

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
VISAKHAPATNAM | WEDNESDAY | 4 NOVEMBER 2020



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WEATHER



Max: 33.8°C
Min: 25.4°C
RH: 81%
Rainfall: NIL
Forecast: Haze.
Max/Min temp.
33/25 °C

COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+48,187)	(+554)
83,10,665	1,23,579
covid19india.org	
STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS	
(+1,536)	(+3)
TS: 2,42,506	1,351
(+2,849)	(+15)
AP: 8,30,731	6,734

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

4,76,06,115
DEATHS
12,15,485
215

worldometers.info/
coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Nija Ashwayuja Bahula
Chavithi till 5.14 am (Thursday)
Star: Mrigasira till
4.49 am(Thursday)
Variyam: 8.37 amto 10.22 am
Durmuhurtam: 11.36 am to
12.22 pm
Rahukalam: 12 noon to 1.30 pm
HIJRI CALENDAR
Rabbi-ul Awwal 17, 1442 AH
PRAYERS
Fajar: 5:50 am
Zohar: 1:30 pm
Asar: 4:45 pm
Maghrib: 6:15 pm
Isha: 8:15 pm
SUNSET TODAY 5:24 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5:57 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 8:12 PM
MOONSET TOMORROW 8:52 AM

COUNTER POINT



According to this online survey, 30% support Republicans, 31% Democrats, 28% JD(U), 25% RJD...

SHORT TAKES

No hike in bank charges: Centre

New Delhi: The finance ministry on Tuesday said that there has been no increase in service charges by any public sector bank even as Bank of Baroda decided to withdraw changes made with regard to the number of free cash deposit transactions in a bank account per month. BoB had made certain changes with effect from November 1, 2020, with regard to the number of free cash deposits and withdrawals per month, a finance ministry statement said. "BoB has informed that in the light of the Covid situation, they have decided to withdraw the changes," the finance ministry said in the statement.

Ola talks to states on e-scooter plant

New Delhi: Ola is in talks with various state governments to set up India's largest e-scooter manufacturing plant, according to sources. Sources close to the development said Ola Electric, the EV arm of the ride hailing company, has been engaging with state governments, including Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra, to set up an e-scooter manufacturing plant with an annual capacity of about 2 million units. The facility is proposed to be set up on a 100-acre land. — PTV



Samantha Jones, left, and Peter Vina take selfies near the Michael Jordan statue on US Election Day on Tuesday, in the atrium of the United Center, transformed into a super voting site in Chicago. — AP

Americans begin to vote to choose new President

Scranton/Washington, Nov. 3: After a rancorous presidential campaign that exposed the depth of the political divisions in the United States, Americans streamed to the polls on Tuesday to choose either incumbent Donald Trump or challenger Joe Biden to lead a pandemic-battered nation for the next four years.

Voters lined up around the country to cast ballots, with no signs yet of disruptions at polling places that some had feared after a protracted campaign marked by provocative rhetoric.

Ahead of Election Day, just over 100 million voters cast early ballots either by mail or in person, according to the US Elections Project at the University of Florida, driven by concerns over crowded polling places during the pandemic as

● **THE MOST** closely watched results will start to trickle in after 7 pm EST (5.30 am IST, Wednesday), when polls close in states such as Georgia

well as extraordinary enthusiasm.

Biden, the Democratic former vice president who has spent a half century in public life, has held a consistent lead in national opinion polls over the Republican president. But Trump is close enough in several election battleground states.

Supporters of both candidates appeared to agree the election was a referendum on Trump and his tumultuous first term.

Among the most closely contested states that are expected to determine the outcome are Florida, Pennsylvania, North Carol-

ina, Wisconsin, Michigan, Arizona and Georgia, with Democrats hoping that Biden may even threaten Trump in states that once seemed like Republican lands such as Ohio, Iowa and Texas.

Voters on Tuesday will also decide which political party controls the US Congress for the next two years, with Democrats narrowly favoured to recapture a Senate majority and retain their control of the House of Representatives.

The most closely watched results will start to trickle in after 7 pm EST (5.30 am IST, Wednesday), when polls close in states such as Georgia. But it is possible that it could be days before the result is known, especially given the massive surge in voting by mail. — Reuters

■ Full coverage on Page 5

PREZ DECLINES TO MEET PUNJAB CM ON FARM BILLS

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 3

Protesting over President Ram Nath Kovind's refusal to meet him over the Centre's new farm laws, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh will lead a "relay dharna" of Congress MLAs from his state at Rajghat in the capital on Wednesday.

Mr Singh had sought an appointment with the President to seek his assent to the agriculture Bills passed by the Punjab Assembly which, if passed would negate the Centre's farm laws.

But the state government said that the Rashtrapati Bhavan has declined his request for an appointment.

Following this, the chief minister decided to hold a relay dharna at Rajghat.

IS sympathiser kills 5 in Vienna

Vienna, Nov. 3: Five people died, including an assailant, and 17 others were wounded in a shooting in the heart of Vienna, hours before a coronavirus lockdown started, Austrian authorities said on Tuesday.

The dead attacker was a 20-year-old Austrian-North Macedonian dual national who had a previous terror conviction. The suspected attacker was shot and killed by police. Vienna's hospital service said seven people were in life-threatening condition on Tuesday after the attack.

Meanwhile, world leaders voiced their condemnation over the multiple shootings in Vienna that killed four people.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted that he was "deeply shocked and saddened

by the dastardly terror attacks in Vienna".

US President Donald Trump said, "These evil attacks against innocent people must stop. The US stands with Austria, France, and all of Europe in the fight against terrorists."

"The fight against assassins and those who instigate them is our common struggle," said Chancellor Angela Merkel's spokesman.

"We French share the shock and sorrow of the Austrian people," President Emmanuel Macron stated. Russian President Vladimir Putin "strongly condemned the cruel and cynical crime which once again confirmed the inhumane nature of terrorism", the Kremlin said.

■ More reports on Page 5

Bihar voters seal fate of many leaders in EVMs

Over 53% voter turnout recorded; Muzaffarpur sees highest

NAYEAR AZAD
with agency inputs
PATNA, NOV. 3

Over 53 per cent of voting was recorded in the second phase of Bihar Assembly elections on Tuesday as voting took place in 94 constituencies across 17 districts. The voting percentage figure is likely to go up as voting continued beyond schedule in several places, the Election Commission said.

The second phase is crucial for both the NDA as well as the Opposition alliance being led by the Rashtriya Janata Dal. For one, it will decide the fate of RJD leader and grand alliance's chief ministerial face Tejashwi Yadav. In this phase the JD(U) has fielded candidates on 43 seats, the BJP on 46. From the Grand Alliance, the RJD fielded candidates on 52 seats, Congress on 24 and three Left parties on 14 seats.

The RJD is locked in a direct fight with the BJP on 28 seats and with the JD(U) in 24 seats. The Congress is contesting 12 seats each against the BJP and JD(U).

While reports suggest that Tejashwi Yadav has the support of don turned politician Rama Singh from his seat, his elder

Booth-capturing mars MP bypolls

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDURY | DC
BHOPAL, NOV. 3

Incidents of firing and booth-capturing marked the 28 Assembly bypolls in Madhya Pradesh on Tuesday. However, they saw an impressive voter turnout of 65.39 per cent despite the coronavirus pandemic.

The Gwalior-Chambal region, where bypolls were held in 16 seats, and which is considered the stronghold of BJP leader Jyotiraditya Scindia, however, witnessed a low turnout.

Official reports said miscreants opened fire outside polling booths at Jatabar and Pura in Sumawali con-

stituency in Morena district. Four people were arrested over the firing at Jatabar, but the police is yet to identify those behind the firing at Pura.

Elsewhere, miscreants stormed a polling booth at Lolai village in Mehgaon constituency in Bhind district, and tried to snatch an EVM, but officials there foiled the booth-capturing bid. This disrupted polling for some time, but it resumed after the police took control. Congress and BJP workers clashed at Malroad polling booth in Gwalior constituency and Tilabali Chanda in Sambre seat, leading to injuries to several people in both parties.

brother Tej Pratap, who had won from Mahua seat in 2015, and is now contesting from Hasanpur, is locked in a tough battle against two-time sitting JD(U) MLA Raj Kumar Rai.

Another important leader whose fate will be decided

in this phase of polling is Nand Kishore Yadav of the BJP. He is the sitting MLA from Patna Sahib Seat and a minister in the Nitish Kumar Cabinet. JD(U) leader and minister Shravan Kumar from Nalanda as well as actor-turned-

Telangana awaits result of hotly contest bypoll



Voters queue up to cast their vote in the byelection for Dubbak Assembly constituency in Dubbak town in Telangana on Tuesday. — DC

HC finds all is not well between govt, poll panel

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 3

The Andhra Pradesh High Court on Tuesday observed that "all is not well" between the State Election Commission (SEC) and the state government.

A single-judge bench of the High Court headed by Justice Battu Devanand held a hearing on a writ petition filed by the State Election Commission on

Tuesday alleging that the state government was not responding properly to the requests for assistance in the discharge of its duties, including conduct of elections in a free and fair manner.

The court observed that the prevailing relationship between the SEC, a constitutional authority, and the state government, appeared to be "very unfortunate" and said that everybody should keep in mind that

institutions are permanent while persons holding the posts are temporary.

The court said the duty of the SEC is to discharge its functions as per the provisions of the Constitution and as per the relevant laws and felt the need on the part of state government to extend cooperation to the SEC to help it discharge its functions.

■ Page 2: HC orders CS to comply with its order

OFFICIALS SCREEN STUDENTS, TEACHERS FOR CORONAVIRUS

DC CORRESPONDENTS
VIJAYAWADA/KAKINADA/
ANANTAPUR/NELLORE/
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 3

State government health officials on Tuesday said that they have been screening teachers and students over the last few days to ensure a Covid-free school environment. They also said several teachers and students, who were tested positive for the disease during this period, have also recovered.

Health officials maintain that they are conducting Covid-19 tests on both the teachers and the students and will continue until they complete all the targeted number of teachers and students to ensure that no infected person spreads the virus to others.

In East Godavari, district health authorities conducted Covid-19 tests on nearly 14,000 teachers in the last 15 days. Out of them, only nine teachers were tested positive for the disease. However, as all infected teachers underwent medical treatment and recovered, they were allowed to attend the schools since November 2. All 2,000 students from Classes 9 and 10 tested negative for Covid-19 and have been attending the classes.

East Godavari district educational officer S. Abraham said, "We are taking up thermal screening of both teachers and students before allowing them to enter the schools. If anyone is found with fever and other symptoms of Covid-19, we are seeing them for the Covid-19 test. Apart from complying with norms like social distancing, wearing a facemask and the use of sanitisers, we are also creating an awareness among children on Covid-19, so that they could remain safe."

■ Page 3: Students isolated after staff tested positive

OTHER STORIES

CM to attend event in Eluru today

Eluru: Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy will visit Eluru in West Godavari district on Wednesday. He will reach Alluri Seetharamaraju Stadium by 10.30 am and will go to VV Nagar Bailey Bridge Centre to inaugurate infrastructure development works at a cost of Rs 330 crore and later he will attend a private function. He will leave for Tadepalli by 11.22 am.

HC ORDERS CS TO COMPLY WITH ITS ORDER

From Page 1

The court observed that the state government has been irresponsible and non-cooperative thereby posing serious hurdles to the functioning of the SEC. As the grievances raised by the petitioner SEC involve several departments to redress them, the court suo motu implemented the chief secretary as one of the respondents to the writ petition for proper adjudication of the issues raised by the SEC.

The court while issuing interim directions asked the State Election Commission to submit details of all required cooperation and financial and non-financial assistance from the state government within three days. It directed the state government to provide all necessary cooperation and assistance to the SEC forthwith.

The court directed the chief secretary to take steps to ensure both the respondents comply with its order and submit the status report to it within 15 days.

As the SEC asked for release of additional funds to clear the bills of senior counsel who appeared for former state election commissioner justice Kanagaraj as he was impleaded in the writ petitions as respondent in his personal capacity, the court expressed surprise and observed that it was nothing but causing loss to the public exchequer.

● The court directed the CS to take steps to ensure both the respondents comply with its order.

Govt to focus on economic activity, speed up projects

Officials told to tie up with Indian, foreign firms to train students

MD ILYAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 3

The AP government has plunged into action focussing on restarting economic activity and promptness of projects after eight months of the Covid-19 pandemic. Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy conducted review meetings on airports, aviation projects, IT policy and planning to introduce sea-plane tourism. Further, the boat operations in the state will resume as the officials were directed to restore all 195 boats with fresh licences after conducting a full-fledged fitness check.

