMC polls

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, NOV. 17

In view of the GHMC election, Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee president N. Uttam Kumar Reddy on Tuesday constituted election committees for Lok Sabha segments which are in the Greater Hyderabad area.

The committees are to begin functioning immediately to finalise the candidates list for the GHMC election by Wednesday.

The TPCC president informed that the mani-

fest committee chaired by Marri Shashidhar Reddy will ready the document on November 20. AICC incharge Manikam Tagore will release it on November 21.

The Hyderabad committee has Feroz Khan, Safar Javed, G. Niranjan, Anjan Kumar Yadav, Shaik Abdulla Sohail and Mohammad Shabbir Ali will act as PCC coordinator. The Secunderabad committee comprises V. Hanumanta Rao, M. Shashidhar Reddy, Anjan Kumar Yadav, Vishnu

Vardhan Reddy, Dr Sravan Dasoji, Adam Santosh Kumar and the PCC coordinator is CLP leader Bhatti Vikramarka.

The Chevella committee has Konda Vishveshwar Reddy, Mohammad Azharruddin, Challa Narsimha Reddy, M. Bikshapathi Yadav, Rachamalla Siddeswar, Deepa Bhaskar and the PCC coordinator is Ponnann Prabhakar.

A. Revanth Reddy, Kuna Srisailam Goud, Ch Narsimha Reddy, N Sridhar, Bude Saab com-

prise the Malkajgiri committee and T. Jeevan Reddy is PCC coordinator.

In the Medak committee, Damodar Raja Narasimha, Vijaya Shanthi, J. Geetha Reddy, T. Jayaprakash Reddy, Gali Anil Kumar are members and Jetti Kusuma Kumar is the PCC coordinator. The committees are to submit the list to the TPCC on Wednesday which will announce the list on Wednesday evening.

Uttam Kumar Reddy said that B-forms will handed over to candidates on November 19.

JANA SENA TO
CONTEST GHMC
ELECTIONSDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, NOV. 17

Jana Sena Party chief Pawan Kalyan announced that the party will contest the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation elections.

Kalyan released a statement in which he explained that several members especially from among the youth had requested him to contest the GHMC elections. Taking their request into consideration, he directed the party to get ready to contest the elections.

EXPERTS | WARN

KANIZA GARARI | DC
HYDERABAD, NOV. 17

Public health specialists and medical experts say that holding elections in winter could only aggravate the spread of SARS-CoV-2, leading to a surge in cases of Covid-19.

The GHMC has continuously recorded more than 500 cases in July and August. It has seen only a dip in October and November.

Elections will lead to large gathering of people for campaigning, government officials sitting in enclosed places in polling booths and counting sta-

Elections will lead to large gathering, campaigning will result in Covid spread

Poll in winter may increase viral infections

tions. It will also increase the frequency of movement of people, thereby aggravating the risk of spread of the virus.

Conducting elections in winter also raises the risk of spread of other influenza viruses which are active during this season.

Dr Santosh Kraleti, public health specialist, told this newspaper, "During winter, we see an increase in cases of respiratory diseases like asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and other ailments. During the Covid-19 pandemic, extra care has to be taken to ensure that one is not immune-

● **THE GHMC** area has for the last two months seen fewer cases as protocols were followed and movements were restricted. But with an increase in activity in these areas experts state that by mid-December there is bound to be a rise in cases.

compromised. The act of gathering of people and increasing movement will aid in faster spread of the virus and increase in cases."

The GHMC area has for the last two months seen fewer cases as protocols

were followed and movements were restricted. But with an increase in activity in these areas experts state that by mid-December there is bound to be a rise in cases.

Dr Prabhu Kumar C., senior consultant and diabetologist, said, "Small gatherings are becoming a source for spreading of infections. In the last few days we are finding people testing positive after they met at small gatherings. Hence, during a pandemic, any activity which leads to more human interaction must be avoided."

SARS-CoV-2 is an airborne disease and those

‘TRS, Congress
leaders in queue
to join BJP’IREDDY SRINIVAS
REDDY | DC
HYDERABAD, NOV. 17

Congress will die as it has no leadership, said BJP vice president D.K. Aruna. The BJP is performing well under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, home minister Amit Shah and party president J.P. Nadda.

Under their guidance, Union minister of state G. Kishan Reddy and TS BJP president Bandi Sanjay are working hard to take on the TRS. The victory at Dubbak will give a boost to the BJP in the GHMC elections, she said in an exclusive interview with *Deccan Chronicle*.

Excerpts:

What is the agenda of the BJP for the GHMC elections?

The ruling party has failed to keep the promises it had made during the GHMC elections in 2016. The TRS sarkar and Chief Minister K.

Chandrasekhar Rao have lost credibility among the poor. K.T. Rama Rao has failed in running the municipal administration department. He has only looked after his own publicity rather than rendering justice to the poor. We will take up the issues of the poor like double bedroom houses, roads and drainage, the flood relief fund scam, corruption among corporators and the land regularisation scheme.

You have alleged that there has been no development in Hyderabad under the TRS regime.

Yes, absolutely. The previous governments were far better compared with the TRS. The Outer Ring Road and other important infrastructure were established by past governments, not the TRS. The TRS is only painting the old structures and claiming credit. Cities like Indore are much better than Hyderabad. In the floods of October, hundreds of colonies and slum areas were badly affected. Where is the Dallas in the making? The Istanbul in the making?

Are you confident that the BJP will perform better?

Yes. With the Dubbak result, we are very confident that the people of Greater Hyderabad will



development for the BJP. Before the Dubbak poll, we didn't have much voting in the rural areas. We are focusing more on the urban areas. This is the best practice for the Assembly elections. People are also looking to the BJP in a positive manner with the Centre allocating thousands of crores to cities under the Smart Cities project.

There is speculation that you have prepared a list of leaders who are ready to join the BJP. Is this correct?

TRS and Congress leaders including former MPs and MLAs are in the queue to join the BJP in light of the day-to-day development of the party. My former colleagues and seniors are likely to join the BJP before the GHMC polls and the MLC graduates constituency elections. I have not specifically prepared any list but 10 to 15 key leaders who are unhappy in the Congress and the TRS will join the BJP soon.

What is the secret behind your promotion in the BJP, from a newcomer to party vice president?

It happened only with hard work and dedication and the party high command was observing it. I am doing my best for the BJP so that it can come to power. The leadership has given me a position at the national level and has also accommodated me as co-incharge of the Karnataka BJP. I am thankful to BJP president J.P. Nadda for giving me the responsibility to do hard work and better the outcome. Basically, I know Karnataka very well, and Raichur is near the border of my constituency.

Top leaders lobby to
make their kin mayorS.A. ISHAQUI | DC
HYDERABAD, NOV. 17

The TRS is facing pressure from sitting MLAs and ministers for tickets for their kith and kin, especially the womenfolk as the post of Mayor has been reserved for a woman from the general category. Sources in the party revealed that three ministers from the city lobbying for party tickets to their daughters-in-law and mayor Bonthu Ram-mohan is aspiring for a ticket for his wife Sridevi.

Deputy Speaker T. Padma Rao is in the race for a ticket for his daughter-in-law. Sridevi met TRS

working president K.T. Rama Rao and MLC K. Kavitha on Tuesday night along with her husband, the occasion was ostensibly the birthday of the mayor's wife. While ministers are lobbying for tickets, women corporators who are sure of getting a second term are also likely to lobby for the mayor's post, sources disclosed. Sources said that Khairatabad corporator Vijaya Reddy, daughter of former minister late P. Janardhan Reddy, and Vijaya Lakshmi, daughter of Rajya Sabha member Dr K. Keshav Rao will also join the race for the top post.

OTHER STORIES

NAVODAYA
PALAIR ENTRANCE
EXAM ON APRIL 10DC CORRESPONDENT
KHAMMAM, NOV. 17

Palair Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayam incharge principal Sobanavalli said that the institution will receive online applications to fill up 80 seats in sixth class. The candidates can apply online till December 15 and 75 per cent seats will be allocated to the students coming from rural areas. There will be one third reservations to the SC, ST, OBC and differently-abled candidates.

The entrance test will be held on April 10, 2021 and the students who are selected will be provided all facilities like boarding and lodging and training in all competitive exams.

Candidates born between May 1, 2008 and April 30, 2012, are eligible to write the exam.

Navodaya entrance test will be conducted in all centres in the country on the same day.

● **CANDIDATES BORN** between May 1, 2008 and April 30, 2012, are eligible to write the exam.

● **SELECTED STUDENTS** will be provided all facilities like boarding and lodging and training in all competitive exams.

1 ARRESTED, 70 KG
GANJA AND A CAR
SEIZED IN T. PALEMDC CORRESPONDENT
KHAMMAM, NOV. 11

Task Force police led by ACP Venkat Rao caught 70 kilo ganja near Tirumalayapalem police station on Tuesday. The value of ganja is ₹10.50 lakh in the open market.

The police arrested Halavat Siva and recovered a car from him. As per the details, Halavat Siva and Bhukya Kishan took the ganja from Purna at Donkara in East Godavari district in Andhra Pradesh. They planned to hand over the product to one Prathap in Torru. Kishan got down from the car in Julurpad and Siva proceeded with the car along with ganja.

Investigation is on.



M. Uma Rani

UMA RANI IS
NEW DPRO OF
SIRCILLA DISTRICTDC CORRESPONDENT
SIRCILLA, NOV. 17

The public relations officer of the state publicity cell, Hyderabad, Ms. M. Uma Rani took charge as the District Public Relations Officer (DPRO) of Rajanna Sircilla district in place of M. Dasharatham.

The DPRO post in the district fell vacant after Dasaratham was promoted as additional director and transferred to Siddipet district.

ILLEGAL CLAIMS

Owners of some Mee Seva centres played a key role in the scam
Irregularities suspected in Kalyana LakshmiDC CORRESPONDENT
ADILABAD, NOV. 17

It is believed that huge irregularities in sanctioning Kalyana Lakshmi and Shadi Mubarak took place in some mandals in the Adilabad district. It is found that owners of some Mee Seva centres played a key role in the scam.

The Adilabad police are conducting further investigation into the issue and scam. The news came to light with the recent murder of a Bagnure Gnaneshwar, 30, of Ponna village in Sirikonda mandal on November 6.

News is making rounds in the political circles that political leaders also involved in the scam since respective local MLAs have to clear the eligible candidates' names for the scheme.

It is said that the murder took place in the backdrop of differences that were cropped up among few persons in sharing the money they siphoned off with the scam.

It is alleged that some retired revenue tahsildars who had a close association with the political leaders indulged in corrupt practices and siphoned off huge sums

meant for the scheme. Many ineligible and 'elderly women' who already got married long back got financial benefit under the Shadi Mubarak and Kalyana Lakshmi in Sirikonda, Ichoda, Boath, Neredigonda, Indravelli, and Mavala mandals in the Adilabad district.

Within the four days of the murder incident took place, the Adilabad police had arrested four accused including Jhadav Srinivas who was the alleged main culprit of the murder of Bagnure Gnaneshwar and came to the conclusion that it was a

planned murder with the investigation. Adilabad RDO Jadhav said memo issued to Nadeem who is working as senior assistant in the RDO office following the allegations of irregularities in the selection of candidates and issuing cheques Kalyana Lakshmi and Shadi Mubarak and added that they would submit a report to the collector seeking action against Nadeem.

The top revenue officials asked the Tahsildars to submit a report on the selected candidates for the Shadi

Mubarak and Kalyana Lakshmi and issuing cheques.

It is said that cheques of the schemes were directly deposited into the bank accounts of the ineligible and elderly persons had directly withdrawn but not invited them to receive cheques at programmes.

Meanwhile speaking to media persons, Adilabad district president Payal Shankar demanded the state government to order an inquiry into the scam of Kalyana Lakshmi and Shadi Mubarak and take action against the culprits behind the scam.

Works speeded up ahead of
ZPTC polls in Adilabad rural

The new bridge coming up will connect 7 interior villages with Adilabad HQ

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHICHDHARI (ADILABAD),
NOV. 17

The elections that are around the corner for ZPTC of Adilabad rural mandal speed up the construction of new roads and bridges and brought development to the interior villages in Adilabad rural mandal.

