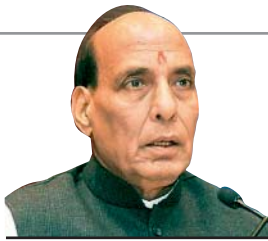


DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
KARIMNAGAR | FRIDAY | 11 DECEMBER 2020



NATION | 4

Rajnath suggests restraint for peace



WORLD | 5

3,054 die of Covid in 24 hours in US

SPORTS | 8

Italy's 1982 World Cup hero Paolo Rossi dead



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WEATHER

Max: 30.9°C
Min: 14.5°C
RH: 36%
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Partly cloudy.
Mist or haze likely.
Max/Min temp. 31/15 °C

COVID-19 CUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+33,346)	(+479)
97,95,596	1,42,214

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+643)	(+2)
TS: 2,75,904	1,482
(+538)	(+2)
AP: 8,73,995	7,047

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

6,96,28,901

DEATHS

15,83,252

COUNTRIES AREAS WITH CASES

218

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Kartika Bahula Ekadasi till 10.02 am
Star: Chitta till 8.46 am
Varjyam: 1.50 pm to 3.17 pm
Durmuhurtam: 8.52 am to 9.35 am; 12.31 pm to 1.15 pm
Rahukalam: 10.30 am to 12 noon

HJRI CALENDAR

Rabbi-ul Aakhir 25, 1442 AH

PRAYERS

Fajar: 5.31 am
Zohar: 12.19 pm
Asar: 4.06 pm
Maghrib: 5.48 pm
Isha: 7.02 pm

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.36 AM
SUNSET TODAY 5.42 PM
MOONSET TODAY 2.55 PM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 2.51 AM

COUNTER POINT

Don't worry, sir... we will dig all national highways!

IN BRIEF

Kamal Haasan on campaign trail

Chennai: Makkal Needhi Maiam (MNM) chief Kamal Haasan will launch his campaign for the 2021 Tamil Nadu Assembly elections from December 13 onwards, the party said on Thursday. The actor-politician will embark on his first phase of campaign between December 13-16, MNM Vice president, Dr R. Mahendran said.

Drone spotted at border, says BSF

Jammu: A drone was spotted flying over the International Border (IB) in Jammu and Kashmir's RS Pura sector, BSF officials said. Alert BSF troops at the border outpost fired on the drone, forcing it to return back, officials said.

Divyang empowerment



G. Kishan Reddy, Union minister of state for home, inaugurates the National Centre for Divyang Empowerment at CRPF Centre, Shamirpet.

Will block trains: Farmers

Tomar urges agitating farmers to consider Centre's plan

SANJAY KAW | DC
NEW DELHI, DEC. 10

Not satisfied with the Centre's offer to amend new agriculture laws, the farmers' unions on Thursday said that they won't relent on their demand of "complete roll-back" and threatened to block railway tracks across the country in coming days. It was despite agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar urging protesting farmers to consider the Centre's proposals and said that he is ready for further discussions with them. "We will block railway tracks if new farm laws are not immediately rolled back... We will decide on the date and announce it soon. The Centre has admitted that laws have been promulgated for traders. If agriculture is a state subject, the Centre does not have the right to make laws on it," said farmer leader Balbir Singh Rajewal after agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar and food and public distribution minister Piyush Goyal invited farmers' leaders for another round of talks. So far, the leaders have held several round of talks with the Central ministers.

The farmer leaders issued fresh threat to block railway tracks just a day after they had out-

FOLLOWING INDIA PROTESTS CLOSELY, SAYS BRITAIN AFTER JOHNSON'S GAFFE

London, Dec. 10: The UK Foreign Office is closely following the protests by farmers in India, a government spokesperson said on Thursday as it clarified that Prime Minister Boris

Johnson had "clearly misheard" a question when he responded with Britain's stance on the India-Pakistan dispute instead.

■ Full report on Page 5



Farmers offer prayer at the Ghazipur border during their ongoing protest against the Centre's new agri-laws in New Delhi, Thursday.

rightly rejected the Centre's draft proposal to amend the new farm laws. They had rejected a 20-page proposal offered by the Centre for it being

"vague".

The agitated leaders had announced to intensify their agitation by blocking highways from Saturday and by organising sit-in

protests across the country on Monday. They had also threatened to gherao the residences and offices of the BJP leaders and ministers.

With the farmers' protests entering 15th day, the agriculture minister said on Thursday that it was not right to escalate protests when talks were still on. He said, "The talks are still on. There is no breakdown. Farmers should express their views during the talks."

Referring to farmers' demand to repeal the farm laws, Mr Tomar said "no law is completely bad". He said that the government is ready to discuss the specific clauses in the farm laws that the farmers think can hurt them. "We have sent them our proposal just on Wednesday and they have announced the next phase of agitation. This is not correct. I again appeal them to withdraw their agitation and start discussions."



Prime Minister Narendra Modi lays the foundation stone of the New Parliament Building during a ceremony, in New Delhi on Thursday.

— PTI

New Parliament to be sign of self-reliant India: Modi

DC CORRESPONDENT
with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, DEC. 10

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday performed the ground-breaking ceremony to mark the symbolic launch of the new Parliament building as part of the "controversial" Central Vista plan.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr Modi said that it would be a symbol of a new and self-reliant India as well as a rich testament

to the nation's cultural heritage. The ceremony was a symbolic one as on December 7, the Supreme Court had come down heavily on the Centre for "aggressively" going ahead with the project, even though a slew of petitions against the project are still being heard by the top court. It had asked the Centre not to carry out any construction or demolition activity but at the same time allowed it to perform a symbolic cere-

mony. The proposed four-storied building to cover an area of around 13 acres is a stone's throw from the Rashtrapati Bhavan. It is the highlight of the government's ambitious ₹20,000-crore Central Vista project. There are plans to finish the building before the country's 75th Independence Day in 2022, but construction cannot begin yet as a legal challenge to the project is pending in the Supreme Court.



Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao inaugurates various developmental projects at Siddipet along with finance minister Harish Rao and health minister E. Rajender on Thursday.

KCR hints at second airport at Siddipet

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 10

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao hinted at the possibility of Telangana state getting its second international airport at Siddipet in the near future on Thursday.

He said this while lay-

ing the foundation stone for an IT Park at Duddeda village in Kondapak Mandal of Siddipet district. The airport, when it materialises, will be in addition to the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport at Shamshabad.

"Siddipet is a dynamic place and is close to

Hyderabad. We can expect another international airport in the area around Siddipet in the future. The establishment of an IT Tower will facilitate development of Siddipet on all fronts," the CM said.

■ Page 2: IT tower built by TS for ₹45 crore

After HC nod, CM orders land regn

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 10

In order to revive the old procedure of provisional registrations of non-agricultural property in the state, on the request of the Telangana state government, the Telangana High Court on Thursday accorded permission to it to insist on the

Property Tax Identification Number (PTIN) for registrations.

Following the instructions of the High Court, Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao directed chief secretary Somesh Kumar to start registrations of non-agricultural properties

■ Page 2: Types of assets for PTIN not clear

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IN BRIEF

TS records 643 fresh Covid cases

Hyderabad: Telangana state saw 643 new cases and two deaths in the last 24 hours. Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation area recorded 109 new cases, Medchal Malkajgiri, 84, Ranga Reddy, 82 and Warangal Urban, 56. Around 53,396 tests were carried out in the state even as the government promised that testing will be increased to 65,000 tests per day. The total cases in the state right now stand at 2,75,904 and total number of deaths at 1,482.

KCR LEAVES FOR 3-DAY DELHI TRIP TODAY

Hyderabad, Dec. 10 Political circles are excited over the proposed Delhi visit of Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao on Friday.

Sources in the government and the Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) said that Rao will leave for a three-day visit to Delhi on Friday afternoon.

Rao's Delhi tour had turned into a debated point in political circles in view of his hard-hitting remarks against the BJP government at the Centre during the GHMC elections and his announcement of playing an active role in the national politics to build an alternative political force to the BJP and the Congress to give a new direction to the country.

The Chief Minister had also announced that he would lead the agitation against the BJP's anti-farmer policies and disinvestments of the public sector undertakings.

Party sources said that the Chief Minister is likely to meet leaders of political parties who are opposing the BJP's policies and will also interact with the representatives of farmers associations who are agitating against the Farm Laws in Delhi.

Rao is expected to meet several Union ministers during his stay in Delhi and unconfirmed reports indicated he has sought appointment of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Rao is also expected to pay a visit to the site allocated by the Union government to the TRS to construct a party office in Delhi.

TAGORE CONTINUES TALKS FOR NEW TPCC CHIEF

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 10

AICC incharge for Telangana state Congress affairs Manickam Tagore continued consultations for the second consecutive day on Thursday with senior leaders of party to select new chief to the Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee. Meanwhile, Anjan Kumar Yadav has resigned as Hyderabad City Congress president.

Bhongir MP Komatireddy Venkat Reddy requested Manickam Tagore to recommend his name for the TPCC president to the AICC. After meeting Tagore, the MP talking to press reporters at Gandhi Bhavan said that he asked for the TPCC chief post considering his services to the party as four-time MLA and MP and also his sacrifice of quitting as minister for the cause of Telangana.

He said that if he was given the TPCC chief post he would get the party back on track and build the party.

'HUMAN BEINGS HAVE RIGHT TO LIVE WITH DIGNITY'

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 10

"Human beings have the right to live with dignity and self-respect with protection from exploitation, and the Legal Services Authority will aid all citizens to protect their rights," said K. Murali Mohan, Senior Civil Judge-cum-Secretary, District Legal Services Authority, City Civil Courts, Hyderabad.

Speaking on the occasion of the International Human Rights Day, he said that to serve litigants in order to get speedy justice, the Legal Services Authority has been conducting several activities providing access to justice to all the neglected people.

Junior Civil Judge Khushboo Upadhyay who participated in the programme said sex determination and elimination of the foetus is a violation of human rights and the law will protect women from all sorts of humiliations. She also apprised participants with regard to various laws

8 women cheated, sold to Arabs as house helps

Notorious city agent involved in racket arrested

ATHER MOIN | DC
HYDERABAD, DEC. 10

More than eight Hyderabad women are stranded in different parts of United Arab Emirates (UAE) after being cheated in the name of employment by a city-based agent. The women were sent by a notorious local agent Mohammed Shafi of Misri Gunj. They were allegedly sold to Arab families.

It is learnt that personnel from Task Force South Zone apprehended Shafi and handed him over to the CCS.

Parents of the eight women, Amreen Begum, Nazia Begum, Yasmeen Begum, Raheema Begum, Kaneez Fatima, Meher Unnisa Begum, Asma Begum and Zareena Begum addressed a letter to the Minister for External Affairs Dr Subrahmanya Jaishankar seeking help to rescue them.

It is believed that about 10 women were sent to UAE in September and October. They were offered jobs as saleswomen in a shopping



Spokesperson of Majlis Bachao Tahreek Amjadullah Khan Khalid with the families of the victims.

mall in Dubai by Shafi. As promised eight women were taken to Dubai on a three-month visit visa and were handed over to Al Safer, a labour recruitment agency, in Dubai.

Badrunnisa Begum, a resident of Prakash Nagar, Begumpet, said her two daughters Nazia and Yasmeen Begum were sent to Dubai in September and October. She said at the time of departure the local agent gave them ₹8,000 each and promised that her daughters would each

get ₹30,000 per month. However, after reaching Dubai, her daughters informed the family that they were cheated and instead of giving a job in the shopping mall, they were taken to Arab families.

They informed that an unidentified woman, belonging to Al-Safer agency who received them in Dubai, took money from Arab families, who hired them as domestic help.

An auto-rickshaw driver Mohammed Maqbool of Vattapally said 40 days

ago his wife Asra Begum was sent to UAE for a job by distant relatives. The agent promised that her employment would start from the time of departure. After reaching there his wife was asked to take 14 days quarantine and later she was given to an Arab family.

He said, "When we approached Shafi requesting him to repatriate them as they were duped, he asked us to pay ₹1 lakh if they wanted to see their children."

Spokesperson of Majlis Bachao Tahreek, Amjadullah Khan Khalid, who alerted the Ministry about their problems, said the family members of the victims had approached him and narrated the tragic story of their daughters.

He said they were being asked to work for minimum 15 hours daily without proper food and accommodation and were being tortured and even sexually assaulted. They have not been paid any salary since they landed in Dubai. He requested the Ministry to intervene in the matter and rescue them.

'MIXOPATHY' DIVIDES AYUSH DOCTORS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 10

AYUSH doctors, especially those from Ayurveda, have asked Indian Medical Association to stop calling the new rule mixopathy and instead as an integration of modern science with ayurveda.

