


DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
KARIMNAGAR | WEDNESDAY | 2 DECEMBER 2020


WEATHER



Max: 29.8°C
Min: 17.2°C
RH: 49%
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Partly cloudy.
Mist or haze likely.
Max/Min temp. 30/17 °C

COVID-19



CASES

(+35,994)

94,98,721

DEATHS

(+481)

1,38,129

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+502)

(+3)

TS: 2,70,318

1,461


(+685)

(+4)

AP: 8,68,749

6,996

CASES AROUND THE WORLD



6,38,77,889

DEATHS

14,80,081

COUNTRIES AREAS WITH CASES

218

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana

Tithi: Kartika Bahula

Vidya till 6.19 pm

Star: Mrigasira till 10.35 an

Varjyam: 7.35 pm to 9.18 pm

Durmuhurtam: 11.43 am to 12.27 pm

Rahukalam: 12 pm to 1.30 pm

NJRI CALENDAR

Rabbi-ul Aakhir 16, 1442 AH

PRAYERS

Fajar: 5.26 am

Zohar: 12.15 pm

Asar: 4.04 pm

Maghrib: 5.46 pm

Isha: 6.58 pm


SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.31 AM

SUNSET TODAY 5.40 PM

MOONSET TOMORROW 8.00 AM

MOONRISE TODAY 7.19 PM

COUNTER POINT



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

IN BRIEF

Nobel Prize event goes online

New Delhi: The Nobel Prize week will primarily be digital with laureates getting their medals and diplomas in their respective countries on December 7 and 8 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The ceremonial presentations in their countries will be shown in the online award ceremonies from Oslo and Stockholm on December 10. Sweden King Carl XVI Gustaf will participate through a digital greeting at the Stockholm City Hall.

BrahMos passes Navy's test fire

New Delhi: The Indian Navy successfully test-fired the anti-ship version of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile. This comes on heels of the test-firing of the land attack version of the missile from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands last week by the Indian Army which has three BrahMos regiments. These slew of tests are being conducted when India is involved in a military stand off with China in Eastern Ladakh.

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Hyd takes civic elections easy

High-pitched campaign fails to bring out people; long weekend plays spoilsport

MADDY DEEKSHITH | DC
HYDERABAD, DEC. 1

True to form, the city remained unmoved by the high-voltage campaign and did not stir out in large numbers for the GHMC elections on Tuesday. Still, the final polling percentage was 45.7, the highest in three GHMC polls. It was 45.27 per cent in 2016 and 42.02 per cent in the 2009 polls. The vote tally refers to 149 out of the total 150 GHMC divisions: Polling has been cancelled at Old Malakpet, where the symbols of the CPI and the CPI(M) were interchanged, and will be held on Wednesday. Because of election to one ward was pending, the exit polls were not telecast on Tuesday. Ramachandrapuram topped the list with 67 per cent voting while Yousufguda with 33.03 per cent was at the bottom, according to the State Election Commis-

Voters at Padmaraonagar show the indelible ink mark to declare their participation in the GHMC elections on Tuesday. — S. SURENDER REDDY

sion (SEC). At 5 pm, out of 74,12,601 eligible voters in the city, only had 27,22,891 voted, the State Election Commission reported. There appears to have been a last-minute rush, and voting extended in some places till 7.30, which led to a delay in tabulating the final figures. The reasons were stat-

ed to be many: The nature of the campaign itself, the disappointment of the voters from flood-affected areas, many people going away for the long weekend or those working from home preferring not to move out.

■ **Page 2: GHMC officials blame booth mapping**

Poor turnout gives TRS hope

S.A. ISHAQUI | DC
HYDERABAD, DEC. 1

The low voter turnout in Tuesday's elections has left the BJP and the Congress worried, more particularly the former which had mounted a massive campaign to win more wards in the GHMC, which covers 24 Assembly segments and five Lok Sabha constituencies.

With the final voting percentage figures coming in, the TRS sounded more confident that it would form the GHMC Council for the second term running. The AIMM also sounded comfortable and even hoped to wrest Ghansi Bazaar which it had lost by a few votes in 2016. Chief Minister K. Chandrababbar Rao has called for a meeting of party election incharges of all divisions at Pragathi Bhavan on Wednesday to get a sense of the polling trends. Sources said that he cautioned the leaders against making any claims with regard to the numbers till the party reviews the situation with more data at hand.

POLLING AGAIN TODAY AT OLD MALAKPET

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 1

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

Sources said that the ground reports as of Tuesday night indicated that the TRS had a clear edge in 75 divisions. TRS leaders spoke of the general political belief that a low voter turnout always favours the incumbent. In the BJP camp, leaders appeared concerned that the their high-energy campaign did not result in mobilisation of voters.

■ **Page 2: BJP remains worried over turnout**

Many blame it on missing names, votes cast Voters stay off polls

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC
HYDERABAD, DEC. 1

Voters had many reasons to explain why they did not take part in the GHMC elections. While the BJP blamed the TRS for the low turnout, the voters said they stayed away because they had no holiday, the fear of the Coronavirus or because their names were missing from the voter list. Some of them, turned up to vote but found that their vote had been cast by someone else. Sreeharsha and mother Padmaa Thanneeru, voters from V.V. Nagar,

Kukat-pally, said: "Our names were not in the voter list even during the Assembly elections, and that continued for these elections too. We are not sure why they were deleted earlier, when both my mother and I have our voter ID cards." Sreeharsha added that he did try to re-register as a voter, but because it didn't go through he decided to give up. "One reason could be that when the officials came to verify at our house, we may have been out for work, and they cancelled our names," he said. Razia Fatima Sultan

from Ramanasapura complained she stood in the queue but when she entered the booth she was told that her vote had been cast. "The polling officers asked me to vote in someone else's name, which I refused to do. The officials there were openly telling voters that they can cast as many votes as they want. Do they want everyone to cheat," Fatima asked. This reporter observed that several voters did not download the e-slips sent as an SMS, which created confusion. ■ **Page 2: New poll booths confuse voters**

Centre, farmers fail to find common ground, talks fail

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

As the farmers' agitation completed six days on Tuesday, there seemed to be no resolution in sight at ending the crisis as both the sides remained adamant on their demands. While the government wants the farmers to end their protest and join a committee of experts to sort out issues related to the three recently enacted farm laws, farmers' leaders say they want the new laws withdrawn or they will intensify their agitation. With the marathon meeting between farmers' leaders and the government remaining inconclusive on Tuesday, a second meeting is now scheduled to take place on December 3.

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

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

related to the farm laws and said they would continue their agitation at the Delhi-Haryana border until their demands are fully met. Union agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar, who led the meeting which was also attended by commerce and industry minis-

ter Piyush Goyal and minister of state for commerce and industry Som Parkash, said the government will continue its dialogue with the protesting farmers on Thursday. "The meeting was good and we have decided that the talks will be held on 3

Never spoke of inoculating all against Covid, says govt

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, DEC. 1

There was never any talk of inoculating the whole population of the country with Covid-19 vaccine, the Centre said on Tuesday said. Responding to a question at a press briefing, ICMR Director General Balram Bhargava said the purpose of the Covid vaccine drive would be to break the chain of viral transmission. "Our purpose is to break the chain of virus transmission. If we are able to vaccinate a critical mass of people and break the chain of transmission, then we may not have to vaccinate the entire population," he said. "The role of masks is also vitally important and that will continue even after the vaccination. Because we are starting with a small group of population at a time and therefore masks will be protective and continue to be used so as to help in breaking the chain of viral transmission," Bhargava said. Union Health Secretary

Rajesh Bhushan said there was never a talk about inoculating the whole population of the country with Covid-19 vaccine. "I just want to make this clear that the government has never spoken about vaccinating the entire country. It's important that we discuss such scientific issues, based on factual information only and then analyse it," said Bhushan. Meanwhile, daily new cases and India's active cases continue to be on a decline while the recoveries are on a rise. On Tuesday, the total active were almost 4.36 lakh and the share of active cases in the total positive cases has further shrunk to 4.60 per cent. India's total tally of Covid-19 is 94.63 lakh with 31,118 fresh detections. The fatalities so far have been 1.37 lakh out of which 482 deaths occurred in the last 24 hours. In Delhi, the daily rise in high number of fresh cases has halted a bit even though it is still reporting much higher cases than many states and UTs. Kerala and

Maharashtra also have high cases. Union health officials said while states like Kerala, Delhi and Karnataka, etc have witnessed a decline in the active caseload in the past 24 hours, those like Uttarakhand, Gujarat, Assam and Goa have reported an addition to caseload. The ICMR has said that the initial findings into an 'adverse event' allegedly suffered by an Oxford Covid-19 vaccine trial participant in Chennai did not necessitate halting of the trials and it is the role of drug regulator to ascertain or refute if any causal link between the event and the intervention. On allegation of the 'adverse event' in a Serum Institute of India trial, the government said it will not affect vaccine timelines. A 40-year-old man who was a volunteer in the third phase of the "Covidshield" vaccine trial in Chennai has alleged serious side effects, including a virtual neurological breakdown and impairment of cognitive functions.

