

OTHER STORIES

CM TO VISIT
MACHILIPATNAM
TODAYDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 20

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy will visit Machilipatnam on Saturday to console minister Perni Venkata-raiaiah alias and his family members. Minister Nani's mother Nageswaramma (82) passed away on November 19, and her last rites were performed on Thursday. Mr Jagan Mohan Reddy expressed his heartfelt condolences over the sudden demise of Nageswaramma.

The CM will start for Machilipatnam in a helicopter from his residence in Tadepalli on Saturday at 11.35 am, will reach the helipad at Andhra National College in Machilipatnam at noon and further would go to the residence of minister Nani. CM Jagan will console minister Nani and other family members and would return to his residence at 1 pm.

CM TO SET STONES
FOR FOUR FISHING
HARBOURSDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 20

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy will lay the foundation stones to four fishing harbours and 25 aqua hubs on November 21 on the occasion of World Fisheries Day.

The Chief Minister will virtually lay the foundation stones for fishing harbours in Nellore, Guntur, Krishna and East Godavari districts that cost ₹1,510 crore.

The state government proposes to bring up eight fishing harbours and four fish landing centers costing ₹3,000 crore, to put the maritime wealth of the state in optimum use.

In the first phase tenders have been called for four fishing harbours at Juvvaladinne, Nizampatnam, Machilipatnam and Uppada costing around ₹1,510 crore, aiming to complete in the next two years. The tenders will be finalised in the second week of December.

Although Andhra Pradesh has the second-longest coastline of about 974km in the country, the previous government neglected the maritime activity and only established small fishing harbours.

The state government laid proposals for constructing a good number of fishing harbours and fish landing centres to benefit the 6.3 lakh fisherman population in the state who are depending on fishing and allied marine activities.



Physiotherapist Dr Gurumurthy

JAGAN'S DOC
IS TIRUPATI
LS CANDIDATEDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 20

Ruling YSR Congress has finalised physiotherapist Dr Gurumurthy as its candidate for Tirupati Lok Sabha byelection. An MLC's post has been promised to Balli Kalyan Chakravarthy, son of late MP Durga Prasad Rao, for giving up his father's Tirupati MP seat to another party candidate.

Durga Prasad, sitting MP of YSRC, died due to Covid-19. Party leaders and politicians expected allotment of the bypoll ticket to his son following the tradition. But Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy surprisingly selected Dr Gurumurthy, who was his personal physiotherapist during the padayatra. Dr Gurumurthy accompanied Reddy from November 2017 to January 2019.

According to sources, Jagan had promised a good position to Dr Gurumurthy. Following this, the CM held a meeting with the kin of late MP at the CM's camp office in Tadepalli seeking their cooperation. The late MP's family members agreed to the proposal of Jagan. Municipal administration minister Botsa Satyanarayana, who accompanied the deceased MP's kin, told media that CM promised MLC post to the son of late MP whenever the first seat falls vacant in the legislative council.

Faith matters



Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy participating in special puja on the occasion of inauguration of Tungabhadra Pushkaralu in Kurnool city on Friday.

— DC

AP credits input subsidy
of ₹366cr to 4.91L farmers

The input subsidy is directly credited to farmers' bank a/c

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 20

In a first of its kind, the state government has credited input subsidy of ₹366 crore into bank accounts of nearly 4.91 lakh farmers for crops damaged during the October rains in Andhra Pradesh.

Unlike the earlier practice, where it used to take a long time for assessing extent of damage to both agriculture and horticulture crops due to natural calamities, the state government has deposited the amount through Real-Time Gross Settlement into the farmers' accounts as input subsidy.

The move is aimed to benefit farmers to use the input subsidy for purchasing seeds, fertilisers and

It is for the first time, the state government has released input subsidy directly to the farmers who suffered damages to their crops due to natural calamities in an expeditious manner to help them raise crops again to compensate crop loss in the state, says horticulture additional director K. Balaji Naik.

pesticides to raise short-term crops and recoup their loss because of the natural calamity.

Due to the Pethai cyclone in 2018, 4,20,440 farmers suffered damage to their crops to an extent of 2,13,669.59 hectares.

Crops were similarly damaged due to floods and heavy rains in 2019-20 and also in 2020-21 during October. Based on the extent of crop loss, the state government estimated that input subsidy be

given to farmers to the tune of ₹30,692.05 lakh. The same amount was credited into the bank accounts of farmers.

Similarly, with regard to horticulture crops,

authorities estimated the crop loss at 31,250 hectares due to heavy rains and floods from April to October 2020 affecting about 70,932 farmers. Out of an estimated input subsidy amount of ₹59.5 crore, the state government had already credited

₹30 crore into the bank accounts of farmers through RTGS. The remaining amount will be credited in a day or two.

Horticulture additional director K. Balaji Naik said, "It is for the first time that the state government has released input subsidy directly to farmers who suffered damages to their crops due to natural calamities in an expeditious manner, so that they can raise crops again to recoup their loss."

The state government fixed an input subsidy of ₹15,000 per hectare for paddy, cotton, sugarcane, for maize ₹12,500; for pulses, wheat and tobacco ₹10,000; for jowar and castor ₹6,800; for korra and mustard ₹5,000, for sand casting ₹12,200 and for soil erosion ₹37,500.

46k retail stores take-off
under YSR CheyuthaDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 20

Aiming to establish 78,000 retail stores across the state under the YSR Cheyutha scheme, YSR Congress government has successfully set up close to 46,000 retail stores in the rural and urban areas.

The interiors boast of 32,341 stores whereas, in the urban areas, the government has successfully set up 13,226 retail stores.

On August 12, Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy launched the YSR Cheyutha scheme, providing financial assistance of ₹18,750 to 23 lakh beneficiaries. Within two months, the government launched the second phase of the

● ON AUGUST 12, the CM launched the YSR Cheyutha scheme, providing financial assistance of ₹18,750 to 23 lakh beneficiaries.

● Within two months, the government launched the second phase of the scheme. It endeavoured to support women in 45 to 60 years age-group

scheme.

He stated that the government endeavoured to support women in 45 to 60 years age-group and belonging to socially dis-

advantaged communities.

Officials stated MNCs and FMCG giants like Amul, ITC, HUL, P&G, and Reliance had transformed these women into micro-entrepreneurs in rural areas. Now their outlets are on par with other retail brands, officials said.

Constant mentoring, exchange of business ideas, converting local resources into marketable commodities would empower women transforming them from a micro consumer to be micro-producers.

Society for eliminating rural poverty (SERP) CEO P. Rajababu, said that the average daily sales turnover comes to ₹5,000. The monthly net profit is around ₹13,500.

War of words over local
body polls echoes in RBDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 20

The war of words between ministers and members of Telugu Desam over State Election Commissioner Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar's decision to conduct local body elections in February is nearing a flashpoint.

Even as they were launching scathing attacks against one another, Mr Ramesh Kumar lodged a complaint with Governor Biswa Bhushan Harichandan alleging verbal abuse by minister for civil supplies Kodali Venkateswara Rao (Nani). The minister came down heavily against Mr Ramesh Kumar and alleged that the SEC was shunning his constitutional responsibility and dancing to the tune of TD chief N. Chandrababu Naidu.

He claimed that Mr Naidu appointed Mr Ramesh Kumar to get benefit from the SEC post and termed him as a mole of Mr Naidu. He demanded removal of Ramesh Kumar from the SEC post as he would not conduct free and fair elections.

Minister for endowments Velampalli Srinivas said that their government was unable to hire services of lawyers charging fees in crore whereas Ramesh Kumar hired

● Mr Ramesh Kumar lodged a complaint with Governor Biswa Bhushan Harichandan alleging verbal abuse by minister for civil supplies Kodali Venkateswara Rao (Nani)

such high-profile advocates for his cases in High Court and Supreme Court which show his politically motivated relations. Minister for education, Audimulapu Suresh alleged that Mr Ramesh Kumar wanted to conduct elections before his retirement, which without consent of the state government was unconstitutional.

Rajya Sabha MP V. Vijayasai Reddy said that the State Election Commissioner was not following constitutional guidelines and was having private meetings with TD leaders.

He stated, "When the state was receiving less than 10 Covid cases a day, the SEC postponed elections before his retirement, which without even discussing with the state government, but when hundreds of cases are being registered and the fear of a second wave is looming large, he is trying to conduct elections. Mr Ramesh Kumar might join TD after his retire-

ment and also usurp the party leadership."

The counters from TD leaders have been equally volatile. Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Council, Yanamala Ramakrishnu alleged that the YSRC government was undermining election related laws as well as the Constitution of India by challenging the autonomy of the State Election Commissioner, whose decision-making cannot be questioned. He claimed that the YSRC's non-cooperation amounted to violation of the Constitution itself.

The TD leader demanded that elections that were thrust by YSRC rulers should be cancelled and fresh elections be held to ensure a vibrant democracy.

Stating that nepotism and favouritism were ruling the roost, Mr Ramakrishnu said that Jagan Mohan Reddy's rule was like that of Donald Trump in the US. He claimed that the Chief Secretary has no authority to tell the SEC that elections cannot be held.

TD organising secretary Nadendla Brahmam and other leaders strongly objected to the manner in which minister Kodali Nani has been making unparliamentary comments against the SEC and Mr Naidu.

‘SEC playing into
Naidu’s hand’DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 20

The State Election Commissioner Nimmagadda Ramesh is playing into the hands of TD chief and former chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu by rushing for the local body elections, said Rajya Sabha member V. Vijayasai Reddy.

Addressing a press conference here on Friday, Mr Vijayasai Reddy criticised the State Election Commissioner (SEC) for not following the constitutional guidelines and the Covid-19 protocol.

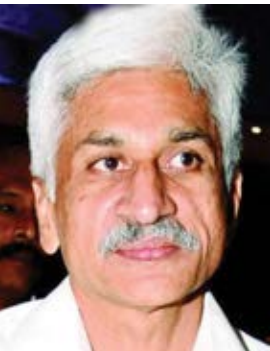
While the state was registering less than 10 Covid-19 cases a day, the SEC postponed the elections without even discussing it with the State government. But when hundreds of cases are reported and the fear of a second wave was looming large, SEC is trying to conduct elections.

"Nimmagadda Ramesh might join TD after his retirement as the party members have an immense trust in him," the MP said.

Speaking on the Polavaram project, he stated that there was nothing wrong in installing the statue of Dr Y.S. Rajashekar Reddy, who initiated the Polavaram project.

While former chief minister Dr Y.S. Rajashekar Reddy laid the foundation for Polavaram and completed a majority of work, Mr Chandrababu tried to stop the land acquisition. Mr Chandrababu Naidu provoked Odisha and Chhattisgarh states to stop the construction and moved to the Supreme Court.