BJP leaders led by Adilabad MP Soyam Bapurao also frequently visiting these interior villages given the elections to be held for the ZPTC of Adilabad Rural mandal. Construction works are going on at a war-footing in the view that winning the Adilabad rural ZPTC seat has become prestigious for TRS.

Adilabad MLA Joga Ramanna is focusing on the construction of bridges on the rivulets and laying new roads to improve the road connectivity to the interior villages in Adilabad rural mandal. He is frequently visiting the interior villages and checking the construction works of roads and bridges and trying for early completion of the works.

However, it is the fact that even today many interior villages are lagging in development



A new bridge on a rivulet is under construction at Chichdhari village in Adilabad rural mandal.

when compared to other villages even in the Adilabad rural mandal.

The new bridge being constructed on a rivulet at Chichdhari village will connect the interior villages Chichdhari, Khanapur, Potamloddi, Allikhori, Sevadasnagar, Hathigutta, Boringuda with the Adilabad headquarters.

These interior villages are nearer to the Indravelli mandal headquarters and far away from the Adilabad district headquarters though they fall in Adilabad Rural mandal.

The completion of the bridge under construction at Chichdhari village will improve the road connectivity for the

above villages with the Adilabad district headquarters and will also reduce the 10 km distance to the Adilabad from these villages.

People of these villages are now going to Adilabad via Indravelli which comes to 38 kms. The bridge coming up at Chichdhari village will enable the people of these

interior villages to reach the Adilabad via Pothaguda directly.

Thodasam Keshav Rao of Chichdhari village said the new bridge coming up on a rivulet and new road being laid in the village will certainly improve the road connectivity to the many interior areas and reduce the distance to Adilabad.

TRS ACTIVISTS
FROM KHAMMAM
REACH HYDRAVINDRA SESHU II DC
KHAMMAM, NOV. 17

The focus of transport minister Puvvada Ajay Kumar has shifted to Hyderabad. Kumar and his team, numbering about 500, will camp in Hyderabad from November 20 to November 30, the day before the GHMC elections.

The minister has been tasked to ensure the TRS victory in the Kukatapally Assembly constituency. His team, from Khammam Assembly constituency, will comprise about 50 party leaders and activists in Khammam Municipal Corporation and 50 from Raghunathapalem.

TRS MLC Balasani Laxminarayana was asked to take charge of the campaign at the ward in Kukatapally. The job of providing accommodation and food to the activists is entrusted to the TRS leaders in Hyderabad. Fifty activists each from Madhira and Sattupally Assembly segments will also be sent to join the GHMC election campaign.

These leaders should identify their friends and relatives and use other connections to secure votes for the TRS.



Minister for agriculture and marketing Singireddy Niranjana Reddy and R&B minister V. Prashanth Reddy unveil the statue of farmers leader V. Surender Reddy at Velpur in Nizamabad district on Tuesday.

— DC

NDA ignores farmers and
favours corporates: MinDC CORRESPONDENT
VELPUR (NIZAMABAD),
NOV. 17

Minister for agriculture and marketing Singireddy Niranjana Reddy criticised that the NDA government ignored the interests of the farming community and was instead protecting the interests of corporate companies.

The NDA government is always trying to benefit the traders instead of farmers, he said and added that restrictions on incentives for paddy procurement by FCI show the true colours of the Central government.

Mr Niranjana Reddy along with minister for roads and buildings, legislative affairs and housing V. Prashanth Reddy inaugurated Rythu Vedika at Velpur mandal headquarters on Tuesday.

Mr Prashanth Reddy built the Rythu Vedika in memory of his late father, a farmers' leader V. Surender Reddy.

● **THE AGRICULTURE** minister said that Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao introduced Rythu Bandhu and Rythu Bima programmes for the benefit of the farmers.

Speaking at the meeting, the agriculture minister said that Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao introduced Rythu Bandhu, Rythu Bima programmes for the benefit of the farmers.

Telangana government is ready to give incentive on above minimum support price of ₹1,888 for paddy, he said.

Food Corporation of India issued orders that state government should declare incentives of paddy procurement, he said. The minister said that alternative crops - sugarcane and oil palm would get importance soon.

He said that farmers in

neighbouring Maharashtra state are reaping profits with cooperative sugar factories.

Mr Prashanth Reddy said that his late father Surender Reddy had struggled for the welfare of farmers. "Whenever KCR asked to finalise the crop loan waiver to the farmers, my father Surender asked to give ₹1 lakh waiver," he recalled.

Balkonda, Armoor, Nizamabad rural Assembly constituencies will change with the Kaleshwaram, SRSP rejuvenation schemes, he explained.

Rythu Bandhu Samiti state president Palla Rajeshwar Reddy, Government whip Gampa Govardhan, Zaheerabad MP B.B. Patil, MLAs Bajireddy Govardhan, Shakeel Amer, MLCs V.G. Goud, Akula Lalitha, collector C. Narayana Reddy, ZP chairpersons D. Vittal Rao, D. Shobha, mayor Dandu Neethu Kiran and others were present.



File photo of BJP state chief and Karimnagar MP Bandi Sanjay Kumar submitting a representation to Union minister Nitin Gadkari.

₹40.9 cr sanctioned
for NH-563 road
repair worksDC CORRESPONDENT
KARIMNAGAR, NOV. 17

The Central government has sanctioned ₹40.9 crore with the initiation taken by the BJP state chief and Karimnagar MP Bandi Sanjay Kumar for taking up repair works of National Highway number 563 present between Jagtial-Karimnagar-Warangal.

For the past four years without any repairs, riddled with many potholes, the travel on 120 km stretch NH 563 between Jagtial to Warangal via Karimnagar has been not only a bad experience but also a back-breaking one for the commuters. With the recent heavy rains, the road turned from bad to worse condition leading to many accidents.

Before 2015, the road was under control of state's Roads and Buildings Department. However, in March 2015 the National Highways Authority had announced the road numbered 563 between Jagtial-Karimnagar-Warangal as a National Highway because of heavy traffic and included it under Bharatmala Pariyojana Scheme for its development.

On several occasions, sur-

veys are done but neither the state nor the Central government has taken any steps for repairing it. The leaders of the opposition parties along with the representatives of various people's organisations staged dharnas and held rasta rokos and even threatened to seize the houses of BJP MPs and TRS ministers demanding that they should take steps for maintenance of the NH 563.

On October 15, Mr Sanjay Kumar met Union transport and highways minister Nitin Gadkari in Nagpur and took the issue to his notice. Mr Sanjay also provided photos and videos to him as evidence and explained to him about the worse condition of the road and requested him to sanction funds to take up repair works. Responding to the request of Mr Sanjay, the Central government has sanctioned ₹40.91 crore to take up the repairing works on war-footage.

Mr Sanjay thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union minister Nitin Gadkari for sanctioning of special funds and said that this shows the commitment of the BJP government for the well being of people.

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SHORT TAKES

NON-MUSLIM TOPS ISLAMIC ENTRANCE LIST

Jaipur, Nov. 17: In a break from the past, a non-Muslim candidate from Rajasthan has topped the all-India entrance exam for a master's course in Islamic studies at the Central University of Kashmir.

"Islam is portrayed as a radical religion and there is lot of misconception about it. The division in the society is growing today and it is really very important to understand each other's religion," said Shubham Yadav, who would join the course in Kashmir for two years.

The result of the common entrance test, held on September 20, was declared on October 29. The university, which had set up the religious studies department, which oversees the course, in 2015, confirmed that Yadav is the first non-Muslim candidate to top the exam.

"This is the first time a non-Muslim has topped the entrance exam. We've had non-Muslim scholars in the past," Professor Hamid Naseem Rafiabadi said.

Yadav (21) has done BA honours in philosophy from the Delhi University and hails from Alwar where two lynching cases of Pehlu Khan in 2017 and Akbar alias Rakbar Khan in 2018 took place. "Such kind of incidents also made me think and gave motivation to read about the religion (Islam). I convinced my parents to pursue Islamic studies by making them understand that it will be about Islamic history and culture and they agreed," he said.

BISWAJIT RAY RESIGNS FROM CONGRESS

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, NOV. 17

In what is said to be a major setback for the party, Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) general secretary and Koch Rajbongshi leader Biswajit Ray resigned from the party after he was served a show cause notice allegedly for sharing the poll campaign stage with BJP leader Himanta Biswa Sarma in the round up to the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) polls on November 12.

Amidst indication of several Congress leaders including few former ministers set to resign from the party, Ray, in his resignation letter sent to APCC president Ripun Bora, said, "For my personal inconvenience and for the sake of serving the Koch Rajbongshi community unbiasedly, I have resigned from the post of Assam Pradesh Congress Committee general secretary and primary membership of Indian National Congress."

Ray admitted that he went to meet Himanta Biswa Sarma to raise the issue of expediting the process of granting Scheduled Tribe (ST) status to the Koch Rajbongshis of Assam and several other issues concerning the indigenous community of the state.

2 MORE HELD IN CONNECTION WITH KANPUR CLASH

Kanpur, Nov. 17: Police arrested two more people in connection with the clash between two communities at Wajidpur's Chakeri locality here as no fresh incident of violence was reported from the area, a senior official said on Tuesday.

A 25-year-old youth was killed and several injured here in the clash that erupted after a man was accidentally splashed with water. Security personnel in large numbers were deployed to ensure normalcy.

"The situation is normal and under control. Heavy police force has been deployed in the area to maintain law and order. Two more arrests were made on Tuesday in connection with the brawl, which had led to communal tensions in the area," Kanpur DIG Preetinder Singh said.

He said so far six people have been arrested in connection with the violence and more arrests are likely to be made soon. Senior police officers, including the Superintendent of police (East) Raj Kumar Agarwal, have been asked to camp in the area to monitor the situation.

Meanwhile, Union minister of state for rural development Sadhvi Niranjan Jyoti and UP minister Satish Mahana paid a visit to the family of Pintu Nishad (25), who had died in the incident. They handed over a cheque for ₹5 lakh to the victim's kin, district magistrate Alok Tiwari said.

Gupkar gang going global: Shah

J&K parties rebuke Amit Shah's remarks; NC says attack shows his frustration

DC CORRESPONDENTS NEW DELHI, SRINAGAR, NOV. 17

Union home minister Amit Shah launched a scathing attack on political leaders, particularly from Jammu and Kashmir, on Tuesday in a series of Tweets saying they wanted "foreign forces to intervene" on the contentious issue of scrapping of Article 370.

The home minister also asked the Congress, which signed the Gupkar Declaration, to clarify its position on the issue. Jammu and Kashmir's regional parties with their allies had recently formed the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD).

"Congress and the

Gupkar Gang want to take J&K back to the era of terror and turmoil.

They want to take away rights of Dalits, women and tribals that we have ensured by removing Article 370. This is why they're being rejected by the people everywhere," the home minister said in his Tweet.

"The Gupkar Gang is going global! They want foreign forces to intervene in Jammu and Kashmir. The Gupkar Gang also insults India's Tricolour. Do *Sonia Ji* and *Rahul Ji* support such moves of the Gupkar Gang? They should make their stand crystal clear to the people of India," Shah added.

"Jammu and Kashmir has been, is and will always remain an integral

● CONGRESS CRITICISED Shah for his 'unsavory remarks' and asked him to explain the BJP's alliances with the PDP, NC in the past.

part of India. Indian people will no longer tolerate an unholy 'global gathbandhan' against our national interest. Either the Gupkar Gang swims along with the national mood or else the people will sink it," Shah stated.

J&K parties sharply reacted to Amit Shah's terming the PAGD an "unholy gathbandhan" against the national interest.

National Conference (NC) vice president and former chief minister

Omar Abdullah in a series of tweets said Shah's remarks clearly revealed 'frustration'.

He said, "I can understand the frustration behind this attack by the Hon'ble Home Minister. He had been briefed that the People's Alliance was preparing to boycott elections. This would have allowed the BJP & newly formed King's party a free run in J&K. We didn't oblige them."

Abdullah said those who oppose BJP ideology were labelled as anti-nationals. "Only in J&K can leaders be detained & called anti-national for participating in elections & supporting the democratic process. The truth is all those who oppose the ideology of the BJP are labelled "corrupt

& anti-national".

