

**THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA**  
**RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM | SATURDAY | 14 NOVEMBER 2020**



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## SPORTS | 8

## Verstappen fastest at Turkish GP practice

**Max:** 31.0°C  
**Min:** 23.0°C  
**RH:** 73%  
**Rainfall:** Nil  
**Forecast:** Clear.  
Max/Min temp.  
31/23 °C

# ASTROGUIDE

**SUNRISE** TOMORROW 6.07 AM  
**SUNSET** TODAY 5.27 PM  
**MOONRISE** TODAY 4.55 PM  
**MOONSET** TOMORROW 5.43 AM

**Not dry fruits, our company  
has given a very expensive  
gift pack to the managers...  
one kg onions!**

**New Delhi:** India successfully test-fired on Friday the Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air Missile (QRSAM) system at an integrated test range in Chandipur off the Odisha coast, officials said. The successful test-firing of the QRSAM, having a range of around 30 km, paves the way for its commercial production, they said. It directly hit a Banshee pilotless target aircraft at medium range and medium altitudes. The test firing took place at 3:50 pm off the Odisha coast. The officials said the missile is propelled by a single-stage solid propellant rocket motor and uses all indigenous subsystems.

**Beijing:** China on Friday shed its initial hesitation and congratulated US President-elect Joe Biden and his deputy Kamala Harris for their victory in the 2020 US Presidential election, saying Beijing respects the choice of the American people. "We respect the American people's choice and we extend congratulations to Biden and Harris and we understand that the result of the US Presidential elections will be determined following the US laws," said Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin.

**HOLIDAY NOTICE** | The offices of *Deccan Chronicle* will remain closed today for Diwali. There will be no edition on Sunday, Nov. 15, 2020

In addition, the Special Enforcement Bureau has been given powers to check illegal excavation, storage and transportation of sand. These are some of the salient features of new sand policy unveiled by

The government proposes to delegate responsibility for sand excavation, storage and sale to central

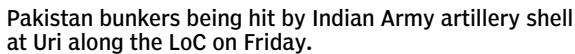
For the purpose, the 13 districts of AP will be divided into three packages. The first will cover Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam,

Sand excavation on patta lands will, however, be stopped. Dredging will be carried out near Prakasam and Dhavaleswaram barrages to increase sand availability. This will be done with departments of underground mines and water resources collaborating with each other.

Milk transported by this special train is being collected from more than 3,000 points spread over 13,000 villages in and around Chittoor district. The train, which ran only on alternate days, started operating daily from July 15, 2020. The train runs with six milk tankers, with each tank having a capacity of 40,000 litres, totalling to 2.4 lakh litres per train. So far, Doodh Duronto special trains have made 167 trips, transporting 4-crore litres milk, a record of sorts.

■ Page 2: SCR GM pats  
Guntakal division staff

Late Friday evening,  
Pakistan's Inter-Services



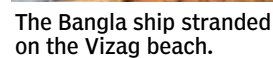
Defence spokesman Colonel Rajesh Kalia said that suspicious movement was observed by the Indian troops at the forward posts along the LoC's Keran sector early Friday but the "suspected infiltration bid was foiled by alert troops".

The Army and J&K police sources said that the cross-LoC firing and shelling in this sector started at around 1.40 pm and continued as reports last came in.

The company sent a mail to its shipping agent, insurers P & I Club and Hull and Mechanics, informing its decision late Thursday evening.

In the mail, the company's executive director

Sheik Shahikul Islam said, "Having arranged all measures to salvage the vessel complying with all the requirements of Visakhapatnam Port Trust authorities and negotiating and finalising salvage contract with Resolve Marine, the company has received further requirements from Visakhapatnam Port Trust before, at the time of salvage and after refloating of the vessel. These requirements are extremely hard to comply with and



would require huge amounts thus making the entire salvage operation

“This new centre will support WHO’s efforts to implement its traditional medicine strategy 2014-2023 which aims to support countries in developing policies and action plans to strengthen the role of traditional medicine as part of their journey to universal health

Globally, each culture has evolved its own system of medicine using herbs, animal products or inorganic chemical compounds. The prominent traditional systems of medicine include those evolved by Indians,

He said Ayurveda is India's heritage whose expansion entails the welfare of humanity and all Indians will be happy to see that the country's traditional knowledge is enriching other countries. Pointing out that during the Coronavirus period the demand for Ayurvedic products increased all over the world, he said exports of Ayurvedic products increased by 45 per cent in September compared to the previous year.

Despite a call by the National Green Tribunal for buying green crackers in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic, people are buying regular fireworks to celebrate Diwali unaware of their ill-effect.

● **RETAILERS**, however, are not impressed with the footfall. They claim that sales have fallen by at least 50 per cent compared to the last year figure

and others have been trying to sensitise people about the dangers of having too much toxic content in the air. But people are queuing up at fireworks shops in large numbers to buy crackers as usual.

Retailers, however, are not impressed with the footfall. They claim that sales have fallen by at least 50 per cent compared to the last year figure and that only a last-minute surge in sales can save them from financial loss.

“We were not able to sell even 50 per cent crackers by Friday evening. Wholesale dealers who purchased crackers from other states like Tamil Nadu, and other places could sell their crackers, but retailers are unhappy with sales” said Cracker Manufacturer Association founder-president V.V. Satyanarayana.

Fluctuation in groundwater levels over the past few years reveals that Andhra Pradesh is facing a steady depletion of groundwater stores, driven by human-caused climate change and over-extraction.

Data from AP Water Resources Information and Management System (APWRIMS) shows that the groundwater levels in the state has decreased from 12.20 metres below ground level (bgl) on November 12, 2019, to 12.85 metres bgl on November 12, 2020.

In coastal AP, the water levels were decreased from 8.78 metre bgl to 10.02 metre bgl, while Rayalaseema witnessed a slight increase from 16.82 metres bgl to 16.73 metres.

An analysis of the data of the last three months shows that there were fluctuations in groundwater levels in the state. The groundwater level in the state on September 30, 2019, was 14.79 metre bgl, while in the same period this year it was 10.66 metres bgl — an increase of 4.13-metre bgl.

Page 2: Experts blame rising temperature



## OTHER STORIES

CHANDRABABU'S  
CAR STOPS ON  
VJD-HYD HIGHWAYDC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 13

Leader of the Opposition N. Chandrababu Naidu's car gave trouble on the Vijayawada-Hyderabad National Highway on Friday while he was returning to Hyderabad from Vijayawada. The bulletproof car developed a technical snag in Narketpalli in Telangana state.

Mr Naidu's convoy came to a halt for about 20 minutes on the busy Vijayawada-Hyderabad National Highway 65. Later, Mr Naidu boarded another bulletproof car in the convoy and proceeded to Hyderabad.

According to the reports, the problem arose as the clutch plates of the vehicle had worn out. The clutch plates have to be replaced for every 20,000 km, and already the main bulletproof vehicle in which Mr Naidu travels has travelled 60,000 km. TD leaders and cadres lamented that the non-replacement of the clutch plates gave the technical problem and said that this is the second time that Mr Naidu's car was stopped on the Vijayawada-Hyderabad highway.

SCR GM PATS  
GUNKATKAL  
DIVISION STAFF

From Page 1

SCR general manager Gajanan Mallaya has appreciated consistent efforts of staff and officers of Guntakal division for mobilising milk that caters to the needs of nation's capital. As a result, there has been neither shortage of milk nor hike in prices of the commodity in Delhi.

SCR is contemplating to continue Doodh Duroto specials. Sources in National Dairy Development Board say, in addition, special trains could also be run to other states where there is demand for milk.

AP is capable of supplying additional milk with its four huge milk grids at Thambalapalle, Srikalahasti, Satyavedu and Nagari, where milk can be stored and preserved.

TD DEMANDS  
WHITE PAPER ON  
SAND REVENUEDC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 13

The Telugu Desam party alleged that YSR Congress government introduced a new sand policy to benefit their henchmen to loot thousands of crores through sand.

TD senior leader and MLA Gorantla Butchaiah Chowdary on Friday accused the ruling YSRC MLAs, MPs and their henchmen of committing unchecked irregularities in sand mining and transportation by causing huge loss of revenue to the state government till now.

He demanded the YSRC government to publish a white paper on the facts of how much revenue it had got from sand mining, sale and transportation and also from the seigniorage charges all over the state in the past 17 months.

Mr Butchaiah Chowdary alleged that from day one, the ruling party leaders looted the sand resources in the state rivers in an indiscriminate manner and transported the same to Hyderabad, Chennai and Bengaluru to make easy money.

He claimed that the latest new sand policy is a cover for the YSRC ulterior plans to loot sand systematically. He stated that no Central institution would come forward to do sand mining under the present suffocating and stifling atmosphere under the Jagan Reddy regime.

He deplored that the construction industry in the state collapsed after the YSRC came to power. Construction workers were thrown on the roads with no work.

He alleged that the sand rates were increased from ₹50 to ₹525 per tonne at the level of sand reaches and boatmen societies, and this was being done to help the YSRC henchmen and leaders to loot more from sand mining.

● **MR GORANTLA** Butchaiah Chowdary on Friday accused the ruling YSRC MLAs, MPs and their henchmen of committing unchecked irregularities in sand mining and transportation by causing huge loss of revenue to the state government till now.



Youngsters along with their family members decorate a rangoli with earthen lamps on the eve of Diwali in Visakhapatnam on Friday.

— K. MURALI KRISHNA

Covid and weather make  
2020 Diwali a damp affair

APPCB issues orders for sale of only green crackers

MD. ILYAS | DC  
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 13

Coronavirus-related financial difficulties, time limitation of only two hours for bursting firecrackers, expected bad weather, and threat of polluted atmosphere spreading Covid-19 has dampened the spirit of Diwali among people of Andhra Pradesh.

Majority of people are lacking liquid cash due to the financial instability brought in by the prolonged Covid-19 pandemic. People are also holding back money, as it might be required in case the virus strikes. Thus, a large number of people are not interested in celebrating the festival in the traditional manner by splurging on crackers.

Private employees B. Narendra and T. Varaprasad said majority of private companies, firms and institutions have slashed salaries from 10-40 per cent, due to which families are already in trouble.

They said every year, they used to purchase firecrackers worth ₹3,000 to ₹5,000. But now, they have decided to buy crackers for only ₹500, that too only for their children, they added.

They said liquid cash is important in this Corona crisis for emergency purposes. Hence, majority people are reluctant about spend huge money on fire crackers.

Every year, as many as 100 cracker shops would set up in Swarajya Maidan in Vijayawada. But this time, there are only 40 shops.

A cracker shop owner D. Krishna, who has been in the Diwali cracker business for 10 years, says, "Last year, I had done ₹7 lakh business. But this festival season, it will be difficult to sell stocks worth even ₹3 lakh, as 80 per cent of people have no money for celebrations."

The same state of affairs is prevalent in all 13 districts of the state.

Environmental organisations too have been campaigning to celebrate Diwali only with lamps in view of the Corona crisis. Otherwise, they say, air pollution will turn health condition of the people



People buying Firecrackers at Swaraj Maidan on the occasion of Diwali celebrations in Vijayawada on Friday.

— C. NARAYANA RAO

Sale of crackers to dip by  
60-70% in AP for DiwaliSAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC  
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 13

Sale of firecrackers in Andhra Pradesh is expected to dip by 60-70 per cent this Diwali festival with the state government permitting only green crackers, that too only for two hours from 8 pm to 10 pm on Saturday, the festival day.

The state government's orders came following directives of National Green Tribunal to limit burning of crackers this Diwali, so as to check air pollution, which could aggravate respiratory problems among Coronavirus patients.

Given these reasons, a good number of people are hesitating to purchase crackers while some have reduced the amount of fireworks they normally purchase on the occasion.

AP mostly imports firecrackers from Sivakasi in Tamil Nadu, though it used to earlier also get them at far cheaper rates

● **PETTY TRADERS** set up shops by purchasing firecrackers from wholesale dealers. Due to uncertainty this time, only a few traders have set up stalls, that too with a limited number of firecrackers.

from China. The Chinese imports have, however, stopped following strained relationships between the two countries.

With Covid-19 pandemic prevailing, wholesale traders have played it safe by ordering only for limited quantities of firecrackers from Sivakasi. Some of them even decided not to order any crackers. Greater Vijayawada Municipal Corporation district fire officer T. Srinivas disclosed, "The number of cracker traders seeking fire NOC for setting up shops has come down to 40 unlike 70-80 earlier.

worse, particularly those suffering from Corona virus.

Telugu Desam woman leader Kesineni Swetha

has also released a video appealing to people that they celebrate Diwali only with traditional lamps. Several other people and

Vijayawada police commissioner B. Srinivasulu said, "We have issued an order asking people to burst only green crackers during the stipulated hours from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. If anyone flouts the order, we will book cases against them for violation of the City Police Act."

State police have threatened that they could book cases even under provisions of Disaster Management Act, 2005, and section 188 of IPC, which provide for more stringent punishment.

