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## OTHER STORIES

PARTY LEADERS  
RETURNING AFTER  
CAMPAIGNINGDC CORRESPONDENT  
ADILABAD, NOV. 30

Campaigning for the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) elections came to an end on Sunday.

Leaders of various political parties are returning to their home districts after completing campaigning.

Many senior and second leaders, MLAs and MPs from all major parties landed in Hyderabad to campaign for their party candidates in the GHMC elections.

Political leaders say, for the first time ever the GHMC elections have drawn the attention of everyone in the state and the nation.

KCR TO VISIT  
NIZAMABAD ON  
DECEMBER 2DC CORRESPONDENT  
NIZAMABAD, NOV. 30

Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao will visit Nizamabad district on December 2.

He will visit the residence of Nizamabad urban MLA Bigala Ganesh Gupta at his native Makloor mandal headquarters to pay tributes to Bigala Krishna Murthy, father of the MLA who passed away on November 21.

The Chief Minister will reach Makloor by helicopter.

TRS NRI cell coordinator Mahesh Bigala said that Dwadasha Dina Karma is being conducted on a low-key due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

"No NRIs were invited for the programme. Elected representatives of undivided Nizamabad district will participate in the programme", he said.

Meanwhile, the district administration has begun making arrangements for the CM's visit. A helipad is being built in the agriculture fields, where the late rites of Krishna Murthy were held.

CPI LOOKS TO  
UP ITS TALLY IN  
THE KMC POLLSDC CORRESPONDENT  
KHAMMAM, NOV. 30

The Communist Party of India (CPI) is making efforts to increase its tally in Khammam Municipal Corporation from two to 10.

Addressing the CPI Khammam town committee meeting, senior leader Puvvada Nageswara Rao said that Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao's government is distributing money to voters.

"The TRS government is imposing financial burden on the people of Telangana through various means including Land Regularization Scheme. The CPI should work hard to get more seats and concentrate on divisions where the party lost with small margins in the previous election", he said.



The manhole in the middle of Kanteswar road at Women's college was covered with lid on Monday.

— DC

DC IMPACT: OPEN  
MANHOLE COVERED  
IN NIZAMABADNARENDER PULLOOR | DC  
NIZAMABAD, NOV. 30

Reacting quickly to a news item published in the Deccan Chronicle, the Nizamabad Municipal Corporation (NMC) officials covered an open manhole near the Women's college in Kanteswar.

A photo news item published on November 25, with the caption 'Manhole on road turn dangerous' in these columns. The photo highlighted the unseen manhole in the middle of the road from Kanteswar temple to Chandrasekhar colony crossroads.

NMC officials covered the open manhole with a lid on Monday.

Walkers in the Government Polytechnic and passersby expressed happiness over initiative taken by the corporation authorities.



Devotees take a holy dip in the Godavari river on the occasion of Kartika Pournami at Kotilingala temple in Dharmapuri in Jagtial district on Monday.



Devotees at the Thousand Pillar Temple in Warangal.

## Kartika Pournami celebrated

Devotees flock Shaivite temples, offer prayers, release diyas into rivers

## Covid can't stop Shiva's devotees

ANUDEEP  
CEREMILLA | DC  
WARANGAL, NOV 30

Mass Satyanarayana Swamy *vratham* and *deepotsavams* marked the celebration of Kartika Pournami on Monday.

Devotees flocked Shaivite temples and offered prayers. A large number of devotees visited the Kaleshwara Mukteswara Swamy temple in Jayashankar Bhupalpally district and took a holy bath in the Godavari. They performed special prayers and released *diyas* into the river.

The Ganapeshwaralayam also known as the Kota Gullu in Ghanpur, was decorated with *diyas*. Serpentine queue was seen at the 1000 Pillar Temple in Warangal Urban since daybreak. Devotees, especially women, performed special prayers.

*Deepotsavams* were conducted at the 1000 Pillar Temple, Sringeri Matam, Prasanna Anjaneya Swamy temple, Datta Kshetram, Vasavi Matha temple, among others.

Devotees in large numbers thronged the Buguloni Venkateshwara Swamy temple in Regonda where the annual *jatara* is underway.

Devotees lined up to the temple on the top of the hillock where priests performed *Kalyana Mahotsavam* to the deity. Devotees circled the Mahua tree near the foot of the hillock with decorated bullock carts. Devotees from the surrounding villages arrived in processions.

PULI SHARATH  
KUMAR | DC  
SIRCILLA/JAGTIAL, NOV. 30

Kartika Pournami which falls on the full moon is considered an auspicious day to worship Lord Shiva and to seek his blessings. It was celebrated on a grand note with religious fervour in erstwhile Karimnagar district on Monday.

From early morning, a large number of devotees thronged various Shiva temples. After taking a holy bath, with amla fruits and leaves mixed in water—a ritual followed, devotees offered prayers.

Despite the Coronavirus pandemic, a large number of people thronged the Sri Raja Rajeshwara Swamy temple in Vemulawada in Rajanna Sircilla district and the Kotilingala temple on the banks of the river Godavari in Dharmapuri of Jagtial district.

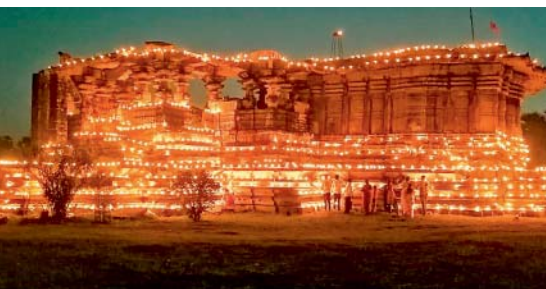
After taking a holy bath in the Dharma Gundam at Vemulawada, and in the Godavari at Kotilingala, devotees chanting Shiva Sahasranamam and Shiva stotras, offered prayers to the presiding deities in the respective temples. Some devotees, along with their families, performed *Samuhika Satyanarayana Swamy Vratam*, in the temple premises.

Women devotees occupied every nook and corner at the temple shrines and competed in lighting lamps. They made special arrangements for the convenience of the devotees,



Devotees in large numbers at the Sri Raja Rajeshwara Swamy temple at Vemulawada in Rajanna Sircilla district on the occasion of Kartika Pournami Monday.

— DECCAN CHRONICLE



Ghanapeshwaralayam decorated with diyas.

wicks ranging from 21 to 365. Some released the deepams into the water bodies in the temple premises. The temple authorities of the respective temples, made adequate arrangements for the convenience of the devotees,

following Covid-19 guidelines. Because of the huge rush, only 'Laghu' darshan of the deities was allowed.

At Vemulawada, devotees were allowed to offer the traditional 'Kode Mokku' (tying of an Ox) at the

■ AFTER TAKING a holy bath in the Dharma Gundam at Vemulawada, and in the Godavari at Kotilingala, devotees chanting Shiva Sahasranamam and Shiva stotras, offered prayers to the presiding deities.

shrine. District collector of Rajanna Sircilla D. Krishna Bhaskar and Revenue Divisional officer, Srinivas Rao, visited the Sri Raja Rajeshwara Swamy temple with their families and offered prayers.

FOUR HELD FOR  
CHEATING TO THE  
TUNE OF ₹7 CROREDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, NOV. 30

The Cyberabad Cyber Crime police arrested a gang of four from Visakhapatnam for cheating the public to the tune of ₹7 crore in two months during the lockdown.

The gang had set up a virtual office for their scam and cheated as many as 2,500 individuals promising huge returns. Upon witnessing a huge inflow of funds, the panicked scamsters took down the website and went underground.

The online investment/marketing fraud was brought to light by an Assistant Engineer of TSSPDCL, who was among the many victims who were conned.

The victim approached the Cyber Crime Wing of Cyberabad and lodged a complaint against Stemcor Max Hedge, which has a website and a mobile application, said commissioner of Cyberabad police V.C. Sajjanar.

The accused were identified as Nanda Kishore, Chittam Anand, Bhumireddy Avinash, and Telluri Srinivas Rao. Officials seized four smartphones, one laptop, a SIM card and two cars along with property documents, all worth ₹58 lakh from their possession.

"The victim was told that the company will refund five per cent of money as commission everyday up to 60 working days and if the customer gets more members, he will get 10 percent commission on his investment. This conversation occurs through mail and WhatsApp.

## Sercial areas marked as danger zones

ALERT | SOUNDED

## Tiger on prowl for a habitat

ANUDEEP  
CEREMILLA | DC  
WARANGAL, NOV. 30

After the heavy rains in the monsoon, the sighting of tigers has become frequent in North Telangana.

It appears the big cat is trying to find a suitable habitat, be traversing across various districts.

The movement of tigers is causing tension among the residents of tribal hamlets deep inside the forests.

People are afraid to leave their homes as incidents of tiger attacks have increased.

Forest officials have marked several areas under Mahabubabad, Mulugu and Jayashankar Bhupalpally districts as danger zones as tiger movement was reported here.

In Mahabubabad, there were several reports of tiger spotting near the Gunjedu Musalamma temple in Kothaguda Mandal. Authorities also found tiger pug marks.

Devotees who visit the Gunjedu Musalamma temple sacrifice chickens and sheep to the goddess. The tiger ventured into the area after getting the smell of blood.

Officials warned villagers not to venture near the temple.

A cow came under attack in Garla area.

Chief Conservator of Forests, Warangal Circle, M. J. Akbar said, grass-roots-level awareness, and training programmes were conducted, among the officials.

"Marking of corridors within the locations where the pug marks were identified has been done. Patrolling is intensified, apart from issuing warning to locals against



Forest staff seen at a natural water body developed as part of the tiger conservation programme in the forest area near Loadpalli village in Penchikalpet mandal in Komaram Bheem Asifabad district on Monday.

— DECCAN CHRONICLE

Tiger attacks nullify forest  
dept's conservation effortsPILLALAMARRI  
SRINIVAS | DC  
KOMARAM BHEEM  
ASIFABAD, NOV. 30

Killing of two persons in tiger attacks on human beings in quick succession is set to hit the forest department's tiger conservation plans in erstwhile Adilabad district.

Adivasis Sidam Vignesh, 22, and Pasula Nirmala, 15, were killed by tigers in separate incidents within 20 days of each other in Komaram Bheem Asifabad district.

These have led to fears among people living in interior areas or on the fringes of the forests.

Forest staff's efforts towards tiger conservation may end up facing stiff opposition from people if such attacks by the big cat continue in the coming days.

Instances of tigers coming close to their villages and entering their agri-

venturing out in these areas. We are seeking financial assistance and technical guidance from

culture fields or lifting their cattle are common, despite forest officials' claiming that the tiger is a shy and sensitive animal. But recent attacks have made those living in or around forests remind forest officials that the tiger is categorised as a "wild animal".

