

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

CHENNAI | MONDAY 2 | NOVEMBER 2020

WEATHER



Max: 33°C
Min: 25°C
Rainfall: Nill

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Aippasi 17
Tithi: Thuvithiyai
Star: Krithigai
Rahukalam:
7.30 am to 9 pm
Yamagandam:
10.30 am to 12 noon
PRAYERS
Fajar: 4.50 am
Zohar: 11.58 am
Asar: 3.13 pm
Maghrib: 5.43 pm
Isha: 6.55 pm
SUNSET TODAY 5.42 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.04 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 7.03 PM
MOONSET TOMORROW 8.55 AM

CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+45,473)	(+470)
82,28,867	1,22,621

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+2,504)
TN: 7,27,026 11,152

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

4,66,91,230

DEATHS
11,97,702

COUNTRIES AREAS WITH CASES
215

worldometers.info

2 held for hoisting separate state flag

Chennai: Two men were arrested in the city on Sunday for violating the order by the police against hoisting a separate flag representing Tamil Nadu to mark its formation day on Sunday.

According to the sources, tension prevailed in Chennai's Adambakkam in the morning, after around 20 members of Naam Tamizhar Katchi gathered in Indira Gandhi Nagar to hoist the flag to celebrate the state formation day.

Sanitiser set afire, boys suffer burns

REPORT ON PAGE 4

COUNTER POINT



No offers on vegetables!

STATE | 3

Speculation rife as Gurumurthy meets Rajini



WORLD | 5

US polls: Focus turns to key states

SPORT | 8

CSK end their season with a win



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GST collections in Oct cross ₹1 lakh cr mark

Tax revenue returns to pre-Covid Feb figures

SANGEETHA G. | FC
CHENNAI, NOV. 1

Gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections crossed ₹1 lakh crore mark in October, first time since February. GST collections registered growth both on a year-on-year and month-on-month basis.

The gross GST revenue collected in October stood at ₹1,05,155 crore, 10 per cent higher than ₹95,379 crore collected in the same month last year and ₹95,480 crore collected in September 2020. During the month, revenues from import of goods were 9 per cent higher and the revenues from domestic transactions, including import of services, were 11 per cent higher than the revenues from these sources during the same month last year.

Of this, Central GST (CGST) was ₹19,193 crore, State GST (SGST) ₹25,411 crore, Integrated GST (IGST) ₹52,540 crore, including ₹23,375 crore collected on import of goods and cess was ₹8,011 crore. A total of 80 lakh GSTR-3B returns were filed for the month of

GREEN SHOOTS, finally?

February: ₹1,05,366 crore
March: ₹97,597 crore
April: ₹32,172 crore
May: ₹62,151 crore
June: ₹90,917 crore
July: ₹87,422 crore
August: ₹86,449 crore
September: ₹95,480 crore
October: ₹1,05,155 crore



October.

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

GST collections had dropped well below the psychological mark of Rs 1 lakh crore since the lock-down, declared in march to contain the pandemic Covid-19. After making a recovery to ₹90,917 crore in June, collections had dipped in July and August. However, in the past two months, collections have



This uptick in collections on a month-on-month basis and over the same month last year is quite a welcome one for the government and the economy in particular. Some potential reasons for this surge could be the increased demand on account of the festivities and input tax credit/other similar reconciliations which were due for businesses in September," said Abhishek Jain, tax partner, EY.

once again improved, mostly due to the festive season demand and normalisation of businesses.

Almost all the states and Union territories, except Delhi, Sikkim, Daman, Diu, Lakshadweep and Andaman and Nicobar Islands registered year-on-year growth in October. Among the larger states, Maharashtra grew 5 per cent, Karnataka 5 per cent, Tamil Nadu 13 per cent and Gujarat 15 per cent.

Hizb chief killed in encounter

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR, NOV. 1

In what their officials termed as a "big achievement", the security forces on Sunday killed the "operational chief" of Jammu and Kashmir's frontline indigenous militant outfit Hizb-ul-Mujahideen during a firefight on the peripheries of Srinagar.

Saif-ul-Islam Mir, a resident of Malangpora in south Kashmir, who was known in militant ranks by the pseudonyms of Dr Saifullah and Ghazi Haider, had taken on the role of Hizb commander after its "operation commander" Riyaz Naikoo was killed along with his aide in a gunfight with the security forces in Pulwama district on May 6 this year. "His killing, like that of Naikoo in May, is a big achievement of the security forces in their fight against militants in J&K," said IGP (Kashmir range) Vijay Kumar at a hurriedly-called press conference here.

The police said Saifullah had joined the Hizb ranks way back in 2014 and was known to have worked closely with its popular Internet-savvy commander Burhan Muzaffar Wani, who was killed during the security forces'

India slams Pak's move on Gilgit-Baltistan

New Delhi, Nov. 1: India on Sunday slammed Pakistan for its attempt to accord provincial status to the 'so-called' Gilgit-Baltistan, saying it is intended to camouflage the "illegal" occupation of the region by Islamabad.

Spokesperson in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) Anurag Srivastava said India "firmly rejects" the attempt by Pakistan to bring material changes to a part of Indian territory which is under Islamabad's "illegal and forcible occupation" and asked the neighbouring country to immediately vacate such areas.

operations in Kokernag area of Anantnag district on July 8, 2016.

Mr. Kumar said Saifullah was gunned down during an encounter in the Rangreth area on the peripheries of Srinagar. Another person who had been holed up with him at a private house during the security forces' cordon-and-search operation was taken into custody, and according to officials is being intensively interrogated.



TN agri minister Doraikkannu laid to rest in Papanasam

DC CORRESPONDENTS
THANJAVUR/CHENNAI, NOV. 1

The mortal remains of agriculture minister R. Doraikkannu, 72, were laid to rest at Vanniyadi village near Rajagiri in Papanasam on Sunday.

He died of Covid-19 late Saturday night in a hospital in Chennai. The body was brought to Rajagiri, his native place on Thanjavur-Kumbakonam road, on Sunday afternoon. It was kept at his house and then near an Ayyanar temple for the public to pay homage. Later it was wrapped in the national tricolor, taken to Vanniyadi village and laid to rest with full state honours. Corona prevention measures were strictly followed at the burial.

■ P3

TN CROSSES 1 CR MARK IN COVID TESTING

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs
CHENNAI, NOV. 1

Tamil Nadu crossed a significant milestone of testing more than one crore samples for coronavirus so far with the testing of 73,012 specimens on Sunday. The state recorded 2,504 new infections, taking the overall tally to 7.27 lakh while 30 deaths mounted the toll to 11,152, the health bulletin said.

With the government machinery emphasising on testing, the total number of samples tested touched 1,00,29,222, it said. Tamil Nadu does not use Rapid Antigen Diagnostic Tests (RADT) and all tests are RT-PCR (Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction based). Chennai logged 686 new cases reaching the grim milestone of 2,00,533 till date.

Recoveries in Tamil Nadu continued to outnumber the new infections with 3,644 people walking out of health care facilities taking the aggregate to 6,94,880 so far.

MHA to tighten Covid protocols

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 1

The Union home ministry is closely monitoring the Corona situation in the country particularly in cities such as Delhi where cases have been rising again for the last four days. The ministry is coordinating with the Union health ministry and is likely to come up with additional guidelines as corona cases are expected to show a sharp increase in view of the winter and festive seasons.

Senior home ministry officials said a team headed by home secretary Ajay Bhalla was reviewing the situation regularly. "The Centre is keeping a close watch on the situation all over the country, and particularly in pockets in Delhi, Bihar, Haryana and parts of Uttar Pradesh which could see further rise in the days ahead," the officials said, adding the home secretary has been holding a series of high level meetings as

the situation has worsened in Delhi, Bihar and some other northern states due to factors such as increasing air pollution, festive season, Assembly elections and the so-called "Conor fatigue" among the people.

Home ministry is the nodal ministry to coordinate with states and Union Territories to deal with the spread of the corona virus. Delhi has been recording more than 5,000 daily for the last four days. It is felt that following the Bihar assembly elections the virus could show a sharp rise as some of the labourers will once again return to the respective states where they were working earlier.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had in his address to the nation a few days ago requested people to be extremely careful during the coming festive and winter seasons to ensure that the spread of the deadly virus can be contained.

PM now targets 'double yuvraj'

NAYEAR AZAD | DC
PATNA, NOV. 1

Ahead of the second phase of polls due on November 3, Prime Minister Narendra Modi exuded confidence that the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) will return to power in Bihar. "The huge turnout in the first phase and all the surveys have proved the poll pundits wrong," the Prime Minister said this while addressing several public meetings in Chapra and Samastipur on Sunday.

Mr Modi tore into the Opposition's grand alliance chief ministerial candidate Tejashwi Yadav and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, referring to them as "double yuvraj", and saying that they are fighting against the "double engine government" in Bihar (BJP



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar during an election rally for the second phase of Bihar Assembly polls, in Samastipur district, Sunday. —PTI

and JD-U) to save their thrones. "The double engine government is working for the development of Bihar but the double yuvraj are fighting the election only to

save their thrones," Mr Modi said.

Referring to Samajwadi Party leader Akhilesh Yadav and Mr Gandhi, Mr Modi said "there used to be

double yuvraj during the Uttar Pradesh elections, too. But you saw what happened to them. These two are going to meet the same fate and you should be careful as one of the yuvraj has now joined hands with the yuvraj of jungle raj in Bihar".

During his public meetings, he also reminded people of the "jungle raj" during the 1990s when the RJD was in power and said that several development projects were stuck for many years due to the policies of the previous government in Bihar. "Earlier mothers used to get worried that their children would get kidnapped for ransom. I ask you whether you want the state to return in the same era," he asked, cautioning people against voting for the grand alliance.

■ P4

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SHORT TAKES

Puducherry celebrates 67th liberation day

Puducherry, Nov. 1: Puducherry on Sunday celebrated its 67th De Facto Merger (liberation) Day, which marked the former French colony's merger with Indian Union in 1954.

Chief Minister V Narayanasamy unfurled the national flag at the celebration held on the Beach Road here.

He inspected a Guard of Honour presented by the police and took salute at the march past by different contingents on the occasion.

Puducherry Assembly Speaker V P Sivakolundhu, Ministers, legislators, Chief Secretary Ashwani Kumar, Director General of Police Balaji Srivastava, freedom fighters and delegates of different organisations were among those who were present.

Pondy records fresh corona cases in 2 digits after six days

Puducherry, Nov. 1: Daily Covid-19 cases in Puducherry dropped below the 100 mark on Sunday after a gap of six days as the tally rose to 35,109.

Three more people, including a 71-year old woman, died of coronavirus in the last 24 hours ending 10 AM on Sunday, taking the toll to 595, the Health department said.

The union territory recorded 96 new cases while 421 people were discharged on recovery. Health and Family Welfare Director S.Mohan Kumar said in a release here.

It was on October 25 that Puducherry last recorded fresh cases in two digits (83).

Of the overall 35,109 cases, as many as 3,169 were active, 31,345 patients had recovered and discharged while the fatalities stood at 595, the official said.

The fatality and recovery rates were 1.69 per cent and 89.28 per cent respectively.

So far, 3.11 lakh samples have been sent for testing.

Of the fresh cases, Puducherry region accounted for 69, followed by Karaikal (11), Yanam (5) and Mahe (11).

The three patients who died of the infection were in the age group ranging between 59 and 71 years and had diabetes or kidney related ailments, the release added.

—PTI

EASING OF CURBS

Hostels, PG business set to witness a revival

T. SUDHEESH | DC CHENNAI, NOV. 1

With educational institutions set to reopen by November 16, the business of hostels and paying guest (PG) accommodations across Chennai, hit hard by the pandemic and lockdown, is expected to see a revival.

The pandemic struck at a time when PG and hostel accommodation was a thriving business in the city. Hundreds of tenants and hostellers, who returned home, had vacated their rooms over a phone call, citing difficulties caused by the pandemic. Many have lost jobs while most of them, who work in IT and IT-enabled service sectors, have got salary cuts, putting them in the 'work from home' option.

Many hostels in Chennai, which were running with over 100 students and employees, are now deserted with a few people, creating a huge financial burden for the owners every month.

P.N. Viswanathan, who runs a PG facility at Ramapuram here, had five PGs at his house complex, but it is down to one now. All four, who were students at the nearby professional college, went home prior to the national lockdown announced in March end, vacated the room over phone calls.

"We are struggling to meet expenses including electricity, internet bills and maintenance charges of each month since there are no takers for the rooms. I set up the accommodation facilities by availing huge bank loans. Though the government has announced a moratorium, it's not at all a solution for the current crisis as we have no income. Now I hope there will be a spur in demand as the educational institutions are set to reopen," he said.

E. Duraisamy, a real estate broker involved in the rent-room business in Ashok Nagar area, says the demand for PGs and hostels had gone up in the last few weeks. "We are



Good tourists influx at Government Botanical Garden in Ooty during this weekend.

— DC

Scrapping of e-pass boosts Nilgiris tourism

B. RAVICHANDRAN | DC OOTY, NOV. 1

The abolition of the e-pass system to visit Nilgiris has increased tourist flow to the hill tourist place.

The travel and tourism industry in Nilgiris suffered most due to the pandemic and the lockdown. Though a ban was imposed in mid-March itself for the entry of tourists to Nilgiris, this status quo continued till early September. When the government eased e-pass norms in the state for

getting many enquiries every day now. We have been doing at least a couple of spot visits as well in these days. However, they are not willing to pay the pre-pandemic rent rate. Everybody wants a discount despite having offered a 10 to 20 percent cut from the pre-pandemic rate. We hope the demand will pick up further with the educational institutions to be opened," he said.

Duraisamy added that many of the hostel build-

ings currently available in the town are either rented or taken on a two-year lease.

There are over 4,000 hostels and PG accommodations in the city. A person residing in a hostel is charged in between Rs 5,000 (four per room) to Rs 14,000 (two per room) per month. In some places, the rent was charged beyond Rs 14,000 for a single room with food. For last two decades, especially after the IT sector thrived in the city, many people ven-

turnout of tourists as nearly 3,000 tourists visited the Government Botanical Garden this weekend.