He stated that Mr Naidu has no commitment



V. Vijayasai Reddy.

towards Polavaram and thus failed to keep his promise of completing the project by 2018.

Opposition TD role is completely absent and it has been working like an NRI party, residing in another state and politicising things in AP.

Speaking on Bhogapuram Airport, he said that the current airport in Visakhapatnam belonged to Indian Navy and once the commercial operations start in Bhogapuram, all the civil aviation in Visakhapatnam airports will be moved to Bhogapuram.

Minister for agriculture Kurasala Kannababu said SEC Ramesh was biased towards Opposition leaders and working under the direction of Mr Chandrababu Naidu.

The minister clarified that YSRC was not afraid of elections and there was no reason to fear seeking public mandate when Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy fulfilled 90 per cent of the poll promises within one year of forming the government.

"Our government implemented all the welfare schemes even during the Covid-19 pandemic," he said.

AP WILL LAUNCH
INDUSTRY RESTART
PROGRAMME:
KANNABABUDC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 20

The AP government will soon start industries restart programme to enable the small and medium scale units that were closed due to Covid pandemic are staggering to reopen them, said Kurasala Kannababu, minister for agriculture and who is also in charge minister for Visakhapatnam district.

Addressing a press conference here on Friday, Kannababu said the government would run parallel the agriculture and industries, the two major sources for creating large-scale employment in the state. He said most of the small scale industries were closed during the lockdown and they were never reopened. Hence financial aid would be given to these sick industries in the restart programme that was being planned.

He said an important meeting has been scheduled for Saturday in which entrepreneurs, industrialists and representatives of public sector undertakings would participate. The meeting would discuss the post lockdown scenario of the industries, pollution problems in Visakhapatnam city and comprehensive development of the region. The PSU role in providing helping hand to the unemployed through CSR programmes would also be discussed, the minister added.

Minister Muttamsetti Srinvasa Rao said the city has enough basic infrastructure facilities to develop as a major industrial hub of AP.

CAPITAL | RELOCATION

The court observed that it ‘felt pain’ after witnessing stalling of all development works
Is shifting of capital from Amaravati not a ‘mindless act’, asks HCDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 20

The Andhra Pradesh High Court on Friday asked whether the state government's move to relocate capital city Amaravati was not a "mindless act".

A division bench comprising justice Rakesh Kumar and justice J. Uma Devi, while hearing a batch of petitions, including a petition filed by former TD MLA Tenali Sravan Kumar, raising objection against police for not allowing former chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu to conduct a roadshow in Visakhapatnam earlier.

The state government's special counsel S.S. Prasad

raised objection over usage of the phrase "mindless act" of the government in handling such a case.

In response to it, the court asked whether it was not a mindless act on part of the state government to relocate capital city Amaravati, after developing it by "spending thousands of crores of rupees of public money".

The court observed that it "felt pain" after witnessing stalling of all developmental works, including the construction of several buildings. The High Court bench further said that criminals were entering into politics undermining democratic institutions. It felt the need to restrict their entry into poli-

PILs filed in the High Court with political motives

From Page 1

Referring to Justice Rakesh Kumar, the special counsel said that as the judge came here from other state, he might not be knowing the problems pertaining to the location of the High Court and pointed out they were facing a series of problems like lack of water, less availability of tea or food as the court was located in a far-

ties and cautioned that if not, criminals would grab power and rule the roost.

The court said that during the appointment of a peon in a government

office, his criminal antecedents are checked and wondered why the same was not the case with those entering politics. It must be done to safeguard

the democracy and constitutional rights of the citizens, the court observed. The court opined that if persons with criminal antecedents were allowed

finding fault with them when he was in no need of their help. He said that as Naidu arrived in Visakhapatnam to play politics, the police asked him to go back wondering why his party leaders were making a hue and cry on the issue. He opined that Naidu should have filed the PIL if he was so concerned instead of allowing his party leaders to file. He said that the PIL lacked

any sanctity for being heard in the court. He also asked as to how far it could be justified to hold the Chief Minister and DGP responsible when a constable had committed a mistake.

As the petitioner's counsel S. Pranathi sought time to file a reply to the counter-affidavit filed by the police, the court adjourned the hearing to Monday.

into politics, they might become rulers and felt a need to safeguard democratic institutions from such persons.

The court also expressed

concern over how IAS and IPS officers were forced to follow dictats of ministers having criminal antecedents. It grieved over the way a top cop in Bihar was forced to listen to a person with a criminal background once he became a minister. The court found fault with Visakhapatnam ACP for serving a notice under section 151 of the CrPC and even felt the need for his dismissal.

Petitioner Tenali Sravan Kumar's contention was that once police had given permission to Mr Naidu to conduct a road show in Vizag, how could they now stop him from leading the road show and instead served him a notice under section 151 of the CrPC.

IN BRIEF

2 held with 400 kg ganja

Visakhapatnam: The Visakhapatnam police arrested two youth who were allegedly shifting about 400 kg ganja in a container lorry at Chodavaram area in Visakhapatnam district on Friday. The estimated worth of ganja seized is more than ₹40 lakh. According to police, the two youths had come to Paderu from Uttar Pradesh in a lorry and procured the ganja from interior parts and were trying to shift back the weed to Uttar Pradesh. Based on credible information, Chodavaram police intercepted the container lorry and seized the ganja. In order to escape from the police, the smugglers prepared a cabin in between the driver seat and the rear, where they stored the ganja packets. Chodavaram police has registered a case.

TD'S V-P, SATYAPRABHA PASSES AWAY

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, NOV. 20

Telugu Desam's national vice-president and former Chittoor MLA D.A. Satyaprabha, 70, passed away due to ill health at Vaidehi Institute of Medical Sciences in Bengaluru late on Thursday night.

The former TD MLA had tested positive for Covid-19 last month and had recovered after a few days. However, her condition turned critical on November 3 following complications from Covid-19, and after a heart attack last night, she breathed her last.

Satyaprabha was born at Sadum in Chittoor district and pursued her matriculation in Bengaluru.

She is an ardent devotee of Sathya Sai Baba, and with his blessings, she got married to D.K. Adikesavulu Naidu, who was then an assistant engineer at a sugar factory in Chittoor.

D.K. Adikesavulu Naidu got elected as the Telugu Desam MP from Chittoor in 2004, besides serving as the TTD chairman twice.

INVESTMENTS WORTH ₹37,500 CRORE LIKELY

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, NOV. 20

Nellore district collector K.V.N. Chakradhar Babu informed that investments worth ₹37,500 crore coming up in the district as part of the Chennai-Bengaluru industrial corridor.

The collector on Friday inspected CBIC lands close to the Nekkanti mega food park in Chillakur mandal and other lands at Kota mandals, where he collected information from the officials on the number of industrial units that have already opened so far and the projects under the pipeline.

Speaking to the reporters, he said that the industrial corridor would boost revenues and opportunities to the unemployed educated youth in the region.

He said they are estimating that around ₹5,735 crore of funds were needed for developing infrastructure in this corridor.

He informed that the Krishnapatnam node is expected to provide direct employment to 2.96 lakh people and also for 1.71 lakh people indirectly.

He asked the officials to speed up the process of developing infrastructure.

MP violates Covid-19 norms**Masks, social distancing ignored, people scuffle for free helmets**

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 20

Covid-19 safety norms were blown to the winds when thousands of people gathered on the RK Beach Road in Visakhapatnam in the early hours of Friday to participate in a rally to create awareness on the use of life-saving helmets. The rally was flagged off by none other than Rajya Sabha member and north coastal in-charge of YSRC Mr V. Vijaya Sai Reddy.

Anakapalle MLA Mr Gudivada Amarnath rode a bike leading the rally and Mr Reddy was the pillion rider.

Surprisingly both of them were seen without masks.

So were hundreds of bike riders seen close to the top leadership of the government.

Later, actor and well-known comedian of Telugu movie industry Ali addressed a meeting with the mask hanging from his ears and minister Muttamsetti Srinivasa Rao and others wore no masks surprising the health-conscious people who had a glimpse at the meeting.

Little people saw commotion and scuffle on the beach where free helmets were distributed to the motorists.

Mr Reddy himself distributed the helmets standing next to minister Mr Srinivasa Rao and hundreds of people rubbed against each other without masks and



Rajya Sabha member V. Vijaya Sai Reddy sits as a pillion rider with Anakapalli MLA, Gudivada Amarnath and takes part in a bike rally to create awareness on safe driving in Visakhapatnam on Friday.

— DC

1,221 new Covid cases, 10 deaths

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 20

AP registered 1,221 new Covid cases scaling up the tally to 8,59,932 and 10 deaths raising toll to 6,920.

The state health authorities issued Covid-19 bulletin on Friday reporting that out of 66,002 samples tested, 1,221 persons were found infected with Covid-19. Out of a total 94,74,870 samples tested so far in the state, 8,37,630

patients were discharged after recovery while 15,382 patients are still active with the virus.

Among the daily Covid-19 cases, East Godavari registered 202 followed by 198 in Krishna, 175 in Chittoor, 145 in West Godavari, 69 in Visakhapatnam, 65 in Kadapa, 50 in Prakasam, 47 in Nellore, 41 in Anantapur, 34 in Srikakulam, 32 in Vizianagaram and 19 in Kurnool.

With regard to the total

Covid-19 active cases, East Godavari topped the state with 4,881 followed by 2,107 in Krishna, 1,724 in Guntur, 1,319 in West Godavari, 1,282 in Visakhapatnam, 1,023 in Nellore, 828 in Chittoor, 581 in Prakasam, 465 in Anantapur, 443 in Srikakulam, 296 in Kadapa, 218 in Vizianagaram and 215 in Kurnool. The rate of recovery among infected patients has been good in East Godavari.

diologist associated with a corporate hospital.

Another medical professional said these leaders were presuming that the virus lost its sting going by the media reports.

“Perhaps they were not aware of the WHO warning on the second bout which is already taking its toll in the US, Europe and New Delhi,” she said.

This is not the first time Mr Reddy led a rally violating the Covid protocol. On November 13, he participated in a walkathon ‘We Support Vizag’ organised by GVMC. Children without masks were seen next to him.

Medical officers in-charge of Covid in Visakhapatnam feigned ignorance. They said they were not aware of these rallies.

At last Friday's rally, the chief medical officer Dr K.S.L.G. Sastry said few people gathered around the leaders, but there was social distance among the walkers and most of them wore masks.

PRODDATUR IS FIT FOR A DIST HQ: RAMANA REDDY

DC CORRESPONDENT
KADAPA, NOV. 20

Proddatur town has all credentials to continue as the district headquarters, said former MLA M. V. Ramana Reddy.