A senior forest officer involved in tiger conservation confessed, "We are under pressure now with the two killings by tigers within 20 days. Tiger conservation will not be an easy task now".

Man-animal conflict is inevitable when people live on fringes or inside the forests, where there is movement of tigers.

In particular, a tiger corridor has been developed between the erstwhile Adilabad district of Telangana and bordering Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh. With their population increasing in Maharashtra, more

tigers are migrating to erstwhile Adilabad district, especially from Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve and Tappeshwar Tiger Reserve.

Godam Ganesh of Thudumdebba (Adivasi Hakkula Porata Samiti), who is familiar with the erstwhile Adilabad forests, says no tiger attacks on human beings had been reported though the number of tigers was high. But the forests were dense three decades ago. Tigers attacking humans is a new phenomenon.

As a matter of fact, the forest department has been planning to shift villages within the tiger corridor in Kagaznagar forest division and resettle villagers elsewhere while offering them special packages to families being shifted. Similar plans are there for villages located in the core area of Kawal Tiger Reserve (KTR).

ments, water availability, ensuring least disturbance in the areas is our priority," he said.

Cong men thrash  
TRS MLA's aidesDC CORRESPONDENT  
KARIMNAGAR, NOV. 30

TRS party leaders from Choppadandi constituency of Karimnagar district, who participated in the GHMC election campaign, were allegedly caught red-handed by Congress leaders while they were distributing money to voters in Rahmat Nagar of Hyderabad.

Right from the time the civic body polls were announced, many leaders from erstwhile Karimnagar district reached Hyderabad and camped in several divisions which were allotted to them by the ruling party.

Around 500 members, including ZPTCs, MPTCs and other key leaders from Choppadandi under the leadership of MLA, Sunke Ravi Shankar participated in the election campaign at Rahmat Nagar division until Sunday.

It is believed although electioneering had concluded on Sunday these persons instead of heading home

began distributing cash to voters. Many videos of such distribution were in circulation from Sunday night.

In one of the videos, Congress leaders can be seen encircling those from Choppadandi and started thrashing those distributing TRS party pamphlets and ₹500 notes. The TRS leaders apologised and sought pardon.

Those beaten up included Malayala Market Committee Chairman, the husband of Ramadagu mandal MPP, Boipapally market committee chairman and the brother-in-law of Sunke Ravi Shankar.

They all managed to flee before police could reach the spot. The car of Panjala Malleshham, a staunch follower of the MLA was completely damaged in the incident.

Meanwhile, people of Choppadandi felt ashamed on knowing of this incident and said this would malign the image of the constituency.



TRS leaders of Choppadandi constituency who were thrashed by the Congress leaders for distributing money to voters in Rahmathnagar in Hyderabad.

— DC

3 peddlers held, 76 kg  
ganja seized in hydDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, NOV. 30

Rachakonda police's Special Operations Teams of LB Nagar apprehended three drug peddlers in possession of 76 kg of marijuana on Monday morning at Kothapet cross roads.

The accused, Sanjeev Kabiraj, 21, Dhabikonda Venkanna Swamy, 26, and Manekar Madhan, 27, were caught by the officials when they headed to Hyderabad from Sileru agency area.

On Friday, the marijuana

consignment was picked up from Sileru agency area by the men following the orders from Manekar Madhan.

The officials checked their vehicle in Kothapet cross roads on Monday and seized the entire 76 kilos, found hidden underneath the rear seats and inside the side doors of their car.

The arrested accused, along with the seized drugs, were handed over to the LB Nagar police for further investigation.

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## GHMC polls..



Let us put an end to indecisiveness, dynastic rule & corrupt administration that has plagued the GHMC for the last 5 years. Vote For BJP will ensure Hyderabad's holistic development with minimum government & maximum governance. BJP's Mayor Is Your Mayor. #BJP4GHMC #Vote4BJP.

**G. KISHAN REDDY**  
Union Minister



Disgusting & shameful, but not surprising. Hindutva believes that only 1 community has the right to political power & all others are subservient. This ideology cannot co-exist with our Constitution, which talks about liberty, fraternity, equality & justice.

**ASADUDDIN OWAIISI**  
MIM president



I request all @INCTelangana cadres to come to Hyderabad today and request your family members/relatives/friends to vote for Congress candidates in #GHMCElections2020.

**UTTAM KUMAR REDDY**  
MP & TPCC president



"Every election is determined by the people who show up."

Larry J. Sabato.  
#GHMCElections2020 will go to polls on a ballot paper this time. I urge my fellow Hyderabadites to watch this short video that will walk us through the voting process.  
#VoteHyderabad

**K. KAVITHA**  
TRS MLC



I humbly request the citizens of Hyderabad to exercise your right to VOTE in today's polling.

**ARVIND DHARMAPURI**  
BJP MP



Massive distribution of money in different parts of GHMC by TRS party Money earned thru filthy means by KCR KTR. Local leader Nari caught this Nalgonda TRS guy distributing Cash in Saroornagar. Must be the money looted from flood relief fund. Waste of complaints. Police mute.

**KONDA VISHWESHWAR REDDY**  
Congress leader



GHMC Elections: 1 Dec 2020 : Show your love for the City which gives you so many things. A city which is your identity. Please come and exercise the right of vote. We have made all the arrangements for you.

**ANJANI KUMAR**  
Police commissioner

## Poll preparation



Election staff collect ballot boxes for the GHMC elections at the City College on Monday.

— P. SURENDRA

# No basic facilities for staff at polling stations

## Mugs, buckets not provided in cubicle-like washrooms

**HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC**  
HYDERABAD, NOV. 30

As polling officers from across the state arrived here on Monday for the highly-anticipated Greater Hyderabad Municipal Committee (GHMC) elections, the body responsible to host the officers and state police personnel seems to be missing in action.

When *Deccan Chronicle* reached the polling station, holding polling booth numbers 18 to 22 at the Gangaputra Community Hall in Ramnagar division at 8.30 pm on Monday, the community hall hosting close to 20 personnel, responsible for the elections were yet to get a

meal and bed sheets from the GHMC. The correspondent noticed that even mugs and buckets were not provided in the cubicle-like washrooms.

To top it all, there were open urinals for men, whereas there were no toilets for female officers.

One of the police officers, stationed at the booth, who did not want to be named said, "No one from GHMC has shown up until now. We had to remove party flags from the premises. Forget tea, coffee or bed sheets, we have not even been provided sanitisers or masks. Luckily, Telangana Police has told us that they will take care of our meals."



Deplorable condition of rooms at a polling station.

What's more shocking is that all the people responsible for the smooth functioning of the polls, the three women officers at this polling station, have been put up in three dingy, unclean rooms. They said they were supposed to sleep on the dirty floor with their own bed sheets, or on the small benches.

"We have one small room for three female polling officers and we will have to share the washroom with 15 men. None of the bathrooms have mugs or buckets," one of the officers present at the booth said, on condition of anonymity.

## GHMC FLOUTS GREEN RULES, ERECTS 200 HAZARDOUS FLEXIS

**Hyderabad:** The over-enthusiastic Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) officials have once again erected over 200 flexis and hoardings at DRC centre, polling stations and polling locations despite plastic ban being imposed in the city.

Ironically, right from the top-notch official to those in the deputy commissioner level, everyone is passing the buck. Over 200 vinyl and flexis have been erected at 30 Distribution, Reception and Counting centres in the city limits and corporation authorities are planning to erect in 9101 polling stations on Tuesday.

As an environmental concern, GHMC has been promoting plastic ban and eco-friendly awareness programs through flexis, vinyl hoardings and other non-eco friendly means. The civic body campaigns used hazardous plastic.

# KTR created Sanjay's fake video, says Kishan

From Page 1

"Shouting that the vehicle was containing cash and liquor, the corporator's aides stopped the car. While banging on bonnets and sides, one of the men broke the windshields of the vehicle," said Ramgopalpet inspector T. Chanchala Babu. No case was booked as yet.

At Karmanghat, BJP workers alleged attacked TRS MLA Sudheer Reddy as they were under the impression that he was carrying illegal cash. Rachakonda police commissioner Mahesh Bhagwat stepped in and resolved the issue. However, no case was booked. Clashes and jostling between TRS and BJP workers were also reported at Attapur and Chaitanyapuri.

Responding to alleged attacks on the BJP workers, Union minister of state for home affairs G. Kishan Reddy accused police officers of working



State BJP president Bandi Sanjay's vehicle allegedly attacked on Necklace road on Monday.

for the TRS. He cautioned that if they make police work as the slaves of the TRS, the Central government will not remain as a mute spectator.

The minister alleged that the TRS has created fake IDs of BJP state president Bandi Sanjay Kumar and has circulated certain posts on social media, wherein Sanjay had said that the BJP doesn't need the votes of people belonging to coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema, but have settled in Hyderabad, for

the GHMC polls.

Alleging that TRS working president Rama Rao has circulated this fake news through social media from Telangana Bhavan, Kishan Reddy demanded the police officers to immediately raid the TRS head office and take action against culprits.

Stating that after knowing that the settlers are supporting the BJP, the minister said the TRS is trying to divert their attention with fake videos and posts on social media.

# Who is my corporator?

I do a simple experiment with my colleagues. Each time general elections are around the corner, I pose a few simple questions to test their "civic quotient". My favourite is a set of three questions that require them to name their current MP, MLA and corporator.

Quite a few of them know their MP, some know their MLA, but very few know the name of their corporator. In the food chain of elected representatives, corporator, even though at the bottom; is the most powerful when it comes to issues of day-to-day matters like bijli, paani and sadak.

As citizens, the first level of government we interface with is municipal corporation. Think of everything that matters to us personally on a day-to-day basis, which collectively contributes to making our city a more liveable one. Without exception, almost all of these issues come under purview of the city government. Whether you want a permit to build a new house, a park in your locality, a better garbage collection system, or a new road, the solution lies with municipal corporation. By extension, corporator is our first point of contact.

In the tweet crazy world that we live in, we find it convenient to raise the issue of a broken water pipe with our Member of Parliament, if not our MLA. Often, MPs and MLAs have teams to monitor their social media accounts. Their quick response creates an impression that the issue has been addressed by them. What we do not

## 'MY OPINION'



D.N.V. Kumara  
Guru

realise is that they do not necessarily have the powers to address these issues. In many cases, they forward it to the corporator concerned to take care of it.