People's Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti tweeted, "Fighting elections in an alliance is also anti-national now. BJP can stitch as many alliances in its hunger for power but somehow we are undermining national interest by putting up a united front."

In another tweet, she said, "Old habits die hard. Earlier BJP's narrative was that the *tukde tukde* gang threatened India's sovereignty & they are now using 'Gupkar Gang' euphemism to project us as anti nationals. Irony died a million deaths since it's BJP itself that violates the constitution day in & day out."

She also wrote, "BJP's

stale tactic of dividing India by projecting themselves as saviours & political opponents as internal & imagined enemies is far too predictable now. Love jihad, *tukde tukde* & now Gupkar Gang dominates the political discourse instead of like rising unemployment & inflation."

The Congress criticised Shah for his "unsavory remarks" and asked him to explain the BJP's alliances with the PDP and NC in the past. It also said that it is not part of the PAGD.

"Congress has entered only seat sharing at certain places at local district level (for the district development council elections in J&K)," the party said in a statement here.

RITA BAHUGUNA'S GRANDDAUGHTER DIES OF BURNS

Allahabad, Nov. 17: The granddaughter of Allahabad MP Rita Bahuguna Joshi has died of burns received during bursting of crackers, a close aide of the BJP leader said on Tuesday. She was six-year-old.

The MP's aide said Kiya died around 2 am on Tuesday at the city hospital where she was admitted following the incident on Monday afternoon.

He said the Bahuguna's granddaughter was bursting crackers with a couple of other children when the accident took place.

A spokesman said the MP's son Mayank was in Lucknow at the time of the incident and had booked an air ambulance to take Kiya to Delhi for treatment. Kiya was to be taken to Delhi on Tuesday. Kiya will be cremated at Allahabad's Daraganj on his father's arrival from Lucknow. —PTI

MAN HELD FOR RAPE, MURDER OF 5-YEAR-OLD

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, NOV. 17

Odisha police on Tuesday arrested a man who allegedly raped and murdered a 5-year-old girl in Dhenkanal district.

The accused was identified as Sankarshan Dehury of Kaliapani village in Jajpur district. He is a relative of the deceased girl, the local police said.

The body of the girl was found in a drain near a market at Kharkhari village under Kankadahad police limits in Dhenkanal district on November 13.

It was alleged that the child was raped and then murdered while the body was dumped in the drain. "During the course of investigation, police apprehended Dehury. He has confessed to the crime during questioning," the police said.

Sea of power



Navies of India, US, Australia and Japan during the second phase of the Malabar naval exercise in the northern Arabian Sea on Tuesday. The exercise involved two aircraft carriers and a number of frontline warships, submarines and maritime reconnaissance aircraft. — PTI

Nitish allocates portfolios, retains home

NAYEAR AZAD | DC PATNA, NOV. 17

A day after taking the oath as Bihar Chief Minister for the fourth straight term, Nitish Kumar on Tuesday allocated portfolios to his 14-member team.

While he kept the home, vigilance, general administration and cabinet affairs portfolios, BJP leader Tarkeshwar Prasad, who replaced Sushil Kumar Modi as one of two deputy chief ministers, was allotted important departments like finance, commercial taxes, environment and forest, information and technology, disaster management and urban development.

Prasad, who hails from the Seemanchal region, won the Katihar seat for the fourth time. He has his roots in the RSS and is seen as a strong Vaishya face.

Similarly, Renu Devi, the

other deputy chief minister, was allotted panchayati raj, backward caste upliftment and EBC welfare and industry.

This is the first time in Bihar's history that two deputy chief ministers have been named on the lines of Uttar Pradesh.

Political analysts said, "By creating two deputy chief ministers and allotting important departments to them, the saffron party in the state is trying to win the Vaishya and EBC communities. Most of the departments allotted to the new deputy chief ministers were earlier handled by a veteran leader like Sushil Kumar Modi".

The health department was allotted to the BJP's Mangal Pandey. In 2019, Pandey, as health minister, had faced criticism from the Opposition for his failure to handle the encephalitis outbreak,

● BJP LEADER Tarkeshwar Prasad, who replaced Sushil Kumar Modi as one of two deputy chief ministers, allotted important departments like finance, commercial taxes, environment and forest, information and technology, disaster management and urban development.

● HAM CHIEF Jitan Ram Manjhi's son Santosh Suman allotted minor irrigation, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe welfare portfolios.

also known as AES.

More than 100 children had died in the state due to the disease. Apart from the health ministry, Pandey will also handle key departments like road construction and art and culture.

Agriculture, cooperatives and sugarcane have

been given to the Bharatiya Janata Party's Amarendra Pratap Singh, while Scheduled Caste MLA from Mithilanchal Rampreet Paswan was given public health and engineering.

From the upper castes, the BJP's Jiwesh Kumar was allotted tourism, mines and labour. Apart from this, the revenue and law department has been allotted to OBC leader Ram Surat Rai.

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) ally VIP's chief Mukesh Sahani, despite losing the Assembly polls by a narrow margin from Simri Bakhtiyarpur, was given animal husbandry and fisheries.

He is being sent to the Legislative Council. His party VIP has won four seats in the Assembly elections.

HAM chief Jitan Ram Manjhi's son Santosh Suman was allotted minor irrigation and Scheduled

Caste and Scheduled Tribe welfare portfolios.

"Although I have lost the Assembly elections by a thin margin, I assure the people who voted for me that I will work for the welfare of the state. I am also happy that as a minister I will get a chance to learn from a leader like Nitish Kumar", Mukesh Sahani said.

From the JD(U), former Assembly Speaker Vijay Kumar Chaudhary has got rural engineering, rural development, water resources, parliamentary affairs and information and public relations.

Mewalal Chaudhary will be education minister. The transport ministry has been allotted to Sheila Kumari.

Senior JD(U) leader Bijendra Yadav, who is also considered close to chief minister Nitish Kumar, will handle energy, planning, food and consumer affairs.

Ex-Mayor held for B'luru riots

VINAY MADHAV I DC BENGALURU, NOV. 17

Former Bengaluru Mayor Sampath Raj, who was on run for the last one month after being accused of instigating riots at KG Halli and DJ Halli areas on the night of August 11, has been arrested by CCB police. On August 11, following a Facebook post by BJP activist Naveen, who happens to be nephew of Pulikeshinagar Congress MLA Akhanda Srinivas Murthy, communal violence had erupted.

The rioters had tried to set fire to the KG Halli and DJ Halli police stations and burned down the house of Akhanda Srinivas Murthy. Police had to struggle for over 12 hours to bring the situation under control, as the rioters were targeting

police also.

However, during the course of investigation, it was revealed that the riot was not a spontaneous reaction, but was instigated by some of the Congress members. Targeting Congress MLA houses by members of minority communities was something that baffled police.

After intercepting a number of telephones in the area, police traced that mobile phone belonging to close associate Sampath Raj was in constant touch with the rioters, giving out instructions to torch Akhanda Srinivas Murthy house and attack the police station.

Akhanda Srinivas Murthy migrated to Congress from JD(S) during the last general elections and is a supporter of Siddaramaiah.

DEOBANDI | FACTION

Police say the duo was also planning to cross the border and go to Pakistan for training

Two suspected JeM terrorists from J&K arrested in Delhi

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA | DC NEW DELHI, NOV. 17

The special cell of Delhi police has apprehended two suspected Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) terrorists from Sarai Kale Khan area in Southeast Delhi. The duo was apprehended by the police on Monday night. The police said that the duo was also planning to cross the border and go to Pakistan for training.

The duo has been identified as Abdul Latif Mir (22), a resident of Doru village in Baramulla district, and Mohammad Ashraf Khatana (20), a resident of Hat Mulla village in Jammu and Kashmir's

Kupwara district.

According to DCP (special cell) Sanjeev Kumar Yadav, on November 16 specific inputs were received that Abdul and Asraf would go near Sarai Kale Khan and then go to Nizamuddin area and would stay for a short period in Delhi for their onward journey to Uttar Pradesh for the purpose of training.

"Acting on the specific inputs, a trap was laid and they were nabbed in the late hours. During interrogation, it was revealed that both the terrorists follow the 'Deobandi' faction of the community and their role model is Maulana Masood Azhar, the leader

of JeM.

"Abdul has a Facebook account in the name of Mir Latif and has displayed the picture of Maulana Masood Azhar in his display picture. He used to listen to Maulana Masood on social media and wanted to join them for the freedom of J&K and to spread Islam all over the world," said the DCP.

"Abdul used to listen to news of brutality with the Muslims all over the world on news channels and the lectures delivered in Deobandi by Arhsad Madani, Maulana Mufti Faizul Waheed Sahab, and in J&K by Mufti Muzaffar Hussain and Nazir Ahmad Shah Kashmiri.

YUSUF JAMEEL I DC SRINAGAR, NOV. 17

The families of two Kashmiri youth arrested by Delhi police's special cell on charges of being Jaish-e-Muhammed (JeM) operatives have pleaded their innocence and claimed that they travelled to the Union capital from the native villages in northwestern Valley's Kupwara and Baramulla districts earlier this month for personal reasons.

"My son was scheduled to tie the nuptial knot on

November 12. He went to Delhi along with his friend to buy some clothing and personal material for his wedding. They left the Valley on November 4 and the last time my son spoke to us from an unknown number was on November 5 to inform he would be returning home the next day," Bashir Ahmad Khatana, father of accused Muhammad Ashraf, told reporters.

He insisted, "My son has no militancy links which you can get confirmed from local police as well.

He is a religious person and would lead prayers in a masjid (mosque)," Khatana, a resident of frontier Kupwara district's Hathmulla village, said that his son's arrest has shocked him and also his (Ashraf's) in-laws who were preparing for the wedding of their daughter.

Khatana said that he after learning about the arrest of his son spoke to the area deputy superintendent of the police and some other police and administration officials back home to plead the

innocence of his son.

Sanaulah Mir, father of the other accused Abdul Latif, said that barely two days after his 22-year-old son went to Delhi on Nov. 4 the family lost contact with him. "Today, I was shocked to know through a TV news channel that he along with another Kashmiri youth has been arrested on the pretext of being militants. The allegation is totally false. I vouch for my son's innocence," Mir, a resident of Duroo suburb of Valley's northwestern Sopore city, said.

IN BRIEF

MCBRIDE AMONG FINALISTS FOR CARNEGIE MEDAL

New York, Nov. 17: James McBride's latest novel and nonfiction by poets Claudia Rankine and Natasha Trethewey are among the finalists for the Andrew Carnegie Medals for fiction and nonfiction.

The American Library Association announced Tuesday that McBride's "Deacon King Kong" was a fiction nominee, along with Ayad Akhtar's novel "Homeland Elegies" and an acclaimed debut novel, Megha Majumdar's "A Burning." The nonfiction finalists are Trethewey's "Memorial Drive: A Daughter's Memoir," Rankine's "Just Us," which combines poetry, prose and photography, and Rebecca Giggs' "Fathoms: The World in the Whale."

Winners in each category will be receive \$5,000, and will be announced Feb. 4, 2021. The awards are supported, in part, by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

MCCANN SUSPECT HURT IN CUSTODY

Berlin, Nov. 17: A suspect in the disappearance of Madeleine McCann, the British toddler who vanished from a Portuguese resort 13 years ago, suffered two broken ribs in an incident at a German court, authorities said Tuesday.

The incident occurred after Christian Brueckner, who is serving time on a drug conviction, was taken to Braunschweig state court on Monday for a routine hearing on that case. Court spokeswoman Jessica Knab-Henrichs told *The Associated Press* that he was briefly treated in a hospital for two broken ribs, and was then returned to the court where the hearing was carried out. The incident is under investigation and further details on what happened at the court were expected to be released later in the day, she said. Although Brueckner is a suspect in the McCann case, prosecutors have said they do not yet have enough evidence to hold him on the McCann case alone.

In addition to the drug trafficking sentence, which Brueckner will have finished serving in January, he was convicted in 2019 of the 2005 rape of a 72-year-old American woman in Portugal and sentenced to another seven years.

That conviction is under appeal. McCann was 3 at the time of her 2007 disappearance from an apartment while her family vacationed in the seaside town of Praia da Luz.