When some members of some non-government organisations and literary associations discussed the issue with him on Friday, Ramana Reddy said the government should respond positively as it is an important commercial centre in AP. May feel Proddatur will be convenient for all as it is a geographical focal point for all constituencies.

67 ACRES TO BE ACQUIRED FOR AIRPORT

DC CORRESPONDENT
KADAPA, NOV. 20

District collector Chevuri Harikiran on Friday inspected the land required for the Kadapa Airport expansion works.

The collector, along with Kadapa sub-collector Pridhivite, spoke to the farmers of Chinnamachupalle and Palampalle areas who are losing their lands in the airport area for expansion works. The collector said that the Kadapa Airport is further expanded in the interest of the public. Therefore, about 67 acres of land in the surrounding areas have to be acquired from farmers.

In this context, views were sought from the concerned farmers for the acquisition of 20 acres of land belonging to the Chinnamachupalle farmers in the Chennur mandal and 47 acres of land belonging to the Palampalle farmers in the Kadapa rural mandal.

He said that he had talked to the landowners to assess the value of the land there and their views had been collected. Kadapa and Chennur tahsildars Shivaramidey, Anuradha, concerned revenue officers and local farmers participated in the programme.



National archery player K. Jyothi taking charge as one day AP State women's commission chairperson under “Kids Takeover” programme in Guntur on Friday.

— DC

Demand for new Penukonda district

DC CORRESPONDENT
ANANTAPUR, NOV. 20

With the Karnataka government announcing a new district called Vijayanagar in memory of Vijayanagar Empire's main capital, there is a similar demand from AP historians seeking Penukonda, the summer capital of Vijayanagar, as one among the new districts, which are in the process of being formed in AP.

The erstwhile ceded area of Rayalaseema region – Bellary district, located closer to Anantapur district, was

divided into two districts by Karnataka government. One of them has been named Vijayanagar, by combining Hospet, Kampli, Hagaribo-mmanagali, Kottur, Hadagali and Harapanahalli constituencies. In the new district Vijayanagar, Hampi, erstwhile capital of Vijayanagar Empire during the 14-17th centuries and an International tourism centre, has been added. The original Bellary district remains with areas of Bellary, Kurugodu, Siruguppa, Sandur and Kudligi areas.

Hospet and Hampi are twin cities. Hampi is the first capital of Vijayanagara Empire, whose summer capital was Penukonda in Anantapur district.

Meanwhile, a group of rich iron ore mine owners, along with Jindal Steels, are said to be behind the aspiration of having a separate district that includes Hampi.

An association of prominent people of Penukonda has been demanding that the state government declare Penukonda as a new district headquarters.

RISKY | DRIVES Black spots, reckless driving add more to accidental deaths
Road mishaps continue unabated on highways

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, NOV. 20

The bloodbath, on the state and national highways and rural stretches, in Chittoor district continues unabated due to various reasons like reckless driving, unsanitary construction of roads and poor lighting.

According to statistics, 612 people have died and 1,389 were injured in 549 accidents, reported in 2019. During January-August this year, about 151 people have died and 432 injured in 352 accidents reported on the highways.

While the maximum number of accidents happened on the Kuppam-Palamaner-Madanapalle-Mulakalacheruvu stretch of the National Highway (NH)-42, the other danger-

ous stretches are Bengaluru-Palamaner-Chittoor-Ranipet stretch of NH-69 and the NH-40 passing through Chittoor-Piler-Kalakada.

The NH-42 has witnessed the maximum number of accidents in which 43 persons were killed. The NHs-40 saw 31 deaths each due to accidents, while the NH-71 (Madanapalle-Piler-Tirupati) witnessed 18. About 82 accidents were reported on the state highways, where 34 people have died and 69 injured, while the rural stretches across the district have seen 133 people dying in road accidents.

The officials of National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), roads and buildings and panchayat raj have recently conducted

● **WHILE THE** maximum number of accidents happened on the Kuppam-Palamaner-Madanapalle-Mulakalacheruvu stretch of the NH-42, the other dangerous stretches are Bengaluru-Palamaner-Chittoor-Ranipet stretch of NH-69 and the NH-40 passing through Chittoor-Piler-Kalakada.

a survey on accidents reported in the district. They have identified 122 most accidents spots on the six NHs, besides few on SHs and other rural stretches in the district. They also found that black spots

account for 60-70 per cent of road accidents reported in the district.

As per the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MORTH), a road accident black spot is a road corridor, about 500 m long, in which either five road accidents, involving fatalities and grievous injuries, were reported during the last three calendar years or ten deaths in the previous three calendar years.

Based on this, the officials have identified 43 black spots on the stretch between Kuppam-Palamaner, followed by 22 each on Chittoor-Piler-Kadapa and Palamaner-Punganur roads and 17 on the stretch connecting Karnataka-AP-Tamil Nadu states, from Palamaner to

Ranipet. Concerned over the rise in the number of accidents, now the officials had swung into action and taking rectification measures for road accident black spots.

An official from the transport department said that the report chalked out recently will be sent to the MORTH for rectification of accident spots on the NH corridors, while the state agencies will take care of spots on the SHs and other rural stretches.

“The transportation planning and research experts will draw rectification plans for black spots and for each location they will enforce measures including engineering treatment, speed control, pedestrian crossing, proper alignment and lighting,” he added.

AP lorry owners demand toll tax cancellation

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 20

The AP Lorry Owners Association (APLOA) appealed to Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to cancel the new proposal of collecting toll tax in double roads. APLOA wrote a letter to Mr Jagan on Friday and lamented that the transport sector had been badly affected due to the Corona crisis for the past eight months.

APLOA general secretary Y.V. Eswar Rao said that due to Corona the transport sector was pushed into a deep crisis and not to levy any burden on the transport sector. He said that they have been paying taxes for four-line and six-line roads

across the state. He lamented that for the last two years the transport sector is in deep crisis and the corona pandemic has shattered the crisis further.

He stated that in this juncture collecting toll for two-line roads will be a heavy burden on the transport sector.

Mr Eswara Rao that at the time of vehicle purchasing they are paying 28 per cent GST and 14 per cent road tax, we have been paying toll at National highways. He said that the government planning to collect toll for two-line roads would be a big setback to the lorry owners and the transport sector, we strongly oppose the government's move.

KARNATAKA MINISTER DONATES ₹1.2CR WORTH DSNG VAN TO SVBC

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, NOV. 20

Karnataka social welfare minister B. Sriramulu on Friday donated a ₹1.20 crore worth Digital Satellite News Gathering (DSNG) van to the TTDs Sri Venkateswara

Bhakthi Channel (SVBC).

After special pujas in front of Srivari temple, Manjunath, a representative of the Karnataka minister handed over the keys of the vehicle to the SVBC MD and TTD additional EO A.V. Dharma Reddy.

Five of same family gone missing traced

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, NOV. 20

The Venkatagiri police have successfully traced the five members of a family including two women and three children, who had gone missing under mysterious circumstances from the G.K. Palli in Venkatagiri mandal of Nellore district on Nov. 16.

Disclosing the case details to media persons, Gudur DSP Mr B. Rajagopal Reddy said that they have received a missing complaint from Polipaka Krishniah on November 17.

The complainant stated that his wife Polipaka Vijaya along with his two daughters and his brother's wife Polipaka Supriya and their daughter, who went out saying that they were going to the primary health centre, had gone missing from November 16.

Based on his complaint, the police have registered a case and launched an investigation. “During the course of investigation, we have

found that the missing persons have gone to Hyderabad via Vijayawada in a rented car. After tracking their exact location, our teams have gone to Yellamabanda area of Kukatpally in Hyderabad and brought them back to their native”, the DSP said.

On being questioned, both Vijaya and Supriya have stated that they have left the house because of family disputes. They also alleged that they have been harassed by their husbands and hence they have decided to escape to Hyderabad.

“Supriya said that she had befriended a woman called A. Sridevi of Miryalaguda, when they both were working in Nellore some time ago. As Sridevi looks like a man in appearance, she got attracted to her and started a relationship with her. As both Vijaya and Supriya have allegedly been facing harassment from their husbands, they left the village and started staying with a relative of Sridevi in Kukatpally,” the DSP said.

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SHORT TAKES

14 PEOPLE DEAD AS CAR COLLIDES WITH TRUCK IN UP

Lucknow/Pratapgarh, Nov. 20: As many as 14 people, including seven children, died when their car collided with a stationary truck on the Lucknow-Allahabad highway, around 70 km from Pratapgarh district headquarters, an official said on Friday.

The road accident took place late on Thursday night when the victims were returning from a wedding function in the Nawabganj area of Pratapgarh. Additional Chief Secretary, Home, Awanish Awasthi said.

Pratapgarh Superintendent of Police (SP) Anurag Arya said the speeding SUV dashed into the truck parked by the road in the Manikpur police station area after one of its rear tyres got punctured near Deshraj Inara.

While five bodies could be taken out initially, a JCB machine had to be used to pull out the SUV from under the truck to retrieve the remaining bodies, he said, adding the bodies have been shifted to CHC Kunda and will be sent for autopsy later in the day.

It took almost two hours to pull the car out from under the truck, the SP said.

Arya, who visited the spot, said the police have spoken to the family members of the victims and assured all possible help.

Awasthi said Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath directed senior officials to reach the spot and extend all possible help. The Chief Minister has extended ex gratia of ₹2 lakhs to each of those killed in the crash, he added.

ED FILES MONEY LAUNDERING CASE IN TRP SCAM

SAURABH JOSHI | DC MUMBAI, NOV. 20

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday filed a money laundering complaint in connection with the alleged TRP (television rating points) rigging scam case that is being investigated by Mumbai police. The ED officials said that the case was filed by them on the basis of the Mumbai police's FIR.

The officials said that they would summon all those named accused in the case for questioning in the fresh case. The Mumbai crime branch is currently probing the case that was filed in October naming *Republic TV*, two Marathi channels accused of rigging the TRP ratings for their channels with help of some other persons, who are also named in the case.

The Mumbai police's probe revealed that apart from the named accused, two former employees of Hansa research agency were in cahoots with the accused persons. These persons will be summoned by the ED for recording their statement and the prime focus of the probe will be to ascertain if there was any laundering of ill-gotten money in the case.

"ED will probe if fake TRPs were generated and if the money earned through this was used to generate illegal funds and create illegitimate assets. TRP is the parameter to ascertain programmes with highest viewership and hence it becomes crucial for the channels to earn advertising and other revenue," said officials.

Mumbai police filed a case after ratings agency Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) filed a complaint through Hansa Research Group pertaining to the alleged rigging. Several people including *Republic TV*'s Arnab Goswami were arrested in the case that has attracted several eyeballs and has become bone of contention between the state and central governments.