In the three-tier governance system that we have in our democracy, the time and resources of an MP and MLA are better utilised if they do what they have to – frame policies that concern the country and the state. We, as ill-informed citizenry, often force them to disproportionately allot their time to issues that aren't their primary concern. And, when things don't work out, we love to blame the system.

Our corporator lives in our neighbourhood and is easily accessible. There is no "outsider" syndrome, which is commonplace during Lok Sabha general elections and at times during state assembly elections. Yet, we do not know her name, and we probably don't care. Why this apathy? Do we simply not care or we do not know? Perhaps, it is a bit of both.

In a couple of days, the twin-city populace will exercise their franchise

for electing representatives to 150 wards in the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation. Every election is a matter of prestige for incumbents and one of opportunity for those in opposition. This election is no different, and we have seen some high voltage campaigning. How will this impact the voting percentage? Will we see an improvement over the 45% turnout of 2016 elections?

Nearly 7.4 million voters have the power to decide the fate of their city by choosing the best from a pool of 1,122 candidates who are in the fray this year. Yet, we do not see the same level of energy or enthusiasm amongst municipal elections amongst voters. There are no major campaigns to increase the voter percentage that we see during general elections. It is time to change that.

Hyderabad aspires to be a smart city. It has all the potential to be so. It is one of the few cities, where old world charm rubs shoulders with the modern tech ecosystem effortlessly, which is so quintessentially Hyderabad. We need a city government that can take ownership of co-creating Hyderabad as a city of global standards; a city government led by a Mayor, who can take charge of the transformation process. More importantly, we need an electorate that is aware, responsible, and one that does not shy away from holding its corporators accountable. We owe it to ourselves to vote in the elections on December 1.

(Director, External Relations, ISB)

## BJP TRYING TO CREATE TENSION, SAYS HARISH

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, NOV. 30

Finance Minister T. Harish Rao on Monday alleged that the BJP was planning to circulate some old videos to create communal tension in a last-minute bid to lure voters in the GHMC elections.

Addressing a press conference at Patancheru, he said that BJP state leaders have invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi and their national president J.P. Nadda to impress the voters, but they did not get the desired response.

Stating that the BJP leaders were frustrated at the lukewarm response in Greater Hyderabad, he alleged that they are now planning to circulate false information about TRS leaders. He claimed that he had credible information to this extent. Reminding that during the by-elections to Dubbak also, the BJP had circulated fake news about Congress candidate Cheruku Srinivas Reddy joining the TRS on the day of polling leading to confusion among voters, he alleged that they were now hatching a similar plan in GHMC polls.



Farmers of Vemsoor mandal stage a dharna in Vemsoor on Monday with the packets of inferior quality seed sold by a company.

— DECCAN CHRONICLE

# Firm to shell out ₹20l for giving bad seeds

**A RAVINDRA SESHU | DC**  
KHAMMAM, NOV. 30

Nearly 121 farmers who lost their paddy crop due to inferior quality seeds will receive ₹5,000 for each seed packet on December 20.

The 121 farmers of Kandukur, Marlapadu, Lingapalem, Vemsoor, Adasarlpadu and Ramannapalem in Vemsoor mandal raised paddy in 500 acres with seeds sold by Nagarjuna Seeds Company.

They bought 401 paddy seed bags each bag weighing 25 kg from the company of MTU-1224 variety.

The paddy plants grew and became tall but did not yield grain even at the start of the harvest season. Worried farmers staged dharnas for weeks opposing the company on selling inferior quality seeds. As they lost both money and labour, all the farmers filed cases in the Vemsoor police station against the company.

Later, the farmers assembled themselves in the villages and collected information on how many farmers had bought

seeds from Nagarjuna Seed Company and who were the dealers.

Congress, CPI, CPI-M and BJP extended their support to the farmers and brought the issue to the higher officials.

The company officials tried to escape by claiming various reasons. A team of farm scientists led by Kasani Rukmini Devi, Satish Chandra and Krishi Vignan Kendra scientist Hemanth Kumar visited the fields and noticed the crop failure due to the false seeds sold by the company.

Sattupalli M.L.A. Sandra Venkata Veeraiah called the company officials for negotiations. A committee was formed, including officials from the farm department, police and company representatives. The company agreed to pay ₹5,000 on each 25 kg seed bag to the farmers. The farmers will get nearly ₹20 lakh as compensation.

The government has ordered the four seed distributors in Vemsoor, Kandukur and Marlapadu not to sell the seeds till further orders.

## MANY ILLITERATES LIKELY TO SKIP CIVIC ELECTIONS WITHOUT VOTER SLIP

From Page 1

Several MIM and BJP candidates also distributed voter slips in a printed manner, along with their pamphlets.

Residents of Goods Shed road, Nampally, complained that in their cluster of more than 50 houses, no one from the Election Commission or the GHMC had knocked on the doors. They said that they had received the voter slips in previous elections, but not this time. However, they said they do not refrain from voting since their polling booth is located close to their dwelling.

Syed Arshad Ayub,

Azampura division, said, "We have eight voters in our family. We did not get voter slips either from the Election Commission or from any candidate. Usually, our polling booth is at the GHMC office in Chadarghat. We will franchise our vote, using either the voter identity card or the Aadhaar."

Social worker Mohammed Abdul Akram said that educated people were able to download voter slips using different modes. However, the illiterate and poor voters do not take the extra effort to get voter slips. They may skip from voting if they do not get voter slips.



SHORT TAKES

SOCIAL WORKER SHEETAL AMTE ENDS LIFE

DC CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, NOV. 30

Sheetal Amte, a renowned social worker and grand-daughter of legendary Baba Amte, on Monday committed suicide by injecting poison. She was in the news recently after she made allegations against trustees and activists of the leprosy service committee of Anandvan. Her family had refuted allegations and said she was suffering from depression.

Dr Sheetal, daughter of social worker Dr Vikas Amte, was reportedly under stress for the last few days. According to reports, a few days ago, she had made serious allegations about the work, trustees, and activists of the leprosy service committee in Anandwan through a Facebook Live.

Within two hours, the Facebook Live was deleted. Later, a statement issued by the Amte family refuted the allegations. Dr Sheetal had been serving leprosy patients with her husband and family for the past several years.

Three generations of the Amte family are into social work in the far-flung rural and tribal areas of Chandrapur through the Anandwan Ashram and Hemalkasa Ashram in Gadchiroli, tending to people deprived of medical facilities in the Maoist-infested areas.

Dr Sheetal completed her degree from Government Medical College, Nagpur. After becoming a doctor, she joined her family at Anandwan. In addition to her MBBS degree, she also had completed her masters from Tata Institute of Social Sciences. In January 2016 Dr Sheetal was selected by World Economic Forum as 'Young Global Leader 2016' and later was selected as a Member of World Economic Forum Expert Network on Humanitarian Response.

'JUSTICE FOR PARI' FIGHT SHIFTS TO DELHI

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, NOV. 30

The fight for justice for five-year-old girl Amrita Sneha Sahoo alias Pari which began in the Jadupur village in Nayagarh district reached to New Delhi on Monday with the BJP national spokesperson Dr Sambit Patra submitting a memorandum to the National Commission for Child Rights Protection (NCPCR) for an independent inquiry into her kidnapping and murder.

"I prayed to the Commission for an independent probe and asking the Nayagarh SP to appear before the child rights body to apprise the progress of the investigation so far. I also briefed the Commission how Pari's parents — Ashok Sahoo and Soudamini Sahoo — were harassed by the police and local goons while seeking justice for the brutal murder of their daughter.

Pari was kidnapped on July 14 while playing in the courtyard of her house and her skeletal remains were found in the backyard of her house seven days after on July 23.

PROF. RESCUES TURTLE FROM FISH MARKET

**Guwahati, Nov. 30:** A turtle belonging to a vulnerable species has been saved from being sold in a fish market in Assam on Monday, thanks to the initiative of an academician, an official said.

Head of the Life Science and Bioinformatics department of Assam University Sarbani Giri had gone to the fish market when she noticed a man putting up an Indian peacock soft-shell turtle (Nilssoniana hurum), which was alive, for sale.

He wanted to cut the turtle into pieces and sell it but Giri immediately stopped him from doing so and offered to buy it alive for ₹4,000, a forest official said. Her gesture moved the man and he gave her the turtle.

After bringing it home, Giri called up the Cachar Forest Division in Silchar to release it in its natural habitat, the official said.

Personnel of the forest department took the turtle from the professor and thanked her for saving the life of the turtle. The forest department has decided to team up with the fisheries department to create awareness among fishermen about turtles.



A 60-year-old Covid-19 patient in critical condition being airlifted for treatment to Chennai, at the airport in Indore on Monday.

— PTI

Elementary schools in Assam to reopen from January 1

The government will soon release detailed Standard Operating Procedure

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, NOV. 30

In a significant move, Assam education and health minister Himanta Biswa Sarma here on Monday announced that the state government has decided to re-open classes for students of nursery to class VI from January 1, 2021. The detailed Standard Operating Procedure (SOPs) regarding the opening of elementary school will be released soon.

Informing that in view of the significant improvement in the Covid-19 scenario, all the temporary Covid testing centres have been closed, the minister told reporters that state government has decided to reopen schools from classes nursery to VI for both government and private schools but it will be left to parents if they want to send their children to school or not.

Earlier, this month the state government had allowed schools to be reopened for students of Class 6 and above. To minimise the risk, schools were asked to follow an odd-even system. The education de-

Delhi govt reduces RT-PCR test price to ₹800 from ₹2,400

**New Delhi, Nov. 30:** The Arvind Kejriwal government on Monday ordered all private laboratories to reduce the price of RT-PCR tests in the national capital to ₹800 from ₹2,400.

According to an order issued by the health department, private laboratories have been asked to charge ₹800 for testing samples collected by government teams and collected from collection sites by private sector labs as requisitioned by districts and hospitals. However, the testing of samples collected through home visit will cost ₹1,200.

All labs and hospitals have also been asked to display the revised rates at a prominent place within 24 hours. The private laboratories have also been asked to process samples, share the reports with the client (government or individual) and update all reports on the Indian Council of Medical Research portal within 24 hours of collection of samples. Health Minister Satyendar Jain had earlier said that labs were finding it

difficult to release the results of all tests within a day. Earlier in the day, the Kejriwal said that he had issued directives to reduce the price of the RT-PCR test in the national capital, saying it will help those going to private labs for Covid-19 tests.

"I have directed that the rates of RT PCR tests be reduced in Delhi. Whereas tests are being conducted free of cost in govt establishments, however this will help those who get their tests done in pvt labs," Kejriwal tweeted. — PTI

BJP MLA DIES AFTER TESTING COVID POSITIVE

**Jaipur, Nov. 30:** BJP leader and MLA from Rajsamand in Rajasthan Kiran Maheshwari, who had tested positive for Coronavirus, died at a hospital in Gurgaon. She was 59.