CHINA POSITIONS ROCKET FOR LUNAR MISSION

Beijing, Nov. 17: China on Tuesday moved a massive rocket into place in preparation for launching a mission to bring back materials from the moon for the first time in four decades.

The Long March-5 was transported by tractor from its hangar to the nearby launch site at the space base in Wenchang along the coast of the southern island province of Hainan. The Chang'e 5 mission it will carry is scheduled to launch early next week, placing a lander on the moon that will drill 2 meters (almost 7 feet) beneath the surface and scoop up rocks and other debris to be brought to earth.

That would allow scientists to study newly obtained lunar materials for the first time since the American and Russian missions of the 1960s and 1970s.

The mission, named for the Chinese moon goddess, is among China's most ambitious as its space programme continues to build steam since it first put a man in space in 2003, becoming only the third nation to do so after the US and Russia. China currently has a mission on the way to Mars, along with a rover on the moon's far side that is providing the first full measurements of radiation exposure from the lunar surface, information vital for any country that plans to send astronauts to the moon.

China has increasingly engaged with foreign countries on missions, although US law still prevents collaboration with NASA, excluding China from partnering with the International Space Station.

That has prompted China to work on its own space station and launch its own programmes that have put it in a steady competition with Japan and India among Asian nations seeking to notch new achievements in space. The space programme has progressed cautiously, with relatively few setbacks in recent years.

Chemical-laced water on Thai protesters



Pro-democracy protesters take shelter as police use chemical-laced water cannons to disperse them during an anti-government rally in Bangkok on Tuesday.

— AFP

More virus deaths if Trump impedes transition: Biden

Trump has not conceded defeat but alleged poll fraud without any evidence

Washington, Nov. 17: President-elect Joe Biden has warned that many more Americans "may die" if incumbent President Donald Trump does not cooperate with the transition process and hamper the incoming administration's ability to tackle the deadly coronavirus pandemic. According to media projections, Democrat Biden has won the November 3 presidential election.

Biden has 306 votes in the electoral college, surpassing the 270 threshold needed to win. However, Trump, a Republican, has not conceded and instead alleged election fraud without presenting any significant evidence. The Trump campaign has also mounted legal fights in a number of battleground states where he lost.

"More people may die if we don't coordinate," Biden said in his home state of Delaware on Monday, responding to a question on President Trump refusing to concede the election and the outgoing administration not co-operating in the transition process.

The US government agency that launches transition process — the General Services Administration (GSA), headed by a Trump appointee — has

yet to recognise Biden and his running mate Kamala Harris as winners. The Trump-appointed administrator of the General Services Administration has so far refused to take the legally necessary step to begin the transition process, which would give Biden's team a budget, intelligence briefings and access to federal agencies.

"A vaccine is important. It's of little use until you're vaccinated. So, how do we get the vaccine, how do we get over 300 million Americans vaccinated? What's the game plan? It's a huge, huge, huge undertaking to get it done, prioritise those greatest in need and working our way through, and also cooperate with the World Health Organization and the rest of the world in dealing with this," he said.

"So they (Trump administration) say they have this 'Warp Speed' programme that not only dealt with getting vaccines, but also how to distribute this. The number of Covid-19 infections in the US has reached new heights in recent days, surpassing 160,000 cases in one day for the first time since the outbreak began. More than 247,000 people have died in the US. — PTI

Pentagon: Downed unarmed missile

Washington, Nov. 17: In a first for the Pentagon's push to develop defenses against intercontinental-range ballistic missiles capable of striking the United States, a missile interceptor launched from a US Navy ship at sea hit and destroyed a mock ICBM in flight on Tuesday, officials said.

Previous tests against ICBM targets had used interceptors launched from underground silos in the United States. If further, more challenging tests prove successful, the ship-based approach could add to the credibility and reliability of the Pentagon's existing missile defense system.

The success of Tuesday's test is likely to draw interest from North Korea, whose development of intercontinental-range

ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons is why the Pentagon has sought to accelerate its building of missile defence systems over the past decade.

North Korea has recently refrained from flight tests of ballistic missiles of intercontinental range and has not continued its nuclear testing. But the intentions of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un are uncertain as President-elect Joe Biden prepares to take office.

Although the US approach to missile defence is designed to protect the US homeland against an ICBM fired from North Korea, both Russia and China have expressed concern that the US could use its missile defences to undercut the deterrent value of their nuclear forces. — AP

A year ago, the illness had emerged in Wuhan

Wuhan, Nov. 17: One year ago, a mysterious illness emerged in Wuhan, China, marking the start of the Coronavirus pandemic that has now killed more than 1.25 million people around the world and infected tens of millions more, according to a report in the *Newsweek*.

In March, the *South China Morning Post* published an article based on Chinese government data that showed the first known case of Covid-19 can be traced back to November 17, 2019—possibly a 55-year-old individual from Hubei province, although "patient zero" has yet to be confirmed.

Chinese authorities did not officially identify the first case of the new disease until December 8, 2019. Over the weeks that followed, medical staff in Wuhan treated dozens of patients suffering from pneumonia of unknown cause.

The patients were treated for a range of unexplained symptoms including high fever, coughing

and respiratory problems.

Among these individuals were an elderly couple who sought treatment at Hubei Provincial Hospital of Integrated Chinese and Western Medicine on December 26.

A doctor at the hospital who attended to the couple, Zhang Jixian, later told Chinese state-run news agency Xinhua in April that the illness "looked like flu or common pneumonia."

But CT scan images revealed lung abnormalities that were not characteristic of either of these diseases. Zhang had worked as a medical expert during the SARS outbreak that originated in China in 2003, which went on to kill more than 800 people around the world.

Given her experience with this epidemic—caused by a pathogen in the coronavirus family—she was attuned to the possibility that the elderly couple's illnesses could represent a new infectious disease.

SPUTNIK VACCINE CAN BE MADE IN INDIA: PUTIN

Moscow, Nov. 17: President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday called for a joint effort by the BRICS countries on the development of the Coronavirus vaccines as he suggested that Russia's Sputnik V vaccine against Covid-19 could be produced in China and India, which are members of the five-nation bloc.

"We believe it is important to speed up the establishment of the centre for development and research of BRICS vaccines, which we agreed to do two years ago, upon the initiative of our South African friends," Putin said while addressing the 12th BRICS summit via videoconferencing. The summit, hosted by Putin, was attended by PM Narendra Modi, Chinese President Xi Jinping, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa. Putin said that Russia's Sputnik V vaccine registered in August could be produced in China and India. — PTI

France mulls police image ban

Paris, Nov. 17: France's lower house of parliament is opening debate Tuesday on a security bill that would permit the imprisonment of people who publish images of police officers with intent to cause them harm.

Critics, including France's human rights ombudsman, say the measure would hurt press freedoms.

Offenders would face up to one year in prison and a 45,000-euro (\$53,000) fine under the proposed law championed by lawmakers of President Emmanuel Macron's party, which has a majority at the National Assembly.

The bill's most controversial measure would make it a new criminal offense "to disseminate,

by whatever means and on whatever media, with the intent of causing physical or psychological harm, an image of the face or any other element that could identify a police officer."

The measure's backers include Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin. He said it is needed because officers "are constantly threatened". — AP

Peru: Sagasti is third Prez in a week

Lima, Nov. 17: Peru's political crisis appeared on the verge of resolution Monday as Congress cleared the way for an elder statesman and consensus candidate to become the country's third president in a week.

Jubilant people waved the nation's red-and-white flag and blared horns on the streets of Peru's capital as Francisco Sagasti of

the centrist Purple Party was selected as the new president of Congress. The 76-year-old engineer has not yet been sworn into office, but as head of Congress becomes the nation's chief of state by default. Peru currently has no president or vice president, making him next in line.

It will now fall on Sagasti to heal a nation bruised by

a week of upheaval. "What's at stake is taking a step toward rebuilding confidence between the people and the state," said Samuel Rotta, president of the Peruvian chapter of Transparency International.

Applause erupted in the legislative palace as Sagasti clinched the required majority vote. A respected academic, he has also spent decades consulting

UNSC impaired organ, says India

United Nations, Nov. 17: A handful of countries are using the Inter-Governmental Negotiations (IGN) as a "smoke-screen" and stopping progress on reforming the Security Council, which has become "impaired", India has said, asserting that it is time for a "decisive movement" to achieve the long-delayed reform of the powerful UN body. India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador T.S. Tirumurti, speaking in the UN General Assembly on "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council", lamented that nothing has moved for more than a decade in the IGN except hearing passionate statements on the need for reform.

"Today's Security Council is an impaired organ. It has been unable to act with credibility essentially due to its unrepresentative nature. But then, what is happening inside the IGN process, which we seem to be wedded to?" Tirumurti said on Monday. Criticising the absence of even a single negotiating text, Tirumurti said that the IGN has become like a "platform

for debate in a University rather than a serious result-oriented process in the United Nations consisting of sovereign member states".

"And why have we come to this pass? because just a handful of countries don't want us to proceed. They have stopped the IGN from progressing. They are using the IGN as a smoke-screen to stop themselves from being identified by paying lip-service to Security Council reform."

"The conditions they are laying out are impossible to fulfill — which is a full consensus of all member states. Ironically, this is happening at a time when we were in a tearing hurry last week to give ourselves e-voting rights. But for IGN, they want no voting, leave alone e-voting, but only full consensus!" he said.

Asserting that there is a need for a decisive movement this year in the UNSC reform process, Tirumurti said: "Without decisive movement, I feel that those who support real reform and who wish to deliver on the commitment made by our leaders, will be forced to look beyond the IGN."

— PTI

Pak military, Qaeda had links: Obama

Washington, Nov. 17: Barack Obama has said that he had ruled out involving Pakistan in the raid on Osama bin Laden's hideout because it was an "open secret" that certain elements inside Pakistan's military, and especially its intelligence services, maintained links to the Taliban and perhaps even al-Qaeda, sometimes using them as strategic assets against Afghanistan and India. Giving a blow-by-blow account of the Abbottabad raid by American commandos that killed the world's most wanted terrorist on May 2, 2011 in his latest book "A Promised Land", the former US president said that the top secret operation was opposed by the then defence secretary Robert Gates and his former vice president Joe Biden, who is now the President-elect.

In the book that hit the stands globally on Tuesday, America's first Black president described the various options of killing bin Laden once it became increasingly clear that the elusive al-Qaeda chief

PAK'S EXTREMIST GROUP LIFTS SIEGE TO CAPITAL

Islamabad, Nov. 17: Hundreds of activists of an extremist religious group in Pakistan have ended their protest following their talks with the government, two days after they laid a partial siege to the national capital to denounce the publication of blasphemous cartoons in a French magazine and force the government to expel the French ambassador, official said on Tuesday.

Tehreek-i-Labaik Pakistan (TLP) of firebrand cleric Khadim Hussain Rizvi started the protest march on the Murree Road of the garrison city of Rawalpindi on Sunday. Riot police had to resort to teargas shelling on Monday against the stone-pelting TLP protesters who succeeded to reach the Faizabad interchange connecting Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

— PTI

Brennan to explore what a raid would look like," Obama writes in his memoir. The need for secrecy added to the challenge; if even the slightest hint of our lead on bin Laden leaked, we knew our opportunity would be lost.

— PTI

SPACEX CAPSULE DOCKS WITH SPACE STATION

Cape Canaveral, Nov. 17: SpaceX's newly launched capsule with four astronauts arrived Monday at the International Space Station, their new home until spring.

The Dragon capsule pulled up and docked late Monday night, following a 27-hour, completely automated flight from NASA's Kennedy Space Center.

The linkup occurred 262 miles (422 kilometers) above Idaho.

"Oh, what a good voice to hear," space station astronaut Kate Rubins called out when the Dragon's commander, Mike Hopkins, first made radio contact.

"We can't wait to have you on board," she added after the two spacecraft were latched together. This is the second astronaut mission for SpaceX. But it's the first time Elon Musk's company delivered a crew for a full half-year station stay. The two-pilot test flight earlier this year lasted two months.

— AP

NEW | STUDY

Comets are the most pristine material in our Solar System, find scientists

Building blocks of life can form long before stars

London, Nov. 17: Scientists have shown that glycine, an important building block of life, can form under the harsh conditions that govern chemistry in space, indicating that the molecule may form in dense interstellar clouds well before they transform into new stars and planets.