LoC locals call for 'end to hostility'

Flare up along LoC last week left at least four civilians and an equal number of jawans dead

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC BALKOT (LoC), NOV. 20

"I was away when I received a phone call from my wife saying intense artillery shelling is underway. She asked me what she and other family members should do, stay at home or leave", recalled Abdul Haleem, a resident of Balkote, a sleepy village comprising scattered traditional houses at the foothills just a stone's throw from the Line of Control (LoC) in Baramulla district.

Alarmed by the grimness of his spouse's voice, Haleem quickly headed for home but, before he could reach there, his wife called up again to inform him that two houses including their's have caught fire due to the artillery fire. "I was shocked and merely asked her if all the family members were safe. I felt relief when told everyone at home has escaped unhurt," Haleem told this newspaper.

Standing beside the debris of his house and that of his uncle's, Haleem said, "You can yourself see everything has been reduced into rubble. What was our fault? Indians and

Pakistanis may do to each other whatever they want to but why should we suffer?"

Farooqa Begum was not as lucky as her neighbour Haleem's family. An artillery shell pierced through a wall of her house killing the 35-year-old housewife on the spot. "*Hum par qayamat guzri hai* (we've gone through doomsday)", lamented her husband Bashir Ahmed Dar.

Tahir Ahmed Mir, an employee of J&K's department of consumer affairs and public distribution, was distributing ration at a depot in Kamalkote area when a mortar shell fell and exploded a couple of metres away. Mir suffered multiple splinter injuries and died on the way to the hospital. Back in his native village Sultan Daki, the world of his aged parents and siblings lies completely shattered after the tragedy.

Raveel Ahmed, his brother, said, "We were six brothers and one of them has been snatched from us. Our hearts are bleeding". The rage in Ahmed's eyes was clearly evident as he repeatedly asked 'Why was he snatched from



Last week's flare up left behind a trail of destruction in villages close to the LoC in Hajipir and Kamalkote sectors of Baramulla district.

us...what was his fault?"

The interminable hostility between India and Pakistan troops along the LoC flared up again last week, leaving at least four civilians and an equal number of Indian Army and one Border Security Force (BSF) jawans dead and more than a dozen civilians and three Army personnel injured. Pakistan reported the death of four civilians and one Army soldier and injuries to 12 civilians in cross-LoC firing and shelling on November 12 and 13.

However, Indian Army claimed to have killed, at least, 11 Pakistani soldiers and caused "substantial damage" to its infrastructure including ammunition dumps and "terrorist launch-pads" across the LoC "in retaliation to unprovoked ceasefire violations".

In their counterclaim, the Pakistan Army claimed inflicting "substantial losses" both in terms of men and material to the Indian troops "in response to their provocative act of engaging innocent civilians".

In J&K, many houses in villages falling in close

proximity of the LoC including Balkote, Kamalkote, Gowhalan, Sarai Bandi, Nambra and Gwalta (Baramulla district), Dawar (Bandipore district), Keran (Kupwara district) and Sawjian (Poonch district) were damaged in artillery shelling, forcing the residents to flee to safer locations.

As reported by Pakistan media, 15 residential houses, a few multi-storey buildings and one shop were gutted and 24 residential houses and a guest-house suffered partial damage and 20 cattle and eight goats perished in the Indian shelling.

The guns fell silent on the evening of November 13. Next day when residents returned to the affected villages on the Indian side of the LoC they found their homes burnt or damaged extensively and the household goods strewn and wrecked apart.

The two countries' armies accused each other of initiating firing and it was not the first time that the exchanges caused deaths among both facing troops and civilians besides leaving a trail of

destruction in villages.

As per official statistics, 32 Indian Army and Border Security Force (BSF) personnel, 26 militants and infiltrators, 16 civilians and three civilian porters working for the Army or the BSF (total number of casualties was 77) were killed in the incidents of cross-border firing and shelling, clashes and sneak attacks carried out by militants or Pakistan's Border Action Teams (BATs) along the LoC and the IB, so far, this year.

As the civilians have routinely fallen prey to such exchanges, Nazir Ahmed, a resident of Balkote asked, "When an artillery shell lands in a house, a cowshed or courtyard we can't immediately say who fired it. But the fact is that it is mainly the civilians on both sides who suffer whenever India and Pakistan troops clash. This has to be brought to a close".

The border-dwellers were also unanimous in demanding early construction of community and individual bunkers in shelling prone areas to minimise the casualties in such eventualities.

TMC MANTRI COMPARES DIDI WITH NETAJI

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, NOV. 20

Trinamul Congress minister Bratya Basu on Friday compared his party supremo and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee with Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose to fan an eternal "Bengali" sentiment about the legendary freedom fighter against the Bharatiya Janata Party ahead of the next year's Assembly election. He also branded her party as her own "Azad Hind Fauj" in what may trigger a controversy.

The state science and technology minister alleged, "it is a fact Bose had to go away from the politics of Bengal and India as the freedom movement was against a colonial power. Exactly the same thing happened after 50 years with Mamata Banerjee. But she did not have to go since her fight was not against any colonial rule for freedom. Mamata Banerjee's battle was on parliamentary democracy for which she formed a separate party."

Night curfew in three more Guj cities to contain Covid-19

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, NOV. 20

The Union government has rushed four high level teams to Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Manipur to help the states deal with surging cases of Coronavirus.

The Union health ministry said on Friday that the teams will visit the districts reporting a high number of Covid-19 cases and support the state efforts towards strengthening containment, surveillance, testing, infection prevention and control measures, and efficient clinical management of the positive cases.

India on Friday crossed 90 lakh cases with 45,882 new detections. The total deaths so far is 1.32 lakh out of which 584 are in the last 24 hours.

India has tested a total of 12,95,91,786 samples, as on date. Close to 11 lakh tests were conducted in the past 24 hours.

"High levels of widespread testing have ensured that the cumulative positivity rate is sustained at low levels and is presently following a downward trajectory. The cumulative national positivity rate stands at 6.95% today, less than the 7% mark. Higher volumes of testing eventually lead to low positivity rate," health ministry said.

The National Recovery Rate has reached 93.60%.

Meanwhile, vaccine maker Serum Institute of India's CEO Adar Poonawalla has said the Oxford Covid-19 vaccine should be available for healthcare workers and elderly people by February 2021 and by April for the general public, and will be priced at a maximum of 1,000 for two necessary doses for the public, depending on the final trial results and regulatory

Schools to remain closed in Mumbai till December 31

DC CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, NOV. 20

Amid the rising numbers of Covid-19 positive patients in Mumbai, the Shiv Sena ruled Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) on Friday announced that schools will remain closed in the city till December 31. Earlier, the Maharashtra government had planned to open schools from November 23.

According to the circular issued by BMC's education department, although pandemic is under control in Mumbai, other countries are witnessing the second wave and considering the situation of the infection of the other states, the possibility of the second wave cannot be ignored in Maharashtra. "The next four to six months are very crucial for containing the

pandemic. Hence, the schools in BMC's jurisdiction cannot be started from November 23rd. All the schools will remain closed till December 31, 2020.

Maharashtra reported a single day rise of 5,640 Covid-19 new cases on Friday taking its overall tally to 17,68,695 cases while 155 new deaths were reported which pushed the fatality count to 46,511.

Gaikwad said that the online classes will continue at the schools that remain closed. "Even if the schools do not reopen, the students can still attend the online classes and learn. I have given necessary instructions to the officials concerned," the minister added.

Gaikwad said that the education department has approved the BMC's proposal.

Chhath Puja in the time of Covid



Devotees gather to take holy dip in Ganga on the occasion of Chhath Puja in Patna on Friday. The four-day festival began with folk songs dedicated to the Sun God and aroma of traditional offerings filled the air. It is celebrated by scores of people, especially those hailing from Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh.

FB: HATE SPEECH PREVALENCE IS 0.10 PER CENT

New Delhi, Nov. 20: Social media giant Facebook has for the first time disclosed prevalence of hate speech on its platform, saying that out of every 10,000 content views globally in the third quarter, 10-11 were hate speech.

Facebook, which has 1.82 billion daily users globally, has drawn flak in the past for its handling of hate speech on the platform in India.

In its community standards enforcement report for Sept. 2020 quarter, Facebook said it is including the prevalence of hate speech on its platform globally "for the first time". "In Q3 2020, hate speech prevalence was 0.10 per cent, 0.11 per cent or 10 to 11 views of hate speech for every 10,000 views of content," it added. — PTI

Sonia shifts to Goa to avoid Delhi pollution

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 20

Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Friday set up three separate panels for discussing policy issues related to economic affairs, foreign affairs and national security before leaving Delhi due to health issues.

Mrs Gandhi, who has been advised to shift out of Delhi to avoid the heavy pollution in the national capital in view of her chronic chest infection, has shifted to Goa for a few days.

Congress sources said she was accompanied by Rahul Gandhi. The Congress president has been under heavy medication following her discharge from hospital in August, and doctors are concerned about her consistent chest infection.

The air pollution in Delhi has aggravated her asthma and her chest condition, the sources added. Hours before leaving, Gandhi set up three separate committees for discussing policy issues related to economic affairs, foreign affairs and national security. Former prime minister Manmohan Singh is a part of all three panels.

The economic affairs committee will comprise of former finance minister P. Chidambaram and party leaders Mallikarjun Kharge and Digvijaya. Rajya Sabha MP Jairam Ramesh will be its convener.

While the committee on foreign affairs will have Anand Sharma, Shashi Tharoor, Salman Khurshid and Saptagiri Ulaka. Khurshid will be the convener of the

panel, the committee on national security will have leader of opposition in Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad, party leaders Veerappa Moily, Vincent H. Pala and V. Vaithilingam, with Pala as its convener.

"The Congress president has constituted three committees to consider and discuss issues and policies related to the subjects of economic affairs, foreign affairs and national security," an official statement from AICC general secretary K.C. Venugopal said.

It is interesting to note that those nominated in the committees include Ghulam Nabi Azad, Anand Sharma, Veerappa Moily and Shashi Tharoor, who were part of the 23 letter-writers seeking an organisational overhaul of the Congress.

TAX FRAUD

The farmer alleges that photocopies of his ID cards were misused

Odisha farmer gets ₹10cr GST evasion notice

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, NOV. 20

A farmer in Sonepur district, who ekes out a living by toiling day in and out in his one-acre farmland, has received a notice for alleged Goods and Services Tax (GST) evasion to the tune of a whopping ₹10 crore.

Naveen Bag, the farmer, on Friday said he came to know how his name has been used by some unknown, dishonest businessmen to evade GST

when some departmental officials recently raided his humble accommodation on charges of tax evasion. The poor farmer learnt that a firm — Bag & Bag — had been set up using his name.