AP Chambers of Commerce and Industry Federation state president V. Bhaskara Rao said, "We are expecting the sale of fireworks to be only 30-40 per cent of the normal because of Coronavirus and restrictions put in by authorities. Normally, the volume of Diwali sales would run into hundreds of crores. But it will come down drastically during this season," he added.

organisations are also promoting environment-friendly Diwali with lamps, sweets and Lakshmi pujas.

Jagan greets Governor,  
appraises him of sopsDC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 13

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy with his wife Y.S. Bharati met Governor Biswa Bhushan Harichandan on Friday and conveyed Diwali wishes. The CM presented a replica of Lord Venkateswara to Harichandan.

According to the sources, Reddy appraised the Governor about the welfare schemes being implemented in the state. He briefed the Governor about the Covid-19 status and mentioned about the possible consequences due to conducting of local body election in the present scenario. Reddy discussed conducting of winter Assembly sessions in the last week of November or first week of December and further about the bills which the government is planning to introduce in the winter Assembly sessions. Further the CM appraised Harichandan about the progress of Polavaram and implementation of Centre-sponsored schemes in AP.

Governor Harichandan conveyed wishes to people of AP for a prosperous Diwali.

The Governor wished that the divine light of Diwali festival would bring in peace, prosperity and happiness to all while extending warm greetings to the people in the state.

In a release from Raj Bhavan here on Friday, the Governor said that the festival of Diwali would signify the victory of good over evil and wished that



Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy presents a replica of Lord Venkateswara to Governor B.B. Harichandan at Raj Bhavan in Vijayawada on Friday.

— DC

the occasion would inspire all to conquer the calamities to build a society filled with peace amity and communal harmony.

The Governor appealed to the people to take all precautions like wearing a mask, washing hands, maintenance of social distance to avoid spread of Covid-19 while celebrating the festival.

To mark the Children's Day to be celebrated on Nov. 14, the Governor underlined the need to nurture and groom the children to become worthy in all aspects. He said that children are the real strength of a country and opined that the responsibility lies with children to protect their motherland and to build a bright future for themselves.

The Chief Minister extended his greetings to the Telugu people on the occasion of Diwali. He

said the Diwali, the festival of lights, marks triumph of good over evil. He wished that the divine light of Diwali would bring in peace, prosperity and happiness to all.

Leader of Opposition N. Chandrababu Naidu extended his heart-felt Diwali greetings to all sections of people. He said that Diwali marks the day when the good triumphed over the evil forces in society. It was a day when a final end was put to all forms of demolitions and destruction. He sought that everybody should celebrate Naraka Chaturdasi and Diwali with their families while duly following Coronavirus guidelines.

TD national general secretary Nara Lokesh, in a separate statement, extended his good wishes that the festival brings joy and happiness into every household in Telugu states.

Vizag likely to  
convert mv Maa  
into a hotelK.M.P. PATNAIK | DC  
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 13

After missing out on converting decommissioned aircraft carrier *INS Viraat* into a floating hotel, the state tourism and the Visakhapatnam Metropolitan Region Development Authority (VMRDA) have now got another opportunity in the form of Bangladesh commercial vessel *mv Maa*, which ran aground at Tenneti Park on Visakhapatnam Beach road and was abandoned by the management on Friday.

Former chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu had grandiose plans to convert *INS Viraat* into a floating hotel with 500 rooms after it was decommissioned in 2016. But the plan never took off due to various reasons. "Since the location where the ship ran aground is under VMRDA jurisdiction, we will explore all possibilities to convert the vessel into a worthy tourist spot," said commissioner P. Koteswara Rao.

Talking to this correspondent, he said the location also has the most-visited places in the city like Tenneti Park and Kailasagiri hill top and this would add value to the place.

Praveen Kumar, managing director of AP Tourism Development Corporation and CEO of AP Tourism Authority, said he would work on a

● **VISAKHAPATNAM** already has the *INS Kursura* Museum and the *TU 142* transport aircraft at RK Beach and a Sea Harrier is planned for these two museums.

plan after getting clarity on the abandonment.

The city has the *INS Kursura* Museum and the *TU 142* transport aircraft at RK Beach and a Sea Harrier is planned for these two museums. If the commercial vessel at Tenneti Park is taken over and converted into a floating restaurant, then Vizag will become a true maritime museum city, said a former merchant navy captain.

K. Vijay Mohan, Tours and Travel Association of Andhra Pradesh president, said the state government should explore all possibilities to take over the vessel and convert it into a floating restaurant.

He said the cargo chamber could be used for conferences and meetings and the open deck for the restaurant. The crew rooms with value addition could be converted into rooms. "It is will be ideal for marriages and conferences," Mr Vijay Mohan said and added that Mumbai, Goa and Kerala are running floating restaurants successfully.

EXPERTS BLAME  
RISING  
TEMPERATURE

FROM PAGE 1

The state has also reported a slight decrease in groundwater table from 12.19 metres bgl on October 31, 2019, to 12.97 on the same date this year.

Experts blame rising temperature and over-pumping of groundwater as the main reasons for the depletion in groundwater levels. They request the state government to improve water literacy among people in the state and discourage over-exploitation of groundwater.

Royalaseema appears to have slightly improved its groundwater level by recording an average increase of 7.48 and 0.09 metre increase in September and November this year when compared to the same corresponding period last year. However, this region has recorded a steep decrease of 8.2 metres bgl in the month of October as against the same period last year.

It may be noted that AP has recorded an actual rainfall of 914.79 mm as on Thursday as against the normal rainfall of 782.57 and the deviation has been recorded at +16.90 per cent. Though the state recorded a decent rainfall, the fluctuations in groundwater stores has been attributed to increase in the use of groundwater for meeting demands, and erratic rainfall in previous years and also the lack of a robust groundwater regulatory mechanism in the state.

## CHEATING | RACKET

Farmers belonging to Reddy community were shown as 'weavers' in Dommaranandyala  
Bogus beneficiaries galore in Netanna Nestam schemeD. SIVA RAMI  
REDDY | DC  
KURNOOL, NOV. 13

It does not matter if you do not know how to weave cloth on a handloom. You just have to show you have a handloom in your house when officials come to record whether you are a weaver or not.

"This is how many bogus beneficiaries have managed to corner ₹24,000 per annum under YSR Nethanna Nestam," explained Kadapa Handloom and Textiles assistant director Srirangam. The racket has

been going on with panchayat raj officials colluding with unscrupulous elements in siphoning off crores of public money in Kadapa district.

As per earlier rules, a weaver must have worked on a handloom for at least one year to become a beneficiary under the Nethanna Nestam. But later, the rule was relaxed. Even if a person showed that s/he has a handloom, the person would be included in the beneficiary list.

This loophole has been exploited to the hilt by villagers of Dommaran-

● **MOST OF** the families earlier living on handlooms had shifted to power looms long ago. But they showed to officials their old handlooms to claim the benefit under the Nethanna Nestam in an illegal manner.

dhyala in Mylavaram mandal of Kadapa district. Most of the families earlier living on handlooms in this village had shifted to power looms long ago. But

they showed to officials their old handlooms to claim the benefit under the Nethanna Nestam in an illegal manner. There have also been instances of the pension amount being cornered by farmers, carpenters, and other sections of the society.

Assistant director Srirangam disclosed that during their latest inspection, they have weeded out 70 bogus persons in Dommaranandyala village.

Kadapa district joint collector Saikanth Varma assured that he would take immediate action if ineli-

gible beneficiaries are identified at any place or complaints are received in this regard.

Dommaranandyala village in Mylavaram mandal of Kadapa district has around 900 beneficiaries, which is humongous compared to any other village in the district. The joint collector has personally visited the village to assess the situation.

Officials say bogus claimants had sprung up as third parties had been involved in choosing the beneficiaries of Nethanna Nestam. It is stated that

mandal development officer of Mylavaram Ramachandra Reddy, in collusion with village secretaries, prepared a "bogus list" of weavers, which was forwarded and accepted by the Handloom and Textiles Department. Each bogus beneficiary paid ₹6,000 to the MDO.

Details of Aadhaar cards were also fudged in the process. Non-eligible persons were shown as being under below poverty line. Farmers belonging to Reddy community were shown as "weavers" of the village.

In the first phase of Nethanna Nestam 9,473 beneficiaries have already sanctioned ₹22.34 crore. Of these Dommaranandyala alone accounted for close to 1,100 beneficiaries. They managed to illegally corner benefits during the second phase too in June 2020.

In the process, Dommaranandyala has already cornered ₹5 crore in the first two phases. Only a strict resurvey will reveal how much of money has been siphoned off in this particular village.



## SHORT TAKES

## STOP VINDICTIVE POLITICS, SAYS APRESA

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 13

The AP Revenue Employees Services Association (APRESA) alleged APJAC of employees, teachers, workers and retired employees chairman Bopparaju Venkateswarlu trying to create disputes among employees associations and sought to stop vindictive politics.

APRESA leaders V. Samuel Diwakar, B. Suguna, J. Srinivasulu and S. Srinivas addressing a press meet on Friday alleged that Venkateswarlu never worked to resolve the employees' issues and he caused a divide among the associations for self-promotion. Recalling the statement of Venkateswarlu that there is no association to APRESA to AP Government Employees Association, the leaders refuted the claim and said that they are working under the leadership of APGEA president K. Suryanarayana. The leaders claimed that VRAs, VROs, tahsildars and sub-collectors vexed with the anti-employees policy of Venkateswarlu had formed AP Revenue JAC and affirmed that APRESA has the support of all associations and union and working towards resolving the employees' problems and issues.

## ANNUAL KARTIKA BRAHMOTSAVAMS AT TIRUCHANOOR

DC CORRESPONDENT  
TIRUPATI, NOV. 13

On the third day morning of the ongoing annual Kartika Brahmotsavams in the Tiruchanoor temple on Friday, Goddess Padmavathi Devi in the guise of Vennemuddaa Krishna blessed devotees on the Muthyapu Pandiri Vahanam.

As per the legend, this vahanam symbolises peace, tranquillity and serene love. The Goddess, who loves her children, graces on the pearl-studded canopy vahanam, which was tastefully decorated for the occasion, to shower her benign blessings.

The Pearl is a metaphor for something rare, fine, admirable and valuable.

## APSRTC WILL RUN SPECIAL BUSES TO PANCHARAMAS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM, NOV. 13

During the auspicious Karthika Masa, APSRTC Rajamahendravaram Region will run special buses to Pancharama Kshetras on every week i.e November 15, 22, 29, December 6 and 13 from every depot.

The RTC regional manager R.V.S. Nageswara Rao told the reporters on Friday that the special buses will start by 7 pm every Sunday and return by 8 pm the next day to ply the devotees to Amaravati, Palakollu, Bhimavaram, Draksharamam and Samalkot.

He said that special buses would run for Sabarimala on a hire basis if the Ayyappa Devotees place an order for it. On the auspicious of Karthika Pournami, special buses would run to Annavaram from October 29 and 30. He requested the devotees and the people to make use of these services for their happy journey.

The RTC Deputy Chief Traffic Manager N.V.R. Varaprasad, Rajamahendravaram depot Manager Mr Murthy, Personnel Officer Mr Prasad and others were present.

**Bus fare from Amalapuram (670 Kms):** Adult: ₹995 (super luxury), ₹970 (Ultra Deluxe) and ₹820 (Express) Child: ₹765, ₹740 and ₹620.

**From Gokavaram (630 Km):** Adult: ₹920, ₹895 and ₹745, Child: ₹710, ₹680 and ₹570.

**Rajamahendravaram (580 kms):** Adult: ₹870, ₹820 and ₹595, Child: ₹660, ₹630 and ₹530.

**Ravulapalem (600 kms):** Adult: ₹920, ₹870 and ₹745, child : ₹695, ₹670 and ₹565.

**Razole (630 kms):** Adult: ₹920, ₹870 and ₹745, Child: ₹695, ₹670 and ₹525.

**Eleswaram (630 kms):** Adult: ₹945, ₹895 and ₹770, Child: ₹720, ₹690 and ₹585.

**Kakinada (620 kms):** Adult: ₹920, ₹870 and ₹745.

**Ramachandrapuram (630 kms):** Adult: ₹945, ₹920 and ₹770. Child: ₹730, ₹695 and ₹590.

**Tuni (700 kms):** Adult: ₹1025, ₹995 and ₹820 , Child: ₹770, ₹755 and ₹640.

## Vizag walk



People take part in "We Support Vizag Walk" on the Beach Road in Visakhapatnam on Friday.

— DC

## Admissions begin into MBBS, BDS courses

Candidates asked to submit applications via online

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 13

The NTR university of health sciences issued notification inviting single online application form for admission into undergraduate medical, dental and Indian system of medicine and homoeopathy courses for seats available under Compete Authority Quota in the colleges affiliated to the university for the academic year 2020-21 from November 13 to 21.

The university in its notification issued on Friday invited applications online from eligible candidates into undergraduate MBBS, BDS, BAMS, BHMS, BNYS and BUMS courses for seats available under Competent Authority Quota in government, private, unaided and minority medical, dental Ayurveda, homoeopathy, Unani and naturopathic and yogic sciences colleges affiliated to Dr NTR UHS, Vijayawada and also for MBBS course in Sri Padmavathi Medical College for Women, Tirupati.