Ayurveda doctors state that the rule proposed by the Central Council of Indian Medicine (CCIM) is a step towards integration of sciences and not a retrograde one.

Dr V. L. N. Sastry, former additional director of department of Ayush, says, "The protest is unethical. There is no poaching but integration of systems of medicine. Everyone should learn the techniques and skills. Surgery is a technique and prescribing a medicine is following a medicinal stream. We are aware of which all have a license and which don't."

The strength of AYUSH doctors is not very high and the scope of surgeries is limited. There are only small and minimal surgeries that have been prescribed in the Gazette notification and that too for those that are not life-threatening.

Dr Mallu Prasad, former member of CCIM, says, "The demand for AYUSH doctors to practice surgical techniques is pending."

HC NOT TO INTERFERE IN PROSECUTION OF NETA CASES

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 10

A Division Bench headed by Chief Justice Raghavendra Singh Chauhan and Justice B. Vijayen Reddy on Thursday refused to interfere in the issue of prosecution of criminal cases against MLAs and MPs of the state.

The Forum for Good Governance, an NGO, had filed a petition seeking a direction to the Telangana state government to expedite the prosecution process. The petitioner organisation says that the Telangana state police were not speeding up the process to complete the prosecutions due to paucity of staff. Refusing to accept the contention, Chief Justice Chauhan said, "The High Court has already directed to fill up 200 vacancies of Public Prosecutors, out of the sanctioned strength of 414 and the Telangana Government has already initiated the process."

Students say UoH closed admissions

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC
HYDERABAD, DEC. 10

Several students in the waiting list after appearing for the entrance examination of University of Hyderabad (UoH) have claimed that the university had closed admissions for MA, MPhil & PhD, before many other central universities, thus preventing them from getting admission.

One of the aspirants, Deshdeep raised the issue with the university officials. Upon enquiring, he said he was told that the admissions for this session were closed. He added that he wrote to the university, requesting them to open admissions for waiting list students, but he did not receive any response.

The UoH students' union also weighed in on the issue and added that this was the case with several students from every department. They also wrote to the Vice-Chancellor of the University urging him to look into the

situation and not deny admission to hundreds of students, even though seats were yet to be filled in the reservation category.

The university had started admissions for MA courses on October 16 and closed them on November 18, a day prior to commencement of classes.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, Vinod Parvala, UoH official spokesperson, denied the allegations saying that 95 per cent of the seats were filled in the admission process only after many students had dropped out at the eleventh hour.

"Some seats at the end of the admission process are bound to remain vacant because students drop out. This year, however, the situation has been different. We did not follow the usual procedure of taking out waiting lists. Instead we opted for the counselling method due to time constraints and the urgency to start classes", he said.

KCR lays foundation stone for IT Towers in Hyderabad

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 10

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao on Thursday inaugurated a host of developmental works and laid foundation stones for multiple development works in Siddipet district.

Rao reached Siddipet around 10.30 am from Begumpet Airport and arrived at Duddeda village by road and laid the foundation for the IT Park which is coming up at a cost of ₹45 crore in a sprawling three-acre land with 60,000 square feet office space.

Later, he inaugurated Rythu Vedita at Mittapally near Siddipet, which was constructed at a cost of ₹22 lakh in 2,046 square yards.

Rao inaugurated Government Medical College which was constructed at a cost of ₹715 crore in three-lakh sft. He laid the foundation for a 1,000-bedded hospital on the same premises.

The Chief Minister also inaugurated 2,460 BHK housing complex in Siddipet which was constructed at a cost of ₹145 crore on 45 acres of land.

He attended housing warming ceremonies performed by beneficiaries P. Devender-Swathi, Raj Kaur, Mohammed Saddam and Yaka Bhagya in the complex which was named as KCR

From page 1

The IT Tower in Siddipet is being constructed by the state government at a cost of over ₹45 crore in three acres with a built-up area of 60,000 square feet in two phases. The first phase is expected to be completed in a year.

Rao said that it is fortunate that four entrepreneurs from Siddipet who settled in the US had come forward to set up their establishments in the IT Tower. He said the four firms will provide employment

Nagar. He also inaugurated a function hall and integrated market in the colony.

The Chief Minister also inaugurated the underground drainage system in Siddipet which was constructed at a cost of ₹278.50 crore as part of making Swachh Siddipet.

The CM spent some time in the guest house which was built in Palla Gutta Island under the Ranga Nayak Sagar Reservoir after inaugurating it.

Later, the Chief Minister

MINOR SAVED FROM CHILD MARRIAGE

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 10

A child marriage was averted by the Rachakonda police. She Teams from Kandukur division and the minor girl was rescued on Wednesday.

Police said parents of the girl, a Class VII student from Begumpet village, had fixed her wedding with a 22-year-old boy from a neighbouring village. "Upon receiving information, we went to their houses and counselled both the families on the negative impacts of early marriages and made them call off the wedding," police said. Rachakonda police commissioner Mahesh M. Bhagwat, appreciating the good work of the SHE Teams, requested citizens not to encourage child marriages as it was a crime. Priests, elders, families etc., would be held responsible, he said.

IT tower built by TS for ₹45 crore

ment to 900 people and that the four entrepreneurs have already signed MoUs with the IT department.

Stating that around 3,000 people will get employment directly and indirectly through the IT Tower, Rao disclosed that temporary accommodation will be provided to the four entrepreneurs to start up their activities without waiting for completion of the tower.

He congratulated entrepreneurs for evincing keen interest in setting up their establishments in the proposed IT Tower.

inspected the beautification of Komati Cheruvu and he walked around the Necklace Road at the lake.

Finance minister T. Harish Rao, ministers Etala Rajendar, S. Niranjan Reddy, Vemula Prashanth Reddy, MPs J. Santosh Kumar, Kotha Prabhakar Reddy, Government Chief Whip Bodakunti Venkateswarlu, chairpersons of corporations, MLAs, MLCs and other public representatives participated in the programmes.

DEMOLISH BUILDINGS ON TANK BEDS: HC

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 10

The Telangana High Court on Thursday chided the authorities for regularising constructions and properties built on tank bed lands and nalas.

It directed the authorities to submit their report on the petition and made it clear that constructions on tank bed lands should be demolished.

The division bench, comprising Chief Justice Raghavendra Singh Chauhan and Justice Bollaam Vijayen Reddy, was dealing with a plea, which brought to the notice of the court, such regularisations in Bheemaram mandal of Mancherial district.

The bench faulted the laxity of the Revenue and local Municipal authorities for not safeguarding the properties and even regularising such illegal constructions.

Urging the higher authorities at the state level to be cautious and to monitor the situation at the ground level, the Bench observed, "If the constructions on tank beds and nalas are regularised, nothing will be left in Hyderabad and other major towns. If the authorities were vigilant, would there be rampant illegal constructions at the Shamirpet tank bed area? One day all these will be regularised, without any concern for floods and storage of water." "It is because of such negligence that we are witnessing a situation in AP Pradesh, where several people are suffering because of contaminated water that is mixed with lead. Be cautious", the Court observed.

Farmer protest: Dasoju questions KCR's concern

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 10

● **DASOJU** states that the CM's letter supporting the PM on the Central Vista project is yet another example of the TRS and the BJP being in collusion.

Speaking to the media at Gandhi Bhavan, he said the CM's letter supporting the PM on the Central Vista project is yet another example of the TRS and the BJP being in collusion.

AICC Spokesperson Dr Sravan Dasoju on Thursday asked Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao if he is really serious and sincere about the farmer issues.

Sravan will be travelling to Delhi on Friday to stage a protest in front of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's residence.

OTHER STORIES
TWO KILLED IN
HIT-AND-RUN
ACCIDENT IN HYD

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 10

Two men were killed in a hit-and-run accident after an unidentified four-wheeler dashed their bike at Eshwarnagar area of Anumula mandal in Nalgonda in the early hours of Thursday.

According to the police, the deceased were identified as Naveen, 16 and Sravan, 28, both natives of Kothaloor of Peddavoora mandal.

The duo were heading home on early Thursday morning when the unidentified vehicle ran over their bike from behind, gravely injuring them, said the police. "They succumbed to their injuries on the spot and the bodies were discovered by area locals, who alerted the cops and we reached the spot to inspect," police said, adding that the place was cleared and the bodies were shifted for post-mortem.

A case was booked under section 304-A (death by negligence) of the IPC against the absconding driver and efforts are on to nab him.



Ravi Avva

RAVIKANT WINS
WORLD QUIZZING
CHAMPION 2020

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 10

Ravikant Avva, hailing from Hyderabad, a team member of Singapore Merlions in the Quizzing World Cup, won the championship 2020. He is the eldest son of the eldest son of A.P.V.N. Sarma, IAS, (Retd), Adviser to the Governor of Telangana state, and has been active in quizzing for the last 25 years. He had also topped the WQC standings in the Asia-Pacific region in 2018 and 2019.

Ravi currently lives in Singapore with his family and works for a multinational medical technology company.

AP RECORDS 538
COVID CASES,
TWO DEATHS

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 10

Andhra Pradesh has registered 538 new Covid-19 cases and two deaths in the last 24 hours.

According to the Covid-19 bulletin issued by the state health authorities on Thursday, out of 64,354 samples tested, 538 persons were found infected with Coronavirus. Out of a total number of 1,06,35,197 samples tested so far in the state, 8,73,995 persons were found infected with the virus so far and out of them, 8,61,711 persons recovered, 5,237 persons are still active with the virus while 7,047 persons succumbed to the virus.

Among daily cases of Covid-19, Chittoor recorded the highest 95 followed by 86 in Krishna, 72 each in Guntur and West Godavari, 50 in East Godavari, 35 in Prakasam, 31 in Visakhapatnam, 24 in Nellore, 21 in Srikakulam, 18 in Kurnool, 14 in Anantapur, 13 in Kadapa and seven in Vizianagaram.

Krishna continues to lead the state with 994 cumulative active cases of confirmed Coronavirus followed by 772 in Guntur, 659 in East Godavari, 631 in Nellore, 495 in Chittoor, 382 in West Godavari, 301 in Prakasam, 245 in Visakhapatnam, 209 in Srikakulam, 200 in Anantapur, 151 in Kadapa, 109 in Vizianagaram and 89 in Kurnool.

The lowest cases of death due to Covid-19 was two with one each in Guntur and Krishna. Among cumulative deaths, Chittoor topped the state with 834 followed by 655 in Guntur, 652 in Krishna, 636 in East Godavari, 594 in Anantapur, 578 in Prakasam, 545 in Visakhapatnam, 529 in West Godavari, 501 in Nellore, 487 in Kurnool, 453 in Kadapa, 346 in Srikakulam and 237 in Vizianagaram. Health authorities discharged 558 infected patients after they recovered.

Farmer suicides unreported
thanks to Rythu Bheema

Local political leaders ask kin of deceased not to report deaths

PILLALAMARRI
SRINIVAS | DC
ADILABAD, DEC. 10

Farmers who suffered losses due to crop damage following unseasonal heavy rains and pink bollworm in the Kharif season are opting to die by suicide, as they feel they will be unable to repay the loans taken from banks and private money lenders.

According to officials, as many 1,33,838 farmers cultivated cotton crop in 4,21,343 acres in Adilabad district and expected 47,93,390 quintals of cotton yield in this Kharif.

There was an above 50 per cent fall in the expected cotton yield due to crop damage and pink bollworm. Many farmers suffered losses as the cotton seeds did not germinate. Many cotton fields, were inundated due to the heavy rains, leaving the

plants rotting.

The Rythu bodies alleged that the 'Rythu Bheema' scheme, has cast a shadow on farmer suicides. Local political leaders are convincing the family members of the deceased farmers, not to report their deaths to the police or the media, as they are entitled to get ₹5 lakh financial help under Rythu Bheema scheme.

Local political leaders inform the families of the victims, that they are entitled to receive compensation of ₹6 lakh under GO: 194. However, the process is long, so they prefer the Rythu Bheema scheme implemented since August 14, 2018.

A three-member committee at mandal and division level has to approve the death as a suicide, if a farmer has to get compensation under GO: 194.

Farmers who died of ill health also get an insur-

ance cover under the Rythu Bheema, unlike GO: 194. After the introduction of the Rythu Bheema scheme, in many cases, farmer suicides are not registered in the local police stations.

Sangepu Boranna, Adilabad district president of Rythu Swarajya Vedika, said that farmer suicides are not being reported by the media, as local political leaders suppress them. The concerned officials do not visit the interior villages to register the deaths by suicide due to Covid-19. Thus farmers' suicides are going unnoticed.

However, Boranna adds that in 2020 the farmer suicides have come down when compared to the previous years.