Tourism minister Muttamsetti Srinivas Rao said that all the boats under the tourism department would start their operations soon based on the flood levels in rivers. He said the boating operations have started in Visakhapatnam and East Godavari regions and once flood levels recede, boating in Bhavani Island, Nagarjunasagar and Srisaillam shall resume. He said that of the total 195 boats, 56 small 12-seater boats were given licences and 112 boats with higher capacity are yet to get licences.

Mr Srinivas Rao further reviewed the possibilities for increasing revenue generation in the tourism sector, especially in the



During a review meeting on airports and aviation projects across the state, Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy directed the authorities to focus on the land acquisition for expanding Gannavaram and Kadapa airports.

coming four months. He stressed on introducing sea-plane tourism connecting Visakhapatnam-Vijayawada-Hussainsagar, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated one such project in Gujarat. The CM also told the officials that the Airport Authority of India is showing interest in the Water-Drome project near Prakasam Barrage.

The tourism minister stated that new boats will be purchased either by the department or through Public-Private partnership and will be operated in potential routes to boost the revenue. He stated that in addition to these, as a measure to avoid boat accidents, nine Command Control Rooms had been set-up. He stated that there are 38 restaurants run by the department and during the Covid-19 lockdown, all these restaurants supplied food to Covid-19 centres and earned a revenue of ₹22.5 crore. He further stated that a new ship

restaurant in Visakhapatnam and setting up of 5 and 7-star hotels are at the proposal stage.

Regarding sports, the minister said that a new stadium in Prakasam district and a shopping complex which were built with an expenditure of ₹2.2 crore and ₹1 crore respectively would be inaugurated on Thursday. He mentioned that construction of six more stadiums in East Godavari, Guntur and Prakasam are underway. He said that the state would receive ₹3 crore funds through Centre's initiative Khelo India, for YSR Sports School in Kadapa. The minister said the state accorded permission to run individual sports institutes for 10 sports events, including archery, badminton and tennis under unlock 5.0 from Thursday.

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy during a review meeting on IT policy said an IT high-end Skill University would be set up in Visakhapatnam and training in advanced

subjects like Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Robotics should be included with job orientation. He told the officials to tie up with Indian and foreign companies for training students and to develop their skills and prepare the required human resources to suit the requirements of IT companies. At least 2,000 students should be trained at the University in Visakhapatnam, and the certificates of training programmes should get international recognition, the CM reportedly said.

The Chief Minister said to start degree or diploma courses in tune with the demand of the IT industry and directed the officials to start the works of IT high-end skill university in Visakhapatnam at the earliest.

During a review meeting on airports and aviation projects across the state, the CM directed the authorities to focus on the land acquisition for expanding Gannavaram and Kadapa airports. Regarding the B h o g a p u r a m International Airport, the officials informed that 98 acres of land is yet to be acquired for construction of the airport. Similarly, land acquisition has to be done for Orvakallu airport in Kurnool district and Dagadharthi airport in Nellore district.

YSRC govt is causing loss to people: Naidu

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 3

Telugu Desam chief N. Chandrababu Naidu on Tuesday accused the YSRC government of causing irreparable loss to the people of Andhra Pradesh by following thoughtless and illogical policies in all aspects of governance. He commented that Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy is more dangerous than Coronavirus and the criticism against the TD was only aimed at diverting attention from YSRC failures.

Addressing a video conference with party's elected representatives and in-charges of 175 Assembly segments, the TD chief said the Polavaram works were stopped in the name of reverse tendering and false allegations were made about corruption in the change of estimates. He lamented that his entire focus was placed on mudslinging the Opposition but not on continuing the works to complete the project at the earliest. He claimed that Jagan has seized AP like a dangerous

Coronavirus and was using fake news to whip up divisive feelings among the people along caste and religion.

Mr Naidu pointed out that during the YSR rule, just ₹400 crore was spent on Polavaram works. The TD regime spent ₹11,000 crore in its five-year rule and completed 71 per cent works and overall, the TD government spent ₹64,000 crore on the irrigation projects during its previous regime.

Stating that owning a house would be every poor family's dream, Mr Naidu said that Jagan has committed a breach of trust by not giving even the completed houses to the beneficiaries concerned.

He demanded that the YSRC government hand over the houses to the already selected beneficiaries by the Sankranti festival and warned that otherwise, the eligible families would take forcible possession of their houses on their own.

Mr Naidu gave a call for an agitation with the slogans 'My House My Right' and 'My House Site My Right' all over the state.

GALLA ALLEGES SCAM IN PADDY PROCUREMENT, COMPLAINS TO CENTRE

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 3

The Opposition Telugu Desam lodged a complaint with the ministry of consumer affairs, food and public distribution, alleging ₹500 crore to ₹700 crore scam in the paddy procurement and sought immediate inquiry by the national agency.

TD MP Jayadev Galla said that paddy procurement by the Government of India through Food Corporation of India (FCI) serves twin purposes of providing minimum support price (MSP) to the farmer and ensuring

food security. In the complaint letter, the TD MP stated that as a part of the second crop, Nellore district had witnessed a paddy production of eight lakh tonnes under which only three lakh tonnes has been procured through various procurement centres in the district.

He alleged that around 60 per cent of the paddy procured was done in collusion between miller/middlemen and local procurement officials leading to a huge scam with connivance between local officials, millers and middlemen.

YSRC GOVT GIVING PRIORITY TO BCs, SAYS RANGANATHA

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 3

Minister for housing Ch. Ranganatha Raju said the YSRC government was giving top priority to BCs in the government. He said that the Telugu Desam government used BCs as vote banks, but Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy was fulfilling his promises given during the election campaign on for the development of BCs through numerous welfare programmes.

Speaking at the YSRC conducted BC meeting Jayahoti Jagananna at Guntur, the minister said Jagan had appointed BCs, including women, to the recently formed BC Corporations.

He asked the newly-appointed chairpersons and directors of the BC Corporations to work for the development of BCs by implementing the welfare schemes transparently without giving any chance for corruption.

BCs ACCORDED SELF-RESPECT BY JAGAN: MINISTER

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, NOV. 3

BC welfare minister Ch. Srinivasa Venugopalakrishna said Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has accorded self-respect to the Backward Classes in the state by forming 56 BC Corporations for the welfare of the BCs. Attending as chief guest at a felicitation programme for the corporation chairpersons and directors here on Tuesday, Mr Vengopalakrishna said Jagan has given priority to the BCs and provided power to them in several sectors.

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IN BRIEF

Lord Krishna idol damaged

Vijayawada: An idol of Lord Krishna was damaged at a temple atop Sivagiri hill in Moghalrajpuram in Vijayawada on Tuesday by some unknown persons. VHP representatives expressed concern over the demolition of Lord Krishna idol. Sevaksheeta seer Siva Swamy said that demolition of idols in temples was an evil act. He visited the temple and examined the damaged idol and later spoke to the media persons and said that miscreants attacked 60 Hindu temples across the state. He said that the police are saying that mentally unstable miscreants are behind the attacks on temples if that was true why they are targeting only Hindu temples, he questioned. Siva Swamy said that despite the state government having such a mechanism, culprits are not being caught which gives scope for suspicion. He alleged that the attacks were carried out by the involvement of foreigners and that the government was negligent in taking action. Continuous attacks on the temples are hurting the sentiments of the Hindus across the country. He questioned the government, which was using the money of Hindu temples, did not care to protect them. He said that the CM review and take action to put an end to the attacks on temples else would protest against the government in a big way. The Swamy appealed to the people to celebrate the Diwali festival happily and told the government to cooperate without imposing any restrictions.

Housewife dies by suicide

Visakhapatnam A 33 year old housewife committed suicide by hanging to the ceiling fan in her bedroom on Tuesday afternoon. Her 10 year old daughter was present in the house. She was identified as D Jyothi. Her husband D Girish Kumar works as a deputy manager in Facor in Vizianagaram district. The woman took the extreme step when her daughter was present in the halls. The Malkapuram police said they would know the reason only when her husband arrives home after his work.

SEX WORKERS SEEK COVID RELIEF

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 3

Sex Workers forums "VIMUKTI" and "Me and My World" who are striving for the Rights of Sex Workers and their welfare in the state have demanded the Government to distribute Covid relief support without asking for any identity cards as directed by the Supreme Court.

State Convener for VIMUKTI S. Haseena and State Secretary of Me and My World P. Devi stated that the Covid effect completely devastated their lives without work and earning, where they are starving even for a fistful of food for them and their children as well as their family members.

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The undersigned invites E-Tenders (IREPS) for the following works up to the dates & time shown against each.

Tender No.: GNT/M/07/RR/GNT/2020-21
Description of the Work: Maintenance and upkeep of Running Room, Guntur and Supply of subsidised food at Running Room, Guntur for a period of two years (730 days).
Value of the Work: ₹. 1,37,62,134.18
Period of Contract: 2 years (730 days)
EMD: ₹. 2,18,800/-
Cost of Tender Form: ₹. 5,000/-
Date and Time of Closing of e-Tender: 07/12/2020 at 15.00 hrs
Date and time of opening of e-tender: 07/12/2020 at 15.30 hrs

i) Last date for online submission of E-Bids is 07/12/2020 upto 15.00 hrs. For detailed information logon to website. www.ireps.gov.in

ii) Any further Communication/Corrigendum shall only be initiated through E-portal www.ireps.gov.in

iii) If any details pertaining to the tender please contract to S S E / Tenders / Mobile No.9701379467

Sr. Divisional Mechanical Engineer, A123020, Guntur

For further tender conditions / details and for downloading the tender documents, Please visit website at <http://www.ireps.gov.in> or www.scr.indianrailways.gov.in

Ambedkar memorial to be ready within 14 mths: CM

Jagan conducts a review meeting on iconic memorial works in camp office

MD ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 3

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy instructed the officials that the ambience of the landscape Ambedkar memorial park to be developed at Swaraj Maidan in Vijayawada should be pleasant.

Mr Jagan conducted a review meeting on iconic Ambedkar memorial works in CM Camp in Tadepalli on Tuesday. He directed the officials to finalise the location to set up the statue focusing on a grand look for the statue. He further directed the officials to order for the statue immediately and start the works and complete it within 14 months.

The Chief Minister told the officials that high standards should be maintained in the construction of Ambedkar Statue at Swaraj Maidan and the structure should



Proposal and plan of Ambedkar Smruthivanam at Swaraj Maidan in Vijayawada.

have glow and spark and the ambience of the landscape to be developed at the Memorial Park should be pleasant. He instructed the officials to display the life and times

of Dr B.R. Ambedkar at Memorial Park in addition to setting up of Library, Museum and a Gallery.

The Chief Minister suggested to display the

quotes of Ambedkar in the park and also to widen the road and attractively develop the walkway.

The officials had shown two plans in a

PowerPoint presentation of Ambedkar statue and Memorial Park. The officials had shown country-wide models, which include Ambedkar Deeksha Bhoomi (Nagpur), Chaitanya Bhoomi (Mumbai), Ambedkar Memorial (Lakhanpur) and Prerana Sthal (Noida). The presentation focused on the design of the gallery and auditorium. The work is slated to be completed within 14 months, the officials said.

The Ambedkar memorial park will be at the heart of the Vijayawada city in Swarajya Maidan which is popularly known as PWD grounds and it is renamed as Dr B.R. Ambedkar Swarajya Maidan after laying the foundation stone by the Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on July 8. A library, memorial hall, a study centre and open theatre will be established by April 14, 2022.

TRAINING TO SECRETARIAT STAFF

Vijayawada: Village and Ward Secretariat employees were instructed to provide services to people in the scheduled timeframe and warned about stern action for showing negligence.

The two-day training programme on e-seva services to master trainers of village and ward secretariats started in KL University on Tuesday. Village and ward secretariats commissioner G.S. Navin Kumar said that phase wise training is offered to provide good services to people. He directed the employees to behave politely and respectfully with people in the village and ward secretariats. He instructed the employees to learn code of conduct as work during the probation period is most important as misconduct would lead towards the dismissal of employees.

Mid Meal making employees distribute the food to students after reopening of the school at One Town in Vijayawada on Tuesday.

— C. NARAYANA RAO

Serving Mid Day meals



AP records highest GST growth in Oct.

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 3

Andhra Pradesh recorded a 26 per cent Goods and Services Tax (GST) growth in October, highest among the mainland states in the country.

Andhra Pradesh collected ₹2,480 crore in October, 2020 over ₹1,975 crore in the corresponding periods in 2019. Chhattisgarh, which takes the second place, recorded a GST collection of ₹1,974 crore in October 2020 as compared to ₹1,570 crore in the same month in 2019. Telangana recorded 5 per cent growth with ₹3,383 crore collected in October 2020 compared to ₹3,230 crore in October 2019.