According to Naveen, he had shared the photocopies of his Aadhaar card, voter identity card and other documents with one Dilip Meher of his district around eight months ago to avail loans from a bank. He now suspects that his identification documents had been misused, leading to the

● **FOLLOWING THE** detection of the fraud, Naveen Bag has lodged a complaint with the Odisha police.

● **THIS IS** not the first time such massive irregularities and instances of GST evasion have come to the light in Odisha.

fraud. Following the detection of the fraud, Naveen has lodged a complaint at the Rampur police station. "The agricultural land is registered in the name of

my father. We are completely dependent on farming and we are completely ignorant how the company was set up in my name," Naveen said.

However, this is not the first time such massive irregularities and instances of GST evasion have come to the light in Odisha. On November 11, a delivery boy working with a private company in Rourkela had received a notice for ₹10 lakh GST evasion.

Preliminary investigations had revealed that a

fake company by the name of 'Manorama Trading' was set up using the name of the delivery boy and fraudulent transactions of over ₹70 lakh had been carried out.

Similarly, a man residing in Sector-20 area of Rourkela was also charged with gross tax liability under Section 74(5) for allegedly receiving taxable goods amounting to ₹23.96 crore and further availing ₹4.31 crore under CGST and SGST on the basis of fake invoices.

DC CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, NOV. 20

As the Maharashtra government blamed the previous BJP-led regime for the rise in the electricity bill arrears and announcing a probe into the dues, senior BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis on Friday attacked the Uddhav Thackeray-led dispensation, saying that it can't do anything except launching inquiries. He also said that although the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government had earlier promised to waive the power bills, it has now realised that it was not possible.

Earlier, state energy minister Nitin Raut, after coming under attack for saying

that no relief can be provided against inflated electricity bills, had claimed that the state is not in a position to waive off electricity bills because three companies which are providing electricity to state are running into losses due to non payment of bills.

Fadnavis said, "during our regime, energy minister Chandrakant Bawankule had done excellent work. We provided electricity at the cheaper rate. We purchased power at a very cheap rate and we gave a concession to the poor and farmers during our rule. If this government has the courage, they should also do it," he said.

The BJP has been target-

ing the MVA government over consumers' complaint of getting inflated electricity bills during the pandemic. Earlier this month, Nitin Raut had hinted at a major relief to the consumers facing the issue of inflated power bills, saying that a Diwali gift was in the offing.

However, a few days back, the minister had said that the government will not be able to provide any relaxation in the inflated electricity bills that consumers received and that they will have to make full payment of the bills.

Raut said that Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray has ordered an inquiry into the dues of the state-run power company.

IN BRIEF

Truck hits funeral mourners, kills 9

Beijing: A truck crashed into a funeral procession in central China on Friday, killing nine people and injuring four others, the state media reported. The accident happened on a national highway in Henan province's Huabin county. Nine people were killed in the incident, Xinhua news agency reported. Four people were injured and hospitalised, it said. The Ministry of Public Security has sent a team to investigate the case, the report said. Deadly road accidents are relatively common in China. Violations of traffic laws are often blamed for these accidents.

'Cannibal' arrested after bones found

Berlin: German prosecutors said Friday there is evidence of "cannibalism" in the killing of a 44-year-old man whose remains were found on the northern edge of Berlin earlier this month. A 41-year-old man was arrested on Thursday on suspicion of murder with sexual motives at his home close to the site where the victim's bones were found. "The suspect had an interest in cannibalism," Berlin prosecutors' office spokesman Martin Steltner said. "He searched online for the topic." Steltner said it was unclear whether the victim had also had an interest in cannibalism. The two men, both Germans, had been in touch with each other online, he said.

Pak: Ancient Hindu temple discovered

Peshawar: A Hindu temple, believed to have been constructed 1,300 years ago, has been discovered by Pakistani and Italian archaeological experts at a mountain in north-west Pakistan's Swat district. The discovery was made during an excavation at Barikot Ghundai. Announcing the discovery on Thursday, Fazle Khaliq of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Department of Archaeology said that the temple discovered is of Lord Vishnu. It was built by the Hindus 1,300 years ago during the Hindu Shahi period, he said. The Hindu Shahis or Kabul Shahis (850-1026 CE) was a Hindu dynasty that ruled the Kabul Valley (eastern Afghanistan), Gandhara (modern-day Pakistan), and present-day northwestern India.

Mink farmers mourn as livelihood dies

Copenhagen: Denmark's mink farmers are mourning what they say is the death of their industry after a government order to cull all of their stocks over a mutated variant of the Coronavirus. On Saturday (Nov 21), angry farmers and supporters plan to demonstrate against the cull in the country's two biggest cities, Copenhagen and Aarhus, with 400 tractors expected to roll in. "We're in shock," Marianne Norgaard Sorensen said. "Words can't describe the nightmare we've been through." She and her husband, who has been a mink farmer since 1993, live in North Jutland, the region in northwestern Denmark home to the most mink farms. Like millions of others across the country, their 27,000 minks were slaughtered in early November and around two thirds of the country's stocks have been culled to date.

SINGAPORE PM'S SIS-IN-LAW BARRED FOR LAW ABUSE

Singapore, Nov. 20: Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong's sister-in-law was on Friday barred from practising law for 15 months over professional misconduct in her handling of the final will of Lee Kuan Yew, the founding father of modern Singapore and the patriarch of the Lee family. The Court of Three Judges, the highest disciplinary body for the legal profession, found senior lawyer Lee Suet Fern guilty of "misconduct unbefitting an advocate and solicitor", for preparing and executing the will which is seen as a gain for her husband, Lee Hsien Yang, the prime minister's younger brother. Following the death of Lee Kuan, the prime minister and his brother are disputing the status of the family property at Oxley Rise on the outskirts of the central business district and hotel belt of Orchard Road. A disciplinary tribunal (DT) had found Lee Suet guilty of grossly improper professional conduct in February this year.



Migrants use a rope to cross the Tachira river, the natural border between Colombia and Venezuela, as the official border remains closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic in Cucuta, Colombia. Hundreds of Venezuelans stranded in Colombia tried to cross the international bridge Wednesday as heavy rains had increased the river level.

Pfizer, BioNTech seek emergency nod from FDA for virus vaccine

Washington, Nov. 20: Pfizer and its partner BioNTech confirmed they will apply on Friday for emergency use authorisation for their Coronavirus vaccine, becoming the first to do so in the US or Europe as the pandemic rages around the world. The vaccine has been developed with breathtaking speed—just 10 months after the genetic code of the Coronavirus was first sequenced. The announcement had been expected for several days, after the companies said that a completed study of trials of the product showed it was 95 percent effective in protecting people from infection. The announcement also confirms what BioNTech's CEO said. "Filing in the US represents a critical milestone

in our journey to deliver a Covid-19 vaccine to the world and we now have a more complete picture of both the efficacy and safety profile of our vaccine, giving us confidence in its potential," Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla said. The vaccine has been under evaluation for weeks in the European Union, Australia, Canada, Japan and the United Kingdom, the companies said. "The companies will be ready to distribute the vaccine candidate within hours after authorisation," their statement said. The Food and Drug Administration has not said how long it will take to study the vaccine data, but the government expects to give the green light for the vaccine in the first two weeks of December.

Serbian Church leader dies due to Covid at 90

Belgrad, Nov. 20: The leader of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Irinej, has died after testing positive for the Coronavirus, the church said on Friday. He was 90. The patriarch was hospitalised with the virus early in November, soon after attending the funeral of the head of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro, Bishop Amfilohije, who also died from complications caused by the Covid-19 infection. "It was an honor to have known you," Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic said on Instagram with a

black and white photo of the patriarch. "People like you are never gone." At that funeral, thousands of mourners, most of them with no masks or keeping any distance between each other, gathered at the funeral in the Montenegrin capital of Podgorica on Nov 1, in violation of coronavirus-fighting measures proclaimed by the small Adriatic state's authorities. Since Amfilohije's death, and the hospitalization of the patriarch, Serbian priests have been appealing for their parishioners to take the deadly virus seriously.

MANY MOURN DEATH OF BELARUS PROTESTER

Minsk, Nov. 20: About 5,000 people gathered in the Belarus capital Minsk on Friday for the funeral of an opposition activist who died of brain trauma after being arrested by police. Roman Bondarenko, a 31-year-old soldier, died last week in Minsk after police arrested him following a dispute in a city square that has become a regular meeting place for the opposition. Mourners carried red and white flowers — the colours of the opposition — to a church on the outskirts of Minsk. For more than three months, Belarus has been gripped by historic protests after a disputed presidential vote that saw strongman leader Alexander Lukashenko re-elected for a sixth term. Protesters demand that Lukashenko, 66, resign and hand over power to political novice Svetlana Tikhonovskaya, who they believe won the election. "It is not in our power to bring back Roman, but we can try to ensure that such crimes are never repeated," Tikhonovskaya, 38, wrote on her Telegram channel from exile in EU member Lithuania.

WRITE | MOVE **Book Shuggie Bain was rejected by 30 editors before US, UK publishers picked it up**

Douglas Stuart wins 2020 Booker Prize

London, Nov. 20: New York-based Scottish writer Douglas Stuart has won the prestigious 50,000-pound Booker Prize for his autobiographical debut novel 'Shuggie Bain', a coming of age tale of love and alcoholism set in 1980s Glasgow and "destined to be a classic", beating five other shortlisted authors including indian-origin Avni Doshi. Stuart, 44, dedicated the book to his mother, who died of alcoholism when he was 16-years-old. After graduating from the Royal College of Art in London, he moved to New York to start a career in fashion

design. "I cannot believe this. Shuggie is a work of fiction but writing the book was extremely healing for me; hugely cathartic," Stuart said, adding that he was "absolutely stunned" to win the coveted prize. "I always wanted to be a writer so this is fulfilling a dream. This has changed my entire life," he said in



his acceptance speech on Thursday. Stuart has worked for various brands, including Calvin Klein, Ralph Lauren and Gap. He started writing in his spare

time a decade ago. Dubai-based indian-origin writer Doshi, who was shortlisted among the final six authors for her debut novel 'Burnt Sugar', lost out on the top prize. She was in the running for this year's prize alongside Zimbabwean writer Tsitsi Dangarembga for the third novel in her trilogy 'This Mournable Body' on a shortlist otherwise dominated by US authors — Diane Cook for 'The New Wilderness', Maaza Mengiste for 'The Shadow King' and Brandon Taylor for 'Real Life'. The 2020 Booker Prize

Trump team cries foul over Joe's win

Take frantic steps to subvert poll results

Washington, Nov. 20: President Donald Trump and his allies are taking increasingly frantic steps to subvert the results of the 2020 election, including summoning state legislators to the White House as part of a long-shot bid to overturn Joe Biden's victory. Among other last-ditch tactics: personally calling local election officials who are trying to rescind their certification votes in Michigan, suggesting in a legal challenge that Pennsylvania set aside the popular vote there and pressuring county officials in Arizona to delay certifying vote tallies. Election law experts see it as the last, dying gasps of the Trump campaign and say Biden is certain to walk into the Oval Office come January. But there is great concern that Trump's effort is doing real damage to public faith in the integrity of US elections. Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, one of Trump's most vocal GOP critics, accused Trump of resorting to "overt pressure on state and local officials to subvert the will of the people and overturn the election."

