

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

NELLORE | THURSDAY | 5 NOVEMBER 2020



NATION | 4

Army chief in Nepal on three-day visit



WORLD | 5

Torres 1st gay man elected to Congress

SPORTS | 8

Mumbai take on Delhi in IPL Qualifier-1 today



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WEATHER

Max: 34.5°C
Min: 26.3°C
RH: 76%
Rainfall: Nil
Forecast: clear.
Max/Min temp. 34/25 °C

COVID-19 COUNT

CASES

(+49,037)

83,59,702

DEATHS

(+697)

1,24,276

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+1,637)

(+6)

TS: 2,44,143

1,357

(+2,477)

(+10)

AP: 8,33,208

6,744

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

4,81,73,631

DEATHS

12,25,309

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES

215

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana

Tithi: Nija Ashwauja Bahula Panchami full day

Star: Ardra full day

Variyam: 1.53 pmt0 3:37 pm

Durmuhurtam: 10.06 am to 10.52 am; 2.38 pm to 3.23 pm

Rahukalam: 1.30 pm to 3 pm

HILIRI CALENDAR

Rabbi-ul Awwal 18, 1442 AH

PRAYERS(SHAHI MASJID)

Fajar: 4.54 am

Zohar: 11.54 pm

Asar: 4.05 pm

Maghrib: 5.42 pm

Isha: 6.54 pm

SUNSET TODAY 5.40 PM

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.07 AM

MOONRISE TODAY 9.22 PM

MOONSET TOMORROW 10.44 AM

COUNTER POINT

Not police, it's IT, ED officials here for hoarding costly items!

SHORT TAKES

3 more Rafales arrive in India

New Delhi: A second batch of three Rafale fighter jets arrived at Jamnagar airbase in Gujarat on Wednesday after flying non-stop from France, in a further boost to strike capability of the Indian Air Force when India and China are locked in a bitter border row in Ladakh. With the arrival of the new batch, the number of Rafale aircraft has increased to eight. The first batch of five Rafale jets arrived in India on July 29, nearly four years after India signed an inter-governmental agreement with France to procure 36 aircraft at a cost of ₹59,000 crore.

■ Full report on Page 4

ED files charges against Kochhars

Mumbai: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has filed its first chargesheet against former ICICI Bank CEO and MD Chanda Kochhar, her husband Deepak Kochhar and Videocon Group promoter Venugopal Dhoot on money laundering charges, official sources said on Wednesday. They said the chargesheet or the prosecution complaint has been filed under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). It was filed before a special court in Mumbai on Tuesday and the court is yet to take cognisance of it, the official sources said.

19% rise in AP tax collection

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 4

Andhra Pradesh registered a 19.40 per cent rise in property tax collection in the current fiscal up to November 4 despite Covid-19 affecting the economy badly. The municipal administration authorities collected ₹752.62 crore from April 1 to November 4, 2020 against ₹630.26 crore in the corresponding period last fiscal.

The authorities had set a ₹1,958.88 crore tax collection target in the current fiscal and have so far managed to collect 38.40 per cent of it.

On November 4 alone, the state collected ₹1.97 crore in tax against ₹1.36 crore on November 4, 2019.

Municipal authorities credit this rise in tax collections to the 3,913 ward secretariats in 120 urban local bodies that were created newly in the state. With each ward Secretariat having an administrative secretary, it had become easy to collect property tax.

The secretary took up an

awareness campaign among property owners about the series of incentives being offered by the government to taxpayers.

They were also entrusted with the task of door-to-door visits to collect tax and this enabled some people who were unable to visit municipal offices for the same. Online payment of taxes also boosted property tax collections.

In addition to this, the state government extended early bird rebate of five per cent on property tax up to July 31, 2020 even though such rebates used to be limited to only the first month of April in the current fiscal.

Property owners who could clear tax dues for the current year at one go were offered rebate. Municipal administration authorities maintain that a good number of people availed the extended rebate. The civic authorities also did not levy two per cent interest per month on late payment of property tax in order to encourage payment.

■ Page 2: Secretaries play crucial role: Officials

Kurnool gets set for pushkaram in Covid

D. SIVA RAMI REDDI | DC KURNOOL, NOV. 4

Covid cases in Kurnool district are being strictly monitored as the district prepares to hold Tungabhadra Pushkarams.

Many pilgrims are expected to converge at the bathing ghats as Karthik Masam coincides with Pushkarams. Health officials said volunteers were drafted to help pilgrims. District collector G. Veerapandian said that out of the 7.3 lakh total Covid tests conducted in Kurnool district, 59,508 were found to be positive.

The district has just 377 active cases while the recovery rate is 98.56 per cent. He compared it to

the national average and claimed Kurnool has the highest rate of recovery compared to the State average of 96.30 per cent and the National recovery rate of 91.65 per cent.

The fatality rate is 0.81 per cent which again is below the national average of 1.49 percent, he said. The district medical and health officer Dr Rama Giddaiah said Tungabhadra Pushkarams is a challenge for the district health officials as the number of pilgrims arriving would have a direct impact on the medicare facilities. He said each ghat has a dedicated team of health officials with all the required medicines besides testing facilities.

AIRLINES CAN OPERATE ONLY 60% OF FLIGHTS

New Delhi, Nov. 4: Indian airlines can operate maximum 60 per cent of their pre-Covid domestic passenger flights till February 24 next year due to the prevailing coronavirus situation, the civil aviation ministry has said.

The ministry had informed the airlines about the 60 per cent limit through an official order on September 2 but it had not told them the period for which the cap would remain in place.

On October 29, the ministry issued a new order clarifying that the September 2 order “shall remain in force until 2359 hrs on February 24, 2021 or until further orders” due to the “prevailing situation of Covid-19”.

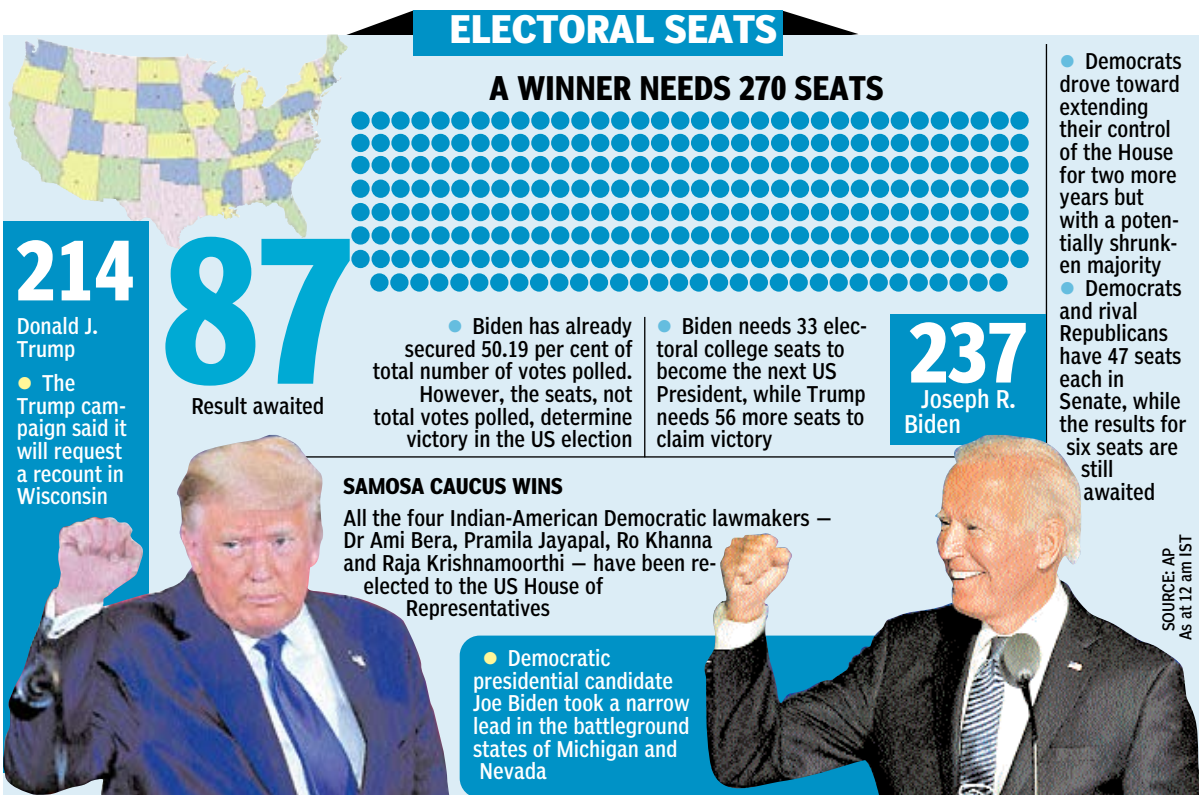
On June 26, the ministry had allowed the airlines to operate a maximum of 45 per cent of their pre-Covid domestic flights.

The ministry had resumed domestic passenger services from May 25 with a 33 per cent cap, after a gap of two months due to the coronavirus-triggered lockdown. Scheduled international passenger flights continue to remain suspended in the country since March 23 due to the pandemic.

— PTI

US Prez poll turns cliffhanger

Biden ahead of Trump; three states key for win; counting to last longer



ing states. The margins were exceedingly tight in states across the country, with the candidates trading wins in battlegrounds. Trump picked up Florida, the largest of the swing states, while Biden flipped Arizona, a state that has reliably voted Republican in recent elections.

The high-stakes election

was held against the backdrop of a pandemic that has killed more than 2,32,000 Americans and wiped away millions of jobs.

Trump, in an extraordinary move from the White House, issued premature claims of victory and said he would take the election to the Supreme Court to

stop the counting. It was unclear exactly what legal action he could try to pursue. The President stayed out of the public eye but took to Twitter to suggest, without basis, that the election was being tainted by late-counted ballots.

Biden, briefly appearing in front of supporters in Delaware, urged patience,

saying the election “ain’t over until every vote is counted, every ballot is counted.” “It’s not my place or Donald Trump’s place to declare who’s won this election,” Biden said. “That’s the decision of the American people.”

■ Page 2: Trump opposes counting of mail-in votes

CM unveils projects worth ₹381 cr during Eluru visit

DC CORRESPONDENT ELURU, NOV. 4

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy unveiled plaques for development works worth ₹381.24 crore during his visit to Eluru in West Godavari on Wednesday.

The CM set stone to develop 11 roads spread over 74.13 km at an estimated cost of ₹201.24 crore under phase-I connecting Tanuku-Bhimavaram,

Palacole-Achanta, Medapadu-Narasapuram, Eluru-Jangareddygudem and others pertaining to roads and buildings department.

A revetment wall for protection of flood ba-nks of Tammileru at a cost of ₹80 crore falling under Eluru municipal corporation will be taken up.

Several works falling under panchayat raj and rural development department worth ₹75.86 crore

are to be taken up as ₹24.14 crore worth works were in progress out of total estimated cost of ₹100 crore.

Earlier, the CM was briefed about the upcoming protection wall to save Eluru from getting flooded with water from Tammileru by the water resources authorities.

Later, the CM attended the marriage of Eluru agriculture market committee chairman M. Mybabu’s daughter.

SC to Centre: Life ban for convicted?

PARMOD KUMAR | DC NEW DELHI, NOV. 4

The Supreme Court on Wednesday asked the Central government to spell out its stand on a plea seeking a lifetime ban on convicted politicians, including sitting lawmakers, from contesting elections as against the six-year ban from the date of release after undergoing sentence of two years or more under the prevailing law.

Justice N.V. Ramana, heading a bench also comprising Justice Surya Kant and Justice Aniruddha

● **APEX COURT** sought the Central government’s reply on a PIL filed by a BJP leader seeking a lifetime ban on convicted politicians

● **THE POLL** panel has already backed the plea for the lifetime ban on convicted politicians

Bose, sought the Central government’s reply on a public interest plea filed by Ashwini Upadhyay, a Supreme Court advocate and a BJP leader, seeking the deletion of the six-year

ban under Section 8(3) of the Representation of People Act and it being substituted with a lifetime ban.

Section 8(3) of the Representation of People Act, 1951, reads: “A person convicted of any offence and sentenced to imprisonment for not less than two years... shall be disqualified from the date of such conviction and shall continue to be disqualified for a further period of six years since his release.”

The Election Commission has already backed the plea for the lifetime ban on

convicted politicians from entering the electoral fray.

The court, while dealing with the aspect of the PIL seeking special courts to fast-track trials of sitting and former lawmakers facing criminal cases, was told by the high courts of West Bengal and Kerala that warrants and summons issued by the trial courts were not being executed by the state police.

The apex court sought a reply from the two state governments, saying it should be filed by a senior ranking, secretary-level officer.

WEDDING | ISSUES

Husband will have to pay maintenance from the date of filing such petition

SC sets rules for courts on marital maintenance

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 4

The Supreme Court on Wednesday ruled that maintenance to a wife and children in matrimonial matters should be awarded from the date on which the family court or other judicial foras were approached for seeking maintenance.

Heading a bench also comprising Justice R. Subhash Reddy, Justice Indu Malhotra framed the detailed affidavit of disclosure of assets and liabilities “to be filed by both parties

in all maintenance proceedings, including pending proceedings before the concerned Family Court or District Court or Magistrate’s Court, as the case maybe, throughout the country.”

Speaking for the bench, Justice Malhotra has also laid down the criteria to be adopted by the courts for determining the quantum of maintenance payable to an application.

Issuing a series of directions, the court said that these are not exhaustive as the concerned court may

● **SPEAKING FOR** the Supreme Court bench also comprising Justice R. Subhash Reddy, Justice Malhotra has also laid down the criteria to be adopted by the courts for determining the quantum of maintenance payable to an application.

exercise its discretion to consider any other factors, necessary or relevant in the facts and circumstances of a case.

The court has directed its

secretary-general to communicate the copy of the judgment to the Registrars of all the High Courts, who would in turn circulate it to all the district courts in the states and “it shall be displayed on the websites of all District Courts / Family Courts / Courts of Judicial Magistrates for awareness and implementation”.

The court felt it necessary to bring uniformity in deciding the issue of maintenance in matrimonial cases across the country as at present they suf-

fer from a variety of discrepancies which the top court had noted in various orders and verdicts by the subordinate courts.

The case is rooted in a criminal appeal filed by the husband, Rajneesh, against his wife Neha and their minor son, as arising out of a case filed in 2018.

The wife had left the matrimonial home in January 2013, shortly after the birth of a son on September 2, 2013, and secured an interim maintenance from a family court in Nagpur on August 28, 2015.

The husband challenged the order before the Nagpur bench of the Bombay High Court, which dismissed his petition on August 14, 2018, affirming the family court’s judgment. He approached the top court challenging the High Court order rejecting his plea.

It was in this backdrop, that the top court decided to frame guidelines on certain aspects pertaining to the payment of maintenance that should be followed by the courts across the country.

OTHER STORIES



FORMER MLA SIVANANDA REDDY PASSES AWAY

DC CORRESPONDENT
KADAPA, NOV. 4

Big industrialist, former MLA Kandula Sivananda Reddy, 70, passed away on early hours of Wednesday. He got a severe cardiac arrest at his home on 3 am of Wednesday; the doctors confirmed that he is no more. He played a key role in the Congress, TD and BJP. Former MLA is well known as MLC.

All party leaders mourned the death of Sivananda Reddy. Kandula Sivananda Reddy won the Kadapa MLA seat in 1989 on behalf of the Congress. He later joined the TD party. He contested as Kadapa MLA in 2004 and 2009 elections and lost.

He, later, went back to the Congress and then joined the BJP. He owned several educational institutions under the name Kandula Groups.

SECRETARIES PLAY CRUCIAL ROLE: OFFICIALS

From page 1

A senior official from municipal administration said, "We have witnessed 19.40 per cent rise in property tax collections so far in the current fiscal when compared with the last year for the same period as the state government came up with a series of initiatives like introduction of ward secretaries. The secretaries are playing crucial role in educating the property owners to pay taxes and they are also collecting taxes door-to-door."