J. Innocent Divya, Collector of Nilgiris, said that e-registration has become mandatory for the outsiders and tourists to visit Nilgiris.

Those who wish to visit Nilgiris can register their names and other details online with valid ID.

There are no restrictions for the entry of outsiders/ tourists/ travelers to Nilgiris, she added.

According to the South Chennai Paying Guest and Hostel Owners Association, many women hostels were closed as the professional colleges and other educational institutions remained closed for months.

City top cop bars assemblies, stirs, meetings for 15 days

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, NOV. 1

City police commissioner Mahesh Kumar Aggarwal promulgated an order prohibiting all protests, meetings and assemblies for the next 15 dates in the city.

The order has been brought into effect under section 41 of the Tamil Nadu City Police Act 1888, which grants police the "power to regulate assemblies, meetings, human chains, processions in any street, road, thoroughfares or other public pla-

ces within greater Chennai police jurisdiction"

It will commence from 15.00 hrs on 31.10.2020 and end with 15.00 hrs on 15.11.2020 for 15 days, the order read.

The order that is passed will not apply to any public meeting, assembly or procession held under the statutory or other express legal authority. Any public meeting, assembly or procession or class of public meeting or assembly or procession exempted from the operation of this order by the State Government by General

or Special Order and public meeting, assembly or procession held under the auspices of the State or Union Government.

The order has been issued by the top cop, on instructions from the health and family welfare department, to contain the spread of pandemic Covid-19 and further instructions issued by revenue and disaster management. The order will now prohibit assemblies, processions, demonstrations, fasts, human chain and other forms of gathering for the next 15 days.

₹1 lakh worth gutka in gunny bags seized from house

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, NOV. 1

Gutka products worth ₹1 lakh were seized from a house in Vadamangalam near Sriperumbudur in the early hours of Sunday.

Based on a tip-off that gutka products smuggled from other states were stored in the house in Vadamangalam village's Bharathi street, the police raided the premises. They found gutka products in gunny bags stored in a

room and seized them.

According to sources, based on a tip-off, the Sriperumbudur police raided a house belonging to Dhayal (45) and found a huge quantity of banned gutka products worth ₹1 lakh. Police learnt that Dhayal smuggled the banned tobacco products from Karnataka and distributed it to shops in the city. Sriperumbudur police registered a case against Dhayal and launched a search for the smuggler.

VIT engg subjects among top 8 in India

Chennai: Engineering and technology subject areas (General engineering, Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Chemical Engineering) of Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT) are ranked among the top 8 universities in India and among the top 501-600 universities in the world in the recently released World University Rankings by Subject 2021 by The Times Higher Education, UK.

Fisheries university releases rank list

Chennai: UG admission 2020-21 rank list was released by Tamil Nadu Dr. J. Jayalalithaa Fisheries University, Nagapattinam on its official website (www.tnifu.ac.in) on Sunday. Dr. G. Sugumar, Vice-Chancellor of the university, released the rank list.

Admission to 386 seats in the 10 UG degree programmes offered by the Tamil Nadu Dr. J. Jayalalithaa Fisheries University through the constituent colleges of the university for the academic year 2020-21 was undertaken through online mode, according to press

In-person counselling for the special category students will be conducted on 07.11.2020 at Tamil Nadu Dr. J. Jayalalithaa Fisheries University, Nagapattinam

release. In-person counselling for the special category students will be conducted on 07.11.2020 at Tamil Nadu Dr. J. Jayalalithaa Fisheries University, Nagapattinam. For other candidates, online counselling will be conducted through website from 09.11.2020 to

11.11.2020. Dr. G. Sugumar further indicated that the PG admission 2020-21 will open for M.F.Sc., M.Tech and Ph.D. Courses. Online applications and prospectus for Post graduate degree programmes is available at the University website (www.tnifu.ac.in) from 01.11.2020. Last date for submission of online application is 27.11.2020.

The aspirants are requested to visit the website for prospectus and online application, he stated. Further details can be obtained from email: pgadmission@tnifu.ac.in or phone 04365-256430 or mobile 9442601908.

Subject educational institutions to consumer law



Sanjay Pinto



"statutory function." It viewed evaluation of a candidate as a statutory function. "The fact that in the course of conduct of the examination, or evaluation of answer scripts, or furnishing of mark-sheets or certificates, there may be some negligence, omission or deficiency, does not convert the Board into a service provider for a consideration, nor convert the examinee into a consumer who can make a complaint under the Act. We are clearly of the view that the Board is not a 'service provider' and a student who takes an examination is not a 'consumer' and consequently, complaints under the Act will not be maintainable against the Board." A similar view was echoed by the Apex Court in Anupama College of Engineering Vs Gulshan Kumar (2017). Significantly, the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, the highest consumer adjudicatory body, in Bhupesh Khurana Vs Vishwa Buddha Parishad (2000) had ruled that "impairing of education by an educational institution for consideration falls within the ambit of 'service' as defined in the Consumer Protection Act." The payment of fees was the trigger. "If there is no rendering of service, the question of payment of fee would not arise." The Commission added that "misrepresentation" over the college's affiliation and recognition, would "tantamount to an unfair trade practice" and "deficiency" in service. The

Supreme Court upheld this verdict in Buddhist Mission Dental College & Hospital Vs Bhupesh Khurana (2009). This decision was referred to by the Supreme Court in P.Sreenivasulu Vs P.J. Alexander (2015) while holding that education does fall under the Consumer Protection statute.

Under the new Consumer Protection Act, 2019, a slew of provisions could well govern consumer disputes. Section 2(11) for deficiency in service, Section 2(28) for a misleading advertisement or Section 2(47) for an unfair trade practice may be invoked in complaints. That there are other platforms before which complaints may be filed like the University Grants Commission, or school education boards, or the Advertising Standards Council of India, or even the police, in cases of cheating, is not a justification to oust the jurisdiction of consumer commissions, as action under this statute is not in derogation of other relief and laws. Moreover, consumer commissions are relatively less adversarial and there is now scope for mediation as well. Disputes brought should ideally be more convenient for complainants and the opposite parties.

Teaching is undoubtedly a noble profession, often even considered a vocation. So is medicine. Respectfully and subject to what the Court ultimately decides, in my opinion, if doctors and hospitals come under the Consumer Protection Act, why should educational institutions be excluded from its purview? Commercialisation is rampant in almost every profession today. To argue that educational institutions are to be treated differently would be semantical and smack of an Ostrich syndrome.

(The writer is an advocate at the Madras high court, columnist & author)



N. SAMPATH | DC CHENNAI, NOV. 1

The Greater Chennai Corporation is reviving the temple tanks of the city with rainwater. As a pilot project, the ponds at Vadapalani Andavar temple and Mylapore Sri Adi Kesava Perumal temple

(Chitrakulam) are connected with stormwater infiltration drains.

A German technology is used in the project. "These drains are different from the regular stormwater drains as the layers of infiltrators prevent the silt and waste from seeping," said a senior corporation

official.

The silt on the top layer of the system can be cleaned frequently. The clean rainwater enters the pond and recharges the groundwater.

A total of 545 metres and 325 metres of the drain network were laid at Vadapalani and Mylapore

respectively.

"These drains are ready-made polypropylene structures that can be removed to relay at other localities too. The project was completed in less than 20 days.

The city wastes gallons of rainwater every day. "Every year there is a

water crisis in Chennai due to mismanagement of rainwater. I hope this project will put an end to that situation," says Kavitha Prasad, a resident of Mylapore.

The corporation aims to replicate this project at other temple ponds in the city.



OTHER STORY

Agri portfolio allotted to K.P. Anbalagan

Chennai, Nov. 1: Governor Banwarilal Purohit on Sunday allotted the Agriculture portfolio, held by the late R. Doraikkannu in state cabinet to higher education minister K. P. Anbalagan, the Raj Bhavan said on Sunday.

Anbalagan has been re-designated as minister for higher education and agriculture, a Raj Bhavan press release said. "On the advice of the hon'ble chief minister, hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu has allotted the portfolios Agriculture, Agricultural Engineering, Agro Service Cooperatives, Horticulture, Sugarcane Cess, Sugarcane Development and Waste Land Development, held by Thiru (Mr) R Doraikannu, since deceased, to Thiru K P Anbalagan," it said.

TN fishermen driven away, attacked by Lankan Navy, alleges assn leader

Rameswaram, Nov. 1: Around 4,000 fishermen from here returned without catch after being allegedly driven away by Sri Lankan Navy personnel and also attacked with stones and bottles, damaging their gear and over 50 boats off Dhanushkodi near here, a fishermen association leader claimed on Sunday.

They were fishing in 528 mechanised boats between Dhanushkodi and Katchatheevu when the Lankan Naval personnel, who came on board eight patrol boats started chasing them away on Saturday, throwing bottles and stones as missiles, local fishermen association president P Sesuraja told reporters here. While around 20 boats returned on Saturday evening itself, others also came without fish catch later in the night and early Sunday, he said, quoting the affected fishermen.

Fishing nets of around 50 boats were snapped and dumped into the sea and as many craft suffered damage in the hurling of stones and bottles, he alleged.

This is the third such mid-sea incident in the last fortnight. —PTI

Fishing at dawn



A fisherman trying his luck at Muttukadu backwaters.

— E.K. Sanjay

Tributes pour in for minister Doraikkannu

From P1

Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam, ministers K.A. Sengottaiyan, S.P. Velumani, P. Thangamani, R. Kamaraj, K.P. Anbalagan, O.S. Manian, Vellamandi Nadarajan and S. Valarmathi; MPs R. Vaithilingam and Ravindranath Kumar, Thanjavur district collector M.Govinda Rao and Villupuram district collector Annadurai paid floral tributes at a portrait of the minister.

A graduate in arts, Duraikannu joined the AIADMK in 1972. He was union secretary of the party during the period of former chief ministers MG Ramachandran and J. Jayalalithaa. He occupied many positions in the party's youth and student wings.

He is survived by wife Banumathi, four daughters and two sons. The traders in Papanasam downed shutters as a mark of respect to him.

Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday condoled the demise of Doraikkannu and hailed his contributions for the welfare of society. "Deeply anguished by the passing away of Tamil Nadu Agriculture Minister, Sri Doraikannu," Mr Naidu tweeted. "He worked with



dedication for the uplift of the downtrodden & welfare of farmers. My condolences to his bereaved family members. Om Shanti!" Mr Modi also expressed sadness at the minister's demise. "Saddened by the demise of the Minister in the Tamil Nadu Government, Thiru R. Doraikannu. He made noteworthy efforts to serve society and empower the farmers. Condolences to his family and supporters in this sad hour," the Prime Minister's Office quoted Mr Modi as saying.

TN Governor Banwarilal Purohit, Chief Minister K. Palaniswami, his deputy O. Panneerselvam and DMK president M.K. Stalin were among others who condoled Doraikannu's demise.

Doraikannu was known for his "simplicity, humbleness, straightforward-

ness, governance skills and commitment towards the welfare of the farming community.. He handled the ministry of agriculture with full dedication and engraved his strong mark," Mr Purohit said in a message.

The Chief Minister, who described the late leader as an "elder brother", said Doraikannu had joined the AIADMK when it was founded by the late M. G. Ramachandran in 1972, adding he had served the party with dedication since then. Doraikannu had efficiently handled his portfolio, he said, describing him as an affable person. Mr Palaniswami visited the hospital on Sunday and paid floral tributes to a portrait of Doraikannu there.

Stalin, the leader of the Opposition in the Assembly, expressed shock over the minister's demise and noted that the latter used to reply during debates in the House "according to ethos".

Telangana Governor Tamiliasai Soundarajan and leaders of various political parties including Vaiko (MDMK), G. K. Vasan (TMC), S. Ramadoss (PMK), L. Murugan (BJP) and those of CPI and CPI (M) also expressed their condolences.

VP, CM greet people on Tamil Nadu Day

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs CHENNAI, NOV. 1

Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu and Chief Minister K. Palaniswami on Sunday extended their Tamil Nadu Day greetings to the people of the state but there was no festivity to mark the day, apparently due to the Covid-19 pandemic situation.

In a Tamil tweet on his official Twitter handle, Naidu greeted the people of the state and hailed Tamil Nadu for its "rich cultural heritage, splendid architecture, beautiful beach and varied landforms."

"Let this state achieve great heights in the coming years," he added. To commemorate November 1, 1956, when states were reorganised on linguistic basis, and to honour those who had strived for the lan-

guage, the government has been celebrating it as Tamil Nadu Day since 2019, Palaniswami said. In a tweet, he extended his Tamil Nadu Day greetings. The name Tamil Nadu was given to the state following an assembly resolution in 1969.

"I extend my Tamil Nadu day greetings with the pledge that we all will strive to develop our Tamil-speaking state in the national arena," he said. Official sources indicated no major events were scheduled this year owing to the pandemic situation. DMK president M. K. Stalin asked people to take a pledge to defeat "communal forces" on this day and said state rights "are facing strong challenges." Fisheries minister D. Jayakumar, PMK founder Dr S. Ramadoss also extended their greetings.

HC query on reward amount for intellectually impaired sportspersons

J. STALIN | DC CHENNAI, NOV. 1

Considering the negligible amount being awarded by the Central government, the Madras high court has directed the Central government standing counsel to get instructions as to the possibility of enhancing the reward amount for the intellectually impaired achievers (sports persons) in the international, national events, on par with that of the general category achievers.

A division bench comprising Justices N.Kiruba-karan and B.Pugalendhi gave the directive while passing further interim orders on the petitions filed by A.Gopikannan and P. Thirumaran and seven others.