The study, published in the journal *Nature Astronomy*, detected glycine in the comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko, and in samples returned to the Earth from NASA's Stardust mis-

sion which was the first to return extraterrestrial material from outside the orbit of the Moon to the Earth.

According to the researchers, including those from the Queen Mary University of London in the UK, comets are the most pristine material in our Solar System and reflect the molecular composition present at the time our Sun and planets were just about to form. While until recently, scientists thought that the formation of amino acids like glycine

required energy, setting clear constraints to the environment in which it can be formed, the current findings suggest that these protein building blocks can form long before stars.

The researchers showed that it is possible for glycine to form on the surface of icy dust grains of comets, in the absence of energy, through 'dark chemistry'. "Dark chemistry refers to chemistry without the need of energetic radiation," explained Sergio Ioppolo, lead author

of the study from Queen Mary University of London. The findings contradicted previous studies which suggested that ultraviolet (UV) radiation was required to produce this molecule.

"In the laboratory we were able to simulate the conditions in dark interstellar clouds where cold dust particles are covered by thin layers of ice and subsequently processed by impacting atoms causing precursor species to fragment and reactive interme-

diates to recombine," Ioppolo said.

The researchers first demonstrated that methyllamine, the precursor molecule of glycine which was detected in the coma of the comet 67P, could form. Then, using a unique ultrahigh vacuum setup, equipped with a series of atomic beam lines and accurate diagnostic tools, the scientists confirmed that glycine could also be formed, and that the presence of water ice was essential in this process.

Further investigation using chemical simulations confirmed the experimental results and allowed the researchers to extrapolate data obtained on a typical laboratory timescale of just one day to interstellar conditions, bridging millions of years.

"From this we find that low but substantial amounts of glycine can be formed in space with time," said Herma Cuppen, a co-author of the study from Radboud University in the Netherlands. — PTI

DECCAN Chronicle

18 NOVEMBER 2020

Nitish weakened, will his govt survive?

JD(U)'s founder-leader Nitish Kumar was sworn in Chief Minister of Bihar for the fourth straight term last Monday, courtesy his alliance partner BJP which won 31 seats more than Mr Kumar's relatively meagre 43, but it is far from clear if the NDA alliance, principally a BJP-JD(U) show, can offer stable governance or indeed even cohere with any sense of certainty.

The relationship between the key coalition partners has been prejudiced. There is a widespread feeling in the state and in political circles more broadly that the BJP had tried to undermine JD(U) from the start by propping up LJP's Chirag Paswan, and this was an important consideration for the less than satisfactory showing of Mr Kumar's party. Purportedly, the reason for this move was BJP's own ambition to be in the driver's seat to the extent of seeking to have its own CM instead of Mr Kumar.

Upon Mr Modi's removal, two new deputy CMs have been foisted on the CM by the BJP. It is a strong likelihood that Patna will be run from Delhi, possibly in tandem with Nagpur.

The game came unstuck because the saffron party, while improving its performance, could not reach a zone of comfort in number terms that may have enabled it to cobble together a government through the use of unconventional methods. The BJP could not choreograph a situation in which both the JD(U) and the RJD, the main Opposition force led by the very young Tejashwi Yadav, could be pushed down electorally at the same time. In the event, the RJD has done exceedingly well, arriving on the scene yet again as the number one party in the Assembly, ahead of BJP.

Having failed to reach its first objective, the BJP, being the bigger ally, looks to be aiming to call the shots more directly in the governance of the state. This can only be done by pushing down the CM and making him as redundant as possible. Ideally, from the BJP's perspective, the CM should be seen but not heard. In furtherance of this, the saffron party has taken their suave and veteran Bihar leader Sushil Modi, who had been deputy CM with Mr Kumar for 13 years, out of the equation. Mr Modi was known to enjoy a special relationship with Mr Kumar, sometimes to the chagrin of the state BJP.

Upon Mr Modi's removal, two new deputy CMs have been foisted on the CM by the BJP. These are politicians not known to possess their own personality. Consequently, it is a strong likelihood that Patna will be run from Delhi, possibly in tandem with Nagpur, the RSS headquarters. The NDA parties had not advanced any particular agenda for the state in their election campaign, which was centred on attacking RJD and Congress and not on defending its poor record or projecting a viable future. It does look as if they have run out of ideas. Getting investment rolling in the state, the need of the hour, is a tall order.

Mahagathbandhan, the NDA's principal opponent led by Mr Yadav, has secured only 12,000 votes fewer than the ruling side. Seats have been won or lost by double-digit margins, leading the Opposition to cry foul. The Opposition boycotted the government's swearing-in and could be in attack mode from the start. There could be unsettling times ahead in a key Hindi-belt state.

Two cheers for Suu Kyi

It was a vote for continuity. In winning what was only the second election in Myanmar since the end of five decades of military rule in the country, convincingly, the crafty National League for Democracy (NLD) head and incumbent state counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi has effectively consolidated her people's democratic ambitions. However, in trying to avoid 'criticism' that she is favouring Rohingyas from the military-backed Opposition Union of Solidarity and Development Party, she delayed decision-making vis-à-vis the crisis. Over 40,000 Rohingyas are stranded in India and eight lakh in Bangladesh awaiting repatriation. The estimated six lakh who remain in the conflict-rife Rakhine state are severely persecuted and were disenfranchised in these elections.

Alarming, the Islamophobic and anti-Rohingya Arakan National Party has won the largest bloc of seats in the regional parliament, even flipping a few previously held by the NLD. The NLD has reached out to them, so a prolonging of the crisis is on the cards. Reforming the 2008 military drafted constitution in which the Army had written in a role for itself in government and politics is another less urgent, but equally important, challenge before Ms Suu Kyi.

For India, Ms Suu Kyi's win spells both diplomatic comfort and continuity. Aside from trying to thwart China's expansionist and encirclement moves around India, New Delhi must be on good terms with all neighbours to maximise trade, market and investment opportunities as well as to bolster our strategic ingredients. Besides, Myanmar is important for its own sake - it is India's gateway to Southeast Asia. Facing charges of Rohingya genocide at the International Court of Justice and chastened, thereafter, by the world community, Ms Suu Kyi has been seen leaning towards China lately. But India has not been idle. Foreign secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla and Chief of Army Staff Gen. M.M. Naravane met the leader recently to discuss Covid cooperation and review progress of India-assisted projects in Myanmar. New Delhi needs to further strengthen its relationship with Yangon, possibly by identifying more areas of mutual cooperation as well as brainstorming solutions to Myanmar's problems, so that it is effectively weaned off its Beijing dependencies.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

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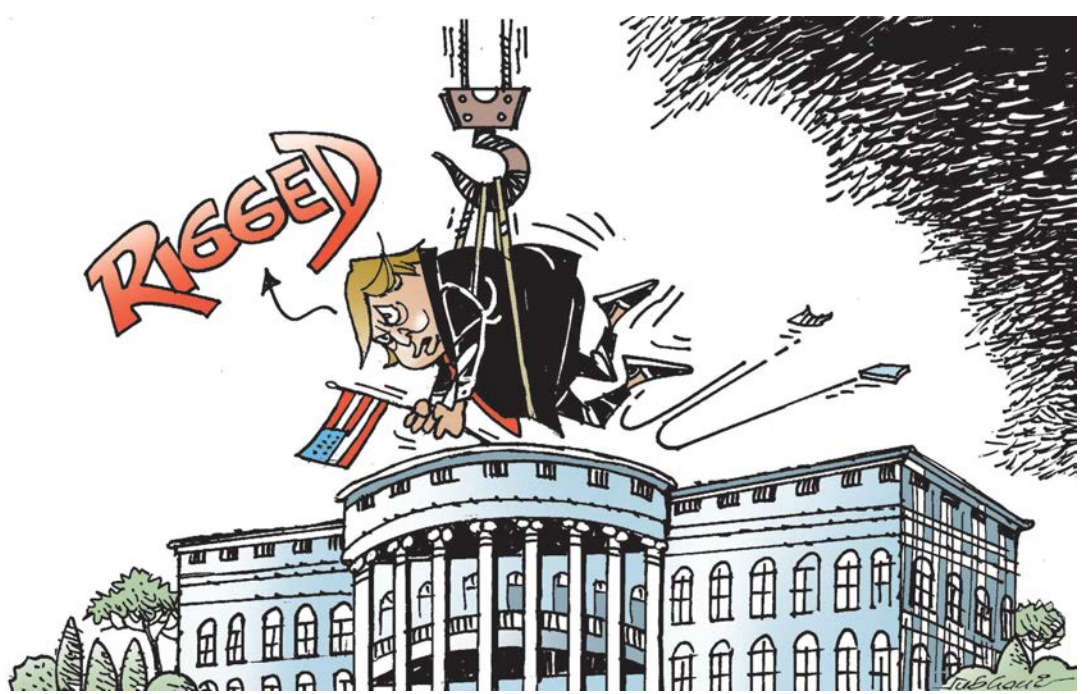
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Subhani



Beyond Covid: Towards a 'new normal' at work



Shashidhar Nanjundaiah

Last month Microsoft joined the new-age league — Facebook, Twitter, Google and Salesforce — in bringing forth an extended work-from-home policy. But the Redmond-based tech giant went further and announced that Microsoft employees all over the world can now opt to work from home permanently, embedding the concept of the hybrid workplace in the system. When a company's product is virtual, the processes can also be virtual, it would seem. No doubt there is the inevitable fine print about approvals and proportions. Still, is it a feasible proposition?

Microsoft's communiqué is compelling and competitive, and the narrative is bold — rather than making it about lockdowns and Covid-19 compliances, it indicates to us what it has learnt from and developed during the pandemic, to that extent embodying the concept of "the new normal". But more important, could this be the beginning of a new era of trust and partnership between employer and employee? That's the question managers are struggling with.

Undoubtedly, the transition to that virtual partnership will be less arduous for the technology and consulting companies. The tech industry has been responsible for systematising work flow and work processes in new ways. The "water-fall" process in management of software development process, for example, entailed a process from brainstorming to delivery that depended on long periods of low communication and reporting. But the new "agile" systems stipulate more rapid dipstick project management sequences such as regular meetings and frequent stock-taking to ensure that processes don't go askew

and that projects are completed within defined timelines with measurable assessments. The deliverables in such cases are data-driven and immediately measurable, potentially eliminating the need for human evaluation.

Because virtuality entails the use of networks, security is an anxiety to overcome. In several industries, virtual private networks (VPNs) or other security systems are par for the course. Those at management levels of the tech industry point out that these kinds of systems make their development projects more failsafe and more or less agnostic of geography. It reduces the anxiety of silence while providing a solution for regular communication and stocktaking, enabling any course correction when needed. Assessment of a project could happen every two weeks, for example, feeding into a quantified framework of sprints (the period of assessment) and velocities (points awarded during each sprint). But cybersecurity applications also often serve as surveillance or monitoring systems. So, several of these measures are more than changes solely related to coronavirus-compliance.

Managers in American tech companies say these points per period have shown a consistent and significant upward trend after a work-from-home mandate. This means productivity has gone up, at least in that industry. Does this mean employees are happier, or more efficient, as a result of sharper processes? That's a good question. For the employee, it allows a better work-life balance. The employer enjoys a wider and deeper hiring catchment area because a Microsoft-like policy unlocks opportunities for talented people who are reluctant or unable to relocate for work. On the other hand,

even in the United States, remote locations come with bandwidth issues, and most tech companies pay employees an incentive each month so that the employee can afford a reliable network connection.

That problem is compounded in an Indian environment, where there is far more caution in extending the work-from-home arrangement beyond the least possible period. Tech clusters like those in Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Gurgaon attract a diverse workforce. Many employees come to these hubs from smaller towns. In a lockdown work-from-home scenario, a significant proportion of them choose to work from their native towns, where the necessary infrastructure — including power supply, connectivity and bandwidth — is often suspect. This unreliable infrastructure has compelled many employers to dissuade employees from travelling or to provide portable connectivity devices such as dongles.