Distressed farmer, Uttam Thakre of Patan village in Bela mandal, died by suicide on November 14, while Erma Lingu, 34, of

Thosham in Gudihathnoor mandal died by suicide on November 30.

Family members of Erma Lingu said Lingu was disappointed as the cotton crop in the 9 acres had failed, resulting in him taking the extreme step.

According to Rythu Swarajya Vedika data, farmer suicides have risen in this Kharif in erstwhile Adilabad district.

Among them, suicides by tribal farmers are high. In this Kharif, from August, as many as 15 farmer suicides took place, among them, 10 are in the erstwhile Adilabad district. A total of 20 farmer suicides took place in Adilabad, five in Nirmal and one in Asifabad and three in Mancherial from January 2020 till date. So far 29 farmer's suicides have taken place in the erstwhile Adilabad district.

IMA Warangal to protest
today against mixopathy

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, DEC. 10



Dr P. Sudhir Kumar addresses the media on Thursday.

Opposing the Central Council of Indian Medicine (CCIM)'s move which allows the legal practice of surgeries by the Ayurveda practitioners, the Indian Medical Association, Warangal chapter, decided to observe total medical bandh on Friday.

Speaking to media persons on Thursday, IMA Warangal president Dr P. Sudhir Kumar said that all doctors practicing modern medicine were to observe complete closure of private practice including out-patient (OP), consultation and elective surgeries on Friday, in protest against the CCIM's notification which authorises post-graduate practitioners in specified streams of Ayurveda to be trained to perform general surgical procedures.

"The CCIM's move should be seen as another step in advancing and

legitimising mixopathy. It could lead to chaos besides endangering the lives of people," Dr Sudhir said, defending their opposition to mixopathy.

Covid-19 and other emergency cases have been exempted from the bandh, he said.

The bandh will be observed from 6 am to 6 pm. The doctors will stage a demonstration at IMA Hall near MGM Hospital

from 10 am to 6 pm.

IMA, Warangal, General Secretary Dr B Prabhakar, Treasurer Dr B Raja Mohan, Zone-3 State Vice-president Dr Sudeep, Zone-3 State Vice-president (elect) Dr N Surender Reddy, Vice-presidents Dr Pilli Rajani, Dr P Manmohan Raju, Dr Yadagiri Reddy, Joint Secretaries Dr A Jyothi, Dr Bingi Srinivas and Dr PSS Mallikarjun were present among others.

Cordon and search
ops held in Agency
areas to nab Maoist

ANUDEEP
CEREMILLA | DC
WARANGAL, DEC. 10

In view of the movement of Maoists along the state borders, a cordon and search operation was organised by the Kataram DSP B. Kishan in Utlapally and Polaram villages of Jayashankar Bhupalpally district during the early hours of Thursday.

During the programme, the police conducted inspections, checked suspects and spoke to the villagers. They asked the villagers to inform the police immediately if any new people come into the village and requested

them not to cooperate with the extremist forces.

DSP B. Kishan said they have been conducting surprise cordon and search operations in the Agency areas to keep a check on suspicious activities.

"These operations are intended to ensure that the extremists do not carry out any of their activities and to identify the persons aiding them. We have intensified our vigil and such operations will be held frequently in random areas," he informed. Kataram CI, B. Hathiram and Mutharam SI Ch Srinivas, Civil, Special Party Police and CRPF personnel took part in the operation.



Kataram DSP B. Kishan speaks to villagers during the cordon and search operation held on Thursday.

COPS RESCUE 38-YR-OLD FROM
DYING BY SUICIDE IN HYDERABAD

Hyderabad: A 38 year old man's suicide attempt was thwarted by the alert R a c h a k o n d a cops who responded to a dial 100 in four minutes and stopped him hanging himself.

According to the police

inspector of Kandukur police, L. Krishnam Raju, a dial 100 call was received from an area local who witnessed Kanchukatla Paramesh, a construction worker, attempting to hang himself by tying a noose.

ALL FOR MILK
Karimnagar Dairy procured animals from Haryana, Punjab
14 breeding bulls given to milk societies

PULI SHARATH
KUMAR | DC
KARIMNAGAR, DEC. 10

The Karimnagar Dairy chairman Ch. Rajeshwara Rao along with the managing director, P. Shankar Reddy distributed 14 breeding bulls to various milk societies in Karimnagar district on Thursday for breeding purpose.

The Karimnagar Milk Producer Company limited which was affiliated to the Karimnagar Dairy has embarked upon the task of distributing the breeding bulls to the milk societies in order to increase milk production in erstwhile Karimnagar.

The Karimnagar Dairy authorities along with artificial insemination of milching animals, launched the distribution programme of bulls in the interior villages where dairy veterinary assistants are unable to conduct insemination of milching animals.

The 14 breeding bulls



Chairman of the Karimnagar dairy, Ch. Rajeshwara Rao along with managing director, P. Shankar Reddy distributes breeding bulls to milk societies at the dairy premises in Karimnagar district on Thursday.

— DECCAN CHRONICLE

The allotment of breeding bulls was done only through a lottery system in a transparent manner. The breeding bulls are being provided at a 50 per cent subsidy to the milk societies. The animal will be insured for a period of three years.

Chairman of Karimnagar dairy, Rajeshwar Rao said that this was the fourth lot of

- THE ALLOTMENT of breeding bulls was done only through a lottery system in a transparent manner.
- THE BREEDING bulls are being provided at a 50 per cent subsidy to the milk societies.
- THE ANIMAL will be insured for a period of three years.

ers and all the schemes were implemented in a transparent manner without giving scope for any irregularities at any level.

Managing director, P. Shankar Reddy said that the distribution of breeding bulls is a continuous process.

At presently about 1.25 lakh litres of milk per day is procured. We have set a target of increasing the milk procurement to 5 lakh litres per day in the days to come.

Collector: Control road
accidents in Warangal

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, DEC. 10

The Warangal Urban district collector Rajeev Gandhi Hanumanth has advised concerned authorities to work in coordination, to control road accidents in the city.



A road safety meeting was held at the Warangal Urban collector's office on Thursday, under the auspices of the Traffic Division of the Warangal Police Commissionerate, on the prevention of road accidents.

Along with the collector, Warangal police commissioner P. Promod Kumar, Greater Warangal Municipal Commissioner Pamela Satpathy and officials from various government departments were briefed by the Central Zone in-charge DCP K. Pushpa on the measures to be taken for the prevention of road accidents.

According to her, more speed guns needed to control speeding vehicles in the suburbs. There are 12 areas in Warangal Urban, identified as black spots, due to the accidents that take place in these areas.

Pushpa stressed the need for a joint committee to be set up with officials from the concerned government departments to analyse the possible causes of road accidents in these black spots.

The DCP sought for installing electronic speed tracking displays on the major roadways within the Warangal Urban District,

- THE DCP sought the installing of electronic speed tracking displays on major roadways within the Warangal Urban district, and to follow the directions given by the Supreme Court to control traffic accidents.
- THE NUMBER of road accidents has reduced by 21 per cent this year compared to last year.

and to follow the directions given by the Supreme Court to control traffic accidents.

Collector Rajeev Gandhi Hanumanth said that the traffic police should fully consider the instructions to prevent road accidents.

He said, "On receiving details about the cost of the equipment, we will release the funds." The Commissioner of Police P. Promod Kumar said that the number of road accidents has reduced by 21 per cent this year compared to last year. In line with the Supreme Court's directive, to reduce the number of road accidents, by 10 per cent every year.

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SHORT TAKES

IMA CALLS FOR NATIONWIDE PROTEST TODAY

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC MUMBAI, DEC. 10

Doctors across the country on Friday (December 11) will protest against government's decision to allow non-graduate practitioners in Ayurveda to perform general surgeries.

The doctors from medical colleges, general practitioners, specialists, government services, resident doctors and medical students will take part in the demonstrations.

As a part of the protest, the doctors will withdraw all non-essential and non-Covid services on Friday from 6 am to 6 pm. All emergency services including casualty, emergency room, critical care, ICUs, Covid care, emergency surgeries and labor room will continue to function. However, OPD services will not be available and elective surgeries will not be posted.

The Central Council of Indian Medicine (CCIM) has issued a notification to train and allow the legal practice of surgeries by Ayurveda practitioners and the formation of four committees by NITI Aayog for the integration of all systems of medicine.

NE STUDENTS TO OBSERVE DEC. 11 AS BLACK DAY

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, DEC. 10

The North East Students' Organisation (NESO) a platform of students bodies of all the north-eastern states has decided to observe December 11, the day controversial Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 was passed by the parliament as "black day" across the region.

It was on December 11, 2019 that the controversial legislation was passed by the Parliament despite widespread protest against the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2019.

NESO chairman Samuel Jyrwa and secretary general Sinam Prakash here on Thursday said, "The CAA has been a glaring example of how a controversial bill was passed in the parliament in an autocratic manner, ignoring the massive protest by the people of the Northeast. The region, which is already bearing the burden of illegal migrants from neighbouring Bangladesh, would never accept this legislation and we would continue to fight against this black law."

CONG BATS FOR EARLY ASSEMBLY POLLS IN J&K

Jammu, Dec. 10: If District Development Council (DDC) polls can be held in times of Covid-19, Assembly elections can too, Jammu and Kashmir Congress in-charge Rajni Patil said on Thursday as she demanded for an elected government in the union territory.

She said the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) ferried dozens of Union ministers, national leaders and film personalities to campaign in Jammu and Kashmir as it feared it would lose in these local elections.

Flanked by state unit president Gulam Ahmed Mir, Patil also hit out at the administration for withdrawal of security and vehicles of Congress leaders, claiming the move was aimed at stopping them from campaigning for the DDC polls.

HEINOUS | CRIME

BJP: Crime against women on rise due to JMM 17 men rape 35-yr-old in J'khand

NAYEAR AZAD | DC PATNA, DEC. 10

A 35-year-old woman was allegedly gang-raped by seventeen men in Jharkhand's Dumka. The incident reportedly occurred under the Mufassil Police station on Tuesday evening.

According to reports, the victim in her statement to the police on Wednesday said that the crime was committed while she was returning home from the weekly village market along with her husband.

According to reports, the victim in her statement mentioned that the men held her husband hostage before committing the crime.

An FIR against seventeen

Nadda's convoy attacked in Mamata nephew's LS seat

BJP alleges TMC workers involved, slam 'lawlessness, intolerance' in Bengal

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, DEC. 10

BJP president J.P. Nadda, in a convoy with several other party leaders, came under a violent attack, allegedly by the ruling Trinamul Congress workers, at Diamond Harbour in South 24 Parganas of West Bengal on Thursday afternoon for reportedly daring to make inroads into the Lok Sabha constituency of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's nephew Abhishek Banerjee.

The unprecedented incident took place a day after the BJP chief slammed the Trinamul Congress for political dynasty and also led a rally in party supremo Mamata Banerjee's Assembly constituency in Bhowanipore without any trouble.

Though Nadda, who enjoys Z-category security cover by the Central Reserve Police Force, escaped unhurt, he informed that BJP national general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya and party's national vice-president Mukul Roy were injured in the rain of bricks, stones and bottles thrown by the angry TMC supporters, who shouted "go back BJP" slogan, after blocking the convoy's way in Shirakol.

Apart from them, the cars of West Bengal BJP chief Dilip Ghosh and five more leaders were also damaged.

Braving the attack on the second and final day of his state tour, Nadda along with others reached Diamond Harbour and lashed out at the Chief Minister and her nephew.

"While coming here I witnessed how Bengal has slipped into anarchy under Mamataji's misrule. It has become a state of lawlessness and intolerance. Only Maa Durga's blessings helped me to reach here. I am safe because my car is bullet-proof. The TMC and it's goons left no stone unturned to throttle democracy. But this Goondaraj will not stay. Lotus will also bloom here, starting from this place," he told a BJP meeting.

The BJP chief claimed,



Injured BJP national secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya receives treatment in South 24 Pargana on Thursday following an attack by alleged TMC activists. — PTI

Didi wonders if BJP men strike their leader's cars

Kolkata, Dec. 10: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday alleged that the BJP is holding rallies with arms every day and its workers are attacking fellow activists while blaming it on the ruling Trinamul Congress.

Banerjee, also the TMC supremo, said in a sarcastic way that personnel of security forces such as the CRPF, BSF, CISF and the Army are present at convoys of every BJP leader visiting West

"Mamataji's misrule has lowered Bengal's height. It has to be restored. This is Diamond Harbour from where Jyotirmoyji, a known parliamentarian, once led. But the present MP is not visible in Parliament. It is a shame on democracy. Police and administration are getting politicised here. No administration exists here. It has collapsed. Without the Central force's security,

Bengal.

Describing the TMC as the party of the state and the BJP as one belonging to Delhi and Gujarat, she urged people to stop "goons from outside" the state during elections here.