TRUDEAU WADES INTO FARM STIR, GETS SLAMMED

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, DEC. 1

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

■ **Full report on Page 4**

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

49% VOTE IN 2ND PHASE OF J&K'S DDC POLL

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR, DEC. 1

The second phase of Jammu and Kashmir's first ever District Development Council (DDC) elections recorded around 49 per cent voter turnout on Monday. J&K's state election commissioner K.K. Sharma, while addressing a press conference here said that like the first one, the second phase of DDC elections has been conducted "successfully" with 48.62 per cent of the electorate using their right of vote in 43 constituencies. "The polling has been peaceful in all 43 constituencies, having a of total of 3,77,401 voters including 2,01,792 male and 1,75,609 female," he said. He said that Jammu division recorded an average voter turnout of 65.54 per cent with frontier district of Poonch registering the highest percentage of 75.07 per cent.

In Asifabad, tigers, humans may have to share same water source

PILLALAMARRI SRINIVAS | DC
ADILABAD, DEC. 1

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

It is feared that the shortage of drinking water may bring both the tigers and the people to the same water sources. Tigers may also come close to the villages in search of water. The people of the interior villages are experiencing sleepless nights with the increased tiger movements and the killing of two persons within 20 days in separate incidents in Dahegaon and Penchikalpet mandals. Farmers are not going to their fields for cotton picking, fearing an attack by the tiger. It was stated that this is the time for the forest department to develop water bodies inside the forests for the

Camera traps set up at various spots

RAVINDRA SESHU | DC
KOTHAGUDEM, DEC. 1

Forest officials said that a tiger had entered the forests of Kanakarajugutta in Aswapuram mandal of Bhadradi Kothagudem district. The tiger reached the place by walking through the Sitarama irrigation project canal and other areas, and it is suspected he may make his home in the forests, according to officials. Forest officials found the pug marks of the tiger at various places. Cameras are

being fixed in the forests to track the movements of the tiger. Officials were also deploying forest staff patrols to track the tiger. If the big cat decide to stay in the forests of Bhadradi district, the safety of locals including farmers who move out to tend to their land, people moving in the area and cattle has to be ensured. On hearing the news of the entry of the tiger, incidents like a tiger attacking locals in Adilabad district were recalled by the residents of Bhadradi district.

tigers so that they do not cross paths with humans. While tiger attacks were unknown for 20 years, the situation has changed with more tigers migrating into

the erstwhile Adilabad district from bordering Maharashtra. While forest officials were happy about the migration of tigers, the two deaths have

had a sobering effect. It is feared that any more incidents may create unrest among the locals and this may go against the interest of tiger conservation. The situation could be ripe for miscreants to take advantage. Poachers are not active these days in the areas where the tigers are moving but may become active and cause harm to the tigers by taking the advantage of the summer season when the big cats scour the dry forests for water, or the panic situation prevailing among the people and push the blame on the villagers. Again, people of Hattighat, Tamsi (K) in Bheempur Mandal informed forest officials two days ago that they saw a tiger movement in the cotton fields of their villages along the river Penganga in the Adilabad district. It was found that tigers are migrating into Adilabad district borders from the Tippeshwar tiger reserve of Maharashtra by crossing the river Penganga.

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IN BRIEF

GSI workshop sees 15,000 participants

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

STATE RECORDS

502 NEW COVID-19 CASES, 3 DEATHS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 1

There were 502 new Covid-19 cases and three deaths recorded in the state on Monday. In all, 46,597 samples were tested on Sunday. This is the lowest number of daily cases unerathed since June 20, when 546 cases were discovered. The total cases are now 2,70,318 and toll due to Covid-19, 1,461. The state had 9,627 active cases, the Covid-19 bulletin of the state health department said, of which 7,586 are under treatment at home or institutional care. The GHMC recorded 101 cases, Medchal Malkajgiri 46 and Ranga Reddy 32. Government has asked people to follow the safety protocols of masks, hand washing and social distancing.

BJP REMAINS WORRIED OVER TURNOUT

From Page 1

Sources revealed that the low turnout may put paid to the party's hopes of increasing its seat share to 50. The estimate at this time is 15 to 20 seats. TRS leaders said that the election-eve dharna of BJP activists, who alleged that its state president Bandi Sanjay had been attacked at MS Maktha had only served to highlight the nervousness ahead of polling day. The Congress feared that those who voted might get swayed by the communal-centric poll campaign of the BJP, TRS and the MIM. The Congress leaders hoped to win eight to 10 seats based on their focus on development. In the Old City, the voting appeared to continue to be one-sided. The MIM leaders felt that if more people had turned out to vote, there would have been scope for a keen contest. That did not happen, and the party hopes to retain its 44 division it won in 2016.

JAGAN SAYS TO ADMIT NAIDU IN MENTAL ASYLUM

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 1

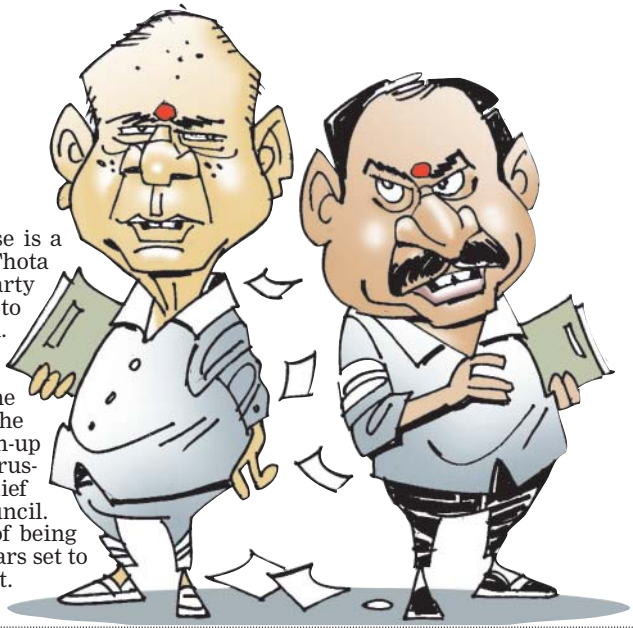
Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy in State Legislative Assembly suggested to Speaker Thammineni Seetharam that Leader of Opposition (LOP) N. Chandrababu Naidu be admitted in a mental hospital "as the latter was speaking about irrelevant matters". This statement of CM Jagan came as the LOP tried to pick faults in functioning of the state government while taking part in a short discussion on house sites and Tidco houses. While speaking, Naidu repeatedly insisted on the Speaker to provide him more time to continue the discussion and spoke on issues unrelated to Tidco houses and house sites. At this stage, Jagan advised Thammineni Seetharam that Naidu be given another two to three minutes to wind up his statement, so that he (CM) could make his statement on the issue. Jagan said people are eagerly waiting to know what the Chief Minister will say on the housing scheme. The CM even advised the Speaker to suspend TD MLAs who were disrupting proceedings in the House. Jagan Mohan Reddy had recalled speeches he made during his padayatra that TD regime was giving houses of 300 square feet each costing Rs. 6 lakh in which Rs. 1.5 lakh each paid by both the state and central government while the remaining Rs. 3 lakh had to be raised as bank loan by the beneficiary, who would need to pay ₹3,000 per month for a period of 20 years. When the Chief Minister said he had given an assurance that he would waive off the beneficiaries' contribution, Naidu tried to pick a fault in the statement. Jagan then suggested to the Speaker that the LOP be sent to a mental asylum.

YSRC MP is an angry man these days

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

KCR keeps babu's prowess in reserve

Telangana state Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao's handling of bureaucratic matters puzzles babus and the case of V. Seshadri is no exception. After making the honest and straightforward officer his secretary, a crucial post in the Chief Minister's Office, KCR did not allocate him subjects. The normal procedure is that secretaries and officers on special duty in the CMO are allotted departments and it's their responsibility to coordinate between the CM and the heads of departments. It was rumoured that Seshadri will be given revenue, given his experience as collector of Ranga Reddy and Visakhapatnam districts in the combined state, which are notorious for land disputes. However, even two months after landing at the CMO from the Prime Minister's Office, where he had a five-year stint Seshadri is waiting for a role. In the meantime he is busy setting the house in order for Dharani, the land registrations portal and a pet project of the Chief Minister.