HC ASKS STATE NOT TO ALLOT TEMPLE LANDS FOR HOUSES

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 4

AP High Court asked the state government not to proceed further on allotment of temple lands as house sites to the poor.

Villagers from Gumpam village of Vizianagaram district filed a petition in the High Court stating that the state government had allotted lands belonged to a temple in the village for distribution as house sites to the poor.

The court hearing the case on Wednesday asked the state government under what provision it was going to distribute temple lands as house sites. The court asked the state government to file a counter affidavit on the issue in four weeks and directed it not to take up any activity.

3 CAPITALS IDEA: CPM COUNTER AFFIDAVIT IN HC

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 4

CPM filed a counter-affidavit in AP High Court opposing the state government's move to relocate capital city Amaravati by setting up three capitals in the state.

CPM state secretary P. Madhu filed a counter-affidavit in the court slamming the Centre for failing to protect the interests of the people in Andhra Pradesh.

He said that though it was the Centre which made Hyderabad as the common capital for both AP and Telangana at the time of bifurcation of the state in 2014, he wondered as to how it could claim that it was no longer concerned on the location of setting up of the capital city.

He asked as to how the Centre offered ₹2,500 crore for development of the capital city in that case. He opined that it was unfair on the part of the state government to relocate the capital city after spending huge amount of money for the development of Amaravati as the capital city. He asked about the fate of farmers who offered their farmlands in land pooling scheme for development of the capital city and also the agreement between the state government and the farmers on development of pooled land as the capital city.



Energy Minister Balineni Srinivasa Reddy playing shuttle after inaugurating a shuttle court at the Mini Stadium in Ongole on Wednesday.

— DC

Eight world-class sports complexes in state soon

7-star and 5-star hotels to be built at 12 places to boost tourism

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 4

AP government to bring new tourism policy in a week and the famous iconic tourist centre Bhavani Island will be reopened on November 10.

Minister for tourism Muttamsetti Srinivas Rao said that the permission for the sailing of boats to Bhavani Island will come from the Irrigation Department after the closure of the Prakasam Barrage gates. He said that boating operations have been started all over AP except Papikondalu. He stated that command control rooms were established under safety measures for the supervision of boating operations.

The minister said that the state government is paying special attention to the development of sports in Andhra Pradesh, as part of which the construction of eight world-class sports complexes will be undertaken.

He mentioned that the complexes will be constructed on a public-private partnership (PPP) basis. He said that 7-star and 5-star hotels would be built in 12 places in the state. He said roadshows would be organised in Bengaluru, Pune and Delhi for this purpose.

Mr Rao said that all the sports complexes in the undivided Andhra Pradesh were located in Hyderabad and sports have not been given due prominence in Andhra Pradesh after the division of the state. He said

Sports complex works on: Min

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, NOV. 4

Andhra Pradesh government has been gearing up to build Sports Development complex in every constituency of the state at an estimated cost of ₹2 crore each.

Sports minister Muttamsetti Srinivas Rao said that works related to 39 such Sports Complexes are already completed.

He was addressing a gathering after inaugurating an Indoor Shuttle Court and Shopping Complex at Dr P. Anand District Sports Authority Mini Stadium at Ongole along with energy minister Balineni Srinivasa Reddy on Wednesday.

The Ministers also unveiled a statue of Sri Prakasam Panthulu and played shuttle to mark the opening of the ₹1 crore estimated Shuttle Court equipped with LED lighting and wooden flooring.

that their government is paying special attention to the development of sports infrastructure in the state under which integrated world-class sports complexes will be constructed in eight places in the state. He explained that these complexes will be constructed on a PPP basis in Guntur, Sriakulam, Aganampudi,

● **SPORTS MINISTER** says that works related to 39 such Sports Complexes are already completed.

● **Sports development complex in every constituency of the state will be built at an estimated cost of ₹2 crore each.**

The sports minister said that the idea behind establishing Sports Complexes in every constituency is to unearth the hidden talent of sportspersons in rural areas.

He said they have sanctioned ₹11.22 lakh under Dr YSR Sports Incentive Scheme to provide financial aid to 68 sportspersons of Prakasam district who secured medals at the national level in different sports and games.

Mr Srinivasa Rao claimed that they have allotted jobs under sports

quota to 70 outstanding sportspersons in the village/ward secretariats.

He said works of two sports complexes are completed at Yarragondapalem and Addani constituencies in Prakasam district.

According to the minister, the reservoirs in Prakasam district are being developed as tourism spots as part of a state-wide programme. He praised Mr Balineni Srinivasa Reddy for his support to develop the mini-stadium at Ongole.

Speaking on the occasion, Collector Pola Bhaskar said they have earmarked 18 acres for Sports College at Pernamitta located close to Ongole City.

He urged the two ministers to take steps to build infrastructure for beach sports at Kottapatnam beach. Kanigiri legislator Burra Madhusudhan Yadav and assistant director of Sports Authority of AP Ramana were present.

Pichukalanka (East Godavari), Horsa Lee Hills (Chittoor), Nagarjuna Sagar (Guntur), Surya Lanka Beach (Guntur), Orvakal (Kurnool), Kalingapatnam (Srikakulam), Rushikonda (Visakhapatnam), Bhavani Island (Krishna), Tirupati-Perur (Chittoor) and Polavaram (West Godavari) areas.

YSRC questions SEC on leaking affidavit to select media

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 4

YSR Congress has refuted allegations of opposition Telugu Desam that the ruling party was afraid of facing local body elections by asserting that the state government is only concerned about the health of people in view of the continuing cases of Coronavirus.

Government chief whip Gadikota Srikanth Reddy pointed out that originally, the State Election Commission (SEC) had postponed the local body

● **Terming the conduct of SEC objectionable, the chief whip said such leakage has lowered the image of the judiciary**

elections when there were only three Corona cases in the state. But now, there are about 3,000 plus Covid-19 cases per day. Thus conducting of elections will not only pose a threat to employees but also the people.

The government chief whip accused the SEC of leaking the affidavit he

had filed in the court on Wednesday. The accusation followed a vernacular daily publishing contents of the affidavit on Wednesday which, Srikanth Reddy alleged, indicated who had selectively leaked the affidavit to media.

Terming the conduct of SEC Nimmagadda Ramesh objectionable, the chief whip said such leakage has lowered the image of the judiciary. He said the public has realised the biased nature of Ramesh Kumar and is witness to his close nexus with Chandrababu Naidu.

TRIBAL | WELFARE

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 4

The officials are instructed to restrain diversion of Tribal sub-plan funds and to use those funds for the development of tribal communities.

Deputy Chief Minister Pamula Pushpa Srivani conducted a review meeting here on Wednesday with the officials of the Tribal Welfare Department and reviewed various welfare schemes

Continue health schemes for students: Pushpa Srivani

Officials told not to divert sub-plan funds

introduced for the Tribals in the state.

She directed the authorities to closely monitor whether the funds allocated for tribal development from 48 departments of the state as part of the Tribal Sub-Plan are being spent following the regulations or being diverted under TSP without bringing to the notice of the nodal agency.

Ms Srivani instructed the authorities to take steps to continue the

health scheme as usual for the students of tribal institutions. She opined that the scheme was necessary to provide continuous services in the Ashram schools.

She also suggested that feeder ambulances, which are used to provide health care in emergencies, should be continued and the number shall be increased if necessary.

She directed the Tribal Welfare Department to react swiftly on the com-

Trump opposes counting of mail-in votes

From Page 1

Vote tabulations routinely continue beyond Election Day, and states largely set the rules for when the count has to end. In Presidential elections, a key point is the date in December when presidential electors meet. That's set by federal law.

Several states allow mailed-in votes to be accepted after Election Day, as long as they were postmarked by Tuesday. That includes Pennsylvania, where ballots postmarked by November 3 can be accepted if they arrive up to three days after the election.

Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf said he had "promised Pennsylvanians that we would count every vote and that's what we're going to do."

Trump appeared to suggest those ballots should not be counted, and that he would fight for that outcome at the high court. But legal experts were dubious of Trump's declaration. Trump has appointed three of the high court's nine justices including, most recently, Amy Coney Barrett.

Democrats typically outperform Republicans in mail voting, while the

GOP looks to make up ground in Election Day turnout. That means the early margins between the candidates could be influenced by which type of votes — early or Election Day — were being reported by the states.

Throughout the campaign, Trump cast doubt about the integrity of the election and repeatedly suggested that mail-in ballots should not be counted. Both campaigns had teams of lawyers at the ready to move into battleground states if there were legal challenges.

Trump kept several states, including Texas, Iowa and Ohio, where Biden had made a strong play in the final stages of the campaign. But Biden picked off states where Trump sought to compete, including New Hampshire and Minnesota.

But Florida was the biggest, fiercely contested battleground on the map, with both campaigns battling over the 29 Electoral College votes that went to Trump. The President adopted Florida as his new home state, wooed its Latino community, particularly Cuban-Americans, and held rallies there incessantly.

YSRC is destroying state's future: Uma

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 4

Telugu Desam leader Deveneni Umamaheswara Rao on Wednesday expressed concern that the YSRC government was deliberately preventing large-scale investments into the state, including Visakhapatnam, out of sheer political interests.

He deplored that lands that were allotted were snatched away from Lulu, Adani, Templeton and other companies in Vizag, which hampered industrial development and employment opportunities.

He alleged that the ruling party was bent upon destroying the golden future of the state's young generation. They will have no other option but leave for other states in search of greener pastures.

Mr Umamaheswara Rao claimed that Visakhapatnam rose and emerged as an IT hub and now, within 17 months, millions worth of investments have gone to neighbouring States. He alleged that there have been zero investments since Y.S. Jagan Mohan

● **TD LEADER** deplored that lands that were allotted were snatched away from Lulu, Adani, Templeton and other companies in Vizag, which hampered industrial development and employment opportunities.

Reddy had become Chief Minister, who for narrow political gains was indiscriminately preventing the growth of the port city and the state.

The TD leader said that by reviewing and cancelling the power purchase agreements (PPAs), the YSRC regime has brought national and international disrepute to AP.

Many industrial groups and investors have made unsavoury comments because of the arrogant attitude of the ruling party.

He demanded the government to explain to the people what practical projects it had brought for the greater development of Visakhapatnam city in last one-and-half years.

TD DEMANDS JAGAN TO COLLECT MASSIVE POWER DUES FROM TS

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 4

Telugu Desam MLA Nimmala Rama Naidu strongly objected to the manner in which the YSRC government was going ahead with fixing current metres on agricultural connections without bothering about the long-term interests of farmers. He accused the government of imposing a burden on the people by hiking power charges twice in the past 17 months.

Now, they were fixing metres, which would be detrimental to the future prospects of farmers.

Mr Rama Naidu asked Jagan Mohan Reddy to

collect pending amounts from Telangana Electricity Distribution Companies instead of putting a needless burden on the AP people and farmers. He pointed out nearly ₹6,000 crore outstanding from Telangana Discoms but Andhra Pradesh has not received a single rupee so far.

He accused the YSRC of running an anti-farmers and the anti-people regime with their retrogressive policies. He claimed that the metres were being fixed on pump sets only for the purpose of availing more loans, which would eventually become an unbearable burden on the people.

IIT, IISER-TIRUPATI SIGNS MoU ON FACULTY, STUDENTS, FACILITIES EXCHANGE

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, NOV. 4

In a first of its kind, IIT and IISER, Tirupati has signed an MoU that would facilitate both the institutes in certain programmes like faculty and student exchange, transfer of credits, sharing of laboratories and precision scientific research facilities.

The founder directors of the institutions, Prof K.N. Satyanarayana, Director, IIT-Tirupati and Prof K.N. Ganesh, Director, IISER-Tirupati, have signed and exchanged the MoU at the IISER's transit campus here on Wednesday.

Speaking on the occasion, both the directors explained that the faculty can now take up multidisciplinary joint research programmes and sharing of such facilities and creation of common research facilities would certainly enable optimal utilisation of scarce resources besides strengthening the bonding between the faculty, students and staff of the Institute.

Prof. Ganesh recalled that the collaboration between the two institutes began with the joint inauguration function on 28th March 2015.

ANIL REITERATES HIS LOYALTY TO JAGAN

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, NOV. 4

Water resources minister Anilkumar Yadav, who makes use of every available opportunity to emphasise about his loyalty to the Chief Minister, once again reiterated that he would remain with Jagan Mohan Reddy as long as he is alive while stressing that he is indebted to the YSRC chief.

Addressing newly elected chairmen and directors of BC Corporation at Nellore, Dr Anil turned emotional while pointing to the affection of Jagan Mohan Reddy towards him while referring to his elevation as minister though he is very young.

Stressing that all Backward Classes voted for YSR Congress in 2019 elections, he said the time has come for Mr Chandrababu Naidu to return to Hyderabad and take rest.

Taking potshots against Nara Lokesh for his fumbling while driving a tractor recently, he said the TDP situation would be the same if the steering was given to him.

Energy minister Balineni Srinivasa Reddy said Jagan Mohan Reddy fulfilled 90 per cent of his promises in a short time, unlike his predecessors.

BC CORP CHIEFS TOLD TO WORK FOR BC's WELFARE

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, NOV. 4

Panchayat raj minister Peddireddy Ramchandra Reddy called upon the newly appointed BC corporations chairmen and members to work hard for the welfare and upliftment of backward communities.

Addressing a meeting organised by the YSRC BC leaders here on Wednesday, the minister thanked the CM Jagan Mohan Reddy for fulfilling his poll promise by appointing 53 chairmen and 656 directors for BC Corporations in the state. "Several political parties have till date used BCs as vote banks and did not strive for the welfare of those communities. For the first time in AP politics, Mr Jagan is the only CM who fulfilled his promise and appointed chairman and directors to all the BC corporations," he said.

Industries minister and Chittoor district in-charge Mekapati Gautam Reddy lauded the efforts of Peddireddy in securing four chairmen and 53 directors posts to the Chittoor district.

SHORT TAKES

CBI RAIDS OFFICES OF AMBICA GROUP IN W. GODAVARI

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 4

CBI sleuths raided offices of M/s Ambica Group of Companies pertaining to their shareholder M/s Trinetra Infra Ventures Limited at Eluru in West Godavari on Wednesday.

M/s Ambica Group of companies' advocate C. Raghu in a statement on Wednesday said that M/s Trinetra Infra Ventures Limited is having its registered office in Hyderabad and it had purchased some shares of M/s Ambica Agarbathies and Aroma Limited earlier.

He said that they are providing information to the CBI officials as they visited their offices pertaining to M/s Trinetra Infra Ventures Limited and made it clear that Ambica Group of Companies was not involved in any issue.

CBI officials are reportedly looking for information on default of bank loans and other irregularities by M/s Trinetra Infra Ventures Limited.

ONE ARRESTED FOR GST EVASION

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 4

The officers of the Directorate General of GST Intelligence, Visakhapatnam has arrested the director of a company located at Vizianagaram engaged in manufacture and supply of lead ingots.

Based on the searches conducted in Delhi, Haryana and Visakhapatnam, various evidences were gathered that led to unearthing the modus operandi of utilizing fake invoices without actual receipt of goods. The fraudulent input tax credit (ITC) so availed on the basis of fake invoices was being utilized to offset tax liability.

VESSEL NOT TO BE GIVEN FOR TOURISM: RESOLVE

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 4

The agencies which have been hired for salvaging the stranded Bangladesh vessel MV Maa, on Wednesday announced that some media agencies floated fake news that the ship would be taken over by the tourism department and converted into a floating restaurant.

Chairman and managing director of Navship Marine Services Ltd in a release said Resolve Marine a USA based company having their branch office at Mumbai has been appointed by the vessel owners to carry out salvage operations and already their representative are in Vizag. Necessary inspection and survey works are being carried out on daily basis and the pull off operation estimated to be carried out during the spring tide conditions around November 15.

ACB EXAMINES FILES IN TAHSILDAR OFFICE

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, NOV. 4

A team of Anti Corruption Bureau sleuths seized some documents pertaining to Patta Passbooks from the tahsildar office in Podalakur on Wednesday.