In his petition, Gopikannan, challenged the order of the authority concerned removing



him from service. In their petitions, Thirumaran and seven others sought a direction to the authorities to treat the sports persons, namely, intellectually disabled persons in Asia Pacific Special Olympics Games on par

G SRINIVASAN | DC THANJAVUR, NOV. 1

Farming is the only activity that continued even during the Covid-19 period. Not to be left out, students of the high school at Kaupatti in Vadakkur area in Orathanadu taluk, also involved themselves in transplantation and other works. They planted 'Seeraga samba', a traditional scented variety of paddy seedling, in the fields in their village, on Friday.

Led by farmer Thavaselvam, the students transplanted the seedlings wading through wet fields, unmindful of the scorching sun. "The idea of the exercise is to train

them in organic paddy cultivation, environment conservation and animal welfare," said Thavaselvam, who heads an organisation called 'Vithaiyal Ayudham Seivom', and Dr Ram Manohar, secretary, 'Clean Thanjavur Movement'.

"We learnt about ecology, agriculture, tree plantation etc., during the Covid-19 period," said the students. In a parallel activity, 18 teachers and eight social activists selected for creating awareness about environment conservation, corona relief services, tree planting, big temple kumbabishekam cleanliness drive, terrace garden in schools, Miyawaki fo-

resty, bio-diversity, waste management etc., were honoured by 'Arivukann', an environment-related monthly and 'Clean Thanjavur Movement', at a function here.

Dr S Maruthu Durai, dean, Thanjavur medical college, G Thangaraj, honorary adviser of Arivukann, Dr Radhika Michael, president, 'Clean Thanjavur Movement', Dr P Ram Manohar, secretary, 'Clean Thanjavur Movement', participated in the function.

Arivukann journal was founded by Dr SR Raman, retired director, Indian meteorological department, who is now the honorary adviser and chief patron of the journal.

Dealing with the case of Gopikannan, a sports person with disability, who won 41 gold

Two held for hoisting separate state flag

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, NOV. 1

Although the state police had warned activists of various Tamil nationalist organisations against hoisting a separate flag representing Tamil Nadu to mark its formation day on Sunday, two men were arrested in the city by the police for violating the orders.

According to the sources, tension prevailed in Chennai's Adambakkam on Sunday morning, after around 20 members of Naam Tamizhar Katchi gathered in Indira Gandhi

On being alerted the Pallikaranai police rushed to the spot and removed the flag. The flag has been seized and the duo were arrested. Police said they have been booked on sedition charges

Nagar to hoist the state flag to celebrate the state formation day. However, the police officials intervened and prevented the organisation from unveiling the separate flag. The members later dispersed.

In another incident in Medavakkam, two men from a Periyarist organization were arrested for

unveiling the red-white state flag on Sunday.

The two men, identified as Pozhilan (60) and Mandela(35) are part of a Periyarist Tamil Nationalist organization. The men reportedly unveiled 'a white flag with Tamil Nadu state map imprinted in red.' On being alerted the Pallikaranai police rushed to the spot and removed the flag. The flag has been seized and the duo were arrested. Police said they have been booked on sedition charges.

Even though various organizations including

'Thamizhar Viduthalai Kazhagam', 'May-17' movement, 'Thanthai Periyar Dravidar Kazhagam', 'Dravidar Viduthalai Kazhagam' and 'Thamil Desiya Makkal Munnani', among others, had planned to unveil and hoist a separate flag for Tamil Nadu in public places or front of their party/living quarters, the police warned them that such an act "would violate the values enshrined in the Constitution of India and would also fall under the 'an offence under section 124A (Sedition) of the Indian Penal Code.

INCREASE QUOTA FOR MUSLIMS: TNTJ

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUCHY, NOV. 1

The Tamil Nadu Thowheed Jamaath (TNTJ) has appealed to the state government to increase the reservation for Muslims in jobs and education from the existing 3.5 percent to 7 per cent.

A resolution to this effect was adopted at the state executive of the TNTJ held in Tiruchy under the leadership of TNTJ's state president Samshulluha.

Briefing the media-persons, E.Mohamed and Abdul Rahim, general secretary and treasurer respectively of the TNTJ, said the meeting also urged the Union Government to withdraw the CAA, and also give up its move for a National Register of Citizens (NRC) and National Population Register (NPR).

They said the meeting called upon the Muslims parties to unite under one banner and to get more seats and contest in next year's election to the Tamil Nadu Assembly.



With Deepavali just a fortnight away, thousands of people flock to T Nagar, the major shopping hub of Chennai, throwing caution to the winds. A scene from Ranganathan street on Sunday. — DC

Gurumurthy-Rajinikanth meet triggers speculation

B. VIJAYALAKSHMI & D. SEKAR | DC CHENNAI, NOV. 1

Political commentator and editor of Tamil magazine *Thuglak* S. Gurumurthy met superstar Rajinikanth at his Poes Garden residence here on Sunday evening and had a two-hour-long chat.

Though Rajinikanth-Gurumurthy's meet was described as a 'courtesy' call to enquire about the former's health, the media was agog with speculation

about the 'timing' of the meet.

Gurumurthy, RSS ideologue, had earlier said Rajinikanth has a bright future in politics and aligning with the BJP would be good for the state. It may be recalled that Rajinikanth, a few days ago, said he had been advised against entering politics by doctors during this pandemic as he had undergone a kidney transplant. However, the actor said he would consult the office-bearers of Rajini Makkal Mandram and

announce at an appropriate time whether he would enter politics or not. He also said on his Twitter handle that the statement hinting that he may reconsider his political entry due to his health condition doing rounds on social media was not from him. However, the content related to his health condition and doctors' advice are true, he said. With Assembly elections nearing in 2021, expectations that Rajini may announce his party have heightened among TN people.

Campaign against lead in paints gains momentum

B. RAVICHANDRAN | DC OOTY, NOV.1

J. Innocent Divya, the Collector of Nilgiris, on Saturday inaugurated the International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week Awareness campaign here. This "message on wheels - campaign" against the lead containing paints started on October 29 at Erode and reached Ooty on Saturday.

"The-toxic truth - children's exposure to lead pollution-2020" report, jointly produced by the

Unicef and Pure Earth, reveals the economic costs caused by lead exposure

and underscores the importance of tackling lead as a priority to environmental, health, and development challenge. Every year more than 5 lakh children are affected by lead poisoning in paints across the world. This has led to a global movement to ban lead in paints. The focus of this year's week of action is on the need to accelerate progress towards the global phaseout of lead paint through regulatory and

legal measures, Innocent Divya added.

Arulagam, a Coimbatore-based NGO, is leading the campaign against lead paint in Tamil Nadu. As part of the campaign, S. Bharathidasan, secretary, Arulagam, appealed to the Nilgiris district collector to regulate the usage of hazardous paints in Palvadis and schools. The district administration immediately instructed to include the use of lead-free paint in the tender documents and adhere to the government norms.

SHORT TAKES

SANITISER SET AFIRE, BOYS SUFFER BURNS

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 1

Two boys, aged 11 and 7, suffered burns when they set a sanitiser liquid on fire at Sirukaveri pakkam in Kanchipuram district on Saturday evening. According to police, the victims, J. Prakash of Shanthi Nagar and D. Mukundan of Andal Nagar in Sirukaveripakkam, were playing near their houses when the mishap took place.

Prakash and Mukundan collected a few sticks and burnt them. They reportedly poured the alcohol-based sanitiser on the sticks and their clothes caught fire resulting in burns.

The villagers doused the fire and rushed them to the Kancheepuram Medical College. However, since both of them suffered around 18 per cent burns, they were shifted to the burns ward in Kilpaik Medical College in Chennai. They suffered burns on their shoulder, neck and hands. The Baluchettychattram police registered a case.

BJP KEEPS ITS DOORS OPEN FOR TMC LEADERS

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC
KOLKATA, NOV. 1

After inducting Mukul Roy, Sovan Chatterjee and many other key Trinamul leaders in recent years, the BJP has kept its door ajar now for another heavyweight of chief minister Mamata Banerjee's party and Cabinet — Shubhendu Adhikari—for his entry to its fold ahead of the Assembly election next year in West Bengal.

Adhikari is the minister of three important portfolios: transport, environment and water resources investigation and development of the state government at present. Known to be the face of the Nandigram movement during the Left rule against forcible land acquisition, which helped Banerjee to come to power in 2011, he was a two-time Trinamul MP of Tamluk in East Midnapore earlier and was seen as the CM's trusted lieutenant in the western belt of the state once.

The BJP's plan about Adhikari comes in wake of his growing distance with the Trinamul supremo and senior party leaders and programmes in the past few months over his rebellion which came to light in more than one occasion. The state minister was seen attending events held by a local forum, floated by his followers, neither under the Trinamul banner nor with Banerjee's symbolic photo.

The relations between Adhikari and the Trinamul has soured so much that Trinamul minister Firhad Hakim, during a visit to Adhikari's home turf, sarcastically asked him to stay put better at state BJP headquarters in Kolkata.

On Hakim's jibe, state BJP president Dilip Ghosh on Sunday said, "That means they will send him (Adhikari) to the BJP! We have also kept our doors open and wide to induct all to our party. If they send him and if any politician wants to continue in field of politics, the BJP will give him the opportunity."

Asked of talks, if any, with Adhikari for his induction to the BJP, the Midnapore MP added, "I did not have any discussion." Sources however indicated of constant communication between Adhikari and the BJP. Adhikari is the son of Trinamul MP Kanthi Sisir Adhikari.

CONG CANNOT BE 'BJP LITE', SAYS THAROOR

New Delhi, Nov. 1: Secularism as principle and practice in India is in "danger" and the ruling dispensation may even try to remove the word from the Constitution, senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor has said, but asserted that "forces of hatred" cannot alter the country's secular character.

Secularism is only a word and even if the government takes it out of the Constitution, it would still be a secular Constitution because of its basic structure, Tharoor told PTI in an interview on his new book *The Battle of Belonging*.

He also asserted that the Congress cannot risk trying to become 'BJP Lite' as it may end up making it 'Congress Zero' and said his party was not offering a watered-down version of the BJP's political messaging. *PTI*

54 seats head for election

Hectic canvassing for Tuesday byelections in the shadow of pandemic

Bhopal/Lucknow/Ahmedabad, Nov. 1 Campaigning ended on Sunday for byelections to 54 Assembly constituencies in 10 states including 28 seats in Madhya Pradesh where the high-stake contest that will decide the fate of the Shivraj Singh Chouhan government saw the parties launching vitriolic attacks against each other.

There was hectic canvassing for the Tuesday byelections in the shadow of the Covid-19 pandemic, with the Election Commission restricting the number of star campaigners and issuing strict guidelines for gatherings.

The main contenders, the BJP and the Congress, traded barbs especially in Madhya Pradesh where the EC had to reprimand leaders of both the parties and even revoked the star campaigner status of former chief minister Kamal Nath, who challenged it in the Supreme Court.

In over 30 seats in MP, Gujarat and Karnataka, the BJP has fielded former Congress MLAs who quit to join the saffron party.

The BJP, which has a comfortable majority in the UP Assembly, is locked in a battle of prestige on seven seats, with the opposition taking on the Yogi Adityanath government on the law and order issue.

The issue of 'love jihad' has also been raked up during the campaigning with the UP and Haryana governments announcing plans to bring a law against it.

In Gujarat, the bypolls are being held in eight seats after the Congress MLAs resigned. Five of them later joined the ruling BJP and are contesting again. Assembly bypolls will also be held in Chhattisgarh (1 seat), Haryana (1), Jharkhand (2), Karnataka (2), Nagaland (2), Odisha (2) and Telangana (1).

In Uttar Pradesh, of the seven seats going to the polls on Tuesday, six were held by the BJP and one by the Samajwadi Party.

The state government faced criticism over the law and order situation, particularly after the Hathras and Balrampur rape and murder cases.



Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) President Chirag Paswan addresses an election rally, in Nalanda, Sunday.

— PTI

Byelections to decide fate of Shivraj in MP

DC CORRESPONDENT
BHOPAL, NOV. 1

The high voltage campaigning for the November 3 by-elections to 28 Assembly constituencies in MP, which may decide fate of the Shivraj government, ended on Sunday.

Chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, state BJP president Vishnu Dutt Sharma and senior BJP leader Jyotiraditya Scindia held road shows in the election-bound constituencies in the state to drum up support for their party in the by-elections on the last day of electioneering on Sunday.

Similarly, former chief minister Kamal Nath staged road shows and addressed election meetings in the state before winding up his campaign-

ing for Congress in the by-polls. Violation of the model code of conduct has robbed Nath of his star campaigner status.

The Assembly byelections may decide the fate of the Shivraj government since the ruling BJP needed nine more seats to gain a simple majority in the 230-member state Assembly. The BJP currently has strength of 107 in the Assembly whose effective strength has reduced to 202 following resignation of 25 Congress MLAs and demise of three sitting legislators.

The Congress' strength in the House has reduced to 88 following the resignation of 25 party MLAs from the House in the last eight months. While 22 Congress MLAs resigned from the Assembly in March leading to fall of

Kamal Nath government, three other Congress legislators resigned in the last one month.

All of them have quit the Congress and joined the BJP. The Congress needed to win all the 28 assembly seats in the byelections to reach the magic figure of 116 to return to power in the state. However, 4 Independents, two BSP MLAs and one SP legislator may play the role of king makers if neither the BJP or the Congress gains simple majority in the byelections. The seven MLAs had earlier extended support to the Kamal Nath government. But, they extended their support to the Shivraj government when the BJP formed a government following the collapse of the Kamal Nath government in March this year.

Big win for J&K forces



Security personnel leave after an encounter with militants at Rangreth on the outskirts of Srinagar on Sunday. Hizbul Mujahideen chief Dr Saifullah was killed and a suspect has been taken into custody and is being questioned.

— PTI

In slip of tongue, Scindia seeks vote for Congress

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC
BHOPAL, NOV. 1

Senior BJP leader Jyotiraditya Scindia created a flutter when he, in a slip of tongue, sought vote for the Congress while campaigning for his party in Dabra in Gwalior district in Madhya Pradesh late on Saturday evening.

A video in which Scindia was seen appealing to the people to vote for 'Hand', the symbol of Congress while addressing an election meeting in Dabra, has gone viral.