That is why it does not come as a surprise that the heads of even technology companies in India do not believe that virtual working — even for non-administrative functions — can be a permanent arrangement. Most of them hanker to go back to the old normal. Employers have calibrated their processes to better quantify the output, but in the absence of qualitative evaluation, they may not be entirely comfortable with an artificial adjustment. On the other hand, strict quantification of processes and output also sets up an alluring case for using artificial intelligence (AI). Already, there have been layoffs and consolidation or restructuring of processes. While the ongoing cutting-edge research on AI as a sup-

plement to human tasks is well-documented, techies worry — thanks to the pandemic — about the enhanced possibility that automation could replace some human processes.

Work-from-home policies are essentially policies of space and time. Employers are having a hard time grappling with them because what was meant to be a temporary fix has unearthed more challenges than they had bargained for. Most technology employers allow employees to work at their own pace, although filling out time sheets is still the norm among Indian companies. So, for many human resources (HR) managers, the new issue is as much about the process as about the theory. On one hand, HR managers are now grappling with effective ways of monitoring. Without it, they find it difficult to fit the existing matrix of periodic assessments and suchlike. On the other, should they continue the surveillance-like monitoring, or should they simply trust the employee more?

Psychological impacts of a protracted work-from-home situation have been well-documented, but Indian companies face additional challenges. The more traditional HR systems among them are accustomed to ways of monitoring their employees' time and space. The work-from-home situation's best and worst feature may be the flexibility of time and space. Redefined office space is a major reason many youngsters hanker to work at the New Age "cool" technology companies. Yet the Covid-19 pandemic is forcing these very companies to redefine their offices as post-Covid workplaces. Home is the best place to work from, some employers seem to be saying. For now, the space to watch over the next few months will be whether systems manage to build on their current success, or the compulsion of human communication and physicality render them unviable.

The writer is a communications expert and has launched and headed a number of reputed institutes of higher education

LETTERS

SENSIBLE DEMAND

It's a sensible demand made by the Forum for Good Governance, which even most of literate people will concur with, that tickets should not be given to candidates with criminal records. The logic is simple and does not need rocket science, because when appearing for government or private jobs, people with criminal record are barred from applying. One really doesn't see reason why this exception is being made for nearly eight decades.

Kumar Shastri
Hyderabad

In the Dubbak bypoll, people have indicated their opinion and the BJP won. The TRS was overconfident and the BJP took this as an added advantage and played their cards well. The GHMC elections will be an acid test for the TRS.

Dr G.V. Kumar
Hyderabad

ALERT ON VIRUSES

With experts saying at Deccan Dialogue organised by ISB that as many as 9,999 virus are likely to hit humans in the future, it should be taken as a really scary warning and world must prepare well in advance to combat such a huge healthcare challenge. It was a good suggestion to the government to have an epidemiologist on board with the MEA who can identify hotspots and warn in advance.

Jitesh Mathur
Hyderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN

DECCAN Chronicle

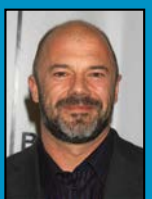
LUNA-17's historic feat, Vehicle moving on command from earth

MOSCOW, November 17. The Soviet Union today placed on the moon the world's first self-propelled vehicle which is moving about on the lunar surface and conducting experiments on command from earth.

A TASS announcement said the vehicle "Lunokhod-1" mounted on an eight-wheel chassis go off the automatic station, Luna-17, about two and a half hours after softlanding of the station in the area of the sea of rains.

It got out of the station by a special gangway and moved to a distance of 20 metres to begin, what TASS called "planned experiments". The first announcement was not clear on the nature of the experiments, how long they would be conducted and if the vehicle would be returned to earth along with the automatic station Luna-17.

Andrew Sullivan



Donald Trump may have lost, but his agenda is here to stay

Donald Trump is now showing exactly why he had to be defeated. Well after the votes have been counted, with no evidence of anything but the usual minor glitches — none of which is sufficient to dent Joe Biden's margin of victory — the President of the United States is doing what he did for four years — sabotaging American democracy because of his pathological narcissism. Mr Trump remains what he has long been — a purely destructive force, a vandaliser, not a builder.

But Trumpism? It did far better than anyone expected. The polls were off — again — missing Republican strength. Down-ballot, many Republicans seriously outperformed their nominal leader. During a health crisis and a recession, the GOP made real gains in the House of Representatives and is likely to hold the Senate, effectively checkmating any progressive ambitions that Mr Biden might have had. The rural

turnout was huge, responding to Mr Trump's boisterous series of big rallies as the campaign ended.

This result is the moment that Mr Trump's core message was seared into one of America's major political parties for the foreseeable future, and realigned American politics. Neo-conservatism is over; globalisation as some sort of conservative principle is over; a conservatism that allows for, or looks away from, unrestrained mass immigration is over. What was cemented in place this week is a new GOP, not unlike the Tories in the United Kingdom. They're nationalist, culturally conservative, geared toward the losers of capitalism as well as its winners, mildly protectionist and isolationist. It is a natural response to the unintended consequences of neo-liberalism's success under a conservative banner. And it speaks in a language that working-class Americans understand, devoid of the woke neologisms of the educated elite.

This election was also an unequivocal rejection of the woke Left. The riots of the summer turned many people off. In exit polls, 88 per cent of the Trump voters said it was a factor in their choice. On the question of policing and criminal justice, Mr Trump led Mr Biden by 46 to 43 per cent. For the past five years, the Democrats have been telling us that Mr Trump and his supporters were white supremacists, and yet he increased his black, Latino, gay and Asian support: 12 per cent of blacks — and 18 per cent of black men — backed him, along with 32 per cent of Latinos, and 31 per cent of Asians. The gay vote for Mr Trump may have doubled.

Pollsters, once again, missed a huge swath of "Shy Trump" voters. Eric Kaufmann, one of the most astute political scientists writing today, noted that the polling under-counted educated white Trump voters, perhaps used to keeping their mouths shut in mixed company: "The exit

polls show that Trump ran among white college graduates 49-49, and even had an edge among white female graduates of 50-49! This puts pre-election surveys out by a whopping 26-31 points among white graduates." The threat of wokeness alienated educated white voters, caused them to lie to pollsters — and led more of them to vote for Mr Trump than anyone expected.

The clarifying truth is that America remains a very closely divided country, growing further apart culturally and socially, exploited by extremists on right and left, and yet still fundamentally sane. The American people do not want a revolution, but they also realised they do not want Mr Trump as head of state. They removed the nutcase, and defanged the woke, showed up to vote in vast numbers, and gave us a constellation of forces in Washington that pleases no one. And that's okay.

America is a vast and complicated place — and its political representa-

tives mirror this rather accurately. That's democracy working, not failing. In such a country, there is a place in the centre for compromise if Americans can unwind the hysteria and polarisation that the far left has fuelled and Mr Trump has exacerbated. We now have a President-elect, voted for by the sane centre, with little personal ambition ahead of him, deep relationships within the Senate that he will desperately need, and with a check on his left flank. There are deals to be done. There is politics to engage. And we'll get there if we can use this moment to listen to each other, especially those whose opinions we have spurned, and whose identities we have feared. Mr Trump will refuse to let go — ever. But he has been removed. The republic will survive, battered and bruised, but it will survive. And with a little grace from all of us, it can also begin to heal.

By arrangement with the Spectator

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	43,952.71	0.72
Nifty 50	12,874.20	0.74
S&P 500*	3,617.83	-0.25
Dollar (₹)	74.44	0.23
Pound Sterling (₹)	98.47	0.23
Euro (₹)	88.35	0.13
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	50,114.3	0.005
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	43.49	-0.33
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.877	-0.001
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.873	-0.033

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Embassy REIT to acquire biz park for ₹9,780 crore

Embassy Office Parks REIT said it has agreed to acquire a large business park 'Embassy TechVillage' in Bengaluru from Embassy group, Blackstone and some other investors for Rs 9,782.4 crore. Embassy REIT is India's first publicly listed Real Estate Investment Trust sponsored by Blackstone and Embassy group. It got listed on stock exchanges last year. The deal is subject to unitholders' and regulatory approvals.

Tata Steel eyes assets of Neelachal Ispat



Tata Steel evinced its interest for acquiring stake in Odisha-based steel maker Neelachal Ispat Nigam Ltd. "NINL plant is something we will look at whenever it is available," Tata Steel EO & MD T. V. Narendran said in a conference call. NINL is a joint venture in which four central PSUs—MMTC, NMDC, Bhel and Mecon—and two Odisha state companies Ipicol and Odisha Mining Corporation are shareholders.

Kris G'krishnan to head RBI Innovation Hub

Senapathy (Kris) Gopalakrishnan, former co-chairman of Infosys, has been appointed the first chairperson of the Reserve Bank Innovation Hub, which aims to promote innovation across the financial sector. Members of the council include CEO-designate Ashok Jhunjunwala (IIT, Madras), H. Krishnamurthy (IISc-B), Gopal Srinivasan (TVS Capital) and K. Nikhila (Institute for Development & Research in Banking Technology, H'bad).

Karvy case: Funds, securities worth ₹2,300 crore settled

The NSE said funds and securities worth Rs 2,300 crore belonging to 2.35 lakh investors of Karvy Stock Broking Ltd have been settled so far. The case pertains to Karvy unauthorisedly transferring securities of clients into one of its Demat accounts by misusing the power of attorney given by its clients. Investors with fund balances up to Rs 30,000 due from Karvy Stock Broking have been settled, the NSE said.



RBI proposes merger with DBS Bank Lakshmi Vilas put under moratorium

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, NOV. 17

Minutes after placing beleaguered Lakshmi Vilas Bank (LVB) under moratorium and superseding its board of directors, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Tuesday announced a draft scheme of amalgamation to merge the ailing lender with DBS Bank India Ltd (DBIL).

RBI has placed the Tamil Nadu-based LVB under moratorium for 30 days that would end on December 16, according to statements from the regulator and the government on Tuesday. As part of this, the regulator has capped deposit withdrawals by customers at Rs 25,000. Depositors can withdraw above Rs 25,000 only for unforeseen expenses, including medical treatment, education, etc, the central government said in a statement.

This is the third such instance in the banking sector as the RBI had placed Yes Bank under moratorium for two weeks on March 5, which was later rescued by an SBI-led consortium while PMC Bank was also placed under moratorium.

Proposing the scheme of amalgamation, the central bank said that DBIL is well-capitalised and will bring in additional capital of Rs 2,500 crore upfront, to support the credit growth of the merged entity.

Owing to a comfortable level of capital, the combined balance sheet of DBIL would remain



healthy after the proposed amalgamation.

DBIL is a wholly owned subsidiary of DBS Bank Ltd, Singapore (DBS), which in turn is a subsidiary of Asia's leading financial services group, DBS Group Holdings Limited and has the advantage of a strong parentage. It had been issued a banking licence in October 2018.

In a statement the central bank said, "LVB has undergone a steady decline with the bank incurring continuous losses over the last three years, eroding its network. In absence of any viable strategic plan, declining advances and mounting non-performing assets (NPAs), the losses are expected to continue. The bank has not been able to raise adequate capital to address issues around its negative net-worth and continuing losses. Further, the bank is also experiencing continuous withdrawal of deposits and low levels of liquidity. It has also experienced serious governance issues and practices in the recent years which have led to deterioration in

its performance."

LVB was placed under the RBI's Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework in September 2019. RBI said "the bank's efforts to enhance its capital through amalgamation of a Non-Banking Financial Company with itself appears to have reached a dead end."

In October, non-bank lender Clix Capital had submitted a non-binding offer for LVB. In an unprecedented move, shareholders at the last AGM voted against the appointment of the bank's top brass.

The RBI said it has superseded the board of the lender for a period of 30 days as any effort to revive the bank "will be in vain" with the present board steering its affairs. It appointed T.N. Manoharan, former non-executive chairman of Canara Bank, as LVB's administrator.

C.H. Venkatachalam, general secretary of bank union Aibea, said the RBI decision would create doubt in the minds of people about the stability and dependability of banks.

AirAsia hints at possible India exit

Kuala Lumpur, Nov. 17: Malaysia's flagship budget carrier AirAsia Group Bhd has given its strongest indication to date that it could exit India, saying on Tuesday it was reviewing its investment in a joint venture airline there.