ACB CI Srinivasa Rao said they came to the tahsildar office to verify records following a complaint lodged by a woman, Kantamma of Lingampalli.

AAROgyASRI: FEES PAID BACK TO PATIENTS

DC CORRESPONDENT
ANANTAPUR, NOV. 4

In a spontaneous action, joint collector Siri initiated to repay bills collected from patients who were being treated under Aarogyasri at Pragna Cancer Hospital here on Wednesday. At least 20 patients got back ₹42,000, paid towards medical bills even though they were admitted under Aarogyasri scheme.

In a tip-off, the joint collector Dr Siri inspected the Pragna Cancer Hospital located on outskirts of Anantapur.

Testing takes a hit as Imasq staff strike work

Staff have not been paid salaries for the past four months

MD ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 4

People in the city and from Krishna district keen on undergoing Covid-19 test are facing hardship following the abrupt stopping of free corona testing in Imasq (Intelligence Monitoring Analysis Service Quarantine) buses.

The staff in Imasq buses stopped reporting for work as they reportedly have not been paid salaries for the past four months. The buses were convenient for the people as they were near the railway station, IGMC stadium and Gundala.

WOMAN RESCUED FROM ABDUCTORS

HOSKOTE
NAGABHUSHANAM | DC
ANANTAPUR, NOV. 4

Anantapur police rescued a 21-year-old woman who was abducted by a constable from Kurnool district within 30 hours of abduction and arrested the constable and his close aides and also seized three cars here on Wednesday. The police teams foiled the bid of the constable to forcibly marry the woman.

SP Satya Esubabu told the media that Bhagirath was working as a constable at Avuku police station in Kurnool district. The parents of the woman had fixed marriage with the constable Bhagirath but cancelled the marriage a day before the wedding few weeks ago on reasons of criminal cases against the constable and bad history. But, he tried in many ways to convince her parents, who rejected the proposal. Finally, he hatched plan to abduct the woman and implement the plan on November 2. Bhagirath abducted her when she was proceeding towards the market in Azad Nagar area and took her in a vehicle.

The parents alerted fourth town police soon after abduction, district police alerted all main routes and police stations suspecting the abductor would forcibly marry the woman. Suspecting police hunt, the abductor left the vehicle near Tadipatri and got another vehicle. Latter, he took the woman to Madanapalle in Chittoor district and threatened the woman to accept for marriage on November 2. The constable again took her towards Banaganipalle in Kurnool district where circle inspector Suresh Reddy nabbed the abductors and rescued the woman.

AP POLICE FIRST TO CONDUCT OPN MUSKAN

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 4

DGP Gautam Sawang stated that for the first of its kind in the country, AP police conducted Operation Muskan to rescue children during police commemoration week. He said that the operation gave good results as the police department rescued 16,000 children and vowed to work for the eradication of child labour.

A Webinar was held in which the DGP and home minister Mekathoti Sucharita interacted with the rescued children through online.

DGP Sawang said that a total of 25298 children were rescued during operation Muskan which was conducted in three phases in January, July and October months in 13 districts of AP. He said that in the third phase operation Muskan conducted during police commemoration week in October, as many as 16457 children rescued.

● The employees stated that they were appointed as outsourcing staff five months ago and as many as 150 employees used to work in Imasq buses. They lamented that they did not receive salaries and had taken the issue to the notice of the district collector and medical and health department officials and others but in vain

um and Gundala.

G. Ravi and K. Ramu (names changed), who went to the railway station to

undergo the corona test lamented that they were returning disappointed for the past two days as the mobile testing service was not available. They said that poor and middle class people preferred Imasq centres but now they will have to shell down between ₹3,000 and ₹5,000 in private testing centres. They sought officials to resolve the issue and restore Imasq services.

Meanwhile, the employees stated that they were appointed as outsourcing staff five months ago and as many as 150 employees used to work in Imasq buses.

They lamented that they did not receive salaries and had taken the issue to the notice of the district collector and medical and health department officials and others but in vain.

They regretted that their families were subject to financial difficulties. They stated that despite not being paid wages, they would dedicatedly also go to rural areas and conduct tests.

Krishna district medical and health officer Dr M. Suhasini said that officials are working on resolving the issue in order to restore Imasq testing services.

Anti Submarine Warfare Operations



Naval Ships from Indian Navy, United States Navy, Japanese Maritime Self Defence Force and Royal Australian Navy take part in the Anti Submarine Warfare Operations, Cross Deck Landings and Seamanship Manoeuvres at the Sea during the Phase-1 of the Malabar-20, 24th Edition off Visakhapatnam in the Bay of Bengal on Wednesday. Indian Naval Ships, Ranvijay, Shivalik, Shakti, Sukanya and Submarine Sindhuraj took part in the exercises with USS John S McCain, HMAS Ballarat and JMSDF Ship JS Onami.

PHOTO BY ARRANGEMENT FROM EASTERN NAVAL COMMAND

YSRC govt determined to develop Vijayawada: Botsa

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 4

YSR Congress government is determined to develop Vijayawada city in all aspects, minister for municipal and urban development Botsa Satyanarayana asserted on Wednesday.

Inaugurated 25 CNG vehicles allocated for collecting garbage from door to door at the Indira Gandhi Municipal Stadium, the minister said the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) is implementing several programmes as part of beautifying the city.

He pointed out that Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has sanctioned ₹150 crore for developing Vijayawada. As part of this, the state government is already developing Singh Nagar Dumping yard as a park.

The minister congratulated VMC Commissioner V. Prasanna Venkatesh and sought help from people of Vijayawada to make the city clean and green. The VMC commissioner maintained that segregation of garbage

SUB-STATION ON INDRAKEELADRI HILL TO SUPPLY POWER TO DURGA TEMPLE

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 4

Endowments minister Velampalli Srinivas said that about 11 lakh farmers across the state and 1.1 lakh farmers in Krishna district are being benefited through the YSR Free Agriculture Power scheme.

The minister released a poster of the YSR Free Agriculture Power scheme at his office here on Wednesday.

APSPDCL chairman Padma Janardhan Reddy and ED B.V. Sudhakar were also present. The minister further said that the construction works

is a must for beautification of the city.

Endowments minister Velampalli Srinivas said construction of an indoor sub-station in the Vijayawada West constituency at an estimated cost of ₹5 crore will

of indoor sub-station in the west constituency with an estimated cost of ₹5 crore would begin shortly.

The minister added that the indoor sub-station would be constructed on the premises of Durga Maleswaraswamy temple atop Indrakeeladri hill to provide quality and low-cost electricity to the Kanaka Durga temple.

Mr Srinivas said that the officials are going to conduct special programmes at the district, mandal and village levels to address the concerns of the farmers as part of the central and state power reforms and free power scheme.

begin shortly. The sub-station will come up on the premises of Durga Maleswaraswamy temple atop Indrakeeladri hill to provide quality and low-cost electricity to Kanaka Durga temple.

Virata parva episode on Nov. 7

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, NOV. 4

TTD additional EO A.V. Dharma Reddy informed that the most important 'Kichaka Samharanam' - Naari Niranjanam' episode as part of the Virat parva parayanams will be performed at Nada Niranjanam platform in Tirumala on November 7 from 8 pm - 9 pm.

The speciality of the episode is that women artists will light the lamps and narrate the concept of women empowerment extolled in the episode of Virata parva. TTD has been organising it.

BALALAYAM AT VARAHASWAMY TEMPLE

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, NOV. 4

The TTD will organise the annual Balalaya programme at Sri Varahaswamy temple from December 6 to 10 for which Ankuraranam will be performed on the previous day.

According to Agama traditions, Balalayam is conducted at any temple for rejuvenation of the sanctum with repairs and gold plating of the Vimanam etc. Since there will be no daily rituals dur-

ing those days in the sanctum, a wooden model of the Mula Virat will be installed in the mukha mandapam of temple for devotees darshan.

For the five days of developmental works of the sanctum, daily rituals of the deities are performed for the model idols in the mandapam. The TTD is also conducting special programmes at the temple yagashala from December 6 to 10 and maha prokshana of the temple is scheduled for December 10 morning.

Srisailam to get a master plan for facelift

D. SIVA RAMI REDDI | DC
KURNOOL, NOV. 4

The master plan for development of Srisailam, keeping in view the expansion needs over the next 25 years, is underway. New Delhi-based Aecom project planners have arrived to assess the needs of the temple town, said Sri Mallikarjuna

Brhama-ramba Swamy temple's executive officer K.S. Rama Rao.

He said the plan is in its preliminary stage and involves widening of roads, increasing accommodation, pilgrims' convenience outlets and rationalising queuing systems.

He said a master plan was developed in the year

2013 but could not be taken up due to various hiccups.

One of the constraining factors was lack of free accommodation for pilgrims and that need is being addressed now. We are also planning donor cottages, he said.

In the digital era, robust systems for e-ticketing and seamless darshan

facilities are also being worked out, he said. Another proposal is to provide glider paths on the queue complex to help the old and differently-abled pilgrims to have a quick and happy darshan, he said.

Further, accommodation complexes and shopping malls and widening of the existing roads

besides developing infrastructure in Srisailam temple town expecting more devotees to turn up is on the cards, he added. A high-security zone within the temple complex and a commercial complex for locating shops away from the security zone would also be part of the development activity.

The EO further said that queue complex, dormitories, choultries, public utilities, open theatre for cultural activities will be constructed as per needful. They will develop Srisailam temple on the lines of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams to attract more devotees from various states, stated the executive officer.

NGT seeks AP, TS response on firecrackers for Diwali

BALU PULIPAKA | DC
with agency inputs
HYDERABAD, NOV. 4.

Diwali celebrations, particularly the bursting of firecrackers and setting off of fireworks in cities such as Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam and several others in Andhra Pradesh, are under the National Green Tribunal's scanner.

During a hearing in New Delhi on Wednesday, the NGT's National Bench, sought responses from Andhra Pradesh government along with those of some other states saying the scope of its hearings that began with respect to air pollution from fireworks in the National Capital Region (NCR) of Delhi, "may need to be to be extended beyond NCR so as to suggest that in all the concerned States where air quality is not satisfactory may consider taking action on the pattern of action taken by the States of Odisha and Rajasthan."

Odisha and Rajasthan governments have already issued notifications prohibiting the sale and use of firecrackers in their states.

On Wednesday, the

Bench, headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel, expanded the ambit of hearing cases on pollution by use of firecrackers beyond the NCR and issued notices to 18 states and Union Territories where air quality is beyond acceptable norms.

In Andhra Pradesh, the list of cities as per the Central Pollution Control Board's 122 air quality non-attainment city list where air quality, as per record maintained by the CPCB, is generally beyond permissible limits, are Guntur, Kurnool, Nellore, Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam, Anantapur, Chittoor, Eluru, Kadapa, Ongole, Rajahmundry, Srikakulam and Vizianagaram.

In Telangana state, the air quality in Hyderabad and Ramagundam fails to meet the permissible limits as set by the Central Pollution Control Board. Hyderabad, Nalgonda, Sangareddy and the Patancheru area in Telangana state fall in the group of non-attainment cities.

"Accordingly, we consider it appropriate to issue a notice to all the States/UTs where the above cities fall, in

addition, to notice already issued to the Governments of Delhi, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

"Notice need not be issued to the states of Odisha and Rajasthan in view of the notification issued by the said States. To all other States/UTs where the above cities fall, notice may be issued by e-mail to the concerned Chief Secretaries returnable for tomorrow," the bench said.

In addition to Andhra Pradesh, the NGT sought responses from Telangana, Assam, Bihar, Chandigarh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, and Bengal.

The Tribunal said it may have to consider prohibiting the use of firecrackers to protect the health of the vulnerable groups in 122 cities. The Tribunal was hearing various pleas seeking action against pollution by use of firecrackers during the time air quality is unsatisfactory with the potential of the severity of Covid-19 pandemic.

STATE RECORDS 2,477 NEW COVID-19 CASES, 10 DEATHS

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 4

AP registered 2,477 new Covid-19 cases raising tally to 8,33,208 and 10 deaths taking toll to 6,744.

Among daily cases of Covid-19, East Godavari topped the state by registering 424 followed by 375 in West Godavari, 332 in Krishna, 323 in Guntur, 321 in Chittoor, 127 in Kadapa, 122 in Visakhapatnam, 117 in Srikakulam, 94 in Nellore, 85 in Vizianagaram, 70 in Prakasam, 52 in Anantapur and 35 in Kurnool.

East Godavari continue to be the worst affected by registering 1,17,207 cumulative confirmed Covid cases followed by 87,210 in West Godavari, 79,643 in Chittoor, 68,386 in Guntur, 65,029 in Anantapur, 60,089 in Prakasam, 59,872 in Nellore, 59,600 in Kurnool, 56,270 in Visakhapatnam, 52,642 in Kadapa, 44,300 in Srikakulam, 40,473

in Krishna, 39,592 in Vizianagaram, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

The rate of recovery of Covid-19 infected patients has been good in East Godavari with 1,12,201 followed by 84,572 in West Godavari, 76,640 in Chittoor, 64,589 in Guntur, 63,302 in Anantapur, 59,115 in Nellore, 58,839 in Kurnool, 58,478 in Prakasam, 54,074 in Visakhapatnam, 51,085 in Kadapa, 43,296 in Srikakulam, 39,053 in Vizianagaram, 36,887 in Krishna, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

AP registered the lowest ever daily death of Covid-19 infected patients to be just 10 with Guntur, Krishna and Visakhapatnam registering two each followed by one each in Anantapur, Chittoor, East Godavari and West Godavari.

Among cumulative cases of death of Covid, Chittoor reported the highest number of 788.

DRUGS OFFICIAL ARRESTED FOR ₹3.7CR ILLEGAL ASSETS

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 4

ACB sleuths carried out simultaneous searches on properties of drugs control administration deputy director and unearthed assets worth of ₹3.7 crore disproportionate to the known sources of income on Wednesday.

The ACB authorities found movable and immovable assets registered in the name of the drugs senior official Mothiki Venkata Siva Satyanarayana Vara Prasad and his family members at four different places in Vijayawada and Guntur during their

search. They found three houses including four buildings worth of ₹3,43,80,000 and a flat worth of ₹6,00,000; three house sites measuring 800 square yards worth of ₹15,64,000; two agriculture lands measuring 2.47 acres worth of ₹1,35,850 and a four wheeler and a motor cycle worth of ₹7,50,000. The authorities also found cash of ₹1,18,580; nearly 1.118 kgs of gold worth of ₹18,00,000; bank balance of ₹15,32,000 and fixed deposits of ₹50,60,000.

The accused was found in possession of assets worth of ₹3.7 crore.

HERD OF CATTLE BLOCKS ROAD AT MANNANUR

DC CORRESPONDENT
MAHBUBNAGAR, NOV. 4

A row between cattle grazers and Amrabad Tiger Reserve officials is getting murkier as hundreds of cattle were parked on the Srisailem road near Mannanur checkpoint protesting against Forest official's order not to allow cattle to graze in forest lands. The traffic was halted for 30 minutes on Wednesday.

Trouble began when Chandu Naik, a villager who let his cattle into the forest lands was said to have been manhandled by the officials. He approached the human rights commission seeking justice, said Mannanur sarpanch Sriram.

When contacted, the N a g a r k u r n o o l Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Kista Goud said the Tiger Reserve is a protected zone and cattle can not be allowed.

FARMERS TOLD AGAINST APPROACHING PVT TRADERS

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, NOV. 4

Assuring Minimum Support Price for farm produce, revenue authorities appealed to the farmers not to approach private traders to dispose of paddy cultivated during Kharif season.

Speaking to media persons at his chambers in Ongole on Wednesday, Joint Collector (Revenue and Rythu Bharosa) of Prakasam district, J. Venkata Murali said the government already announced ₹1,888 per quintal to A grade paddy and ₹1,868 for general variety of paddy.

He said they would procure paddy through 75 Paddy Purchase Centres in the limits of 309 Rythu Bharosa centres across the district.

IN BRIEF

KERALA CONG CHIEF BOOKED FOR RAPE JIBE

GILVESTER ASSARAY | DC THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, NOV. 4.