Owaisi's humour comes as antidote

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

Drastic steps needed to lure voters, feel RWAs

KANIZA GARARI | DC
HYDERABAD, DEC. 1

Resident welfare associations (RWAs) rued that the dismal voting percentage from apartments, colonies and gated communities had put paid to their effort to develop a strong group of residents to raise their voice to press for their demands. They pointed out that a locality suffers when the voter percentage is less than 50 per cent. The RWAs had carried out an awareness campaign in their social media groups asking every eligible person to vote. Those who complain about poor civic amenities were not seen at the polling booths, said members of RWAs in

many areas. The RWAs said that despite their efforts to involve people in the civil works, many backed off when it came to showing their strength in numbers. C.S. Chandrashekar from Sainikpuri said, "The low polling percentage means that something drastic needs to be done to influence, motivate and dictate citizens to increase the voting percentage." RWAs played a major role in drawing the attention of the GHMC to the civic problems in their areas, taking up follow up action with officials and elected representatives and ensuring that the promises are implemented. Given the dismal response of the residents,

RWAs fear that they may be ignored when they go to the corporator with their problems. In the municipal offices too, their representations will not be taken seriously and officials will not be ready to listen to their complaints. There were some areas where the voting percentage was good but in a majority of places there were challenges, B.T. Srinivasan of the United Federation of Resident Welfare Associations said, "There are 43,000 resident welfare associations with us, and we have seen that a section has exercised their right to vote. The problems were faced by people whose polling booths were located far away from

their homes." It was observed that areas which had problems like garbage dumping, leaking of sewage drains and non-cleaning of roads by the GHMC staff saw less voting. Perhaps put off by the poor state of affairs, the votes appeared to have stayed away. It was also feared that this could be a warning sign of the people giving up on their democratic functions. A resident on condition of anonymity at Begumpet said, "Why should we vote? Every political party is the same. They all say different things but when it comes to governance they are the same. Why should we waste our time."

GHMC officials blame booth mapping

From Page 1

On top of all, this was suspected to be the Covid-19 impact, voters staying away due to fear of contracting the infection. Many families who had gone to their native places did not return. There were infrastructural issues. All voters did not get the voter slips, and they were directed to download it from apps which proved to be difficult. The creation of new polling stations due to Covid-19 guidelines added to the confusion. Prof. K. Nageshwar, political analyst, said it was the failure of political parties which did not give any radical alternative to the people to vote for actively. "The agenda of political parties is contrary to what the public aspirations are. The politics was dominated by the talk of destruction of graveyards, Osama bin Laden and babas while the people need better

roads, sanitation, drinking water facilities, drainage system and health. There is a disconnect between what people want (and what the parties are offering)," he said. Prof. Nageshwar said the political parties have "killed" local democracy. "Though the mayor's post is reserved for women, none put women in the forefront or announced a mayoral candidate. The parties have replicated the Assembly and Lok Sabha poll model for the GHMC. The people have voted twice in the last two years, and parties did not give the people a good reason why should they should come out and vote." Polling began on an extremely dull note. At 9 am, the polling percentage was 3.95, and it grew slowly to 11.62 by 11 am, 20.35 by 1 pm, 29.76 by 3 pm and 36.73 per cent by 5 pm according to data issued by the SEC. The elderly, the specially-

abled and very few middle-class voters participated in the voting. Non-distribution of voter slips by the GHMC and the SEC kept many people from voting since they could not download it from the internet. Students stood away for multiple reasons right from lack of development to a busy weekend. V. Prakash, political analyst and Prof. Jayashankar Research Foundation founder, said the pandemic had forced a lower turnout in the IT corridor since most of the people were working from home and had gone to their hometowns. Guest workers from Nalgonda, Mahbubnagar, Srikakulam and other places never came back, fearing the Coronavirus. "Political parties and GHMC did encourage the middle class and young voters to vote. There are multiple reasons like not providing voter slips, change of polling booths,

providing e-voter slip through mobile applications," he added. The corporators elected in 2016 seemed to have added to the disenchantment by not resolving local grievances. Despite warning by the TRS, the corporators continued in their corrupt ways during. A GHMC officials said that the prime reason for the low turnout was mapping of polling stations. The GHMC mapped polling stations in a different pattern, unlike during the Assembly polls and Lok Sabha polls. This led to many voters not finding their names in the voter list and believing that they had been deleted. Since the polling agents and other staff were deployed at short notice, they did not guide the voters properly. Through the day, celebrities, NGOs and politicians cutting across party lines continuously encouraged voters to step out and vote.

TOUGH TIMES Residents are upset that they did not get compensation

Angry flood victims skip civic body polls

KANIZA GARARI | DC
HYDERABAD, DEC. 1

Residents of flood-affected areas and those residing close to lakes decided to skip voting in the GHMC elections on Tuesday as they had shifted to other places. The conditions are still inhospitable in many areas and residents were also upset with the government for not compensating them for their loss. The Old City areas of Hafiz Baba Nagar, Al-

Jubail Colony, Nadeem Colony were badly affected due to the heavy rains in October, and the voter turnout was very low. The residents had lost their voter ID and other identity cards in the floods. Those who could have gone did not turn up as they had lost everything and were unwilling to go by the promises made by different parties. Mohammed Aslam of Al-Jubail Colony said, "People are not interested to vote as they found that

the promises are not fulfilled. The work of cleaning and clearing our homes was done by non-government organisations. Why should they vote for a politician who comes once in a while?" Near Lower Tank Bund, people were not interested as they were scared of Covid-19. Senior citizens were not keen to go out for health reasons and their children did not want them to risk their lives by voting.

In areas like Saroornagar, Trimulgherry, Kapra, RK Puram and Alwal, where people were affected by floods, they were upset that the causative factors such as encroachment around lakes had not been addressed. These areas have been regularly inundated every year and are upset that no alternative arrangement has been made despite representations being given to the authorities. For this reason, they stated that

voting in the GHMC elections would not help. M.B. Raju at RK Puram lake said, "What is so different that the new set of councillors will do? Will they be able to resolve our long-pending problems? There is no reason to cast our vote." Areas where there are issues noted from time to time have left people in a dismal state and the recent floods have added an assault to their memory.

Women try to rig votes, caught

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 1

A group of burqa-clad women allegedly went to a polling booth with petroleum jelly to wipe off the ink mark and rig votes, it was claimed on Tuesday. The police recorded their statements before letting them off. According to Majlis Bachao Tehreek (MBT) spokesperson Amjed Ullah Khan, the women arrived in six autorickshaws at Booths No. 16 and 17 of Azampura. "The women when quizzed by the local police were unable to prove their credentials," Khan alleged. The MBT also alleged that the electoral rolls contained fake names which, it claimed, had been inserted by the AIMIM. MBT has fielded

Asma Khatoun, wife of Amjed Ullah Khan, from Aampura against Ayesha Jehan Naseem of the AIMIM. Several photos were shared on social media platforms which appeared to back the claims made by the MBT spokesperson. The Hyderabad police rejected the claims made by the party. DCP, East Zone, M. Ramesh, said that the claims were inaccurate and false. "These women were going in an autorickshaw when they were stopped and MBT workers alleging that these are women casting bogus votes. The women were let off after verification." The DCP said that polling stations have women staff who will verify the credentials of women voters in burqas.

BANDI SLAMS SEC ON GHMC POLLS

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

created panic among the people. Sanjay was speaking to mediapersons along with Union minister of state G. Kishan Reddy to mark the calling off of the fast of BJP OBC Morcha president Dr K. Laxman, party vice president D.K. Aruna and former MP G. Vivek Venkataswamy.

Happy to vote



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

— R. PAVAN

Location of new poll booths confuse voters

From Page 1

The State Election Commission had set up additional polling stations as part of Covid-19 guidelines to reduce the rush of people. But these voters went to their regular polling stations and found that their names were missing. But then, there were others who did not find their names in any booth. Syed Mohammed Abdullah Sultan, a first-time voter from Charminar division, and Rohith Bolineni from Allwyn Colony said that they did check in different polling booths around the area, but to no avail. Bolineni said, "My father and I did not find our names on the list today, despite voting in the Lok Sabha polls last year. Just to make sure that it had been transferred to other wards, I did check in the GHMC app and ver-

fied it with the staff on the ground, but to no luck." He said the voter enrollment team had visited there for registration, and he had provided all documents, but it seems that didn't help. Rohith added that he had not received any e-slip. Syed Mohammed said that he went around to other booths to check if his name was placed in the surrounding polling stations, but found it missing and could not vote. Varun, a voter from Padmaraoanagar, said that despite living in Hyderabad for 20 years, his mother Adbhuta Rani hadn't received her voter ID card. He and three members of his family couldn't vote because their names were missing. "We didn't raise this issue with anyone, though we were not being able to

vote for the general elections too. But I remember someone coming to our place and taking our details and documents before the elections. So we had expected that the names would be on the list", he said. Jesu V., a senior citizen, said she had stepped out after three months to cast her vote, only to find out that her name was deleted from the list. She had been staying at home due to Covid-19 restrictions. Speaking on the issue, Arun Daniel, founder, Youngistaan Foundation, said, "The attitude of the people is, 'why should we get involved'. There is a need for a proper platform with government participation to increase awareness of the public, especially the youth. More involvement in constructive form will encourage many of them to come out and participate."