## BIE TO ANNOUNCE REVISED DATE FOR INTER FIRST YEAR SOON

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, NOV.13

Andhra Pradesh Board of Intermediate Education to announce the revised date for commencement of classes for first-year intermediate courses for the academic year 2020-21 shortly.

The eligible candidates are asked to submit their applications through online mode along with uploading the scanned copies of original certificates and images or photo/signature because of the Covid-19 pandemic. The same application will be considered for all the round of counselling, including MOP-UP and also for stray vacancies.

The notification is for determining State merit position for admission into CAQ seats which means the seats remaining after contributing 15 per cent to All India Quota and also 126 seats in Sri Padmavathi Medical College for Women, Tirupati.

The BIE secretary, V. Ramakrishna, in a release issued on Friday said that though the first year inter classes were supposed to commence from Nov. 16 onwards as per the earlier schedule, they were going to announce the revised schedule for commencement.

Women, Tirupati.

The minimum cutoff score in NEET UG-2020 for admission into medical, dental and ISMH courses include general category including EWS-50th percentile-147/720; SC/ST/BC categories including persons with disability (BC/SC/ST)-40th percentile-113/720 and persons with disability (OC) including EWS-45th percentile-129/720.

The schedule for registration of online application form and uploading scanned original certificates commences from November 13 at 4:00 pm to November 21 up to 4:00 pm by NEET All India Rank category and also

• The university invited applications online from eligible candidates into undergraduate MBBS, BDS, BAMS, BHMS, BNYS and BUMS courses.

other categories.

The university authorities maintain that it takes two weeks for them, for preparation of the state merit position of the eligible candidates who applied online based on their NEET UG-2020 score and rank and other eligibility criteria. They also have written a letter to Medical Counselling Committee with a requisition to defer the second phase of counselling for All India Rank category of NEET UG-2020 as it scheduled to commence from November 18 to avoid eligible candidates from AP to lose their option for choosing a better college for admission based on their state rank.

The university issued notification for submission of applications from eligible candidates as the state government issued GO RT No. 159 on Friday on implementation of reservations.

## 1 dies as 2 YSRC groups clash in P. Anantapuram

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KADAPA, NOV. 13

One person Guru Pratap Reddy, 46, was killed and two others injured as two groups belonging to the ruling YSR Congress clashed at Pinji Anantapuram village in Kondapuram mandal of Kadapa district on Friday.

According to Jammalamadugu DSP Nallamari Nagraj, there had been a complaint from two groups belonging to YSRC that non-genuine persons were posing as those who had been displaced due to floods in the Gandikota reservoir. While one group was led by Ramesh Reddy, the other owed allegiance to Guru Pratap Reddy. In turn, they are supporters of former minister Ramasubba Reddy and MLA Dr Sudheer Reddy.

## Tuskers trample farmer to death

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIZIANAGARAM, NOV. 13

A wild elephant killed another farmer in Parisirampuram under Komarada mandal in the district on Friday morning.

The deceased was identified as R. Lakshmu Naidu and this is the second incident in Komarada mandal in the last 15 days. A few days ago, the same elephant herd trampled to death a 25-year-old farmer Yerra Narayana near Gumpa under

Komarada mandal in the district.

The police said that Lakshmu Naidu along with his cousin Sanyasi Naidu went to their farm field for harvesting. While the duo was in the farm, the lone male elephant attacked Lakshmu Naidu trampling him to death in the field. Sanyasi Naidu had no scope to save his cousin and managed to escape from the spot.

The farmers in parts of Komarada mandal have been facing sleepless nights as the wild ele-

phants have been creating havoc in the region by destroying the standing crops. The locals said that one male elephant which strayed away from the herd has been attacking the farmers. In Kurupam constituency of Vizianagaram, the elephants have killed six people in the past two years.

Expressing displeasure over the loss of crops and lives due to the jumbo menace, the locals on Friday staged a protest.

He urged authorities to take appropriate action and punish the culprits.

The agriculture and food processing minister, Kurasala Kannababu, said that the crop in 60,000 hectares had been badly damaged due to floods and rains during July, August, September and October in the state.

He said that the input subsidy for crop damage in October month would be paid by the end of November to the farmers. He inaugurated the Paddy Purchasing Centre in Valluri Apparao Agriculture Cooperative Credit Society in Mandapeta on Friday. He said that ₹10,500 crore directly were credited to the bank accounts of the farm-

## AP to touch one crore mark of samples tested for Covid-19 soon

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 13

AP to touch one crore mark in several samples tested for Covid-19 soon as it had already tested 90,21,225 so far.

According to Covid-19 bulletin issued by the state health authorities on Friday, out of 80,737 samples tested, 1,593 persons were found infected with Covid-19. The state recorded 10 daily death cases of Covid-19 patients, taking the toll to 6,847.

Among daily cases of Covid-19, East Godavari recorded the highest number of 259 followed by 225 in Chittoor, 202 each in Guntur and Krishna, 188 in West

Godavari, 105 in Anantapur, 93 in Nellore, 89 in Visakhapatnam, 58 in Srikakulam, 51 in Prakasam, 45 in Kurnool, 43 in Kadapa and 42 in Vizianagaram.

East Godavari has been the worst affected, where the cumulative cases of Covid-19 are 1,20,050 followed by 89,855 in West Godavari, 81,791 in Chittoor, 70,596 in Guntur, 66,023 in Anantapur, 60,828 in Prakasam, 60,792 in Nellore, 59,896 in Kurnool, 57,143 in Visakhapatnam, 53,497 in Kadapa, 44,921 in Srikakulam, 42,819 in Krishna, 40,192 in Vizianagaram, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

East Godavari counties to lead with the highest number of active cases at 5,192 followed by 2,391 in Guntur, 2,292 in West Godavari, 1,493 in Visakhapatnam, 1,487 in Chittoor, 940 in Nellore, 775 in Anantapur, 748 in Srikakulam, 745 in Prakasam, 590 in Kadapa, 357 in Vizianagaram and followed by 296 in Kurnool. The total number of active cases is 20,262 in the state.

The state recorded a recovery of 8,24,189 Covid-19 infected patients so far.

Among daily cases of death of Covid-19 infected patients, three in Krishna, two in Visakhapatnam and one each in Chittoor, Guntur, Nellore, Vizianagaram and West Godavari.

## Punish cops, says Abdul Salam's kin

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KURNOOL, NOV. 13

There was a steady stream of visitors for the mother-in-law of Abdul Salam, who had committed suicide along with his two children and wife by jumping in front of a running train on November 3 near Panyam in Kurnool district. While Chief Minister granted an ex gratia of ₹25 lakh, some minority leaders lent moral support to Mabunnisa who is now saying she wants justice and punishment to the police officers accused of perpetrating the suicide of Abdul salam family. She said, "What do I have to do with the money? I want peace for the dead souls who will only be satisfied when justice is done to them."

The deceased, Abdul Salam, used to work in Nimishamba Jewelers for nearly 25 years and never had any bad remark, the family members said. It was only in 2019 that a

• Youth ended his life on Friday under the Nandyal Two Town limits. He tied his hands and legs before ending his life, police said.

theft case was foisted on him alleging that he stole 3 kg of gold. A YSRC leader who was in close contact with the crime constable Gangadhar, the accused in the suicide case and brought pressure on the deceased to accept that he had committed the theft. It was their torture that had taken away the life of my son-in-law, said Mabunnisa to a visiting fact-finding team from Humann Rights Forum on Friday.

Meanwhile, TD leader N.M.D. Farooq demanded a CBI inquiry into the mass suicide of a minority family.

Another youth has ended his life in Nandyal on Friday under the Nandyal Two Town limits. He tied his hands and legs before ending his life, the police said.

## BRITISH-ERA BRIDGE CAVES IN, TIPPER FALLS OFF NEAR YELERU

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KAKINADA, NOV. 13

An old bridge near Yeleru Canal connected to Samalkot and Pithapuram, constructed during the British regime, caved in on Friday Night as gravel-loaded lorry fell off in the drainage under the bridge, and a part of the bridge caved in. However, the tipper driver and cleaner managed to escape unhurt. The bridge has been in a dilapidated condition for the past few

years. Upon receiving the information, the Samalkot police headed by Mr Sumanth reached the spot and took up rescue operations. The traffic was diverted. If the people want to go Pithapuram from Samalkot, they should go through the Divili village route. Sources said that due to the recent rains and flooding of Yeleru reservoir, the bridge was badly damaged. Mr Sumanth said that people would not be allowed to go through the bridge.

## TWO ELECTROCUTED IN SEPARATE INCIDENTS IN CHITTOOR DISTRICT

DC CORRESPONDENT  
TIRUPATI, NOV. 13

A 35-year-old man was allegedly electrocuted to death at the new Indira Nagar on DR Mahal road in Tirupati on Friday morning while urinating near an electric transformer.

The deceased was identified as Ramesh, a local taxi driver. On Friday

morning, police got information that a man had died due to electrocution. They immediately rushed there and came to know that he had gone to urinate near an electric transformer at Indira Nagar.

In another incident, a 33-year-old man identified as Sheikh Jaffer was electrocuted to death while trying to erect a tent.

## Crop in 60,000 hectares damaged due to floods

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KAKINADA, NOV. 13

The agriculture and food processing minister, Kurasala Kannababu, said that the crop in 60,000 hectares had been badly damaged due to floods and rains during July, August, September and October in the state.

He said that the input subsidy for crop damage in October month would be paid by the end of November to the farmers. He inaugurated the Paddy Purchasing Centre in Valluri Apparao Agriculture Cooperative Credit Society in Mandapeta on Friday. He said that ₹10,500 crore directly were credited to the bank accounts of the farm-

• ₹10,500 crore credited to the bank accounts of the farmers in 16 months

ers for the past 16 months. He said that month-wise crop damage compensation had been given to the farmers for the first time in history. He said that if agricultural yields good returns, all sectors would be developed. He said that 18.41,602 metric tonnes of paddy was purchased during the Rabi season and grading and machinery equipment would be provided to the all Rythu Bharosa Kendras in the state. He said that if the farmers face any problems in purchasing the paddy, they can contact the number 0884-2354341 number. He said that purchasing cen-

tres for cotton and maize would be opened soon.

The MLC Pandula Ravindrababu said that the Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy was taking up several development and welfare schemes for the farmers and these steps have reduced the suicides of the farmers drastically. The joint collector G. Lakshminsha said that the paddy is being cultivated in 2,11,933 hectares during the Kharif season and it is expected that 13.11 lakhs metric tonnes of paddy production.

Rajya Sabha member Pilli Subhash Chandra Bose, former MLA Thota Trimurthulu, Mandapeta MLA Vegulla Jogeswara Rao and others were present.



SHORT TAKES

NCB GRILLS ARJUN RAMPAL IN DRUGS PROBE

SAURABH JOSHI | DC MUMBAI, NOV. 13

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) on Friday grilled actor Arjun Rampal, days after grilling his girlfriend Gabriella Demetriadis, in connection with the Bollywood drugs consumption and peddling probe. The questioning went on till late in the evening after it started at around 11 am. The actor allegedly submitted a medical prescription to the NCB in support of the tablets that were seized from his residence.

Rampal was grilled from 11 am to 6 pm by a team of NCB at their Ballard Pier office. The investigators said that Rampal was initially summoned by the NCB on Wednesday but he turned up on Friday. While the officials grilled the actor, his friend who is also a foreign national, Paul Giryard was arrested by the NCB officials, on Thursday. He was summoned and grilled by the NCB following which he was placed under arrest. Prior to the questioning of Rampal, the NCB grilled his girlfriend for two consecutive days.

KUNAL KAMRA REFUSES TO SAY SORRY

New Delhi, Nov. 13: A petition was on Friday filed in the Supreme Court seeking initiation of criminal contempt proceedings against stand-up comic artist Kunal Kamra for his alleged scandalous tweets against the apex court.

The plea was filed a day after Attorney General K.K. Venugopal granted consent for initiation of criminal contempt proceedings against Kamra, saying the tweets are in bad taste and it is time that people understand that attacking the apex court brazenly will attract punishment under the Contempt of Courts Act, 1972.

The consent of either the Attorney General or the Solicitor General is necessary, under section 15 of the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971, for initiating contempt proceedings against a person.

Kunal Kamra on Friday refused to retract his controversial tweets against the Supreme Court or apologise for them, saying he believes they speak for themselves.

“The tweets I recently put out have been found in contempt of court. All that I tweeted was from my view of the Supreme Court of India giving a partial decision in favour of a Prime Time Loudspeaker, he said in a statement addressed to Venugopal and the judges on his Twitter page. My view hasn’t changed because the silence of the Supreme Court of India on matters of other’s personal liberty cannot go uncriticized. I don’t intend to retract my tweets or apologise for them. I believe they speak for themselves, he added.

Kodiyeri quits as CPM Kerala chief

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, NOV. 13

Kerala CPM’s powerful state secretary Mr Kodiyeri Balakrishnan on Friday stepped down from the post citing health reasons a day after his son Bineesh Kodiyeri who is an accused in money laundering case linked to a drug racket, was sent to Parapana Agrahara jail in Bengaluru.