Maintaining flow of his speech, Mr Scindia suddenly called upon people to press the button on 'Hand' while casting their votes on November 3, when by-elections to 28 Assembly constituencies in Madhya Pradesh were scheduled to be held.

However, after realising his mistake he promptly corrected it saying that they should dump Congress and press the button on 'Lotus', the

symbol of BJP.

His faux pas had evoked laughter in the gathering which included BJP candidate for Dabra constituency Imarti Devi.

The Congress on Sunday took a jibe at Scindia for his slip of tongue.

"We assure Mr Scindia that people will vote for Congress in MP assembly by-elections," Congress spokesman here Narendra Saluja said.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission has barred Devi from campaigning for a day on Sunday for her recent offensive remarks against the kin of an unnamed rival.

Devi while reacting to former chief minister Kamal Nath's item jibe at her had said a leader from Bengal had come to Madhya Pradesh to become chief minister and after losing his post of chief minister he had gone crazy.

The leader's wife and sister may be items, she had said.

SP: Yogi makes laws as law and order fails

Ballia (UP), Nov. 1: Taking a jibe at UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's announcement of framing a new law against 'love jihad', SP leader Ram Govind Chaudhary on Sunday said the CM was only making laws while the law and order in the state was deteriorating. Adityanath had on Saturday said his government would come out with a law to deal with 'love jihad' and used the Hindu funeral chant 'Ram Naam Satya Hai' to threaten those who do not respect their daughters and sisters. Love jihad is a derogatory coinage referring to the alleged campaign of Muslims forcing Hindu girls to convert in the guise of love.

"After the BJP formed

government in the state, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is only making laws. The reality is that the Adityanath government is unable to control crime in the state, and the law and order situation is deteriorating," Chaudhary, also the Leader of Opposition in UP Legislative Assembly, said.

"Have incidents of murder and rape stopped?" he told reporters here. The Samajwadi Party leader also accused the CM of moving on the path of German dictator Adolf Hitler. He also claimed that despite the "misuse" of government machinery in the bypolls, the SP candidates will emerge stronger. On being asked if his party will register a complaint, he said nothing will come of it. — PTI

Covid-19 number up by 46,963; active cases dip

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 1

With 46,963 fresh cases, India till Sunday logged in a total of 81.86 lakh cases of Covid while the overall fatalities crossed 1.22 lakh with 470 fresh deaths in the last 24 hours. Among those who died was Tamil Nadu's agriculture minister R. Doraikkannu, who had tested positive for Covid on October 13. However, a steady decline in active cases continues and for the third consecutive day after the active cases fell down below the 6 lakh mark after nearly three months.

At present, India's total active cases are 5.70 lakh and the number of those recovered is 74.92 lakh. In the last 24 hours, 58,684 people were discharged from medical supervision. Higher recoveries has aided the national

Recovery Rate to further improve to 91.54 per cent.

7,025 new cases in Kerala: Kerala continued to clock a high number of new Covid-19 cases and reported 7,025 fresh ones on Sunday, pushing the total number of infections to 4.27 lakh. The state also saw 28 related deaths, taking the toll to 1,512. The results of 8,511 patients have come out negative, taking the number of those cured in the state to 3.48 lakh.

TS reports 1,416 cases: Telangana state recorded 1,416 new Covid-19 cases on Saturday and five more deaths from the disease, taking the total to 2,40,048 and the fatalities from the disease to 1,341. Saturday saw the GHMC area recording 279 new Covid-19 cases, followed by 132 in Ranga Reddy, and 112 in Medchal-Malkajgiri districts. The new cases in

Ranga Reddy district rose on Saturday from 107 recorded on Friday, as per the bulletin.

AP tests 81 lakh samples: Andhra Pradesh has till now tested more than 81 lakh samples for coronavirus and recorded the lowest 16 Covid-19-related deaths in a day in the past three months on Sunday. The state reported 2,618 new positive cases against an earlier average of 10,000 cases per day. The total positive cases reached 8,25,966.

K'taka reports 3,652 cases: Karnataka on Sunday recorded 3,652 fresh coronavirus cases and 24 deaths, taking the tally and cumulative fatalities to 8,27,064 and 11,192, respectively. The state had reported an alarming trend of over 10,500 infections and over 200 fatalities a day for almost a week barely a month ago.

REALTY | BITES

Delinked land to be used for affordable housing

Govt to delink land of sick PSUs

ANIMESH SINGH
NEW DELHI, NOV. 1

Unable to dispose of 17 out of the 19 sick public sector undertakings (PSUs) which the NDA government had earmarked for time-bound closure back in 2018, mainly due to the delay in disposal of the land held by these state-owned units, the Centre has decided to delink the land component from the companies and transfer them to their parent ministries to expedite the process of doing away with such entities.

The delinked or transferred land would be used in priority sectors of the government, including investments in key eco-

nomie sectors and for affordable housing, sources said.

The sources said the heavy industry ministry has prepared a proposal to seek the Union Cabinet's approval to delink the land from these units and transfer them to the parent ministries, to expedite their disposal.

While the government identified 19 sick PSUs for time-bound closure two years back, till now it has managed to close only two of them, with a backlog existing even from units identified back in 2016, adding on to it.

The reason behind its failure to do away with the sick units was because of inordinate delay in dispos-

al of land belonging to these PSUs, as the Centre has so far managed to dispose of only 41 per cent of the total land owned by the identified 19 sick units.

Despite the fact that the list of sick PSUs that had to be disposed of was notified first in 2016 and later in 2018, the Centre failed to complete the process owing to delay in disposal of land.

Of the 13,000 acres of land which belonged to the 19 PSUs, around 5,400 acres or 41 per cent could not be disposed of. Any sick unit cannot be completely disposed of till its assets and liabilities become zero. Once this is done, only then a PSU can

file an application for closure before the Registrar of Companies (RoC).

Since doing away with the land was proving to be a major impediment, a committee of secretaries suggested that land assets should be alienated and transferred to the ministries under which a particular PSU falls. This will help complete other formalities of closing down sick PSUs in a time-bound manner.

At the same time, the delinked land can be disposed of in a phased way in future for the government's priority projects. This will also eliminate the possibility of a distress sale of the PSUs' land, the sources added.

Kerala Cong chief in soup on rape row

Thiruvananthapuram, Nov. 1: Kerala Congress chief Mullappally Ramachandran on Sunday found himself in the midst of a controversy for his alleged remarks about rape victims.

However, he tendered an unconditional apology after coming under fire from women leaders, including those from his party. Addressing a protest meet against the LDF government over various issues, he said, "... it's a desperate attempt by the (Left) to dress up a prostitute and make her stand behind the curtain and narrate her tales. This will not work."

"One can understand when a woman is raped

once. But what if she repeatedly says it. A woman with self respect will either die by suicide or try not to be sexually assaulted again."

Ramachandran was criticising the LDF after the Solar scam accused Saritha Nair approached the police recently accusing former Congress Minister A.P. Anil Kumar of raping her. The solar scam had rocked the then UDF government headed by Oommen Chandy in Kerala after reports surfaced in 2013 that some of his staff were involved in alleged duping of several people of crores of rupees by Saritha and her husband by offering solar panel solutions. — PTI

AT 11.4°C, DELHI SEES LOWEST MIN TEMPERATURE

New Delhi, Nov. 1: The national capital recorded a minimum temperature of 11.4°Celsius on Sunday morning, the lowest this season so far, according to the India Meteorological Department.

Normally, the Safdarjung Observatory, which provides representative data for the city, records a minimum of 15 to 16°C in the first week of November. The mercury dips to 11-12°C by the last week of November, it said.

Kuldeep Srivastava, the head of the regional forecasting centre of IMD, said the absence of cloud cover was the major reason for the low minimum temperature.

Clouds trap some of the outgoing infrared radiation and radiate it back downward, warming the ground. Another reason is calm winds, which allow formation of mist and fog, Srivastava said.

There hasn't been much snowfall in the hills, so cold winds from that region are yet to start affecting Delhi's weather, he added.

The month of October was the coolest in 58 years in the national capital, according to IMD. The mean minimum temperature in October this year was 17.2°C, the lowest since 1962, when it was 16.9°C, it said.

Normally, Delhi records a mean minimum temperature of 19.1°C in October. The city recorded a mean minimum temperature of 17.5°C in October 2007, according to IMD. On Thursday, Delhi recorded a minimum temperature of 12.5°C — the lowest in October in 26 years. The last time Delhi recorded such a low temperature in October was in 1994.

— PTI

SHORT TAKES

MISSION TO FIX DIVERSITY GAP FOR WOMEN

London, Nov. 1: A British-Indian financial expert, recently honoured in the Queen's Birthday Honours List for her work in the field of inclusion and diversity, says she is on a mission to fix the diversity gap within the financial services sector, especially for women.

Dr Bijna Kotak Dasani, an Executive Director at global investment bank Morgan Stanley, was awarded an MBE by Queen Elizabeth II for "Services to Diversity and Inclusion in Financial Services" last month.

She now wants to make use of that platform to support women in India as she advocates the upskilling of women in the financial services workforce.

"This fix in the diversity gap needs to be a firm partnership between both men and women and the shared responsibility discussion needs to extend beyond the boardroom and into the home environment," said Dasani.

"My primary focus is on promoting women into senior roles and I will be extending mentoring capabilities to India with a focus on helping as many young women as possible thrive and progress in their career trajectories," she said.

TURKISH FM IN AZERBAIJAN AS TENSIONS MOUNT

Baku, Nov. 1: Turkey's foreign minister arrived in Azerbaijan on Sunday for talks over the breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh after Baku's arch-enemy Armenia requested security assistance from Russia. "We are once again in Baku with our brothers to renew our strong support for dear Azerbaijan and exchange on the latest developments in Nagorno-Karabakh," Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said on Twitter.

On Saturday, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan formally asked Russian President Vladimir Putin to begin consultations on security assistance, invoking the two countries' defence pact.

Pashinyan said hostilities were approaching Armenia's borders and reiterated that Turkey was backing Baku.

Moscow's defence pact with Armenia does not extend to Nagorno-Karabakh and Russia said Saturday that "necessary" help would be provided if the fighting reaches Armenian territory. At the same time, Russian foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said "concrete formats" of assistance to Armenia would be discussed.

Armenia's request for assistance from Moscow further raised fears of Russia and Turkey getting sucked into the decades-old conflict over Karabakh.

HK LAWMAKERS ARRESTED FOR LEGISLATURE RALLY

Hong Kong, Nov. 1: Seven pro-democracy Hong Kong politicians were arrested on Sunday over protests and scuffles that broke out in the legislature earlier this year, the latest prosecutions targeting Beijing's opponents in the deeply divided city.

The seven politicians — four of them sitting lawmakers — were arrested on charges of "contempt" and "interfering" with members of the city's Legislative Council in early May, police said.

The chamber passes semi-autonomous Hong Kong's laws, but only half of its seats are directly elected and a complex appointment system ensures the city's pro-Beijing establishment is all but guaranteed a handsome majority.

Scuffles and protests routinely break out, with the pro-democracy minority often resorting to filibustering, chanting and obstruction to try and halt bills they oppose. On May 8, confrontations broke out in a committee that decides which bills come up for debate.

The opposition had used months of filibustering to stop the appointment of the committee's leader. The pro-Beijing camp responded by forcibly installing one of their politicians to the committee chair.

That prompted angry scenes and protests in the chamber with lawmakers from both sides displaying placards amid boisterous heckling and physical obstruction.

Security guards and pro-Beijing lawmakers eventually dragged most of the pro-democracy politicians from the chamber and the installation of the committee chair went ahead.

US polls: Focus turns to key states

Trump, Biden, running mates, converge on Pennsylvania; Covid failure major election issue

US ELECTION IN NUMBERS

THE RACE FOR THE WHITE HOUSE CONTINUES TO BREAK NEW GROUND AND SET RECORDS IN 2020 — ON EARLY VOTING, AD SPENDING AND MORE. THESE FIGURES BREAK DOWN THE CAMPAIGN IN NUMBERS.

3 NOVEMBER

That's the date for the US presidential election, congressional races, Senate contests and several state and local races. Election Day is traditionally set for the Tuesday after the first Monday in November.

10 KEY STATES:

The presidential election is expected to come down to results in 10 states where residents tend to vacillate in their support between one party and the other.

Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Michigan, Florida, Iowa and Ohio were essential for Donald Trump's victory in 2016. Polls show that Joe Biden could disrupt Republican electoral power in Georgia, Arizona, North Carolina and Texas this year.

35+435

1. Besides voting for president, millions of American voters will also be choosing members of the country's 117th Congress. There are 35 Senate seats up for grabs, as are all 435 in the House of Representatives.

1. Democrats currently hold power in the House, an advantage they are unlikely to lose, according to experts.

2,30,000,000

1. There are 230 million Americans who are eligible to vote in the presidential election, although a large portion often sit it out. But the 2020 election could see record-high turnout.

1. Early voting has already exceeded previous years' numbers, with many voters preferring to fill out their ballots in advance to avoid long lines on an Election Day taking place in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic. As of Friday midday nearly 84 million people had cast their ballots early.

1. Some 138 million Americans voted in 2016.

270: American democracy is executed through a unique mechanism on the national level: the Electoral College. Rather than vote directly for their presidential candidate of choice, Americans actually vote for 538 electors who then elect the president. To win the White House, a candidate must take an absolute majority of electoral votes, making 270 the magic number. The number of electoral votes granted to each state is calculated by the number of representatives they send to the House (a number which itself is based on population) plus their senators (two each).

6,600,000,000

1. Campaigns have smashed spending records in 2020, with \$6.6 billion spent by the respective presidential candidates -- \$2 billion more than was spent during the Trump-Clinton race four years ago, according to a study by the Center for Responsive Politics.

1. The Biden campaign has pulled ahead on that front, flooding airwaves in key states with political ads. In total, more than \$14 billion has been spent in the run-up to November 3, with more than \$7 billion of that going toward congressional races.