Maheshwari, a three-time MLA from Rajsamand, was undergoing treatment at Medanta hospital for the past few days. She passed away late Sunday night.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, Assembly Speaker CP Joshi, BJP state president Satish Poonia and other leaders condoled her demise.

"Saddened to know of the untimely demise of BJP leader & Rajsamand MLA Kiran Maheshwari ji. My heartfelt condolences to her family members & supporters in this most difficult time," Gehlot tweeted.

— PTI

Tractor-trolleys turn into shelters for farmers

**Sonipat, Nov. 30:** Tractor-trolleys and key farm equipment have turned into temporary shelters for thousands of farmers who have assembled at the borders of the national capital to protest against the Centre's new farm laws.

The ongoing protests by thousands of farmers entered the fifth day on Monday, with the protesters threatening to block all five entry points to Delhi.

As temperatures have dipped, the farmers demanding that the laws be repealed are spending the chilly nights inside their tractor-trolleys covered with tarpaulin, which they have turned into temporary shelters.

Most of the farmers have brought at least two trolleys with each tractor with one of them carrying ration and other essentials and the other being used to accommodate the protesters.

Stubble or crop residue, disposal of which otherwise becomes a major challenge for the farmers, is also coming in handy as many have cushioned their trolleys with layers of straw and laid mattresses over it to protect them from the cold.

Night temperatures over the last few days have been settling in the range of around 9 degrees Celsius.

The tractor-trolleys have occupied over a 10-km-long area in this Haryana district which lies along

the Ambala-Delhi national highway. Among the protesters are several men and women, some of them aged over 70 years.

Flags of various farmers' outfits from Punjab and Haryana can be seen fluttering atop the tractors, some of which are fitted with loudspeakers and used by the leaders of peasants' bodies to address the gatherings.

The protesting farmers say they will force the Centre to repeal the anti-farmer laws.

Having gathered here in thousands amid the coronavirus pandemic, they claim adverse conditions do not affect them as they are used to various challenges anyway while working in the fields.

If these laws are implemented, farmers will be destroyed, said Trilok Singh, a farmer from Amritsar as he sipped freshly prepared tea with some bread and biscuits.

Protesting farmers have said that they have come prepared for a long stir and have stocked themselves with ration, clothes, cooking gas cylinders, quilts and other essentials.

We will rest only when these laws are scrapped. In Punjab, we peacefully sat in protest for two months, but our plight did not move the Centre, now they will have to listen to us because our livelihoods are at stake, said another farmer Lakhwinder Singh from

Moga district.

When asked that Centre claims these laws will benefit them and give them wider choice to sell their crops, Lakhwinder Singh said, The one who is going to eventually benefit are the big corporates, we don't see much gain for farmers.

Another farmer Kuldeep Singh said, When the Centre first brought ordinance before these laws were passed, did they consult farmers at any stage. When farmers don't want these reforms, why are these being thrust upon us? The farmers said that they would not return to their homes, till their demand for scrapping of three farm laws was accepted. — PTI

WILL RECONSIDER RLP'S SUPPORT TO NDA: BENIWAL

**Jaipur, Nov. 30:** Nagaur MP Hanuman Beniwal, an alliance partner of NDA, on Monday said he will have to reconsider his party's support to the Centre if the new agricultural reform laws are not withdrawn.

Beniwal appealed to Amit Shah to withdraw the three farm laws immediately.

"RLP is an alliance partner of NDA, but its strength lies in youth and farmers, and if prompt action is not taken in this matter in the interest of farmers, I will have to reconsider on being part of the NDA," he tweeted. — PTI

LONG | WAIT The superstar refuses to answer big question of whether he would enter politics or not

Rajinikanth's political plans remain a mystery

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR & D. SEKAR | DC CHENNAI, NOV. 30

Nothing emerged from the closed door meeting that actor Rajinikanth had with around 45 top level functionaries of Rajini Makkal Mandram, including 38 district secretaries, as the super star refused to answer the big question of whether he would enter politics or not.

Following the news of the meeting leading to the media on Saturday night through a copy of a letter

to the police department seeking protection for the event, the media went berserk with speculations on Rajinikanth's political plans.

Apart from articles in newspapers and discussion on television channels, even social media was agog with posts.

The media hype also gave rise to hope among his supporters, fans and followers. Many of them turned up outside the Raghavendra Kalyana Mandapam in Kodambakkam, where the

meeting was scheduled to be held at 10 am on Monday.

Leaving his Poes Garden residence at around 9.30 am, Rajinikanth arrived at the venue ahead of time to a cheerful welcome from the fans outside the hall, who hailed him as 'future chief minister', and also showered him with flowers.

Inside the hall, where the chairs were arranged according to Covid-19 protocol with sufficient gaps between them, the actor is said to have listened to the

participants without committing himself to joining politics.

He elicited their views but did not reveal much about his plans.

The actor reviewed the working of the Mandram district branches and gave his opinion on the working of the secretaries.

Only 18 of the secretaries, according to his assessment, had done exceedingly well, while 12 had just done what was told to them and eight had performed below par.

The secretaries had been

entrusted with the tasks of enrolling more members, setting up booth committees and also doing social service in the times of the pandemic.

The secretaries' performance was reportedly assessed based on these parameters.

No one was allowed to take mobile phones inside the meeting hall and the private security of the actor threw a ring around him. He left the hall at around 12.10 pm.

Speaking to the media outside the gates of his

residence, he said the district secretaries had assured him that they would abide by his decision, which he had not taken so far.

He would take the decision soon and convey it to them.

However, a pall of gloom descended among the gathering of fans and supporters outside the Kalyana Mandapam.

They had come expecting their matinee idol to make a dramatic announcement on his political entry.

PM to hold 2nd all-party meet on Coronavirus

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, NOV. 30

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will hold a discussion on the Covid-19 pandemic situation in the country with the floor leaders of all political parties of both Houses of Parliament on Friday.

The parliamentary affairs ministry is coordinating the meeting, which will be held virtually on Friday from 10.30 am. This will be the second all-party meeting called by the government to discuss the Covid-19 situation since the pandemic's outbreak. The first one was held April 20 amid a nationwide lockdown to curb the spread of the virus.

The government is likely to brief parliamentarians about various steps it has taken to deal with the pandemic and may also touch on the advances in vaccine development and distribution.

India till Monday had a total of 91.32 lakh coronavirus cases, of which 38,772 were detected in the past 24 hours. The total deaths due to the virus have crossed 1.37 lakh, out of which 443 fatalities were new.

Kerala, Maharashtra, Delhi and West Bengal continue to report a high number of cases. The cases in Delhi have started reducing a bit after the government enforced stringent measures and increased RT-PCR testing.

The Centre has, meanwhile, also asked states/UTs to identify healthcare workers, including doctors, pharmacists as well as MBBS and BDS interns, who will carry out a Covid-19 inoculation drive once a vaccine is available.

In a letter to the states and UTs, the Centre said MBBS and BDS doctors and interns, staff nurses, auxiliary nurse midwives and pharmacists will be considered as potential vaccinators, provided that they are actively involved in day-to-day provision of clinical care and have experience in administering injections.

"Further, the states may also consider retired personnel from these categories that may be utilised to meet the demand for vaccinators," the letter written earlier this month by health ministry additional secretary Vandana Gurnani said. The health ministry has

MODI INTERACTS WITH MORE TEAMS WORKING ON VACCINE

**New Delhi, Nov. 30:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday held a virtual meeting with three teams working on developing and manufacturing Covid-19 vaccine, and urged them to take extra efforts to inform people in simple language about the vaccine and related matters such as its efficacy.

These teams were from Gennova Biopharmaceuticals Ltd, Pune; Biological E Ltd, Hyderabad; and Dr Reddy's Laboratories Ltd, Hyderabad.

A statement from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said that Modi also asked the companies, represented by these teams, to come out with their suggestions and ideas regarding regulatory processes and related matters.

"The PM advised all the departments concerned to engage with the manufacturers and seek to resolve matters so that the efforts by these companies bear fruit in order to serve the needs of the country and the entire world," it said.

The Prime Minister appreciated the efforts being taken by scientists in these companies to come out with a vaccine solution to tackle Covid-19. — PTI

said the recovery rate in the country is good as 45,333 fresh recoveries were recorded in the last 24 hours, ensuring a net reduction of 7,004 active cases.

"The contraction of India's active caseload has ensured India's present active caseload of 4,46,952 consists of just 4.74 per cent of India's total positive cases. The difference in new recoveries outnumbering new cases has also improved the recovery rate to 93.81 per cent today. The total recovered cases stand at 88,47,600. The gap between recovered cases and active cases, that is steadily increasing, stands at 84,00,648 -- 19.8 times active cases," the health ministry said in a statement.



# DECCAN Chronicle

1 DECEMBER 2020

## Mend ties in region, try to counter China

We are glad of the flurry of in-person, “non-virtual” diplomacy effected by India in recent weeks in order to pay greater attention to neighbourhood contours that have been allowed to languish of late for want of foresight, although it is time to ponder how this will be rated on the adequacy scale.

India’s immediate neighbourhood is “Saarc Plus” if we take into account Myanmar to the east, China to the north, and Iran and the Gulf Arab states to the west. Of these, the prickly or difficult ties have traditionally been with Pakistan and China, which too need engagement of another kind. Regrettably, however, for some time we have lost sight of the value of ties within Saarc, Afghanistan being the exception, and the neighbourhood too if Iran and the Gulf are excluded.

The relationship with Beijing has now grown tense, with China having militarily encroached into our territory in Ladakh this summer, with India responding to save face by amassing forces inside our own borders to face the People’s Liberation Army. Our northern neighbour’s repeated attempts to encircle us on the Bhutan and Sikkim side has added gravity to the way we think about China.

China’s military incursion into Indian territory adds many layers of complexity to an already complicated dynamic, whose key characteristic was persistent Chinese efforts over a fairly long period to cut us off from our South Asian neighbours, one by one, by lavishing vast sums of money on these countries in the form of investments and infrastructural installations, besides buildup of defence facilities. It’s no exaggeration to say that Beijing has got pretty far in that game, and it is to this reality that the Narendra Modi government has finally woken up.