The group said in a statement that its operations in India, like those of its now-shuttered Japan business, have been draining cash and adding to the group's financial stress.

"Cost containment and reducing cash burn remain key priorities evident by the recent closure of AirAsia Japan and an ongoing review of our investment in AirAsia India," it said.

AirAsia shut its operations in Japan, the smallest of its foreign offshoots,



last month.

The airline owns 49 per cent of AirAsia India, a joint venture with Tata Sons.

News reports said that the Tatas are in discussions to buy AirAsia Group's stake.

AirAsia Group chief executive officer Tony Fernandes told Reuters in September that the group intends to consolidate and

strengthen its Asean foothold, which could mean one day exiting both Japan and India.

AirAsia Group said it remains confident of returning stronger, more robust and faster than many competitors, given strong signs of recovery in its key domestic markets due to pent-up demand and numerous Covid-19 vaccines in near

final stages of testing. "The general outlook is that air travel will be bouncing back real soon; we expect to get back to pre-pandemic levels on many routes across the Group by mid-2021, if not earlier," president for the group's airlines, Bo Lingam said.

AirAsia Group's share price touched its highest since June 29 on Tuesday in a second consecutive day of sharp gains, likely buoyed by news that US vaccine maker Moderna Inc's experimental vaccine is 94.5 per cent effective in preventing Covid-19 based on interim data from a late-stage trial.

Shares in its long-haul arm AirAsia X Bhd increased as much as 14 per cent.

—Reuters

Huawei sells off Honor business

Nov. 17: Huawei Technologies Co sold its Honor smartphone business to a Chinese government-backed consortium for an undisclosed amount, hiving off the entry-level devices arm after the Trump administration cut off its access to American technology.

The consortium was jointly founded by Shenzhen Smart City Technology Development Group Co Ltd and more than 30 of Honor's agents and dealers. Huawei will no longer hold any shares in Honor.

"This acquisition represents a market-driven investment made to save Honor's industry chain," said the statement, without explaining how the deal would bypass the

sanctions.

Honor was an integral part of Huawei's smartphone business, once larger than Samsung Electronics Co's but now struggling to secure enough crucial components and software for production. The sale illustrates the uneven impact of White House sanctions on China's largest technology company, whose consumer business is ailing even as its networking unit soldiers on. Shenzhen-based Huawei is said to have safeguarded its core telecom equipment business by stockpiling critical components to continue supplying its home country's 5G rollout through at least 2021.

Citing national security

concerns, the US has waged a far-ranging campaign against Huawei since 2018. The White House enacted sweeping restrictions against suppliers this year, closing off loopholes that let Huawei procure ready-made semiconductors to keep its consumer business afloat.

It's unclear if the Honor spin-off would lead to an automatic resumption of American chip supply to its new owners.

Huawei's smartphone shipments plummeted 22 per cent in the September quarter because of the US sanctions, according to research firm IDC. It now has to defend its No. 2 position against fellow Chinese players from Vivo to Xiaomi Corp,

which recorded a 42 per cent jump in third quarter shipments, IDA data show.

Honor has been operating as a budget phone brand alongside mainstream phones like the Mate series, and doesn't compete directly with the best offerings from Apple Inc or Samsung. Honor-branded phones are sold as low as 899 yuan (\$137) and go up to around 4,000 yuan. The most expensive Huawei phones go for as much as 17,000 yuan—surpassing the most expensive iPhone 12 Pro Max. Honor also competes with its own parent in a range of consumer electronics from gaming laptops to smart watches.

—Bloomberg

Global majors see upside to Indian stocks

ERIC LAM NOV. 17

Record highs in Mumbai are stoking the enthusiasm of strategists calling for further upside for Indian stocks, with companies poised to take advantage of a post-pandemic economic recovery in Asia through next year and beyond.

Morgan Stanley, Goldman Sachs Group Inc and JPMorgan Asset Management are among a number of prominent names talking up prospects for the country's shares in recent days. India traders marked Diwali by watching the S&P BSE Sensex Index rally to record highs last week, helped in part by a solid third-quarter earnings season.

About 86 per cent of reporting firms in the benchmark posted a sales beat while more than 70 per cent topped earnings expectations, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. The benchmark is up 10 per cent this month and has narrowed its year-to-date underperformance against the MSCI Asia Pacific Index to about 5 percentage points from over 10 percentage points earlier this year.

"India's earnings revisions trend has improved sharply and valuations are on the cheaper side of their historical relation-

SENSEX BREACHES 44K-MARK INTRADAY

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, NOV. 17

The Sensex crossed the 44,000-mark in early trade, driven by the bullish trend in global stock markets. The benchmark index touched a new all time high of 44,161.16 before closing at 43,952.71, gaining 314.73 points.

The broader Nifty-50 also inched closer to the 13,000-mark as it closed at 12,874, up 93.95 points.

Heavyweight financials outperformed again with the BSE Bankex up 1.88 per cent and the Nifty Bank gaining 2.05 per cent. Some beaten down sectors like capital goods, Metals, realty and automobile also gained.

The Sensex gained close

to 1,000 points in just six sessions as it had closed above 43,000 for the first time on November 10.

With stocks surging ahead BSE's market capitalisation soared to an all time high of over Rs 170.56 lakh crore.

Analysts expect now the broader market to gain momentum after the sharp run-up in the large cap stocks. "With index regaining new peaks, we expect broader markets to participate, going forward, with small cap, mid-cap space to relatively outperform their large cap counterparts," said ICICI Securities.

FPIs were net buyers of equities worth Rs 4,905.35 crore while domestic institutions booked profit.

rising infections.

"The investment case for India has improved now," a team including Timothy Moe wrote in a note last week. "We expect a 'catch up' laggard rally given the positive news flow on the vaccine front, which could spur a faster than expected recovery"

Goldman forecasts real economic growth to bounce back strongly over the next two years, fuelling a corporate profits rebound of 27 per cent in 2021 that's ahead of its projected 23 per cent increase for the MSCI Asia Pacific ex-Japan Index.

The team expects the NSE Nifty 50 Index to hit 14,100 by the end of next year, implying about 10 per cent upside from last week's close.

Looking further ahead, JPMorgan Asset Management projects strong long-term average annualised returns for Indian stocks of 8.9 per cent over the next 10-to-15 years.

"We see broad potential in India from a macro perspective," said Sylvia Sheng, global strategist with the firm's multi-asset solutions team in a press briefing last week. Bullish factors include population growth as well as room for productivity to grow, she said.

—Bloomberg

Textile industry finds PLI criteria tough to meet

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, NOV. 17

The textile industry feels that the incremental growth proposed under the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme is difficult to achieve.

The PLI scheme for man-made fibre products and technical textiles has set high eligibility criteria in terms of turnover growth for the units.

As per the scheme outlined for the sector, firms with a minimum turnover between Rs 100 crore and Rs 500 crore will have to increase the turnover by 50 per cent every year for five years. A company with a turnover of Rs 300 crore will have to make incremental revenue of Rs 150 crore in the first year in order to receive 9 per cent of Rs 14 crore incentive. In the second year, the incentive will be 8 per cent of the incremental revenue of Rs 224 crore, or Rs 24 crore.

While the incremental turnover growth would remain 50 per cent in subsequent years, the incentive will be 7 per cent in the third year, 6 per cent in the fourth year and five



per cent in the fifth year.

For companies with a turnover above Rs 500 crore, the incremental growth expected is 50 per cent for the first year and the incentive will be 7 per cent of the incremental turnover. In the subsequent years, the incremental turnover growth expected from the company is 25 per cent. However, the incentive will be 6 per cent, 5 per cent, 4 per cent and three per cent in the subsequent years.

In order to receive the additional incentive for greenfield projects with a minimum investment of Rs 500 crore, the company will have to achieve a turnover of Rs 1,500 crore in the first year and 25 per cent in the subsequent years. In the first year, it

will receive an incentive of 11 per cent and it will come down to 10 per cent, 9 per cent, 8 per cent and 7 per cent in the subsequent years.

"I don't think the incremental growth target is achievable, at least for the next two to three years. The export market has been stagnating and the domestic sales too are not improving. Further, the pandemic has hit both domestic and export markets. The stimulus packages have largely skewed towards providing funding. But that will not improve the demand situation. Without an assurance on return on investment, companies will hesitate to invest," said D. K. Nair, an industry veteran.

Sidharth Rajagopal, executive director of Texprocil, hopes that the government will tweak the eligibility criteria. "There is a challenge. It is a tall task to achieve the targets considering that the demand is sluggish, retail is not doing well, the clientele is price-conscious and earnings are going down. We hope that the government will tweak the criteria."

CROP | INSURANCE

Agri ministry seeks DGCA nod for aerial survey of rice fields

It's a bird, It's a plane, It's govt drone

LAXMI DEVI NEW DELHI, NOV. 17

The agriculture ministry has sought civil aviation regulator DGCA's nod for allowing shortlisted private agencies operate drones to capture images of rice fields in 100 districts to assess crop yields at gram panchayat level under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), a senior government official said.

This is the second year the ministry has hired private agencies for a pilot study of unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) based remote sensing data col-

lection in agricultural areas of 100 districts for assessing gram panchayat level under the PMFBY.

"Since harvesting in selected 100 rice growing districts is in full swing currently and will be completed shortly as per the crop season, we have requested the Directorate General of Civil Aviation to give approval for flying drones over selected regions," the official said.

A letter to the effect has been sent to the DGCA seeking permission for agencies such as Amnux, Agrotech, RMSI Pvt Ltd and Weather Risk Management Services



Private Ltd to operate drones for two months till December 31, he said.

The official mentioned that the drone-based images are one of the important inputs in the

models for crop yield estimation and validation. The shortlisted agencies have already started the study in their assigned regions as per the time schedule.

The drone-based images will be captured in 10 states—Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh.

On benefits of using drones for the PMFBY, the official said crop damage valuations have traditionally been difficult to make as it is carried out manually after an insurable

event such as floods, drought or pest infestation.

However, the remote sensing data captured through drones will help get the accurate information on crop conditions and losses to farmers, and shorten timelines for crop insurance claims, he explained.

"After the success of pilot studies, it will be scaled up," the official added.

As per the official data, about 241.7 lakh hectare farm land has been insured in the 2020 kharif season.

—PTI

SHORT TAKES

Olympian hurdler Jagmohan dead

Patiala: Olympian hurdler and multi-faceted sports personality Jagmohan Singh, who introduced scientific fitness training methods in athletics and other sports during his long stint at the NIS-Patiala, died of heart attack here on Tuesday.

He was 88. Jagmohan, who had also served as joint director general of Sports Authority of India, represented the country in 110m hurdles in the 1960 Rome Olympics. He was the national champion in this event from 1958 to 1960. He also had held national records in 110m hurdles and decathlon.

Not only he was a top athlete of his time, Jagmohan had served Indian sport as teacher, coach, administrator and physical trainer. After completing his B.Sc. degree, Jagmohan served in Punjab Police for nearly 10 years before joining NIS Patiala as a teacher in 1962. — PTI

Athletes should be vaccinated: Bach

Tokyo: IOC president Thomas Bach has said during this week's trip to Tokyo that he is encouraging all Olympic participants and fans to be vaccinated if one becomes available if they are going to attend next year's Tokyo Olympics. Bach says a reasonable number of fans should be able to attend the venues vaccine or no vaccine. And he said confidently that the postponed Olympics will open on July 23.

We want to convince as many foreign participants as possible to accept a vaccine, he said repeatedly on Monday, his first of two days in Tokyo lining up support for the Games and holding conferences. — AP

Suarez, Munoz are Covid positive

Uruguay: Luis Suarez and goalkeeper Rodrigo Munoz have tested positive for the coronavirus, the Uruguayan Football Association said. They and national team staffer Matias Faral, also infected, will miss Uruguay's home match against Brazil in South American World Cup qualifying. Besides missing Suarez and Munoz, Uruguay are already without goalkeeper Martin Silva, defenders Sebastian Coates and Matias Vina, midfielder Federico Valverde, and striker Maxi Gomez for the match against Brazil. Suarez will also miss Saturday's Spanish league match between Atletico Madrid and his former club Barcelona. — AP

MKE in final of T20 tournament

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, NOV. 17

Murali Krishna Enterprises defeated KK Blasters by 29 runs to enter the final of the Gosports T20 Cup in Vijayawada on Tuesday. Batting first in the first semifinal, MKE made 170 for 9, built on a fine knock from Abdullah (49). In reply, the Blasters could only manage 141 for 8.