An overwhelmed AP industry minister Mekapati Goutham Reddy said State GST revenue increased by 26 per cent and hoped that festive season will also spur growth and both are positive signals for a full recovery soon.

With the Diwali and

other festivals like Christmas and the biggest festival of Makar Sankranti may further boost the economy for the state.

The gross GST revenue collected in the month of October, 2020 is ₹1,05,155 crore of which CGST is ₹19,193 crore, SGST is ₹25,411 crore, IGST is ₹52,540 crore (including ₹23,375 crore collected on import of goods) and cess is ₹8,011 crore (including ₹932 crore collected on import of goods). The total number of GSTR-3B Returns filed for the month of October upto October 31, 2020 is 80 lakh.

Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh recorded a hike of 5 per cent at ₹15,799 crore and 17 per cent at ₹2,403 crore, while Gujarat and West Bengal reported 15 per cent increase in the GST collection each at ₹6,787 crore and ₹3,738 crore respectively. Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Kerala registered 7 per cent increase each at ₹5,471 crore, ₹1,010 crore, and ₹1,665 crore

respectively.

The government has settled ₹25,091 crore to CGST and ₹19,427 crore to SGST from IGST as regular settlement. The total revenue earned by Central Government and the State Governments after regular settlement in the month of October, 2020 is ₹44,285 crore for CGST and ₹44,839 crore for the SGST.

The revenues for the month are 10 per cent higher than the GST revenues in the same month last year. During the month, revenue from import of goods was 9 per cent higher and the revenues from domestic transactions (including import of services) are 11 per cent higher than the revenues from these sources during the same month last year. The growth in GST revenue as compared to that in months of July, August and September, 2020 of -14 per cent, -8 per cent and 5 per cent respectively clearly shows the trajectory of recovery of the economy and, correspondingly, of the revenues.

Muskan: 13k kids rescued

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 3

DGP Gautam Sawang said that 13,000 boys and girls were rescued during Operation Muskan and asked the parents to care for their children. He interacted with the children who were rescued during Operation Muskan in Good Shepherd Karunamayi Home in Tadepalli and offered study kits.

As part of the ongoing Operation Muskan programme, the state DGP, Gautam D.

Sawang visited an orphanage on Tuesday and showered his kindness over the inmates of the orphanage.

The DGP gave the children gifts and study kits to the rescued boys and girls along with children. On receiving the gifts, the children thanked the DGP and performed a skit on Save Girl Child. The DGP and senior officers encouraged the girl children Bindhu of the orphanage. They appreciated the work done by stakeholders towards sheltering and

taking care of the needs of the children, including their studies.

The DGP said that the police organised operation Muskan as part of the Martyrs' Day celebrations.

He said that 13,000 boys and girls had been identified across the state. The street children and child labourers were evacuated to Child Welfare Homes. He said that the parents would be given counselling before handing over the children to them.

22-yr-old ends life over debts

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 3

A 22-year-old woman ended her life by hanging herself to a ceiling fan at her one room house in Sanjeevayya Colony under Gajuwaka police station on Tuesday. The victim was identified as Mandava Ahalya, who did her post graduation in MBA and in search of employment.

Gajuwaka circle inspector H Malleswara Rao said as per preliminary investigation, it was found that the woman borrowed small amounts through online and could not repay them due to unemployment. As pressure mounted, she took the extreme step. The incident took place around 10.30 am when her father, a small time worker in Autonagar, went away for work and her mother went to a local bank. She sent her cousin

● The police identified online banking companies as Go Cash, Billion Cash, Bubble Loan and Small Cash from whom she availed the loan.

● The total loan amount could not be assessed as the police could not open the phone.

away on the pretext of taking a bath. When her mother in return found the door locked, she got it opened with the help of neighbours. She saw the body hanging from the fan and immediately raised an alarm.

The police identified online banking companies as Go Cash, Billion Cash, Bubble Loan and Small Cash from whom she availed the loan. The total loan amount could not be assessed as the police could not open the phone.

Students isolated after staff tested +ve

FROM PAGE 1

In West Godavari, nearly 2,410 out of a total number of 12,347 teachers underwent Covid-19 tests. But only 27 students and 38 teachers tested positive for the disease. In Visakhapatnam district, nine teachers tested Covid-19 positive so far in the district. In Anantapur, 10 teachers tested positive for Coronavirus.

At Kakinada, a midday meal worker working at Zilla Parishad High School at Gangalakurru village of Ambajipeta mandal in East Godavari, was tested Covid-19 positive on Tuesday. However, as she served food to 17 students in the school on Monday, all the students were sent to quarantine as a precautionary measure.

In Krishna district, 10 teachers tested Covid-19 positive in the last few days in the district. In

AP records 2,849 news Covid cases

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 3

AP registered 2,849 new Covid-19 cases rising tally to 8,30,731 and 15 deaths taking the toll to 6,734 in the last 24 hours in the state.

State health authorities released Covid-19 bulletin on Tuesday reporting that out of 84,534 samples tested, 2,849 persons were found infected with Covid-19. Out of a total of 82,66,800 samples tested for Covid-19 so far, 8,02,325 patients were discharged after recovery while 21,672 patients are still active with the virus.

Among the daily cases of Covid-19, Chittoor topped the state with 436 followed by 421 in Krishna, 394 in East Godavari, 386 in West Godavari, 277 in Guntur, 185 in Prakasam, 169 in Kadapa, 145 in Visakhapatnam, 142 in Anantapur, 93 in Nellore, 88 in Srikakulam, 78 in Vizianagaram and 35 in Kurnool.

East Godavari continues to be the worst hit with the highest number of cumulative confirmed cases with 1,16,783 followed by 86,835 in West Godavari, 79,322 in Chittoor, 68,063 in Guntur, 64,977 in Anantapur, 60,019 in Prakasam, 59,778 in Nellore, 59,565 in Kurnool, 56,148 in Visakhapatnam, 52,515 in Kadapa, 44,183 in Srikakulam, 40,141 in Krishna, 39,507 in Vizianagaram, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

● Among the daily cases of Covid-19, Chittoor topped the state with 436 followed by 421 in Krishna, 394 in East Godavari, 386 in West Godavari, 277 in Guntur, 185 in Prakasam, 169 in Kadapa, 145 in Visakhapatnam, 142 in Anantapur, 93 in Nellore, 88 in Srikakulam, 78 in Vizianagaram and 35 in Kurnool.

The rate of recovery of Covid-19 infected patients is good in East Godavari with 1,12,041 followed by 84,199 in West Godavari, 76,396 in Chittoor, 64,191 in Guntur, 63,154 in Anantapur, 59,100 in Nellore, 58,806 in Kurnool, 57,981 in Prakasam, 53,883 in Visakhapatnam, 50,924 in Kadapa, 43,210 in Srikakulam, 38,982 in Vizianagaram, 36,563 in Krishna, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

The daily cases of death of Covid-19 infected patients, Anantapur and Guntur, registered three each followed by two each in Chittoor and Krishna and one each in East Godavari, Nellore, Prakasam, Srikakulam and West Godavari.

Chittoor topped the state by registering 787 cases of death of Covid-19 infected patients followed by 625 in Guntur, 614 in East Godavari, 575 in Krishna, 573 in Prakasam, 568 in Anantapur, 510 in Visakhapatnam.

KONKAN RAILWAY CORPORATION LTD
(A Government of India Undertaking)

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

Chief Engineer, Konkan Railway Corporation Ltd., invites Open Tender in Single bid system through E-Tendering on IREPS portal from Eligible Contractors for the following works:

1) **Name of Work:** Pway Zonal Contract for maintenance of Track under the jurisdiction of SSE/Madgaon of Konkan Railway. **Tender Notice No.:** KR-W-01-58-2020-07. **Estimated Cost:** Rs. 4,18,97,717/- excluding GST.

2) **Name of Work:** Pway Zonal Contract for maintenance of Track under the jurisdiction of SSE/Karwar of Konkan Railway. **Tender Notice No.:** KR-W-01-58-2020-08. **Estimated Cost:** Rs. 4,29,90,596/- excluding GST.

3) **Name of Work:** Pway Zonal Contract for maintenance of Track under the jurisdiction of SSE/Bhatkal of Konkan Railway. **Tender Notice No.:** KR-W-01-58-2020-09. **Estimated Cost:** Rs. 4,07,75,765/- excluding GST.

4) **Name of Work:** Pway Zonal Contract for maintenance of Track under the jurisdiction of SSE/Udupi of Konkan Railway. **Tender Notice No.:** KR-W-01-58-2020-10. **Estimated Cost:** Rs. 4,04,67,887/- excluding GST.

Completion Period: Two years including monsoon. **Closing Date/Time:** 25.11.2020 up to 15:00 hrs for submission of online Offers/Bids. Manual offers shall not be accepted. Please visit www.ireps.gov.in website for details / participation. Corrigendum / addendum will be hosted in this website only.

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited
Regd. Office: PSEB, Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001
OFFICE OF CHIEF ENGINEER / METERING
C-3, SHAKTI VIHAR, PSPCL, PATIALA, PUNJAB 147001
Tel. No. 0175-2218871, Fax No. 0175-2200284, e-mail: semeteringpatiala@gmail.com
Corporate Identification Number (CIN) : U40109PB2010SGC033813
Registration Number: 33813, website: www.pspcl.in
e-tendering page: <http://eproc.punjab.gov.in>

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Tender Specification No.	MQP-164/2020-21/PR
Short Description	Procurement of 11 KV Piller resistant metering panel housed with 3 Nos. dry type 11KV Cts, 1 No. 3-Phase Dry type PT and having meter compartment with accuracy of Cts as 0.2S & PT as 0.2 of assorted rations and empanelment for the private sale.
Start date of downloading of tender docs./bid submission	04.11.2020 at 11.00 Hrs.
Last date for Bid submission	07.12.2020 till 11.00 Hrs
Bid opening (Part-I & II)	14.12.2020 at 11.30 Hrs

Detailed NIT and set of specification/ tender documents can only be downloaded from website <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>. Tender ID is 2020_POWEMR_55517_1

Note: Corrigendum, if any, after the publication of this tender enquiry shall only be uploaded on site and will not be published in any newspaper.

C-339/2020
RO - I/99276

-Sd/-
SE/HMC
PSPCL, Patiala

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IN BRIEF

PROXY WRITER
IN JEE MAINS
SCAM HELDMANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, NOV. 3

In a breakthrough in the investigation, police arrested the proxy writer in the Joint Entrance Examination (Mains) scam but the National Testing Agency (NTA), which conducted the Joint Entrance Examination (Mains), is yet to respond to the communication by Guwahati police in connection with the scam.

Informing that proxy writer Bhargav Deka, the owner of a city-based coaching institute Global Edu Light, has been arrested, sources said that the police has requested the NTA to give details about the procedures used in the examination and the possible ways that might have been used by the proxy candidate to appear in the examination on behalf of Neel Nakshyatra Das.

Though NTA officials without thorough probe in the scam claimed that it took place only in the specific examination centre located at ION Digital Zone in the Azara area of the city and nowhere else in the country, sources admitted that the NTA was reluctant to hold any nation-wide probe into the scam as any such investigation by any competent agency may open Pandora's box.

Pointing out that from the examination centre, the police have already seized several documents security sources said that the NTA has hardly taken any note of the scam as the centre was allowed to function and on November 4, National Eligibility Test will be held at the centre.

COVID CASES
LOWEST AFTER
OVER 100 DAYSDC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 3

Central government officials on Tuesday said that a steady decline in daily fresh cases in India has been noted but a large part of the country's population is still susceptible to the coronavirus infection. On Tuesday, 38,310 new cases were detected which was lowest after over 100 days.

The national Covid-19 recovery rate is now 91.96 per cent.

"It is satisfying that there is an improvement in overall cases and there is a consistent decline in active cases. However, in some states it is a reverse trend and there is a rise in fresh cases. In Kerala, West Bengal, Delhi and Manipur we are noticing rise in cases. In neighbouring cities of Delhi – Gurgaon and Faridabad – there is a sharp increase in new cases," said NITI Aayog member (Health) Dr V.K. Paul.

"We are susceptible to a very large extent and the situation in America and Europe is showing (that). We don't know the behaviour of the virus completely. So, we need to save the gains that we have earned in our fight against the pandemic till now," Mr Paul said.

BJP MLA FOR
ACTION AGAINST
BACHCHANBHAGWAN PARAB | DC
MUMBAI, NOV. 3

The *Kaun Banega Crorepati* (KBC) show on the Sony TV has courted yet another controversy. A Maharashtra BJP MLA has accused veteran actor Amitabh Bachchan and the makers of the popular TV show of allegedly hurting Hindu sentiments.