Thus, we had the foreign secretary heading to Bangladesh in August. A few weeks later, in early October, he was in Myanmar along with the Army Chief. In October-November there has been a cluster of visits. The external affairs minister headed to Bahrain, the UAE and Seychelles in the Indian Ocean. The Army Chief and the RAW chief showed up in Kathmandu, followed up by the foreign secretary. Relations with Nepal have dipped with Kathmandu eating into Indian territory, redrawing boundary maps and getting this endorsed by its legislature. There is considerable lost political ground to cover even as India is going about promising development aid for infrastructure, connectivity and education. The national security adviser was in Colombo for the fourth meeting of the India, Sri Lanka, Maldives trilateral maritime security conference, which had been dormant for some time.

On the whole, however, there is a sense that these are bit moves to compensate for lost time in which the Chinese have made deft manoeuvres. Even as our foreign secretary left Kathmandu, the Chinese defence minister landed there for follow-up action. Our eastern Himalayan neighbours are extremely valuable in dealing with the Chinese. In the Narendra Modi government’s six years, foreign policy has mainly meant being worshipful of the US to the extent of showing partisanship with President Donald Trump in domestic US politics. This is not just amateurish but also harmful. The neglect of neighbours, breaching the first principles of diplomacy, has been another feature of our recent policy. It is time to rethink priorities and have a few good, grand ideas in a rapidly changing environment.

## A long way still to go

India’s economy, according to a set of numbers released by the government last week, has shrunk by 7.5 per cent in the quarter that ended on September 30. The contraction in the size of the economy for the second successive quarter has technically got the Indian economy into recession for the first time in its history. A decline in economic growth for two consecutive quarters indicates a recession, or economic stagnation. The silver lining, however, was that the degree of contraction in the economy has reduced in the July-September quarter, compared to the April-June quarter.

While economic activity picked up pace in the second quarter of financial year 2020-21, there is no consensus about the durability of this economic growth. Industrial activity witnessed in the July-September quarter could be to address pent-up demand during the festive season. While people have slowly started resuming their normal activities, business transactions in the touch-heavy sectors have still not reached their pre-Covid levels — a key prerequisite for India’s economic growth re-entering the positive territory.

According to data released by the ministry of statistics, key indicators such as cargo handled at seaports and airports, production of cement, sale of commercial vehicles, and exports continued to underperform and remain in a two-digit contraction. The inter-city movement of people — as shown by data of airports and the railways — has not reached normal levels yet. Unless such a big component of the GDP does not resume its activity, the real economic growth will not be seen.

The government, which was expected to step in to restore demand normality in the economy, has in fact reduced its revenue expenditure. The government’s final consumption expenditure, according to the ministry of statistics, has come down by over ₹1 lakh crore at ₹3.62 lakh crores in the second quarter of fiscal 2020-21 compared ₹4.65 lakh crores in the second quarter of fiscal 2019-20. In a scenario, where the government tries to escape its responsibility by blaming an act of God, one could only hope that God gives Indians strength to beat the coronavirus and help them resuscitate the ailing economy.

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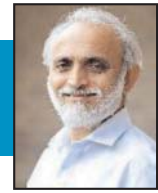
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Subhani



# Will our farmers force arrogant govt to yield?



Parsa Venkateshwar Rao Jr

The march of the Punjab farmers to New Delhi, accompanied by their counterparts from Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and other parts of northern India, despite all the attempts by the BJP-ruled Haryana government, and the refusal of the leaders of the farmers’ unions to abide by the conditions laid down by Union home minister Amit Shah to move to a specified protest site before talks with the government could begin, and more basically rejecting the home ministry’s intervention and insisting that the talks will be held with the agriculture ministry, is a clear rebuff to the self-righteous and arrogant Narendra Modi government one-and-a-half years into its second term. The farmers are not willing to buy the spin of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Cabinet and party colleagues that the three farm reform laws rushed through the two Houses of Parliament during the Monsoon Session in September through a voice vote was to strengthen the position of farmers.

The issue is no longer about the merits and demerits of the laws shaking off the shackles of the local mandis and apparently freeing the farmers to sell where they choose, of giving a backdoor entry to corporates into engaging farmers to grow what they need for their commercial purposes and lifting the “essential commodities” tag from food-grains and other commodities, enabling corporate groups to store the produce.

There is enough to discuss there, and the government may have a point or two, but it does not matter if the people affected by them remain suspi-

cious and hostile, and the government do not have any convincing arguments.

What is at issue is the Modi government’s conviction that it can do no wrong, and that the farmers in this case should grasp the good being done for them. The attitude is not that of a democratically elected government, but that of a paternalist state which believes that people should accept the government’s decisions in good faith and not raise impertinent questions.

The Modi government has been getting its way in the last six-and-a-half years, but now it has come up against the farmers’ formidable barricades. The Haryana and Delhi police, with the latter falling under the Union home ministry, have tried to barricade the farmers’ march but there was no stopping the farmers. The Union government had to get off its high horse, and Mr Shah was forced to plead with the farmers that the government was ready to talk to them and that they should move to the Nirankari Grounds at Burari on the outskirts of the national capital. It appears that Mr Shah has no option but to yield further ground.

There is of course the fact that this is also a political tussle between the BJP and its erstwhile ally in Punjab, the Shiromani Akali Dal. The farmers form the core

**By freeing the mandis, the Centre is not enabling the farmers to sell their produce where they want to because 90 per cent of them are marginal farmers**

**There is enough to discuss there, and the government may have a point or two, but it does not matter if the people affected by them remain suspicious and hostile, and the government do not have any convincing arguments.**

constituency of the Akali Dal, and it is alleged that the Agriculture Produce Marketing Committees (APMC), or the mandi committees in the state, are controlled by the first family of the party, Prakash Singh Badal and his son Sukhbir Singh Badal.

The BJP under Mr Modi has been on the warpath of weakening its allies in the National Democratic Alliance — the Shiv Sena in Maharashtra, the Akali Dal in Punjab, and Janata Dal (United) in Bihar. The Shiv Sena and Akali Dal have sensed the danger and they are hitting back, though the JD(U) is not in a position to do so now.

Prime Minister Modi seems to have miscalculated the horse sense of the farmers. The hard-nosed men and women of the soil are not going to be overwhelmed by the PM’s rhetoric and sweet talk. His “one nation, one farm market” idea does not fool them.

They know their problem is different from that of their counterparts in other parts of the country, and they know the problems they face on the ground more than any government which pretends that it knows best. The issue of minimum support price is only one part of the problem. By freeing the mandis or grain markets, the Centre is not enabling the farmers to sell their produce where they want to because 90 per cent of them are small and marginal farmers owning not more than two acres of land, but it is enabling the corporates to enter the mandis.

The Prime Minister’s

positive spin turns out to be a bluff, and the farmers have seen through this. The Prime Minister and the government have been forced on to the backfoot. They will have to take greater pains to explain the hidden benefits to the farmers that would flow from the new laws, or they will have to promise to address the concerns of the farmers and incorporate them into the laws through necessary amendments.

More than anything else, Mr Modi and his colleagues need to learn, quickly, that they are not infallible, that they mean to do the right thing but yet go wrong, and that even without any evil intention they may do things that harm people more than benefiting them. Their desire to change the country overnight based on a parliamentary majority reveals political immaturity. Farm reforms may be necessary but for them to be successful it is not enough to pass new laws. There is need to connect with the people and win their trust and consent, or at least of a majority of them. The BJP has come to believe in the mantra of “Modi hai toh mumkin hai”. It is not. Even Mr Modi must persuade and convince the people. He cannot simply have his own way. Mr Modi and the BJP might chomp at the reins of democratic controls exerted by the people. But they must learn to hold back and reconsider all issues. There is an urgent need to change the style of governance from that of the presidential to the parliamentary. Had the government sent the bills for review by a joint select committee, as the Akalis and the Opposition parties had so vociferously urged, there would have been time and scope enough to respond to the concerns of the farmers and to incorporate the necessary changes before they became law.

*The writer is a Delhi-based commentator and analyst*

### LETTERS

#### POLL CAMPAIGN

Spewing venom seems to be the new normal in election campaigns and the state BJP president has done exactly that by raising the issue of declining Hindu population in the Old City (*Bandi: Why is Hindu population falling?, DC, Nov. 30*). It is also intriguing that parties with a dismal record in governance continues to seek votes successfully in the name development.

**M. Saleemuddin**  
*Hyderabad*

#### LOVE JIHAD LAWS

All political parties in the past 10 years of election campaigns promised employment. Since no progress report in this regard is possible, love jihad is being introduced to divert attention. The result of this is hatred and division and not employment. Youth must boycott news that divides India.

**Prasad**  
*Hyderabad*

#### VIRTUAL YEAR

2020 saw only two months of activity in January and February. From March onwards, the world was in lockdown due to Covid. We saw the rise of virtual leaders, professionals and executives conducting virtual summits, conferences and meetings, while students were busy attending online classes. Even virtual marriages are taking place. Good that cricket matches are not taking place virtually.

**G.V. Sudhir**  
*Secunderabad*

#### Big blaze at Guruvayur temple

KOZHIKODE, NOV. 30 Large portions of the famous Sri Krishna temple at Guruvayur in central Kerala were gutted by a fire which broke out in the early hours of this morning.

A spokesman of the temple told PTI on trunk telephone that the sanctum sanctorum was not affected.

The spokesman said the debris were being removed and poojas would commence only after “Sudhi Kalasam” (purification ceremony) He said the fire was first noticed on the western side at about 0200 hours. Soon it spread to other parts. It took over three hours to extinguish the fire by the fire brigade, requisitioned from Ponnani.

Aakar Patel



## Looking at the future in fear as economy goes into ‘de-growth’

India’s economy had contracted for another three months, we were told late last week. Meaning that, as a nation, we produced less in goods and services than we did in the same period last year. Meaning also that Indian families in the numbers of lakhs and perhaps crores got pulled into poverty. India’s economy has contracted for six months since Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for the harshest lockdown in the world. This has brought the nation into what economists call a recession, whose definition is two straight quarters of de-growth.

We know we are in a recession because of the media.

The Prime Minister has not tweeted out the numbers his government has put out. The finance minister has not done so either. The Niti Aayog’s head says he was “pleasantly surprised” that the numbers were not worse that had been expected. The chief economic adviser professes “cautious optimism” about the data. He had previously predicted growth in the two quarter from April to September. It turned out that instead of growth we had a contraction of 23.9 per cent. He describes himself as inter-

ested in “deep thinking and research”. In the economic survey, he used Wikipedia as a source. News about the third quarter is not good. Bank credit is lower in the current period than it was in the one when the economy contracted. The core sectors (steel, cement, electricity, coal, oil, refining and fertilisers) shrunk in October. If you do not know this, it might be because the Prime Minister and the finance minister have not tweeted about it. If they ignore something, then it doesn’t exist. The data is all from the corporate sector. We have no idea what is happening to the unorganised and small sectors where most Indians are employed. The weak and the poor cannot “work from home”. They must toil every day to eat. We do know that the lockdown, like the earlier demonetisation, like GST, has taken work away from the small and the poor and given it to the corporate sector. The stock market is at a historic high for this reason.