LDF convener A Viayaraghavan has been given the additional charge of party state secretary for the time being.

An official statement issued by CPM state secretariat here said that Mr Balakrishnan’s request for leave to undergo medical treatment had been accepted by the party leadership.

LDF convener A Vijayaraghavan will officiate as state secretary in his absence, the party release said. However, the period of leave has not been mentioned. Kodiyeri’s leave comes close on the heels of investigating agencies including the Enforcement Directorate tightening their noose around Bineesh Kodiyeri. The damning revelations being made by ED in connection with the money laundering case had made Kodiyeri’s continuation in the post untenable. Though the state and cen-

Festive spirit at its peak



Devotees decorated Kedarnath temple with 10 quintals of flowers in Kedarnath on Friday on the eve of Diwali festival. President Ram Nath Kovind on Friday asked people to take a resolve to become a lamp of hope and prosperity for the poor, destitute and needy this Diwali by sharing happiness.

— PTI

Delhi reports over 7k Coronavirus cases

Home ministry is monitoring the sharp increase in cases

DC CORRESPONDENT With agency inputs NEW DELHI, NOV. 13

With 44,879 fresh cases, India’s overall tally of Coronavirus reached 87.28 lakh on Friday. However, the number of active cases are 4,84,547 and the total recoveries have crossed 81.15 lakh taking country’s recovery rate to 92.97 per cent. The death toll has reached 1,28,668 after 547 more fatalities were reported in the last 24 hours as case fatality rate declined to 1.47 per cent. “India continues to report a trend of steadily declining active cases. For the third day after the active cases dropped below the 6 lakh mark after nearly three months, progressive decline has been maintained. The active cases have dropped to only 6.97% of the total positive cases of the country demonstrating a steady falling percentage of the total cases,” Union health ministry officials said.

Officials added with the consistent decline in the active cases, the cases per million in India is among the lowest in the world. India’s average cases per million stand at 5,930.

With over 7,000 cases in a day, Delhi is one of the epicenters of the virus followed by Kerala and West Bengal. However, northern states like Haryana and Rajasthan that have seen a drop in new cases are once again reporting a surge in fresh cases.

The home ministry which is closely monitoring the sharp increase in Coronavirus cases in the national capital is of the view that the cases would start coming down and the situation would once again return to normalcy within the next 8 to 10 days.

Delhi has been recording more than 7,000 cases on average over the last few days in view of the ongoing festive season, increased pollution and onset of winter.

In fact, in the last 24 hours there have been 100 deaths due to Coronavirus in the capital.

This has forced home secretary Ajay Bhalla to personally take charge of the situation and hold regular review meetings on the issue.

“We have done our own internal assessment and are of the opinion that the situation should once again return to normal within the next 8 to 10 days. By normal we mean that the number of cases being reported daily would once again drop drastically to less than a 1,000 daily,” a senior home ministry official said.

Ministry officials claimed that the medical facilities in the city were adequate. Even in private hospitals, officials added the situation was under control with adequate beds being available even in the ICU.

Both Delhi government and the ministry have already reserved a large number of beds in private hospitals for the

Coronavirus patients.

Officials admitted that Delhi was witnessing a “third wave” of Coronavirus, but it had already reached a peak and the situation would stabilise over the next few days.

The home ministry in a statement also emphasised that Metro rail travel should be carefully regulated as per Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

“The recent surge in the number of active cases was attributed to the festival season, which has witnessed greater movement of people, accompanied by laxity in adhering to the basic principles of safe Covid-19 behaviour,” the statement said.

The strategy to contain the spread of Covid-19 in Delhi, especially keeping in view the festival season and decreasing temperatures accompanied by rising pollution, was discussed at length with representatives of the health ministry and experts.

FORMER NC MLA BARRED FROM TRAVELLING TO DUBAI

DC CORRESPONDENT SRINAGAR, NOV. 13

A former National Conference (NC) lawmaker claimed on Friday that he was prevented from travelling to Dubai by the Immigration officials at New Delhi’s Indira Gandhi International Airport and was forced to return to Srinagar.

Altaf Ahmed Kaloo, the NC’s former MLA representing Pahalgam constituency of Anantnag district, said that he was stopped at the immigration counter at the IGIA, detained for more than four hours and barred from travelling to Dubai where he had to attend a function of the extended family.

“I was barred from boarding a Dubai-bound airplane. I was scheduled to visit Dubai to attend a family function but to my shock, I was stopped and detained for more than four hours,” he told reporters here.

He claimed that the officials concerned told him that he figured in the exit control list which also has 37 other politicians from Jammu and Kashmir “who won’t be allowed to travel outside country”.

WB REGISTERS RECORD RECOVERY OF 4,468 COVID-19 PATIENTS

Kolkata, Nov. 13: West Bengal on Friday reported the highest single-day recovery of 4,468 Covid-19 patients, taking the total number of cured people to 3,85,617, the health department said in a bulletin.

The discharge rate went upto 90.80 per cent on Friday from 90.57 per cent on Thursday.

The Covid-19 death toll in the state rose to 7,557 with 51 more people succumbing to the disease, the bulletin said.

North 24 Parganas district registered 17 fresh deaths, followed by Kolkata at 10. The remaining fatalities were reported from sever-

al other districts.

As many as 3,835 fresh cases were reported from different parts of the state, pushing the tally to 4,24,675. The percentage of positive cases out of samples tested stood at 8.27 per cent, it said.

Since Thursday, 44,312 samples have been tested in the state and the number of active cases stood at 31,501 on Friday, it said.

A total of 51,36,012 samples have been tested in West Bengal so far, the bulletin said.

A total of 51,36,012 samples have been tested in West Bengal so far, the bulletin said.

— PTI

MP minister asks people to defy babu’s order on crackers

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, NOV. 13

A minister in the Shivraj cabinet was locked in a battle with a district collector in Madhya Pradesh, who is also his son-in-law, over bursting of firecrackers on Diwali, which falls on Saturday.

State home minister Narottam Mishra on Friday literally called upon people to defy the order by Bhopal district collector Avinash Lavania, imposing a specified period from 8 pm to 10 pm for use of crackers by the revelers on Diwali.

The district collector on Thursday issued an order under Section 144 of the CrPC, making use of firecrackers other than green crackers on Diwali an offence. The order also restricted bursting of firecrackers to the specified period.

The district collector’s order was in accordance

with the directive by National Green Tribunal (NGT) in this regard.

“He (the district collector) may have issued the notification as per NGT directive. But, there is no need to observe the time limit imposed for bursting of crackers. This is our festival. One should enjoy the festival to the hilt and burst crackers as long as one desires”, Mishra told reporters here.

He, however, called upon the people to follow the Covid-19 guidelines while celebrating the festival of lights.

The minister’s remarks have created a flutter in the political as well as official circles here.

“The minister has made a mockery of law by exhorting people to ignore the district collector’s order. He has forgotten that he is home minister of the state and is bound by Constitutional obligations to ensure strict enforcement

of law. But, he overlooked his Constitutional responsibilities by asking people to ignore the order for cheap popularity”, former minister and MP Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) vice-president Raja Pateria said.

Former chief secretary of MP K.S. Sharma has expressed dismay and shock over the minister’s remarks.

“It is very strange and shocking that a minister is appealing to the people to ignore the order issued by a district collector of his state. It is not appropriate for a minister to make such an appeal to the people. A government functionary cannot nullify an official order unless the government adopts change in the policy”, he observed.

Mishra had earlier sparked a row when he chose to defy Covid-19 guidelines by not wearing a face mask in public. Incidentally, he held the health portfolio then.

BJP will not come to power in Maha for 25 years: Raut

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC MUMBAI, NOV. 13

Upset over BJP leader Kirit Somaiya’s allegations of corruption against the Thackeray family, Shiv Sena’s Sanjay Raut on Friday said that his party will ensure that the BJP remains out of power in Maharashtra for next 25 years. Another Sena leader Gulabrao Deokar said that Somaiya has mental problems and needs to be given “electric shock”.

Raut also termed Somaiya “enemy of Maharashtra” and said that no matter how much Somaiya prattles on, the MVA government will remain in power for the next five years and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) would sit in opposi-

tion for 25 years.

BJP leader Kirit Somaiya has alleged that Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray’s wife had done 21 land transactions with Anvay Naik, who had committed suicide in the year 2018. Last week, editor-in-chief of Republic TV Arnab Goswami was arrested for abatement of suicide of Naik.

The BJP leader has claimed that he has official papers of the transitions, which are “suspicious”.

Rebutting the allegations, Raut said that Somaiya is free to go anywhere be it Enforcement Directorate (ED), Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) or Interpol for probe into the land dealings.

Raut further said that

Somaiya is himself corrupt. “What does Somaiya know about the land deal? In 2014, the land deal was done as per the rules. All the allegations of Somaiya are false,” he said.

“Naik’s wife and his daughter have been seeking justice for the past several months. But Somaiya does not say anything about Naik, who had committed suicide. We want to give justice to Naik’s family. Somaiya has to save Arnab Goswami, who is one of the accused in this case,” the Sena leader added.

Meanwhile, Somaiya said that if his allegations are wrong, then the Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut should go to police station and register a case against him.



## IN BRIEF

**'Yorkshire Ripper'**  
**UK killer dies at 74**

**London:** A notorious British serial killer dubbed the "Yorkshire Ripper" after murdering 13 women across northern England between 1975 and 1980 died on Friday aged 74. Sutcliffe was convicted in 1981 of 13 murders and seven more attempted murders after a reign of terror that is still seared on the public memory. He received 20 life sentences and was ordered to serve at least 30 years in prison, but in 2010 a High Court judge ruled that he should never be freed. Sutcliffe had tested positive for Covid-19 but according to British media reports this week had refused treatment. No immediate cause of death was given. Boris Johnson's spokesman said the prime minister's thoughts were with the victims, survivors and their families, calling Sutcliffe "a depraved and evil individual".

**7 killed in Beijing**  
**factory explosion**

**Beijing:** Authorities say seven people have been killed and one injured in a factory explosion southwest of Beijing. The expanded polyethylene plant in Hebei province's Wuji county went up in flames around 6 pm on Thursday. Expanded polyethylene is a type of foam used in packaging and other industrial uses. The county government said search and rescue work has been concluded and the cause was under investigation. With its heavy industrial base, China suffers frequently from factory fires and explosions. In August 2015, a massive warehouse explosion rocked the port city of Tianjin, killing 173 people and injuring nearly 800. Investigators found the warehouse held illegal stores of ammonium nitrate, which caught fire and caused a series of blasts.

**Suicide bomb kills**  
**2, 4 hurt in Afghan**

**Kabul:** A suicide car bomb exploded at the western entry gate of the Afghan capital on Friday killing at least two government security troops and wounding four others, an Afghan official said. Interior Ministry spokesman Tariq Arian said the explosion targeted a government forces checkpoint near the gate. No one immediately claimed responsibility, though suspicion immediately fell on the Taliban. Violence and chaos have increased in Afghanistan in recent months even as government negotiators and the Taliban are meeting in Qatar to find an end to decades of relentless war in Afghanistan. The two sides have made little progress. The attack on the army checkpoint follows weeks of violence, including an attack by gunmen earlier this month claimed by the Islamic State group affiliate at Kabul University that killed 22 people, mostly students.

**RISHI SUNAK**  
**LIGHTS DIWALI**  
**CANDLES**

**London, Nov. 13:** UK Chancellor Rishi Sunak marked the festival of Diwali by stepping out of his No. 11 Downing Street home in London to lay out a rangoli decoration and light four diyas at the doorstep. The 40-year-old Indian-origin finance minister, who is married to Akshata Murthy – the daughter of Infosys co-founder Narayana Murthy, has spoken about being a "proud Hindu" over the years. His celebratory gesture on Thursday night marks a first for Downing Street, which annually sees the UK Prime Minister host a Diwali gathering and an Annakut, or spread of festive food, from London's Swaminarayan Mandir next door at No. 10. Sunak's message this Diwali was for British Hindus to follow the lockdown rules and refrain from the usual tradition of getting together with friends and family. "I know how difficult it is not to be able to see each other," Sunak said. "Just a couple more weeks and we are going to get through this and it's going to be so much better on the other side. We will have lots of happy times afterwards. But, to keep everyone safe right now, just follow the rules," he said. Diwali – which symbolises the spiritual victory of light over darkness, good over evil and knowledge over ignorance – will be celebrated on Saturday.

# Hesitant China finally congratulates Biden

**Chinese foreign ministry is more forthcoming on Harris' win**

**Beijing, Nov. 13:** China on Friday shed its initial hesitation and congratulated US President-elect Joe Biden and his deputy Kamala Harris for their victory in the 2020 US presidential election, saying Beijing respects the choice of the American people.

"We have been following reactions on the US elections from both within the US and the international community," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told a media briefing here when pointed out that more world leaders as well as United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres have congratulated 77-year-old Biden.

"We respect the American people's choice and we extend congratulations to Biden and Harris and we understand that the result of the US presidential elections will be determined following the US laws and procedures," Wang said.