Clashes between oppn parties spark tension

ATHER MOIN | DC
HYDERABAD, DEC. 1

Tension gripped a few areas in the Old City when workers of opposing political parties confronted each other in certain areas during and after the polls on Tuesday. However, police quickly stepped in and calmed the groups in areas like Azampura, Chandrayangutta, Jangamm, Rein Bazaar, Vijayanagar Colony, Red Hills, Malleshpally, Shaikpet and Nanalnagar and

witnessed the disturbance. The police deployed additional forces including the striking force in sensitive areas, and resorted to a lathicharge in Shaikpet division to quell the crowds. BJP workers alleged that the MIM workers attacked the brother-in-law of C. Mahesh, BJP's Shaikpet candidate in Hakim Shah area. When MIM candidate Rashed Faraz reached a polling station in Sakku Bai Memorial Hall,

OTHER STORIES

STATE RECORDS
502 NEW COVID-19
CASES, 3 DEATHSDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 1

There were 502 new Covid-19 cases and three deaths recorded in the state on Monday. In all, 46,597 samples were tested on Sunday.

This is the lowest number of daily cases unerathered since June 20, when 546 cases were discovered.

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

The state had 9,627 active cases, the Covid-19 bulletin of the state health department said, of which 7,586 are under treatment at home or institutional care.

BEHAVE WELL WITH
COMMUTERS, AUTO
DRIVERS TOLDDC CORRESPONDENT
KHAMMAM, DEC. 1

Motor vehicle inspector of Wyr Sankar Naik asked the autorickshaw drivers to behave like gentlemen while taking commuters to different destinations in their vehicles.

He said that they were informed some auto drivers were not behaving properly with the commuters. The drivers are taking the phone numbers of passengers and calling them.

He said that the drivers should refrain from such activity. The charges being collected from the people should be genuine and some drivers are collecting ₹30 for small distance.

Mr Sankar Naik convened a meeting with drivers and asked them to carry all documents and licences with them.

BOY TRIES TO END
LIFE IN FRONT OF
LOVER'S HOUSEDC CORRESPONDENT
NIZAMABAD, DEC. 1

In a shocking incident, a youth attempted suicide in front of his girl friend's residence at Aryanagar in Nizamabad. Ananth Kumar, 28, of Vanasthalipuram in Hyderabad set himself ablaze.

According to sources, Ananth Kumar and Ravali (name changed), 27, have been working in a private company in Hyderabad and fell in love. They decided to marry soon.

Ananth Kumar came to Nizamabad on Monday evening to discuss marriage proposals with Ravali's family members. Reportedly, Ravali and her parents refused to accept the marriage as the lovers belong to different communities. Shocked over this, Ananth Kumar attempted to kill himself.

Reacting to the screaming of the victim, the neighbours called for an ambulance and the police. The victim was shifted to Government General Hospital in Nizamabad, later referred to Gandhi Hospital in Hyderabad as his condition is said to be serious with severe burns.

Speaking to this correspondent, IV town police sub-inspector Laxmaiah said that condition of Ananth Kumar is critical on Tuesday.

"We have not received any complaint from the family members of Ananth Kumar, but registered a case as *suo moto*," he explained.

Love affair and other details to be ascertained during the investigation, he added. "Based on the cell phone of the victim, we are collecting information," he said.

Med authorities gear up to
tackle 2nd wave of Covid-19

Sufficient stock of Covid-19 medicines are kept ready in the hospitals

DC CORRESPONDENT
NIZAMABAD/KAMAREDDY,
DEC. 1

Medical and health officials geared up for the second wave of Covid-19 virus in undivided Nizamabad district. To tackle the situation, they made arrangements for the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds, medicines in Covid-19 designated hospitals. Also, the number of tests have been increased to find out the Covid-19 in vulnerable groups.

The number of Covid-19 cases increased in few states, including Maharashtra, which borders the undivided Nizamabad district. The officials prepared plans for workforce and infrastructure during the pandemic.

As many as 26,500 Covid-19 cases were reported in Nizamabad and Kamareddy districts so far. Compared with previous days, currently, the number of positive cases has been decreasing.

Nizamabad Government General Hospital (GGH) superintendent Dr Prathima Raj said that 570 beds are ready for Covid-19 patients.

Around 200 Coronavirus tests are being conducted daily in the hospital, she added.

Sufficient stock of Covid-19 medicines including anti-viral and anti-inflammatory drugs are available, she explained.

She added, "75 beds equipped with ventilators for Covid-19 patients, and added the in-patients number has also decreased from 200 to 50 per day."

In Kamareddy district, the medical and health department has concentrated on vulnerable groups to identify the Covid-19 patients.

Coordinating with the Integrated child development service (ICDS) and Mission for the elimination of poverty in municipal areas (MEPMA), the officials conduct coronavirus tests.

Old age homes, senior citizens forum, pensioners groups and residential education institutions are identified for conducting Coronavirus tests.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, Kamareddy district medical and health officer Dr P.



Huzurabad area hospital

Huzurabad area hospital a
ray of hope for poor patientsPULI SHARATH KUMAR
| DC
KARIMNAGAR, DEC. 1

Due to the impact of Covid-19 pandemic, in many primary health centres and area hospitals present across the district, the prevention and treatment services for non-communicable diseases along with performing of deliveries have been severely disrupted, but the area hospital present in Huzurabad not only rendered better medical services to the patients but also recorded the highest number of deliveries in November, in Karimnagar district.

The hospital rendered its services for as many as 6,574 out-patients (OPs) and around 1,458 in-patients in November which included 15 general surgery cases, 15 paediatric cases, 25 ENT minor cases and 335 cycles were done for about 38 dialysis patients.

The area hospital present in Huzurabad constituency from which the health minister Etela Rajendar is representing has become the main

Dr Ramesh, Hospital
Superintendent

resource for many poor pregnant women. Since the hospital is equipped with all modern facilities, the patients from surrounding villages are visiting the hospital instead of going to the main government hospital situated in the district headquarters or to the private hospitals situated in the region.

Besides modern facilities, KCR kits are attracting pregnant women to get treatment and avail government benefits. Under the scheme, the government is giving mothers an incentive of ₹12,000 (for a baby boy) and ₹13,000 (for a baby girl). Apart from that, the doctors are also giving

top priority to normal delivery by giving counselling to pregnant women.

Hospital Superintendent Dr Ramesh speaking to *Deccan Chronicle* said that by seeing the better services that are provided by the staff to the patients and corporate level facilities in the hospital, the number of patients is gradually increasing every month despite the widespread of Covid-19 pandemic. The number of deliveries also have gone up compared to previous months.

A record number of 204 deliveries were performed in the hospital in November, out of which 163 were Lower Segment Cesarean Section (LSCS) deliveries, and 41 were normal deliveries which is the highest in the history of Huzurabad area hospital till date, he informed.

Dr Ramesh congratulated all the doctors and staff members of the hospital for their best efforts and services. He also thanked minister Etela Rajendar for providing modern facilities in the Huzurabad area hospital.

Chandrasekhar said that they intensified 'Information, Education and Communication (IEC) programmes to cre-

ate awareness among the people on Covid-19 pandemic. Self-help groups at village level will play a key role in the prevention

TS HALTS FREE
SUPPLY OF
COVID-19 RICENARENDER
PULLOOR | DC
NIZAMABAD, DEC. 1

Rice that was supplied free of cost during the Covid-19 pandemic through the Public Distribution System (PDS), has been halted in Telangana state.

The quota of rice will also decrease, and from December 1 rice will be supplied at the regular price through the Fair Price (FP) shops.

Consumer affairs, Food and Civil Supplies Department has made arrangements in this regard. To help ration cardholders during the pandemic, the Central and state governments jointly supplied rice free of cost.

During the lockdown, 12 kg of rice per head (unit) was supplied free of cost to ration cardholders from April to July. From August to November, per head got 10 kg rice.

Under the Prime Minister Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana scheme, the Central government supplied 5 kg rice per head and the Telangana state government added 7 kg rice. Later, the Central and state governments each supplied 5 kg rice, free, till November end.

Nizamabad district civil supply officer Venkateshwar Rao said that presently they did not receive any orders to continue the free supply of rice to ration the cardholders.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, we supplied 15,000 metric tonnes rice to the cardholders and December onwards it would be the regular quota of 7,500 MTs only, he said.

"We have directed FP shop dealers to make arrangements in this regard," he added.

Kamareddy district civil supplies officer K. Kondal Rao said, "Rice for ₹1 per kg, will be given from December 1. From the Central scheme, 5 kg rice and from the state government 1 kg rice, will be supplied per head.



Leaders of the Kisan Cell unit of Congress party handed over the Signature Campaign documents collected from one crore farmers to the AICC secretary D.S. Megi in New Delhi on Tuesday.

Kisan leaders take
signature campaign
papers to New DelhiDC CORRESPONDENT
KARIMNAGAR, DEC. 1

The leaders of Congress party Kisan cell on Tuesday handed over the documents of signature campaign programme which was held against the new agriculture bills across the state in the last month at the office of All India Congress Committee (AICC) in New Delhi.