Abhimanyu Pawar, BJP legislator from Ausa in Latur district, on Tuesday filed a complaint at Latur police seeking action against Mr Bachchan and Sony Entertainment Television, the makers of KBC, for a question about religious text Manusmriti.

On October 30, in the Karamveer special episode of KBC, Mr Bachchan, the host of the show, had asked contestants activist Bezwada Wilson and actor Anup Soni: "On 25th December 1927, Dr BR Ambedkar and his followers burned copies of which scripture?" The options given to the contestants were: Vishnu Purana, Bhagavad Gita, Rigved and Manusmriti.

Mr Bachchan said the answer was Manusmriti and then explained Ambedkar's actions. The BJP MLA said that all the four options of the question pertained to the Hindu religion. "It is clear that the motive behind this question was to hurt the sentiments of Hindus," he alleged.

Record 89.8 per cent vote in Nagaland

Moderate to high voting in bypolls for 54 Assembly seats across 10 states despite Covid fears



Voters stand in long queues to cast their votes at a polling station during the second phase of Assembly elections at Diyara in Danapur on Tuesday.

— PTI

Nitish attacked
with onionsNAYEAR AZAD | DC
PATNA, NOV. 3

While campaigning for the third phase of polls, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar was attacked with onions and stones in Madhubani on Tuesday.

The incident occurred when he was talking about the state's development and employment during his public meeting. According to reports from Madhubani a group of youths present in the rally got angry with his comments and started throwing stones at him. This is probably the first time that stones and onions were thrown at the CM during an election campaign.

"You can keep throwing stones at me. But I ask you to beware of such people who have been promising 10 lakh jobs as they don't know anything about governance. I can tell you that they have no knowledge about the ABC of governance and cannot do anything. I also ask you not to indulge in all these anti-social activities otherwise nobody will be able to save you", Nitish Kumar warned those who were throwing stones at him.

Later when his security personal tried to intervene and detain people who were involved in the attack, the CM stopped them and said, "Let them

do it. They are being misled by people who have done nothing for the state. I have already told you that I am working hard to create opportunities here so that people don't go out to other states for work. They got the opportunity for 15 years but they didn't give any jobs".

Nitish Kumar whose party is an ally of the BJP in Bihar has been facing criticism from the opposition parties including LJP Chief Chirag Paswan. On Tuesday Mr. Paswan while talking to reporters had said that "Nitish Kumar will not return as CM of Bihar. I can give you in writing as people are angry with him for not doing anything for the state".

Criticizing the grand alliance for the incident JD(U) leader Sanjay Jha in a statement said that "everybody is aware how Chief Minister worked hard for the development of the state. Such kind of incident is not good for the democracy".

The BJP also condemned the attack on the CM. Party spokesperson Sanjay Tiger in a statement said that "attack on CM during the campaign should be condemned. Violence has no place in democracy and those who are indulging in such activities should understand that they have the power of voting".

minister Lois Marandi of the BJP in Dumka.

NAGALAND: A total of 84.41 per cent votes were

cast in the 22 polling stations under Southern Angami-I constituency in Kohima district while

Modi mocks at Congress' shrinking tally in House

NAYEAR AZAD | DC
PATNA, NOV. 3

While Bihar voted for the second phase of polls, Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed rallies in Araria and Saharsa and urged voters to "choose NDA for the overall development of the state".

During his speech at both the rallies, he also dismissed speculations about anti-incumbency against Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and his government and said that "last decade was spent in meeting the needs of the people".

He also used the occasion to mock at the shrinking tally of the Congress party in both the houses of parliament. He said that the current state of Congress shows how people have rejected the party.

"Look at the condition of the Congress today. Even if they combine the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha they won't find even 100 MPs. They are in such a state because people are not happy with them. Now they are trying to save the party by tagging with others," Modi said at a rally in Forbesganj.

During his public meetings, he also reminded people of the "jungle raj" and poor law and order scenario during the 1990s when the RJD was in

● **DURING HIS** speech at both the rallies, he also dismissed speculations about anti-incumbency against Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and his government and said that "last decade was spent in meeting the needs of the people."

power. He said that the turnout during the ongoing elections shows the mood of the voters in Bihar.

"Reports show what Bihar wants. The message is clear that people have rejected 'Rangbazi' and 'Rangdari' and development is winning. They have also rejected the dynasts and want only those to remain in power who work for the welfare of people", he said.

This was the Prime Minister's fourth tour of Bihar for the ongoing assembly elections. Besides, Forbesganj in Araria he also addressed a rally in Saharsa where he listed the NDA government's achievements and urged people to be "vocal for local".

According to political analysts here, his public meetings in Araria and Saharsa hold significance as both the districts in Seemanchal are considered a stronghold of RJD led grand alliance. Forbesganj in Araria is a Muslim bastion while

Saharsa in Kosi is a Yadav stronghold.

The four districts in Seemanchal – Purnea, Kishanganj, Katihar and Araria have 24 assembly seats while Kosi region has three districts comprising of Saharsa, Madhepura and Supaul. There are 13 assembly segments in the region.

The JD(U) is trying its luck on 20 seats and its ally BJP has fielded 13 candidates in the region. The NDA partner VIP is also contesting 3 seats and Jitan Ram Manjhi's party HAM has fielded one candidate from the region.

"The double engine government has brought speed in the progress of the state and it will continue to do so after the NDA is elected back to power", Modi said while addressing voters in Saharsa.

He also mocked at the grand alliance chief ministerial face Tejashwi Yadav and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi by repeating his "double Yuvraj" jibe and said that, "people have rejected all those who are responsible for jungle raj in the state".

Adding further he said that, "some people have problems with the NDA winning elections. They keep asking why Modi win elections. The answer is simple Modi wins because he works for poor people, mothers and sisters. They bless me".

There were complaints from both Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party and Naga Peoples

Front under Southern Angami-I seat but it didn't disturb the polling, officials said.

— PTI

70.45% VOTE
IN ODISHA
BYPOLLSAKSHAYA KUMAR
SAHOO | DC
BALASORE, NOV. 3

The bypolls for two Assembly constituencies in Odisha passed off peacefully on Tuesday, barring a few stray incidents of attempt to influence and bribe voters.

The Election Commission of India said at least 70.45 per cent of voters turned out to cast their ballots by 6 pm.

In Balasore, the police detained a woman for allegedly distributing money among voters at Adivasi Sahi in Ward 1 when voting for the bypoll to the Balasore Sadar constituency was underway.

The locals gheraoed the woman when she was distributing cash alongwith her supporters. They later informed the police about the incident.

The woman hailing from the neighbouring Mayurbhanj district was questioned by cops regarding her act.

Chief Electoral Officer S.K. Lohani said the police questioned the woman and she was later let free after due to want of concrete proof.

"I talked to the Balasore district collector and local police there. They were probing into the matter. However, they said no concrete evidence with regard to distribution of money was available," the CEO said.

In Balsore town, tension prevailed as a policeman engaged in security duty was found circulating chits which contained the image of conch, the party symbol of the ruling Biju Janata Dal.

The CEO said the concerned police man and Booth Level Officer were replaced immediately resumed without any further hiccups.

The two constituencies went to bypolls as the sitting lawmakers died in July due to illness. While BJP represented the Balasore Sadar seat, the BJD held Tirtol seat.

In Balasore, the BJP has fielded lawmaker Madan Mohan Dutta's son Manas Kumar Dutta, ostensibly to cash in on sympathy factor. Similarly, the BJD has fielded Bijaya Shankar Das, son of MLA Bishnu Charan Das.

The Congress which was relegated to third position in the 2019 assembly elections, is also tying its luck in both the constituencies. The party has fielded Mamata Kundu in Balasore Sadar and Himansu Mallick.

The results will be declared on November 10.

CRUCIAL | MOVE China confirms another round of Corps Commanders meeting on Ladakh issue

India, US, Japan, Aus kickstart Malabar exercise

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 3

India and three other 'Quad' countries — US, Japan and Australia — on Tuesday started the naval exercise 'Malabar' in Bay of Bengal. Meanwhile, China confirmed another round of Corps Commanders meeting on Ladakh standoff and a mutual agreeable date is being worked out.

While India is trying to peacefully resolve the six month military stand-off with China through negotiations, it is also forming up strategic alliances with other nations.

This is reflected by India's invitation to Australia to participate in Malabar Naval exercise and signing Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-spatial Co-operation with the US last week.

This is a signal to China that India will not bow down to any pressure, even as it wants peace in the region.

The Indian Navy, United States Navy, Japan Maritime Self Defence Force, and Royal Australian Navy on Tuesday carried out anti submarine warfare operations, cross deck landings and seamanship manoeuvres at sea.

Indian Navy ships Ranvijay, Shivalik, Shakti, Sukanya, and submarine Sundhara are exercising with USS John S McCain, HMAS Ballarat, and JMSDF Ship JS Onami.

China said on Tuesday that it hoped that the quadrilateral Malabar exercise would be conducive to the regional peace and stability instead of the contrary.

"We hope that relevant countries' military opera-

tions will be conducive to peace and stability in the region instead of the contrary," said Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin.

India, US, Japan and Australia are part of the 'Quad' alliance, which Beijing considers as an anti-China grouping.

While Australia wanted to be part of the Malabar exercise for some time now, India had been hesitant to invite it to avoid any angry reaction from China.

During the 7th round of Corps Commanders meeting, India and China on October 12 had agreed not to turn differences into disputes and jointly safeguard peace and tranquility in the border areas.

Both sides had agreed to maintain dialogue and communication through military and diplomatic channels.

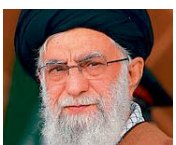


The four-day-long first phase of the Malabar naval exercise is seen as a prelude to future military cooperation among the member nations of the Quad Coalition.



The incumbent president, who is supposed to hold the elections, says this is the most-rigged US election throughout history. His opponent says Trump intends to widely cheat. This is American democracy.

— AYATOLLAH ALI KHAMENEI, Iran's supreme leader



I certainly won't do that (comment on vote) one day before the election in the United States. You know that simply because of my education as a physicist I naturally attribute great weight to scientific advice, and make use of it myself

— ANGELA MERKEL, German Chancellor

US votes: Long lines seen outside polling stations

Mail-in votes count to take time; result not out soon

Washington, Nov. 3: Americans were voting in large numbers on Tuesday in one of the most divisive bitter presidential elections in decades in which incumbent Republican Donald Trump is challenged by Democrat Joe Biden.

Amidst a resurgent Covid-19 pandemic, nearly 100 million people have already cast their ballots in early voting, putting the country on course for its highest turnout in a century. Some 239 million people are eligible to vote this year. The mail-in ballots

could take days or weeks to be counted in some states — meaning a winner might not be declared in the hours after polls close on Tuesday. There is an estimated four million Indian-American population of which about 2.5 million are potential voters in the November 2020 presidential elections.

Over 1.3 million Indian-Americans are voters in key battleground states, including Texas, Michigan, Florida and Pennsylvania. The timing of the start of the polling differs

from State to State, mainly due to the different time zones. People mostly in the East coast started trickling down to the polling stations as many States opened up the polling stations at around 6 am (4.30 pm IST). These States include Virginia, New York, New Jersey, and Maine. Polling in California starts at 7 am (8.30 pm IST).

Initial reports indicated an early large turnout. In the battleground State of Pennsylvania, hundreds of people were seen outside polling booths even before

the start of the polling. Trump who returned from campaigning in the wee hours of Tuesday urged Americans to vote for him. "VOTE, VOTE, VOTE!" Trump said in a tweet with a short video of him dancing at election rallies.

"Vote like your freedoms, your livelihood, and our future depends on it... Because they do!" said Trump, who is seeking to avoid becoming the first incumbent president to lose a re-election since George H.W. Bush in 1992. Biden also tweeted urging

people to vote. "It's Election Day. Go vote, America!" he tweeted.

"In 2008 and 2012, you placed your trust in me to help lead this country alongside Barack Obama. Today, I'm asking for your trust once again this time, in Kamala and me. We can heal the soul of this nation — I promise we won't let you down," Biden tweeted. His running mate, Kamala Harris, urged voters to not to "allow anything to come between you and your vote".

— PTI

ELECTION FIGURES FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY

100m

Americans had already cast ballots by Tuesday



6 crore likely to vote on the real election day on Tuesday

16 crore casting votes in a presidential election is a record in itself in terms of turnout after 1900

23.9 crore people are eligible to vote, according to the US Election Project

90 per cent of their 2016 turnout has been crossed by North Carolina, Georgia, New Mexico, Nevada and Tennessee

90 per cent of their 2016 turnout has been crossed by North Carolina, Georgia, New Mexico, Nevada and Tennessee

WHAT'S 270? THE MATH GAME BEHIND POLL

Washington, Nov. 3: What's all this hubbub about 270? It's not about the 270 whales stranded this fall on Australia's island state of Tasmania. It's not about congestion on Interstate 270 feeding commuters into Washington, D.C. It's about who's going to sit in the White House for the next four years.