Don is damaging democracy: Biden

Willmington, United States, Nov. 20: US President-elect Joe Biden on Thursday accused Donald Trump of brazenly damaging democracy, as the incumbent's campaign to reverse his election loss through fraud claims was dealt another blow with a recount in Georgia.

Trump was behind "incredibly damaging messages being sent to the rest of the world about how democracy functions," Biden told reporters in his home state of Delaware. "It's hard to fathom how this man thinks," said Biden. "I'm confident he knows he hasn't won, is not going to be able to win and we're going to be sworn in January 20th." Trump has refused to accept his loss on November 3, despite his opponent getting over six million more votes.

Biden won the state-by-state Electoral College votes that ultimately decide who takes the White House by 306 to 232, flipping five states that went to Trump four years ago. That includes Georgia, where a hand recount of its five million ballots confirmed Thursday that Biden is the first Democratic presidential candidate to win the southern state in almost three decades.

The recount showed Biden had won by 12,284 votes, according to figures posted on Georgia secretary of state Brad Raffensperger's website—slightly fewer than the approximately 14,000 he originally led by. Trump campaign legal advisor Jenna Ellis attacked the outcome and pledged the campaign will "pursue all legal options."After initially making baseless claims of widespread fraud, Trump has appeared to shift his strategy to asking states to overrule the will of voters. In Michigan, Trump

BIDEN: CHINA MUST PLAY BY RULES, U.S. TO BE BACK IN WHO

Washington, Nov. 20: US President-elect Joe Biden has said that he wants to make sure that China plays by the rules and announced that his administration will rejoin the World Health Organisation. Biden was responding to a question on Thursday about his remarks during the presidential debates that he wanted to punish China over the way Beijing has been behaving. He was asked if that could include economic sanctions or tariffs on China, the world's second largest economy. In April, President Donald Trump announced that the US would withdraw from the WHO, accusing the UN organisation for failing to oversee the onset of the coronavirus as it began to spread in China. "It's not so much about punishing China, it's about making sure China understands they've got to play by the rules. It's a simple proposition," Biden said during a meeting with a bipartisan group of governors in his hometown in Wilmington, Delaware.

placed a telephone call to a Republican on a once-obscure board who wants to withdraw her certification of the election result in a heavily Democratic county that includes majority-Black Detroit. "He was checking to make sure I was safe after seeing/hearing about the threats and doxxing," Wayne County Board of Canvassers chairwoman Monica Palmer said, referring to personal information posted about her on social media.

ICE STORMS IN RUSSIA'S FAR EAST LEADS TO EMERGENCY

Vladivostok, Russia, Nov. 20: Freak ice storms following an abnormal weather phenomenon has left 1,50,000 people without water and electricity in the far eastern Russian city of Vladivostok and prompted a state of emergency. The exceptional weather brought down cables and trees with the government of the Primorsky region declaring a state of emergency. "The situation with the electricity supply remains very difficult — the destruction is widespread," the regional administration's deputy head Elena Parkhamenko said. She said it could take "several days" to restore power. Freezing rain began pummelling the city of some 6,00,000 people overnight Thursday after a cyclone carrying hot air met an anticyclone carrying cold air, Boris Kubay, a local weather service official said. He said in some places the resulting ice was 12 millimetres thick — something not observed in the region in 30 years. Photos and videos published by local authorities and on social media showed everything from apartment buildings to road signs to public transport covered in ice. Video footage from a security camera showed a man moving away from his car at the last second as he was cleaning ice from its windshield before a block came crashing down from the side of a building.

Tech giants tell Pak to ease data rules

Islamabad, Nov. 20: Global technology companies have told the Pakistan government that its "draconian" data regulations would make it extremely difficult for them to continue their operations, two days after the IT ministry notified rules to define how social media will be governed in the country, according to a media report on Friday. Under the new rules announced by the Ministry of Information and Technology on Wednesday, social media companies and internet service providers shall provide the designated investigation agency with any information or data in decrypted, readable and comprehensible format, the *Dawn* newspaper reported. Subject to justifiable technical limita-

tions, the information to be provided may include subscriber information, traffic data, content data and any other information or data. In a statement, the Asia Internet Coalition (AIC), which exclusively represents leading global internet companies on matters of public policy, expressed its alarm over the scope of new law targeting internet companies, as well as the government's "opaque process" by which their rules were developed. Earlier this year, Prime Minister Imran Khan promised to initiate a "broad-based" consultation on content regulation after a strong backlash from stakeholders over the release of formally known as the Citizen Protection (Against Online Harm) Rules 2020.



quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	43,882.25	0.65
Nifty 50	12,859.05	0.68
S&P 500*	3,570.89	-0.31
Dollar (₹)	74.14	0.18
Pound Sterling (₹)	98.45	-0.35
Euro (₹)	87.92	-0.09
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	49,551.65	0.13
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	44.36	0.36
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.877	0.017
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.849	-0.702

CCI approves Reliance-Future Group deal

The Competition Commission has approved Reliance's proposed acquisition of Future Group businesses. The Rs 24,713-crore deal was announced in August. In a tweet on Friday, the regulator said it has approved "acquisition of retail, wholesale, logistics & warehousing businesses of Future Group by Reliance Retail Ventures Limited and Reliance Retail and Fashion Lifestyle Limited".

Rabi sowing begins; wheat planted in 97L ha.



Sowing of winter crops has started in the country, with farmers planting wheat in about 97.27 lakh hectare so far in this rabi season, the agriculture ministry said. Wheat is the main winter or rabi crop. Rice and pulses, such as gram, urad, moong as well as oilseeds like groundnut and sunflower, are other rabi crops. Paddy has been sown in more area at 7.26 lakh hectare compared with 6.98 lakh hectare a year ago.

Large IPOs may be allowed with 5% equity dilution

The Sebi proposed to reduce the minimum offer size in an initial share-sale, whereby companies with a post-issue capital of above Rs 10,000 crore would be required to offer at least 5 per cent stake in IPO. At present, all companies with a post-issue capital above Rs 4,000 crore have to dilute at least 10 per cent shareholding in an IPO. Sebi felt minimum public holding of 10 per cent may be achieved in 18 months.

Forex reserves surge \$4.28 bn to record \$572.77 bn

The country's foreign exchange reserves swelled by \$4.277 billion to a record high of \$572.771 billion in the week ended Nov. 13, RBI data showed. In the previous week ended Nov. 6, the reserves had risen by a massive \$7.779 billion to \$568.494 billion. Foreign currency assets climbed by \$5.526 billion to \$530.268 billion. The gold reserves declined by \$1.233 billion to \$36.354 billion.



RBI panel for 26% promoter stake Corp. houses set to get banking licence

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, NOV. 20

In what could potentially change the landscape of the Indian banking sector, an internal working group of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has suggested that large companies and industrial houses may be allowed as promoters of banks with necessary legislative changes, and large, well-run NBFCs could convert into banks after 10 years of operations.

Interestingly, the panel also suggested that the cap on promoters' stake in the long run (15 years) banks may be raised from the current level of 15 per cent to 26 per cent of the paid-up voting equity share capital.

The views gain significance in the light of year-long legal battle between Uday Kotak, promoter of Kotak Mahindra Bank, and the RBI that ended in January this year. Under the current RBI norms, promoters of private banks have to reduce their stake to 40 per cent within three years of operations and then to 20 per cent within 10 years and to 15 per cent within 15 years.

The group headed by RBI executive director P.K. Mohanty was set up in June 2020 to review the extant ownership guidelines and corporate structure for Indian private sector banks with the terms of reference, including the review of the eligibility criteria for individuals/entities to apply for banking licence, examination of



preferred corporate structure for banks and harmonisation of norms in this regard, and review of norms for long-term shareholding in banks by the promoters and other shareholders.

The panel that submitted its report on Friday said, "Large corporate/industrial houses may be allowed as promoters of banks only after necessary amendments to the Banking Regulations Act, 1949 to deal with connected lending and exposures between the banks and other financial and non-financial group entities; and strengthening of the supervisory mechanism for large conglomerates, including consolidated supervision. RBI may examine the necessary legal provisions that may be required to deal with all concerns in this regard."

Large non-banking finance companies with an asset size of Rs 50,000 crore, including those owned by large corporate houses, may be allowed to convert to private banks subject to completion of 10 years of operations and

other criteria. The working committee recommended minimum initial capital requirement for licensing new banks should be enhanced to Rs 1,000 crore from Rs 500 crore for universal banks and Rs 300 crore from Rs 200 crore for small finance banks. "The cap on promoters' stake in long run of 15 years may be raised from the current levels of 15 per cent to 26 per cent of the paid-up voting equity share capital of the bank. This stipulation should be uniform for all types of promoters and would mean that promoters, who have already diluted their holdings to below 26 per cent, will be permitted to raise it to 26 per cent of the paid-up voting equity share capital of the bank. The promoter, if he/she so desires, can choose to bring down holding to even below 26 per cent, any time after the lock-in period of five years," said the report. For non-promoter shareholding, a uniform cap of 15 per cent of the paid-up voting equity share capital of the bank may be prescribed, the report said.

Gland now among top 10 pharma companies

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, NOV. 20

Hyderabad-based Gland Pharma made a grand debut on the bourses, listing at Rs 1,710 on both NSE and BSE, a premium of 14 per cent over the public issue price of Rs 1,500 per share.

Gland is now among top 10 pharma companies in terms of market value, with a market capitalisation of Rs 29,848 crore at the close of trade on the NSE.

The stock touched an intraday high of Rs 1,850 on both NSE and BSE.

Earlier this month, Gland Pharma raised Rs 6,479.55 crore through an initial public offering priced at Rs 1,490 to Rs 1,500 per share with Re 1 face value. The issue was subscribed more than two times but had received very poor response from retail and high networth investors, making its bourses debut quite a suspense till the last moment.

On the NSE, Gland Pharma shares finally closed at Rs 1,828 providing public shareholders a return of 21.8 per cent on their IPO investment. On the BSE the stock closed at Rs 1,820.45.

Since retail and high net worth investors had largely skipped the public offer, there was a rush to buy the shares after the initial listing gains and so the percentage of deliverable quantity of shares was high at 56.25 per cent on the NSE.