In the last month, the Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) launched the signature campaign programme across the state opposing the new agricultural Bills and policies that are adopted by both the state and Central governments. The TPCC collected the signatures of as many as one crore farmers from all the districts of the state.

As per the orders issued by the TPCC working president Ponnann Prabhakar, the team of Kisan cell leaders led by state unit president Sunketa Anvesh Reddy and Karimnagar unit president Patti Krishna Reddy along with Warangal unit president Bhumpelli Deva-

ndar Reddy visited New Delhi and handed over the documents to the office secretary of All India Congress Committee (AICC), D.S. Megi and requested him to submit them to the President of India.

Extending their full support to the protest that was taken up by the farmers in New Delhi, they said that for the first time a huge number of farmers came on to the road seeking justice.

Unfortunately, the farmers who feed the nation are fighting against the government for resolving their issues. Instead of listening to their problems and showing solutions, the BJP government is using its power and is trying to suppress the movement and is harassing the innocent farmers by encouraging the police to lathicharge on them. The BJP will face the heat of the farmers in the days to come, they warned.

The people of the nation must support the farmers and must join in their movement to teach a befitting lesson to the BJP government, they appealed.

TRS MLA Nomula
passes awayDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 1

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

Narsimhaiah, born on



Nomula Narsimhaiah

January 9, 1956, in Palem of Nakrekal mandal in Nalgonda district, was a law graduate and practicing lawyer. A Marxist since his student days, he entered active politics in 1987.

APOLLO HOSPITAL DOCTORS CONDUCT
CRITICAL CARDIAC SURGERYDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 1

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

The elderly man had developed lung fibrosis, leading to breathlessness, palpitations and extreme fatigue, despite recovering from Covid.

He was rushed to the hospital considering the

deteriorating condition due to pre-existing severe aortic valve disease coupled with the post-Covid difficulties, on November 25.

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

'MNREGS funds can be
used to dig fish ponds'DC CORRESPONDENT
KHAMMAM, DEC. 1

A piece of good news for marginal and small farmers: They can get funds under MNREGS to form fish ponds to increase their income.

District Rural Development additional project director Sirisha said that the government would provide funds to the small and marginal farmers and they should come forward and utilise it. The farmers can get additional revenue

by allocating some portion of land for fish ponds. They can sell it in the surrounding villages.

Ms Sirisha said that the Central government is allocating funds directly to the gram panchayats under Fifteenth Finance Commission. She said that the farmers could set up thrashing floors in their land to dry their farm produce. She said that the burial grounds were built in all 584 Gram Panchayats and Palke Prakriti Vanalu (village

natural forest) completed 733 places against 748 locations. The government plans to build natural manure centres by using the garbage collected there with an aim to increase the revenue of concerned gram panchayats. It is targeted to build 584 such natural manure units in the district and completed 526 so far.

On thrashing floors, she said that the government-sanctioned 4,203 thrashing floors and the farmers built 41 so far.

FARMERS' | WOES

Delayed decision of TSOILFED officials caused loss to oil palm growers

Palm growers may lose ₹400 per tonne FFB

RAVINDRA SESHU | DC
DAMMAPET (BHADRADRI),
DEC. 1

The unwise decision of higher officials of Telangana State Cooperative Oilseeds Growers Federation (TSOILFED) caused loss to oil palm growers in Khammam and Bhadradi-Kothagudem districts. The oil palm growers may suffer ₹400 loss per tonne of fresh fruit bunch (FFB) to be bought in December.

As per details, the oil palm units in Apparaoet in Dammapet mandal and Aswaraoet in Bhadradi district used to sell crude palm oil before 7th of every month. The prices of the FFB of the palm of next month

will be decided as per the price to the crude palm in the open market in the present month. The officials did not sell 1,700 tonnes of crude oil palm produced in Apparaoet oil factory, which should be sold out before November 7.

The duty on crude palm oil has been reduced to 27.5 per cent from 37.5 by the Central government and the reduction is effective from November 27. With this, the crude palm oil prices have been reduced to ₹86,000 per ton from ₹92,000. The Apparaoet palm oil factory will lose ₹1.02 crore straight away with it.

In general, the crude palm oil will be sold in the open market within four or five

days of its production. The free fatty acids should be below five per cent if the crude palm is sold within five days. After the time limit, the crude palm oil is suggested not to be used for edible oil and it can be sold to the cosmetics industries. The price of crude palm oil may be further lessened due to this.

When contacted the Oilfed general manager Sudhakar to ask about the loss, he was not ready to respond.

The Apparaoet factory used to crush two lakh tonnes FFBs per year, and the price of bunches will be decided based on the price of crude oil every month. The farmers should bear at least 50 per cent of loss faced by the factory with the delayed

act. It is expected that about 12,000 tonnes of FFB will come to the factory in December. The farmers will lose ₹48 lakh due to the decision of officials.

Alapati Prasad, Telangana Oil palm Growers' Association state president, said that the OILFED officials should be careful in every moment and study international palm trade in disposing of its produce and any false decision by them will cause loss to the farmers finally.

He said that the decision of increasing the prices of fibre (waste) to ₹200 from ₹5 per tonne is also a wrong decision. The private factories are giving palm waste free of cost to the farmers.



Oil palm groves in Mandalapalli in Dammapet mandal in Bhadradi district.

— DC

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SHORT TAKES

KAMAL WANTS PM TO HAVE DIALOGUE WITH FARMERS

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

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

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

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

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

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

BILKIS DADI TURNED AWAY FROM BORDER

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

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

Soon after she reached the border point to extend her support to the agitating farmers, she was stopped by Delhi Police personnel at the border. “She was stopped at the Singhu Border and was escorted by the police back to her home in southeast Delhi,” a senior police officer said.

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

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

DELHI GOVT NOTIFIES ONE FARM LAW

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

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

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

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

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

Sportspersons to return awards

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Farmers had faced water cannons and teargas when they were heading



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

towards the national capital as part of their ‘Delhi Chalo’ march against the farm laws. Singh said several former players will go to Delhi on December 5 and will return their awards.

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

Punjab Police.

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

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

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

have backed them.

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

SHOW RESTRAINT, CENTRE TELLS SECURITYMEN

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, DEC 1

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

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

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

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

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

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

India fumes as Trudeau backs farmers

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC NEW DELHI, DEC 1

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

New Delhi also said “diplomatic conversations” should “not be misrepresented for political

purposes”. The reaction came after the Canadian PM said the protests were “concerning” and that Canada always backed the right to protest peacefully, adding that the Canadian Government had raised the issue with Indian authorities.

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

situation is concerning and we’re all very worried about family and friends ... Let me remind you. Canada will always be there to defend the right of peaceful protest. We believe in the importance of dialogue and that’s why we reached out in multiple means directly to the Indian authorities to highlight our concerns.”

India hit back sharply, with the Ministry of External Affairs stating, “We have seen some ill-informed comments by Canadian leaders relating to farmers in India. Such comments are unwarrant-

ed, especially when pertaining to the internal affairs of a democratic country. It is also best that diplomatic conversations are not misrepresented for political purposes.”

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

Up in arms



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

TWO VOICES Rahul backs farmers, others concerned over Khalistani angle

Differences in Cong over stir

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, DEC. 1

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

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

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

“The food grower is sitting in protest on the roads and fields and speeches are being given on TV. We all are indebted to the hard work of farmers. This debt will be over

only by giving them justice and their rights, and not by mistreating them or by beating them with batons or using tear gas against them,” the former Congress President tweeted.

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

However, sources said that within the Congress, specially in Punjab, there was a deep concern over the turn the movement was taking.

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

Sources said that Punjab Congress Chief Sunil Jhakhhar held a meeting with Chief Minister Amarinder Singh over this.

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

by Khalistanis.

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

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

We will always stand by farmers: Hooda

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

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

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

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

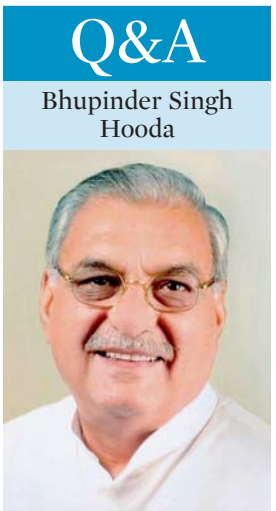
This is blatantly false. There is no such thing like this happening. The farmers of Haryana have been agitating against the three agricultural laws for many months and I have repeatedly urged the government to withdraw these laws or bring in a new law to guarantee minimum support price (MSP) for farmers. Similarly, we have seen in neighboring states also there have been protests for long but the central government and the BJP just refused to see and acknowledge the unease and injustice being met out to farmers. Also Mr. Khattar should tell us whether he does not consider the agitating farmers as residents of Haryana? If the farmers of Haryana are not part of the movement, then who did the government lathi-charge in Pipli? Who are the people who were detained by the Haryana Police before their Delhi march? Who where are the thousands of farmers against whom the Haryana government has filed cases. They are just trying to deflect attention from the real issue.