China initially hesitated to congratulate Biden, a Democrat, after Republican incumbent President Donald Trump refused to concede. On November 9, Wang had declined to congratulate Biden on his victory, saying the outcome of the American election should be determined by the country's laws and procedures.

He, however, was more forthcoming on the victory of Harris as the first woman Vice-President-elect. When reminded about Chinese President Xi Jinping's statement calling for greater gender equality in a recent UN conference on women and does China have any comment on Harris, Wang quoted a Chinese saying which states women hold half of the sky. "In China, there is a saying that women hold half of the sky. China has been committed to realising gender equality and advancing women's development around the world," he said.

—PTI

## Mark Zuckerberg 1st tech giant head to acknowledge Biden

**Washington, Nov. 13:** Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg has become the first head of a US tech giant who has acknowledged Democrat Joe Biden as the next president of the country, a media report has said.

Zuckerberg told his employees that the outcome of the November 3 election is now clear and Biden was to take over as the new president of the country, BuzzFeed, which obtained an audio of the meeting, reported on Thursday.

"I believe the outcome of the election is now clear and Joe Biden is going to be our next president," Zuckerberg was quoted as saying in the report on Thursday. The US media

## NO EVIDENCE AMERICAN VOTE WAS COMPROMISED, SAYS ELECTION BODY

**Washington, Nov. 13:** There is no evidence of compromised ballots or corrupt voting systems in the US election, officials said on Thursday, as a top Democrat accused Republicans who refuse to accept President-elect Joe Biden's win of "poisoning" democracy.

Their messages came hours after President Donald Trump once again

cried foul, retweeting a baseless claim that an election equipment maker "deleted" 2.7 million votes for him nationwide.

Biden, who leads by more than five million in the popular vote, cemented his victory late Thursday by winning Arizona, US networks said, flipping the state Democratic for the first time since 1996.

—AFP

has projected Biden, a Democrat, as the winner of the 2020 presidential election. However, incumbent President Trump, a

Republican, is yet to concede defeat, vowing to mount legal fights in several key battleground states.

—PTI

## BIDEN CONQUERS ARIZONA TOO, FIRMLY ON TOP

**Washington, Nov. 13:** Joe Biden has won the state of Arizona, US networks said late Thursday, further cementing his lead in the Electoral College and flipping the state Democratic for the first time since 1996.

NBC, CBS, ABC and CNN declared Biden the winner in the tight race with a lead of more than 11,000 ballots, giving him the state's 11 electoral votes.

Fox News and The Associated Press called the race in the southwestern state in Biden's favor on Election Night, triggering the wrath of president Donald Trump, but the other outlets held off on declaring a winner until after nine days of ballot counting.

—AFP

## Chinese firms out of bounds in US

**Washington, Nov. 13:** US President Donald Trump has signed an executive order banning Americans from investing in Chinese firms deemed to be supplying or supporting Beijing's military and security apparatus, earning a sharp rebuke from China.

The order listed 31 companies on Thursday it said China was using for the "increasing exploitation" of US investment capital to fund military and intelligence services, including the development and deployment of weapons of mass destruction.

US-China relations have deteriorated sharply during Trump's presidency, and this was the latest in a series of executive orders and regulatory actions

that have targeted China's economic and military expansion.

On Friday, Beijing lashed out at the US for "abusing state power to arbitrarily oppress Chinese companies", saying the move "severely undermines" trade and investment cooperation between both countries.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told a regular press briefing that the US should "stop its wrong behaviour" and withdraw its decision.

"This measure not only severely harms the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese companies, it also hurts the interests of international investors including those from the US," Wang said.

—AFP

## UK PM's top aide to exit amid power struggle

**London, Nov. 13:** The disquiet caused by a power struggle at the very top of the UK government, which spilled out into the open earlier this week with a high-profile exit from Downing Street, seemed to intensify on Friday as it emerged that UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson's senior-most aide is to also resign by Christmas next month. Dominic Cummings, one of Johnson's most influential and high-profile aides as his Chief Strategy Adviser, has not formally announced his resignation but a Cabinet minister confirmed that he is on his way out.

"He'll be missed... But advisers come and go," UK Transport Secretary Grant Shapps told *Sky News*. "In any government, you

● **AS PART** of Johnson's top team, Cummings, 48, is widely credited with helping secure the UK Prime Minister's thumping General Election victory in December 2019.

require people who are going to shake things up and come up with ideas, and he's actually been that person," he said.

As part of Johnson's top team, Cummings, 48, is widely credited with helping secure the UK Prime Minister's thumping General Election victory in December 2019.

The largely behind-the-scenes influencer found himself in the limelight earlier this year when he was accused of breaching lockdown rules by making

a trip from London to the north-east of England, at a time when he feared he could have contracted Coronavirus.

There were resounding calls for him to step down or be sacked but he instead hosted a press conference to deny allegations of wrongdoing. In a blog post in January, Cummings had hinted that he planned to leave his role by the end of the year, saying he hoped to make himself "largely redundant" by then.

However, according to sources being quoted across the UK media, the exit of one of his own close allies in Downing Street – Lee Cain as the No. 10 Director of Communications – had precipitated his exit plans.

—AP

## US makes comeback in Covid restrictions as infections surge

**Washington, Nov. 13:** The mayor of the United States' third biggest city Chicago issued a new stay-at-home advisory on Thursday, as the country's Covid-19 outbreak shattered records in the absence of a national strategy by President Donald Trump.

Lori Lightfoot called on the Midwestern city's 2.7 million people to go out only for essential tasks or to attend work or school, to scrap Thanksgiving plans and to avoid travel.

"Every single one of us needs to step up and 'Protect Chicago' right now, or 2020 could go from bad to worse," said an explanatory note on the city's website.

It comes as the United States, already the world's

### France remembers 2015 Paris attacks



Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo, left, and French Prime Minister Jean Castex, 2nd left, participate in a wreath laying ceremony, marking the 5th anniversary of the November 13, 2015 attacks outside the Bonne Biere cafe bar in Paris, on Friday. In silence and mourning, France is marking five years since 130 people were killed by Islamic State extremists who targeted the Bataclan concert hall, Paris cafes and national stadium. —AP

## Obama recalls Rahul as a 'student eager to impress'

**New York, Nov. 13:** Former US president Barack Obama says Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has a "nervous, unformed quality" about him like a student eager to impress the teacher but lacking aptitude and passion to "master the subject."

The *New York Times* reviewed Obama's memoir 'A Promised Land', in which among other issues, the first person of colour

American President has talked about political leaders from around the world.

On Gandhi, Obama says he has "a nervous, unformed quality about him, as if he were a student who'd done the coursework and was eager to impress the teacher but deep down lacked either the aptitude or the passion to master the subject," according to *The New York Times* review.

Gandhi's mother and Congress president Sonia Gandhi also appears to find mention in the memoir. The NYT review said in the memoir "we are told of the handsomeness of men like Charlie Crist



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with former US president Barack Obama. — Twitter

and Rahm Emanuel, but not the beauty of women, except for one or two instances, as in the case of Sonia Gandhi."

Former US Secretary of Defence Bob Gates and former Indian prime minister Manmohan Singh both come across as having a kind of impassive integrity, the review states.

It added that Russian President Vladimir Putin reminds Obama of the tough, street-smart ward bosses who used to run

the Chicago machine.

"Physically, he was unremarkable," Obama writes of Putin.

The 768-page memoir, expected to hit the stands on November 17, chronicles Obama's childhood and political rise, before diving deeply into his historic 2008 campaign and first four years in office.

Obama was the first African-American president of the United States. He visited India twice as the US President — in 2010 and 2015.

—PTI

## PESHAWAR HC CJ WHO SENTENCED MUSHARRAF DIES OF CORONAVIRUS

**Peshawar, Nov. 13:** Peshawar High Court Chief Justice Waqar Seth, who handed down the death sentence to former Pakistan president Gen (Retd) Pervez Musharraf in the high treason case, passed away due to coronavirus-related complications at a private hospital in Islamabad, officials said on Friday.

He was 59 and is survived by his wife and a

daughter. He belonged to Dikhan district of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Seth tested positive for Covid-19 on October 22 and was subsequently admitted to a hospital in Peshawar. He was later shifted to Kulsum International Hospital in Islamabad, where he succumbed to the deadly viral infection on Thursday, the officials said.

—PTI

The seven-day-average of new daily cases currently stands above 1,25,000, more than 65,000 people are hos-

pitalised, and more than 1,000 people are dying every day, according to data from the Covid Tracking Project.

Four states, including former global epicenter New York, have in recent days ordered restaurants and bars to close at 10:00 pm. And in embattled North Dakota, the governor has authorized Covid-19 positive medics who don't have symptoms to keep working in virus wards.

President Trump, who has focused his energies recently on trying to overturn the election victory of his rival Joe Biden through legal challenges, rarely talks about the pandemic anymore, but has always opposed sweeping lockdowns.

—AFP

## VIRAL | VIDEO

### Stunt 'violated the professional requirements' for protection of panda

## Korean group's panda stunt angers China

**Beijing, Nov. 13:** A publicity stunt involving South Korean girl group Blackpink and a cuddly baby panda has prompted outraged comments and calls for an apology from some in China.

The endangered animals are native only to China, which claims ownership over all pandas loaned to foreign zoos, including those born abroad. Many Chinese are particularly sensitive about representations of what they view as a national symbol, sentiments fed by rising nationalism that often takes its most virulent form on the internet.

The outrage over a video of group members cuddling the baby panda in Everland Zoo near Seoul may also reflect a growing awareness of animal wel-



Rose, Jenni Kim, and Lisa of Blackpink perform at the Coachella Music & Arts Festival in Indio, California. A publicity stunt involving South Korean girl group Blackpink and a cuddly baby panda has prompted outraged comments and calls for an apology from some in China.

—AP file

fare, with the China Wildlife Conservation Association among those raising their voices.

The stunt "violated the professional requirements

for protection of the giant panda," the group said, adding that the zoo should improve its management to ensure such incidents do not happen again.

**THE ENDANGERED** animals are native only to China, which claims ownership over all pandas loaned to foreign zoos, including those born abroad

In comments under a posting of national broadcaster CCTV's report on the controversy, users called for apologies from the band and their management and some form of explanation from the zoo itself. "If it's all about the money and you cannot or don't wish to take proper care of (the pandas), then give them back to us," wrote one person, using the name Jenea.y. "K-pop" bands such as Blackpink are hugely popular in China, as well as in South Korea, Japan and

elsewhere.

But politics poses a particular challenge for those seeking fame and fortune in the vast Chinese market. Any hint of criticism of China's ruling Communist Party — and its take on major historical events — or support for an independent Taiwanese identity or for the pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong can bring a major fan backlash, egged on by state media and Chinese diplomats.

South Koreans tend to be the biggest targets of such attacks, along with Americans and Japanese. Last month, Chinese nationalists unloaded on South Korean boy band BTS after its leader thanked Korean War veterans for their sacrifices.

—AP



## DECCAN Chronicle

14 NOVEMBER 2020

### Brainstorm revival steps to take in the short term

Announcing the third tranche of the stimulus package on Thursday, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the government's focus was on bringing back the economy on the growth path. The stimulus package was estimated to be ₹2.7 lakh crore, which translates to 1.4 per cent of the GDP. The package touches upon all key segments of the economy, such as industry, agriculture, employment generation, real estate and infrastructure, among others. Reforms address some of the long-pending demands of the industry, such as production-linked incentives, which could potentially attract companies that want to diversify their supply chains.

Notwithstanding its goal, the package does not give the economy and the people what they need right now: Revival of demand. Most of the announcements on Thursday were of the medium-term nature. They are, no doubt, good, but they won't provide any solution to the current problem, which is sagging demand. The Covid-19 pandemic has made several contact-intensive industries to shut or operate at abysmally low capacities, which resulted in massive retrenchments. While this had eliminated the enormous purchasing power that these people collectively wielded, the reluctance of those having cash to splurge in these uncertain times has further mauled the demand in the Indian economy.

**Retail inflation continued to be high, which, unless addressed immediately, could affect people's lives and also slow down India's economic recovery**

Though there have been encouraging signs of demand revival as suggested by the collection of GST, one cannot say if it is a normal demand revival or the pent-up demand, which was released ahead of the festive season. The revival of demand, therefore, should have been the focus of the government. However, it continues to ignore the advice of the economists and appears keen on letting the economy heal itself—a course that would be painful for most of the population. Despite its claims of providing a combined stimulus, whose size is 15 per cent of the GDP, experts claim that the actual fiscal component—the money spent by the government—would be less than two per cent of the GDP. Further, the government expects no additional borrowing. In the backdrop of falling tax revenue, no additional borrowing means the government would be diverting other budgeted expenditure for spending on the stimulus package, which means it won't spend any extra money.

Incentives offered for real estate, and housing could improve home sales and have a spill-over effect on other businesses, such as furnishing and building products, and create employment in the construction sector. This alone, however, cannot restore the demand in the economy. If one goes by data of inflation and industrial production (IIP), there is nothing to cheer about as yet. The demand for capital goods, which indicates a booming economy, continues to be in the negative territory. Retail inflation continued to be high, which, unless addressed immediately, could affect people's lives and also slow down India's economic recovery. The government should, therefore, also focus on immediate short-term steps to revive the economy, without losing focus on medium-term and long-term economic goals, because as famous economist John Maynard Keynes said, "In the long term, we are all dead."