"They (BJP activists) are coming out (for rallies) with arms every day. They are slapping themselves and blaming it on the Trinamul Congress. Just think of the situation. They are roaming around with the BSF, CRPF, Army and the

Bengal visit is a challenge."

The West Bengal Police, however, stated, "J.P. Nadda, national president, BJP reached safely at the venue, Diamond Harbour, South 24 Pgs. Nothing happened to his convoy. Few bystanders at Debipur, Falta Police Station, Diamond Harbour PD, sporadically and suddenly threw stones on the vehicles trailing along behind his

CISF (personnel). Why are they so scared?" Banerjee said.

Her statement came days after the death of a BJP worker during a protest rally in Siliguri on December 7.

The police have claimed that armed persons were brought in the rally and the man was killed in firing from a shotgun which is not used by the force.

The saffron party, however, maintained that the police were behind the killing of its activist. — PTI

convoy. Everyone is safe and situation is peaceful. Matter is being investigated to find out actual happenings."

Senior TMC MP Sougata Roy wondered, "Why did the BJP need to pick Banerjee's constituency with it's national president's visit? They could have planned only a meeting there. Anyway, it would have been better had stones and bricks were not pelted."

and adherence to International rules and laws. He also reiterated India's support to freedom of navigation and over-flight for all in International waters in accordance with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

Singh stated that terrorism remains a major scourge for the region and world. He reiterated that the structures that support and sustain terrorism continue to exist, including in India's neighbourhood. He called for stronger commitment and need to strengthen International mechanism to fight terrorism, jointly and vigorously.

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, DEC. 10

Senior BJP leader and Rajya Sabha member Jyotiraditya Scindia has started lobbying with the party leadership here to accommodate his loyalists in the state ministry as well as the organisation.

Scindia who is arriving here on Friday on a day's visit to the state is scheduled to meet Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan here to discuss with him on the issue, sources close to him told this newspaper on Thursday.

This would be Scindia's second meeting with Chouhan in the last fortnight.

SHAH TELLS WB TO ANSWER FOR STATE TERROR

DC CORRESPONDENT KOLKATA, DEC. 10

Expressing his concern, over the attack on the convoy of BJP chief J.P. Nadda by alleged TMC supporters in West Bengal, Union home minister Amit Shah tweeted, "Today, the attack on the BJP national president @JPNadda ji in Bengal is really condemnable. The more it is condemned, the lesser would it be. The central government is taking this attack very seriously. The Bengal government will have to answer to the peace loving people of the state for this sponsored violence."

He added, "Bengal has slipped into an era of tyranny, chaos and darkness under the Trinamul rule. The way political violence has been institutionalised and taken to an extreme level in West Bengal under the TMC rule is both tragic and worrisome for all those who believe in democratic values."

Triangular Parl to see Lotus symbol

New Delhi, Dec. 10: Indian Parliament's new building will have a triangular shape to reflect the importance of triangles being a sacred geometry in various religions, while its interiors will have three national symbols as their main themes — Lotus, Peacock and Banyan Tree.

The new building, being constructed by Tata Projects Ltd, will come up in front of the existing Parliament House that was built nearly 100 years ago at a cost of ₹63 lakh at that time and would eventually be turned into a museum.

The new building will house larger Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha Halls, with capacities of 888 seats and 384 seats respectively, to accommodate an expanded Parliament after the freeze on its expansion lifts in 2026.

The Lok Sabha Hall will also have additional capacity, up to 1,272 seats, to host joint sessions.

"The new Parliament building is designed in a triangular shape, since it sits on a triangular plot and has three main spaces — Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha and a Cental Lounge. Also, triangles are sacred geometries in various religions and cultures of the country," the new building's architect Bimal Patel said.

"In the Lok Sabha chamber,

we have used the national bird Peacock as its theme, in Rajya Sabha chamber we have used the national flower Lotus as its theme and in Central Lounge courtyard we have used the national tree Banyan as its theme," Patel said. The National Emblem will crown the new Parliament building.

He said the architecture of the new building is in harmony with the present building so that both buildings complement each other. The ceiling of the new Parliament building will have fresco paintings like that of Rashtrapati Bhawan and carpets will have traditional designs, instead of the current single colour carpets, Patel said.

To retain some of the characteristics of the existing Parliament, the interior walls of the new one will have shlokas inscribed on them. Dhulpur stone will be largely used, as is the case with the existing Parliament, and in some interior portions, red granite may be used in place of the red sandstone.

This will be a building with most modern facilities but displaying our culture and tradition as well, the eminent architect said. The four-storey building will be built on 64,500 square metres area. — PTI

Pressure mounts on BJD to sack Sahoo

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, DEC. 10

Aiming to nail the ruling BJD in the five-year-old girl Pari murder case, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) led by its new Odisha in-charge Daggubati Purandeswari on Thursday visited the victim's village Jadupur and met her parents.

The party, while accusing the local lawmaker and state minister Arun Sahoo of shielding the accused involved in the kidnapping and murder of Pari, said it would not stop from its agitation against the ruling party unless the minister is sacked.

Accompanied by BJP's state president Samir Mohanty and several party leaders, Purandeswari held discussion with the deceased girl's parents and also visited the spot near the house where the girl's

body was found.

"Minister Arun Kumar Sahoo, who is accused of shielding the accused, should immediately resign on moral grounds. The SIT formed by the state government has no judicial powers. For a proper investigation into the case, we demand a CBI probe. The matter is also linked to organ trading. We will fight till Pari's parents get justice," said Purandeswari.

She also said that the government was "incapable" of providing security to the couple. Purandeswari's visit follows unrelenting statewide protests by the BJP workers against the state government's inaction to arrest the Pari murder case accused and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's noncommittal attitude to sack Arun Kumar Sahoo from his cabinet for his alleged complicity in the crime.

Kerala records 76.38 pc in 2nd phase of civic polls

DC CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DEC. 10

Huge voter turnout was witnessed in the second phase of local body elections in Kerala with the state recording 76.38 per cent polling on Thursday.

All districts which went to polls recorded high polling percentages. Wayanad recorded the highest polling with 79.46 per cent, Kottayam 73.91 per cent, Ernakulam 77.13 per cent, Thrissur 75.03 and Palakkad 77.97 per cent. The polls went off peacefully with no incident of violence being reported from any part of the state. However, there were routine complaints of EVM snag in some polling stations which held up polling for a brief period.

While the three major fronts; the CPM led ruling LDF, Congress led UDF and BJP led NDA made claims and counter claims about their electoral prospects, the top leadership of these parties are keeping their fingers crossed over the heavy turnout.

LDF Convenor A. Vijayaraghavan said the ruling front

is going to register a significant victory in the polls while Congress leader and former minister Thiruvananthoor Radhakrishnan said the high voter turnout indicated the electorate's anger against the government. The BJP leaders claimed that the two fronts were in for a surprise this time.

The LDF and UDF are locked in a direct fight in Ernakulam, Wayanad and Kottayam districts, while BJP is putting up a stiff competition in Thrissur and Palakkad districts where triangular contest is likely to be witnessed in many wards.

Scindia lobbies for accommodating his loyalists in Shivraj's ministry

● JYOTIRADITYA SCINDIA is scheduled to meet Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan here to discuss with him on the issue.

Sources said Scindia was keen to re-induct 2 former ministers, Govind Singh Rajput and Tulsi Silawat, in the Shivraj cabinet as soon as possible.

The two former ministers, considered staunch loyalists of Scindia, had resigned from the Shivraj government on October 27 when their 6-month-tenure as non-MLA ministers ended.

They have been elected to the house in the November 3 Assembly by-elections.

"The delay in their re-

induction in the state ministry has caused unease in the Scindia camp. Scindia is keen to see their re-induction in the Shivraj cabinet as early as possible", a BJP leader told this newspaper requesting not to be quoted.

Sources said the Chief Minister has so far shown no interest to go for a mini-expansion of his ministry to take back the two former ministers in his cabinet, apprehending that such a move would trigger resentment among other ministerial aspirants in the BJP legislature party.

"The Chief Minister does not want to send a message in the party that he has buckled under pressure to re-induct two former minis-

ters in his cabinet, by going for mini-expansion of his ministry", the BJP leader said.

Incidentally, the Chief Minister has earlier declared that ministry expansion was not in his agenda right now.

Scindia has also started lobbying with the party leadership to accommodate his other loyalists who crossed over to BJP from Congress, along with him in March this year, in the organisation as well as corporations. Sources said reconstitution of state executive committee of BJP has been delayed over the issue. Scindia was scheduled to attend some private programmes during his visit to the state.

SHORT TAKES

CHINA SANCTIONS
US OFFICIALS
OVER HK MOVES

Beijing, Dec. 10: China said on Thursday it will impose sanctions on US officials who have “performed badly” over Hong Kong issues, in response to restrictions slapped on Chinese officials this week over Beijing’s harsh clamp-down on the city.

The financial hub was rocked by pro-democracy protests last year that were largely halted by a sweeping national security law imposed by Beijing, drawing criticism over eroding rights from countries including the US.

On Monday, the US said it was freezing any US assets and barring travel to the United States for 14 vice chairs of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress, which spearheaded the tough new law.

U.S. BOMBERS
FLY ON MISSION
TO DETER IRAN

Washington, Dec. 10: In a new show of military might, two American bomber aircraft took off from the United States and flew over a swath of the Middle East on Thursday, sending what US officials said was a direct message of deterrence to Iran.

The flight of the two massive B-52H Stratofortress bombers over the region, the second such mission in less than a month, was designed to underscore America’s continuing commitment to the Middle East even as President Donald Trump’s administration withdraws thousands of troops from Iraq and Afghanistan.

The long-range heavy bombers, which are capable of carrying both conventional and nuclear weapons, are a formidable sight and are flown less frequently in the Middle East than smaller combat aircraft, such as American fighter jets. Adversaries often complain about bomber flights in their region, deeming them a provocative show of force.

NOBEL PRIZE
WINNERS WARN
ABOUT HUNGER

Oslo, Dec. 10: Accepting the Nobel Peace Prize in a ceremony held online because of the coronavirus, the World Food Programme (WFP) warned on Thursday of a “hunger pandemic” it said could be worse than Covid-19.

“Because of so many wars, climate change, the widespread use of hunger as a political and military weapon, and a global health pandemic that makes all of that exponentially worse, 270 million people are marching toward starvation,” WFP executive director David Beasley said.

“Failure to address their needs will cause a hunger pandemic which will dwarf the impact of Covid,” he said, removing his facemask to make his remarks broadcast from the WFP’s headquarters in Rome.

The largest humanitarian organisation fighting famine, the UN agency founded in 1961 feeds tens of millions of people each year — 97 million in 2019 — across all continents.

SEXUAL ABUSE
SHAKES FBI’S
SENIOR RANKS

Washington, Dec. 10: An assistant FBI director retired after he was accused of drunkenly groping a female subordinate in a stairwell. Another senior FBI official left after he was found to have sexually harassed eight employees.

Yet another high-ranking FBI agent retired after he was accused of blackmailing a young employee into sexual encounters. An Associated Press investigation has identified at least six sexual misconduct allegations involving senior FBI officials over the past five years, including two new claims brought this week by women who say they were sexually assaulted by ranking agents.

Each of the accused FBI officials appears to have avoided discipline, the AP found, and several were quietly transferred or retired, keeping their full pensions and benefits even when probes substantiated the sexual misconduct claims against them. Beyond that, federal law enforcement officials are afforded anonymity even after the disciplinary process runs its course, allowing them to land on their feet in the private sector or even remain in law enforcement.

3,054 die of Covid
in 24 hours in USAdvisory panel convened to decide on
endorsing mass use of Pfizer virus vaccine

Washington, Dec. 10: The US has set a new grim record of more than 3,000 Covid-19 related deaths in a single day, reflecting a bleak reminder of the pandemic’s devastating toll, even as two coronavirus vaccine candidates appear to be on the verge of clearing the country’s final regulatory hurdles.

According to The Covid Tracking Project, the US on Wednesday reported as many 3,054 reported deaths — the highest single-day total to date. The previous single-day record was on May 7 at 2,769 deaths, it said. Overall, there were 1.8 million tests reported on Wednesday, 2,10,000 cases, and a record 1,06,688 Covid-19 patients in US hospitals, it said.

The 7-day average for Covid-19 deaths are at an all-time high as deaths are rising throughout the country, it said. So far more than 15 million Americans have been infected with Covid-19 and 2,86,249 people have lost their lives, according to Johns Hopkins University.

The US, the worst-affected country by the Coronavirus pandemic, is in the final stages of approving at least two Covid-19 vaccines — one by Pfizer and BioNTech and another by Moderna.