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

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

What is your demand from the government?

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



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

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

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

What will the Congress do in all this?

Obviously we will stand with the farmers. The Congress has taken a principled stand on this since the monsoon session of parliament when this issue came up. We were not allowed to put our points across and the government brazenly passed all legislation. Several Congress ruled states have already passed legislations to nullify the impact of the center’s legislations. Infact I have several times asked the state government to do away with the law but no avail. I often find that the state government’s ignorance towards such a large movement is not only shocking but also disturbing.

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

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

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

SHORT TAKES

GERMANY BANS FAR-RIGHT, PRO-NAZI GROUP

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

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

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

TAINTED RICE WINE KILLS 7 IN CAMBODIA

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

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

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

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

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

BIDEN, HARRIS GREET ON GURU NANAK B' ANNIV

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

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

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

Euphoria in Azerbaijan



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

— AP

Vaccine: Europe agency to decide on Dec. 29

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

Berlin, Dec. 1: The European Medicines Agency will convene a meeting on December 29 to decide if there is enough data about the safety and efficacy of the Covid-19 vaccine developed by Pfizer and BioNTech for it to be approved, the regulator said Tuesday.

The agency also said Tuesday it could decide as early as January 12 whether to approve a rival Covid-19 vaccine developed by Moderna Inc. The German pharmaceutical company BioNTech and its US partner Pfizer said earlier Tuesday that they had asked the regulator for speeded-up, conditional approval of their Coronavirus vaccine, concluding the rolling review process they initiated with the agency on October 6.

The move comes a day after rival Moderna said it was asking US and European regulators to allow the use of its Covid-19 vaccine. BioNTech said if the vaccine, currently named BNT162b2, is approved, its use in Europe could begin before the end of 2020.

The companies said last month that clinical trials with 44,000 participants showed the vaccine is 95% effective. The efficacy rate in particularly vulnerable older age groups was more than 94%, they said. In a statement, the EU medicines regulator said it had already begun a "rolling review" of the Moderna vaccine based on laboratory data previously submitted by the company and would now assess data on how well that vaccine triggers an immune response and whether it is safe enough for broad use across Europe. The agency said that "if the data are robust enough to conclude on quality, safety and effectiveness," then it could approve the Moderna vaccine at a meeting scheduled for January 12.

BioNTech and Pfizer have already submitted a request for emergency approval with the US Food and Drug Administration and the UK regulator MHRA, as well as rolling submissions in other countries including in Australia, Canada and Japan.

— AP

Trump Coronavirus adviser Atlas resigns

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

While questioning the usefulness of masks he was against lockdowns and promoted the idea of herd immunity. The 65-

year-old the Stanford University neuro-radiologist resigned on Monday at the end of his 130-day temporary assignment, according to US media reports.

Atlas tweeted a photo of his resignation letter on Monday. In the letter, he said his "advice was always focused on minimising all the harms from both the pandemic and the structural policies themselves, especially to the working class and the poor." "I sincerely wish the new team all the best as they guide the nation," he wrote.

— PTI

UK MPs to vote on tier-based lockdown

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

Wednesday.

"While we can let up a little, we can't afford to let up a lot," said Hancock.

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

— PTI

Trafficking up: Nobel winner

United Nations, Dec. 1: Nobel Peace Prize laureate Nadia Murad said the Coronavirus pandemic has increased trafficking of women and gender-based violence, leaving the health and safety of women "on the line."

The 27-year-old activist, who was forced into sexual slavery by Islamic State fighters in Iraq, said curfews, lockdowns and travel restrictions imposed by governments to slow the spread of the virus "have had unintended consequences on women worldwide."

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

reports of domestic violence since Covid began." She said domestic tensions have intensified in confined living spaces, and stay-at-home orders "are increasing human trafficking farther underground, out of sight of law enforcement."

"The few resources for prevention, rescue and rehabilitation are being stretched thin," she said.

"The few resources for prevention, rescue and rehabilitation are being stretched thin," she said.

● **IN 2008, NASA's Phoenix Mars Lander "touched and tasted" Martian water. Since then, the European Space Agency's Mars Express has discovered several underground ponds of water which remain in a liquid state thanks to the presence of magnesium perchlorate salt.**

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

US opposes release of Tahawwur Rana

Washington, Dec. 1: The US government has moved a motion in a federal court in California opposing the release of Pakistani-origin Canadian businessman Tahawwur Rana, who has been declared a fugitive by India for his involvement in the 2008 Mumbai terror attack case, describing him a flight risk.

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

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

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

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

Rana in his court filing has said the Bureau of Prison (BOP) was unable to manage the Covid-19

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

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

— PTI



Nirav Modi

NIRAV REMAND EXTENDED, FINAL HEARINGS IN '21

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

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

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

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

— PTI

Research may radically change logistics of future missions to the Red Planet and beyond

Novel system can extract oxygen, fuel from Mars water

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

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

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

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

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

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

In the journal *Proceedings of the National Acad-*

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

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

25 times more oxygen than MOXIE using the same amount of power, said the researchers, adding it also produces hydrogen, which could be used to fuel astronauts' trip home.

"Our novel brine electrolyser incorporates a lead ruthenate pyrochlore anode developed by our team in conjunction with a platinum on carbon cathode" Ramani said. "These carefully designed components coupled with the optimal use of traditional electrochemical engineering principles has yielded this

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

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

— PTI

DECCAN Chronicle

2 DECEMBER 2020

Regulators amiss in not probing vaccine ‘effect’

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Is Rajini under pressure?

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

While it’s a totally different matter if Rajinikanth would provide clean governance, as his fans tout, or bring about a change in Tamil Nadu or not, why is his impending arrival, or the lack of it, on the political scene engendering palpable anticipation. Are some political parties like the DMK and the AIADMK, which trace their lineage to the Dravidian tradition that Rajinikanth purportedly abhors, wary of fighting him electorally, as his supporters see it? No, those parties show no sign of fright. Then, does he hope to turn a Pied Piper leading the masses on a so far untrodden garden path and turn the affairs of the state upside down, thus unsettling existing social structures and disconcerting cultural mores? Does he have a plan and an agenda for revolutionary changes that would go against the status quo, upending socio-political systems for a better future? Of course there have been no such indications.

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

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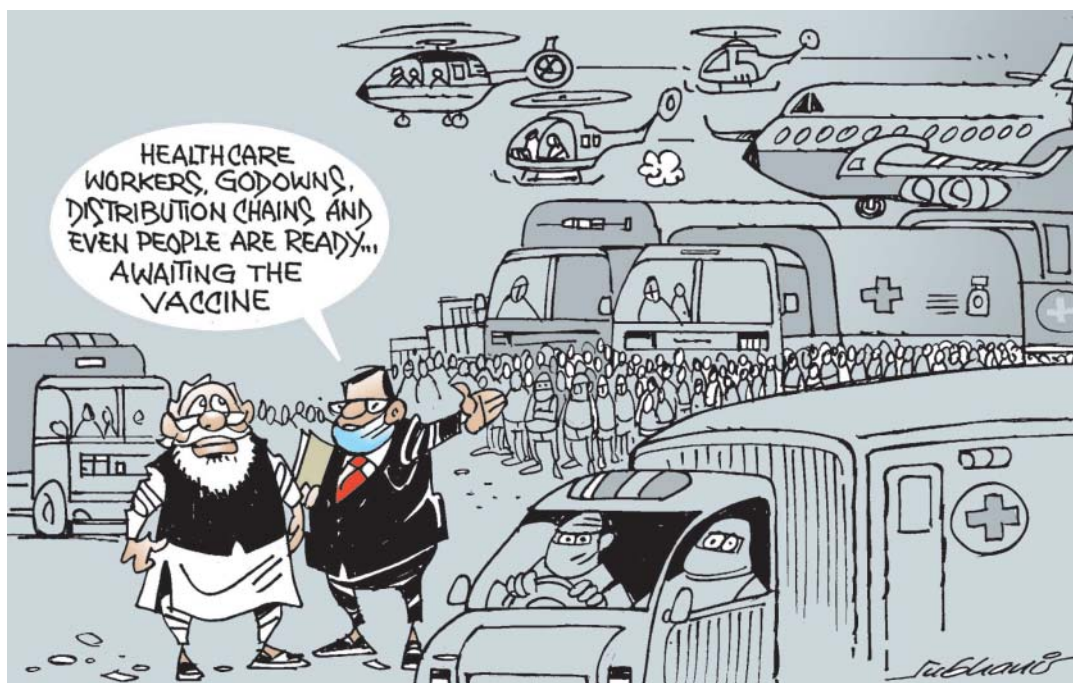
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Subhani



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

Indranil Banerjee

The Donald Trump era may be drawing to a close in the United States, but America will never be the same again. At least not the America that once shone proud, flashing its democratic credentials, hoist on its self-made pedestal.