ROCHE'S COVID-19 ANTIBODY COCKTAIL LAUNCH LIKELY BY MARCH

FRANCINE LACQUA & NAOMI KRESGE NOV. 20

Roche Holding AG is working hard to rapidly boost supply of Covid-19 antibody treatments and will be able to make its first deliveries in the first quarter of next year, according to CEO Severin Schwan.

Roche has filed for emergency authorisation for an antibody cocktail it's working on with US biotech Regeneron Pharmaceuticals Inc and that could be granted "very soon," Schwan said on Friday in an interview. "At Roche we'll be able to provide supply in the first quarter," he added, cautioning that availability will initially be limited and should be reserved for patients at high risk.

"We're working hard to ramp up production as fast as we can," Schwan said. "No matter what, irrespective of other therapeutics, the demand for antibody cocktails will be far outstrip supply, so we have to make sure we target really the right patient groups." —Bloomberg

Profits zoom, but wages flat at listed companies

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, NOV. 20

In business, there seems to be no relation between profits and wages. While listed companies made bumper profits in the September quarter, wages have grown in low single digits, much lower than in past several quarters, finds private think-tank CMIE.

The net profit of listed companies zoomed to record levels, as they grew 209 per cent in the September quarter. Even in the first half of the fiscal, which covered the entire period of the lock down of different intensities and associated uncertainties, the net profits of these companies grew 23.8 per cent. This growth was even higher than 11.8 per cent, the average growth in the past 60 quarters. The data is based on the financial statements of 1,897 companies available in CMIE's Prowess database as of November 11.

However, this profit growth seemingly has nothing to do with the wage growth. "In business and for corporate



honchos, there is no relation between growth in profits and growth in wages. The two move completely independently. Corporate managers would minimise their wage bill to maximise their profits," says Mahesh Vyas, managing director, CMIE.

Amidst lay-offs, salary cut and negligible hiring, wage growth was 2.8 per cent in the first half of the fiscal. Even in the September quarter wage growth stood at 3.7 per cent, which was lower than the average year-on-year growth in wages over the past 60 quarters at 13 per cent. "The low single-digit growth in wages in the last two quarters is therefore very low by historical standards and is in stark contrast to the

extraordinary profits earned by companies," says CMIE.

Manufacturing companies saw a 9.1 per cent fall in wages in the June 2020 quarter, which was the toughest quarter for them. Sales had shrunk by 42 per cent and net profits by 62 per cent. Then, in the September 2020 quarter, while sales fell again by 9.7 per cent, profits sprang a surprise by scaling up by a handsome 17.8 per cent. Yet, wages declined by one per cent. Evidently, companies do not apportion resources to labour in any proportion of profits.

In the services sector's case, except for banking and IT, the remaining sectors collectively saw a 9 per cent fall in wages in the June quarter and a 5 per cent fall in the second quarter.

"Shareholders are being awarded interim dividends or buy-backs. There is still very little interest in investing into new capacities... Employment in the corporate sector could recover if business picks up again," says Vyas.

Mills to get ₹12.5K-cr loan to make ethanol

New Delhi, Nov. 20: The food ministry on Friday said it has given in-principle approval to 185 sugar mills and standalone distilleries to avail Rs 12,500 crore of loans for capacity addition of 468 crore litre of ethanol per annum as part of its efforts to achieve 20 per cent blending with petrol.

In the last two years, 70 ethanol projects were sanctioned loans of Rs 3,600 crore.

Apart from promoting ethanol production from sugarcane, the ministry is making efforts to manufacture ethanol using surplus rice with state-owned FCI as well as maize.

The move is aimed at

boosting ethanol blending with petrol, which now stands near 5 per cent.

Under the ethanol interest subvention scheme for molasses-based distilleries, the government had opened a window September for 30 days, inviting sugar mills/ distilleries, to apply for the scheme, the ministry said. —PTI

JLR seeks to block imports of Audi, Porsche SUVs in US

CHRISTOPHER YASIEJKO & SUSAN DECKER NOV. 20

Jaguar Land Rover Automotive Plc filed a complaint on Thursday to block US imports of Porsche, Lamborghini, Audi and Volkswagen sport utility vehicles it says are using its patented Terrain Response technology without permission.

Jaguar Land Rover, a British carmaker owned by Tata Motors Ltd, said in its filing with the US International Trade Commission that the technology helps negotiate a "broad range of surfaces" and is a key feature in Jaguar's F-Pace and Land Rover Discovery vehicles.

"JLR seeks to protect itself and its United States operations from companies that have injected infringing products into the US market that incorporate, without any licence from JLR, technology developed by JLR and protected by its patent," Jaguar's lawyer, Matthew Moore, said in the filing.

Representatives of Volkswagen didn't immediately respond to emails seeking comment on the complaint.

Jaguar wants to block imports of Porsche's Cayenne; Lamborghini's Urus; Audi's Q8, Q7, Q5, A6 Allroad and e-tron vehicles; and VW's Tiguan vehicles. It said there are plenty of other luxury midsize SUV and compact crossover vehicles to meet buyer demand if the SUVs are banned from the US.

Still, the premium Porsche and Audi lines provide much of the profit VW is using to fund its investments in technology for electric vehicles, autonomous vehicles and further innovations. In addition to the four brands, Volkswagen Group owns other upscale nameplates, including Bentley and Bugatti.

The International Trade Commission is an independent, quasi-judicial agency that investigates complaints of unfair trade practices, like patent infringement. It can't award damages but does have the power to block products from entering the US.

—Bloomberg

Hyundai i20 sells 20,000 units in 20 days



MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, NOV. 20

Despite uncertainty in the market due to Covid pandemic, the all-new Hyundai i20 premium hatchback is turning out to be a big hit for the carmaker, which sold 20,000 cars in just 20 days, that is, 1,000 cars per day.

Prices of the all-new Hyundai i20 start from Rs 6.80 lakh, making the car significantly expensive than its main rival the Maruti Baleno.

The new i20 offers plenty of choice for buyers with multiple variants, engines and transmission options.

In fact, one in every four buyers has opted for automatic/semi-automatic variants of the car while one in three buyers has opted for the sunroof equipped, top-end trims. Even the diesel variant found one in five buyers.

RBI REJECTED DBS OFFER TO BUY 50% OF LVB IN 2018

Mumbai, Nov. 20: K. R. Pradeep, the single largest promoter of Lakshmi Vilas Bank (LVB) with a 4.8 per cent shareholding, has said that Singapore's DBS was keen to acquire 50 per cent stake in the lender for a high valuation in 2018 but the Reserve Bank did not allow the deal to go through.

With RBI superseding LVB board and mooted its merger with DBS Bank India, Pradeep also said he was confident the central bank will listen to all the shareholders and promoters, and will not let them go empty handed.

Currently, Pradeep's 4.8 per cent shareholding does not have any value. Retail shareholders own 45 per cent of LVB equity. —PTI

WINNER | TECH'S IT ALL?

It's feared that the rise of fintech firms may send banks the dinosaur way Ant's setback holds a lesson for all fintechs

ELISA MARTINUZZI NOV. 20

Speaking in October to his banking brethren at the world's biggest payments confab the annual Sibos conference-Jamie Dimon didn't mince words. The rise of financial technology companies, warned JPMorgan Chase & Co's chief executive officer, will see some banks "go the way of the dinosaur."

In the world of finance, as in many other parts of the economy, Covid-19 has accelerated a shift to digital interactions that was already under way. And it hasn't gone unnoticed by regulators. In Asia, Europe, and the US, central banks and other regu-

lators are increasingly focused on how technology companies could come to dominate financial services, undermining the stability of the systems the watchdogs are entrusted to preserve.

One obvious sign of the growing importance of fintech companies is their surging market value.

The valuation of PayPal Holdings Inc, the US e-commerce payments giant, had exceeded \$225 billion as of early November-more than that of Europe's top four banks combined and higher than all US banks bar JPMorgan. In Europe, where lenders' stock prices have plummeted to record lows this year, only HSBC



Holdings Plc, with \$3 trillion in assets and a history dating to 1865, was worth more than Adyen NV, a 14-year-old Dutch payments processor.

And of course, none compare with Jack Ma's Ant Group Co, the Chinese financial giant that at the end of October was proceeding with an initial

public offering set to value it at \$315 billion—bigger than Dimon's JPMorgan. But then China's regulators stepped in to halt the IPO at the eleventh hour, demanding that Ant adhere to stricter capital requirements and provide at least 30 per cent of the funding for loans it underwrites, just like the banks it competes with.

Analysts at Morningstar Inc and other firms estimated the rules could cut the company's value in half. China's top banking watchdog also warned that it will step up probes to ensure fair competition where monopolies can be spotted. Ant and Tencent Holdings Ltd, which owns the WeChat Pay platform,

are luring customers away from commercial banks in the consumer-loan market.

While the news was shocking, thwarting the world's biggest-ever IPO, the truth is that China isn't alone in expressing new concerns about the regulatory advantage provided to the digital finance industry. The collapse of fintech poster child Wirecard AG after billions of dollars went missing from the Bavarian startup has prompted a review of how regulators in Germany and Europe oversee payment companies.

In the UK, the banking supervisor is considering tougher demands on so-called neobanks and once-hot fintechs such as Monzo

and Revolut that are struggling. In the US, the New York Department of Financial Services has sued to bar the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency from handing out licences under a fintech charter that would place companies under lighter regulation than banks.