A US government advisory panel convened on Thursday to decide whether to endorse mass use of Pfizer’s Covid-19 vaccine to help conquer the outbreak that has killed close to 3,00,000 Americans.

The meeting of outside advisers to the Food and Drug Administration represented the next-to-last hurdle before the expected start of the biggest vaccination campaign in US history. Depending on how fast the FDA signs off on the panel’s recommendation, shots could begin within days.

The FDA panel functions like a science court. During the scheduled day-long session, it was expected to debate and pick apart the data — in public and live-streamed — on whether the vaccine is safe and effective enough to be cleared for emergency use.

“The American public demands and deserves a rigorous, comprehensive and independent review of the data,” said FDA’s Dr. Doran Fink, who

Cyberattackers hit
vaccine regulator

The Hague, Dec. 10: Documents related to the Pfizer Coronavirus vaccine were illegally accessed during a cyberattack at the EU regulator, the company said Wednesday, as Germany and other northern hemisphere countries grappled with a winter surge in the pandemic.

The Amsterdam-based European Medicines Agency (EMA) reported the cyberattack as European countries eagerly await a vaccine, including Germany where Chancellor Angela Merkel is pushing for tougher action against a second wave of Covid-19 that is proving deadlier than the first there.

While the EMA did not give details on the attack, Pfizer and BioNTech said documents relating to their vaccine candidate had been accessed, but that “no systems have been breached in connection with this incident.” The EMA has promised to reach a decision on conditional approval for Pfi-

described agency scientists working nights, weekends and over Thanksgiving to get that done.

With unprecedented interest in the normally obscure panel, the FDA broadcast the meeting via Youtube, and thousands logged on to follow the discussion. The FDA is not required to follow the committee’s advice but is widely expected to do so.

Once that happens, the US will begin shipping millions of doses of the shot. The meeting came as the Coronavirus continues surging across much of the world, claiming more than 1.5 million lives, including more than 2,89,000 in the US. Hanging over the meeting is a warning from British officials that people with a history of serious allergic reactions shouldn’t get the vaccine.

Government officials there are investigating two reports of reactions that occurred when the country began mass vaccina-

tion on Tuesday. Still, a positive recommendation and speedy US approval appeared nearly certain after FDA scientists issued an overwhelmingly positive initial review of the vaccine earlier this week.

FDA said results from Pfizer’s large, ongoing study showed that the shot, which was developed with Germany’s BioNTech, was more than 90% effective across people of different ages, races and underlying health conditions, including diabetes and obesity. No major safety problems were uncovered, and common vaccine-related side effects like fever, fatigue and injection site pain were tolerable.

“The data presented in the briefing report were consistent with what we heard before and are really exciting,” said Dr. William Moss, head of Johns Hopkins University’s International Vaccine Access Center.

— *AFP/AP*

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“The data presented in the briefing report were consistent with what we heard before and are really exciting,” said Dr. William Moss, head of Johns Hopkins University’s International Vaccine Access Center.

TRUMP, REPUBLICANS PIN HOPES ON
TEXAS TRIAL TO OVERTURN RESULTS

Washington, Dec. 10: A longshot Supreme Court lawsuit from Texas against four states key in the November 3 election gave President Donald Trump fresh hope of stalling if not overturning Democrat Joe Biden’s victory.

Texas — a state Trump won — lodged the suit late on Tuesday against Michigan, Georgia, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, challenging Biden’s victory in each of the four.

The suit was seen as audacious and barely legally sound, given that no one state has any legal right to interfere in another’s election processes.

Texas alleged that the



France's President Emmanuel Macron talks with Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez and European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell as he arrives at the EU headquarters' Europa building in Brussels on Wednesday, prior to a European Union summit.

— *AFP*

Deadline to salvage Brexit
accord extended to Sunday

Brussels, Dec. 10: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen gave themselves until Sunday to decide on the future of post-Brexit negotiations, after a three-hour dinner left the two sides “far apart”.

Johnson came to Brussels on Wednesday in a last gasp effort to salvage trade talks that are teetering towards failure and the two leaders agreed that their negotiators should attempt one last push to bridge the divide.

“We had a lively and interesting discussion on the state of play across the list of outstanding issues,” Von der Leyen said in a statement after the dinner at her Brussels’ headquarters. “We gained a clear understanding of each other’s positions. They remain far apart,” she added.

A senior UK source said the talks were “frank” and that it remained unclear whether the “very large gaps” between the two sides can be bridged.

The leaders agreed to further discussions by their negotiating teams “over the next few days” and that a “firm decision” should be taken by Sunday, the UK source said.

EU negotiator Michel Barnier and his UK counterpart David Frost have narrowed the gaps over eight months but London insists it will reclaim full sovereignty at the end of the year after half-a-century of close economic integration.

— *AFP*

EU chief publishes ‘no deal’
Brexit contingency scheme

Brussels, Dec. 10: EU chief Ursula von der Leyen on Thursday published a back-up plan to protect road and air travel and fishing rights if Britain leaves the union without a trade deal.

The UK left the European Union on January 31 and at the end of this month will leave the bloc’s single market and customs union, bringing a half-century of ever

closer economic integration to an end.

Negotiators from London and Brussels have been trying to agree a follow-on trade pact that would govern cross-Channel business after the transition period ends, but talks are deadlocked with three weeks to go.

The EU’s Michel Barnier and his UK counterpart David Frost resumed their talks on

Thursday with barely 72 hours left before the decisive moment, and the contingency plan served as “no deal” warning shot.

“Negotiations are still ongoing. However, given that the end of the transition is very near, there is no guarantee that if and when an agreement is found, it can enter into force on time,” von der Leyen said.

— *AFP*

EU weighs sanctions over
Turkey’s Med drilling work

Brussels, Dec. 10: Concerned that their credibility is at stake, European Union leaders are set on Thursday to give the green light to the expansion of sanctions against Turkey over its exploration of gas reserves in Mediterranean waters claimed by EU members Greece and Cyprus.

At their last summit in October, the leaders offered “a positive political EU-Turkey agenda” to Ankara, including trade and customs benefits and

the prospect of more funds to help Turkey manage Syrian refugees on its territory if it halts its “illegal activities” in the eastern Mediterranean.

But EU foreign ministers agreed this week that Turkey’s behavior has not improved, and on Thursday’s summit is shaping up as a “crucial” meeting for EU-Turkey relations. “All of them considered that we have not seen a fundamental change of direction,” EU foreign policy chief Josep

Borrell told reporters after chairing a videoconference between the ministers on Monday. “In several aspects the situation has worsened.” The 27 EU countries are split over how best to handle Turkey. France and Cyprus have pushed for tougher measures like economic sanctions, but other countries are concerned about further undermining the country’s already ravaged economy and destabilising the region.

— *AP*

Following India protests closely,
says UK after Johnson’s gaffe

London, Dec. 10: The UK Foreign Office is closely following the protests by farmers in India, a government spokesperson said on Thursday as it clarified that Prime Minister Boris Johnson had “clearly misheard” a question in Parliament when he responded with Britain’s stance on the India-Pakistan dispute instead.

The gaffe occurred during the weekly Prime Minister’s Questions (PMQs) session in the House of Commons on Wednesday, when Johnson reiterated that any dispute between India and Pakistan was for the two countries to

● **A UK GOVERNMENT spokesperson said: “The Prime Minister clearly misheard the question in Parliament. The Foreign Office are following the issue of protests in India closely.”**

settle bilaterally in response to a question by Opposition Labour MP Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi about conveying British Sikh “anxieties” over the ongoing protests against agricultural reforms in India.

A UK government spokesperson said: “The Prime Minister clearly misheard the question in Parliament. The Foreign

Office are following the issue of protests in India closely.” Dhesi, who has been very vocal on the protests by farmers against India’s agricultural reforms, had raised the issue of the footage of “water cannons, teargas and brute force” being used against the peaceful protesters.

“So, will the Prime Minister (Johnson) convey to the Indian Prime Minister (Narendra Modi) our heartfelt anxieties, our hopes for a speedy resolution to the current deadlock and does he agree that everyone has a fundamental right to peaceful protest,” he questioned Johnson.

— *PTI*

DYING | STATISTICS

Diabetes, dementia in top 10 causes of death, non-communicable diseases 7 out of 10 causes

United Nations, Dec. 10: Heart disease, which has remained the leading cause of death at the global level for the last 20 years, is now killing more people than ever before, according to the World Health Organisation.

The WHO said diabetes and dementia are also among the world’s top 10 causes of death.

The WHO’s 2019 Global Health Estimates, released on Wednesday, said non-communicable diseases now make up 7 of the world’s top 10 causes of

death, an increase from 4 of the 10 leading causes in 2000.

The new data cover the period from 2000 to 2019. “Heart disease has remained the leading cause of death at the global level for the last 20 years. However, it is now killing more people than ever before,” the organisation said.

Heart disease now represents 16 per cent of total deaths from all causes and the number of deaths from heart disease increased by more than two million

● **DEATHS FROM diabetes increased by 70 per cent globally between 2000 and 2019, with an 80 per cent rise in deaths among males. In the Eastern Mediterranean, deaths from diabetes have more than doubled and represent the greatest percentage increase of all WHO regions.**

since 2000 to nearly 9 million in 2019.

Diabetes and dementia enter the top 10 causes of

death. Alzheimer’s disease and other forms of dementia are now among the top 10 causes of death worldwide, ranking 3rd in both the Americas and Europe in 2019. Women are disproportionately affected: globally, 65 per cent of deaths from Alzheimer’s and other forms of dementia are women.

Deaths from diabetes increased by 70 per cent globally between 2000 and 2019, with an 80 per cent rise in deaths among males. In the Eastern Mediterranean, deaths from dia-

betes have more than doubled and represent the greatest percentage increase of all WHO regions.

The WHO said the estimates reveal trends over the last 2 decades in mortality and morbidity caused by diseases and injuries, clearly highlighting the need for an intensified global focus on preventing and treating cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases, as well as tackling injuries, in all regions of the world, as set out in the agenda for

the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

“These new estimates are another reminder that we need to rapidly step up prevention, diagnosis and treatment of non-communicable diseases,” Director-General of WHO Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said. “They highlight the urgency of drastically improving primary health care equitably and holistically. Strong primary health care is clearly the foundation on which everything rests, from combatting non-communi-

cable diseases to managing a global pandemic.”

While more non-communicable diseases are now causing deaths worldwide, there has been a global decline in deaths from communicable diseases, which however still remain a major challenge in low- and middle-income countries. In 2019, pneumonia and other lower respiratory infections were the deadliest group of communicable diseases and together ranked as the fourth leading cause of death.

— *PTI*

DECCAN Chronicle

11 DECEMBER 2020

Farmers' stand-off has a few lessons for govt

After a meeting with Union home minister Amit Shah on Tuesday following a sudden and late invitation, and considering the government's proposals advanced through a 20-page note, the protesting farmers have announced intensification of their agitation.

The protest is already a fortnight old. The new element in it is that it threatens to engulf the entire country, not just the borders of the national capital with Haryana leading on to Punjab, which has emerged as the epicentre of the dissatisfactions.

This is suggested in the programme announced by a coordination committee of the dozens of farmers' bodies from across the country. This plan visualises demonstrations at district headquarters across India, taking over toll plazas nationwide, in measured steps blocking entry by road to the national capital, and protesting at the door of all BJP MLAs, MPs, and ministers.

From being seen as a movement of Punjab farmers to begin with, it is the all-India profile of the movement that has now emerged. This is a clear rebuff of the home minister who had invited only 13 of the many more farmer organisations for

talks last Tuesday, excluding in fact the largest farmers' union of Punjab, giving rise to speculation that, at one level, the effort was to sow seeds of discord among protesters.

Five representatives of Opposition parties led by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, and including NCP chief Sharad Pawar, and leaders of CPI(M), CPI and the DMK, called on President Ram Nath Kovind to submit a memorandum in support of the farmers' demands, and later addressed the media to publicise their endorsement.

While the farmers have not called for the support of political parties, the backing given to them by these entities can only impart operational resilience and muscle to any future deepening of a planned nation-

wide protest. Moreover, in the forum of Parliament, it is parties that represent various sections of the people, not associations and unions of occupation or trade groups. It is open to the government to appreciate that the linking of political parties brings on a new dimension, making it prudent to offer serious political conciliation. If not, the country is staring at serious economic dislocations and an atmosphere of confrontation and mistrust in the body politic.

In the written offer made to the farmers on Wednesday after the meeting with the home minister, the government has agreed to present its assurance in black and white that the minimum support price regime won't be dismantled, that terms on which private traders (the feared big business and multinational corporations) will operate in the farm sector will be the same as the present APMC "mandis", whose vanishing the farmers fear, and also that contract farming being encouraged through the contentious agri-laws will not cause land alienation from farmers.