Mr Trump and the recent US presidential elections have irrevocably tarnished the American democratic model and eroded its moral authority. Today, America increasingly looks like a tired, somewhat tattered democracy, struggling with its inherent inefficiencies and flaws, clawed by manipulators and creased by unwieldy procedures.

The bitter and highly polarised November 2020 election was watched with disbelief and distaste across the world. Even nations at the bottom of the democratic ladder couldn’t restrain their delight and disdain at America’s tortured electoral process.

“What a spectacle!” exclaimed Iran’s supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei of the US elections. Khamenei, a champion of one of the world’s most repressive regimes, tweeted: “One says this is the most fraudulent election in US history. Who says that? The President who is in office. His rival says Trump intends to rig the election! This is how #USElections & US democracy are.”

The incoming US President, Joseph R. Biden, who will be sworn in on January 20, 2021, knows that he has his job cut out for him. Before the elections he pledged to unite America and end the “grim era of demonisation”.

“It is time to heal America”, he declared, adding he fought this election “to restore the soul of America, to rebuild the backbone of this nation, the middle class and to make America respected

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

But all that is easier said than done. America remains totally polarised, like never before, and having once slipped from the top of the global hierarchy, it might be difficult if not impossible to crawl back. Mr Biden’s democratic credentials, statements and world-view hark back to an era forever lost. The old days of American hegemony are not lamented by the world. Internally too, Mr Biden will find it hard to restore those values so missed by liberal, egalitarian Americans.

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

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

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

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

and the dozens of dictatorships it supports the world over.

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

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

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

While the end of using democratic credentials as a tool for hegemonic objectives will not be lamented, what will be is the erosion of those core values. All said and done, those values did serve to rescue many societies from various forms of utter despotism.

Who will shine the moral beacon in the years to come? With America’s democratic ideal broken and suspect, Europe cringing and unable to come to terms with growing ethnic and religious diversity, it will be the despotic ascendant powers like the People’s Republic of China that will seek to assume the

America remains totally polarised, like never before, and having once slipped from the top of the the global hierarchy, it might be difficult if not impossible to crawl back

status of global role model. This cannot but be a terrible portent. Something better must emerge. But from where, in this wilderness of ideologies and systems currently prevailing all over the world?

One unusual suggestion has recently been made by Singapore’s best-known diplomat-academic Kishore Mahbubani. In a recent piece in the *South China Morning Post*, he wrote: “India is entering a geopolitical sweet spot. What does this mean? In a world crying out for a strong, independent voice to provide moral guidance to a troubled planet, the only realistic candidate is India. None of the three other obvious candidates — the United States, the European Union and China — can step up to the plate now.”

“India’s rise is ‘reassuring’ because it is not perceived as a threat by other powers. Given this trusted position, India can take advantage of it by providing the world ethical leadership, of the kind that Gandhiji would have provided if he were alive today”, Mahbubani wrote, adding that India could become the global champion of multilateralism and a rules-based behaviour.

Within India, however, there is widespread disillusionment and a sense of dejection arising out of the uncontrolled spread of the Covid-19 pandemic and sustained economic contraction. Massive job losses, economic dislocation and disappearing public savings have left a nation bewildered and despondent.

Internally too, India is acutely polarised and fragmented; and few in the world are looking up to it as a potential role model. Yet, as Mahbubani argues, India has the potential to emerge as the world’s ethical flag bearer. But for that to happen, the country will require a benevolent, consensual, farsighted statesman as a leader, who is capable of unifying a vast and diversified nation — and perhaps the world as well.

The writer is an independent commentator on political and security issues

LETTERS

LISTEN TO FARMERS

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

G. Thirupathaiah
Hyderabad

STRONG OPPOSITION

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

Mansoor Dashti
Secunderabad

BALLOT PAPER

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

T. Kailash Ditya
Hyderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN

DECCAN Chronicle

Foreign offers pour in to make small car

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

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

A.G. Noorani



Congress in crisis, but India needs strong Opp.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

so long as they can get the party elected and provide jobs for the minions.

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

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

The writer is an author and lawyer, and one of India’s top constitutional experts

By arrangement with Dawn

quick BITES

INDICATORS

		%
Sensex	44,655.44	1.15
Nifty 50	13,109.05	1.08
S&P 500*	3,669.50	1.32
Dollar (₹)	73.63	0.56
Pound Sterling (₹)	98.54	0.13
Euro (₹)	88.06	0.23
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	48,273▲45	0.09
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	47.51	-0.37
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.930	0.019
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.914	0.072

* As of 8:30 PM IST

UK retailer Debenhams to be liquidated

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

Sinha to head group strategy at Mahindra



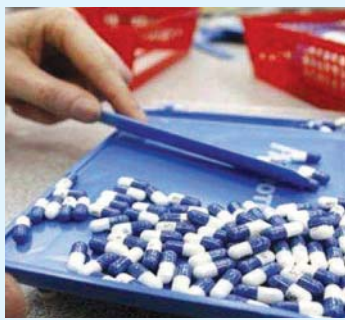
Mahindra Group announced the appointment of Bain & Co. veteran Amit Sinha as president, group strategy. It said Sinha will work with the group businesses to help drive growth and returns. "He will also oversee synergy, risk and economist functions and play a key role in coordinating international synergies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

Paytm waives merchant transaction fee

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

PLI schemes for drugs, devices get good response

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



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

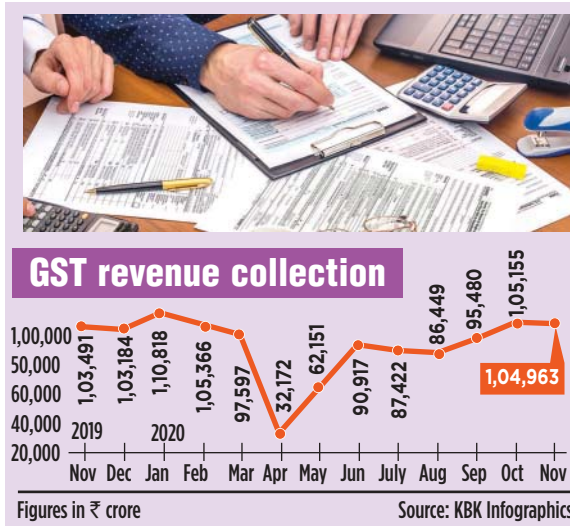
MADHUSUDAN SAHOO
NEW DELHI, DEC. 1

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

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

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

In last month's mopup, the share of CGST was Rs 19,189 crore and IGST was Rs 25,540 crore. IGST and cess amounted to Rs 51,992 crore and Rs 8,242 crore, respectively. The total number of GSTR-3B returns filed for the month was 82 lakh, the finance ministry said in a statement.



However, manufacturing activity showed a decline in November from the decadal high recorded by the Nikkei Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) in October. As per the survey compiled by IHS Markit, Manufacturing PMI declined to 56.3 in November from October's 58.9, still remaining well above the 50-level separating growth from contraction for the fourth month.

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

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

Businesses expect quicker return to profitability

New Delhi, Dec. 1: Indian businesses expect a quicker return to pre-Covid levels of profitability than most others, and are positive about international trade, says a survey. According to HSBC's annual Navigator survey, which covered more than 10,000 companies across 39 global markets, including 350 firms from India, Indian businesses continue

to have an appetite for growth and investment. As per the survey, 87 per cent of Indian businesses, notably higher than the global average (73 per cent), expect to return to pre-Covid levels of profitability within two years, by the end of 2022. Besides, 90 per cent of Indian businesses intend to increase financial investment to become

more successful over the next year, notably higher than the global average of 67 per cent. On business outlook, almost half (45 per cent) of the surveyed Indian businesses are optimistic about business growth, far higher than the global average of 29 per cent. "The overall business sentiment is understandably muted, given the chal-

lenging environment over the course of the year. However, we are witnessing signs of recovery as companies are charting new pathways to recovery," said Rajat Verma, head of commercial banking, HSBC India. The outlook towards international trade is positive with 93 per cent of Indian firms (against 72 per cent globally). —PTI

Festivals, wedding season aid car sales

MICHAEL GONSALVES
PUNE, DEC. 1

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

Sales in November at Hyundai, India's second biggest car maker sold 9.4 per cent more cars, Tata Motors 108 per cent, Kia Motor 50 per cent, Mahindra and Mahindra 24 per cent and Toyota Kirloskar Motor 2.4 per cent, Honda Cars 55 per cent, MG Motors 28 per cent more cars. Sales at Hyundai Motor jumped 9.4 per cent at 48,800 units. "Building on the strong sales momentum that was driven by festive demand this year, the recently introduced i20 has helped carry forward the festive momentum even in the post-Diwali period," Tarun Garg, director (sales, marketing and service at Hyundai Motor India, said.

Tata Motors, India's

largest automaker by revenues, sold whopping 108 per cent more cars at 21,641 units last month, up from 10,400 units it sold last year. Kia Motors saw 50 per cent year-on-year growth at 21,022 units last month. Kia Sonet sold 11,417 units.