IN THREE DAYS, we can put an end to a presidency that has divided this nation. In three days, we can put an end to a presidency that has failed to protect this nation. In three days, we can put an end to a presidency that has fanned the flames of hate all across this nation.

— JOE BIDEN

IT'S THE STATE where the American Constitution was signed. Three days from now, this is the state that will save the American Dream. On November 3, we're going to win Pennsylvania. We're going to win four more years in that very beautiful White House.

— DONALD TRUMP

exhausting Sunday schedule with successive rallies in Michigan, Iowa, North Carolina and Georgia before an unusual 11:00 pm rally in Florida.

On Monday, both Trump and Biden, as well as their

running mates, will converge on Pennsylvania, which Trump won in 2016 by less than one percentage point.

Amid the surge of mail-in ballots to be counted, and with legal challenges

likely, Pennsylvania is expected to be a focus of prolonged uncertainty — and anxiety — for days after the election.

Democrats have dominated in early voting, but polls show many

UNPRECEDENTED ELECTION

1. Tuesday's US Presidential election has been called many things: extraordinary, bizarre, unprecedented.

1. There are rising fears that days or weeks might pass before the outcome is known.

1. This is the first time a woman of colour has been nominated by a major party.

1. It's the first time both presidential nominees are in their 70s.

1. It is the first time a presidential election has been held in the throes of a pandemic.

1. The 1918 midterm election, in the midst of the Spanish flu pandemic and World War I, saw voter participation drop 20%.

1. Until 1937, Presidents were inaugurated in March, partly because it took so long to report and count the votes.

1. The pandemic has sparked an unmatched shift to early voting, by mail or otherwise. President Donald Trump has seized on concern about mail voting to repeatedly suggest that the election is beset by fraud.

1. The 2000 election was not resolved until Dec. 12, when the US Supreme Court made George W. Bush the winner by ruling that Florida must stop counting votes.

1. One more pandemic-inspired departure from the norm: While Trump has campaigned furiously, jetting from town to town, until recently Biden stayed in or near his home in Delaware.

ROAD TO 270: BIDEN HAS OPTIONS, TRUMP WALKS NARROW PATH



Democratic presidential candidate former vice president Joe Biden and former President Barack Obama greet each other with an air elbow bump, at the conclusion of rally at Northwestern High School in Flint, Mich.

14. Even if Trump nets Florida and holds battlegrounds he won in the South and Southwest, he would still be short of 270.

5. They would give Biden 279 electoral votes, as long as he wins all the other states where Hillary won. Under this scenario, Biden would not need to win any other states Trump won in 2016.

6. The fiercest struggle among the three is in Pennsylvania. Biden has had a slight advantage in most polls, while some suggest Trump remains within striking distance.

7. If Biden loses Pennsylvania, it would require him to find 11 electoral votes elsewhere.

8. Once reliably Republican Arizona, offering exactly 11, and North Carolina, with 15, are states Trump won four years ago that are well within Biden's reach.

9. The Arizona alternative supposes that he also wins Nevada, last won by a Republican in 2004.

10. The race for North Carolina appears tighter. Barack Obama won from there in 2008 but Republicans have taken the state in 2012 and 2016.

11. Florida, the perennial battleground, offers 29 electoral votes and is, per usual, exceedingly close. Some have suggested a slight Biden advantage and Trump is campaigning hard there.

12. There's one more big prize on the table: Texas, where Democrats have struggled.

13. Trump almost certainly cannot reach 270 electoral votes without carrying Florida, where polls show a tight race.

Suspect arrested after 2 killed in Quebec stabbing

Quebec City, Nov. 1: Police in Quebec City early on Sunday arrested a man on suspicion of killing two people and injuring five others in a stabbing rampage on Halloween near the provincial legislature in Quebec City.

They say a man in his mid-20s has been arrested in connection with the Halloween night attacks and taken to a hospital. Quebec police said in a tweet their initial information indicates the motive is personal.

Police had earlier warned residents to remain indoors as they hunted for a man dressed in medieval clothing and armed with a bladed weapon who had left "multiple victims."

Spokesman Etienne Doyon said police were first notified of the stabbings near the National Assembly shortly before 10:30 pm on Saturday.

The five injured victims were taken to a hospital, and a spokeswoman said their lives do not appear to be in danger.

Police have asked any potential witnesses to contact them. Doyon declined to offer any information about the two people who were killed, saying only that "Our thoughts are with the family of the people who died today." Carlos Godoy, who lives in the area, said police K-9 units had searched his backyard as they hunted for the suspect.

— AP

UK braces for complete lockdown as Covid -19 tally crosses 1 mn mark

London, Nov. 1: The UK has crossed the grim milestone of 1 million Coronavirus cases as it prepares for a second complete lockdown in an attempt to curb the rapid spread of infections.

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson declared the latest stay-at-home rules for England, to take effect from Thursday and last until at least December 2, during a 10 Downing Street briefing on Saturday evening.

As the experts ran through the latest figures and statistics showing a surge in the numbers being infected by the deadly virus, Johnson declared that "no responsible PM can ignore the message of those figures" and must be humble in the face of nature, even as he faced a backlash from sections within his

ISRAEL REOPENS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSES AFTER SIX WEEKS

Jerusalem, Nov. 1: Israel reopened elementary school classes after a six-week shutdown on Sunday as the country eases restrictions following a nationwide lockdown that began in September.

First to fourth grade students will attend school four days a week, with up to 20 students in each class. Students and teachers are required to wear face masks in class.

Group prayers are also now allowed with up to 10

people indoors and 20 in open spaces. Hairdressers and beauty salons across the country have too been allowed to reopen.

Other businesses, including street shops, will remain closed until next Sunday. Israel imposed a second nationwide lockdown on Sept. 18 as the country saw one of the highest per capita infection rates. Israel's Health Ministry has recorded over 3,14,000 cases of the Coronavirus and 2,541 deaths.

— AP

accusing him of acting too late.

"In this country alas, as across much of Europe, the virus is spreading

even faster than the reasonable worst-case scenario of our scientific advisers whose models suggest that unless we act we could see deaths in this country running at several thousand a day. A peak of mortality alas far bigger than the one we saw in April," said Johnson.

The UK prime minister stressed that a complete lockdown was the only answer to prevent the overrunning of the country's state-funded National Health Service (NHS), which would be a "medical and moral disaster" beyond the raw loss of life. The new rules, which will be debated in Parliament before a vote on Wednesday, will be enforced from midnight on Thursday until the start of December. — PTI

FRANCE MAKES NEW ARRESTS OVER ATTACK

Paris, Nov. 1: French police have made two new arrests in the probe into an attack on a church in the southern city of Nice that left three dead, as authorities seek to understand the profile of the suspected killer, judicial sources said on Sunday.

Authorities are now holding a total of six people for questioning to understand if they were linked to Tunisian Brahimi Issaoui, who prosecutors say carried out the knife rampage early Thursday morning in the Notre-Dame Basilica.

It so far remains unclear if he had outside help for the attack, which French President Emmanuel Macron has described as an act of "Islamist" terror and was the latest of a string of attacks in recent weeks in France.

The latest people to be detained are aged 25 and 63 and were arrested on Saturday at the residence of an individual detained earlier in the day, a judicial source said, asking not to be named. Three others detained earlier over suspected links to Issaoui remain in custody.

Issaoui was shot by police multiple times and is currently in a serious condition in hospital. Investigators have been unable to question him and his precise motivations remain unclear.

"It is still too early to say if there were others complicit, what his motivations were in coming to France and when this idea took root in him," another source close to the inquiry who asked not to be named said Saturday.

— AFP

BEING COUNTED

Around 7 million community volunteers will drive the two-month data collection

China starts census of world's largest population

Shanghai, Nov. 1: Millions of census-takers began knocking on doors across China on Sunday for a once-a-decade head count of the world's largest population that for the first time will use mobile apps to help crunch the massive numbers.

Around seven million community workers and volunteers will drive the two-month data-collection effort, visiting homes ranging from residential skyscrapers in downtown

Shanghai to remote Tibetan mountain villages.

China conducts the census every ten years to determine population growth, movement patterns and other trends, using the findings to apportion resources for education, health, transportation, labour, elderly care and other services.

The previous tally in 2010 counted 1,339,724,852 persons, an increase of 5.83 percent, or 73,899,804 people — equal to adding

more than the population of France over 10 years.

Much of the attention on this year's census — expected to take two years to fully compile — will focus on whether it indicates any population bump from China's relaxation of its former "one-child policy".

The policy was introduced in the late 1970s to slow rapid population growth amid concerns over too many mouths to feed, but was relaxed four years ago to allow two chil-

dren due to fears over China's fast-ageing society and shrinking workforce.

But the change has not yet resulted in a baby boom. The national birth rate last year was the slowest since the founding of Communist-ruled China in 1949, with many Chinese today choosing smaller families amid rising living costs.

The government estimates the 2020 census could update the population to 1.42 billion, a 5.99 percent increase. — AFP



Census workers collect information from a woman in Lianyungang, in Jiangsu province on Sunday.

— AFP

DECCAN Chronicle

2 NOVEMBER 2020

A change in Washington to be a test for New Delhi

The result of the November 3 elections in the United States is likely to bring about changes in focus, emphasis, or orientation in the conduct of America's foreign and military policies, as well as trade, technology and economic outlook toward the major countries of the world in the event that President Donald Trump falls short, of which many analysts do see a possibility, and his Democratic challenger and former vice-president Joe Biden makes it to the White House.

But in the event of America's leader receiving a fresh endorsement, in India we would do well to look for points of emphasis rather than change in direction. Trade relations between the two countries need to look better if the comprehensive global strategic partnership between the two countries is not to remain confined to India picking up American military hardware off the shelf. If India's exports of goods and services are not permitted to find a stable footing in the US market, we may just begin to look like a client state.

For all the hoopla we saw on the supposedly ascendant Narendra Modi-Donald Trump personal chemistry — the main basis on which a section of traditionally Democratic voting Indian origin voters in the US have reportedly switched to Mr Trump's corner, especially the chauvinistic "Hindu Indian" outfits — on the trade and economy side India has failed to make much headway in the US market while giving US goods, services and investments a much easier ride here.

Perhaps the Modi government's efforts do not appear to have been forceful enough, or single-minded and purposeful, in leveraging the Indian diaspora in a strategic way in this direction. Nor has New Delhi played up this country's natural geo-strategic advantages, although Mr Trump has persisted with his predecessor Barack Obama's "pivot to Asia" approach, which has seen the shift of America's strategic and military focus to the Far East.

In the event of a Trump victory, these have to be worked on while working to strengthen India's position in relation to a possibly uncertain or dangerous situation materialising in Afghanistan. Of course, the current Republican administration has been more understanding of India in this dynamic and in relation to the Pakistan theatre more broadly than a Democratic administration might have been, looking at the historical record.

Should Mr Biden prevail, and this seems the likelier possibility at this juncture, Indian diplomacy may have to tidy up. The ideological strain that he represents is quite different from that of the Indian leader and his party who appear to be near soul mates of Mr Trump on the ideological side.

A Democratic win in America will please the Western world greatly but for India it is likely to be more bittersweet. At the civil society level, constituencies that are critical of the majoritarian steamrolling on view today will have something to be glad about. On the important matter of Iran, with which we ought to be good friends, a Biden victory can be more facilitating although the Trump administration has not been as obstructive as may have been expected.

In the end, if we are sensible, we can do business with a Republican or a Democrat in the White House provided we know how to remain united internally and where to pitch ourselves in the world.

The first and best Bond

A man's man, that's how his co-stars remember him. As 007, no doubt, he had had many a close shave, but the death of the legendary Sean Connery at the ripe old age of 90 finally brings the curtain down on the first and best James Bond ever to have lit up the big screen. A tall and muscular bodybuilder, footballer and streetfighter, the then-working-class Connery's rugged charisma contributed to the barely controlled menace he brought to the character of the MI6 spy which, along with a bit of method acting and some well-coached mannerisms, managed to make over the British secret agent's movie persona into something far more vital and immediate than what his creator Ian Fleming had written. It ended up securing a global appeal for Fleming's originally lanky and blue-eyed English hero.

The charismatic Scottish actor starred in seven Bond films, beginning with *Dr No* (1962) and returning twice for encores with *Diamonds are Forever* (1971) and *Never Say, Never Again* (1983), the title of the last being contributed by his wife, Micheline Roquebrune, who has survived him. He wore his Scottish nationalism as a tattoo just under his sleeve and rarely changed his accent. Connery was also a character artiste and won award — one Oscar, two Bafta and three Golden Globes — and acclaim for many more memorable films, the *Untouchables*, *Name of the Rose*, *the Hunt for Red October* and *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* among them. *Murder on the Orient Express* and *The Man Who Would be King* were but two of his best-loved films, and he was finally knighted for his services to film and drama in 2000.

Globalisation, technology and a change in sensibilities have all conspired today to strike the last nail in the coffin of the larger-than-life action hero. There is no more space for male fantasy, no new civilisations left to explore. The last bastion has been conquered. Cinema, too, has, meanwhile, evolved from the exuberant adventures of yore, turning realist and/or experimental.

To that effect, Connery's death spells the end of an era. The world is shaken, not stirred by its demise.

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Kishwar Desai
London Diary



Why Covid stress affects the young; UK gets ready for a digital Diwali

Since there has been very little to cheer about during the pandemic — here is something a little uplifting. Hopefully enough to make our desi hearts beat faster: we are going to have new statues in Leicester Square, of Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol from *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* on the 25th anniversary of its release. Of course, the movie itself was a globe trotting romance, and Leicester Square was part of it. So Kajol and SRK will join Paddington Bear, Harry Potter and Mary Poppins in 'Scenes in the Square'. These statues will be lit up every evening — and will no doubt push the Indian community to troop down to the square and pose for selfies with the stars.