Elsewhere, the capital of our nation is facing farmers’ protests. They want the government to take back the laws that will gut procurement and affect their livelihood. The government’s agents have said

the protesters are anti-national and separatists. The standard line that is used for anyone — academics, minorities, farmers, dissident industrialists — who points out that what the government is doing is wrong. It is like children and name-calling. That is the level of maturity in our national debate.

On the Ladakh front, China has refused to go back from the spaces they have occupied on our border and the Indian Army has to spend the winter in spaces that have not been prepared for such an eventuality. Our jawans were issued sleeping bags that have been previously found to be “unfit for use in glacier and super higher altitude areas”. But they must make do because the political establishment has decided it does not want to deal with the problem. The Prime Minister tweeted that he had an “excellent discussion with my friend Boris Johnson”, the British Prime Minister, about climate change and other matters. He has not found the time to have a discussion with his friend Xi Jinping about his Army going back from our borders. Again, if you don’t talk about the problem, it doesn’t exist. His right hand man, the home

minister of India, has said that the implementation of his pet project, the Citizenship Amendment Act, has been postponed for now. He says this is because of Covid-19 and he will only implement the CAA after the pandemic ends. Why Covid-19 should affect India’s giving citizenship to those non-Muslims who came to India illegally before December 2014 is not known. No other law has been paused because of it. But after an aggressive campaign against those he called “termites”, Amit Shah is now hesitant to take India down the road of religious discrimination. It might help to understand why by looking at what our ambassador in the United States is up to.

He has spent the last two weeks sweet talking those American leaders who had previously condemned India’s actions on the CAA, the National Register of Citizens and on Kashmir.

He has been tweeting out the details of the meetings without saying why India was now engaging with those who did not like the actions of the Narendra Modi government. The reason of course is that Mr Modi’s friend Donald Trump has been defeated in the

presidential election and a Democrat will become America’s new President in two months’ time. The Democratic Party has been very vocal about its concern that India is heading in the wrong direction under Mr Modi and is damaging itself by indulging in overt majoritarianism and harassing and bullying its own minorities. We will see what the effect of India’s outreach to the Democrats is soon enough.

Meanwhile, there has been no let-up in the conduct of the ruling party. In Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and elsewhere, laws have been passed that will jail Muslim men for 10 years if they marry Hindu women. In Hyderabad, the BJP has said in the campaign for the local elections that a vote for Muslims is a vote against India. Ten years ago, this would have produced outrage, but today it is normal and is accepted because it has become normalised. This is what is going on in our country today. It is hard to see any of it without a sense of dread and fear for what is happening and what may lie ahead.

*The writer is a columnist and a senior journalist*



## SHORT TAKES

### NEPAL INTEGRITY SAFEGUARD GETS CHINA THUMBS UP

Beijing, Nov. 30: China's Defence Minister Gen. Wei Fenghe has lauded Nepal's leadership for resolutely pursuing the 'one-China' policy and offered firm support to the Himalayan kingdom in safeguarding its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, the defence ministry said here on Monday.

Wei, who is also a State Councillor, met Nepal PM K P Sharma Oli and exchanged views on matters of mutual interest and held talks with Army chief Gen. Purna Chandra Thapa on ways to resume military cooperation and training impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic during his one-day visit to Nepal on Sunday.

According to a Chinese defence ministry statement, Wei told the Nepalese leaders that China highly appreciates Nepal for resolutely pursuing the 'one-China' policy, and also firmly supports Nepal to safeguard its national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. Under the 'one-China' policy, Beijing emphasises other countries to recognise Taiwan and Tibet as part of China, the statement said.

As China firmed up its ties with Nepal, which shares borders with Tibet, with heavy investments besides loans and financial assistance, Beijing wants Kathmandu to stop the free-flow of Tibetans to travel to Dharamshala in India to meet Tibet's highest spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, the statement said.

## EXTRADITION HEARING FOR RANA ON FEB. 12

Washington, Nov. 30: A US court has set February 12 as the date of hearing for extradition of Pakistani-origin Canadian businessman Tahawwur Rana, who has been declared a fugitive by India for his involvement in the 2008 Mumbai terror attack case. Rana, 59, a childhood friend of David Coleman Headley, was re-arrested on June 10 in Los Angeles on an extradition request by India for his involvement in the 2008 Mumbai terror attack in which 166 people, including six Americans, were killed.

Rana was earlier arrested in October 2009 by US police soon after Headley's arrest at Chicago O'Hare airport. US District Court Judge in Los Angeles Jacqueline Chelonian said in her order on November 13 that the Extradition Hearing in this case is scheduled for February 12, 2021, at 10:00 am. Rana has time till December 21 to file his opposition to the request for extradition. The United States Government will have another month's time to file its reply.

In its motion on September 28, the US government supported Rana's extradition to India where he has been charged with the offences of conspiracy to wage war, commit a terrorist act, the waging of war, the commission of murder, and a terrorist act. Rana has argued that the US decision not to extradite his co-conspirator, David Headley, to India is inconsistent and bars his extradition.

## FORCES KILL GHAZNI ATTACK MASTERMIND

Kabul, Nov. 30: Afghan forces have killed the Taliban mastermind of a suicide car bomb attack that left at least 30 security personnel dead, officials said Monday. Hamza Waziristani was killed in an air strike overnight in the eastern province of Ghazni where the bomber struck an Afghan military base on Sunday.

"The mastermind behind yesterday's terrorist attack on the (Ghazni) base was killed along with seven other terrorists," the defence ministry said in a statement. Ministry spokesman Fawad Aman said that Waziristani was a Taliban militant from the Pakistani border region of Waziristan.

The attack was one of the deadliest in months targeting government forces in Afghanistan, where violence has surged since the start of peace talks between President Ashraf Ghani's administration and the Taliban in Qatar. No group has claimed the attack.

The insurgents have launched near daily attacks against Afghan forces, primarily in rural areas, since signing a deal with Washington in February that paved the way for the withdrawal of foreign troops by May 2021.

Health officials in Ghazni said 30 people died in Sunday's attack, but the defence ministry — which is known to downplay tolls in attacks against its forces — said 10 were killed.

## China, Pak talk regional security

Islamabad, Nov. 30: China's Defence Minister Gen Wei Fenghe on Monday held talks with Pakistan Army chief Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa and discussed regional security issues and signed an agreement to deepen defence cooperation between the all-weather allies.

"During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, regional security and enhanced bilateral defence collaboration were discussed," said the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the media wing of Pakistan's Army, after the meeting between the two generals.

"An MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) was also signed for enhancement of defence cooperation between both the Armies," the statement said. The details of the MoU were not shared.

Gen Bajwa thanked Gen Wei for China's unwavering support to Pakistan on all key issues at regional and international forums, saying that the Pakistan Army greatly values the "time-tested and brotherly relations" with China.

● GEN WEI acknowledged and appreciated the Pakistan Army's sincere efforts towards maintaining regional peace and providing a secure environment to the \$60 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor projects.

"We have been standing together all along, and our relations will be no different in wake of future challenges," Gen Bajwa said.

Gen Wei acknowledged and appreciated the Pakistan Army's sincere efforts towards maintaining regional peace and providing a secure environment to the \$60 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor projects, the ISPR statement said.

Earlier on arrival at GHQ, Gen Wei laid a floral wreath at Yadgar-e-Shuhada. The Pakistan Army presented a Guard of Honour to the visiting dignitary.

— PTI

## Navalny poisoning pressure on Russia

The Hague, Nov. 30: Russia came under renewed pressure Monday to explain the nerve agent attack on opposition figure Aleksei Navalny as the annual meeting of the global chemical weapons watchdog got underway amid measures aimed at reigning in the spread of Covid-19.

Navalny fell ill on August 20 during a domestic flight in Russia, and was flown to Germany for treatment two days later. His allies accused the Kremlin of poisoning its fiercest opponent.

Tests carried out by labs in Germany, France and Sweden and by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons established that Navalny was exposed to a Soviet-era Novichok nerve agent.

The organisation's director-general, Fernando Arias, told Monday's meeting that according to the Chemical Weapons Convention, "the poisoning of an individual through the

use of a nerve agent is a use of a chemical weapon." A group of 56 nations issued a statement as the start of the annual meeting of the OPCW's member states urging Moscow to disclose "in a swift and transparent manner the circumstances of this chemical weapons attack."

Russia, which denies involvement in Navalny's poisoning, reacted bullishly in its written statement to the conference.

"Instead of trying to look into what had happened, Germany and its allies resorted to megaphone diplomacy, unleashed a mass disinformation campaign against Russia and started to demand some 'independent international investigation' under the auspices of the OPCW," Moscow's statement said.

In October, Moscow asked for OPCW experts to visit Russia to provide "technical assistance" in its investigations.

— AP

## Lankan prison riot: Eight inmates killed, 37 hurt

Colombo, Nov. 30: At least eight prisoners were killed and 37 others injured when a riot broke out on Sunday at a prison on the outskirts of Sri Lanka's capital when some inmates tried to force open a door and escape, prompting the authorities to use force, police said on Monday.

Police spokesman Ajith Rohana said inmates created "unrest" at the Mahara prison located about 15 kilometres north of Colombo and prison officials took steps to control the situation. The incident comes as pandemic-related unrest has been growing in Sri Lanka's overcrowded prisons.

Inmates have staged protests in recent weeks in several prisons as the number of confirmed Covid-19 positive cases spiked in the country's overcrowded jails. "The incident was started by a set of remand prisoners when they tried to force open a door and

**7 Dec.:** New York City will reopen elementary schools and offer in-person classes for special-needs students of all ages despite a recent surge in coronavirus cases

**FACTS, FIGURES FROM ACROSS THE WORLD**

**13,000** face job threat as owner of high-street chains including Topshop, Topman, Dorothy Perkins, Burton, Miss Selfridge, Evans and Wallis, faces collapse despite loan offer

The United States is the world's worst-affected country, with 266,831 Covid-19 deaths

**4<sup>th</sup>** wave strikes in Hong Kong, authorities reimpose social distancing measures at some of their strictest levels in the city

**8 billion** euros is new stimulus package approved by Italy's government to shore up businesses affected by the latest round of anti-Coronavirus restrictions

First international students have arrived in Australia for the first time since the country shut its borders

escape following which the authorities had to use force," Rohana said. He said during the entire incident at least 37 more, including two jailors, were

injured and all of them were transferred to the nearby Ragama hospital. The residents near the prison said smoke was coming out of the premises

due to fire. Prisons authorities said the rioters had set fire to the kitchen and a record room of the prison.