Kerala Pradesh Congress committee president Mr Mullapally Ramachandran was booked by police for his offensive remarks against rape victims which had triggered angry reactions from women organisations in the state.

Even though the KPCC chief had withdrawn the remarks and tendered an unconditional apology, various women organisations lodged a strong protest against him demanding legal action. The case was registered with the women police station here under various sections of IPC following a complaint forwarded by city police commissioner.

The KPCC president has been slapped with section 508 and 354 sections of IPC which pertains to insulting the modesty of any women and outraging the modesty of a woman respectively.

Mr Ramachandran made the controversial remarks on November 1 while inaugurating a protest meet against the government. The following statement triggered the controversy "Everyday this woman wakes up saying she has been raped by someone. It is a desperate attempt by the LDF to dress up a prostitute and make her tell tales standing behind the curtain. This game plan will not work," he said.

He further had said, "one can understand when a woman is raped once. But what if she repeatedly says this. A woman with self respect will either die by committing suicide after she is raped or else try not to be sexually assaulted again."

2ND BATCH OF 3 RAFALE JETS LANDS IN INDIA

PAWAN BALI | DC NEW DELHI, NOV. 4

The second batch of 3 Rafale fighter jets for Indian Air Force landed in India on Wednesday evening after flying non-stop from France.

The fighter jets landed in Jamnagar at 8.14 pm after three mid-air refuelling en route. These aircraft took over 8 hours to reach directly from France.

This will take the total strength of Rafale fighters with IAF to eight to take on threats emerging from China.

Indian Air Force will like to operationalise the second batch of Rafale jets as soon as possible.

In the first batch India had received five Rafale aircraft in July and these were inducted in IAF in September. The first batch has already been operationalised and has carried out sorties in Ladakh sector. In 2016, India had signed a \$59,000 crore deal for 36 Rafales which will be based in Ambala and Hasimara (West Bengal) air bases.

The 4.5 generation fighter aircraft, capable of carrying nuclear weapons provides IAF unmatched air superiority in the region with its advanced avionics.

MADHYA PRADESH BANS CHINESE CRACKERS

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, NOV. 4

Madhya Pradesh government on Wednesday imposed a ban on storage, transportation, sale and use of Chinese crackers in the state ahead of festival of lights.

Chief minister Shivrang Singh Chouhan told reporters here that restrictions on storage, transportation, sale and use of crackers manufactured in other countries like China have been imposed in the state.

He said those who would violate the order would attract provisions of section 9(B) and 1(B) of the Explosive Act, providing a minimum of 2 years of imprisonment.

Mr Chouhan, however, said there would be no restrictions on sale and use of crackers manufactured in India, in the state. The state government has also decided to impose a ban on crackers having pictures of Hindu deities.

"It has been decided to impose restrictions on sale of crackers having pictures of Hindu deities since they hurt religious sentiments of a particular community," Mr Chouhan said.

Chief protest



Congress leader Navjot Singh Sidhu greets Punjab Chief Minister Capt. Amarinder Singh during a protest against the recent farm reform Bills at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on Wednesday. Amarinder Singh sat on a protest demonstration against what he called was "step motherly" treatment towards his state. He said he wanted to save Punjab and its farmers. — PTI

It's 'third wave' in Delhi, but no need to panic: Kejriwal

With over 46K cases, India records 20% increase in daily Covid cases

VINEETA PANDEY | DC NEW DELHI, NOV. 4

Kerala and Delhi are registering the highest number of daily fresh cases in the country at present even as active cases of coronavirus in India continue to be on a decline.

While Kerala on Tuesday had 8,516 fresh cases and 28 new deaths, Delhi recorded 6,842 new cases and 51 deaths in one day prompting Delhi Chief Minister Mr Arvind Kejriwal to declare that the national capital is going through the "third wave" of the pandemic.

"For some time now, Delhi has seen an increase in the number of the coronavirus cases. We may refer to it as the third wave. We are holding a review meeting on Thursday over this. We have been monitoring the situation continuously and there is no need to panic. We will take whatever steps are needed," Mr Kejriwal said.

The Delhi government has decided to intensify testing in markets, restau-

● ON OCTOBER 6, CHIEF Minister Arvind Kejriwal had said that Delhi is past the peak of the second wave of coronavirus and the situation has been controlled to a large extent.

rants and other places that register heavy footfall.

Mr Kejriwal said his government intends to challenge the Delhi High Court decision to cap 80 per cent city beds for Delhi residents as a huge number of Covid patients from neighbouring towns like Faridabad, Gurugram, Noida, Ghaziabad are rushing to Delhi for treatment putting pressure on already stretched Delhi health infrastructure.

As active cases continue to decline, a 20 per cent rise in daily fresh cases was seen on Tuesday.

The total numbers of Covid-19 cases in India have reached 83.14 lakh after 46,253 fresh cases were registered in the last 24 hours. So far 1,23,611 people have died due to the virus out of which 514 are

fresh fatalities.

India's fatality rate stands at 1.49 per cent. According to Union health ministry there are 5.34 active cases of Covid-19 infection in the country as on date which comprise only 6.42 per cent of the total caseload, while the total number of recoveries has surged to 76.56 lakh, taking the national recovery rate to over 92 per cent.

The ministry added that 17 states and Union Territories have recovery rates more than the national average while 16 states and Union Territories, including Assam, Punjab, West Bengal, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar, have cases per million lower than the national average.

The officials said that 80 per cent of the new recovered cases are from 10 states and UTs, with Kerala recording the highest — more than 8,000 single-day recoveries — followed by Karnataka (7,000).

Theatres, yoga centers to 'unlock' in Maha

DC CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, NOV. 4

The entertainment-starved people in Maha-rashtra can now enjoy movies and plays during the festive season of Diwali as the state government has allowed cinema halls, drama theatres and multiplexes to reopen from November 5.

Yoga institutes, indoor sports facilities such as badminton halls, tennis, squash courts, indoor shooting ranges will also be allowed to operate from Thursday. Physical distancing and sanitization must be ensured, the guidelines said.

Under unlock guidelines, the state had allowed restaurants, bars, food courts to open with 50 percent capacity from October 5. All industrial and manufacturing units of non-essential items in Mumbai Metropolitan Region will be open.

strictly be followed in containment zones.

As per the latest government guidelines, swimming pools used for training of state, national and international-level sportspersons and located outside containment zones can operate from November 5.

Yoga institutes, indoor sports facilities such as badminton halls, tennis, squash courts, indoor shooting ranges will also be allowed to operate from Thursday. Physical distancing and sanitization must be ensured, the guidelines said.

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JD(U) SUBMITS MEMO AGAINST TEJASHWI

NAYEAR AZAD | DC PATNA, NOV. 4

Ahead of the third and final phase of polls, the JD(U) has submitted a memorandum to the Election Commission seeking action against RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav and his brother Tej Pratap for allegedly concealing facts about their properties in the affidavit.

"We have submitted documentary proof about properties which both the brothers Tejashwi and Tej Pratap did not mention in their affidavit. We have also urged the Election Commission to investigate the false affidavits and take action under section 123 (2) of the Representation of People's Act", JD(U) leader Neeraj Kumar said.

The JD(U) leader said that the state Chief Electoral Officer H.R. Srinivas has assured the delegation that the details furnished in the memorandum would be sent to the election commission for further action. The NDA has been raising the "corruption, land grabbing and jungle raj" issue against the opposition coalition led by RJD in almost all their rallies.

After WB, Kerala revokes nod for CBI probes without its consent

GILVESTER ASSARAY | DC THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, NOV. 4

The LDF government in Kerala on Wednesday decided to revoke the general consent required by the CBI under the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, for probing cases in the state.

From now on the central investigation agency will have to take permission of the state government for conducting investigations in fresh cases. The Kerala government move comes in the wake of CBI's decision to register a case in connection with the alleged corruption in Life Mission housing scheme.

With Wednesday's Cabinet decision, Kerala joined the league of opposition ruled West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Maharashtra which have withdrawn the general consent required by the

CBI under the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act to act in states. The state government move, however, will have no impact on the cases which are already being investigated by the CBI.

The CBI had initiated a separate probe into the housing scheme following a complaint filed by Congress MLA Anil Akkara regarding violation of Foreign Contribution Regulation

Act. The legislator had alleged that the foreign funds for the housing project were received by private construction companies, Unitac Builders and Developers and its subsidiary Sane Ventures which amounted to violation of the provisions of FCRA.

However, the high court stayed the CBI probe for two months following a petition filed by the state government.

The central government has criticised the state administration over the action against the senior journalist.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah termed Goswami's arrest as 'blatant misuse of state power and attack on free press must be and will be opposed'.

However, the Naik family stated that Goswami had tried to derail the probe in the 2018 case.

Arnab arrested in suicide case

SAURABH JOSHI | DC MUMBAI, NOV. 4

The Alibaug police arrested Arnab Goswami, editor in chief of *Republic TV*, in connection with a suicide of 53-year-old interior designer who ended his life in 2018 naming the senior journalist as one of the persons in his suicide note.

Architect Anvay Naik and his mother Kumud had committed suicide over non-payment of dues by Goswami and two others.

The police landed at his Lower Parel residence and after much resistance, arrested Goswami and took him to Raigad.

The Mumbai police has now filed a fresh case against Goswami, his wife, son and others for resisting arrest and allegedly manhandling the police personnel.

Goswami and his wife alleged of manhandling and assault in the process of the arrest, whereas, the Editors Guild and several quarters criticized the arrest and blatant use of state power. The police stated that Goswami's wife tore the arrest warrant when they presented the same.

The arrest comes weeks after the war of words between Goswami and the Mumbai police and the state government after the TRP manipulation case was filed naming the news channel.

The probe in the said case is also underway in connection with which the channel approached the Supreme Court and sought for transfer of probe to the central investigation agency.

"The family was not cooperative and Goswami tried to evade arrest. Goswami was taken to Civil Hospital in Alibaug for conducting a medical check-up," said a police officer.

The police had begun a probe in the case after the state home minister ordered the same in May following a complaint from Adnya, daughter of deceased Anvay Naik. She alleged of substandard investigation by Alibaug police in the case, despite her father leaving behind a suicide note naming Goswami, Feroz Shaikh of Icast X-Skimedia and Niteish Sarda of Smartworks. Shaikh and Sarda were arrested on Wednesday by Raigad police.

Naik owned Concorde Designs Pvt Ltd and in the suicide note he claimed that he was ending his life due to non-payment of his dues by Goswami, Shaikh and Sarda. Police said that as per the note, the three firms owed Naik's company ₹83 lakh, ₹4 crore and ₹55 lakh respectively.

The Alibaug police's case is under sections 306 (abetment of suicide) and 34 (acts of common intention) as per the Indian Penal Code. The police have got his custody for further investigation in the case.

The central government has criticised the state administration over the action against the senior journalist.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah termed Goswami's arrest as 'blatant misuse of state power and attack on free press must be and will be opposed'.

However, the Naik family stated that Goswami had tried to derail the probe in the 2018 case.

SENA: CASE NOT RELATED TO PRESS FREEDOM

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC MUMBAI, NOV. 4

The war of words has escalated between the Shiv Sena and the BJP over the arrest of editor-in-chief of *Republic TV* Arnab Goswami in connection with a suicide abetment case. The Shiv Sena denied the accusations of attack on free press while Congress called BJP's criticism a "selective outrage".

Senior BJP leaders and several Union ministers, including Union home minister Amit Shah and BJP national president JP Nadda, rebuked the Congress over Mr. Goswami's arrest and called it an "attack on freedom of press".

Sena leader and minister Anil Parab said the police has arrested Mr. Goswami for the enquiry. "This case is not related to freedom of the press. The BJP leaders and workers are making hue and cry for the arrest of Mr. Goswami. They are giving a different colour to the arrest," he said.

Shiv Sena spokesperson Sanjay Raut said that the rule of law is in Maharashtra. The state has not acted against anyone in vendetta since the formation of the MVA government.

Mumbai Congress spokesperson R.K. Trivedi condemned the selective outrage of BJP on the arrest. "The arrest of Arnab Goswami in a suicide abetment case is not at all an assault on media or on freedom of press under any circumstances."

Naik's daughter Adnya and wife Akshata claimed they had sent applications seeking justice to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and Raigad SP however in vain.

"We had made applications to various people including the PMO and SP, Raigad, to get justice for my father. Investigation into the case was suppressed only because of Arnab Goswami," said Adnya, the deceased architect's daughter.

Akshata Naik, wife of the deceased said, "My husband had mentioned names of three persons including Arnab Goswami in his suicide note but no arrest was made then. He committed suicide only because his legitimate dues were not paid by the accused persons."

Meanwhile, leading the attack against the Maharashtra government, BJP president J.P. Nadda tweeted "India didn't forgive Indira Gandhi for the Emergency. India never forgave Rajiv Gandhi for his assault on press freedom. And now, India will again punish Sonia-Rahul Gandhi for their brazen and intimidating use of state power to get equal with journalists."

Information and Broadcasting minister Prakash Javadekar said it is reminiscent of "Emergency days" and also hit out at the Congress, saying its "fascist and Emergency mindset" is on display in Maharashtra.

Gen Naravane will be conferred with the honorary rank of General of Nepal Army

Army Chief arrives in Nepal on crucial 3-day visit

Kathmandu, Nov. 4: Army chief Gen. M.M. Naravane arrived in Nepal on Wednesday on a three-day crucial visit that is largely aimed at resetting the bilateral ties that came under severe strain following a bitter border row between the two countries.

Gen Naravane is visiting Nepal at the official invitation of Nepal Army chief Gen Purna Chandra Thapa.

He was accompanied by his wife Veena Naravane, who is the chairperson of the Army Wives Welfare Association of the Indian

Army. They were received by the Chief of General Staff, Lt.Gen Prabhu Ram upon arrival at the Tribhuvan International Airport around noon.

The Nepali Army believes that exchange of such high-level visits and continuation of tradition helps in strengthening relations between the two armies, contributing to enhancing the relationship between the two countries, reads a statement issued by the Nepal Army.

Gen Naravane on Tuesday said he was

eagerly looking forward to the visit and exuded confidence that it will go a long way in strengthening the "bonds of friendship" between the armies of the two countries.

His engagements in Nepal include a visit to the headquarters of the Nepalese Army, an address to the young military officers at Nepali Army's Staff College and attending a banquet to be hosted in his honour by Chief of Nepalese Army Gen Purna Chandra Thapa. He will hold formal talks with his Nepalese

counterpart at the Nepal Army headquarters on Thursday. The Indian Army Chief will be conferred with the honorary rank of General of Nepal Army by President Bidya Devi Bhandari amidst a special ceremony at the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

He will also pay a courtesy call on President Bhandari after the ceremony on Thursday. He is scheduled to meet Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli on Friday.

India's decision to send the Army chief to Nepal to reset the ties is seen as

part of a larger exercise by New Delhi to rejuvenate relations with Myanmar, the Maldives, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Afghanistan in the wake of greater efforts by China to expand its influence in the region.

The ties between the two countries came under strain after Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated an 80-km-long strategically crucial road connecting the Lipulekh pass with Dharchula in Uttarakhand on May 8.

Nepal protested the inauguration of the road

claiming that it passed through its territory. Days later, Nepal came out with the new map showing Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura as its territories. After Nepal released the map, India reacted sharply, calling it a "unilateral act" and cautioning Kathmandu that such "artificial enlargement" of territorial claims will not be acceptable to it. In June, Nepal's Parliament approved the new political map of the country featuring areas which India maintains belong to it. — PTI

US Prez poll headed into uncertain phase

Projections awaited for key states like Michigan, Wisconsin, North Carolina, Georgia, Nevada

Washington, Nov. 4: The closely-fought US presidential election appeared to be headed into an uncertain phase with Republican incumbent Donald Trump and his Democratic challenger Joe Biden fighting it out in the key battleground states. When reports last came in, Biden had earned 220 electoral college votes, with Trump following closely with 213 votes. As per *Fox News*, Biden has 238 of the 538 electoral college seats, while Trump has 213. On the other hand, *CNN* has projected 220 electoral college votes to Biden and 213 to Trump. *The New York Times* reported that Biden has earned 224 electoral college votes and Trump 213. The winner needs at least 270 electoral college votes.