IT'S THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

Nearly 2.9 million more people voted for Hillary Clinton in 2016, but she still lost. Donald Trump won because he took the Electoral College, under a system set up in the US Constitution and refined through the centuries. This is where the magic number comes into play. To win the White House, a candidate must win at least 270 electoral votes. That's a majority of the 538 that are up for grabs in the 50 states.

THE NUMBERS: Each state is allotted a different number of electoral votes, based on how many representatives it has in the House, plus its two senators. California has the most electoral votes with 55. Texas is next with 38 electoral votes. The candidate who wins New York or Florida can pocket 29 electoral votes toward the race to get 270. Illinois and Pennsylvania each have 20. Rounding out the top 10 list of states with the most electoral votes is Ohio with 18.

TRUMP'S BEST PATH: Trump has several paths to 270, but his best route hinges on winning Florida and Pennsylvania. If he wins both states and holds onto North Carolina and Arizona, which he narrowly carried in 2016, and also Georgia and Ohio, which he won in 2016 but is now competitive, he will win. With 29 electoral votes, Florida is arguably the most crucial state for Trump.



Alkent Pozhegu works on an image of Joe Biden made with grain and seed in Gjakova, Kosovo.

WHAT BIDEN NEEDS:

Democrat Joe Biden's campaign is laser-focused on the states in the Midwest and close by that Trump flipped in 2016 - Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania. He's also making a big play for Arizona, a state that hasn't backed a Democratic presidential candidate since 1996. Biden is also redoubling his focus on Florida, the biggest prize among the perennial battles.

TRUMP CLAIMS HARRIS WANTS TO BE PRESIDENT

Washington, Nov. 3: Claiming that Democratic vice presidential candidate Kamala Harris wants to be the first woman president of the United States, President Donald Trump told his supporters that this is one "good reason" not to vote for his challenger Joe Biden.

"This wonderful woman, she wants to be your first female president. I don't think so. You know, that's a good reason not to vote for sleepy Joe too, right? You don't want to do that," Trump, a Republican, said at a political rally in Kenosha in Wisconsin, a key battleground state on the eve of Tuesday's presidential election. "Biden and Kamala! Does anybody know who Kamala is?" Trump said.

Trump said this in almost all of his election rallies on the last day of his campaigning for the Tuesday presidential elections.

The President has been claiming that if 77-year-old Biden wins Tuesday's elections, his running mate Harris will take over as president in a month's time.

— PTI

Don, Joe woo undecided voters

Washington, Nov. 3: Republican incumbent President Donald Trump and his Democratic challenger Joe Biden on Tuesday ended their most divisive and bitter election campaign with fervent appeals on social media to the undecided Americans to vote for them, as they pledged to take the country out of the woods.

The November 3 presidential election has been billed as one of the most divisive in recent American history. The election is already setting records for turnout, and perhaps no two candidates are more at odds over the future of the country and the direction they want to take it in. Trump, 74, toured the key voting battlegrounds of Wisconsin, Michigan, North Carolina and Pennsylvania on Monday while his

AMERICA CANNOT AFFORD FOUR MORE YEARS OF TRUMP, ASSERTS HARRIS

Washington, Nov. 3: Attacking Donald Trump on the eve of the US presidential election, Democratic vice presidential nominee Kamala Harris said that the president has failed to lead the country and America can no longer afford four more years of him. "We've seen who we are. The country we love. And that is why I know

77-year-old rival campaigned in Pennsylvania and Ohio, urging Americans to back them in the race for the White House.

"To all of our supporters: Thank you from the bottom of my heart. You have been there from the beginning,

and I will never let you down. Your hopes are my hopes, your dreams are my dreams, and your future is what I am fighting for every single day!" Trump tweeted past mid-night.

"A vote for Sleepy Joe Biden is a vote to give con-

— PTI

trol of government over to Globalists, Communists, Socialists, and Wealthy Liberal Hypocrites who want to silence, censor, cancel, and punish you. Get out and VOTE #MAGA tomorrow!" the president wrote in another tweet, attacking Biden.

The Republican Party in a tweet said, "Let's Make America Great Again and re-elect our fantastic president!" "We made history together four years ago, and tomorrow we're going to make history once again," the ruling party said. Biden, the former US vice president, said he was "running as a proud Democrat, but I will govern as an American president."

"I will work with Democrats and Republicans, and I'll work as hard for those who don't support me as for those who do."

— PTI

Dems back mail ballot delivery

Philadelphia, Nov. 3: Down to the wire with the threat of court battles looming, supporters of former US vice president Joe Biden scrambled on Monday to rally swing-state voters to drop off ballots, visit precincts in person and ensure that their votes are counted.

As months of President Donald Trump undercutting the legitimacy of mail-in votes gave way to promises he would challenge them in court, both sides made a final push to ensure their supporters turned out, even with the lingering threat of lawsuits aimed at invalidating ballots.

"Do not put ballots in the mail. Hand-deliver

your mail ballot to your county election office, satellite election office or other designated drop box or drop-off location," Pennsylvania's top election official, Secretary of State Kathy Boockvar, a Democrat, said. "Do it today. Do not wait."

With about 700,000 of some 31 lakh requested mail ballots in Pennsylvania still outstanding, some voters like 57-year-old Daniel Pigott took the warning to heart. Pigott stood in a line of dozens of voters, waiting to cast his vote after being alerted that there was a problem with his mail-in ballot. "In a normal election, would I do all this?" asked Pigott.

— AP

KEEPING TRADITION: 2 NEW HAMPSHIRE TOWNS CAST VOTES AFTER MIDNIGHT

Dixville Notch (US), Nov. 3: Two tiny New Hampshire communities that vote for president just after the stroke of midnight on Election Day have cast their ballots, with one of them marking 60 years since the tradition began.

The results in Dixville Notch, near the Canadian border, were a sweep for former Vice President Joe Biden who won the town's five votes. In Millsfield, 12 miles (20 kilometers) to the south, President Donald Trump won 16 votes to Biden's five. Normally, there

would be a big food spread and a lot of media crammed into a small space to watch the voting, Tom Tillotson, town moderator in Dixville Notch, said last week. But that's no longer possible because of the Coronavirus pandemic.

It's also hard to observe the 60th anniversary of the tradition, which started in November 1960. "Sixty years — and unfortunately, we can't celebrate it," he said. A third community with midnight voting, Hart's Location, suspended the tradition this election.

— AP



Voters check in with election officials before receiving their ballots at Ballard High School in Louisville, United States on Tuesday.

— AFP

Khamenei mocks US election

Tehran, Nov. 3: Iran's supreme leader mocked America's presidential election Tuesday in a televised address, quoting President Donald Trump's own baseless claims about voter fraud to criticize the vote as Tehran marked the 1979 US Embassy hostage crisis.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei reiterated a long-standing Iranian position that it didn't matter whether Trump or Joe Biden wins the vote, but the stakes couldn't be higher for the

Islamic Republic. Another four years could see Trump's maximum-pressure campaigns further expand as it crushes the Iranian economy and stops Tehran from openly selling its crude oil abroad. Biden meanwhile has said he would consider re-entering Tehran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, providing possible relief to the beleaguered Iranian rial.

"If you look at their own situation, it's lovely to watch. The incumbent

president, who is supposed to hold the elections, says this is the most-rigged US election throughout history," Khamenei said, not acknowledging that individual US states run the vote. "Who says this? The sitting president who is arranging the elections himself. His opponent says Trump intends to widely cheat. This is American democracy." Khamenei added that the result of the vote "is none of our business".

— AP

ISLAMIST | TERROR

As precaution, UK raises terror threat level from 'substantial' to 'severe' after attacks in Austria, France

5 dead in Vienna attack; assailant had previous conviction

Vienna, Nov. 3: Five people died, including an assailant, and 17 others were wounded in a shooting in the heart of Vienna hours before a coronavirus lockdown started. Austrian authorities said Tuesday. The dead attacker was a 20-year-old Austrian-North Macedonian dual national who had a previous terror conviction.

The UK's terror threat level was raised from "substantial" to "severe" on Tuesday, the second-highest alert level which means an attack is now judged to be "highly likely". UK Home

Secretary Priti Patel described the action as a "precautionary measure" following terror attacks in France last week and in Austria this week.

Two men and two women died from their injuries in the attack Monday evening, Chancellor Sebastian Kurz said. The suspected attacker was shot and killed by police. Vienna's hospital service said seven people were in life-threatening condition Tuesday after the attack, the Austrian news agency APA reported. In total, 17 people were

being treated in hospitals, with gunshot wounds but also cuts. "It is now confirmed that yesterday's attack was clearly an Islamist terror attack," Kurz said. "It was an attack out of hatred — hatred for our fundamental values, hatred for our way of life, hatred for our democracy in which all people have equal rights and dignity."

Interior Minister Karl Nehammer later told APA that the dead assailant, who had roots in the Balkan nation of North Macedonia, had a previous conviction

under a law that punishes membership in terrorist organisations. The attacker, named as Kujtim Fejzulaj, was sentenced to 22 months in prison in April 2019 because he had tried to travel to Syria to join the Islamic State group.

He was granted early release in December under juvenile law. Fifteen house searches have taken place and several people have been arrested, he added. The attacker, he said, "was equipped with a fake explosive vest and an automatic rifle, a handgun and a

machete to carry out this repugnant attack on innocent citizens."

Authorities were still trying to determine whether further attackers may be on the run. People in Vienna were urged to stay at home if possible on Tuesday and children did not have to go to school. Some 1,000 police officers were on duty in Vienna on Tuesday morning. Among those wounded in the attack was a police officer, said Nehammer.

The 28-year-old officer was in the hospital but was no longer in a life-threatening

condition. The shooting began shortly after 8 p.m. (1900 GMT) Monday near Vienna's main synagogue as many people were enjoying a last night of open restaurants and bars before a month-long coronavirus lockdown, which started at midnight. Vienna police chief Gerhard Puerstl said the attacker was killed at 8:09 p.m.

Chancellor Sebastian Kurz said that "we are victims of a despicable terror attack in the federal capital."

— AP



Armed police arrive at the first district near the state opera in central Vienna following a shooting.

— AFP

DECCAN Chronicle

4 NOVEMBER 2020

Need to reform mindset of politicians and judges

The nation got a rude jolt, and deservingly so, when Attorney-General of India K.K. Venugopal stood up in the Supreme Court on Monday and told a three-member bench that judges in the trial courts and High Courts must be sensitised on gender justice and the judgments of the apex court in this regard must be taught in judicial academies. Judges should be educated on the necessity of focusing on facts when imposing bail conditions in sexual harassment cases. The country's top law officer made the plainspeak before the bench hearing an appeal against a Madhya Pradesh High Court order granting bail to an accused in a molestation case on the condition that he requested the victim to tie a "rakhi" on his wrist. The A-G was unequivocal in condemning the ritual as "drama" in that context.

Every civilised society revisits the way sexual assaults are treated in such a way that women's rights and gender sensitivity take precedence.

Both the suggestions of Mr Ramachandran a six-time Lok Sabha member and a former Union minister of state for home and agriculture, carry trouble: if he thinks that a woman can avoid the circumstances that lead to the crime, then the former junior home minister displays criminal ignorance of our social realities

That this awakening is not reflected in the judiciary is the point the A-G was trying to make. We have judges who think such offences are compoundable; some even direct the marriage between the perpetrator of the crime and the victim, thus sentencing the latter to life-long trauma. As the A-G was speaking in the apex court, the Kerala High Court was forced to defer the trial in the actor assault case after the victim complained that the trial court was biased, hostile and partisan. The silver lining in the whole episode is that the A-G's words carried sufficient weight that the bench assured him that gender sensitisation will be part of its order.

It is not just the judiciary or officialdom that is at fault when it comes to gender sensitivity. The political class is equally or more guilty. It is not long before Kamal Nath, Congress leader, former chief minister and a Union minister for several terms called a woman minister an "item". The latest in this series has come from Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee president Mullappally Ramachandran who said women who have been raped should either commit suicide or avoid circumstances that can lead to the repeat of the crime. Both the suggestions of Mr Ramachandran a six-time Lok Sabha member and a former Union minister of state for home and agriculture, carry trouble: if he thinks that a woman can avoid the circumstances that lead to the crime, then the former junior home minister displays criminal ignorance of our social realities. And if he thinks a rape victim must commit suicide, then his insensitivity is nothing less than criminal. For rape is a crime which takes no mitigating circumstances. Anyone who thinks that the blame, or part of it, can be shifted to the victim is an apologist for the crime and a potential rapist, and must be treated accordingly.