These seem reasonable, but farmers still demand the total repeal of the three laws passed without due discussion in Parliament and without consultation with them, the key stakeholders. Their demands have sometimes been called "maximalist". But what they emphasise, in effect, is that legislation must not be carried out on the strength of a party's brute majority in legislature, ignoring those who are impacted the most.

Breaking up Big Tech

The war against Big Tech just got bigger in the US where the Federal Trade Commission and a coalition of attorneys general of 46 states sued Facebook on the grounds that it transgressed antitrust law and hence should be broken up. This comes on top of the Justice Department taking similar legal action Alphabet's Google two months ago. The day cannot be far when Amazon will be facing similar charges, perhaps Apple, too, for its restrictive App Store practices. Together, the quartet is the creme de la creme of the new economy, whose bloated growth into behemoths gave them the power to influence society by dictating digital lives and the economy while enjoying a global footprint.

The charge against Facebook is it used its dominance to crush rivals at the expense of everyday users even as its power rose manifold with the acquisition of Instagram and WhatsApp. The same charges could as well be aimed at other tech giants who have already been facing intense scrutiny from lawmakers in Congressional hearings. Given the US history of successfully breaking up monopolies like Standard Oil, US railroads and AT&T, besides Microsoft in the new millennium, Big Tech world could look quite different in a few years.

While socialist countries can move against monopolies by simply nationalising industries like India did its banks and the life insurance business, only to suffer a different kind of lazy monopoly, the US believes in dismantling monopolies to ensure healthy competition thrives. The Internet may not be that much different for users if Facebook were to hive off WhatsApp or Amazon were to divest some of its 88 acquisitions. The only difference would be that Google cannot demote competitions through clever search algorithms or Amazon copy goods of their own sellers to take a greater slice of the marketplace.

When threatened with anti-monopoly action by the UK, Mark Zuckerberg challenged a nation saying he would invest elsewhere in Europe. And now you know why the arrogance of unbridled power should be curtailed by promoting healthy competition free of restrictive trade practices.

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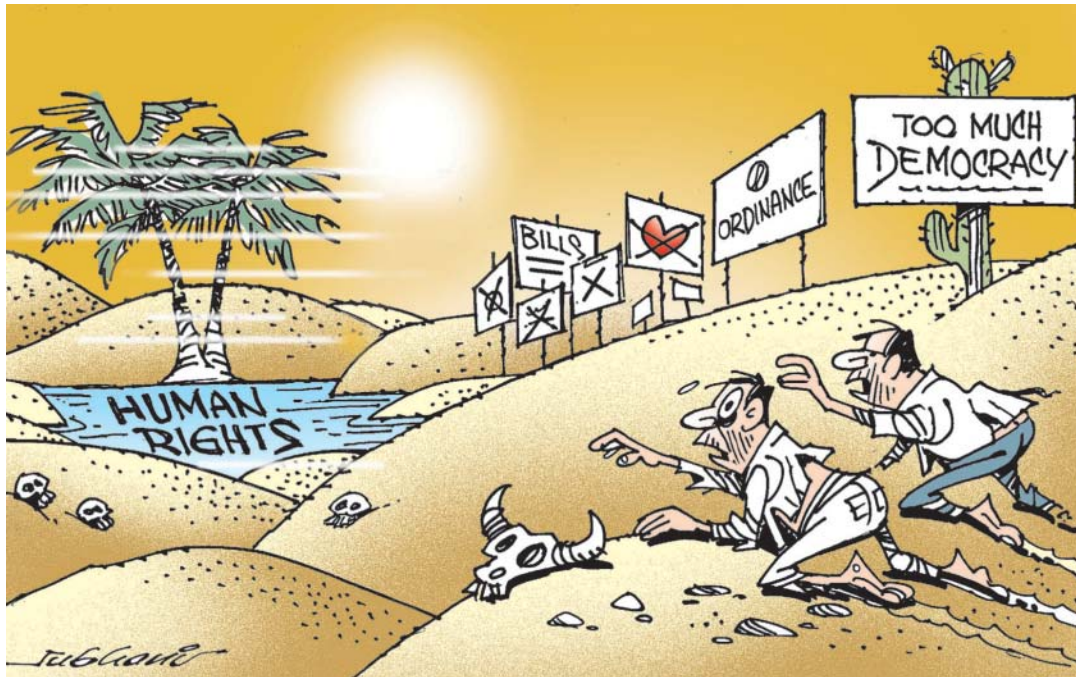
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Subhani



How Nehru had gutted the Constitution in 1951



Karan Thapar

As I See It

I'm part of a generation that grew up thinking of Jawaharlal Nehru as the architect of our democracy and the guardian of our Constitution. For many this was beyond questioning. However, a book published earlier this year reveals a very different side of the first Prime Minister. It argues that the first amendment to the Constitution, that he got passed in 1951, gutted the original. So sweeping were the changes that constitutional scholar Upendra Baxi calls the post-amendment document "the second Constitution". He doesn't believe that it bears credible resemblance to the original.

In his book *Sixteen Stormy Days*, Cambridge scholar Tripurdaman Singh identifies several fundamental rights which the first amendment adversely affected. I shall only focus on two.

The first is freedom of speech, perhaps the most important of all rights in a democracy. Nehru's 1951 amendment added new grounds on which this could be curbed. In addition to the existing grounds of libel, slander, defamation, contempt of court and anything that undermines the security of the state or tends to overthrow it, Nehru added relations with foreign states, public order and, most important, the interests of the security of the state.

Now, Tripurdaman Singh argues, this amendment created the grounds to validate sedition. This is because "the interests of the security of the state" can be variously interpreted and, thus, permits a wide range of speech to be classified under it. And this gave the state enormous powers. Admittedly Nehru did not misuse them, but his successors certainly did. Thus the first amendment "opened the floodgates for drastic and

oppressive laws" like the National Security Act, the Maintenance of Internal Security Act and the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, all of which have been used to ban books, arrest journalists, jail activists and harass political opponents.

The second fundamental right that Nehru's 1951 amendments made redundant was the right to property. Because the courts placed obstacles in the way of his attempts to acquire zamindari lands — in the case of Bihar requiring unaffordable compensation — Nehru amended the Constitution to ensure that such compensation need not be paid. Consequently, the right to property may have continued in theory but in practice, because compensation was not necessary when lands were forcibly acquired, it ceased to be a fundamental right.

Let me mention one other element of Nehru's first amendment which seriously damaged the original Constitution. This is the insertion of the Ninth Schedule. Here, Tripurdaman Singh writes, "laws could be placed to make them immune to judicial challenge even if they violated fundamental rights". In other words, the Constitution now provided protection for unconstitutional laws. Frankly, this is nothing short of a constitutional monstrosity and, arguably, the worst of the amendments pushed through in 1951.

Now, if the content of the amendments was troubling, the impact they had on Indian politics was no less disturbing. For a start, Nehru established the precedent of amending the Constitution to overcome adverse judicial pronouncements. His successors and his daughter, in particular, made this almost a regular practice. Today, when governments don't like what the Supreme Court has said, they

blithely change the Constitution to overturn its verdict.

Tripurdaman Singh identifies two other equally important points. First, "the very concept of the judiciary and the Constitution as checks on the government" was undermined. Instead, a tradition of using executive power to subdue the judiciary began. Second, the 1951 amendments undermined the constitutional position of the individual qua class, caste, community and State. Since the original document had placed the individual at its heart, this changed not just its focus but, more critically, its character.

So why did Nehru do all of this? The answer is simple but hardly a valid justification. He felt the original Constitution was blocking his policies and reforms. As Tripurdaman Singh writes: "Zamindars, businessmen, editors and concerned individuals had repeatedly taken the Central and state governments to court ... (and) the courts had come down heavily on the side of the citizens and struck mighty blows against the government". So, to rein in the courts, Nehru amended the Constitution from which they got their powers. In the process, he gutted it. Nehru thus became the first Prime Minister to damage the Constitution.

However, Tripurdaman Singh's book goes one critical step further. It not only exposes what Nehru did to the Constitution, equally importantly it shines a cruel light on how he did it.

In June 1951, when the first amendment was passed, the Constitution was barely 16 months old. Yet in that brief period Nehru decided it was an impediment to his government's policies. This doesn't speak highly of his commitment to the Constitution. In fact, as Tripur-

daman Singh says, Nehru argued that his government, with its huge majority, represented "the will of the people" and thus took precedence over the principles of and the rights enshrined in the Constitution. Consequently, Nehru had no qualms using a provisional and largely unelected Parliament to amend the Constitution.

But it was worse than that. The Constitution stipulates that amendments require a two-thirds vote in both Houses of Parliament. However, the provisional parliament was a unicameral institution. In 1951, the Rajya Sabha did not exist. So Nehru misused the Constitution (Removal of Difficulties) Order to get around this. It wasn't intended for this purpose, but that did not deter him.

This is a technical and complicated point and I deliberately won't go into detail. However, what Nehru did is uncannily similar to what Narendra Modi did in 2019 when he changed the constitutional character of Jammu and Kashmir. Just as Nehru misused Article 392, from which the Constitution order gets its authority, to change the amendment procedure, so too Narendra Modi misused Article 370 to amend critical definitions thus enabling him to de-operationalise the article. Both were guilty of a sleight of hand.

The only thing I can add to salvage Nehru's image is that B.R. Ambedkar, whom we consider the Father of our Constitution, was a member of Nehru's Cabinet when the first amendment was approved and did not protest. Even Sardar Patel, who died six months earlier and may have had reservations about the impact on the right to property, would have supported the new curbs on freedom of speech. In fact, as Tripurdaman Singh points out, he considered free speech "exaggerated exuberance".

This raises the question: how committed to protecting our freedoms were the men who fought for our Independence? The answer will have to wait for another day.

The writer is a television commentator and anchor

LETTERS

FARMERS' UNREST

The newly-enacted Farm Bills allow storage of foodgrains, pulses, etc., without any limit as hitherto stated in the Essential Commodities Act which is since scrapped. Common sense tells us that only corporates and the government have the capacity to create huge storage space. This is a licence to create famines and manipulate prices. The Bengal famine in 1940s was man-made leading to millions of deaths. Corporates will repeat history to maximise their profit.

K. Gopal Rao

Hyderabad

Prime Minister Narendra Modi government's stubborn stand on the agitated farmers is painful. It can be compared to the Telugu proverb '*Pichuka meedha Brah-masthramu*' (using Brahmastra on a sparrow. Why did the government fail to take similar action against Vijay Mallya, Nirav Modi, Mehul Choksi and other wilful bank loan defaulters? It shows Modi's concern for corporates and apprehensions of farmers.

Kshirasagara Balaji Rao

Hyderabad

CENTRAL VISTA

Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhkar Rao has set a precedent by demolishing the Secretariat to build a new one and thus create history. Under the circumstances, it is obvious Rao will greet PM Narendra Modi (on Central Vista) as he also wants to create history.

B. Raghunadha Rao

Hyderabad

Air Traffic paralysed

NEW DELHI, Dec. 10. The Union Minister of civil aviation, Dr. Karan Singh today called a high level conference of his aides as the Indian Airlines pilots at Bombay, Calcutta and Madras refused to operate flights till suspension orders against their colleagues were withdrawn. The Indian Aircraft Technicians' Associations has warned the Indian Airlines management that if proper attention is not given to the pilot's complaints, the Association will be forced to side the pilots.

According to a spokesman, the management was determined to be "very firm" and gave indications of further stern action, after reading Josh's Marsias, the Maulana invited the complainants and Josh. What happened next was dramatic. The maulana spread out his personal prayer mat for Josh and invited him to recite "Hussain and Inqilab". The message from the maulana was straightforward: it would be wrong to occupy the pulpit inebriated.

This was the open mindedness Maulana Kalbe Sadiq inherited from the generations of "ulema". From the 1990s he had pleaded: Even if the Muslims win the Ram Jannabhoomi land dispute, they should gift the land to the Hindus. "You will win their goodwill." His point was that a Muslim can turn towards Ka'aba and say his prayers anywhere. "Ram is central to the Hindu ethos." He initiated the joint Shia-Sunni namaz, allowing the Sunni cleric to take the lead.

He traced Muslim backwardness to a singular lack of education and dedicated his life to establishing non-sectarian institutions in every possible field. But he died a disappointed man because of the expanding communalism and a community trapped in the snare of self-ish political leaders.

The writer is a senior journalist and commentator based in New Delhi

Saeed Naqvi
Wide Angle



Is Naseer right? That Hyderabad more 'cultured' than Lucknow?