Officials in Pennsylvania, which many say now holds the key to the White House for both the campaigns, announced in the wee hours of Wednesday that their next update would be only after 9 AM (local time), indicating that the suspense over the election results would continue for at least one more day. Pennsylvania has 20 crucial electoral college votes.

Major American media outlets are yet to declare their projections for some other key battleground states like Michigan, Wisconsin, North Carolina, Georgia and Nevada. "Race Tightens Between Trump and Biden, Key States Still Counting," *The Wall Street Journal* reported. "It has become clear that most Americans will go to bed without knowing who won the presidency, as vote counting in crucial states including Pennsylvania and Michigan may take



Ballots are counted at the Los Angeles County Regional Offices in Downey, California.

— AFP

days to complete. The results that are in show a nation still divided," the daily said. "All eyes on swing states as counting continues in key battlegrounds," *The Washington Post* said. "Election turns into nail-biter that may extend for days," *The NYT* reported.

President Trump held several states he won in 2016 that Biden had hoped to flip, but other battlegrounds were too close to call.

Democrats gained a Senate seat in Colorado but lost one in Alabama, the daily reported. "In a briefing for donors on Tuesday night, Biden campaign officials acknowledged underperforming among Cuban-Americans in the Miami area, but saw positive signs with their strength in some suburbs in Ohio that they said could be predictive across the Midwest, according to two people familiar

with the matter," the daily reported.

"Campaign officials signaled that Biden's team was preparing to wait for votes to be counted in three Northern battlegrounds that Mr Trump carried in 2016 — Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin — where it still feels bullish," *The NYT* added. The Biden campaign tried to downplay its electoral performance in Florida, which has 29 electoral

college votes.

"We said Florida was going to be close and... it is! We also said we didn't have to win it, and that remains true," the campaign said in a statement, reiterating that it has multiple paths to victory. Biden won New Jersey and New York in a tight race with President Trump also registering early wins in key states. The former vice president got 2.2 million votes in New York.

— PTI



Donald Trump

TWITTER HIDES TRUMP'S BIDEN POLL STEAL TWEET

Washington, Nov. 4: Twitter on Wednesday placed a "disputed" label on a tweet from President Donald Trump in which he accused the rival Biden campaign of trying to "steal" the tightly-contested 2020 presidential elections.

In his first reaction to the election results, Trump tweeted, "We are up BIG, but they are trying to STEAL the Election. We will never let them do it. Votes cannot be cast after the Polls are closed!"

The tweet was placed behind a warning on the president's account that the content shared is "disputed and might be misleading about an election or other civic process." Twitter has taken similar action against Trump's account in the past.

Facebook also flagged the post of president Trump. "Final results may be different from initial vote counts, as ballots counting will continue for days and weeks," Facebook said, quoting Bipartisan Policy Center.

The social media giant also flagged the second post by Trump in which he claimed that he is winning big and will soon make a statement. "I will be making a statement tonight. A big WIN!" he said.

Flagging the post, Facebook said, "the winner of the 2000 US Presidential Election has not been projected."

— PTI

World waits nervously for US vote count

Washington, Nov. 4: From Ford Model T cars that popped off the assembly line in just 90 minutes to 60-second service for burgers, the United States has had a major hand in making the world a frenetic and impatient place, primed and hungry for instant gratification.

So waking up to the news on Wednesday that the winner of the US election might not be known for hours, days or weeks — pundits filled global airwaves with their best guesses — came as a shock to a planet weaned on that most American of exports: Speed. "We have to have a little patience, almost certainly a lot of patience," said the European Union's foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, as the nail-biting contest for the White House increasingly focused on three states — Wisconsin, Michigan and Pen-

nsylvania — that could prove crucial in determining whether President Donald Trump or challenger Joe Biden wins.

"In the American system, the last vote counts, and maybe the last vote changes the result," Borrell told Spanish National Television. But as world leaders generally refrained from commenting on the outcome until it was clear, the particularly fractious and contested nature of the vote was already sparking concerns overseas that the superpower's sharp divisions and internal conflicts exposed by the election might endure long after the winner is declared. "The battle over the legitimacy of the result — whatever it will look like — has now begun," said German defence minister, Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer.

— AP

Celebrating win without victory

Washington, Nov. 4: It was a victory celebration without a victory.

Empty wine glasses littered a table in the East Room of the White House. Pizza boxes and cans of White Claw hard seltzer abounded elsewhere in the complex. As Election Day came and went without a verdict in the presidential race, President Donald Trump grew agitated. At 2:21 a.m., the president took the stage before a well-lubricated crowd in the East Room and falsely claimed he had won. He vowed to take his case to the Supreme Court.

"We were getting ready for a big celebration," Trump said. "We were winning everything and all of the sudden it was just called off." He added, "We will win this and as far as I'm concerned we

already have won it." That was not true. In fact, 102 million Americans spooked by the coronavirus pandemic had shattered records to vote early, and millions of ballots had yet to be counted in key battleground states. Neither Trump nor Biden had yet reached the 270 Electoral College votes required to win the presidency.

Biden, too, felt the need to respond to the indecision. Just after midnight, the former vice president's motorcade abruptly shuttled him from his house in Wilmington, Delaware, to an outdoor speaking venue nearby, where he cautioned that a result might not come for a few days. "We're going to have to be patient," Biden said around 12:30 a.m., as supporters honked their car horns.

— AP

TRUMP TO FIGHT ELECTION IN US SUPREME COURT

Washington, Nov. 4: In an unprecedented claim in US politics, Donald Trump on Wednesday falsely asserted "fraud" in the counting of votes and said he would approach the Supreme Court to stop it, as the race between incumbent Republican president and his Democratic challenger Joe Biden was poised for a photo-finish. In one of the most divisive and bitter presidential elections in American history saw tight races in many key battleground states with Biden winning 224 electoral college votes and Trump closely behind with 213. The winner of the 2020 presidential election should have at least 270 electoral college votes out of the 538-member electoral college.

Fox News, considered to be the favourite news network of the president, gave him only 213 electoral college votes while crediting 238 votes to Biden. It also gave 50 per cent of the popular vote to the Democratic challenger and 48.4 per cent to Trump. Trump called the election "a fraud on the American public" and said, "Frankly, we did win this election." He also said he planned to take the battle to the Supreme Court to stop the counting of votes.

"All of a sudden everything just stopped. This is a fraud on the American public. This is an embarrassment to our country. We were getting ready to win this election. Frankly, we did win this election," Trump said, without citing any evidence of a fraud in the electoral process. "We will win this, and as far as I'm concerned, we already have won it," Trump, 74, said in remarks to supporters in the White House East Room at 2 a.m.

"Our goal now is to ensure integrity, for the good of this nation. This is a very big moment. This is a major fraud on our nation. We want law to be used in a proper manner. So we'll be going to the US Supreme Court. "We want all voting to stop. We don't want them to find any ballots at four o'clock in the morning and add them to the list," Trump said, amidst applause from his supporters.

Biden's campaign manager called Trump's statement as "outrageous, unprecedented, and incorrect." "If the president makes good on his threat to go to court to try to prevent the proper tabulation of votes, we have legal teams standing by ready to deploy to resist that effort.

— PTI

Torres 1st gay man elected to Congress

Washington, Nov. 4: Democrat Party's Ritchie Torres has made history by becoming the first openly gay POC man elected to the US Congress.

Torres, 32, a New York City Council Member, won the election from New York's 15th Congressional District, defeating Republican Patrick Delices to become the next representa-

tive, *New York Daily News* reported. "Tonight, a new era begins for the South Bronx," Torres said in a statement.

"It is the honour of a lifetime to represent a borough filled with essential workers who have risked their lives so that New York City could live. "The Bronx is essential, and the vibrant, loving and talented people

who live here have shown time and again their power, fortune and perseverance. The Bronx is the heartbeat of New York City," he said.

Torres, who identified himself as an Afro-Latino, has served in the City Council since 2013. He defeated nearly a dozen other Democrats in the June primary after Republican Jose Serrano annou-

nced his retirement earlier this year. Torres is expected to be joined by another POC gay man, Mondaire Jones, in the US House of Representatives as results were pending in the race to replace retiring Republican Nita Lowey from Westchester county. The seat is expected to go to 33-year-old Jones, a Harvard Law School graduate.

— PTI

VOTERS RECEIVING ROBOCALLS: NY CONDUCTING PROBE

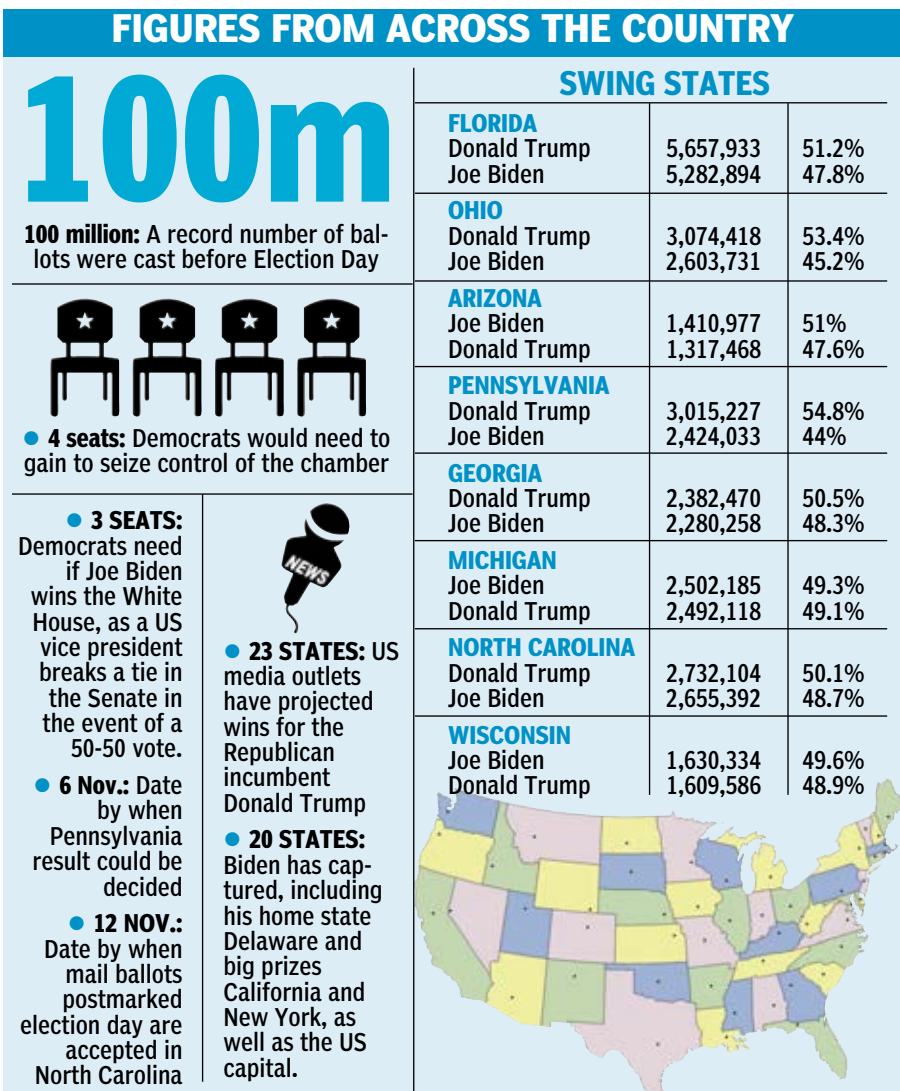
New York, Nov. 4: New York Attorney General Letitia James on Tuesday said her office is actively investigating allegations that voters are receiving robocalls, spreading disinformation and encouraging people to stay home on Election Day.

"Voting is a cornerstone of our democracy," James said. "Attempts to hinder voters from exercising their right to cast their ballots are disheartening, disturbing and wrong. What's more is that it is illegal and will not be tolerated." James said every voter must be able to exercise his fundamental right to vote without being harassed, coerced or intimidated.

"Our nation has a legacy of free and fair elections and this election will be no different. Voters should be rest assured that voting is safe and secure, and they should exercise their fundamental right to vote in confidence," she said.

James added that state leaders across the nation are working hard to protecting "your right to vote and anyone who tries to hinder that right will be held accountable to the fullest extent of the law".

— PTI



POLL | SURVEY In 2016, 13% Muslims had cast ballots for Trump

69% Muslims vote for Biden

New York, Nov. 4: Nearly 69 per cent Muslim voters cast their ballot for Democratic Presidential nominee Joe Biden while 17 per cent supported President Donald Trump, according to a survey conducted by Muslim civil liberties and advocacy organisation in the US.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the nation's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organisation, released the results of its 2020 Muslim

Voters Presidential Election Exit Poll on Tuesday. CAIR's poll of 844 registered Muslim voter households found a high Muslim turnout with 84 per cent reporting that they voted in the US election, with 69 per cent voting for Biden and 17 per cent for Trump. CAIR said more than one million American Muslim voters turned out in "record-breaking" numbers this election cycle.

CAIR National Executive Director Nihad Awad said

the "Muslim community's significant ability to impact the results of numerous races across this country, including the presidential election, was recognised nationally." CAIR Director of Government Affairs Robert S. McCaw said there was no denying the role the Muslim community plays in local, state and national politics.

"Now is the time to hold the politicians we elected to office accountable to ensure that the civil and religious

rights of all Americans are being upheld and protected," McCaw said. Compared with the 2016 election, in which then President-elect Donald Trump received a 13 per cent of the Muslim vote, Trump in 2020 received 4 per cent more support.

According to Pew Research Center, there were about 3.45 million Muslims living in the US in 2017, and that Muslims made up about 1.1 per cent of the total American population.

— PTI



Jill Biden waves as her husband Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden speaks during election night at the Chase Center in Wilmington, on Wednesday.

— AFP

DECCAN Chronicle

5 NOVEMBER 2020

Future of Afghan: India must talk to US, others

Monday's attack on the campus of Kabul University, in which at least 35 young Afghans were cut down in their prime, is likely to be a landmark of the present phase in which peace talks are supposedly being held between the Taliban and other Afghan parties at the behest of the United States in Doha, the capital of Qatar.

There have been deadlier attacks by the Taliban or Islamic State (ISIS) this year, but this one has shaken the nation. A national day of mourning was announced by the Ashraf Ghani government, and for the first time a public demand was made to "boycott" the Doha talks. The message was inscribed on a defiant banner that fluttered on the university campus on Wednesday. The social media is apparently full of the same demand.

This is likely to put political pressure on the Afghan government, and the various parties and prominent individuals that have oriented themselves toward participating in the process of conversation with the Taliban for the sake of peace, and the United States, which brokered the Doha process in February as a necessary ingredient of its exit from the Afghan quagmire. The Taliban, keenly aware of America's decision and desire to get out of Afghanistan quickly, is piling up the pressure through violence and targeted assassinations so that the outcome — such as it may turn out to be — will be on its terms. That should, in real terms, mean the end of an attempt at some kind of democracy.

It is noteworthy that the Taliban hasn't agreed to a "ceasefire" to facilitate these so-called peace talks. And it is futile discussing whether it is the Taliban or ISIS which is responsible for the Kabul University and other high-profile attacks, for it is Pakistan which appears to be the mentor in either case. According to the UN office in Afghanistan (UNAMA), the first nine months of this year have produced nearly 6,000 civilian casualties — some 2,100 killed and 3,800 injured.

India has done well to point out yet again after the latest attack that New Delhi stands firmly behind Afghanistan in dealing with terrorism. The next step should be for this country to engage the Americans as soon as the next US President takes office, and also the key European powers and Japan on this question. Peace in Afghanistan is not just a bilateral matter for India, or a regional matter, but an international one. It is time this determination was made. Regionalism may not be the answer in this case. The dire question is: What happens if the Doha talks break down? The huge civilian toll the violence has taken across Afghanistan cannot but build even greater pressure on various constituencies within that country — since so far the talks do appear to be futile — as well as on the international community. America can't carry on pretending that it is for the Taliban and the Afghans to sort out the mess and bring peace. This is what Zalmay Khalilzad, the key US interlocutor for the Doha talks, appears to be saying without mincing his words. India simply cannot accept this approach.