— PTI

# Yellen is Biden's Treasury Secy, Tanden head of OMB

Prez-elect announces economic team members, to introduce them today

Washington, Nov. 30: US President-elect Joe Biden on Monday named Janet Yellen as his Treasury Secretary and Indian-American Neera Tanden as Director of Office of Management and Budget, as he announced key members of his economic team. If confirmed by the US Senate, Yellen, 74, will be the first woman to lead the Treasury Department in its 231-year history, and the first person to have served as Treasury Secretary, Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers, and Chair of the Federal Reserve. She has previously been confirmed by the Senate on four separate occasions. Tanden, 50, if confirmed by the Senate, would be the first woman of colour and first Indian-American to lead the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

Tanden's career has focused on pursuing policies designed to support working families, foster broad-based economic growth, and curb rampant inequality. "Another proud day for Indian Americans to see Neera Tanden be nominated for a Cabinet level position in the next administration. This position at OMB is a wide-ranging role with broad powers to manage trillions of dollars of the US budget. If anyone had any doubts that our community has arrived politically, this election cycle is proof enough," Indiaspora founder M R Rangaswami, and an eminent philanthropist and venture capitalist, said.

Announcing key members of his economic team, Biden also named Wally Adeyemo, as Deputy Secretary of the Treasury; Cecilia Rouse as Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers; and Jared Bernstein and Heather Boushey, as members of the Council of Economic Advisers. Biden would formally introduce his team on Tuesday. This crisis-tested team will help Biden administration lift America out of the current economic downturn and build back better — creating an economy that gives every single person across America a fair shot and an equal chance to get ahead, the transition said.



Neapolitan nativity statuettes artisan Gennaro Di Virgilio shows one of the latest addition to his gallery of figures: President-elect Joe Biden, in his shop in San Gregorio Armeno, Naples, on Monday.

## Completed Wisconsin recount confirms Biden's win over Don

Madison (US), Nov. 30: Wisconsin finished a recount of its presidential results on Sunday, confirming Democrat Joe Biden's victory over President Donald Trump in the key battleground state. Trump vowed to challenge the outcome in court even before the recount concluded.

Dane County was the second and last county to finish its recount, reporting a 45-vote gain for Trump. Milwaukee County, the state's other big and overwhelmingly liberal

county targeted in a recount that Trump paid \$3 million for, reported its results Friday, a 132-vote gain for Biden.

Taken together, the two counties barely budged Biden's winning margin of about 20,600 votes, giving the winner a net gain of 87 votes.

"As we have said, the recount only served to reaffirm Joe Biden's victory in Wisconsin," Danielle Melfi, who led Biden's campaign in Wisconsin, said. Trump campaign spokeswo-

man Jenna Ellis said in a statement that the Wisconsin recounts have "revealed serious issues" about whether the ballots were legal, but she offered no specific details to validate her claim.

"As we have said from the very beginning, we want every legal vote, and only legal votes to be counted, and we will continue to uphold our promise to the American people to fight for a free and fair election," Ellis said.

— AP

## INAUGURAL COMMITTEE: ALLEN CEO, VARGHESE IS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Washington, Nov. 30: President-elect Joe Biden is taking the first formal preparations for his January 20 inauguration, unveiling the inaugural committee that will lead arrangements for the day he and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris assume their posts.

Biden is naming Delaware State University president Tony Allen to serve as chief executive officer of his presidential inaugural committee and campaign chief operating officer Maju Varghese as the group's executive director.

— AP

## NOVEL CORONAVIRUS MAY ENTER BRAIN THROUGH NOSE, STUDY SAYS

Berlin, Nov. 30: The novel Coronavirus may enter the brain of people through the nose, according to a study published on Monday that may help explain some of the neurological symptoms observed in Covid-19 patients, and inform diagnosis and measures to prevent infection.

The research, published in the journal *Nature Neuroscience*, noted that SARS-CoV-2 not only affects the respiratory tract but also impacts the central nervous system (CNS), resulting in neurological symptoms such as loss of smell, taste, headache, fatigue and nausea.

Although recent research has described the presence of viral RNA in the brain and cerebrospinal fluid, it remains unclear where the virus enters

and how it is distributed within the brain. The researchers from Charité — Universitätsmedizin, Berlin, Germany examined the nasopharynx — the upper part of the throat that connects to the nasal cavity — a likely first site of viral infection and replication, and the brains of 33 patients — 22 males and 11 females — who died with Covid-19.

The median age at the time of death was 71.6 years, and the time from onset of Covid-19 symptoms to death was a median of 31 days, they said. The researchers said that they found the presence of SARS-CoV-2 RNA, the genetic material of the virus, and protein in the brain and nasopharynx, adding intact virus particles were also detected in the nasopharynx. — PTI

**VIRUS | EFFECT** Deadly term started trending in Jan. when 1st US deaths, ship outbreaks happened

## Merriam-Webster's top '20 word: Pandemic

New York, Nov. 30: If you were to choose a word that rose above most in 2020, which word would it be? Ding, ding, ding: Merriam-Webster on Monday announced "pandemic" as its 2020 word of the year. "That probably isn't a big shock," Peter Sokolowski, editor at large for Merriam-Webster, said.

"Often the big news story has a technical word that's associated with it and in this case, the word pandemic is not just technical but has become general. It's probably the word by

which we'll refer to this period in the future," he said. The word took on urgent specificity in March, when the Coronavirus crisis was designated a pandemic, but it started to trend up on Merriam-Webster.com as early January and again in February when the first US deaths and outbreaks on cruise ships occurred.

On March 11, when the World Health Organisation declared the novel Coronavirus outbreak a global pandemic, lookups on the site for pandemic spiked

hugely. Site interest for the word has remained significantly high through the year, Sokolowski said.

By huge, Sokolowski means searches for pandemic on March 11 were 115,806 per cent higher than lookups experienced on the same date last year. Pandemic, with roots in Latin and Greek, is a combination of "pan," for all, and "demos," for people or population. The latter is the same root of "democracy," Sokolowski noted.

The word pandemic dates to the mid-1600s, used

● ON MARCH 11, when the World Health Organisation declared the novel Coronavirus outbreak a global pandemic, lookups on the site for pandemic spiked hugely.

broadly for "universal" and more specifically to disease in a medical text in the 1660s, he said. That was after the plagues of the Middle Ages, Sokolowski said. He attributes the lookup traffic for pandemic not entirely to searchers

who didn't know what it meant but also to those on the hunt for more detail, or for inspiration or comfort. "We see that the word love is looked up around Valentine's Day and the word cornucopia is looked up at Thanksgiving," Sokolowski said.

"We see a word like surreal spiking when a moment of national tragedy or shock occurs. It's the idea of dictionaries being the beginning of putting your thoughts in order," Merriam-Webster acted quickly in March to add and

update entries on its site for words related to the pandemic. While "Coronavirus" had been in the dictionary for decades, "Covid-19" was coined in February. Thirty-four days later, Merriam-Webster had it up online, along with a couple dozen other entries that were revised to reflect the health emergency. "That's the shortest period of time we've ever seen a word go from coinage to entry," Sokolowski said. "The word had this urgency."

— AP

## MASSACRE IN NIGERIA LEAVES OVER 100 DEAD

Maiduguri, Nigeria, Nov. 30: At least 110 people were killed in a weekend attack on farm workers in northeast Nigeria blamed on jihadists, the UN humanitarian coordinator in the country said on Sunday, making it the deadliest raid on civilians this year.

The attack, in a state gripped by a jihadist insurgency for more than 10 years, took place the same day as long-delayed local elections in the state.

"I am outraged and horrified by the gruesome attack against civilians carried out by non-state armed groups in villages near Borno State capital Maiduguri," Edward Kallon said in a statement.

"At least 110 civilians were ruthlessly killed and many others were wounded in this attack." Initial tolls indicated 43 and then at least 70 dead from Saturday's massacre. Some locals blamed the attack on Boko Haram fighters, but Bulama Bukarti, an analyst with the Tony Blair Institute, said the rival IS-affiliated Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) were more active in the area.

"ISWAP is the likely culprit," he tweeted. Kallon, in his statement, said: "The incident is the most violent direct attack against innocent civilians this year."

"I call for the perpetrators of this heinous and senseless act to be brought to justice," he added. One pro-government anti-jihadist militia said the assailants tied up the labourers and slit their throats.

— AFP



## SHORT TAKES

## NorthEast United frustrate FC Goa

**Goa:** NorthEast United extended their unbeaten run to three games after frustrating FC Goa in a 1-1 draw in their Indian Super League Season 7 encounter at the Fatorda Stadium on Monday. Goa are yet to record three points this season.

Idrissa Sylla (40') scored the opening goal before Igor Angulo (43') equalised just before the break.

Brandon Fernandes was handed his first start of the season along with Aibambha Kupar Dohling as Goa boss Juan Ferrando made three changes to the side which had suffered a defeat to Mumbai City FC. Jorge Ortiz Mendoza started with James Donachie benched. NorthEast made as many as five changes to the side which came from behind to hold Kerala in a thrilling 2-2 draw. — Agencies

## 4 Olympic-bound boxers in TOPS

**New Delhi:** Four Olympic-bound Indian boxers — two men and as many women — have been included in the sports ministry's Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS), the Sports Authority of India said on Monday.

World bronze-medallist Simranjeet Kaur (60kg), Asian medallist Pooja Rani (75kg) joined M.C. Mary Kom in the elite group. Asian silver-winner Ashish Kumar (75kg) and Asian Games bronze-winner Satish Kumar (+91kg) have been included in a group which already featured Amit Panghal (52kg), Manish Kaushik (63kg), and Vikas Krishan (69kg) among the Tokyo-bound.

Lovlina Borgohain and Kavinder Singh Bisht are also part of the core group. "Nikhil Zareen (51kg), Sonia Chahal (57kg) and Shiva Thapa (63kg) were moved to the TOPS developmental group from the Core Group," the SAI said. — PTI

## Clash of heads as Wolves win

**London:** The sound of the thud from a clash of heads just added to concern. The game was only five minutes old when Wolverhampton forward Raul Jimenez and Arsenal defender David Luiz collided while jumping for the ball.