I don't know when the interview was done but I saw it on YouTube last week. Naseeruddin Shah dismissed Lucknow as a centre of culture and praised Hyderabad sky-high by comparison. Naseer's right but there's a reason why Lucknow lost out in the culture stakes with both Hyderabad and Lahore. Both cities were around, their "culture" intact, till 1947. Lucknow had begun to "die" in 1857, after the British exiled Nawab Wajid Ali Shah to Metiabruz near Kolkata in late 1856, triggering 1857's Great Uprising.

Lucknow, however, retained its premier slot for the institution of the "ulema", plural for "alim" which derives from "ilm", or knowledge with theology as the main expertise. With Maulana Kalbe Sadiq's death at the age of 83 last month, the curtain finally fell on the institution of a long line of Lucknow's "ulema".

That this was largely a Shia institution is easily explained: the Nawabs of Awadh were Shia, which is where the patronage came from. This mustn't detract from the fact that internationally known Sunni institutions like Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulema also flourished. There was considerable intellectual rapport between the sects. How

else does one explain the masterly *Muazna-e-Anis-o-Dabir*, a comparative study of Anis and Dabir, written by one of Nadwa's greatest scholars Shibli Nomani. Anis and Dabir were famous Marsia writers, a genre focused on the tragedy of Karbala, central to the observance of Muharram, not exclusively but primarily a Shia occasion.

Kalbe Sadiq came from a long line of "ulema", theological scholars conversant with liberal traditions of which Sufism was another part. Saiyid Waris Shah, Pir of Dewa Sharief, 7 km from Lucknow, had a simple explanation for not going through the "namaz" rituals. "Where is the space to bow in supplication?" The implication was: "He is in me".

During my schooldays, a phase of cultural bifurcation between school and home, the two towering "Alims" of Lucknow were Maulana Kalbe Hussain (alias Kabban Sahib), Kalbe Sadiq's father, and Maulana Ali Naqi (Naqqan Sahib), both brilliant orators whose sermons were much valued at congregations called the "Majlis", provided the speaker deftly brought in Karbala to clinch the argument.

Lucknow's celebrated tapestry of manners found itself frayed even in this limited circle of theologians and

their followers. A group, clearly not from among "Naqqan Sahib's" followers, created what for Lucknow was a major scandal. The group accused the respected cleric of blasphemy and physically assaulted him.

Apparently, Naqqan Sahib had in his research spotted mention of water in Imam Hussain's tent. Even a hint like this was anathema to a bunch of fanatics. The absence of water in Karbala's torrid heat heightens Hussain's tragedy. For that reason, even a suggestion of water in Karbala would soften the tragic effect. The truth, of course, is "Naqqan Sahib" had never said "water" was available. He simply cited sources hinting at such a possibility.

Worst was the treatment of poet Yaas Yagana Changezi, a contemporary of Jigar, Firaq and Josh. Yagana wrote: "*Samajh mein kuch nahee ata, / Parhey jaaney se kya hasil?/ Namazon mein hain kuch maaney, / to pardesi zabaan kyon lo?*"

In one of his "naats", or religious songs, Yagana referred to Prophet Mohammad in less than reverent terms. He probably did not know that he had violated one of the unenforced codes: "*Ba Khuda deewana baash-o/ Ba Mohammad hoshiyar.*" (Take liberties

with God, but be careful with Mohammad)

Dara Shikoh's prime minister, Chandrabhan Brahman, broke the code brazenly: "*Panja dar panja-e-Khuda daram/ Man che parwa e Mustafa daram.*" (My hand is in the hand of God: Why should I worry about Mohammad?)

It reflects in the backward slide of a tolerant culture that Yagana did not go scot free. His face was blackened and he was given a donkey ride through the old city.

The liberal streak in the "ulema" of Lucknow comes out in bold relief in an incident concerning Josh Malihabadi. His Marsia titled "Hussain and Revolution" became a cult poem even in devout circles. Josh became a popular invitee to various Imambaras of Lucknow, indeed across the country, including Hyderabad. He built up a reputation for Marsias, second only to the great Mir Anis. A group of orthodox Shias turned up at the residence of the great Alim of his age, Maulana Naasir ul Millat, armed with a complaint. Josh, devoted to liquor (he called it *Kaaba e khaas o aam*), should be banned from reciting Marsias from pulpits in "our sacred imambaras".

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	45,959.88	-0.31
Nifty 50	13,478.30	-0.38
S&P 500*	3,671.57	-0.03
Dollar (₹)	73.66	-0.12
Pound Sterling (₹)	98.36	0.55
Euro (₹)	89.06	0.14
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	48,652.534	1.11
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	50.99	2.13
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.916	-0.001
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.933	-0.008

* As of 8:30 PM IST

India's recovery faster than expected: ADB

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) upgraded its forecast for the Indian economy, projecting 8 per cent contraction in 2020-21 as compared to 9 per cent degrowth estimated earlier, on the back of faster than expected recovery. Observing that the economy has begun to normalise, the Asian Development Outlook (ADO) Supplement said the second quarter contraction at 7.5 per cent was better than expected.

Hina Nagarajan to head United Spirits from July 1



United Spirits Ltd (USL), a part of global liquor giant Diageo, appointed Hina Nagarajan as the firm's new CEO with effect from July 1, 2021. Incumbent Anand Kripalu will step down on June 30. Nagarajan is currently MD, Africa regional markets at Diageo and will join USL as the CEO-designate from April 1. She will be a member of the Diageo executive committee. Nagarajan will be based in Bengaluru.

Mukesh Ambani becomes a grandfather

Mukesh Ambani on Thursday became a grandfather after a son was born to his eldest son. "Shloka and Akash Ambani became proud parents of a baby boy today in Mumbai," a statement from the Ambani family said. Akash married diamondaire Russell Mehta's daughter Shloka in March 2019. Ambani, 63, and his wife Nita have three children—twins Akash and Isha, 29 years old, and Anant, 25.

Bayer to sell mini packs of hybrid vegetable seeds

Bayer said it is entering India's home garden segment with mini packs of Seminis vegetable seeds, to provide rural farmers and semi-urban growers a choice in cultivation. Bayer aims to leverage its broad portfolio of high-quality hybrid seeds with mini packs of bitter gourd, bottle gourd, okra and beans, initially. Gradually, Bayer plans to extend its mini packs across the entire range of its Seminis hybrid seeds.



■ Smaller players may find norms tough Dividend cap won't affect large NBFCs

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, DEC. 10

The Reserve Bank of India's proposal to restrict dividend payments by non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) could impact several hundreds of unlisted NBFCs, but may not have any material impact on the listed ones.

The apex bank's draft norms on dividend payouts for NBFCs have been anchored on the capital adequacy ratio (CAR) and net non-performing loans (NPL) and only firms meeting the prescribed prudential requirements would be allowed to declare and distribute dividends. The RBI proposes to cap the dividend payout ratio for NBFCs at a maximum of 50 per cent.

Asutosh Mishra, head of research, institutional equity at Ashika Stock Broking, said, "There are thousands of unlisted NBFCs in India and of them around 400-500 could be impacted. Several manufacturers such as Hero, Maruti, Ashok Leyland, Bajaj Auto have their own unlisted NBFC arms and such NBFCs may have to restructure their operations to comply with the new regulatory norms in order to pay dividends. However, the large listed NBFCs may not have any significant impact."

A Kotak report said LIC Housing Finance (due to low capital adequacy ratio), Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services (due to high net NPL) and Shriram



Transport Finance (due to high net NPLs) will not be eligible to pay dividends, if the norms apply to the previous year. "Kotak awaits the final set of guidelines and implementation timelines," the report said.

According to the draft norms released by the RBI on Tuesday, NBFCs that have capital adequacy ratio (CAR) below 15 per cent or net non-performing loans (NPLs) above 6 per cent are not eligible for paying dividend. NBFCs have to comply with these requirements for three consecutive years (including the current fiscal) to be eligible for dividend payouts. The payout ratio caps range from 15-50 per cent based on the two ratios.

"The draft circular on dividend distribution by NBFCs is unlikely to impact most of the NBFCs. Over the last three years, dividend payout ratios have been about 10-20 per cent for most entities, with a few in the range of 20-30 per cent. Icrs expects NBFCs to comfortably meet the CAR criteria but a few entities having high NPAs would find it difficult to meet the

net NPA filter and thus dividend payout could be impacted for those, if this circular is implemented. Icrs notes that while HFCs have not been specifically mentioned in this draft, meeting the CAR criteria would be relatively easier given the lower risk weights on the large part of their portfolio. Also, the net NPA criteria specified for NBFCs may not be a constraint for HFCs to pay out dividend considering the low NPAs for the segment," said Manushree Sagar, VP-financial sector ratings at Icrs Ltd.

Kailash Baheti, CFO, Magma Fincorp, said, "Within NBFCs the NPAs for different classes of NBFCs would be very different. A vehicle financing company would typically have higher NPAs. A tractor financing company would have even higher NPAs. The higher NPAs are well covered by higher yield and does not necessarily mean weak business. It would be sensible to have different thresholds considering the underlying business of each NBFC."

CCI raids offices of UltraTech, ACC, Ambuja

ADITYA KALRA NEW DELHI, DEC. 10

India's antitrust body on Wednesday conducted raids at offices of UltraTech Cement and two subsidiaries of the world's largest cement maker LafargeHolcim, two sources close to the matter said.

Swiss firm LafargeHolcim in a statement to Reuters confirmed officials visited the Mumbai offices of ACC and Ambuja Cements and said the companies were fully cooperating with the authorities, but could not comment further as the matter is ongoing.

Several officers of the Competition Commission of India (CCI) were involved in search operations conducted simultaneously at multiple locations, the sources said, asking not to be named because of the confidential nature of the raids.

Searches were also conducted at Shree Cement Ltd, a third source said.

None of the Indian cement companies responded to requests for a comment. The CCI did not respond either.

In 2012, the CCI imposed a total penalty of \$1.1 billion on several cement-makers for colluding to under-use their plants and create a shortage of cement. An appeal against that decision is still pending.

In recent years, the CCI has raided offices of other foreign firms, including beer giant Carlsberg and commodities trader Glencore.

— Reuters

Lawsuits could force FB to sell Instagram, WhatsApp

DIANE BARTZ, NANDITA BOSE & KATIE PAUL WASHINGTON/PALO ALTO, DEC. 10

Facebook Inc could be forced to sell its prized assets WhatsApp and Instagram after the US Federal Trade Commission and nearly every US state filed lawsuits against the social media firm, saying it used a "buy or bury" strategy to snap up rivals and keep smaller competitors at bay.

With the filing of the twin lawsuits on Wednesday, Facebook becomes the second big tech company to face a major legal challenge this year after the US Justice Department sued Alphabet Inc's Google in October, accusing the \$1 trillion company of using its market power to fend off rivals.

The lawsuits highlight the growing bipartisan consensus to hold Big Tech accountable for its



business practices and mark a rare moment of agreement between the Trump administration and Democrats, some of whom have advocated breaking up both Google and Facebook.

The complaints on Wednesday accuse Facebook of buying up rivals, focusing specifically on its previous acquisitions of photo-sharing app Instagram for \$1 billion in 2012 and messaging app WhatsApp for \$19 billion in 2014.

Federal and state regula-

tors said the acquisitions should be unwound—a move that is likely to set off a long legal challenge as the deals were cleared years earlier by the FTC. "For nearly a decade, Facebook has used its dominance and monopoly power to crush smaller rivals, snuff out competition, all at the expense of everyday users," said New York attorney general Letitia James on behalf of the coalition of 46 states, Washington, DC and Guam. Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina and South Dakota did not participate in the lawsuit.

James said the company acquired rivals before they could threaten the company's dominance.

Facebook's general counsel Jennifer Newstead called the lawsuits "revisionist history" and said antitrust laws do not exist to punish "successful companies."

— Reuters

ICI Lombard offers cashless OPD, cover reset

Mumbai, Dec. 10: Non-life player ICI Lombard on Thursday announced 100 per cent resetting of the sum assured multiple times and also cashless OPD in its bid to offer maximum benefits to likely Covid-19 patients.

As part of offering a more comprehensive health policies, the fourth largest non-life insurer launched four refreshed policies of the existing ones—health shield, health shield plus, health elite and health elite plus—offering

enhanced protection.

Some of the new coverage benefits include donor expenses, domiciliary hospitalisation, emergency assistance, worldwide cover, unlimited reset, air ambulance, super no claim bonus, sum insured protector and claim protector, cashless OPD services, among others, the company said in a concall.

We are redefining the health insurance space by introducing benefits that are aligned to the new normal and contextual to

today's customer needs, it said.

With the unlimited reset benefit, a policyholder can reset up to 100 per cent of the base sum insured unlimited times in a policy year for an un-related ailment, the company said.

The sum insured protector feature increases the sum insured every year in line with inflation rates.