The Director of Destination Marketing at Heart of London Business Alliance, Mark Williams, said in a statement: "It's fantastic to be adding such titans of international cinema to our trail as Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol. This statue is a fitting tribute to the global popularity of Bollywood and the cultural bridges that cinema can help

build, and we're in no doubt it will attract fans from all around the world."

The weather is definitely turning wintry. Even on the Covid front, things are getting worse rather than better. The second attack of the infection is now here to stay. There is a deep division across the country on how to handle it. There is no nationwide circuit breaker (a short total lockdown) that many want imposed. A more complicated system like a traffic light signal has been worked out — and only some parts of the country are in lockdown, as in the North. London has no lockdown, but just a few rules such as restrictions on pubs, which have to close early and no more than six people meeting at once. Or it may be only two. It is very difficult to know what the rules are as they keep changing! Better to just stay at home and go through the albums remembering what it was like to meet people!

At this rate, we are gearing up for a digital Diwali. The restrictions on

people getting together from different households means some relatives will be left out, and this will definitely impact our relationships. Who do you invite and who do you leave out? Things may not improve by winter and it promises to be a blue Christmas... Fortunately the Scottish government has ruled that Santa Claus does an 'essential' job so he is allowed to go down chimneys and deliver Christmas presents to children. The "six or less" rule does not apply to him. The reindeers must be Covid-free of course!

School-meals have now raised a political storm. There are many children here from poor families who depend on these free meals. (Yes, even in the UK!) Marcus Rashford a young talented football player who plays for Manchester United had persuaded the government that the scheme for free lunches be continued during the holidays. He was reflecting on his hard childhood. This was done (or so we thought). He even got an honour from the Queen for his bril-

liant suggestion. Alas, the government is refusing to continue the free meals during half term. But the community has risen to the challenge. Local councils are paying up and restaurants and hotels are chipping in. McDonalds have donated a million Macs to feed these marginalised children. Britain has a big heart!

With online viewing an essential part of our survival kit, BBC has revived their very popular show, *Strictly Come Dancing*. This is where serious dancers pair up and get judged for executing some really complicated routines. The audience also votes by e-mail or phone to select the winners. The show has offered a great revival to the sagging careers of retired politicians and journalists and made their popularity soar: Ed Balls who was a Cabinet minister under the Labour government and an economist had a successful stint going through many rounds. Now Jacque Smith (Home Secretary in the Tony Blair government) is trying her luck. At

least we know that there is life after politics and it is called dance!

Mental health has become a big problem during the pandemic as people find staying at home very tough. It has specially impacted the youth who have found that their school, college and job participation has fallen apart. The British Asian Trust has launched an emergency appeal to help the sufferers of mental health problems. Rakesh Chauhan has composed a music video Neelam's Song — shown on YouTube, where through some very Indian-style dance and song the problems of mental health have been flagged. Prime Minister Boris Johnson has praised Rakesh for his 'tremendous efforts'. But we need to do more for all age groups. Covid stress will stay on for a long time — and there is no vaccine against it.

Kishwar Desai is an award-winning author. Her latest book, The Longest Kiss: The Life and Times of Devika Rani, will be out by November.

Subhani



TMC realpolitik, BJP & future of 'Gorkhaland'



Shikha Mukerjee

Playing the politics of divisiveness by raising expectations that indeed a "permanent political solution" will be found on the demand for a separate "Gorkhaland", carved out of West Bengal, to fulfil aspirations for a "Bas Bhoomi", or homeland, or a heartland all Nepali-speaking Indian citizens can call their own, is a signal that the West Bengal Assembly polls, due before May 2021, will be fiercely competitive. Realpolitik is back in the chronically volatile politics of Darjeeling.

Unlike in the past, when the demand for a separate state was always initiated by Darjeeling's leaders to muster the masses and warn off ambitious challengers, this time the spark was lit by the October 7 invitation to talks to "discuss issues related to Gorkhaland" by the Union home ministry. The ambiguity was deliberate: the use of "Gorkhaland" to describe the political space of the Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong subdivisions and the Gorkha-dominated areas in Siliguri, Jalpaiguri, Naxalbari was a signal that the BJP and its government in New Delhi were preparing to use fissiparous politics to outflank Mamata Banerjee.

In retaliation, Ms Banerjee rescued absconding Gorkha Janamukti Morcha leader Bimal Gurung and his aide Roshan Giri, from oblivion and struck a deal later in October, just before Durga Puja. This ended the Gurung-led Gorkha Janamukti Morcha's 2016 alliance with the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance and signalled the champion's return to the centrestage of Darjeeling politics and a revival of its entente with the Trinamul Congress. It also ended the left the

GJM's support gave to the BJP and helped it win the Darjeeling Assembly seat in the 2019 bypolls, and more significantly delivered the parliamentary seat to an outsider, though a Gorkha, Raju Bista from Manipur.

Mr Gurung's return is effectively his reinstallation, thanks to Ms Banerjee, as leader of the GJM in Darjeeling. It obviously destabilises, if not unseats, the leadership of Binay Tamang, who stepped in when Mr Gurung fled. It may trigger a period of ugly infighting in the GJM. It may also prove a dud card, if Mr Gurung's popularity dips as a result of his deal with Ms Banerjee's TMC as the price for his return to the heartland of Gorkha politics.

His return does other things, too. It puts a spoke in Meghalaya CM Conrad Sangma's National Peoples Party's expansionist plans and his ambitions as a champion of a "Bas Bhoomi" or homeland for all Nepali-speaking Indian citizens, otherwise identified as "Gorkhas," an omnibus description that includes the multiplicity of communities who are demanding Schedule Tribe status as part of a permanent political solution. As the first Northeast party to be recognised as a national party by the Election Commission, the NPP's aspirations to lead in places other than Meghalaya could suffer a setback with Mr Gurung's resurfacing. The NPP's alliance with the BJP as part of the NDA also positions it as a proxy for the BJP. Without a base in Darjeeling, the NPP's expansionist plans would automatically serve as an alternative space for local leaders disaffected with the parties to which they currently belong.

There are indications

that Mr Gurung's return will be perceived by many as an opportunistic sell-out to the West Bengal government and a move that, even if temporarily, irretrievably pushes the demand for separate statehood deeper into a pit. Whether that is the verdict of the masses, who till his re-emergence hailed him as a leader, is open to speculation.

The anticipation that there will be widespread disaffection because he has teamed up with the TMC could be, however, offset if New Delhi decides to hound him as a wanted person in a UAPA case. It could also be that a maturing electorate, having experienced the vicissitudes that unsatisfactory bargaining with the government in West Bengal and in New Delhi have produced on the Gorkhaland issue, will make choices that could be surprising. There could be a surge of support for the BJP, so that there is, theoretically, a better chance of striking a deal on a "Bas Bhoomi", or territorial space that would be a "heartland" for all Gorkhas. Or a mature electorate may be as enamoured of Mr Gurung, as the Bihar electorate seems to be of Lalu Prasad Yadav's heir Tejashwi, despite his legacy of corruption, prosecution and a long jail term.

The irreconcilable minimum in the search for a permanent political solution is a separate state, however many intermediate entities are created that stop short of conceding the ultimate goal of a movement that has gone through several stages of evolution over the past four decades. It is a

The othering of the Bengali in West Bengal for the Gorkha cause would probably destroy all parties that facilitated it. Knowing this, the Trinamul Congress has stepped forward regardless of what its critics make of it.

demand that chills political leaders of parties with roots in West Bengal's 22 other districts, because the cost of conceding to the demand for a separate state of Gorkhaland would be an effective division of the state and dangerously risky because partition is an idea that is intensely subjective for millions of Bengalis, who went through the pain of separation in 1947. The othering of the Bengali in West Bengal for the Gorkha cause would probably destroy all the parties that facilitated it.

Knowing this, the Trinamul Congress has stepped forward, regardless of what its critics make of it for ignoring the criminal charges against Mr Gurung. The BJP may have attacked Mr Banerjee over her ruthless realpolitik, but it too knows that its promises of a permanent political solution must stop short of "any split in Bengal", as minister of state for home G. Kishan Reddy had declared at the October 7 meeting.

The present phase of politics over Gorkhaland and the return of Bimal Gurung are not about finding a permanent political solution acceptable to all sides in the issue. The politics is over the number of seats where voters who are Nepali-speaking Indian citizens in West Bengal could significantly influence outcomes. By one estimate, there are 16 seats across North Bengal in Jalpaiguri, Alipurduar and Cooch Behar districts as well as in and around Siliguri where the pockets of Nepali voters could be the difference between a win and a loss. In 2019, of the BJP's tally of 18 Lok Sabha seats, seven were from North Bengal, where Gorkha voters have a significant impact. Mr Gurung's return under the aegis of Mamata Banerjee unsettles the BJP's gains of 2019 and could give the Trinamul Congress a return that is worth the mud that the Opposition slings at it for doing so.

Shikha Mukerjee is a senior journalist in Kolkata

LETTERS

TWITTER POLITICS

Tamil Nadu politics is bizarre, ridden with fanaticism and hatred, the tantrums on Twitter are meaningless and Raja's statement 'it is karma 'is superfluous and no philosophy can be linked to such hate mongers' idle prattle. Stalin is a leader of the major kazhagam and if a few shout 'go back Stalin', where he will go. I do not hold brief for him but he is like a stallion, powerhouse who struggled, irrefutably contributed a lot as an MLA, Mayor and deputy CM and accredited with many projects, mostly flyovers, implemented them, recognised as Tamil Nadu's 'fly-over man' a la BJP's Nitin Gadkari, famed 'fly-over' man of Maharashtra. This trend 'if we like we would welcome you or yell go back is incongruous'. Since it is not much touted Tamil culture to shout 'go back', the political leaders should prevail upon their cadres to air their views in a dignified manner. The Twitterers should not become twaddlers.

A. Seshagiri Rao,
Chennai

BOND NO MORE

The legendary actor Sean Connery, who played the role of James Bond, and won an Oscar in 1988, was voted as the 'Sexiest Man of the Century' by the American weekly People in 1999. He was also knighted in 2000. (Sean Connery, first James Bond, breathes his last). For little over two decades from 1962 to 1983, Connery starred in seven films as the suave secret agent, which made his name inseparable from James Bond. From delivering milk to polishing coffins, Connery became one of the world's most accomplished actors. And it is the kind of rags to riches story that would inspire any young artiste. The British daily The Guardian once asked Connery that if he would ever escape his identification with Bond. He replied, "Not yet, it's with me till I go in the box."

R. Sivakumar,
Chennai



quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	39,614.07 -0.34
Nifty 50	11642.40 -0.24
S&P 500*	3,269.96 -1.21
Dollar (₹)	74.10 98.9
Pound Sterling (₹)	96.27 -0.20
Euro (₹)	86.94 -0.14
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	50,700.418 0.83
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	37.35 -0.30
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.881 0.023
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.859 0.022

As of Friday/Saturday

SpiceJet plans to expand seaplane services

Buoyed by the response to the Ahmedabad-Statue of Unity seaplane service, SpiceJet said it plans to start a similar service connecting Surat in south Gujarat with the 182-metre tall statue near Kevadiya. Other routes under consideration for the seaplane service are Port Blair to Havelock, Delhi to Haridwar, Delhi to Rishikesh and Naini lake, Udaipur, Dal lake, Leh and Kerala backwaters, Spicejet CMD Ajay Singh said.

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October shakes off the Covid blues

■ Companies beef up dealer inventories

Car-makers ring in festive cheers

MICHAEL GONSALVES
PUNE, NOV. 1

Major car-makers in India, the world's fourth biggest automobile market, have rung in festive cheer, with Maruti Suzuki, India's biggest carmaker, Hyundai, the second largest, Mahindra, Toyota Kirloskar Motor, Honda Cars, and MG Motor reporting higher sales in October to cash in on the festive demand for cars.

Auto-makers beefed up their dealer inventories across the country last month in anticipation of festive demand. They consider factory-gate dispatches of passenger vehicles to the dealerships as sales.

But the ground reality would be known only when retail sales are made available later this month by dealers' association, Fada.

Sales at Maruti Suzuki jumped 17.6 per cent at 1,63,656 units in October. Its six-car pack of the Wagon R, Swift, Celerio, Ignis, Baleno and Dzire cumulatively added 95,067 units, up 26.6 per cent compared with last year.

Hyundai, the Korean car maker, reported a 13.2 per cent rise in sales last month at 56,605 units.

"With the advent of the festive season, Hyundai shares the spirit of happiness and celebration with our customers through our



super-performer brands-all new Creta, Verna, Venue, Aura, and Nios, achieving landmark sales of 56,605 units in October 2020," Tarun Garg, director (sales, marketing & service) at HMLL, said.

The October sales have a positive tone for overall business environment, he pointed out.

Similarly sales at Mahindra and Mahindra also increased 1 per cent at 18,622 units, up from 18,460 units it sold last year.

"For Mahindra, the festive season has started on a positive note with deliveries and bookings being higher than last year," Veejay Nakra, CEO, automotive division at M&M, said.

Sales at Toyota Kirloskar Motor also grew 4.27 per cent at 12,373 units last month, up from 11,866 units it sold last year.

"October has been our best month so far since March 2020. The festive

season has proved to be bullish as we witness demand surging, month on month. This has been true of our retail too as order flow has been smooth, from the very beginning," Naveen Soni, senior vice president, sales & service at TKM, said.

Sales at Honda Cars rose 8.3 per cent at 10,836 units in October against 10,010 units in corresponding month last year.

"We have seen positive sales momentum in line with market sentiment and our October results have been as per our plan. The festive buying picked up from Navratri in mid-October and we are focusing on maximising deliveries during this period," Rajesh Goel, senior vice president and director, marketing & sales at Honda Cars India, said.

He expects this demand to continue through Diwali.

Sales at MG Motor India grew 6 per cent at 3,750 units last month. "With festive demand, we have registered 48 per cent growth vis-a-vis last month. We expect continued traction because of Diwali," Rakesh Sidana, director-sales at MG Motor India, said.

Sales at Hero MotoCorp, India's biggest motorcycle-maker, jumped 35 per cent as it sold a record 8.06 lakh two-wheelers last month.