It was a rare moment in our history that the A-G spoke up on the need to reform the judicial mindset, and one hopes for action to follow. The political class, too, must feel the heat, and take early steps to reform itself.

A win for diversity

She is no longer a Chennaite, nor a Keralite, neither an Indian. Ernakulam native Priyanka Radhakrishnan holds a New Zealand passport only. Yet the elevation of the left-leaning Labour Party leader to the post of minister for diversity, inclusion and ethnic communities in the new Jacinda Ardern government, which also placed its first Maori woman in the shape of foreign minister Nanaia Mahuta as well as half-Maldivian Ayesha Verrall, gladdens Indian hearts. It is the magic of democracy manifest in the brave, new post-globalised world.

Old-timers like to see the 41-year-old Radhakrishnan as a chip off the old block. Her maternal great grandfather, C.R. Krishna Pillai, was a doctor and a communist. He helped shape the political and cultural sensibilities of the people of Kerala and contributed to the formation of the Kerala state. Born to an IIT Kanpur alumnus and a cardiologist, both high achievers, Ms Radhakrishnan went to school in Singapore and proceeded to New Zealand to get her master's degree in development studies from Wellington's Victoria University. She joined politics while in university and stayed on to pursue it, proving her commitment to the welfare of her adoptive community. After entering the Labour Party in 2006, she became an MP first in 2017, then in 2020, from Maungakiekie constituency, entering the New Zealand parliament via the mixed member proportional representative system. She went on to serve as private secretary to Jenny Salesa, former ethnic communities minister. Ms Radhakrishnan's current portfolios also include youth, and community and voluntary sector. She is associate minister for social development and employment.

Ms Radhakrishnan has spent her public life advocating the cause of those whose voices often go unheard — migrant workers and victims of domestic violence in Indian-origin families. She is a votary of gender, race and income equality and community-based decision-making. The trust and responsibility vested in her by the people of her country of choice is a win for diversity and defeat for atavism and narrow identity politics. Welcome the newest kid on the desi diasporic block.

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Subhani



Will Biden win in US, but Trump still be President?



Mohan Guruswamy

The American presidential election is possibly the most widely and closely watched electoral contest in the world. Like Americans, most of the world believes that the US President is the most powerful person in the world. A good part of that notion is attributable to the authority conferred by what is generally believed to be a free and fairly won mandate. But American presidential elections are not without controversy. It is widely believed the 1960 elections that saw John F. Kennedy getting elected by a plurality of less than 100,000 votes was because Chicago mayor Richard Daley, an old-fashioned Democratic party boss, with a wide network of friends in the labour unions and organised crime "stole" the election by ballot stuffing. A popular cry in Chicago in those days was "vote early and vote again and again".

Closer to our times George W. Bush is generally believed to have won in 2000 when a combination of voter fraud, deliberate miscounting and judicial intervention giving him the state of Florida by 537 votes. The state's secretary of state, Kathleen Harris, who was responsible for oversight of the state's elections and certification of the results, had also served as a co-chair of the Bush campaign in Florida. Further, Florida governor Jeb Bush was George W. Bush's brother. Between them they ensured that over 12,000 voters were excluded from the voter list on the grounds that they were all ex-felons. When the Florida Supreme Court ordered a recount in all 67 counties, a conservative leaning US Supreme Court overrode that order and ordered the election be declared. That gave Florida's 25 electoral votes to George W. Bush, winning him the presi-

dency in the Electoral College 271 to 266. This did not become a point of contention though the popular vote was with Al Gore, who got 48.4 per cent while Mr Bush received 47.9 per cent, losing by over 540,000 votes.

America's Presidents are, however, are chosen by the Electoral College, a system in which "electoral votes" are assigned to states based on their population and then awarded as a lump sum to the winner of the popular vote in that state — currently, it takes 270 electoral votes to win. In 2016 Democrat Hillary Clinton took the popular vote by almost 2.9 million votes, with 65,844,954 (48.2 per cent) to Mr Trump's 62,979,879 (46.1 per cent), but Mr Trump won the Electoral College votes 306 to 232.

That is why the US Senate's approval of Amy Coney Barret as a Supreme Court judge and tilting the balance heavily towards the conservatives 6-3 is significant. In 2016, under similar circumstances, the Republican-dominated Senate blocked the appointment of Merrick Garland, Barack Obama's nominee, a full 10 months before his term ended. Republican majority leader Senator Mitch McConnell then argued the elections were close and the people must decide. This time he argued just the opposite. Most observers believe like Bush vs Gore, this year's elections will also end up before the

In 2016 Democrat Hillary Clinton took the popular vote, but Mr Trump won the Electoral College votes. That is why the US Senate's approval of Amy C. Barret as a Supreme Court judge is significant.

The likely outcome that worries observers is this: That the voting boxes and machines may reveal an early Trump lead, but as the postal ballots keep getting counted that lead will start whittling away

Supreme Court over challenges by a losing President Trump to the huge numbers of postal ballots. Mr Trump has not hidden his views on postal ballots. Time and again he has called them "very dangerous for our country" and "a catastrophe", even calling 2020 the "greatest rigged election in history". The US has about 240 million eligible voters. As of Sunday, over 91 million Americans had already cast their ballots. Surveys have also revealed that almost 60 per cent of Democrats prefer to vote by postal ballot, while in sharp contrast only about a quarter of Republicans were willing to do so.

The likely November 3 outcome that worries observers is this: That the voting boxes and machines may very likely reveal an early Trump lead, but as the postal ballots keep getting counted that lead will start whittling away. This will be keenly watched in borderline states like Texas, Georgia and Florida, which had favoured Mr Trump in 2016. The Trump operatives are expected to scrutinise each and every postal ballot and challenge many. It is estimated that close to 1.3 per cent of postal ballots are rejected on various technicalities. This suggests nearly 110,000 rejected postal ballots. Remember, in Florida in 2000, just 537 votes decided the outcome by requiring the Florida electoral votes to go to George W. Bush. This time, hundreds of Trump lawyer operatives have fanned out and the electoral process can expect to get slowed down by the sheer weight of challenges. Mr Trump has been quite blatantly signalling his troops to hobble the postal ballot count.

Postal ballots will have plenty of flaws for the Trump lawyers to seize upon. For instance, if a voter gives a different address, or a different version of his name such as Joe for Joseph or Richie for Richard, or if there is a variation in signature, any one of them can become a ground for dispute. Now here comes the catch. The states are required to finalise the appointment of the 538 Electoral College members by December 8. The Electoral College has to formally meet by December 14 to "elect" the President. The big question now is what next?

The US and even the world is accustomed to choosing the Electoral College by popular vote, but nothing in the US Constitution says it has to be that way. Article II, Section 1 states: "Each State shall appoint, in such Manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a Number of Electors, equal to the whole Number of Senators and Representatives to which the State may be entitled in the Congress."

Republicans control the governorships and state legislatures in Texas, Georgia and Florida. Thus, these states can, in the absence of a popular vote, appoint the electors. If that happens, given the predicted "red" states voting for him, Donald Trump might very well be deemed to have been elected, or decide he is still the elected US President. The matter will almost certainly have to be resolved by the Supreme Court. But its tendencies are well understood.

Whatever be the Supreme Court's final decision, that is unlikely to come in time before January 20, 2021 when the US traditionally swears in the new President on the steps of the Capitol in Washington D.C.

If that doesn't happen, the world will have to live with President Donald Trump for some more time.

The writer, a policy analyst studying economic and security issues, held senior positions in government and industry. He also specialises in the Chinese economy.

LETTERS

SCHOOLS REOPENING

I do not agree that 42 per cent of student attendance so poor in schools and colleges on reopening of very first day after a gap of seven months that too during the Covid-19 pandemic situation (*Poor turnout seen in schools, colleges in state, DC, Nov. 3*). Even teachers attendance was also very good. The fact is that the fear of Covid-19 is still in the minds of parents as infections are being reporting daily in thousands. I am sure that the attendance of students will gradually improve.

Bommadevara Sitapati Rao
Vijayawada

AIR POLLUTION

It's an established fact that the air pollution directly affects the respiratory system and causes an increase in respiratory diseases. The second wave of Coronavirus spread in Europe and America is directly linked to the air pollution levels. More number of cases are concentrated in cities with high levels of pollution. India should take cue from the experiences of the West. The government should dissuade people from bursting crackers. Instead they should be encouraged to light traditional lamps as the act doesn't add to any pollution.

Bhavani Sishtla
Hyderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN

DECCAN Chronicle

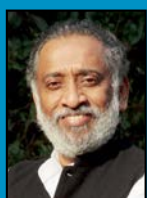
LIC to give housing loans to policy holders

NEW DELHI, November 3. The Life Insurance Policy holders who want to own flats will be able to get loans from the LIC when a Bill submitted to the Centre goes through Parliament. LIC Chairman T.A. Pai told a news conference here today that he had already sent a draft Bill to this effect to the Union Housing Ministry and the State Government for their consideration.

LIC at present could advance loans only against plots or constructed houses but not against flats.

Mr Pai explained that proposal was to mitigate the sufferings of a number of houseless persons in congested cities like Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Delhi. Under the Bill the national title to the land on which the flat is constructed would be given to LIC to enable it to advance loans.

Dilip Cherian
Dilli Ka Babu



Crunch time for officials preparing Budget 2021

The countdown to the annual Budget for 2021-22 has started amid the urgency to push economic growth badly mauled by the Covid-19 pandemic. There is already talk of a third stimulus soon, going by the recent utterances of the finance minister, Nirmala Sitharaman. The Budget-making babus led by finance secretary Ajay Bhushan Pandey have their work cut out. Sources say that the first meeting of the budget preparing exercise took place with officials of the department of financial services as well as MSME, housing, steel and power ministries in attendance. The almost one-month long exercise to finalize the Revised Estimate (RE) for 2020-21 and Budget Estimate for 2021-22 will conclude on November 12 after the expenditure secretary, T.V. Somanathan, completes discussions with other secretaries and financial advisors.

This year, however, due to Covid, the number of participants for the pre-budget meetings may be restricted to a maximum of 5 officers for each meeting from a ministry/department, not below the rank of director.

For the Modi sarkar, the next Budget will be crucial since it will have to deal with the impact of the pandemic on revenue collection, disinvestment, expenditure, export and food prices. The indications are gloomy with the IMF forecasting that the economy will shrink by 10.3 per cent. Even the Reserve Bank of India has similarly opined that it will shrink by 9.5 per cent. The Budget will have to address critical issues pertaining to growth contraction and subdued revenue collection due to the pandemic.

MAHARASHTRA'S BIG IPS MUDDLE

As many as 36 IPS officers in

Maharashtra are awaiting new postings and the unprecedented delay has given the Opposition BJP a handle to criticise the state chief minister Uddhav Thackeray. Among the officers on the "wait" list are 15 SP-rank officers besides high-profile top cop Devan Bharti.

Mr Bharti, a 1994-batch officer has not been assigned a new posting but continues as ADG (Anti-Terrorism Squad) since he has not been relieved despite being transferred!

Sources say that this situation has created unease in the force, since the state government's refusal to clear the air, has only led to more rumours.

It is well-known by now that Mr Thackeray wasn't too pleased with the transfer of cops effected by the Mumbai Police Commissioner in July when he reshuffled 10-DCP rank officers in consultation with the government. Later, the trans-

fers were put on hold. Clearly, there is uncertainty and perhaps sharp differences on the issue within the government, even as the wait grows longer.

The government says the "exercise" will be completed soon, but that may be little relief to the cops forced to cool their heels waiting for a decision.

IAS VS OTHERS IN HARYANA

The tussle between the IAS and other services is a constant factor in any government. The resignation of Jagdeep Dhandha, president of the Haryana Civil Service Officers' Association, has blown the lid off the resentment among a section of Haryana IAS officers. They feel that the Manohar Khattar government is allowing the "usurping" of IAS cadre posts by other services. Sources inform that Mr Dhandha resigned to express his resentment over the appointment

of HCS officers in the state transport department.

This feeling has peaked after the latest round of transfers issued by the state government. While an IPS officer was posted as the principal secretary and another was given the charge of managing director of one of the two power utilities in the state, an IFS officer was also posted as the principal secretary. Further, the state government has posted DSPs and employment officers against the post of district transport officers (DTOs), causing heartburn among officers of the state civil services.

Apparently, after confabulations, a senior officer has been deputed to write to the chief minister on posting officers of other services against IAS cadre posts.