The new plans also comes with services such as free health check-ups and online chat with doctors and dietician.

—PTI

Tata rejects Mistry's offer as 'nonsense'

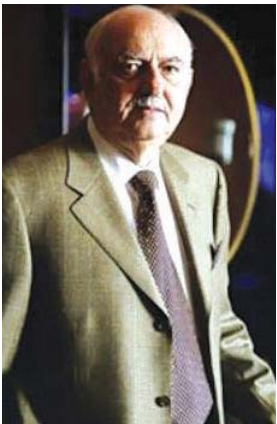
UPMANYU TRIVEDI DEC. 10

Tata Group rejected a truce offer by Pallonji Mistry's conglomerate that suggested swapping the Mistry family's stake for shares worth \$24 billion in the listed Tata companies.

"It's nonsense. This kind of relief cannot be granted," Tata's lawyer Harish Salve said during a hearing before the Supreme Court on Thursday. "I'm opposing it," he said, arguing on behalf of the largest Indian conglomerate.

The Mistry-led Shapoorji Pallonji Group had informed the court in October that it estimated its 18.4 per cent stake in Tata Sons-- the group's main holding company -- to be worth more than Rs 1.75 lakh crore (\$23.7 billion). It was seeking pro-rata shares in all listed Tata entities, cash, or any marketable instrument in lieu. Tata Group earlier this week pegged this valuation at \$11 billion, or less than half of Mistry's ask.

Salve said that accepting the Mistrys' offer could cause the issue to spill over from Tata Sons, which controls the coffee-



Pallonji Mistry

to-cars empire, to its listed firms where the SP Group would then be holding minority stakes.

Tata's rejection of SP Group's proposal threatens to stretch India's biggest corporate battle in recent history. The Mistry family announced in September its intention to sever a 70-year relationship, capping four years of bitter feud that started with a boardroom coup in 2016 at Tata Sons and led to the abrupt ouster of Cyrus Mistry as Tata Group chairman. Cyrus is the son of billionaire Mistry, 91, who controls the 155-year-old SP Group.

— Bloomberg

Shippers reposition empty containers

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, DEC. 10

In order to mitigate the shortage of containers for exports, shipping companies have started repositioning empty containers to Indian coast. Still, the shortage caused due to imbalance in trade will take at least two to three months to ease.

Integrated logistics company Maersk has started repositioning empty containers from the Middle East by almost three times in order to mitigate the

container availability issue in India.

"There has been a general shortage of equipment in the market caused by an imbalance between imports into and exports out of India. With imports being much lower than exports, there is a shortage of empty containers for exports," Steve Felder, MD, Maersk South Asia told *Financial Chronicle*.

"With exports rising from different parts of the country, we had to position empty containers accordingly across the country.

E-com shipments to touch 10 bn by FY25

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, DEC. 10

Shipments by e-commerce platforms are expected to grow from 2.5 billion in FY20 to 10 billion by FY25.

In FY20, the number of e-commerce shipments stood at 2.55 billion, having grown at a 50 per cent CAGR for the past three years. In FY18, the sector had made shipments to the tune of 1 billion, as per a report by Bengaluru-based firms RedSeer and Shadowfox.

E-commerce shipments are expected to grow by a

30- 35 per cent CAGR for the next five years and touch 10 billion by FY25.

Some key drivers of growth are the latent demand in tier-2+ cities, logistics networks, infrastructure built by large horizontal players and growth of new-age third-party logistics players.

Horizontal players like Amazon and Flipkart accounted for 43 per cent of the shipments in FY20. Hyperlocal service providers like BigBasket, Grofers, Zomato and Swiggy accounted for 44 per cent of the shipments.

We are constantly in contact with our customers... We have increased our repositioning of empty containers from the Middle East by almost three times to support our customers exporting out of India. This has helped us in improving the situation to some extent," he said.

Traditionally, Indian exports have been relying on imports for empty containers. For the past few months, the exports have been moving up and imports have been lagging behind, creating an imbalance and shortage of empty containers. Containerised exports out of India were up by 14 per cent year-on-year in the September quarter but imports were lower by 28 per cent year-on-year.

K. Unnikrishnan, deputy D-G, Fieo, said, "Other shipping companies also are trying to reposition empty containers. However, the availability of containers and higher freight charges continue to be an issue. Until imports improve, we do not see the situation easing much."

Though the lockdown had put the logistics to a halt, the logistic services got up again. In a span of one year, Shiprocket witnessed 2.5x growth in the number of e-commerce shipments between October 2019 and October 2020," said Saahil Goel, CEO and co-founder, Shiprocket.

"Logistics is emerging as the bellwether sector indicating the economic recovery...Many critical sectors including e-commerce and retail are staging a recovery," said Abhishek Bansal, co-founder & CEO, Shadowfax.

CAUTIOUS | CHINA

Norm kicks in if infections exceed 500:1 million ratio in a region

Cabin crew told to wear diapers on risky flights

WILL DAVIES DEC. 10

China's aviation regulator recommends cabin crew on charter flights to high-risk Covid-19 destinations should wear disposable diapers and avoid using the bathroom to reduce the risk of infection.

The advice comes in a 38-page list of guidelines for airlines to prevent the spread of coronavirus. The sixth edition echoes similar instructions in previous, less lengthy versions.

The Civil Aviation Administration of China



said the recommendation applies for charter flights to and from countries and regions where infections exceed 500 in every one million people.

The diaper advice is in a

section on personal protective equipment, which also recommends the following for cabin crew: Medical protective masks; double-layer disposable medical rubber

gloves; goggles; disposable caps; disposable protective clothing; and disposable shoe covers.

Flight crew should wear masks and goggles, but they don't need diapers.

Other advice for the flights includes dividing the cabin into "clean area, buffer zone, passenger sitting area and quarantine area," separated by disposable curtains. The last three rows should be designated as an emergency quarantine area, CAAC said.

China's aviation market was hit hard at the onset of the outbreak in Wuhan and subsequent spread

around the country. But it has recovered -- on the domestic front at least-- to close to pre-pandemic levels, while other regions such as Europe and the US struggle to bring Covid-19 under control.

Airlines have insisted that it is safe to fly during the pandemic, partly thanks to the hospital-grade air filters on planes, but some researchers say it isn't yet clear to conclude there's minimal risk. Some cases have documented transmission on flights when passengers wore masks and sat far apart.

— Bloomberg

LEXUS SETS UP GUEST EXPERIENCE CENTRE IN H'BAD

Mumbai, Dec. 10: Lexus, the luxury vehicle arm of Toyota, on Thursday expanded its dealership network in India with the setting up its fourth guest experience centre (GEC) in Hyderabad.

Lexus, which entered India in March 2017, has such centres in New Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru.

"The overwhelming response we received from Hyderabad to our self-charging hybrid electric portfolio is what prompted us to bring the Lexus Guest Experience Centre here," Lexus India president P. B. Venugopal said.

— PTI

SHORT TAKES

Dad-to-be Kane pulls out of Test

Wellington: New Zealand captain Kane Williamson on Thursday pulled out of the second Test against the West Indies in Wellington as he awaits the imminent arrival of his first child. The abrupt U-turn came just hours after battling mainstay Williamson had told head coach Gary Stead he would play in the match, which begins on Friday. Williamson had flown home to Tauranga to be with his wife Sarah on the even of the match. After confirming his availability he flew back to Wellington where, after further discussions with Stead, he agreed it would be best if he returned to be with his wife. "It's a decision that we've come to around the best interests for him and for Sarah, and also for our team," Stead said. Williamson had previously said the baby was due "mid-to-late December". — AFP

Akram backs out as Pak selector

Karachi: The Pakistan Cricket Board is finding it difficult to appoint a new chief selector after its top candidate backed out of working under the current system of selection in the country. A well-placed source said that former pacer Muhammad Akram was the top candidate for the chief selector's post but he has backed out demanding that the board return to the old system of selection. Under the old system, the board used to appoint an independent three to five-member national selection committee headed by a chief selector which picked the teams and had them approved by the Chairman of the board. Under the new system implemented in October 2019, the national team's head coach, Misbah-ul-Haq was also the chief selector and the other members of his committee were the head coaches of the six provincial teams taking part in first-class competition in domestic cricket. — PTI

SUPERMAN CITY

Real Madrid, PSG carve out victories; Reds held

Paris, Dec. 10: Karim Benzema sent Real Madrid through to the last 16 of the Champions League on Wednesday alongside their rivals Atletico. Also, Manchester City made it five wins and a draw in Group 'D' as they eased to a 3-0 victory against Marseille with Ferran Torres and Sergio Agüero getting second-half goals before an Alvaro Gonzalez own goal. Real Madrid are Europe's most decorated club with 13 European Cups but they needed to beat Borussia Moenchengladbach in Madrid to be sure of making it through the group stage of the Champions League for a 24th straight year. Benzema was their hero, easing the pressure on coach Zinedine Zidane with two fine back-post headers in the first half securing a 2-0 win in a game played behind closed doors at the Alfredo di Stefano Stadium. The Frenchman also hit the bar in the second half and in the end it was a result that suited both teams, with a 0-0 draw between Inter Milan and Shakhtar Donetsk allowing Real to top Group 'B' and Gladbach, former European Cup runners-up, to go through as runners-up. Shakhtar go into the Europa League while Inter finish bottom of their group, failing to reach the last 16 for a third season running. Meanwhile Atletico needed to beat Red Bull Salzburg in Austria to qualify as runners-up in Group 'A' behind Bayern Munich, and did so with



Mohamed Salah (centre) of Liverpool and Midtjylland's Jens Cajuste vie for the ball during their UEFA Champions League Group 'D' football match in Herning, Denmark, on Wednesday. — AFP

Mario Hermoso and Yannick Carrasco scoring in a 2-0 victory. Salzburg now go into the Europa League while reigning European champions Bayern completed the group stage unbeaten as Niklas Süle and Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting gave them a 2-0 win over Lokomotiv Moscow.

The other team to clinch qualification on Wednesday was Atalanta, whose 1-0 win away to Ajax secured second place in Group 'D'. Luis Muriel scored a late winner for Atalanta in Amsterdam after Ryan Gravenberch was sent off for the hosts, who drop into the Europa League.

Liverpool were able to give a chance to several younger players in their 1-1 draw with Midtjylland in Denmark, where Mohamed Salah put the 2019 winners ahead early on but Alexander Scholz's penalty gave the hosts an honourable draw. PSG had wrapped up their qualification for the

last 16 on Tuesday despite their own game being suspended after an unprecedented walkout. With a new set of officials, the game restarted in the 14th minute on Wednesday and Neymar scored a hat-trick while also winning a penalty converted by Kylian Mbappe. — AFP

Italy's 1982 WC hero Rossi dead

Milan, Dec. 10: Paolo Rossi, who fired Italy to victory in the 1982 World Cup after almost missing the tournament through a match-fixing scandal, has died aged 64, prompting an outpouring of grief and tributes. Rossi's wife Federica Cappelletti announced the death in an *Instagram* post featuring a photo of the couple, accompanied by the comment "Forever," followed by a heart. She did not disclose the cause of his death. "He didn't want to go, I hugged him tightly and told him 'Paolo, now go, you have suffered too much'," Cappelletti said. "It is not easy to summarise in a few words all that Paolo was," she continued. "A unique person, full of optimism even in the most difficult moments, a great person but at the same time simple. He knew how to talk in the same way with Heads of State but also with the people we met at the supermarket. This was Paolo and this was his greatness," she further added. Rossi's funeral will take place in his adopted city of Vicenza, in northeastern Italy, with his ashes returned to his native Tuscany, Cappelletti added. Rossi won the hearts of Italian fans when his goals propelled Enzo Bearzot's Azzurri — who started the tournament with three uninspiring draws — to a third world title. He exploded onto the stage of the 1982 tournament with a hat-trick in the 3-2 defeat of Brazil. In the semifinals he scored both goals as Italy



In this file photo, Paolo Rossi poses at the Juventus Stadium in Turin, Italy. — AP beat Poland 2-0, and he hit the opening goal in the 3-1 win over West Germany in the final. Goalkeeper Dino Zoff, who captained the 1982 winning side, described Rossi as an "extraordinary footballer, excellent teammate and friend". "He was irreplaceable in that group. And the relationship with him was great. We were a team of friends, a great group," Zoff said. Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte paid tribute to an "unforgettable champion", saying that his goals that summer "gave a dream to an entire generation". "You will always remain our hero. Ciao Pablito," Juventus coach Andrea Pirlo, wrote on *Twitter*. "Paolo was a friend, a golden boy: benevolent, humble and intelligent. He will be forever remembered by the (Juventus) team and everyone with a black and white heart," France football legend Michel Platini, who played alongside him at Juventus, said in a statement. — AFP

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