### Owaisi's reach is growing

The Hyderabad-based All India Majlis-e Ittehadul Muslimeen (or Muslim Unity Party) and its leader Asaduddin Owaisi have lately drawn analytical attention. Were it not for this party being in the fray in the recent Bihar Assembly polls in a Muslim-preponderant region, many think the NDA might have lost to the Mahagathbandhan, the Opposition coalition of the RJD, Congress, and Left parties. The AIMIM won five seats and 1.24 per cent of the votes, but this percentage would be higher if voting for only the Seemanchal region is considered. If the AIMIM had received just half a per cent fewer votes, the anti-NDA parties could have made it.

But it is clear that Mr Owaisi has every right to contest elections where he wishes. It is for the anti-BJP parties (the so-called secular forces typically) to open political channels to the AIMIM. This is not likely to be easy, though. To begin with, Mr Owaisi aims for Muslim votes. Therefore, the parties that attract his ire in an election are those that have traditionally attracted Muslim votes. This is why, politically, he does not go for the BJP and its allies, giving them an easy ride. In that sense Mr Owaisi's forays in Muslim areas are useful to the BJP. But what appears evident is that Mr Owaisi is doing his best to grow the AIMIM as an all-India Muslim party, inasmuch as the BJP is a Hindu party. In 2015, his party drew a blank in Bihar but this time round it has won as many as five seats. In Maharashtra Assembly too it has won seats and also has an MP from that state. Now the AIMIM leader has announced his intention to fight in West Bengal and UP. The continued existence of caste and religious parties is not healthy for the spread of the democratic ethos in this country. Identity-based electoral and political consolidation is a complex phenomenon but in part it derives from the failure of centrist forces represented by the Congress or the Janata Party earlier, or even the Left.

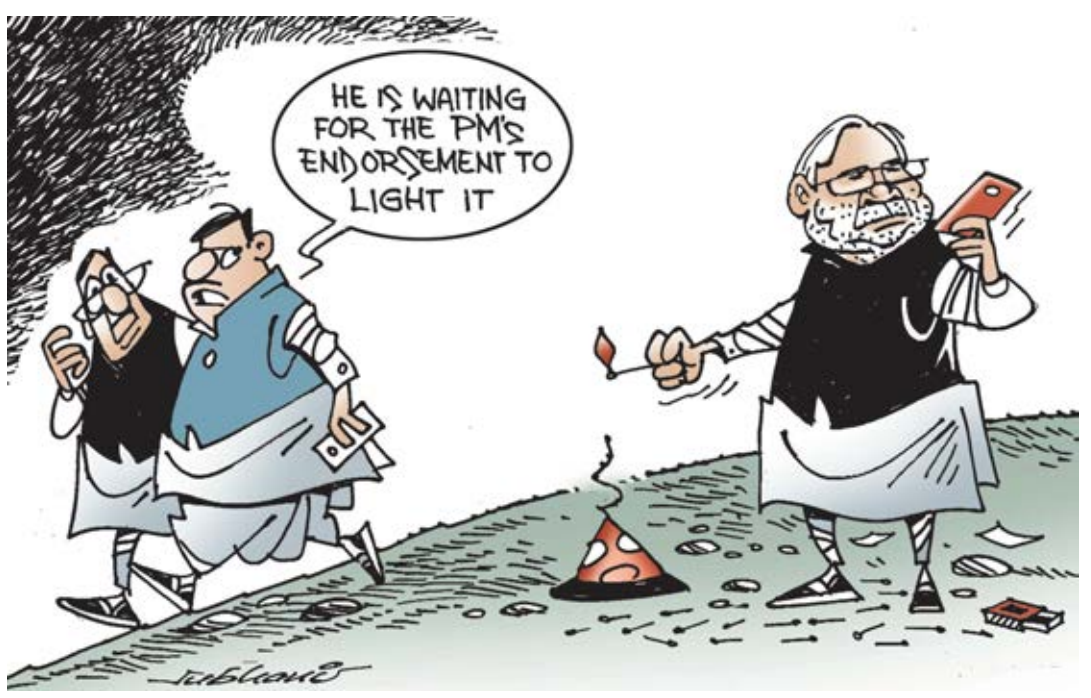
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Subhani



## How to be a good loser... Don needs crash course

Shobhaa De

This year, Dhanteras was celebrated on what the West deems an ominous day — Friday the 13th. Well... ominous for some is auspicious for someone else. India is lighting diyas, and let's not spoil the fun. I know I should be focusing on momentous events, closer to home — like the Bihar elections. But a timely meme said it all. It showed a super glamourised image of actor Ratna Pathak (bouffant hair, cat eyeglasses) advising her beta not to discuss the Bihar elections, since it is so "middle class". Such is the dilemma faced by us urban idiots, we did indeed follow the American presidential race pretty breathlessly, while being pretty indifferent to what was going on in *hamara* Bihar. Well, that's also because we kinda knew what would happen in Bihar — and it did! Whereas the bitterly fought battle for the White House, between Orange Hair and Boring Biden, provided more *mazaa*. If you ask me, the guy who really won the White House back for his party (the Democrats) is the guy who never wanted to leave it in the first place — Barack Obama. It was this man's solo crusade that did the trick for Boring Biden. Because, in truth, the average American is not all that different from the average Indian — we happily fall for "BS". Besides, Donald Trump did indeed bag eight million more votes this time! Had it not been for the most charismatic living politician (Obama) working relentlessly for Boring Biden and Coma-la, Orange Hair would have cruised back in *aaram se*. This is the thing about democracies (please note: India still counts itself as

**Had it not been for the most charismatic living politician (Obama), Orange Hair would have cruised back in. This is the thing about democracies, the lowest common denominator generally leads the rally.**

states indicates that it may be a far quieter Diwali. With luck, this ban on toxic *patakas* fumes will also reduce lung damage. *Khair*... what got me going far more than Rohit Sharma's MI win (tell us something we can't predict) was a letter which did the rounds after Trump was trumped (though it ain't over till it is over [and] the fat lady sings). It was a handwritten note from George H.W. Bush Jr to his successor in the White House, Bill Clinton, in 1993. Read it! That's called a class act. It is a friendly, man-to-man handwritten note which strikes the right balance — it is not "chummy", it is not condescending, and it is anything but whiney. This is how seasoned politicians/statesmen/ statesw omen accept defeat. Losing is an art. A sore loser goes down in history as a pathetic, insecure person, who is unable to move on and concede the top spot to the next, more deserving individual. Nobody expects grace or courtesy from Donald Trump — the most boorish American President in history. And he is not ready to make that concession speech either. Take that, Boring Biden.

**Nobody expects grace or courtesy from Donald Trump — the most boorish American President in history. And he is not ready to make that concession speech either. Take that, Boring Biden.**

cannot be manufactured by managers and agents. It is so evident that these two all-time great tennis champions possess the one quality that separates the men from the boys — an abundance of confidence. Compare them to the Joker with his tantrums on and off the court, and one can easily see who wins the popular vote.

It is said true character gets revealed not when you win big but when you lose even bigger. Some of our superstars in Bollywood and cricket need to remind themselves of this aspect of competition — films flop, someone else gets the role, heartbreaks happen, box office records are broken, more wickets are taken, and the spotlight shifts to the next one and the next one and the next one. True achievements never tarnish. In India, we have any number of sterling examples — men and women, who inspire generations to put the best foot forward and not obsess over "legacy".

There is something truly hideous about boastfulness, especially during a time like this, when the whole world is dealing with stress and confusion. Chest thumping is easy — watch an alpha male gorilla to figure out how it's done. But when the prevalent and dominating political culture in the country actively advocates belligerent egotism and steps in with unseemly alacrity to "save" a particularly obnoxious television anchor who has made a career out of bulldozing opponents and fabricating narratives, it is best to say "*Hari Om*!", and remind ourselves that even the mighty eventually fall with a thud despite all the cushioning provided by powerful mentor-sponsors. You can be the biggest loser on earth while foolishly believing you have won! BTW, the biryani in Taloja remains top class.

Readers can send feedback to [www.shobhaade.blogspot.com](mailto:www.shobhaade.blogspot.com)

### LETTERS

#### SANITISER IN DIWALI

Due to Covid-19, everybody is habituated to use alcohol-based sanitizer. During Diwali, that sanitizer must not be used before lighting crackers or candles. They can easily catch fire. Therefore, those sanitizers must be kept at a safe point. Instead of carrying sanitizers everywhere, one can consider carrying water and paper soaps.

N.V.U. Chandra Mouli  
Visakhapatnam

#### STIMULUS MEASURES

The Centre's Atmanirbhar Bharat 3.0 stimulus will bring cheers for developers and buyers. For over seven months the realty business and other businesses took a beating unheard of in history of India. With 135 crore people and a still developing economy, India is going through the toughest of times since Independence. The US' consumer-based economy is a good example of money management. I think the FM is taking a cue from the US to take steps to refuel our economy.

Govardhana Myneedu  
Vijayawada

#### DIGITAL CENSOR

The Centre is right to bringing the OTT platforms under I&B ministry. It's a timely intervention before any damage is caused. As far as violation of Article 19(1) of the Constitution is concerned, the judiciary shall take care of it whenever such exigencies arrive.

K. Nehru Patnaik  
Visakhapatnam

### 50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

#### 300 killed in E. Pak tidal wave

CALCUTTA, Nov. 13 About 300 people were feared killed in today's cyclone in the coastal areas of Khulna district of East Pakistan. Deputy High Commissioner of Pakistan A.K Choudhury told UNI here tonight.

He said the reports he had received said Khulna district bore the brunt of the storm.

He said weather reports indicated that another cyclone was likely to hit parts of East Pakistan tonight.

A tidal wave, apparently started by a hurricane, has hit the island of Dubla in the Bay of Bengal and is feared to have washed away several thousand Hindu pilgrims.

Farrukh Dhondy  
Cabbages & Kings



"Why do we in temperate India Read about poetic snous Which foreign poets celebrate In metaphors none of us knows? Yes, we sing hymns to the monsoon, The downpours which each year Bring promises of renewal When thunderous clouds appear. — From *Godrej to Road Rage* by Bachchoo

Dear Narendra Saheb, Pradhan Mantri,

I address you as a petitioner on a matter which has, I am sure, occupies the minds of millions in our constantly changing world. I mean, as you can see from global reports, particularly in the last weeks from France and Vienna, that there have been murders and terrorist attacks in the name of Islam in Europe. After the beheading of a schoolteacher in France and the murder of people in the Notre Dame cathedral of Nice, President Emmanuel Macron declared his policy of war on Islamist terrorism. He was, commendably, careful to say that his offensive was not against the religion but against those that interpret it as an injunction or licence to

murder the innocent.

He has declared a relentless campaign by the French state to eliminate terrorism emanating from this particular interpretation of Islam which, according to very many scholars and to the philosophy of many schools of the religion, is anti-Islamic and amounts to the ideas of deviant savants who instituted death-cults and insisted they were the authentic religion.

President Macron's declared offensive is fraught with difficulty as the French police say they have 20,000 individuals whom they need to keep under surveillance as they have indicated in one way or another their adherence to or sympathy for the ideas of the contemporary death-cult. Mr Macron's initiative is welcomed by the citizens of France but his efforts and that of the French state, or that of the Austrians, British, other Europeans, Americans or even the Pakistani state (which has been ambivalent towards this phenomenon) will obviously not solve what is now a universal occurrence. The Trump administration of the US didn't seem to distinguish between Islam and the Islamicist death-cults. Mr Trump

and his aides perhaps didn't understand any distinction and declared bans on citizens of certain parts of the globe.

The reason is that Islam today is a universally divided house. In the states which call themselves Islamic, the factions of Sunnis and Shias fight and kill each other in terror attacks as in Pakistan, or in factional armies, supported by foreign powers, as in Syria, or as opposing national states with deadly foreign-manufactured-and-marketed weapons as in the Yemen. ISIS, declaring itself heir to the world, began its murderous campaigns in Islamic countries, fighting Muslims in the name of Islam.

No country, no state, has gone any distance to set any sort of example to bring peace where there is war and hope where there is the underlying despair that leads to the murder of innocents. The wisest world opinion has concluded that only Muslims can bring about this peace or defeat of death cults in the Islamic world. That's as obvious, gentle reader, as the nose on your face (apologies to Surpanakha of the *Ramayan* who had hers cut off by Lakshman). But can they? Unlike Christianity, Islam

has no Pope or archbishop to make a ruling. The fatwas abound, the killing continues

And yet Narendra, there is one country that can offer examples of an attitude, a policy, strategies towards the future and set patterns and ideals for the rest of the world. Yes, Pradhan Mantri, that country is Bharat Mata.

The theology of Islam didn't come to India in the shape of Muslim conquest. It came in the guise of the Sufi evangelists, the Chishtis and the Olyas. A scholar and prince such as Dara Shikoh, the brother of the bigoted Aurangzeb, recognised the closeness of Sufi Islam to the philosophical Advait Vedant of Shankara.