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@Twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect.

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	40,261.13	1.27
Nifty 50	11,813.50	1.24
S&P 500*	3,375.99	1.99
Dollar (₹)	74.40	0.04
Pound Sterling (₹)	96.25	-0.47
Euro (₹)	86.77	-0.23
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	50,735.55	0.10
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	39.74	0.77
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.898	0.008
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.877	0.029

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Exports dip 5.4%, trade deficit narrows by 25%

With sharp decline in shipments of petroleum products, gems and jewellery, and leather, India's merchandise exports fell 5.4 per cent to \$24.82 billion in October from \$26.23 billion a year ago. Imports also fell 11.56 per cent to \$33.6 billion. "India was thus a net importer in October 2020 with a trade deficit of \$8.78 billion, as compared to trade deficit of \$11.76 billion, an improvement by 25.34 per cent," the government said.

Zydus Cadila files Covid drug application



Drug firm Zydus Cadila said it has filed the investigational new drug (IND) application for its small molecule candidate ZYIL1, positioned for management of critically ill Covid-19 patients. "Following up on its initiatives to fight Covid-19 with diagnostics, vaccines and therapeutics, the company is now focussing on cutting edge research to bring targeted therapies," Zydus Cadila said in a regulatory filing.

Future Retail files caveat in Delhi High Court

Kishore Biyani led-Future Group has filed a caveat before the Delhi High Court requesting it to be heard if any plea is filed by Amazon over its ₹24,713 crore deal with Mukesh Ambani-led RIL. Anticipating a move by Amazon, which had got an interim arbitration award in its favour, the Future Group firm has moved the Delhi High Court. Let no order of any kind be passed...without due notice," it urged the court.

Singapore to discontinue S\$1,000 notes

Singapore will discontinue the circulation of 1,000 Singapore dollar (SGD) notes from the beginning of next year to counter money laundering and terror financing risks. A limited quantity of SGD 1,000 notes will be made available each month from now until December 2020, said the Monetary Authority of Singapore. Existing SGD 1,000 notes in circulation will remain legal tender and can continue to be used.



■ Gets in-principal nod for signing deal Adani set to develop Lanka's port terminal

ARCHANA CHAUDHARY, P. R. SANJAI & ASANTHA SIRIMANNE NOV. 3

Adani Group is the front-runner to develop Sri Lanka's stalled East Container Terminal in Colombo port, people with knowledge of the matter said, helping billionaire Gautam Adani expand his port business overseas. Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd and a local partner received an in-principle approval to sign a deal with Sri Lanka Ports Authority, which will hold majority stake in the project, the people said, asking not to be identified, citing rules for speaking with the media.

Details of the stake holding are still being worked out after a review of the project following labour protests that had stalled the deal before parliamentary elections in August, they said.

India's foreign ministry and the Adani Group didn't respond to requests seeking comments. Adani, India's biggest ports and logistics company, had signed a preliminary agreement for the project last year.

Work on reviving the project, being jointly developed by Sri Lanka, India and Japan, comes at a time of rising regional tensions with China. Both India and Japan are members of the informal Quad grouping that along with US and Australia is seen as a counter to Beijing's influence in the Indo-Pacific region.



APSEZ Q2 NET PROFIT UP 32%

New Delhi, Nov. 3: Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Limited on Tuesday reported a 31.57 per cent increase in its consolidated profit to Rs 1,393.69 crore for the second quarter. Its total consolidated income rose to Rs 3,423.16 crore against Rs 3,326.90 crore in the year-ago period.

—PTI

While the deal was agreed upon last year, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa had announced a review after protests by labour unions who feared foreign control over the strategic project, according to reports. The island nation had earlier depended heavily on China for its infrastructure development in the first half of this decade, creating tensions with New Delhi.

The neighbours began rebuilding trade and investment ties before the coronavirus pandemic struck. In July, India extended a \$400 million currency swap facility to Colombo to assist with post-pandemic economic recovery. The two countries also discussed deferring of debt repayment during Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa's first high-level virtual meeting since his re-election with India's Narendra Modi in September.

Sri Lanka—which emerged from a three-decade civil war in 2009—was known for taking Chinese loans to fund vast infrastructure projects, including ports and highways, which eventually became part of Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative. Its appetite for Chinese cash waned after rising debt forced it to sell the Hambantota port back to China Merchants Port Holdings.

—Bloomberg

Abu Dhabi fund first to get 100% tax exemption

New Delhi, Nov. 3: Abu Dhabi's sovereign wealth fund (SWF)—MIC Redwood 1 RSC—has been granted 100 per cent income tax exemption for investments to be made in specified infrastructure sectors, the finance ministry said on Tuesday.

With this, the income from interest, dividend and long-term capital gains for the SWF's investment in India's priority sectors has been exempted, the ministry said in a statement.

MIC Redwood 1 RSC has become the first foreign SWF that has been notified and granted 100 per cent income-tax exemption for the long-term investments to be made in the specified priority sectors in India, the ministry said.

India has gradually opened up the economy for FDI, except for a few sectors, and also extended tax concessions for sovereign funds to attract long-term investments in the infrastructure sectors.

A tax official said that to expedite foreign investment in India's priority areas during the pandemic, the process of notification of MIC Redwood 1 RSC was completed in a record time.

To incentivise long-term investment by SWFs in the priority sectors, the government through the Finance Act, 2020, had granted a 100 per cent income tax exemption to notified SWFs on investment made in the specified infra sectors.

—PTI

PSBs won't raise deposit, withdrawal charges: Govt

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, NOV. 3

Public sector banks will not be raising bank charges in the near future in view of the Covid-19 pandemic, the government informed the public on Tuesday. The government quashed media reports claiming a steep increase in service charges by state-owned banks.

The finance ministry, in a press release, cited the RBI guidelines which allow all banks, including public sector banks, to levy charges for their services in a fair, transparent and non-discriminatory manner on the basis of the costs involved. However, the ministry said that all the public sector banks have said that they do not propose to raise bank charges in the near future considering the Covid-19 pandemic.

Alluding to media reports of steep increases

STIMULUS SOON, SAYS SECY

New Delhi, Nov. 3: Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman will soon announce the next set of stimulus package, economic affairs secretary Tarun Bajaj said.

The finance ministry is looking into suggestions received from various sectors, he said in a virtual media conference on Tuesday. "We have received a lot of requests and comments from various sectors and we are looking into it. Very soon it will be unveiled. The finance minister will come out and speak to you on that," he said.

—PTI

in service charges by public sector banks, the ministry issued a "factual position".

"There have been several media reports alluding to steep increase in service charges by certain public sector banks (PSBs). In this context, the factual position is as follows: No service charge is applicable on the 60.04 crore Basic Savings Bank Deposit accounts, including 41.13 crore Jan Dhan accounts opened by the poor and unbanked segments of society, for the free services prescribed by RBI," said the ministry.

The government clarification comes close on the heels of Bank of Baroda announcing on Sunday that it will be charging customers for deposits, withdrawals above certain limits, which would be effective November 1, 2020. However, the ministry on Tuesday said that owing to the ongoing coronavirus situation in the country, the state-owned lender has "decided to withdraw the changes".

Lockdown hurts new investments

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, NOV. 3

The pandemic-induced lockdown led to a sharp fall in new investments in the first half (H1) of the current fiscal year (FY21). New project investment announcements plunged by 69 per cent at Rs 1.5 lakh crore compared with Rs 4.8 lakh crore during the same period last year, Care Ratings said.

Though Andhra Pradesh had the highest share of 23 per cent in the capex project

announced in H1FY20, totalling Rs 1.1 lakh crore, the state slipped to No. 2 spot after Tamil Nadu in FY21, with a share of 11 per cent of the investments proposed.

Investments announced for new projects have been falling for the past five years for the April-September period with the exception of H1 FY19 where it rose by 29 per cent year-on-year.

"As the enterprises were faced with Covid-19 induced challenges, they

focussed on survival. Hence the decline in capex investments (in H1 FY21) was somewhat expected," Care Ratings said.

"Companies for now seem to be focussing on normalising their business operations. Hence, it is expected that capacity expansion may not be in the pipeline soon."

There was an 81 per cent decline in projects announced by government, to Rs 0.6 lakh crore in H1 FY21 from Rs 3.2 lakh crore in H1 FY20.

World's best-performing airline stock is Jet Air

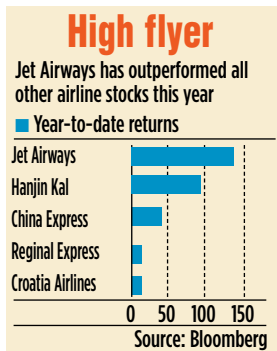
ANURAG KOTOKY & NUPUR ACHARYA NOV. 3

All airlines are feeling the coronavirus pinch but one that hasn't flown since April 2019 after collapsing under a pile of debt is the world's best performing—at least from a share price point of view.

The stock in Mumbai-listed Jet Airways India Ltd has surged almost 150 per cent this year versus a 42 per cent plunge in the 27-member Bloomberg World Airlines Index, which comprises the globe's biggest carriers.

The stock has hit a 52-week high of Rs 71.85 per share on the BSE on Tuesday, rising gradually from its 52-week low Rs 13.

Its runaway gains have market watchers scratching their heads, especially since Jet Air is undergoing bankruptcy proceedings, has almost 17,000 creditors seeking claims of around \$3.4 billion and has had most of its landing slots confiscated. It doesn't have any employees to speak of, either.



A panel of creditors did approve a resolution plan last month, bringing the recovery of any dues one step closer, but that doesn't guarantee a resumption of flights.

Retail investors are the last ones to get anything out of a bankruptcy, yet some are buying in the hope Jet Airways will successfully emerge from a restructuring, said Ajay Srivastava, MD of advisory firm Dimensions Corporate Finance Services. The airline isn't being thought of as a going concern, but a shell containing assets that may be sold, he said.

The resolution plan for Jet Airways was submitted by two individuals, Murari Lal Jalan and Florian Fritsch, exchange filings show. Jalan is a businessman with investments in India, Russia and Uzbekistan. Fritsch is the chairman of Kalrock Capital Management Ltd, a London-based financial advisory and alternative asset manager. The filings don't state how the men plan to restructure the airline.

Other investors may be hoping Jet Airways goes "the Ruchi Soya way," Srivastava said, referring to the stock that rocketed on thin volumes after an insolvency plan was approved.

Ruchi Soya Industries Ltd was acquired by a consortium led by Baba Ramdev's Patanjali Ayurved Ltd late last year. The founders held 99 per cent of Ruchi Soya's capital as of March 31. Its shares surged almost 500-fold on tiny volumes before paring gains.

—Bloomberg

Govt investment in weather forecast pays off: Survey

New Delhi, Nov. 3: Investments of nearly Rs 1,000 crore on the National Monsoon Mission and the High Performance Computing programme of the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) over the past five years have generated economic benefits worth Rs 50,000 crore for farmers, livestock rearers and fishermen, a survey has shown.

The study conducted by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) was based on a face-to-face survey of 6,098 respondents—3,965 crop farmers, 757 marine fishermen and 1,376 livestock owners. Responses from over 2 lakh farmers were also collected through an interactive voice response system.

"The report provides an estimated income gain of nearly Rs 13,000 crore per year for agricultural and livestock farmers and an incremental benefit of nearly Rs 48,000 crore," the ministry said.

The report was launched by earth sciences minister Harsh Vardhan at an event here on Tuesday.

A total of Rs 551 crore



Harsh Vardhan minister

was spent on the National Monsoon Mission while Rs 990 crore was incurred on the High Performance Computing programme to better weather forecast.

For every rupee invested in the National Monsoon Mission and high-performance computing facilities of the ministry, the country has gained benefits worth Rs 50, resulting in 50-fold gains, it said.

"On adding the economic gain accruing to agricultural households and fisher households, the present value of benefits accruing to the BPL households to rain-fed areas works out to be Rs 50,447 crore."

"The current level of investment is far less in comparison to the realisable benefits over the period of five years," the report said.

—PTI

PERFORMANCE STREET

SUN PHARMA Q2 NET PROFIT UP 70%

Sun Pharmaceutical Industries reported a 70.36 per cent jump in its consolidated net profit to Rs 1,812.79 crore for the September 2020 quarter against Rs 1,064.09 crore a year ago, mainly on robust sales and exceptional tax gains. Consolidated revenue from operations stood at Rs 8,553.13 crore versus Rs 8,123.35 crore. "Tax gain (exceptional) for the quarter ended September 30, 2020, is on account of creation of deferred tax asset amounting to Rs 288.28 crore," the firm said.