Crack whip on crackers

The Centre should take a lesson from the governments of Rajasthan, Odisha, West Bengal and Haryana, and ban the sale and use of fireworks this pandemic year in order to ward off a possible second wave of the coronavirus. Indeed, the National Green Tribunal has issued a notice asking it to consider the same. However, the government should not play apologist to its constituents by waiting for final orders.

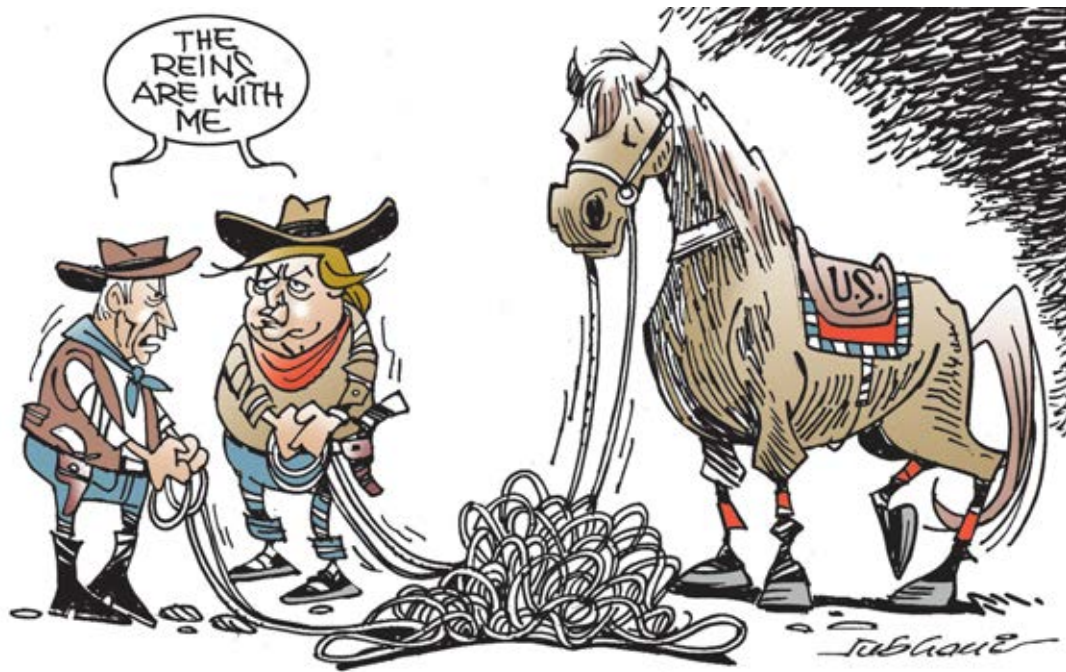
The case for regulating, indeed reducing, use of fireworks is unquestionable, even in the best of times. Over the last 10 years, Delhi's population has seen a quantum jump and is now at 30 million plus. Tokyo, the most populous city in the world, has 38 million people. The population rise has increased the corresponding pressure on resources, leading to rising pollution levels. Stubble burning by farmers at the onset of every winter, a perennial problem that the recently dissolved EPCA failed to resolve, has compounded that — it is now clear that this is what precipitates NCR's infamous annual haze.

Smoke from crackers gets trapped in the lowest layers of air owing to the autumn fog. It has deleterious effects on the health of children, elderly, and asthma and chronic pulmonary disease patients. In 2018, the Supreme Court had ordered that only firecrackers with reduced emission and "green crackers" can be manufactured and sold. However, this year, that measure won't be enough to contain the crisis. For, aside from weakening the lungs and predisposing one to infection, exposure to pollution, also associated with the increased presence of a coronavirus receptor on lung cell surfaces, increases the risk of contracting Covid. About 15 per cent of people who died from Covid-19 worldwide had had long-term exposure to fine particulate air pollution.

The air quality index in Delhi, averaging between 410 and 450, is currently in the hazardous category. Delhi has also emerged as India's newest pandemic hotspot this festive season, thanks to some poor decisions at the government and individual levels, Diwali shopping mania and buses running to full capacity among them, recording, without precedent, over 5,000 new cases for five straight days, with the tally crossing 6,725 on Wednesday.

If firecracker pollution triggers a surge that reaches the critical mass amid daily progressive lowering of temperatures due to the change of season, the epidemic might well shoot out of control. In the interest of their own safety, therefore, the people should practise restraint and the government must act swiftly.

Subhani



Prioritise the needs of most vulnerable kids

Patralekha Chatterjee

Dev 360

As we continue to navigate the multiple uncertainties thrown up by the coronavirus pandemic, there is a heartening finding from the latest Annual Status of Education Report (ASER 2020 Wave 1) that deserves special attention. The report, released online late last month, reaffirms a positive trend: households in India, both rich and poor, are pinning their hopes on education as a passport to upward mobility, even in the times of Covid-19.

The release of an ASER report is an eagerly-awaited event for everyone not just in the education sector or civil society but also for others who are concerned about India's development trajectory and the country's future. The reason is simple: it provides deep insights into the state of learning of India's children. This year's survey is the first-ever phone-based ASER survey. Conducted in September 2020, the sixth month of the nationwide school closures, it looks at how distance education was provided and accessed, the kind of materials and activities given to rural children and the way they dealt with these remote learning approaches, along with their families, from their homes. The learnings are collated from 26 states and four Union territories — a total of 52,227 households and 59,251 children in the age group of 5-16 years, as well as teachers or head teachers from 8,963 government schools offering primary grades.

That schoolgoing children have suffered hugely is obvious. Covid-19 severely disrupted lives across India, as elsewhere. Millions of people lost sources of livelihood dur-

ing the lockdown; those in the informal sector did not get paid for several months; even during the "unlock" phase, earnings have dipped. Household savings have evaporated. Many people are in deep debt.

But what leaps out from the flood of depressing news is that even while negotiating this catastrophic turn of events, families, rich and poor, have tried their best to support their children's education when classroom teaching went virtual.

The latest ASER data tells us that at the household level, about 11 per cent of all families bought a new phone since the lockdown kicked off. Over 80 per cent of these new phone purchases were smartphones. Of the lot who didn't have a smartphone at home, around 13 per cent said their children could access someone else's smartphone. With time, we will know more about the choices poor households made in their crisis hour, what they gave up, what they postponed in order to buy smartphones which the children used to access learning material in recent months.

The pandemic has once again sledgehammered the fact that in digital India, everyone is not equal. Over 500 million Indians are now using smartphones, a 15 per cent jump from 2018, but there is a big gap between city dwellers and those living in villages, high-income and low-income, high-education and low-education households, as well as between men and women.

A recent study by Harvard's Kennedy School of Government estimated that, today in India, 71 per cent of men use mobile phones, as against 38 per cent of women.

Needless to say, we

don't know yet how time was divided between boys and girls in households with one smartphone and whether there was any distinction made by gender and age-group.

ASER 2020 tells us that WhatsApp was the most commonly used way by which children received learning materials. Children in private schools were at an advantage compared to their government school counterparts over use of this platform.

Interestingly, children in government schools were much more likely to have got learning materials through personal contact with a teacher than those in private schools. This happened when the teacher visited the family or when someone from the family went to the school.

Clearly, families with low incomes and low education who couldn't buy smartphones tried to support their children in other ways, as did many schools.

Despite the challenges and contradictions inherent in the Indian milieu, families across the board are trying their level best to make sure their children have a fighting chance in the emerging, highly competitive world of work.

A smartphone is an aspiration marker. But buying one isn't the only way parents have helped children deal with the pandemic's new normal.

The latest ASER survey offers insights about the support at home for learning — 74.9 per cent families reported being able to provide some learning support at home to their children.

Apart from parents, older children also pitched in. There are promising signs from many states. West Bengal, for example, tops the list in reduction in school dropouts, going by the latest ASER data.

The school dropout rate there is 1.5 per cent this year, from 3.3 per cent in 2018. ASER 2020 also tells us West Bengal is on top in the country for giving textbooks for school students.

Several state govern-

ments are working on school fees to help families in financial distress and with schoolgoing children.

Andhra Pradesh, for example, has decided to slash 30 per cent of tuition fees for the 2020-21 academic year for private unaided educational institutions. Even city governments are doing their bit.

The Pune Municipal Corporation has formed a committee to look into the issue of school fee payments.

But while lower school fees, support at home and smartphones definitely help, they aren't going to be enough to compensate for the possibly severe learning loss suffered by many children.

We know schoolgoing children learnt something during all the months they have been at home. We also know that when schools reopen, not everyone is likely to be equally positioned to cope with classroom teaching.

Two key issues must be given top priority. Along with strengthening family support in children's learning, working on more impactful digital content, etc, there needs to be special, targeted incentives for children at risk of dropping out of school in the coming days. They must stay on.

Second, there is an urgent need for free remedial classes for all those who didn't have optimal access to learning sources when there was no physical classroom teaching or who have not been able to absorb what they received remotely.

The pandemic has affected every child in India, but not equally. When schools reopen, it is vital to continue to track who goes back to school, and to understand whether there is a learning loss compared to previous years. Children who have fallen behind and who need more help than others should be policy priorities.

The writer focuses on development issues in India and emerging economies. She can be reached at patralekha.chatterjee@gmail.com

LETTERS

PM'S POLL CAMPAIGN

Instead of highlighting his NDA's achievements in Bihar, Prime Minister Narendra Modi seems sure of attracting voters by casting aspersions against the Congress like its shrinking strength in both Houses of Parliament (*Modi mocks at Congress' shrinking tally in House, DC, Nov. 4*). When it comes to NDA, Modi calls it "double engine" government while terming the Mahagathabandhan as "double yuvaraj". If a political leader is talking ill of his opponent, it means he is not sure of his party's prospects. It is a clear indication that he is afraid of the Opposition.

N.S. Sharma

Visakhapatnam

TIT FOR TAT

Former chief minister and Telugu Deasm chief N. Chandrababu Naidu is very frustrated. He was unable to muster support against the three capitals issue. He is also unable to make people raise voice against the YSRC for the latter's alleged acts of commissions and omissions. He has been relying on his "moles" to put the state government in trouble and seems to have succeeded to a large extent. A tit for tat politics will be visible in AP as YSRC will not taking it lying down. Naidu's efforts to raise a hue and cry through 'My House-My Right' etc. won't attract supporters.

Govardhana Myneedu

Vijayawada

50 YEARS AGO IN

DECCAN Chronicle

Jammalal Bajaj stamp released

By a staff reporter
HYDERABAD, Nov. 4. Tributes were paid to the late Jammalal Bajaj by several speakers at a function organised by a committee of hosts here on the occasion of releasing the commemorative postal stamp to mark his 81st birth anniversary, today. Mr. Khandubhai Desai, Governor, who released the stamp, said that late Mr. Jammalal Bajaj, whom Gandhiji had adopted, was a social worker of rare quality, who strove hard for social reforms like removal of untouchability and upliftment of the Harijans. Mr. Desai observed that Mr. Jammalal had become the guardian of Mahatma's time and health, for the public good.

Douglas Murray

American Diary



Trump's humour is his weakness... and his strength

Earlier this summer left-wing activists announced a "semi-autonomous zone" in the Capitol Hill area of Seattle. Denuded of law enforcement and any other signs of the American state, these activists deluded themselves that they were creating a blueprint for the perfect society. After a number of wholly predictable murders and rather more rapes, the state retook control. The area where the state formerly known as CHAZ briefly stood is now just another homeless encampment, overlooked by empty luxury apartments. Local businesses are suing the city for failing to protect them. All still have "Don't hurt me" signs in the windows. One, a hairdresser, stresses that it is "a minority-owned, women-led, LGBTQIA+ staffed local business". What any business in the area might do if it is unfortunate enough to be owned or staffed by people from a majority group is not to be imagined. Like most other businesses in town, the local Whole Foods is boarded up against rioters. Over this unprepossessing edifice Whole Foods has hung a huge banner of its own

which proclaims: "Racism has no place here". As though the Seattle Whole Foods was ever suspected of hosting Klan meetings in the dried fruit and nuts aisle. Even the local ice-cream parlour has a side-business selling T-shirts for the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People. Seattle, like Portland, is like living in a one-party state in which the state religion is BLM.

Pensacola, Florida, is different. And not just because Air Force One is soon to arrive. In the airfield where it will land, thousands of people stream through the metal detectors and await the main act. It is hard to know whether the warm-up songs blasted out through loudspeakers have been chosen with too much thought or none at all. "My Way", "Losing My Religion", "Rocket Man" and "Don't Stop Believing" can all be interpreted in several ways. Gounod's Ave Maria is abruptly interrupted to make way for Florida's governor, Ron DeSantis. The theme song from Titanic is played twice, and "YMCA" — which has become the theme song of the re-election campaign — comes on before

the President's arrival. The crowd is thrilled, dancing about with joy. One of the addresses ahead of the President is from a pastor who prays for the re-election of Donald Trump. He says he believes that because of what the President has done for Israel (another normalisation treaty signed that day), Trump will be rewarded eternally. It summons up the disturbing image of the world's humblest arriving into heaven to find themselves greeted by the man who recently introduced himself as "Your favourite President".

The plane has landed and the world's most famous head of hair heaves into view. The audience remains on its feet throughout his hour-long speech. Although I am standing among them, taking notes and admitting I am from the media, everyone is warm and welcoming. Certainly they are here for the tough stuff (right to bear arms, defending the police, and patriotic — not America-hating — education). But they are also here because of something the media rarely admits: the President is funny. When he slings nicknames at his opponents and otherwise goes off script, both he and the crowd get to enjoy themselves. In the segment about "the China virus" he starts talking about the period after he tested positive for corona. "What the hell was that all about?" he asides, as if he is as bemused as anyone else by the reality show around him. It is his weakness and his strength.

His freewheeling indifference to political norms attracts many of his supporters, some of whom say they never voted before. But as the great Peggy Noonan recently wrote, the nation may also be tiring of the 24/7 reality show, and wish to change the channel. Such voters hoped that Joe Biden will bring back "normal".

The laptop from hell" is how the President describes the device Joe's son Hunter forgot to pick up from a computer repair shop and which ended up in the hands of Trump's associate Rudy Giuliani.

The contents include emails that suggest Biden's son spent recent years enriching himself (and possibly his father) abroad through holding out his family connections. The laptop also contains photos and

videos of Hunter smoking crack, exposing himself and being pleased by the foot of an unknown person.

The Democratic Party and most of the media wish to protect the Bidens and are still claiming the laptop is a Russian interference plot. Elsewhere, much fun is being had with the "I can't look, show me" elements of the sex leaks. Yet Republicans should beware of this. The corruption and cronyism scandals risks being drowned out amid the sex. Plus, nobody could mistake the Republican candidate for Snow White. Though exactly who he is remains both strange and wholly transparent.

When "YMCA" comes back on after his speech, the President manages not only to move his hands in time to the music, but even dares a little hip wiggle and sway of the legs. So, amid the floodlights the evening ends in signature style — with militarism and camp, deadly seriousness and palpable insincerity. Perhaps this is normal. Perhaps nothing ever is.

By arrangement with the *Spectator*

quick
BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	40,616.14	0.88
Nifty 50	11,908.50	0.80
S&P 500*	3,466.26	2.88
Dollar (₹)	74.74	-0.44
Pound Sterling (₹)	96.60	-0.12
Euro (₹)	87.17	-0.25
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	50,743.111	0.21
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	40.88	1.17
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.886	-0.012
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.770	-0.111

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Fund raising via
capital markets
dips 31% in Sept.