Concerns grew as Jimenez appeared motionless and was eventually wheeled off the field with an oxygen mask on. "I knew straight away that something was wrong," Wolves manager Nuno Espirito Santo said. "Everyone called 'red, red,' which means it's a bad situation. You see the panic in their eyes."

By the time the game ended with Wolves beating Arsenal 2-1 there was a more encouraging update from the hospital with Jimenez said to be conscious and talking. — AP

## Liverpool, Man U look to advance

**Washington:** Chelsea and Manchester City are already through to the Champions League knockout phase with two games to spare. Now it's the turn of Manchester United and Liverpool off the back of a challenging weekend in the Premier League.

Liverpool on Tuesday host Ajax, with a two-point advantage on the Dutch club in Group D, with a packed program, fixture scheduling and James Milner adding to the injury headaches. The 2019 European champions were stunned at home last week with a home loss to Atalanta. The visit of Ajax come a day too soon for the return of up to 2,000 fans being allowed at Anfield. — AP

## Live on TV

## CRICKET

**Lanka Premier League:** Colombo vs Dambulla from 3 pm; Jaffna vs Kandy from 7.30 pm on Sony Six

**South Africa vs England:** Third T20 from 9.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

## FOOTBALL

**Indian Super League:** Mumbai City vs East Bengal from 7.20 pm on Star Sports 2, 3

**Champions League:** Shakhtar Donetsk vs Real Madrid from 11.25 pm on Sony Ten 2; Monchengladbach vs Inter Milan; Atletico Madrid vs Bayern Munich; Liverpool vs Ajax; Porto vs Manchester City from 1.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony Ten 1, 2, 3 and Six

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## WARNING BELL

## Setback for Oz as injured David out of ODI, T20 series

**Sydney, Nov. 30:** Star opening batsman David Warner faces a battle to be fit for the India Test series after Cricket Australia said Monday he will miss the last one-day international and the three-match Twenty20 series next month.

Warner limped out of Sunday's one-day international against India after straining his groin while fielding as Australia secured the series 2-0 in Sydney.

After a typically swash-buckling innings of 83 on Sunday, Warner fell awkwardly and had to be helped from the field.

Warner will miss Wednesday's final ODI and all three Twenty20 internationals beginning Friday in Canberra to undergo rehab in an effort to ready for the Test series which begins on December 17 in Adelaide.

Opening batsman D'Arcy Short has been called up to the Twenty20 international squad as a replacement.

Cricket Australia also announced that leading pace bowler Pat Cummins will be rested for the remainder of the white-ball matches against India, putting pressure on an out-of-form Mitchell Starc.

"Pat and Davie are critical to our plans for the Test Series," head coach Justin Langer said.

"Davie will work through his injury rehab and in Pat's case it is important all of our players are managed well to keep them mentally and physically fit throughout what is a challenging summer."

"The priority for both is being fully prepared for one of the biggest and most important home Test Series we have played in recent years, especially with World Test Championship points up for grabs."

Left-hander Short plays cricket for Western Australia and was the Twenty20 Big Bash League's leading run-scorer in 2017-18 and 2018-19.

No replacement has been announced for Cummins, with Australia to rely on Josh Hazlewood, Starc and allrounder Marcus Stoinis to provide the main seam bowling options. — AFP



Australia's David Warner (centre) is assisted from the Sydney Cricket Ground after injuring himself while fielding during the second one-day international match against India in Sydney on Sunday. — AP

## Marnus feels Oz have advantage

**Sydney, Nov. 30:** Australia's rising star Marnus Labuschagne believes that the home team will enjoy a slight advantage going into the Test series against India as most of their top-order players will be coming in after having played a fair amount of first-class cricket.

Labuschagne, who contributed a solid 70 off 61 balls in the second ODI which Australia won by 51 runs on Sunday, has scored two hundreds in three Sheffield Shield matches.

"It definitely helps to have a few games under your belt just to get the pace and the timing of the game from T20s to one-dayers to four-day cricket," he replied to a query from PTI during a virtual media interaction

## SMITH SCORED 2ND TON DESPITE ACUTE VERTIGO

**Sydney, Nov. 30:** Top Australian batsman Steve Smith has revealed that he suffered a "bad dose of vertigo" ahead of the second one-dayer against India and was not sure of playing the game in which he struck a series-clinching hundred.

"I didn't know I was playing today. I had a really bad dose of vertigo this morning and I was struggling until ... I came down early to have a hit and a bit of a run around," Smith told *cricket.com.au* after receiving his second successive Man of the match award.

Smith said it was team doctor Leigh Golding, who relieved him of the symptoms by performing Epley maneuver which involves a series of head movements used to treat benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV), a condition caused by a problem in the inner ear. — PTI

facilitated by series' official broadcaster Sony. The Indian players, who

had played IPL and now ODIs, last played red-ball cricket in New Zealand

and will only have two three-day games to get into the groove.

"But a lot of these (Indian) players we're talking about, they've been doing it for a long time, they're not new to the changes of format. I'd be surprised if they didn't shift back into gear very quickly."

"I will say that it's a slight advantage, four out of our top six have been playing Shield cricket and got that rhythm as a batting group."

With David Warner ruled out of the last ODI as well as the upcoming T20 series, Labuschagne won't mind a chance to open the innings if he is asked about it. "Certainly, if I got asked to open the batting absolutely. It's an opportunity that I would enjoy taking." — PTI

## KIWIS POCKET SERIES AS 3RD T20 CALLED OFF

**Mount Maunganui (New Zealand), Nov. 30:** New Zealand on Monday claimed the T20 series against the West Indies 2-0 after the third and final match of the rubber was washed out here.

Persistent rain played spoilsport to left-arm spinner Mitchell Santner's debut as New Zealand's T20I captain and the final match of the series was called off after just 2.2 overs.

The Kiwis were without Tim Southee, Ross Taylor and Kyle Jamieson, who had been given a break for the third game and were replaced by Daryl Mitchell, Scott Kuggeleijn and Hamish Bennett.

Sent into bat, West Indies were off to a brisk start with openers Andre Fletcher and Brandon King scoring 12 runs off the first over. — AFP

## World Cup hero Diop dies at 42

**Washington, Nov. 30:** Papa Bouba Diop, the tall Senegal midfielder who scored the goal that delivered one of the greatest upsets in World Cup history, has died. He was 42.

"FIFA is saddened to learn of the passing of Senegal legend Papa Bouba Diop," the sport's governing body said on Sunday.

Diop was the hero when Senegal shocked defending champion France 1-0 in the opening game of the 2002 World Cup in Japan and South Korea. It was Senegal's World Cup debut and the win sent the West Africans on a run to the quarterfinals to match the best performance at the tournament by an African team. "Once a World Cup hero, always a World Cup hero," FIFA said in its tribute on Twitter.

Diop was first called up to play for his country at the

● **Papa Bouba Diop was first called up to play for Senegal at the age of 21 and made more than 60 appearances for his country between 2001 and 2008.**

age of 21 and made more than 60 appearances for Senegal from 2001-08.

He played club football in Switzerland, France and Greece and for four teams in England — Fulham, Portsmouth, West Ham and Birmingham.

Diop was 6-foot-5 and nicknamed "Wardrobe" because of his commanding presence. He was loved in Senegal because of that goal against the French, the former colonisers of Senegal, but also for his likeable personality off the field along with his skill on it. — AP



## Maradona's doc under scanner

**Buenos Aires, Nov. 30:** Diego Maradona's surgeon responded to the launch of an investigation for involuntary manslaughter by saying he "everything he could, up to the impossible" for an "unmanageable" patient.

Earlier in the day prosecutors in San Isidro, near Buenos Aires, said they were investigating Leopoldo Luque while Argentine television showed police raiding the doctor's surgery and home.

The probe was triggered by concerns raised by Maradona's daughters Dalma, Gianinna and Jana over the treatment he received for his heart condition at his home, judicial sources said.

Maradona was buried on Thursday at the Jardin de Paz cemetery on the outskirts of the Argentine capital.

"Our investigations are ongoing, we are talking to witnesses including members of the family" of Maradona, a source close to the San Isidro inquiry said.

"The clinic had recommended that he go elsewhere to be hospitalised, but the family decided otherwise. His daughters signed for him to be discharged from the hospital," said a family member.

Later in the day, Luque gave an emotional televised news conference. "You want to know what I am responsible for?" the 39-year-old doctor asked

## NAPOLI WIN BIG IN A TRIBUTE TIE TO MARADONA

**Milan, Nov. 30:** Napoli beat Roma 4-0 in an emotional match in the Italian league as the team paid tribute to Diego Maradona.

It was Napoli's first Serie 'A' game since Maradona died. Maradona led Napoli to their only two Serie 'A' titles in 1987 and 1990 and is considered a god-like figure in Naples. "Certainly we played with extra motivation. Today we wanted even more than normal to get a result, for Diego, for our city which is suffering this loss. We dedicate the victory to him," Napoli captain Lorenzo Insigne said.

The win saw Napoli move level with Roma and Juventus, six points below leader AC Milan on points table. — AP

between sobs. "For having loved him, for having taken care of him, for having extended his life, for having improved it to the end."

Luque said he did "everything he could, up to the impossible" and considered himself a "friend" of Maradona and saw him "as a father, not as a patient". — AFP

## New Innings



Andhra Ranji Trophy cricketer D. Naren Reddy is all smiles as he poses with his childhood coach G. Kiran Reddy (left) of the Sarojini Cricket and Fitness Academy at his wedding reception in Hyderabad on Sunday. Naren married Harika Reddy in Siddipet on Friday.



A steward reacts as officials put out a fire on Haas F1 driver Romain Grosjean's car following a crash during the Bahrain Grand Prix in Sakhir on Sunday. — AFP

**Sakhir (Bahrain), Nov. 30:** French driver Romain Grosjean will sit out next weekend's Formula One race after escaping a fiery high-speed crash in the Bahrain Grand Prix with just burns to his hands, his team Haas said on Monday.

Grosjean walked away from the wreckage after he collided with Daniil Kyvart's Alpha Tauri on the first lap of Sunday's race, causing the Haas car to split in half and burst into flames as it smashed through the safety barriers at 225kph.

Haas said treatment for the burns that 34-year-old

Grosjean suffered was "going well" and he was expected to be discharged from hospital on Tuesday.

Grosjean escaped alive thanks to the integrity of his car's survival cell, his "halo" device, which deflected the ruptured Armco metal barriers away from his head, his own presence of mind in remaining calm as he extricated himself and the rapid skilled assistance of F1's medical staff and track marshals.

"Hello everyone, I just wanted to say I'm okay, well, sort of okay," the Frenchman said in an Instagram post. — AFP