Every religion has beliefs and writings from the past which the modern worshipper discards and is forced, by sheer common sense and humane values, to neglect as things which have outlived their origins. No Christian should act on the dictates and punishments that Leviticus prescribes in his book in the Bible. Just so, there are passages in the Hindu scriptures about castes and the status of women which don't accord with the democracy that brought your party and you to power. Of

course, all the modern movements of Hinduism understand that.

Millions of our citizens go to temples to worship and also make a pilgrimage to Ajmer to the shrine and presence of a Sufi saint.

Yes, as my late friend V.S. Naipaul insisted, we should tell the truth about the atrocities that were visited by conquerors on the Indian population. Nothing should be swept under the carpet, including the atrocities, through thousands of years, of the ruling upper castes against those born as lower.

In the moments of the Black Lives Matter *morchas* in the United States and Britain we saw whites and blacks saying let us, while acknowledging it, put the history of division behind us.

I address this to you, Narendra, as being uniquely placed in the world to lead a country with a unique history to put the divisions of that history behind us and discover, recognise the inevitability of and anoint the avatar of the future India... of freedom from the devils of conflict. *Jai Hind!*

Ever,  
Farrukh Dhondy





quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	43,443.00	0.20
Nifty 50	12,719.95	0.23
S&P 500*	3,566.86	0.84
Dollar (₹)	74.61	0.04
Pound Sterling (₹)	98.19	0.21
Euro (₹)	88.11	0.049
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	50,425*241	0.47
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	42.87	-0.66
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.878	-0.024
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.893	0.007

Fuel demand sees first annual growth since Feb.

The country's fuel demand posted its first yearly increase since February as a spurt in diesel demand ahead of the festival season pushed consumption to pre-Covid-19 levels. Total demand for petroleum products rose 2.5 per cent in October to reach 17.77 million tonnes as compared to 17.34 mt a year back, according to provisional data published by the oil ministry's Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell.

Forex reserves surge \$7.78 bn to record \$568.49 bn



The country's foreign exchange reserves jumped by a massive \$7.779 billion to touch a life-time high of \$568.494 billion in the week ended November 6, RBI data showed. In the previous week ended October 30, the reserves had increased by \$183 million to \$560.715 billion. The jump in reserves was mainly on account of an increase in foreign current assets, which increased by \$6.403 billion to \$524.742 billion.

Experts can submit Budget ideas via e-mail

The finance ministry said a dedicated e-mail ID would be created to receive suggestions from industry bodies and experts on the Union Budget 2021-22, instead of physical pre-Budget consultations that have been happening over the years, owing to the pandemic situation. Also, the Centre's 'MyGov' portal would provide a platform to receive ideas from public on the Budget and would remain open from November 15 to 30.

China halts seafood imports from Indian firm

China has suspended the import of seafood products from an unnamed Indian company for a week, starting from Friday, after traces of Covid-19 were reportedly found on the outer packaging of some samples of frozen cuttlefish exported by the firm. China's General Administration of Customs suspended the import of seafood products from an Indian company for one week the state-run *Global Times* reported.



Poonawalla says inoculation may begin next month

CHRIS KAY NOV. 13

The world's largest vaccine maker is ramping up production of AstraZeneca Plc's Covid-19 shot, aiming to have 100 million doses ready by December for an inoculation drive that could begin across India that same month.

If final-stage trial data show AstraZeneca's candidate gives effective protection from the virus, the Serum Institute of India Ltd—which is partnered to produce at least one billion doses—may get emergency authorisation from New Delhi by December, said Adar Poonawalla, chief executive officer of the family-owned firm in Pune.

That initial amount will go to India, Poonawalla said in an interview on

Thursday. Full approval early next year will allow distribution on a 50-50 basis with India and Covax, the World Health Organization-backed body that's purchasing shots for poor nations. Serum, which has tied up with five developers, has so far made 40 million doses of AstraZeneca's vaccine in the past two months and aims to start manufacturing Novavax Inc's contender soon.

"We were a bit concerned it was a big risk," said 39-year-old Poonawalla. But both AstraZeneca and Novavax's shots "are looking pretty good."

The haste underlines Poonawalla's confidence in one of the main vaccine front-runners. AstraZeneca CEO Pascal Soriot has said he is preparing for the possibility of large-scale vaccina-

VACCINE MAKERS STAKING REPUTATIONS: GLAXO CEO

THOMAS MULIER & THOMAS BUCKLEY NOV. 13

Vaccine makers have a lot at stake if any of the shots designed to protect against Covid-19 fail, according to Emma Walmsley, CEO, GlaxoSmithKline Plc. The industry's commitment will help ensure that the shots that do make it to the market are safe after a one-year development cycle, which is a fraction of the normal time need-

ed, the head of the largest vaccine maker said. "The world will pay a very big price, not just for Covid, but beyond that if we break trust in the quality of vaccination," she said in a TV interview.

The race to develop vaccines and treatments for Covid is set to permanently accelerate drug discovery, Walmsley said. Advances in processing genetics and genomics data, as well as developments in artificial intelligence and machine learning, have a

"real, real shot over the next decade to improve the productivity of R&D and science in my industry incredibly," she said.

Walmsley also said the pandemic has mobilised the world to find faster solutions, with businesses working in concert with regulators to speed the roll-out of inoculation without compromising on safety.

Still, further vaccines are needed to make the world safe from Covid, she said. —Bloomberg

tions as early as December and once the UK grants its own emergency licence, Serum will submit that same data to Indian counterparts. Drugmakers are just

now getting data that will show how well their vaccine candidates work, but there are plenty of hurdles remaining as the global race to find an effective shot against the pathogen

reaches its final stages. Astra and co-developer University of Oxford still need to see testing results. And even if their vaccine proves effective and gets a nod from regulators, there

Jewellers say sales back by 65-70%; light-weight pieces in demand Dhanteras exceeds expectations

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, NOV. 13:

Despite being overshadowed by pandemic fears and gold price rise, Dhanteras this year clocked 65 to 70 per cent of the sales volumes of last year. Dhanteras sales were much better than that on Akshya Tritiya, which was washed out by the lockdown.

"Jewellers have reported that they have garnered 65 to 70 per cent of last year's sales volumes," said Somasundaram PR., managing director, India, World Gold Council.

According to him, foot-

falls were much better, which indicates that customers braved the pandemic to grab the yellow metal on the auspicious day.

Organised players have seen better sales as part of the shift in customer preference that has been underway in recent years. "In terms of volumes, we would have reached 65 per cent of last year and in terms of value it would be around 80 per cent, as the gold prices are much higher than last year's Dhanteras," said Joy Alukka, chairman, Joyalukkas.

Gold prices are higher by more than 30 per cent this time compared to last



Dhanteras. The higher prices too have dampened the sales.

"There is a popular perception that gold prices have gone up due to the

pandemic and now that a vaccine is likely to be released soon, prices might cool down to previous levels. Many customers have been postponing their wedding purchases expecting that prices will come down," said Somasundaram.

According to Bachchraj Bamelwa, past chairman, All-India Gems and Jewellery Trade Federation, customers preferred to pick up light-weight jewellery as a token on the auspicious day.

WGC found that coins too were in demand in line with the increased investment demand in the

September quarter.

Online players as well as organised players who have been promoting digital sales, have seen better sales this time compared to last year. Online jeweller Melorra has seen maximum demand for light-weight jewellery coming from young adults between the ages of 25-35 years.

"Digital platforms are receiving new customers and they are becoming an integral part of the jewellery industry. Even during Akshaya Tritiya, organised players have been promoting online sales," said Somasundaram.

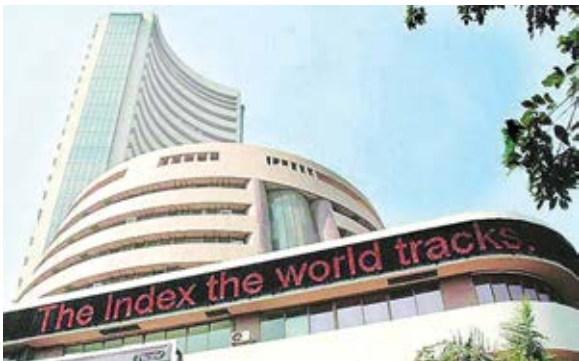
Market looks bullish as Samvat 2077 dawns

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, NOV. 13

Despite huge volatility in Samvat 2076, the Sensex return was a healthy 10.68 per cent from the close of last Diwali at 39,250.20 on October 27, 2019. The index closed at 43,443 on November 13, 2020, the last day of the Samvat.

Nifty-50's return during the same period was 9.4 per cent, as it went up from 11,627.15 points to 12,719.95. The broader market return was also healthy, with the BSE Midcap Index returning 9.93 per cent, as it went up from 14,441.06 to 15,876.49.

The uncertain and highly volatile market post-the pandemic-forced lockdown saw a huge rush from retail



investors in the hope of making some money, as they were working from home and the lockdown had severely impacted household income.

According to the BSE data, over 1.59 crore new investors have joined the

equity market during the year, taking the count of registered investors to over 5.67 crore. Due to the huge volatility seen post-the Covid break out, the Sensex had slipped from a January 2020 high of 42,273.87 to

Disney+ booms in India

CHRISTOPHER PALMERI NOV. 13

The growth of Walt Disney Co.'s streaming service in India and Indonesia has been staggering, with the countries now accounting for more than a quarter of its 73.7 million customers globally.

What's less staggering is the price most of the subscribers pay: Even the premium plan is just \$20 a year. That's a fraction of the \$70 that US customers shell out and illustrates the challenge the company faces as it takes its streaming platform to more countries.

The growth of Disney+, which launched a year ago, has far exceeded the expectations of both Wall Street and the company itself. It was a bright spot in Disney's latest quarterly results, released on Thursday. But keeping up its pace will mean tapping markets with less spending power.

"If you get enough sheer volume, you can make it work even at a relatively low price per subscriber," said David Heger, an analyst at Edward Jones.

The company serves India and Indonesia with a product called Disney+ Hotstar, a rebranded plat-



pandemic weighed down heavily on health as well as on economies across the world. But it seems that slowly and steadily things are coming back to normal. In fact, a lot of positivity across the globe lifted markets at fresh record highs.

"All's well that ends well and hence, from hereon we can see a brighter picture till the next Samvat. Looking at the daily chart, we can observe a couple of encouraging developments.

"On the upside, the next milestone of 13000 is likely to be achieved (bu the Nifty-50) very soon; in fact, we do not rule out the possibility of reaching 13100-13200 in the forthcoming week itself."

VITOL TO BUY OIL LIQUIDS MADE FROM TYRES

ANDY HOFFMAN & LARS ERIK TARALDSEN NOV. 13

Vitol Group, the world's biggest independent oil trader, is betting on a new technology to produce hydrocarbon liquids from recycled car and truck tyres.

The trading giant unveiled a 10-year off-take agreement on Friday to buy and sell naphtha, distillates and bunker fuel produced by Norwegian startup Wastefront AS. The products will be produced at a tyre recycling plant in Sunderland, UK, starting in 2023.

The agreement marks the latest foray by big energy merchants seeking greener alternatives to traditional sources of oil. Vitol has already invested in a company turning plastics into oil liquids as well as another that is using coal waste to produce fuels.

Vitol has been in talks with Wastefront for about two years, providing advice to the startup as to how best to use its technology and ensure it had a commercial outlet, Chris Bake, a senior executive at the trading house, said.

"It's to help make sure it happens," he said.

It's also another move by Vitol to stake out a fresh position in the life-cycle of transportation vehicles. The trading house recently took a surprise leap into the used car business with a startup called Vava Cars. The recycled tyre oil products will amount to about 30,000 tonnes a year—the equivalent of about 220,000 oil barrels. That's a drop in the ocean compared to Vitol's total daily traded volumes that topped 8 million barrels a day in 2019.

Most waste tyres in Europe are exported for re-use or recycling in developing countries. Wastefront plans to build more plants now. —Bloomberg



## SHORT TAKES

## Prajnesh downs Sock, in quarters

**Cary, North Carolina (USA):** Fighting hard, Prajnesh Gunneswaran prevailed over tough nut Jack Sock in three sets to sail into the quarterfinals of the Atlantic Tire Championships, an ATP Challenger event here. The fourth-seeded southpaw beat the former top-10 American 6-7(3), 6-2, 7-6(5) in a tight round two contest, which lasted almost three hours. The gritty Indian broke the serve of Sock, who reached a career-high singles ranking of eight in 2017 but is now placed 253, thrice and dropped his own serve only once in the slugfest. Prajnesh, ranked 146, next faces Brazilian qualifier Thomaz Bellucci for a place in the semi-finals of the \$52,080 hard court tournament. — PTI

## Liverpool's Salah is Covid positive

**Cairo, Egypt:** Liverpool forward Mohamed Salah has tested positive for Covid-19 while on international duty for Egypt without showing any symptoms, the Egyptian Football Association announced Friday. Medical swabs on the national team "showed that our international player, Mohamed Salah, Liverpool star, was infected with the Coronavirus", it said in a tweet. It added that he was "not suffering from any symptoms". The tweet said other members of the Egyptian national team tested negative. Salah was observing medical protocols agreed in consultations between doctors in Egypt and Liverpool, a Coronavirus hotspot, and self isolating in a Cairo hotel room. — AFP

## Handball polls on December 6

**Hyderabad:** The Hyderabad District Handball Association is conducting elections on December 6 at the Akshara International School in LB Nagar, Hyderabad, according to a press release. Two representatives each, preferably the president and secretary of the member association are eligible to participate in the elections. In their absence two representatives duly authorised jointly by the president and secretary will be acknowledged for onward submission to Returning Officer L. Srinivasa Rao, Advocate, the release read. All the affiliated member associations have to submit the names of the two representatives attending the elections along with photographs in the specified format to the Telangana Handball Association general secretary by hand on or before November 23, 5 pm.