Diesel, petrol sales cross pre-March levels

NIDHI VERMA
NEW DELHI, NOV. 1

India's diesel consumption in October rose 6.6 per cent from a year earlier, the first such increase since Covid-19 restrictions were imposed in late March, preliminary data showed on Sunday, signalling a pick-up in industrial activity.

Diesel sales by the country's three state fuel retailers totalled 6.17 million tonnes in October, according to provisional data compiled by Indian Oil Corp, the country's biggest refiner and fuel retailer.

Month-on-month, sales of diesel, which account for about two-fifths of India's fuel demand, rose 27.5 per cent from September.

Rising diesel sales in the world's third-biggest oil consumer and



importer should help refiners, who had to cut crude-processing runs during the coronavirus crisis.

IOC hopes to operate refineries at full capacity in a couple of months, up from 95 per cent now, as local fuel demand is rising, company chairman S.M. Vaidya said on Friday.

Petrol sales in October rose above pre-pandemic levels for a second month in a row. Petrol sales rose 4 per cent from a year earlier to about 2.4 mil-

lion tonnes, about 8.6 per cent higher than September, the data showed.

State companies IOC, Hindustan Petroleum Corp and Bharat Petroleum Corp own about 90 per cent of the country's retail fuel outlets.

State retailers sold 3.8 per cent more cooking gas in October than a year ago, at about 2.44 million tonnes, while jet fuel sales halved to 328,000 tonnes.

— Reuters

Arbitration order not enforceable: Future Retail

New Delhi, Nov. 1: Future Retail on Sunday said the emergency order passed by the Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC) putting its Rs 24,713-crore deal with Mukesh Ambani-led RIL on hold is not "enforceable and binding", and any move to enforce it would be "resisted" by the firm.

The interim award passed by the emergency arbitrator (EA) of SIAC last week over the plea of Amazon.com NV Investment Holdings LLC are "void and coram non-judice", said Future Retail Ltd (FRL) in a regulatory update.

According to FRL, the EA order was passed in arbitration proceedings initiated by Amazon, by invoking an arbitration clause in a contract to which FRL is not a party.

"FRL is advised that an emergency arbitrator has no legal status under Part I of the Indian Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 and therefore, the proceedings before an emergency arbitrator are void and coram non-judice," the Kishore Biyani-led company said.

The EA order having been passed by an authority without jurisdiction is a nullity under Indian law, it added.

Last Sunday, the SIAC, passing an interim award in favour of Amazon, had asked the Future Group to put the deal on hold.

— PTI

Power consumption increases 13% YoY

K K SHANKAR
NEW DELHI, NOV. 1

India's power consumption grew 13.38 per cent to 110.94 billion units (BU) in October this year, driven by buoyancy in industrial and commercial activities. Electricity consumption was recorded at 97.84 BU in October 2019, showed the power ministry data.

Experts earlier last month had exuded confidence that the power consumption would grow by

double digits in October on the basis of the extrapolation of half-month data.

The power consumption had grown 11.45 per cent to 55.37 BU during October 1 to 15, against 49.67 BU, in the corresponding period a year ago.

A double-digit growth in power consumption in October, experts said, gives sufficient indication that commercial and industrial demand has perked up, with the easing of lockdown restrictions.

The government had imposed nationwide lockdown on March 25.

Power consumption started declining from March and the trend continued for six months till August this year.

Power consumption on year-on-year basis declined 8.7 per cent in March, 23.2 per cent in April, 14.9 per cent in May, 10.9 per cent in June, 3.7 per cent in July and 1.7 per cent in August.

— PTI

COFFEE-BREAK

Your day today By Dr C.V.B. Subrahmanyam



Aries: Disposal of old assets may add to your liquidity. Be careful while signing important contracts. Outdoor activity will keep you healthy and fit.



Taurus: Looking back will drain off valuable energy. A shopping spree lifts your spirits today. However, this is not the time to become complacent regarding your achievements.



Gemini: Romance will pick up after a prolonged period of disquiet. Hard work will be rewarded. Investing in real estate will pay off. Spend time with children.



Cancer: Guard against stomach problems. You may sabotage yourself thinking you are acting intelligently. Don't overdo things at work. Take advice on your love prospects.



Leo: The self-employed will have to work hard. Those in service may have no-win situations. Curb lethargy in academic pursuits. Don't take work related stress.



Virgo: Unavoidable expenses will burn a hole in your pocket. Avoid new business ventures and speculation. Rely on your intuition while tackling important problems. Analyse business situations strictly.

You share your b'day with

Shah Rukh Khan, Bollywood actor. He is best known for his roles in Baazigar, Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge, Dil To Pagal Hai, Kuch Kuch Hota Hai, Devdas, Swades, Chak De! India, Don, Chennai Express and My Name Is Khan amongst others.



Libra: A heavy workload is indicated. Academic progress is likely. Academic/career decisions taken today may have a long-term impact. Grab the opportunity to prove your worth, and work wonders in your life!



Scorpio: Intense love from your partner keeps you upbeat. Long-term investments will bring gains. You will have an abundance of energy at work.



Sagittarius: A great day for family togetherness. Your plans are coming to fruition. Trust yourself to judge what you want from life - this might just stop you from making a mistake.



Capricorn: Self-employed professionals will experience a steep ascent. You enjoy the company of your family. Keep your argumentative tendencies in check.

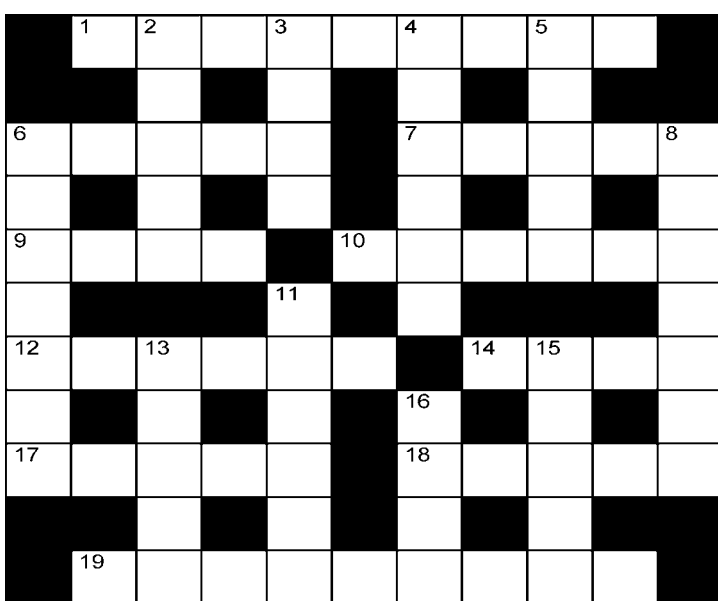


Aquarius: Shaky finances may make it difficult to retain talented manpower. Restrain yourself from indulging in lust. Consult someone rather than take a wrong step.



Pisces: Be wary of those you don't get along with. Weigh matters before deciding on an opportunity at work. Focus your energy on important issues and seek help if necessary. Politicians, move cautiously.

QUICK CROSSWORD



Across

- Gave way suddenly (9)
- Foreign (5)
- Toss (5)
- Window glass (4)
- Stone fruit (6)
- Alleviation (6)
- Large fish (4)
- Wanderer (5)
- Moved gradually, furtively (5)
- Bottom surface (9)

Down

- Pungent vegetable (5)
- Wild cat (4)
- Irregular in quality (6)
- Mistake (5)
- In pairs (anag) (7)
- Errant (7)
- Interfere (6)
- Citrus fruit (5)
- Encouraged (5)
- Military dining room (4)

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

Across: 1. Gullible, 7. Exile, 8. Chasin, 9. Outlaw, 10. Inca, 12. Pact, 14. Comet, 17. Still, 18. Dogma, 19. Escargot.
Down: 1. Guilt, 2. Leeway, 3. Itch, 4. Learn, 5. Decompose, 6. Impartial, 11. Topdog, 13. Coins, 15. Night, 16. Ulna.

Word Mine

D
A I E
E A N T L

TODAY'S RATINGS: 35 AVERAGE: 40
GOOD: 45 OUTSTANDING

How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown in today's puzzle? In making a word, each letter may be used once only. Each word must contain the letter at the top of the pyramid. There should be at least one nine letter word. Plurals, foreign words and proper names are not allowed.

Answer here: _____

jumble

COLLA
GREEN
NPURSG
BLINEB

Answer here: _____

Yesterday's Jumbles: EIGHT COVER SHRANK CATNIP
Answer: When the chick was ready to leave its shell, it took the — ESCAPE HATCH

CALVIN AND HOBBS | Bill Watterson



THE WIZARD OF ID | Parker and Hartsd



ARCHIE | Bill Henry Scarpelli & craig boldman



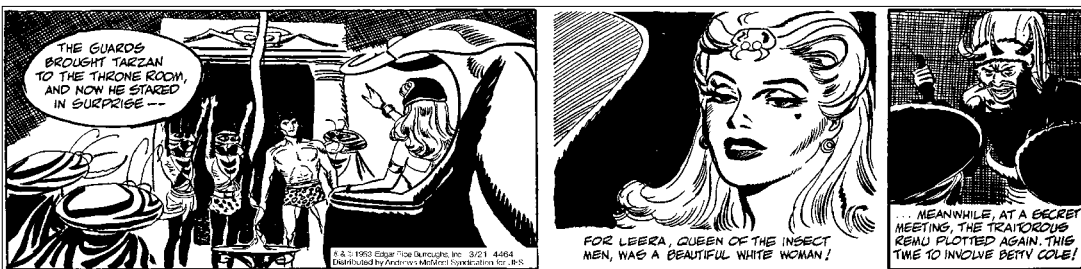
BLONDIE | Dean Young and John Marshall



ANDY CAPP | Reg Smythe



TARZAN | Edgar Rice Burroughs



THE NAME IS NOT WHAT YOU THINK

Why is Chicago called the Windy City?

Today's deal was played in you-can-guess-where during the 2006 Summer North American Championships. What should West lead against four spades doubled?

In the auction, North's passed-hand three-club opening opposite a pre-emptive opening was fit-showing. It indicated length in the bid suit and support for partner's suit. The rest of

the auction was natural, but East should have contested to the five-level. She knew that her opponents had a double fit in the black suits, and this meant that she and her partner had a double fit in the red suits. When you have a double fit, declare; do not defend.

Based on the bidding, West probably should have found the killing defense, leading the club ace and continuing with the club four as a suit-

West	North	East	South
♠ 7 2	♠ 8 7 2	♠ 10 6	♠ 9 5 3 2
♥ 4	♥ 10 6	♥ 9 4	♥ 8 7 2
♦ 4	♦ 8 7 2	♦ 9 4	♦ 10 6
♣ 9 5 3 2	♣ 10 6	♣ 8 7 2	♣ 9 5 3 2
♠ 7 2	♠ 8 7 2	♠ 10 6	♠ 9 5 3 2
♥ 4	♥ 10 6	♥ 9 4	♥ 8 7 2
♦ 4	♦ 8 7 2	♦ 9 4	♦ 10 6
♣ 9 5 3 2	♣ 10 6	♣ 8 7 2	♣ 9 5 3 2

preference signal for diamonds, the lower-ranking of the other two side suits. East would have ruffed, put her partner back on lead with the diamond ace and received a second club ruff. Then the diamond king would have defeated the contract by two tricks.

But West led the heart two, lowest from an odd number of cards. The declarer won with dummy's ace, drew trumps and played a club toward the board. When dummy's king held the

trick, South ruffed a heart in her hand and led another club, holding her losses to two diamonds and one club.

It is likely that Chicago was given the Windy City moniker by Cincinnati. The cities shared an intense rivalry toward the end of the 19th century, and Cincinnati's felt that Chicagoans could be overly boastful at times.

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SHORT TAKES

Harris, Pucovski share record stand

Adelaide: Test batsman Marcus Harris and rising star Will Pucovski have combined to record the biggest batting partnership in the history of Australia's Sheffield Shield domestic first class competition. The pair put on 486 in an opening stand for Victoria against South Australia, breaking the 30-year-old record set by brothers Steve and Mark Waugh. The partnership finally ended when Harris was out on Sunday for 239. The Waugh twins had owned the record since 1990 when they put on 464 for New South Wales against Western Australia. Harris and Pucovski's partnership now becomes the largest since the Sheffield Shield began in 1892. — *AP*

Dar 1st to umpire most ODIs on-field

Rawalpindi: Aleem Dar on Sunday broke the record for most ODIs as an on-field umpire when he stood for his 210th match in the series' second match between Pakistan and Zimbabwe here. The 52-year-old from Pakistan surpassed South African Rudi Koertzen's record of officiating in most ODIs. Dar also holds the record of umpiring in most Test matches. He achieved the feat when he officiated in his 132nd match last year — Australia vs New Zealand in Perth in December — to go past Jamaican Steve Bucknor's mark. The record for officiating in the most international matches — 387 — is also in the name of Dar. He has also umpired in 45 T20 internationals, one behind his countryman Ahsan Raza. — *PTI*

Iftikhar, Babar star in Pak series win

Rawalpindi, Pakistan: Spinner Iftikhar Ahmed grabbed a maiden five-wicket haul while Babar Azam notched a half-century as Pakistan thumped Zimbabwe by six wickets to win the second one-day international in Rawalpindi on Sunday. Ahmed spun a web around Zimbabwe's batsmen with figures of 5-40 to wreck them for a paltry 206 before Azam knocked an attractive 74-ball 77 not out to chase down the target in 35.2 overs. Zimbabwe needed early wickets, but a solid opening stand of 68 between Imam-ul-Haq (49) and Abid Ali (22) ensured Pakistan were set up nicely. The win gives Pakistan an unsailable 2-0 lead after they won the first game by 26 runs on Friday. — *AFP*

Brief scores: Zimbabwe 206 (Sean Williams 75, Iftikhar Ahmed 5/40) lost to **Pakistan 208/4** (Babar Azam 77 not out, Imam-ul-Haq 49, Tendai Chisoro 2/49).