BRIEF SCORES

Murali Krishna Enterprises 170/9 in 20 overs (Abdullah 49, Vamsi 26, Ch Srikanth 24, Krishna Kanth 2/30, Bhuvaneshwar 2/33) bt KK Blasters 141/8 in 20 overs (Vineeth 24, Baji 22, Sudhakar 3/34, Ravi 2/21, Ch Srikanth 2/19).

Man of the Match: Abdullah.

Live on TV

CRICKET

Big Bash League: Adelaide Strikers vs Melbourne Renegades from 9 am; Sydney Thunder vs Sydney Sixers from 1.35 pm on Sony Six

TENNIS

ATP Finals: Matches from 7.30 pm and 1.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Six, HD

FOOTBALL

UEFA Nations League: Albania vs Belarus from 8.30 pm; Georgia vs Estonia from 10.30 pm on Sony Ten 2; Poland vs Netherlands from 11.15 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 3; England vs Iceland from 1.15 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 1; Belgium vs Denmark from 1.15 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 2

WWE

NXT: Bouts from 6.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 1, HD

Regd. No. H/SD/509/2018-20

Printed and Published by K. Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited. Printed at Deccan Chronicle Press situated at Karimnagar: Survey No.1341, Vavilalpalay Colony, Jagityala Road, Karimnagar - 505 001, Ph. 0878-2228908; Telefax: 0878-220433. RNI Registration No. 3081/1957, Editor: Kaushik Mitter

Covid scare in Oz

Aussie players airlifted to NSW in attempt to save series

Sydney, Nov. 17: Cricket Australia on Tuesday airlifted players, including Test skipper Tim Paine and star batsman Marnus Labuschagne, to New South Wales from Adelaide in an attempt to save the series against India as a coronavirus outbreak in South Australia threatened the upcoming summer.

As Western Australia, Queensland and Tasmania closed their borders to South Australia on Monday, the country's cricket board brought players from Australia's white-ball, Test match and Australia A squads into Sydney from Adelaide to ensure that the upcoming fixtures of the \$300 million season remain unaffected.

"CA has taken a proactive approach and mobilised a number of people across the country over the past 24 hours to shore up our men's domestic and international schedules," CA's interim chief executive Nick Hockley was quoted as saying by *ESPNCricinfo*.

"I would like to thank the players and staff for their understanding regarding the changes to their travel schedules and for their commitment to ensuring the summer of cricket is a huge success," he said.

Besides Paine and Labuschagne, the list of players relocated include their colleagues Matthew Wade, Travis Head and Cameron Green among others.

Despite the spike in Covid cases and developments related to it, CA maintained that the Adelaide Oval will host the first Test of the summer against India from December 17.

Hockley added, "I would also like to thank the various leadership groups across Australian cricket for coming together over the past 48 hours and taking quick, decisive action - made possible by thorough, cross-department contingency planning."

Earlier, CA vowed that all possible measures would be explored to ensure that the series goes ahead as planned. — PTI

Pucovski confident of making Test debut

Sydney, Nov. 17: Fast-rising Australian batsman Will Pucovski feels he has "earned the right" to be in the red-ball squad for the series against India and is better prepared to make his Test debut compared to a couple of seasons ago.

Pucovski, who was named in a 17-member extended Australian Test squad for the four-match series against India, is coming off back-to-back double hundreds in the Sheffield Shield.

Despite missing the opening two rounds of the competition, he has scored 495 runs so far this season in three innings and is currently the tournament's highest run-scorer. "This time it feels like I've earned the right to be here, and I'm pretty pumped to take the challenge on of playing India if I do get the



Indian cricketers Cheteshwar Pujara (left) and Deepak Chahar at a training session in Sydney.

— BCCI

Virat & Co. undergo Test simulation

Sydney, Nov. 17: The limited-overs competition awaits them first but Indian players, led by captain Virat Kohli, seemed focussed on next month's Tests against Australia as they practised in simulated long-format match conditions complete with pacers using red and pink balls here on Tuesday.

All the top batsmen and bowlers, who are in all the three squads, were seen taking part in the practice session. The likes of senior pacer Mohammed Shami and youngster Mohammad Siraj were seen bowling to Kohli in a video posted on Twitter by the captain himself.

"Love Test cricket sessions," the tweet from Kohli read. The star batsman will feature in just the opening day-night Test, starting December 17 in Adelaide, before flying back to India for the birth of his first child.

The video showed the players using the centre strip of the ground with proper Test match field and a batsman at the non-striker's end, which is a deviation from traditional net sessions.

Given that the players were kept busy by the IPL for the last two months, the white-ball training has taken a back-seat. Opener K.L. Rahul facing the pink ball was an indicator that he is in line to be picked for the first Test.

In another video, posted by the BCCI, Shami was seen bowling in tandem with youngster Siraj. Shami, who took 20 wickets from 14 matches for Kings XI Punjab, is a part of all the three squads. India will rely heavily

on him during the four-match Test series starting with the day-night pink ball game in Adelaide.

Siraj, who is only in the Test squad, followed his senior team-mate and was seen sending down a few deliveries as other senior players watched him bowl.

The 26-year-old, who has played one ODI and three T20Is, took 11 wickets from nine matches for Royal Challengers Bangalore in the recent IPL. "The master and his apprentice. When @MdShami11 and Siraj bowled in tandem at #TeamIndia's nets. Fast and accurate!", the BCCI tweet read. — PTI

ATP | FINALS

Medvedev masters Zverev on Day 2

London, Nov. 17: Daniil Medvedev pulled off an underarm serve as he outlasted Alexander Zverev and joined Novak Djokovic as a winner at the ATP Finals on Day Two. Medvedev prevailed 6-3, 6-4 in an empty O2 Arena on Monday.

Djokovic and Medvedev meet on Wednesday to secure the group lead.

Medvedev led 4-3, 30-30 in the second set when he surprised Zverev with a quick underarm serve. It brought the German to the net and he lost the point when his backhand block volley flew long.

"My wide serve was not working as well as I would like and he was returning good. I see that he was five meters behind the baseline and I have the ball close to my racket, so I thought, 'Go for it,'" Medvedev said.

It actually worked. It's also smart.

Two games later, he served a love game to earn his first win at the ATP Finals in his fourth match going back to last year.

Medvedev went 0-3 in his first Finals, including a loss to Zverev which he avenged after an attritional opening set.

Zverev, the 2018 champion, earned a break in the first game but gave it straight back with three

● **Medvedev prevailed 6-3, 6-4 in an empty O2 Arena. He will now meet Novak Djokovic to secure the group lead.**

double faults. Another double fault by Zverev in the sixth game gave Medvedev a 4-2 lead, and the Russian finished the set with his first ace.

A weak forehand into the net cost Zverev the decisive break at 3-3 in the second.

Medvedev held with the underarm serve, and he beat Zverev again eight days after winning their Paris Masters final. The top-ranked Djokovic smothered Schwartzman after conceding an early break and, despite no fans inside the 20,000-capacity O2 Arena, he gestured to each section as if to say thanks. "Why I celebrated? Because that's my celebration and that's also my gratitude to the court and to this opportunity to be able to compete," the Serb said.

"Even though there was no crowd in the stands, I know that there was a lot of people watching it on TV, so that was me sharing that emotion with them," Djokovic added. — AP



Russia's Daniil Medvedev returns to Alexander Zverev of Germany during their singles match at the ATP World Finals tennis tournament at the O2 Arena in London on Monday. Medvedev won 6-3, 6-4.

— AP

PARGAT, GURBUX ARE IN MASTERS PANELS

New Delhi, Nov. 17: Former captain Pargat Singh, Mir Ranjan Negi and Gurbux Singh have been included in the 'Masters Committees' constituted by Hockey India's state member units to promote and develop masters hockey in the country; the national federation said on Tuesday.

The initiative will provide opportunities for all age groups (both male and female) to continue their passion for hockey and remain active in the sport irrespective of any age barrier; the HI said in a release.

In March, HI had joined 38 other national associations from around the world as a member of the World Masters Hockey (WMH), which is the sole

masters entity recognised by the International Hockey Federation (FIH) and is responsible for organising international masters hockey globally.

To further carry out responsibilities at the state level, HI urged all the state member units to form working committees comprising of former national and international hockey players to lead the state level activity.

The committee's first responsibility will be to ensure all the masters athletes of various age categories are registered on the Hockey India member units portal.

The Masters Committee will be overseeing all matters related to these masters matches and tournaments at the national level in India. — PTI

Man held for issuing a death threat to Shakib

Dhaka, Nov. 17: Bangladesh police on Tuesday arrested a man who allegedly issued death threats to cricket all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan for inaugurating a Kali puja pandal in Kolkata, even as the cricketer issued an apology and said he only joined the function briefly.

A joint team of the elite anti-crime Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) and police arrested 28-year-old Mohsin Talukdar from south-eastern Sunamganj district after 24 hours of a massive manhunt.

"He is now in our custody awaiting subsequent legal procedures," a police officer familiar with the development



Shakib Al Hasan

said. After the cricketer's picture at the programme in Kolkata's Amra Sobai Club went viral, Talukdar went live on Facebook on Sunday night carrying a large machete in his hand and threatened to kill Shakib, saying he hurt his religious sentiments by inaugurating the Puja

event in the West Bengal's capital city.

By early morning, Talkudar, however, withdrew the threat and apologised in another live video on social media and then went into hiding. He was later traced in neighbouring Sunamganj district.

The 33-year-old cricketer in a post on Facebook denied inaugurating the puja pandal. He said it was inaugurated by Kolkata's mayor Firhad Hakim.

"Media, social media everywhere it was flooded that I went to Kolkata to inaugurate a puja ceremony which actually was not the reason behind my visit and I did not inaugurate puja. — PTI



Venezuela's Ruben Limardo Gascon cycles with a food delivery to clients in Lodz, Poland, on Saturday. Gascon needs the delivery job to support his family as he lives and trains in Poland. — AP

Olympic champ turns delivery rider

Lodz (Poland), Nov. 17: Back home in Venezuela, Ruben Limardo Gascon is hailed as a national hero for winning a gold medal in fencing at the 2012 London Olympics.

In Poland, where he has lived for years, he's taken up delivering food for Uber Eats to support his family as he trains for the Olympics in Tokyo next summer.

Every day after intensive training, he jumps on his bike and with a green thermal bag on his back he crisscrosses the city of Lodz, where he lives with his wife and two children, delivering food to people's doorsteps.

With the global economic situation precarious amid the coronavirus pandemic and little chance for sponsorship, Limardo is grateful to have a job, particularly one that leaves him time for sports practice.

"There is no sponsorship now because there is no competition, but I still have to generate



There is no sponsorship now because there is no competition, but I still have to generate some resources to support my family. I don't want to leave the sport because I still have a dream.

— RUBEN LIMARDO GASCON
2012 fencing champion

Limardo said.

With a mask covering his face these days, fans of fencing have little chance of recognizing the Olympic gold medalist known for his modesty.

But some know about him and ask for selfies and take the opportunity to chat with the native of Ciudad Bolivar, who speaks perfect Polish.

Limardo moved to Poland, which has a long tradition in fencing, some 20 years ago as a teen to train on the p e, the heaviest of modern fencing weapons.

He has also won gold in individual epee at the 2007 Pan American Games and at the 2006 and 2008 championships in Poland.

His gold medal from London is the second Olympic win ever for a Venezuelan, making him a celebrity in his native land.

He competed in the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro in the individual and team p e competitions, but failed to secure any medals.

From his home in central Poland, he continues to root for Venezuela, which has seen problems including political discontent exacerbated by hyperinflation and shortages of food and medicine.

He says he hopes that things will get sorted out soon in Venezuela. In the meantime, he seeks to represent his country with pride.

"Wherever I go, I'll lift the flag 100%, with a lot of pride, with a lot of ardour," Limardo said. — AP