Companies garnered over Rs 75,000 crore from capital markets in September, a decline of 31 per cent from August, with private placement of debt instruments remaining the most preferred route. By Sebi data, companies raised Rs 75,230 crore in September as compared with Rs 1.1 lakh crore in August by issuing equity and debt securities. Out of this, Rs 64,389 crore was raised by private placement of debt.

OnePlus unveils
largest Experience
Store in Hyderabad

Chinese smartphone maker OnePlus unveiled its largest experience store globally in Hyderabad. Spread across 16,000 sq.ft, the experience store "OnePlus Nizam Palace" also includes a large customer service centre with dedicated glass cubicles for customers to meet and consult service executives, thus, ensuring transparency in the service provided, a company release said.

FlyDubai to start
daily flights to Tel
Aviv from 26th

FlyDubai will start scheduled flights between Dubai and Tel Aviv on Nov. 26 in line with strengthening ties between the United Arab Emirates and Israel following a diplomatic breakthrough in August. The carrier will operate two trips a day between Dubai International Airport and Tel Aviv Ben Gurion, a statement by the state-owned airline said. The price for a return ticket starts at 1,651 dirhams (\$450).

Jyothy Labs Q2
profit rises
12% to ₹60 crore

Jyothy Labs reported a 12.2 per cent increase in consolidated net profit at Rs 60.13 crore for the September quarter. Its total income stood at Rs 508.51 crore, up 5.86 per cent. M. R. Jyothy, MD, said the company's focus on execution combined with its portfolio comprising daily use 'essential hygiene' has delivered strong sales and profitable growth. There is strong demand acceleration in general trade, the firm said.

■ Index marks first growth since lockdown
Services PMI too
expands in Oct.SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, NOV. 4

India's dominant services sector registered growth for the first time since the lockdown began, as relaxation in movement restrictions supported business activity. Services growth, along with factory production, helped IHS Markit's composite Purchasing Managers' Index grow the fastest in nine years.

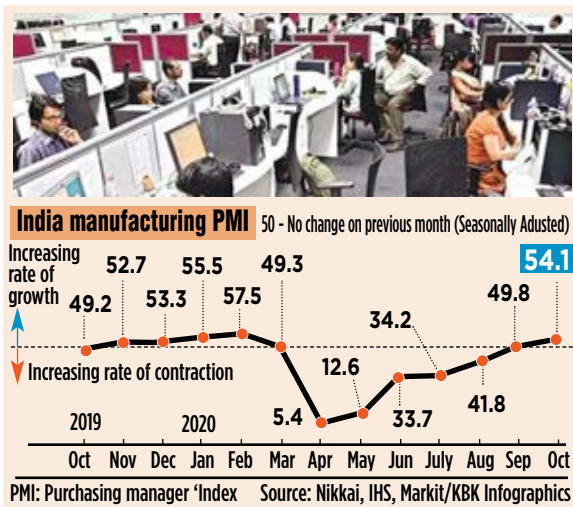
Rising to 54.1 in October, from 49.8 in September, the seasonally adjusted India Services Business Activity Index moved above the 50-mark that separates growth from contraction for the first time since February.

Earlier IHS Markit had released the manufacturing PMI, which recorded the strongest growth in 13 years at 58.9 points.

Services companies reported an increase in new work intakes, which they attributed to successful marketing efforts and strengthening demand. The upturn in bookings ended a seven-month sequence of contraction.

Further, the domestic market was the key source of new business gains, as new orders from abroad declined further. The deterioration in international demand for Indian services in October was the slowest since March, but nevertheless sharper than pre-Covid times.

Amid reports of workers on leave failing to return and difficulties in hiring



staff due to the pandemic, services employment decreased again in October. The pace of job shedding matched the September levels. As a result of falling employment and rising orders, backlogs of work increased.

Services companies continued to report rising expenses at the start of the third quarter of the fiscal, taking the current sequence of cost inflation to four months. The latest increase was the strongest since February. Fuel, maintenance and material prices continued to increase. Some service providers lifted their fees, passing on the rising cost burden to their clients.

"While new business spending showed a reasonably big improvement, it is still not feeding into employment within the

service sector, although backlogs are rising, which may boost employment in coming months. Given that pricing pressures from fuel and material prices remain, there was an increase in the cost burdens and some reports of pass-through beginning to emerge. While output prices remain low, we will monitor this dynamic over the coming months as the economy normalizes," said Rahul Bajoria, chief India economist, Barclays. The Composite PMI Output Index too rose from 54.6 in September to 58 in October, signalling the strongest increase in private sector output in close to nine years. A sharp rise in factory production accompanied by a return to growth of services activity reflected in the growth of composite index.

SAUDI ARABIA
TO RELAX RULES
FOR FOREIGN
WORKERSMARWA RASHAD
NOV. 4

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on Wednesday announced new plans to ease foreign workers' contractual restrictions, improving a controversial seven-decade-old sponsorship system known as kafala.

The plans, to take effect in March 2021, aim to make the Saudi labour market more attractive, the deputy minister for human resources said, by granting foreign workers the right to change jobs by transferring their sponsorship from one employer to another, leave and re-enter the country and secure final exit visas without the consent of their employers.

"Through this initiative we aim to build an attractive labour market and improve the working environment through three main services...available to all foreign workers in the private sector," Abdullah bin Nasser Abuthunain told reporters.

Saudi Arabia, which chairs the Group of 20 major economies (G20) this year, is seeking to boost its private sector, part of an ambitious plan to diversify its oil-dependent economy.

The currently applicable kafala system generally binds a migrant worker to one employer. Rights groups have been calling on Saudi authorities to end that system.

—Reuters

Gland Pharma mega IPO priced
at ₹1,490-1,500 per ₹1 shareRAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, NOV. 4

Hyderabad-based Gland Pharma's mega initial public offering (IPO) that aims to raise nearly Rs 6,500 crore opens on November 9. The price band for the public offer has been fixed at Rs 1,490 to Rs 1,500 per equity share of Re 1 face value.

Gland Pharma's Rs 6,479.55 crore public offer is the largest pharma sector IPO in recent times, far bigger than Alkem Laboratories (Rs 1,349 crore in 2015) and Eris Lifesciences (Rs 1,741 crore in 2017).

The public offer that opens next Monday closes on Wednesday, November 11, the company said at a virtual media meet.

Gland Pharma is a generic injectables-focused company that sells its products primarily under a business to business model in over 60 countries, including the United States, European countries, Canada and Australia.

The IPO comprises a fresh issue of shares aggregating up to Rs 1,250 crore and an offer for sale of over 3.48 crore equity shares worth Rs 5,229.54 crore at the upper price band by the promoter selling shareholders.

Gland Pharma's foreign promoter China-based Fosun Pharma Industrial PTE will be selling over 1.93 crore shares. Gland Celsus Bio Chemicals, Empower Discretionary Trust, Nilay Discretionary Trust are the other selling promoter shareholders.

FIRM ASKED TO TRANSFER RAMALINGA
RAJU FAMILY'S SHARES TO ESCROW A/C

Hyderabad, Nov. 4: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has instructed Gland Pharma to transfer its six million shares owned by companies promoted by Satyam Computers' B. Ramalinga Raju and his kin to an escrow account following the city-based drug company announcing its initial public offering (IPO), a senior executive of the Gland Pharma said on Wednesday.

Ten firms owned by Raju and his family members held six lakh shares with Rs 10 face value each, which later became six million at face value of Re 1.

After the Satyam multi-crore scandal broke out in 2009 and the subsequent developments, the ED, which filed cases against Raju and others, had attached the shares and directed Gland Pharma not to transfer, dispose, remove, part with or otherwise deal

with them in any manner until further instruction from it.

"There is no risk in terms of Ramalinga Raju's shares, because they invested in the company (Gland Pharma) in the late 90s. And then they offloaded a few of the shares. And these are the leftover shares when the issue happened and they were attached by the Enforcement Directorate" Srinivas Sadhu, MD and CEO of Gland Pharma said in a virtual press conference.

He was responding to a query about the risk factors of the shares being held by Raju's firms.

The attached shares represent 3.87 per cent of the pre-offer paid-up equity share capital of the company.

Gland Pharma was founded by P. V. N. Raju in 1978 and Chinese Fosun Pharma acquired 74 per cent stake in the company in 2017. —PTI

SBI net jumps 52%
on lower provisionsFALAKNAAZ SYED
MUMBAI, NOV. 4

The country's largest lender, State Bank of India (SBI), on Wednesday reported a 52 per cent rise in net profit at Rs 4,574 crore for the September 2020 quarter compared to the year-ago period on account of lower provisioning and higher core income.

The bank had clocked a net profit of Rs 3,012 crore during July-September last year.

The bank's operating profit, excluding exceptional items, increased to Rs 16,460 crore in Q2FY21 from Rs 14,714 crore in Q2FY20, a rise of 11.86 per cent year-on-year.

The net interest income or the difference between interest earned and expended grew 14.56 per cent YoY. The domestic net interest margin improved to 3.34 per cent, registering an increase of 12 basis points YoY.

SBI's provisions fell 49 per cent year-on-year to Rs 5,619 crore in July-September. During the



Dinesh Khara

quarter, the bank made additional provisions worth Rs 239 crore against accounts that may be impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Slippages declined to Rs 2,756 crore compared with Rs 8,805 crore a year ago. But the bank said that loans worth Rs 14,388 crore would have slipped to NPA, if the Supreme Court instructions were not in place. Of the accounts that have received classification benefit from Supreme Court's instructions, Rs 5,965 crore worth of loans were upgraded in October itself. The bank holds provisions worth Rs 3,194 crore against the pro forma accounts.

The lender said its gross non-performing asset (GNPA) would have been at 5.88 per cent and net NPA at 2.08 per cent if the bank had classified the loan accounts as NPA after August 31, in accordance with RBI's norms. It should be noted that the Supreme Court in an interim order on Sept. 3, had directed that the accounts which were not declared NPA till August 31, shall not be declared NPA till further orders.

"We are expecting further Rs 20,000 crore worth of slippages in the second half of this financial year. This has been calculated keeping in mind our usual run rate of Rs 10,000 crore worth of slippages every quarter. We do not think we will deviate from this," Dinesh Khara, SBI's new chairman told reporters.

The bank has received restructuring requests worth Rs 6,495 crore in Q2 under the one-time restructuring scheme.

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Expect 7.3% pay hike next year

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, NOV. 4

After all the reports of job losses and salary cuts, there is something employees of India Inc can look forward to.

Global professional services firm Aon's salary trend survey has found that 87 per cent of surveyed companies plan to give salary hikes to their employees next year compared to 71 per cent this year.

Companies intend to increase compensation by an average 7.3 per cent in 2021 compared to 6.1 per cent this year-- the lowest in the history of the survey, even lower than 6.3 per cent recorded in the aftermath of the global financial crisis in 2008.

In 2021, roughly 61 per cent of the companies are planning increments of 5-10 per cent compared to 4.5 per cent in 2020.

Around 26.7 per cent companies may offer higher salary increases over last year, another 39.8 per cent plan to offer the same hike and 33.5 per cent companies intend to offer lower salary hike in 2021 over 2020, said Navneet Rattan, director, performance and rewards solutions practice, India. The

Aon Salary Trends Survey analysed data across 1,050 companies from more than 20 industries.

Commenting on the survey, Aditya Narayan Mishra, director and CEO of CIEL HR Services, said during the festive season several companies have started restoring the salary cut implemented earlier. "Many of the organisations had laid off employees and effected salary cuts. Of this, around two-third are in the process of restoring salaries. As the business outlook is better now, it is likely that companies might provide at least single digit increments in 2021," he said.

HIRING FOR FRESHERS IMPROVING

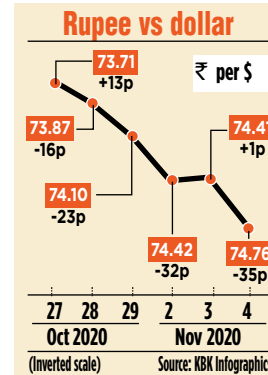
Mumbai, Nov. 4: Demand for freshers has seen an uptick since June and this trend is likely to continue till the end of this financial year, say experts.

The sectors that are seeing significant uptrend include EdTech and e-Learning followed by healthcare, HR Tech and FinTech. "Freshers hiring had dropped down to mere 1.5 lakh during March 25-April 30, from the average 5 lakh per month. However, the scenario is improving and currently there are around 3.5 lakh fresher job openings listed on the portal, Team-lease.com and Freshers-world.com VP and business head Kaushik Banerjee said.

Hiring began to look up for freshers in late June and is likely to gather strength in September-November, he noted.

The other sectors where freshers are being hired include FMCG, IT and ITES, manufacturing, BFSI, telecom, and semiconductor, he added.

CIEL HR Services director and CEO Aditya Mishra says most companies are betting on recovery and are hoping to witness pre-Covid levels of demand in January-March 2021. "About 65 per cent of the freshers who were holding offers slated to join in May-September have found placements. However, the remaining ones are struggling to find work," he said. —PTI

Adani to
acquire 3 city
gas licences
from defaulter

New Delhi, Nov. 4: Adani Gas Ltd on Wednesday announced the acquisition of city gas licences for Ludhiana, Jalandhar and Kutch (East) from Jay Madhok Energy for an undisclosed sum of money.

Jay Madhok Energy Pvt Ltd has been issued show cause by the oil regulator Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) over defaulting on timelines and alleged irregularities in the acquisition of the city gas licence.

"Adani Gas Ltd has signed a definitive agreement for acquisition of three Geographical Areas, namely Ludhiana, Jalandhar and Kutch (East)," the firm said in a statement.

It, however, neither disclosed the name of the city gas licence holder for the three cities nor the acquisition price.

"All 3 GAs have high volumes potential in terms of demand of over 6.5 million standard cubic metres per day over a period of 10 years. These geographical areas (GA's) are under Phase 1 of Bharat Mala Pariyojana by NHAI which will further boost the development and volume growth," it said.

Jay Madhok had in 2013 won the licence to retail CNG to automobiles and piped natural gas in Jalandhar in Punjab and two years later it got a licence for Ludhiana and Kutch (East) in Gujarat. —PTI

WEALTH MANAGEMENT Unhappy with bank returns, billionaire takes things into his own hands

He has no regrets about pulling money out of banks

BEN STUPPLES
NOV. 4

Mohamed Mansour enjoys the challenge of managing his own fortune.

The 72-year-old billionaire set up an investment firm a decade ago to oversee his family's wealth the same way he and his brothers built their closely held business into a global firm with operations, including McDonald's Corp restaurants and a General Motors Co dealership.

Mansour Group's proceeds have allowed the Egyptian dynasty behind it to invest through their family office in firms such as Airbnb Inc, Twitter Inc and Snowflake Inc, the maker of cloud-data soft-

ware that popped 104 per cent on its first day of trading this year. With those sort of results, Mansour isn't missing someone else managing his money.

"I used to leave my money with the banks, but I wasn't pleased with the returns I was getting," he said in a recent interview. "They always have an A-team that meets you at first, and you think, 'Wow! But you don't really know who manages your money, and then you get a 2 per cent one year."

"Now I can say, 'It's my money and I'm going to invest it.' And if I lose, I lose," he added.

Mansour helped lead his family's conglomerate—founded as a cotton exporter in 1952—follow-



Mohamed Mansour

ing his father's death in 1976. It's now worth about \$7 billion, according to Bloomberg calculations. His son Loufty is chief executive officer of their London-based family office, Man Capital, which also has a venture capital business in San Francisco. Bloomberg spoke with Mansour about how he

became an early Facebook Inc. investor, his exercise regime and why he's waiting for the outcome of the US election.

Did the pandemic hit your wealth?

I reduced my exposure maybe 75 per cent at the end of February. I saw Covid was in China. When it started hitting Europe and the numbers started doubling every five or seven days, I went to my office and told my team we needed to exit any stocks not in the technology sector. We've gone into the market a bit since then, mostly in tech, but we have quite a bit of cash as we're waiting to see what happens. It'll be interesting to see how the US election

affects the markets.

Why did you set up a family office?