## Condolence meet for TT's Sultan

**Hyderabad:** A condolence meeting in memory of S. M. Sultan, former secretary of the Andhra Pradesh Table Tennis Association (APTTA) and senior vice president of the Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI) was held at Anandnagar Welfare Association Sports Academy in Hyderabad on Friday. The poignant meet was attended by Telangana State Table Tennis Association president A. Narasimha Reddy, secretary P. Prakash Raju, vice presidents A. Narasimha Rao and Amrullah Dasthani, players, officials, parents among others.

## Live on TV

## CRICKET

**Women's Big Bash League:** Hobart Hurricanes vs Sydney Sixers from 10.10 am; Sydney Thunder vs Melbourne Stars from 1.35 pm; Sydney Thunder vs Perth Scorchers from 4.50 am (Sunday) on Sony Six

## FORMULA ONE

**Turkish Grand Prix:** Third practice from 2.25 pm, Qualifying from 5.25 pm on Star Sports Select 2, HD

## GOLF

**Augusta Masters:** From 11.30 pm on Star Sports Select 1, HD

## FOOTBALL

**UEFA Nations League:** San Marino vs Gibraltar from 7.30 pm; Cyprus vs Luxembourg from 10.30 pm on Sony Ten 2; Germany vs Ukraine from 11.5 am (Sunday) on Sony Six; Portugal vs France from 1.15 am (Sunday) on Sony Ten 2; Switzerland vs Spain from 1.15 am (Sunday) on Sony Ten 1; Sweden vs Croatia from 1.15 am (Sunday) on Sony Ten 3

## UFC FIGHT NIGHT

Islam Makhachev vs Rafael Dos Anjos and other bouts from 5.30 am (Sunday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

## SCOTLAND SOAR

## End two decades wait, qualify for prestigious Euro

**Belgrade, Nov. 13:** Scotland qualified for a first major international tournament since 1998 by reaching Euro 2020 thanks to a 5-4 win on penalties over Serbia after a 1-1 draw in Belgrade.

The Scots' demons of two decades without qualifying seemed set to reappear when Luka Jovic's 90th-minute header sent the game into extra time. Ryan Christie's opener had deservedly put the visitors in front during what had been a fine performance from Steve Clarke's men.

But just like in a semi-final shootout win over Israel, Scotland kept their cool with five perfect penalties and finally got over the line when David Marshall saved from Aleksandar Mitrovic.

Goalscorer Christie and captain Andy Robertson welled up with emotion as a generation of Scots can look forward to a major tournament for the first time. There is an extra reward of two matches at Hampden against the Czech Republic and Croatia and a clash with England come June.

Christie missed the play-off semifinal win over Israel last month after he was categorised as a close contact of Stuart Armstrong, who tested Covid-19 positive after joining up with the Scotland squad.

He spoke openly about the mental challenge of self-isolation for 14 days on his return to playing and hoped qualification can offer some relief to those struggling with lockdown restrictions in Scotland.

Scotland are now unbeaten in nine games stretching back 13 months and the confidence Clarke has instilled in his side showed as the visitors controlled the first 90 minutes.

Serbia had all the momentum going into extra time with Clarke having withdrawn Lyndon Dykes, Christie and McGinn towards the closing stages of normal time.

Marshall had to produce a brilliant save from Nemanja Gudelj a winner.

And the Derby goalkeeper was the hero in the shootout after Leigh Griffiths, McGregor, Scott McTominay, Oli McBurnie and Kenny McLean had found the net. — AFP

## THE RESULTS

<b>Scotland</b> (Christie 52)	1
<b>Serbia</b> (Jovic 90)	1
(after extra time, Scotland win 5-4 on penalties)	
<b>Hungary</b> (Nedo 88, Szoboszlai 90+2)	2
<b>Iceland</b> (Sigurdsson 11)	1
<b>Slovakia</b> (Kucka 17, Duris 110)	2
<b>Northern Ireland</b> (Skirniar 88-og)	1
<b>North Macedonia</b> (Pandev 56)	1
<b>Georgia</b>	0

## MSK Academy champions

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, NOV. 13

MSK Prasad International Cricket Academy emerged winners of the RVM Cup U-16 tournament played at Countdown Cricket Ground at Gandipet near Hyderabad.

They did it in style, defeating T-11 Cricket Academy by a thumping 106 runs in the final, to remain unbeaten throughout the tournament via dominating performances in all departments of the game.

Batting first in the title round, MSK CA put up a mammoth 275 for 4 in 30 overs courtesy brilliant batting by Yash and Abhinav. Yash made 93 in 70 balls while Abhinav made 78 off 56 balls. Aarya contributed 33.



Scotland players celebrate after winning the Euro 2020 play-off qualification football match against Serbia at the Red Star Stadium in Belgrade on Thursday. — AFP

## Argentina held by Paraguay

**Buenos Aires, Nov. 13:** Argentina had to come from behind to draw 1-1 with Paraguay in a World Cup qualifier at La Bombonera on Thursday, and Lionel Messi had what might have been a winning goal disallowed in the second half.

A Nicolas Gonzalez goal brought Argentina back level after Angel Romero's penalty put Paraguay in front at the home of Boca Juniors.

The result ends Argentina's perfect start in their bid to qualify for the 2022 finals in Qatar, after Lionel Scaloni's team claimed narrow wins last month at home to Ecuador and away to Bolivia.

They thought they had gone in front in the 58th minute when Giovani Lo Celso pulled the ball back for Messi to sidefoot low into the net, but the goal was eventually disallowed by the Brazilian officials for a foul by Gonzalez at the beginning of the move.

At least Argentina recovered from falling behind midway through the first half, when Romero converted a penalty awarded for a foul by Lucas Martinez Quarta on Newcastle United's Miguel Almiron.

The home side lost Exequiel Palacios to injury soon after, but his replacement Lo Celso delivered the corner for Gonzalez to head in the equaliser four minutes before half-time. — AFP



England's Harry Maguire (centre) in action during the international friendly football match against Ireland at Wembley stadium in London on Thursday. — AFP

## Easy victory for England

**London, Nov. 13:** Gareth Southgate admitted he was impressed with Jack Grealish as the England winger sparked and Harry Maguire enjoyed a moment of redemption in Thursday's 3-0 friendly win against the Republic of Ireland.

Just 48 hours after the resignation of English Football Association chairman Greg Clarke following his offensive comments about the BAME and LGBT communities, Southgate's side showed no signs of being distracted by the controversy.

After being sent off in his previous England appearance against Denmark, Maguire captained his country for the first time and scored the opening goal at Wembley. It was a welcome boost for Maguire, who has endured a difficult campaign marred by his Greek court case and poor form for Manchester United and England.

Jadon Sancho bagged England's second goal before the interval and Dominic Calvert-Lewin made it three with a second-half penalty.

That was enough to seal England's first success against the Republic since 1985. Grealish, starting against the country he represented at youth level, caught the eye on the left flank as he justified the constant calls from fans and pundits for the Aston Villa star to be given a sustained run in the team.

"The two players in those roles, Jadon and Jack, they've got the freedom to go either side of the pitch and try and create overloads," Southgate said. — AFP

## CARIBBEANS CLEAR COVID TEST ON KIWI TOUR

**Christchurch, Nov. 13:** The entire West Indies cricket contingent has cleared the third and final round of Covid-19 test and will be leaving for Queenstown on Friday ahead of the first warm-up match against New Zealand 'A' beginning November 20.

The Caribbean team has been in isolation since arriving in New Zealand on October 30 for the T20I and Test series. All the members had cleared the first two rounds of testing. "All members of the West Indies team have returned negative results from their third and final Covid-19 tests, conducted on Day 12 of the ongoing tour of New Zealand," West Indies Cricket Board stated. — PTI

## Aussie coach on guard vs India

**Melbourne, Nov. 13:** Australia head coach Justin Langer has hailed India captain Virat Kohli for taking paternity leave during the tour Down Under but conceded that his absence will definitely affect the visitors during the much-anticipated Test series for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

Kohli will return home after the opening Test, which ends on December 21. He has been granted paternity leave by the BCCI to be with his actor wife Anushka Sharma for the birth of their first child in early January.

Langer said he respects Kohli for putting family ahead of cricket.

"Virat Kohli is probably the best player I've ever seen in my life for so many reasons, not only batting but his energy and passion for the game, the way he fields," Langer told reporters by video conference on Friday.

"I cannot believe he displays the energy he does in everything he does and I've got so much respect for him. I've also got respect for him in the sense that he's made this decision (to return for the birth)."

"He's a human being like all of us... if I was giving advice to any of my players I would always say never, ever miss the birth of your children because it is one of the great things you'll ever do," the former Australia opener added.

Kohli will miss the Boxing Day Test in



**Of course it will have an impact (his absence), but we also know that India beat us last time (in 2018-19). They're a very, very good team, we cannot get complacent for a second with or without Virat.**

— JUSTIN LANGER  
Australia head coach

Melbourne (December 26-30), New Year's Test in Sydney (January 7-January 11) and the final game at the Gabba (January 15-January 19).

Langer said Kohli's absence will definitely impact India but they cannot afford to lower their guard.

"Of course it will have an impact (his absence), but we also know that India beat us last time (in 2018-19). They're a very, very good team, we cannot get complacent for a second with or without Virat," Langer said.

India's tour of Australia begins with three ODIs, followed by as many T20 Internationals and four Tests. — PTI

## GLITZY IPL IS ALL SET FOR EXPANSION, SAYS DRAVID

**New Delhi, Nov. 13:** Former India captain Rahul Dravid strongly believes that Indian Premier League (IPL) is "ready for expansion" in terms of number of teams without compromising on the quality as well as quantity of talent available in the country. There are talks that the 2021 IPL will be featuring nine teams instead of eight and will go up to 10 teams by 2023, which has always been the BCCI's long-term plan.

The views of Dravid, who is now the director of National Cricket Academy (NCA), were echoed by Rajasthan Royals co-owner Manoj Badale, who felt that a nine-team IPL in 2021 is "definitely possible".

"I feel IPL is ready for expansion in terms of talent, if you look from talent perspective. There are a lot of talented players who are not getting an opportunity to play," Dravid said, adding if there are more teams, all the talented players could be fitted in and there won't be a drop in quality. — PTI

## Verstappen fastest in Turkey practice

**Istanbul (Turkey), Nov. 13:** Red Bull driver Max Verstappen posted the fastest time Friday in the second practice for the Turkish Grand Prix as speeds improved following a slow first session on a slippery track.

Verstappen was .4 seconds quicker than Ferrari driver Charles Leclerc and .58 ahead of Valtteri Bottas. Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton was .85 back in fourth place on a resurfaced circuit low on grip and which last hosted a Formula One race in 2011.

Hamilton is looking to secure his seventh F1 title and equal Michael Schumacher's record. He is the runaway championship leader and only needs to finish ahead of Bottas on Sunday to win the title.

Verstappen's best lap was 1 minute, 28.33 seconds, considerably better than his fastest time of 1:35.077 in the first session. But although times improved as tyres got

warmer in the afternoon, Verstappen's leading mark was still three seconds slower than Sebastian Vettel's pole position for Red Bull nine years ago.

Verstappen was even further behind Juan Pablo Montoya's track record of 1:24.77, when the inaugural race was held in 2005.

Several drivers had difficulties controlling their cars during the second practice. Williams driver George Russell slid sideways across the track and teammate Nicholas Latifi lost the rear of the car. So did AlphaTauri driver Daniil Kvyat and Alfa Romeo veteran Kimi Raikkonen, who won the inaugural race when he was 25. Driving under a cloudy sky and cool temperatures in the first session, Verstappen finished ahead of teammate Alexander Albon and Leclerc, who skidded into a bollard at the pit lane entrance early on. Hamilton took no risks and ended that practice run down in 15th place. — AP

## JOHNSON, FRITTELLI, CASEY IN AUGUSTA MASTERS LEAD

**Augusta (Georgia, USA), Nov. 13:** Top-ranked Dustin Johnson and South African Dylan Frittelli grabbed a share of the lead after Friday's conclusion of the storm-hit first round of the Masters while Rory McIlroy struggled to make the cut.

They matched England's Paul Casey by shooting seven-under-par 65 in concluding their darkness-halted opening rounds at storm-hit Augusta National before returning to the rain-softened layout for round two. — AFP

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