Barcelona held by 10-man Alaves

Madrid: Barcelona made it four La Liga games without a win on Saturday after failing to beat 10-man Alaves, a 1-1 draw leaving Ronald Koeman's side sitting 12th. Luis Rioja put Alaves in front at Mendizorrotza after an error from Barca goalkeeper Neto, with Antoine Griezmann equalising in the second half.

Live on TV

CRICKET

IPL: Delhi Capitals vs Royal Challengers Bangalore from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

TENNIS

ATP Paris Masters: Day 1 action from 3.30 pm on Sony Six

FOOTBALL

English Premier League: Fulham vs West Brom Albion from 11 pm; Leeds United vs Leicester City from 1.30 am (Tuesday) on Star Sports Select 2

Italian League: Verona vs Benevento from 1.15 am (Tuesday) on Sony Ten 2

WWE

Raw: Bouts from 6.30 am (Tuesday) on Sony Ten 1

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Dhoni & Co end on high

CSK finish season with 9-wicket win, KXIP knocked out

SCORECARD

Kings XI Punjab: K.L. Rahul b Lungi Ngidi 29, M. Agarwal b Lungi Ngidi 26, C. Gayle lbw Tahir 12, N. Pooran c Dhoni b Thakur 2, M. Singh b Jadeja 14, D. Hooda (not out) 62, J. Neesham c Ruturaj Gaikwad b Lungi Ngidi 23, C Jordan batting 4. Extras (b-1, w-1) 2. **Total (for 6 wkts, in 20 overs) 153.** **FoW:** 1-48, 2-62, 3-68, 4-72, 5-108, 6-113. **Bowling:** Chahar 3-0-30-0, Curran 2-0-15-0, Thakur 4-0-27-1, Ngidi 4-0-39-3, Tahir 4-0-24-1, Jadeja 3-0-17-1. **Chennai Super Kings:** Ruturaj Gaikwad (not out) 62, Faf du Plessis c Rahul b Jordan 48, Ambati Rayudu (not out) 30. Extras (lb-7, w-7) 14. **Total (for 1 wkt, in 18.5 overs) 154.** **FoW:** 1-82. **Bowling:** Jimmy Neesham 3-0-26-0, Mohammed Shami 4-0-29-0, Chris Jordan 3-0-31-1, Ravi Bishnoi 4-0-39-0, Murgan Ashwin 4-0 -17-0, Chris Gayle 0.5-0-5-0.

out on 62 off 49 balls after striking six boundaries and a six, while Rayudu made a run-a-ball 30.

Earlier, Hooda smashed four sixes and three fours during his entertaining stay in the middle.

Thanks to Hooda, KXIP managed 40 runs in the last three overs after CSK, opting to field, choked their middle-order for runs.

— *PTI*



Ruturaj Gaikwad of Chennai Super Kings raises his bat after scoring a fifty against Kings XI Punjab in an Indian Premier League match at the Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi on Sunday. — *BCCI*

RCB, DC aim to arrest slide

Abu Dhabi, Nov. 1: Delhi Capitals and Royal Challengers Bangalore are both expected to go all out against each other on Monday to arrest their rapid slide in the IPL and, more importantly, secure a top-two finish in the points table.

DC and RCB go into the virtual quarterfinal, having lost four and three games on the trot respectively, showing that things can change rather quickly in the highly-competitive IPL.

At stake is a top-two finish which provides a couple of attempts to make it to the final. The loser of Monday's game could still end up making the play-offs but it will be then at the mercy of other teams. DC, who were bossing most teams in the first half of the tournament, has had a dramatic fall from grace with their last win coming two weeks ago. Their batsmen have come a cropper since then and the bowling doesn't look as potent as it was in the first half.



Shikhar Dhawan

Problems started with DC unable to find a stable combination at the openers' slot. Both Prithvi Shaw and Ajinkya Rahane have been paired up with Shikhar Dhawan but either of them has not provided the much needed consistency.

In fact, Dhawan, who was flying high with back-to-back hundreds,

has managed 0, 0, 6 in the last three games.

RCB too are smarting from a string of losses, most recently against Sunrisers Hyderabad on Saturday. The three losses on the trot has reignited the debate on the team's dependency on its star players — Virat Kohli and AB de Villiers.

— *PTI*

NUMBERS GAME

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL:

- Matches: 24
- Bangalore: 13
- Delhi: 9
- Tied: 1
- No Result: 1 (Royal Challengers Bangalore beat Delhi Capitals in Super Over after match ended in a tie)

MEETING IN 2019

- DC beat RCB by 4 wickets in Bangalore.
- DC beat RCB by 16 runs in Delhi.

MEETING IN 2020

- Delhi Capitals beat Royal Challengers Bangalore by 59 runs in Dubai.

FOR THE RECORD

- Yuzvendra Chahal with 20 wickets in 13 innings of as many matches, is the highest wicket taker for RCB in this IPL
- Shikhar Dhawan with 471 runs in 13 innings of as many matches is the second highest run-getter in this IPL. He received two successive ducks in last two matches.

— *S. PERVEZ KAISER*

IPL PLAY-OFF IS A TOURNAMENT IN ITSELF FOR ROHIT

Abu Dhabi, Nov. 1: His first target accomplished, defending champions Mumbai Indians skipper Rohit Sharma has not set his sights on the IPL play-offs, which he considers as a "small little tournament".

MI (18 points from 13 games) has ensured a top-two finish in the IPL league table with a clinical nine-wicket win over Delhi Capitals on Saturday and will take on Sunrisers Hyderabad in their final game on Tuesday in Sharjah.

"Now that we know we have qualified, it's a good achievement. All the hard work that we did before we came here and also when we came here, it all paid off.

"So, one hurdle which is being crossed, another small little tournament to play for us and before that we still got one more game against SRH," Rohit said in a video posted on MI's official Twitter page.

— *PTI*

MSD confirms he will be back in '21

Abu Dhabi, Nov. 1: Mahendra Singh Dhoni will be back in the IPL next year. The World Cup-winning captain confirmed it himself at the toss of Chennai Super Kings' final game of the season here on Sunday.

Dhoni made the customary toss tradition a memorable one for his countless fans by confirming that he will be back in the yellow jersey next season.

"Definitely not," said Dhoni when asked by former New Zealand pacer Danny Morrison if the game against Kings XI Punjab was his last for CSK.

As expected, his terse response sent social media into a frenz.

However, the 39-year-old Dhoni was expected to play the IPL for at least two seasons after announcing his international retirement on August 15 after the T20 World Cup, to he held in Australia in October-November, was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dhoni's final India appearance happened to be the 2019 World Cup semifinal against New Zealand.

CSK have had their worst season ever this year and are set to finish at the bottom of the table. It is the first time that the three-



MS Dhoni

time champions have not made the play-offs, showing their remarkable consistency over the years.

The IPL next year is scheduled to be held in the usual April-May window but the dates could change due to the evolving COVID-19 situation around the world. — *PTI*

Knights stay in play-offs mix

Dubai, Nov. 1: Kolkata Knight Riders comprehensively beat Rajasthan Royals by 60 runs in an IPL encounter on Sunday.

Batting first, KKR scored 191 for 7, riding on skipper Eoin Morgan's unbeaten 68 off 35 balls.

Morgan's top-notch knock was studded with six maximums and five fours as KKR amassed 59 in last five overs.

For Royals, leg-spinner Rahul Tewatia (3/25) and Kartik Tyagi (2/36) were the most successful bowlers.

In reply, Royals only managed 131 for 9 with Pat Cummins grabbing 4 for 34 in four overs.

KKR finished with 14 points from 14 games with a net run-rate of -0.214 and will now wait for the results of the last two fixtures between DC and RCB followed MI against SRH to know if they will make it

to the last four.

Earlier, Shubman Gill (36) and Rahul Tripathi (39) shared a 72-run stand for the second wicket, while Andre Russell had a 11-ball-25 to his credit.

Sent in to bat, Nitish Rana fell for a first-ball duck after he edged a Jofra Archer delivery and was caught behind. But the opener went for a review only to waste it early.

Gill (36), however, looked in good touch as he blasted three boundaries off Varun Aaron and then sent spinner Shreyas Gopal soaring over the ropes twice.

Rahul Tripathi (39), who looked uncomfortable against pace early on, also got into the act, smashing Gopal for a couple of fours as KKR scored 17 runs in the fourth over. Ben Stokes then went for 11 runs with Tripathi pulling him for a six in the last ball. — *PTI*

SCORECARD

Kolkata Knight Riders: Shubman Gill c Jos Buttler b Rahul Tewatia 36, Nitish Rana c Samson b Jofra Archer 0, Rahul Tripathi c Uthappa b Shreyas Gopal 39, Sunil Narine c Stokes b Rahul Tewatia 0, Eoin Morgan (not out) 24, Dinesh Karthik c Steven Smith b Rahul Tewatia 0, Andre Russell c (sub) Miller b Kartik Tyagi 25, Pat Cummins c Samson b Kartik Tyagi 15, Kamlesh Nagarkoti (not out) 1. Extras (lb-5, w-2) 7. **Total (for 7 wkts, in 20 overs) 191.**

FoW: 1-1, 73-2, 74-3, 94-4, 99-5, 144-6, 184-7. **Bowler:** Jofra Archer 4-0-19-1, Varun Aaron 2-0-22-0, Shreyas Gopal 3-0-44-1, Ben Stokes 3-0-40-0, Rahul Tewatia 4-0-25-3, Kartik Tyagi 4-0-36-2.

Rajasthan Royals: R. Uthappa c Nagarkoti b Cummins 6, B. Stokes c Karthik b Cummins 18, S. Smith (c) b Cummins 4, S. Samson c Karthik b Shivam Mavi 1, J. Buttler c Cummins b Varun 35, R. Parag c Karthik b Cummins 0, R. Tewatia c Karthik b Varun 31, S. Gopal (not out) 23, J. Archer c Shivam Mavi b Nagarkoti 6, Kartik Tyagi c & b Shivam Mavi 2, VR Aaron (not out) 0. Extras (lb-1, w-4) 5. **Total (for 9 wkts, in 20 overs) 131.** **FoW:** 1-19, 2-27, 3-32, 4-32, 5-37, 6-80, 7-105, 8-125, 9-129. **Bowling:** P.J. Cummins 4-0-34-4, Shivam Mavi 4-1-15-2, C. Varun 4-0-20-2, S.P. Narine 4-0-37-0, K. Nagarkoti 4-0-24-1.

Hami bags record 7th title for Merc

Imola (Italy), Nov. 1: Lewis Hamilton made the most of his luck to lead team-mate Valtteri Bottas home in Sunday's Emilia-Romagna Grand Prix as Mercedes sealed a record seventh consecutive constructors' championship triumph.

The six-time champion capitalised on pole-sitter Bottas's ill fortune in picking up a debris-damaged floor to win with a near-flawless tactical drive and the fastest lap of an incident-filled race at Imola.

Hamilton recovered from a poor start, when he dropped to third, to fight back with a long first stint and the aid of a timely Virtual Safety Car (VSC) intervention to grab the lead on a memorable day for the 'silver arrows'.

Daniel Ricciardo finished third for Renault ahead of Daniil Kvyat of Alpha Tauri and Ferrari's Charles Leclerc after Max Verstappen had crashed out of the race in his Red Bull in the closing stages. Sergio Perez was sixth for Racing Point, Carlos Sainz finished seventh ahead of his McLaren team-mate Lando Norris and the two Alfa Romeos of Kimi Raikkonen, in his 325th Grand Prix race, and Antonio Giovinazzi.

It was Hamilton's record-increasing 93rd victory in a race that saw him complete 5000 laps as a race leader. The Mercedes one-two finish also not only secured the teams' title, but also ensured that a Mercedes driver will take the drivers' championship.

Jota caps Reds fightback as Blues win

London, Nov. 1: Diogo Jota capped Liverpool's dramatic fightback as the Premier League champions beat West Ham 2-1 to move three points clear at the top, while Manchester City and Chelsea both won to keep in touch with the leaders on Saturday.

Jurgen Klopp's side were rocked by Pablo Fornals' early strike at Anfield as the West Ham midfielder punished a poor header from Joe Gomez in the 10th minute.

The Reds drew level in the 42nd minute when Mohamed Salah was fouled by Arthur Masuaku and the Egyptian stepped up to convert the penalty for his eighth goal of the season.

Liverpool thought they had claimed the lead with just over 10 minutes remaining when substitute Jota turned in a loose ball.

THE RESULTS

Burnley 0
Chelsea 3
(Ziyech 26, Zouma 63, Werner 70)

Liverpool 2
(Salah 42-pen, Jota 85)
West Ham 1
(Fornals 10)

Sheffield United 0
Manchester City 1
(Walker 28)

Jota had pounced after Lukasz Fabianski saved Sadio Mane's shot but after a lengthy delay that saw referee Kevin Friend make use of the pitchside monitor, the goal was ruled out for a foul by the Senegal winger.

In the 85th minute, Jota ran onto Xherdan Shaqiri's pass to score his fourth goal since joining



Liverpool's Diogo Jota celebrates after he scores against West Ham in their Premier League match at the Anfield Stadium in Liverpool on Saturday. — *AP*

from Wolves in September. It was Liverpool's fourth successive victory since

influential defender Virgil van Dijk was sidelined for several months with a serious knee injury suf-

fered against Everton.

Title rivals City have yet to hit the free-scoring form of Pep Guardiola's side at their best, as for the third consecutive league game they were held to a solitary goal.

But Kyle Walker's long-range strike against his former club was good enough to earn a 1-0 win at goal-shy Sheffield United.

It was his first goal for a year in his 100th Premier League appearance for City.

A fourth win in five games in all competition gives City up to eighth, five points behind Liverpool.

Chelsea are also finding their form after a slow start to the season as Frank Lampard's men ran out 3-0 winners at Burnley to stretch their unbeaten run to nine games.

— *AFP*