After serving in government from 2005 to 2009, I was starting a new career. The companies in Mansour Group were solid, and we had liquidity. When you run a business, you really don't pay attention to your wealth, and I wanted to be able to manage my own money. We used to give it to X or Y bank, but I said, "This doesn't take rocket science. We could hire bright young men and women that can manage our money. If the bank can do it, why can't we do it ourselves?"

We now have a team of 14 people, including my son, and we've established a

reputation. The deal flow comes to us, and we do one or two deals a year. It was definitely the right decision, and family offices are the future.

Why so much focus on technology?

I was at a conference about 15 years ago, when I heard a guy say the world will change: one day, you won't need to go and see a doctor in person. Instead, you'll just need a screen and the doctor will look and just give you a prescription. After hearing that, I said technology is where the future is, and we invested early in Facebook, Twitter, Uber, Spotify and more recently in Snowflake and Adyen.

—Bloomberg

SHORT TAKES

VK, Rohit dominate ICC ODI rankings

Dubai: India skipper Virat Kohli and his deputy Rohit Sharma continued to dominate the ICC ODI rankings for batsmen by occupying the top two positions, while pacer Jasprit Bumrah remained static at the second spot in the bowler's list. Kohli (871) and Rohit (855), who have not featured in any one-day game since the Covid-19 pandemic suspended all cricket activities across the globe, are ranked one and two respectively in the batting chart.

Pakistan captain Babar Azam, however, has bridged the gap with the Indian pair after amassing 221 runs, which included a knock of 125 in the third match against Zimbabwe recently. In the bowling chart, New Zealand pacer Trent Boult (722) held on to his top spot, followed by Bumrah (719). — PTI

Samuels bids adieu to cricket

Kingston: West Indian batsman Marlon Samuels, who top-scored in both of the team's T20 World Cup final wins during a career that also had its share of controversies including a two-year ban for corruption, has retired from all forms of cricket.

ESPNcricinfo reported that Cricket West Indies chief executive Johnny Grave confirmed to it that Samuels had told CWI of his retirement in June, having last played in December 2018. The 39-year-old played 71 Tests, 207 ODIs and 67 T20Is for the West Indies. He scored over 11,000 international runs and also picked more than 150 wickets.

Samuels was known as the man for big occasions, evidences of which were his exploits in the team's T20 World Cup title triumphs in 2012 and 2016. — PTI

Doubts brew over Asian League

Seoul: There are growing concerns as to whether the eastern zone of the AFC Champions League can be completed in the face of travel restrictions in the region. Sixteen teams from Japan, South Korea, China, Malaysia, Thailand and Australia are scheduled to resume their campaigns in the continent's flagship club tournament in a bio-secure hub in Qatar on November 15. The eastern zone winner is then scheduled to take on western conference champion Persepolis of Iran in the final in Doha on December 18. The tournament was split in half because of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the western zone competition was completed in the same Qatar hub last month. Australian clubs especially have an issue with the revised timing of the continental competition. — AP

Oz swim coach Don dies aged 87

Sydney: Long-time former Australia coach Don Talbot has died aged 87, with the swimming world on Wednesday remembering him as a legend of the sport who oversaw his country's golden era in the pool. Talbot passed away peacefully on November 3, Sport Australia Hall of Fame said in a tribute. He began his coaching career in the 1950s and was Australia's head swimming coach during its peak in the 1990s and 2000s — including at the 2000 Sydney Olympics when Australia produced their best result in almost 30 years by winning 18 medals. Talbot guided the 4x100m relay team of Michael Klim, Chris Fydler, Ashley Callus and Ian Thorpe to break the world record and stun the US team who had never been beaten in the event since its Olympic introduction in 1964. — AFP

Live on TV

CRICKET

IPL: Qualifier 1 — Mumbai Indians vs Delhi Capitals from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

IPL Women's T20 Challenge: Velocity vs Trailblazers from 3.20 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

TENNIS

ATP Paris Masters: Day 4 action from 3.30 pm on Sony Six

FOOTBALL

Europa League: Benfica vs Rangers from 11.25 pm on Sony Ten 1; Ludogorets vs Tottenham Hotspur from 11.25 pm on Sony Ten 2; Roma vs CFR Cluj from 11.25 pm on Sony Ten 3; Arsenal vs Molde from 1.30 am (Friday) on Sony Ten 2; Leicester City vs Braga from 1.30 am (Friday) on Sony Ten 3; AC Milan vs Lille from 1.30 am (Friday) on Sony Ten 1

Heavyweights clash

Ambitious Delhi Capitals face mighty Mumbai Indians

Dubai, Nov. 4: They stand on the opposite ends of IPL's success spectrum but there is little to separate between Mumbai Indians and Delhi Capitals in the tournament's 13th edition as they head into a blockbuster first qualifier here on Thursday.

The team to beat in the league stage, four-time winners Mumbai lost a bit of their momentum after a 10-wicket defeat to SRH on Tuesday.

Chasing their maiden title, DC roared back to form by thrashing Royal Challengers Bangalore by six wickets to grab the second spot, after four successive losses.

The biggest positive for Mumbai has been the return of skipper Rohit Sharma, who had missed four games to recover from a hamstring injury. The star opener, though, perished cheaply against SRH and needs to come good on the big day.

The defending champions boast an explosive batting line-up coupled with an equally lethal bowling attack, but the batters had an off day against SRH.

Their bowlers too were taken to the task — a wake-up call before the crucial game.

Delhi's middle-order has been sluggish and heavily dependent on one or two batters.

Mumbai top-order has been firing on all-cylinders and young Ishan Kishan (428 runs) has been a revelation. Quinton De Kock (443) would be keen to continue his sublime form while opening with Rohit.

And so would Suryakumar Yadav (410), who has played some scintillating knocks.

Known for their six-hitting prowess, Hardik Pandya (241), Kieron Pollard (259) and Krunal Pandya (95) have pummelled bowling attacks to submission.

Pollard's six-hitting ability was on display again



Rohit Sharma (right) of Mumbai Indians and Shreyas Iyer of Delhi Capitals in this photo.

NUMBERS GAME

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL:

● Matches: 26 ● Mumbai: 14 ● Delhi: 12

MEETING IN 2020

- Mumbai Indians beat Delhi Capitals by 5 wickets at Abu Dhabi
- Mumbai Indians beat Delhi Capitals by 9 wickets at Dubai

FOR THE RECORD

- Rohit Sharma who scored 3992 runs at an average of 31.43 in 149 innings of 153 matches, needs just eight runs to become first batsman to score 4000 runs for Mumbai Indians in IPL.
- Kagiso Rabada with 25 wickets at an average of 17.80 in 14 innings of as many matches, is the highest wicket-taker in this Indian Premier League.

— S. PERVEZ QAISER

with two hundreds and three fifties, but will need support from others in a big game.

A major cause of concern is the form of two youngsters — opener

Prithvi Shaw (228) and Rishabh Pant (282) — who haven't lived up to their true potential. So has been the case of their key overseas players — West Indian Shimron Hetmyer

(138 runs) and Marcus Stoinis (249 runs).

Skipper Shreyas Iyer (421) will have to play the anchor's role.

On the bowling front, the South African pace duo of Kagiso Rabada (25 wickets) and Anrich Nortje (19) have been exceptional.

Ravichandran Ashwin and Axar Patel have done well to suffocate the opposition teams.

Earlier in the league stage, Mumbai got the better of Delhi twice but Rohit conceded that it is history.

"You keep doing well, I know you want to remember those performances, but it is always nice to forget what has happened and focus on the present," Rohit said. — PTI

NEVER-SAY-DIE ATTITUDE IS KEY TO SRH SUCCESS

Sharjah, Nov. 4: Sunrisers Hyderabad's "never-say-die" attitude helped the team stage an incredible turnaround and secure a spot in the IPL play-offs, skipper David Warner stated.

Sunrisers Hyderabad delivered under pressure in a must-win game to crush table toppers Mumbai Indians by 10 wickets and qualify for the play-offs.

"It feels good now after that dreadful loss against KXIP. They (MI) rested a few players but to hold them to 150 on this ground was great. A lot of credit goes to the bowlers, (Shahbaz) Nadeem was superb.

"We were trying to be as clinical with the bat then, and it feels good.

"We have a never say die attitude and that is how we approach each game," the Sunrisers Hyderabad's captain added. — PTI

Sushma shines in Velocity win

Sharjah, Nov. 4: Velocity toppled defending champions Supernovas by five wickets in the opening match of the Women's T20 Challenge here on Wednesday.

Sushma Verma (34) and Sune Luus (37 not out) were main contributors in Velocity's successful chase.

Ekta Bisht (3/22) scalped three batswomen, while Leigh Kasperrek (2/23) and Jahanara Alam (2/27) took two wickets apiece for Velocity.

For Supernovas, opener Chamari Atapattu top-scored for Supernovas with a 44-run knock.

Left-arm spinner Ekta Bisht scalped three batters as Velocity put up a disciplined bowling effort to restrict defending champions Supernova to a modest 126 for eight in the opening match of Women's T20 Challenge, here on Wednesday.

Apart from Bisht, New Zealand off-spinner Leigh Kasperrek (2/23) and medium pacer Jahanara Alam (2/27) also contributed in stifling the holders.

Jahanara dismissed key batters — Harmanpreet Kaur (31) and Chamara Atapattu (44) — to derail Supernova.

Atapattu and her Indian counterpart Harmanpreet had seized control in the back end but their 47-run partnership was broken by Jahanara with Veda Krishnamurthy taking calm-headed skier in the long on. — PTI

BRIEF SCORES

■ Supernovas 126/8 in 20 overs (Chamari Athapathu 44, Harmanpreet Kaur 31; Ekta Bisht 3-22, Leigh Kasperrek 2-23, Jahanara 2-27) lost to Velocity 129/5 in 19.5 overs (Sune Luus 37, Sushma Verma 34, V. Veda Krishnamurthy 29; A. Khaka 2-27; A. Khaka 2-27)



Sushma Verma of Velocity plays a shot against Supernovas during their Women's T20 Challenge match at Sharjah Cricket Stadium in the United Arab Emirates on Wednesday.

— BCCI

THE RESULTS

Liverpool (Jota 16, 33, 54, Salah 47, Mane 49)	5	Manchester City (Ferran Torres 12, Gabriel Jesus 81, Joao Cancelo 90)	3
Atalanta	0	Olympiacos	0
Bayern Munich (Lewandowski 21-pen, 88, Kristensen-OG, Jerome Boateng 79, Leroy Sane 83, Hernandez 90+2)	6	Real Madrid (Karim Benzema 25, Sergio Ramos 33, Rodrygo 80)	3
RB Salzburg (Berisha 4, Okugawa 66)	2	Inter Milan (Martinez 35, Ivan Perisic 68)	2

for Liverpool's fourth before Jota got his hat-trick goal as the Premier League champions recorded their biggest win in Europe since beating Porto 5-0 away in February 2018.

With three wins from three, Liverpool are well on course to top Group D, with Ajax and Atalanta both five points back.

Ajax won 2-1 away to Midtjylland in Denmark, as Brazilian youngster Antony opened the scoring in the first minute and Dusan Tadic netted from an indirect free-kick inside the box soon after. Anders Dreyer got one back for the hosts, who remain pointless.

Meanwhile, Real Madrid ran out 3-2 winners in a

dramatic encounter with Inter behind closed doors at the Alfredo di Stefano Stadium, as Vinicius Junior set up his fellow Brazilian substitute Rodrygo to lash in the decisive goal 10 minutes from time.

Karim Benzema had put the hosts ahead and Sergio Ramos headed in his 100th Madrid goal in

the 33rd minute, but Lautaro Martinez pulled one back shortly after.

In another match, reigning champions Bayern have now won a record-extending 14 consecutive Champions League games after a 6-2 victory against Salzburg in Austria.

German forward Mergim Berisha gave Salzburg an early lead only for Robert Lewandowski to level from the penalty spot, and a Rasmus Kristensen own goal put Bayern ahead before the break.

Jerome Boateng headed them back in front, Leroy Sane got their fourth and Lewandowski strained to head in his 12th of the season, before Lucas Hernandez wrapped up their win.

— AFP

Maradona's brain surgery goes well

Buenos Aires, Nov. 4: Diego Maradona has had successful surgery for possible bleeding on his brain less than a week after his 60th birthday.

It was all successful and it happened as expected, Maradona's public relations team said in a statement Tuesday night.

Maradona had a subdural hematoma, which is an accumulation of blood between a membrane and his brain, his personal doctor, Leopoldo Luque, said.

Luque, a neurologist, said the problem likely was caused by an accident, but Maradona said he doesn't remember the event.

The Argentine soccer great will rest in his room in a private clinic outside Buenos Aires for at least 48 hours.

Maradona was accompanied to the clinic by his daughters Dalma, Giannina and Jana and other relatives, according to local media.

The surgery closed a journey that the 1986 World Cup champion started in another clinic in the city of La Plata, where he was admitted with anemia and dehydration.

Donato Villani, the head of the Argentine national team's medical staff, told television channel TyC Sports that such a surgery normally goes well, "but it is different with Diego," citing Maradona's past treatment for cardiac problems and his use of drugs and alcohol.



Diego Maradona

Maradona was admitted to the Ipenza Clinic with signs of depression on Monday. Luque said Maradona had felt sad for about a week and refused to eat before arriving at the clinic.

Maradona has lived in La Plata since the end of 2019, when he became coach of Gimnasia y Esgrima.

Maradona turned 60 last Friday and showed up that night for Gimnasia's national championship match against Patronato, which his team won 3-0. He left before the end of the first half, which raised questions about his health.

Before undergoing surgery on Tuesday, the former star for Barcelona, Napoli and Boca Juniors reported feeling better.

"Diego feels much better than yesterday and feels like leaving. He spent the night well and we have been joking," Luque said Tuesday morning. — AP

ENGLISH FOOTBALLER RYAN RACIALLY ABUSED

Sinsheim (Germany), Nov. 4: Ryan Sessegnon, on loan at German club Hoffenheim from Tottenham, has revealed that he's been subjected to online racial abuse.

The 20-year-old left-back published a screenshot of the abuse late Monday showing a series of messages sent on Instagram including racist insults.

The craziest thing is I'm not even surprised anymore," wrote Sessegnon.

The account shown as having sent the messages is no longer active on Instagram.

Tottenham and Hoffenheim both issued messages of support for Sessegnon, who has played for England's under-21 team.

Everyone at the club is with you. We are proud of the rich ethnic diversity that exists across our communities, fans, staff and players. We are driven by inclusion and equality for all and nobody should have to endure such repulsive abuse," Tottenham wrote on Twitter.

Sessegnon joined Hoffenheim this month on a season-long loan. Crystal Palace player Wilfried Zaha has said that Black athletes are regularly subjected to online racial abuse. — AP



Ugo Humbert celebrates after defeating Stefanos Tsitsipas in their men's singles tennis match of the Paris Masters in Paris on Tuesday.

— AFP

Ugo sends Tsitsipas packing from Paris

Paris, Nov. 4: Second seed Stefanos Tsitsipas was dumped out of the Paris Masters on Tuesday after losing to in-form Frenchman Ugo Humbert in a marathon second-round tie.

Humbert, who is on a seven-match winning streak after winning the Antwerp title last month, missed four match points but battled to a 7-6 (7/4), 6-7 (6/8), 7-6 (7/3) victory.

He was visibly struggling in the final-set tie-break after over three hours on court, but Tsitsipas said he was also not at full fitness.

"I'm just disappointed with the way I played," Tsitsipas said.

"During the second set my Roland Garros injury came back, and it wasn't as

bad as at the French Open, but it kind of had me on the edge of things, and I wasn't sure if that's good for me to be out there," he added.

The 22-year-old Humbert will face former US Open champion Marin Cilic for a place in the quarter-finals.

Tsitsipas will next defend his ATP Tour Finals title in London at the season-ending tournament which gets underway on November 15.

Humbert appeared poised to secure the win in the second-set breaker, but saw three match points come and go before Stefanos Tsitsipas forced a decider.

It was a second straight narrow defeat for Stefanos Tsitsipas after his loss to Grigor Dimitrov in Vienna last week. — AFP

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