The pace at which consumers have turned to digital transactions during the pandemic, as bank notes and coins became untouchable, is one reason regulators fret. Given the rate at which some fintechs are growing, regulators will have to decide quickly how far they want to go to keep them in check. —Bloomberg

SHORT TAKES
Women's T20 WC
pushed to 2023

Dubai: The South African edition of the Women's T20 World Cup was on Thursday postponed by three months to February 2023 to avoid a cluster a big-ticket events in 2022 and manage players' workload, International Cricket Council (ICC) announced on Thursday. The tournament was scheduled in November 2022 but will now be held in February 2023. In August this year, the ICC had postponed the 50 over Women's World Cup slated in New Zealand from 2021 to 2022 owing to pandemic and women's T20 cricket is also set to make its debut in the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games. "The Board confirmed that the ICC Women's T20 World Cup will move from its current slot at the end of 2022 to 9-26 February 2023. If not postponed, the year would have "three major events in 2022 with the Commonwealth Games in July 2022 and the ICC Women's T20 World Cup due to be held in November 2022," ICC said. The ICC said the decision was taken keeping in mind the workload of the players and also considering long term interest of women's cricket. — PTI

Champ Rossi gears
up for final race

Portimao, Portugal: Nine-time world champion Valentino Rossi says it will be a "special moment" when he brings the curtain down on his 15-year factory Yamaha MotoGP career in the final race of the season in Portugal on Sunday. Joan Mir's World Championship may already be secured but second place and the constructors' title will also be on the line in Portimao. Rossi, who has won seven of his world titles in the elite class, is among a number of riders bidding farewell, with Andrea Dovizioso heading off for a planned sabbatical and Cal Crutchlow exiting the series to become a Yamaha test rider next year. Rossi will join Yamaha's satellite Petronas team, leaving the factory to go ahead with Fabio Quartararo alongside Maverick Vinales in 2021. "Sunday will be a special moment because it was a long journey together," said Rossi. Pol Espargaro, Jack Miller, Johann Zarco and Danilo Petrucci are also among those departing for pastures new. — AFP

Task cut out for
Spurs against City

London: Tottenham's title credentials face a thorough examination when they host Manchester City as the Premier League returns on Saturday after the international break. Spurs are just a point behind early pace setters Leicester, but only three points separate the top six, with Chelsea and Aston Villa also having the chance to claim top spot for a few hours at least when they face Newcastle and Brighton respectively. With the final international fixtures of the year done and dusted, a gruelling winter schedule of club football awaits for England's top-flight with nine rounds of league matches before January 2. Defending champions Liverpool are already bearing the brunt of the hectic schedule as Jurgen Klopp's squad has been ravaged by injury ahead of Leicester's trip to Anfield. Tottenham enjoyed a couple of hours at the top of the table for the first time in over three years prior to Leicester's victory over Wolves before the international break. — AFP

Live on TV

CRICKET

Big Bash League: Hobart Hurricanes vs Perth Scorchers from 10.10 am; Sydney Sixers vs Melbourne Renegades from 1.35 pm; Perth Scorchers vs Adelaide Strikers from 4.50 am (Sunday) on Sony Six, HD

TENNIS

ATP Finals: Semifinal-1 from 7.30 pm, Semifinal-2 from 1.30 am (Sunday) on Sony Six, HD

FOOTBALL

English Premier League: Newcastle vs Chelsea from 6 pm; Aston Villa vs Brighton from 8.30 pm; Tottenham Hotspur vs Manchester City from 11 pm; Manchester United vs West Brom from 1.30 am (Sunday) on Star Sports Select 1

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

Italian league: Crotone vs Lazio from 7.30 pm; Spezia vs Atalanta from 10.30 pm; Juventus vs Cagliari from 1.15 am (Sunday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

NADAL NAILS IT

Djokovic also makes semifinals at season-ender

London, Nov. 20: Rafael Nadal kept alive his hopes of a first ATP Finals title on Thursday, beating defending champion Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-4, 4-6, 6-2 in London to qualify for the Last four. Novak Djokovic too advanced to the semifinals after beating Alexander Zverev 6-3, 7-6 (4).

The top-ranked Djokovic set up a match against Dominic Thiem on Saturday as he goes for a record-tying sixth title at the season-ending event, and a first since 2015.

Rafael Nadal will take on Daniil Medvedev in the other semifinal match.

Bouncing back from a straight-set loss to Medvedev on Wednesday, Djokovic broke Zverev to take a 2-0 lead in the first set when his opponent double-faulted on the second break point.

Djokovic saved two break points at 4-2 before clinching the set with a backhand down the line as he closed in on the net following a serve out wide.

Zverev posed more problems for Djokovic in the second set, and led 2-0 in the tiebreaker. Djokovic then won five of six points and, on his first match point, sent a deep and penetrating forehand that Zverev could only slice into the net on the stretch.

Nadal, whose haul of 86 singles titles includes just one on indoor hard courts, is chasing the biggest prize missing from his resume at the eight-man elite event. The 34-year-old has qualified for the ATP Finals for a record 16 consecutive years but has been forced to withdraw on six occasions.

The second seed won his opening round-robin match against Andrey Rublev but defeat against Dominic Thiem meant he faced a shootout against 2019 champion Tsitsipas to reach the semifinals.

Both players were rock solid on serve until Nadal



Rafael Nadal of Spain reacts during the match against Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas in their men's singles match of the ATP World Tour Finals tennis tournament at the O2 Arena in London on Thursday.

earned the first two break points of the set in the seventh game, which he failed to convert.

Tsitsipas was again under pressure in his next service game and this time he cracked, double-faulting on break point.

Nadal pressed home his

advantage, serving consecutive aces to take the set 6-4 against his 22-year-old opponent.

The Spaniard, twice a finalist at the tournament, had another chance to break in the first game of the second set but the Greek sixth seed dug him-

self out of danger with a searing backhand.

Tsitsipas did well to cling on against his illustrious opponent who was serving with metronomic efficiency and dominating the longer rallies.

But out of nowhere the Greek earned two set

points on Nadal's serve and levelled when the Spaniard double-faulted on the second of those.

The match took a bizarre twist at the start of the decider, with neither player able to hold serve until Nadal finally held to lead 3-1.

INDIA SLIP TO SECOND SPOT IN TEST RANK

Dubai, Nov. 20: India on Thursday slipped to the second position in the standings of the ongoing World Test Championship (WTC) after the ICC decided to rank teams "in order of percentage of points earned" from the contested matches.

Australia (296 points from 3 series) toppled India (360 points from 4 series) in the standing after the revision with a percentage of 82.22 compared to the latter's 75 per cent.

According to current regulations, incomplete matches are treated as draw but after due deliberation, the ICC Cricket Committee, headed by Anil Kumble, recommended that the final WTC standings should be determined on the basis of matches played, which was approved by the Board. — PTI

GUILTY ZOYSA SAYS THERE IS FOUL PLAY

Colombo, Nov. 20: Former Sri Lanka cricketer Nuwan Zoysa on Friday denied any wrongdoing after being found guilty of corruption on three counts by an independent tribunal of the ICC.

Already serving suspension on match-fixing charges, Zoysa was charged under the ICC anti-corruption code in November 2018 and was found guilty on all charges on Thursday after he exercised his right to a hearing before an independent anti-corruption tribunal.

The ICC said Zoysa will remain suspended and sanctions will follow in due course. — PTI

Bagan blast past Kerala in opener

Bambolim, Nov. 20: In their new avatar, ATK Mohun Bagan kicked off the seventh season of the Indian Super League on a high, defeating Kerala Blasters by a solitary goal here on Friday.

Fijian hitman Roy Krishna, who was ATK's top goal scorer with 15 goals last season, struck the all important goal after a 67 minute deadlock to give the all important three points for the green-and-maroon brigade.

The Yellow Brigade playing with a heavy defensive lineup of 4-2-3-1 managed to thwart ATKMB throughout the first half but after the hour mark they left a loose ball as the Fijian International pounced on it with a calm and composed finish.

All eyes were on the 131-year-old legacy club Mohun Bagan as they were making their ISL debut following their 'marriage' with three-time defending champions ATK.

ATKMB had a dominant first half and made some early inroads with Roy Krishna missing an early chance, even as KBFC enjoyed more ball possession in the first 45 minutes.

KBFC, who were the designated home team, looked more threatening and came out with an attacking intent in the second-half.

But KBFC were made to pay for it as Roy Krishna made amends for his three misses in the first half with his poacher goal to become the difference between the two sides.

That goal was enough for ATKMB to sink Kerala Blasters' hearts. — PTI

MUMBAI TAKE ON NORTHEAST TO OPEN BID

Vasco, Nov. 20: A revamped Mumbai City FC, with 19 new recruits and a Spanish coach of repute, will be aiming for a positive start in pursuit of a maiden ISL title when they take on NorthEast United here on Saturday.

Mumbai City have never won the coveted trophy and would be hoping that there is a turnaround in fortunes under new coach Sergio Lobera, who had guided FC Goa to a Super Cup win in 2019.

Mumbai have two good strikers in Bartholomew Ogbeche and Adam Le Fondre who can prove to be more than handful for any opposition.

The inclusion of Mandar Rao Dessai has bolstered the team's defence and he coupled with the likes of Sarthak Golui, Senegalese Mourtada Fall and Mohamad Rakip are ready to thwart any attacking lineup.

On the other hand, NorthEast United FC under new coach Gerard Nus, would also be aiming for redemption after a poor last season.

They will expect their foreign players to pull their weight with much depending on former Anderlecht and Queens Park Rangers striker Idrissa Sylla and former Ghanaian international Kwesi Appiah. — PTI

Betting charges dog Andhra T20

DC CORRESPONDENT ANANTAPUR, NOV. 20

At least six players from Andhra Premier League (APL) conducted at RDT stadium here last month were reportedly involved in cricket betting.

The six cricketers from Andhra Pradesh include four from Kadapa district and another from Anantapur district. They used 'Dafabet', an online betting company. The anti-corruption unit of Andhra Cricket Association (ACA), reportedly identified the role of some players in betting.

Andhra Premier League was held as Karbonn Harmonycity T20 Andhra by Andhra Cricket Association for 18 days in October. A total of 98 players participated in the event and 33 matches were held overall with Kings-XI

emerging triumphant. Now, the online betting allegations have raised many eyebrows. Sources close to ACA revealed the players were involved in betting, although there was no evidence of match-fixing.

Association president Sharath, secretary Durgaprasad and several others were present during the tournament. The organisers reportedly warned players for involvement in suspicious activities.

"The players were not involved in match-fixing activities but in betting by using an online betting company," an official from ACA confirmed.

A police officer from Anantapur district observed that he had become suspicious because of a group of sponsors in the league.



Winners of the Gosports T20 Cup pose with the trophy and medals in Vijayawada on Friday.

ME win Gosports Trophy with ease

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, NOV. 20

Muralikrishna Enterprises defeated SS Interiors to win the Gosports T20 Cup in Vijayawada on Friday.

Choosing to make first use of the wicket after winning the toss, ME made a modest 133 for 8 in the stipulated overs. Ch Srikanth (34) and Sandeep (33) came up with decent scores while Vardhan (2/22) and Ganesh (2/31) were among the wickets for SSI.

In reply, Interiors were bundled out for a mere 94

in 16.5 overs as ME bowlers Manikanta (3/23) and Ravi (3/20) proved too hot to handle.

BRIEF SCORES
■ Muralikrishna Enterprises 133/8 in 20 overs (Ch Srikanth 34, Sandeep 33, Vardhan 2/22, Ganesh 2/31) bt SS Interiors 94 in 16.5 overs (Manikanta 3/23, Ravi 3/20). **Man of the match:** Ch Srikanth.

■ **Man of the Tournament:** Ch Srikanth (Muralikrishna Enterprises). **Best Batsman:** Ujwel (SS Interiors). **Best Bowler:** Ravi (Muralikrishna Enterprises).