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

Mahindra and Mahindra sold 24 per cent more cars at 18,212 units last month. Maruti Suzuki, India's biggest car maker, which sells one out of two cars bought in the country, sold 135,775 units in November. Sales at Honda Cars shot up 55 per cent at 9,990 units last month while Toyota Kirloskar Motor sold 8,508 units. MG Motor, which overtook Ford in the sales rankings for the first time in November, retailed 4,163 units, a rise of 28.5 per cent.

Gas use returns to pre-Covid level

SHWETHA SUNIL &
DEBJIT CHAKRABORTY
DEC. 1

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

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

Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeks to double gas's share to 15 per cent of the country's energy mix by 2030. The country, which the World Bank said in 2016 was home to 14 of the 30 most polluted cities on the planet, will see \$60 billion in investment in new pipelines and import facilities to increase use of the fuel.

"India's gas consumption has already surpassed pre-Covid levels," Ranganathan said in an interview. "All the big industries have actually come back full swing." The rebound comes after pandemic lockdowns sapped demand, forcing Gail to cancel one US cargo and postpone another from Gazprom PJSC,

which will now arrive this month, he said. Meanwhile, rival Indian gas importers - including Indian Oil Corp. and Gujarat State Petroleum Corp. - have jumped back into the LNG spot market recently, issuing tenders seeking prompt shipments. India has aggressively auctioned out areas for city-gas supplies covering 70 per cent of its population while starting LNG fuel stations on highways and industrial areas to convert diesel-guzzling trucks and mining vehicles. Oil refineries alone will boost consumption to 50 million cubic meters a day by 2025 from about 10 million now, Ranganathan said. —Bloomberg

Consumer durables set to become costlier

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, DEC. 1



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

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

MDI, or methylenediphenyl diisocyanate, is used in the production of polyurethanes.

According to Emkay Global Financial Services, on an average, copper prices have increased 20 per cent over last year and 4.5 per cent over the previous quarter. Aluminum prices have inched up 12 per cent and polypropylene prices have also rebounded 8.5 per cent over the previous quarter.

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

son in order to clear inventory. The price cuts were evident in air conditioners, washing machines and refrigerators.

While there were no major price changes in the offline channel, brands have resorted to aggressive pricing online, says Emkay. As a result, online channels saw strong growth in white goods, with a large number of shoppers coming from tier 2 towns. Footfalls for large format retail stores saw a single digit decline as mall-based stores continued to see challenges during the festive season.

Refrigerators and ACs were the most impacted category due to the lockdown, as it coincided with the peak summer season. Brands had adopted aggressive online pricing in May and June and then during the festive season to clear off old inventory and start fresh for the next summer season.

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

prices in the range of 13-22 per cent and Voltas by 6.2 per cent.

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

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

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

ETFs gaining traction, MFs' profit may get affected

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, DEC. 1

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

Investment in ETFs by pension funds like the Employee Provident Fund Organisation—which were hard-pressed to pay high interest of as much as 8.5 per cent on contributions in FY20—are now sitting pretty with market value of their investments hitting all-time highs.

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

ETF/index funds continue to gain traction as



individual folios have grown at a CAGR of 64.8 per cent to 3.6 million during FY15-FY21 (till September 2020) while assets have increased to Rs 21,300 crore at a CAGR of 59 per cent, said a report by HDFC Securities. "While increased volatility and active equity outflows of Rs 20,480 crore in FY21 till date have dented the performance of asset management companies (AMC), we do expect a more benign environment as markets are near all-time high levels and 4QFY21 will see ELSS inflows," HDFC Securities said. "Performance at most listed fund houses except for UTI AMC continued to disappoint as a higher percentage of rated active equity AUM

slipped to underperforming," HDFC Securities added.

FY21 (till date) ETF net inflows continue to be robust at Rs 27,310 crore, while active equity assets continued to witness outflows of Rs 20,480 crore. Gross SIP flows have declined 9.7 per cent since March-20 to Rs 7,800 crore in October 2020 as uncertain markets tested investors' nerves.

The brokerage said it expects flows to improve as markets stabilise and individuals invest in tax savings schemes over the fourth quarter.

"Passive ETF plus index funds are gaining traction. Passive funds individual AUM has displayed phenomenal growth at FY15-FY21 (Sep20) at CAGR of 59.0 per cent to Rs 21,300 crore. Strong traction from individual investors has resulted in a robust folio growth at CAGR of 64.8 per cent. We continue to keenly watch this space as any sustained growth in this segment can dent profitability," the report said.

Wockhardt UK lends facility for vaccine supply



RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, DEC. 1

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

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

Wockhardt UK specialises in the supply of generic and speciality medicines and is one of the leading suppliers to the National Health Service of the United Kingdom. Founder chairman of Wockhardt Habil Khorakiwala said, "The visit by the Prime Minister of the UK demonstrates our global strength in sterile injectable facilities."

NEW PRESS SECY FOR RAMGARHIA BOARD



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

Business NOTE

SHORT TAKES

Hamilton tests Covid-19 positive

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

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

Bach unopposed in bid for 2nd term

Lausanne: Thomas Bach will stand unopposed to serve a second term as International Olympic Committee president, the body said on Tuesday. Bach, a 66-year-old German lawyer, is set to be confirmed for a second and final four-year term at an IOC session in March in Athens.

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

Olympic rings back in Tokyo Bay

Tokyo: The five Olympic rings are back in Tokyo Bay. They were removed for maintenance four months ago shortly after the Tokyo Olympics were postponed until next year because of the Covid-19 pandemic. The rings arrived on Tuesday after a short cruise from Yokohama and are positioned on a barge in the shadow on Tokyo's Rainbow Bridge. The rings painted blue, black, red, green, and yellow are gigantic. They stand about 15 meters tall and 33 meters in length about 50 feet tall and 100 feet in length. The rings will be lighted at night and herald the coming of the Olympics, which are to open on July 23, 2021, followed by the Paralympics on August 24. The rings made their first appearance early in 2020, just a few months before the Olympics were postponed late in March. — AP

Lopez banned 8 years for fixing

London: Spanish tennis player Enrique Lopez was banned for eight years on Tuesday for fixing matches at tournaments in 2017. The Tennis Integrity Unit said Lopez cannot play in or attend any officially recognized tournament while banned. He was fined 25,000.

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

Live on TV

CRICKET

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

FOOTBALL

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

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

Third time lucky?

India look to salvage pride in third ODI against Oz

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

A 0-3 defeat against Australia would be their second rout in consecutive ODI series having met the same fate in New Zealand earlier this year. "We are very much determined to go out there to win the next match and see that it's not a clean sweep," top-order batsman Shreyas Iyer said when asked what his team can do to stop Australia's first in 20 years.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Langer feels Warner paves way for others to grab slot

Canberra, Dec. 1: A groin injury has ruled David Warner out of at least the first Test against India and Australia coach Justin Langer says the temporarily vacant opening slot will go to the one who performs well for Australia A in the upcoming four games against the visitors.

The Australian cricket fraternity has been debating about Warner's opening partner in the Test series with a few backing the struggling Joe Burns to keep his place while others want the young William Pucovski to open.

However, the injury to Warner has changed the scenario and has created a situation where both Burns and Pucovski could open.

Langer said, it has

AMIR REVEALS PAK PLAYERS SCARED OF TAKING BREAKS

Karachi, Dec. 1: Pakistan pacer Moahammed Amir says players of the national team are scared of asking for a break even when they feel exhausted as they apprehend being dropped from the side altogether due to a "communication gap" with the team management.

Amir, who has retired from Test cricket to prolong his career in the shorter formats, said communication and understanding needs to be better between players and the management.

"The problem is that if a player musters courage to say in Pakistan cricket that he wants rest, he is dropped, so players are now scared about speaking about it with the management," he said. — PTI



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

Iyer glad that Oz have plan against him

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

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

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

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

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

and score more runs and make best use of it." Playing the short stuff

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

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

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

CAPTAIN FINCH STANDS FOR STRUGGLING STARC

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SHAH RUKH INVESTS IN USA CRICKET LEAGUE

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

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

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

Mumbai sweep aside East Bengal

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

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

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

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

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

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

HYDERABAD FC LOOK TO EXTEND UNBEATEN RUN

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

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

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

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

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

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

PELLEGRINI'S BETIS LOSE AGAIN IN LIGA

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

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

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

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

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



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

Fulham escape relegation zone

London, Dec. 1: The first ballooned over the crossbar. The second was a dreadful attempt at a "Panenka" that flopped into the goalkeeper's arms. The third flew off target because of an unfortunate slip.

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

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

A 2-1 victory was only Fulham's second in 10 games since promotion

back to the top-flight and it lifted the team out of the relegation zone.

It also ended Fulham's penalty nightmare.

"I didn't feel pressure," said Cavaleiro, who slipped before shanking a penalty over the bar in last week's 3-2 home loss to Everton.

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

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