GODREJ PROPERTIES Q2 NET DROPS 78%

Godrej Properties reported a 78 per cent fall in its consolidated net profit at Rs 7.10 crore for the September quarter on lower income. Its net profit stood at Rs 31.57 crore in the year-ago period. Total income fell to Rs 250.23 crore from Rs 395.11 crore. Sales bookings stood at Rs 1,074 crore during the quarter compared to Rs 1,446 crore a year ago.

DEEPAK FERTILIZERS NET PROFIT SOARS

Deepak Fertilizers and Petrochemicals posted an over three-fold jump in its consolidated net profit to Rs 80.55 crore for the second quarter against Rs 25.50 crore posted in the year-ago quarter. Net income rose to Rs 1,418.47 crore from Rs 1,181.47 crore.

MUTHOOT FINANCE Q2 NET RISES 2.5%

Muthoot Finance reported a 2.5 per cent rise in consolidated net profit at Rs 930.80 crore for Q2 versus Rs 908.54 crore a year ago. Total income grew 17.4 per cent to Rs 2,824.19 crore from Rs 2,406.39 crore. Consolidated loan assets under management grew 29 per cent to Rs 52,286 crore. Standalone net profit rose to Rs 894.39 crore.



SHORT TAKES

Zimbabwe beat Pak in super over

Rawalpindi, Pakistan: Paceman Blessing Muzarabani took career best figures of 5-49 as Zimbabwe beat Pakistan in a thrilling super over finish in the third and final one-day international on Tuesday. The actual match finished in a tie after Pakistan skipper Babar Azam hit the final delivery of the 50th over from Richard Ngarava for a boundary to level the scores at 278. But man-of-the-match Muzarabani dismissed Iftikhar Ahmed and Khushdil Shah for two runs on four balls in the super over which Zimbabwe scored off just three balls without any loss.

Despite the defeat Pakistan won the three-match series 2-1. Azam, who finished with a run-a-ball 125 with 13 boundaries and a six, led Pakistan's fight-back and stood firm after Pakistan were set a daunting 279-run target. He added a match turning 100 for the seventh wicket with Wahab Riaz who made 52. — *AFP*

Brief scores: Zimbabwe 278/6 (Williams 118*, Taylor 56, Hasnain 5-26) tied with Pakistan 278/9 (Azam 125, Riaz 52, Muzarabani 5-49)

Super Over: Zimbabwe 3 beat Pakistan 2

Maradona shows sign of depression

Buenos Aires: Diego Maradona was admitted to a hospital with signs of depression, three days after his 60th birthday. A Maradona staffer told The Associated Press the former footballer's health condition is "not serious." He requested anonymity because he was not authorised to speak about the issue. "He has been very sad for a week, didn't want to eat," the staffer said, adding that Maradona's personal doctor Leopoldo Luque took the former footballer to a hospital so he could undergo health checks.

The captain of Argentina's 1986 World Cup winning team was admitted to a private clinic in La Plata, about 40 kilometers south of Buenos Aires. Maradona has lived there since the end of last year, when he took over as coach of first division team Gimnasia y Esgrima. Maradona turned 60 on 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. — *AP*

Covid-19 scare in archery camp

Pune: A support staff member of the Indian archery team training at the Army Sports Institute (ASI) here has tested positive for Covid-19 but the camp resumed after a two-day break, the Sports Authority of India said on Tuesday. The SAI said it is getting RT-PCR test conducted for all national campers as per the protocol. The support staff member, who tested positive for the virus on October 30, is undergoing treatment at a special Covid-care hospital in Pune outside the premises of ASI. Following the Covid-19 positive case, the training camp was suspended for two days — October 31 and November 1 — but resumed on Monday. "All precautions were taken with campers being isolated and restricted to their respective rooms for those two days. With due Covid precautions and monitoring of temperature, the camp has resumed with effect from November 2," the SAI said in a release. According to SAI, the said person underwent a 14-day quarantine after joining the camp on October 7 and was a part of training for nine days. — *PTI*

Live on TV

CRICKET
IPL Women's T20 Challenge: Supernovas vs Velocity from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD
Women's Big Bash League: Perth Scorchers vs Sydney Thunder from 9 am on Sony Six
TENNIS
ATP Paris Masters: Day 3 action from 3.30 pm on Sony Six
FOOTBALL
Champions League: Istanbul Basaksehir vs Manchester United from 11.25 pm on Sony Ten 2; Barcelona vs Dynamo Kyiv from 1.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 1; Ferencváros vs Juventus from 1.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 2; Chelsea vs Rennes from 1.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Six; RB Leipzig vs Paris Saint Germain from 1.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 3
WWE
NXT: Bouts from 6.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 1

Sun shines bright

Hyderabad save best for the last to qualify for playoffs

Sharjah, Nov. 3: Sunrisers Hyderabad defeated Mumbai Indians by 10 wickets in a must-win match to qualify for the play-offs of the Indian Premier League here on Tuesday.

Chasing 150, openers David Warner (85 not out) and Wriddhiman Saha (58 not out) were enough to help Hyderabad cruise past the target in just 17.1 overs. Captain Warner's 58-ball knock was studded with 10 fours and a six while Saha struck seven fours and a six en route home.

Earlier, Hyderabad bowlers also played their part in a must-win game by restricting Mumbai Indians to 149 for eight.

MI would have ended up with much less if it wasn't for Kieron Pollard, who ensured his team put up a fighting total on a slow surface with an entertaining 41 off 25 balls. The defending champions collected 51 runs off the last five overs.

Needing a victory to make the play-offs, SRH bowlers made merry on a helping surface after their skipper David Warner decided to put the opposition in to bat.

MI skipper Rohit Sharma (4), who missed the last four games due to a hamstring injury, made a surprise return in his team's

SCORECARD

Mumbai Indians: Rohit Sharma c Warner b Sandeep Sharma 4, Quinton de Kock b Sandeep Sharma 25, Suryakumar Yadav st Saha b Nadeem 36, Ishan Kishan b Sandeep Sharma 33, Krunal Pandya c Williamson b Nadeem 0, Saurabh Tiwary c Saha b Rashid Khan 1, Kieron Pollard b Holder 41, Nathan Coulter-Nile c Garg b Holder 1, James Pattinson (not out) 4, Dhawal Kulkarni (not out) 3. Extras (lb-1) 1. **Total (for 8 wickets, in 20 overs) 149.**

FoW: 1-12, 2-39, 3-81, 4-81, 5-82, 6-115, 7-116, 8-145.

Bowling: Sandeep Sharma 4-0-34-3, Jason Holder 4-0-25-2, Shahbaz Nadeem 4-0-19-2, T. Natarajan 4-0-38-0, Rashid Khan 4-0-32-1.

Sunrisers Hyderabad: Warner not out 85, Saha not out 58. Extras (w-8) 8. **Total (for no loss in 17.1 overs) 151.**

Bowling: Dhawal Kulkarni 3-0-22-0, Nathan Coulter-Nile 4-0-27-0, James Pattinson 3-0-29-0, Rahul Chahar 4-0-36-0, Krunal Pandya 3.1-0-37-0.

last game ahead of the play-offs. However, he lasted for only seven balls as pacer Sandeep Sharma (3/34) had him caught at mid-off with a well-disguised knuckle ball.

Sandeep also found the stumps of Rohit's opening partner Quinton de Kock (36 off 29) who played on after smashing the SRH pacer for couple of sixes and a boundary. — *PTI*



David Warner of Sunrisers Hyderabad plays a shot against Mumbai Indians in an IPL match at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium on Tuesday. — *BCCI*

BCCI WILL DO ITS BEST TO GET ROHIT ON FIELD

New Delhi, Nov. 3: BCCI president Sourav Ganguly wants injured senior opener Rohit Sharma to tread cautiously while deciding on competing for his IPL team Mumbai Indians in the play-offs as he risks aggravating the hamstring tear that led to his exclusion from the Australia-bound India squad.

Rohit has been out of action since the second leg fixture against KXIP due to a left hamstring tear and has been left out of the Indian squad for Australia tour starting later this month.

The BCCI president said that the board will do everything possible to get an "asset like Rohit" back in the park as that's their job. MI are scheduled to take on Delhi Capitals on Thursday in the play-offs. "Rohit is injured at the moment. Otherwise, why would we leave out a player like him. He is the vice-captain of the national (limited-overs) team," Ganguly said.

"We will have to assess him. I don't know (when he can come back). He hasn't played so far since the time he has got injured. We want him to recover. It's the BCCI's job to get their best players on the park. If he recovers, he plays."

When asked about the videos put out by MI where Rohit is seen batting at the nets, Ganguly struck a note of caution for the senior player.

"Yeah, you don't want him to get injured again. He has a hamstring tear and it will get ruptured again. It will then get longer for him to come back. But yes, there are people working with him."

"The Mumbai Indians physio is working with him. The Indian physio (Nitin Patel) is there. Rohit himself knows that he has got a long career ahead and it's not just this IPL or next series for him." — *PTI*

Make helmets must for batsmen: Sachin

New Delhi, Nov. 3: Concerned about safety of the players, Indian batting legend Sachin Tendulkar on Tuesday urged the International Cricket Council (ICC) to make it mandatory for batsmen to wear helmets while playing at the professional level.

Tendulkar shared a video of Sunrisers Hyderabad all-rounder Vijay Shankar getting hit on the head when Kings XI Punjab fielder Nicholas Pooran threw the ball towards the striker's end, attempting to run out the batsman.

In the video, originally posted by the official website of the Indian Premier League, Shankar is seen falling on the ground after taking the hit as physios rushed to check on him. Fortunately the 29-year-old was wearing a helmet.

"The game has become faster but is it getting safer? Recently we witnessed an incident which could've been nasty. Be it a spinner or pacer, wearing a HELMET should be MANDATORY for batsmen at professional levels. Request @icc to take this up on priority," Tendulkar tweeted.

The tragic death of young Australian batsman Phillip Hughes after being hit by a Sean Abbott bouncer during a domestic match in November 2014 had triggered a debate on players' safety.

The 25-year-old was hit on the neck, just below the helmet. It forced the manufacturers to redesign the helmets to enhance safety



Vijay Shankar (left) of Sunrisers Hyderabad is hit on the helmet by the returning ball during an IPL match against Kings XI Punjab in Dubai on October 24. — *BCCI*

of the batsmen.

Tendulkar also tagged all the cricket boards including the BCCI, Cricket Australia and England and Wales Cricket Board.

In another tweet he tagged Ravi Shastri, recalling an incident when the India head coach got hit by a full-toss bowled by Sunil Gavaskar during an exhibition match.

"This also reminded me of the time when you got hit after top-edging a full toss bowled by Mr Gavaskar during an exhibition game. That could've been a grave injury too but thankfully wasn't!" — *PTI*

WOMEN'S T20 | CHALLENGE

Supernovas target third straight title

Sharjah, Nov. 3: The best of Indian women's cricket will combine with and also go up against stars from countries like England, South Africa, and the West Indies when the third edition of the Women's T20 Challenge gets underway here on Wednesday.

The four-match tournament will have three teams — defending champions Supernovas, last year's runners-up Velocity and Trailblazers — competing against each other once before the summit clash on November 9. Cricketers from Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and New Zealand will also participate.

The Supernovas, led by Harmanpreet Kaur, have been invincible so far winning all the previous two editions. They will kick-start the tournament taking on Mithali Raj's Velocity in a repeat of last year's final eyeing a third title on the trot.

Harmanpreet was in top form in the last edition scoring two half-centuries in three matches and in the final, her blistering 37-ball 51 sealed a second win for them. India's T20 captain will look to return to her majestic form, overcoming a patchy show in the World T20 in Australia earlier this year.

She had a forgettable out-

● **The four-match tournament will have three teams — defending champions Supernovas, last year's runners-up Velocity and Trailblazers — competing against each other once before the summit clash on Nov. 9.**

ing averaging a dismal 6.00 from five matches that cost India quite dearly in the tournament where they finished runners-up, after being bowled out for 99, chasing 185.

There will also be Jemimah Rodrigues to watch out for. The Mumbai cricketer was the top run-getter (123 runs at an average of 61.50) in their triumphant campaign last season. She was adjudged the 'Player of the Series'.

The opposition camp features Mithali, who will be keen to lead from the front and avenge their 2019 defeat when they lost by four wickets in a last over thriller. Velocity will rely heavily on 16-year-old Indian sensation Shafali Verma who grabbed eye-balls by hitting most sixes (nine) in the World T20 and finished as the fifth highest run-scorer. — *PTI*

Watson retires from competitive cricket

Sydney, Nov. 3: Top Australian all-rounder Shane Watson on Tuesday retired from competitive cricket following his team Chennai Super Kings' exit from the Indian Premier League, calling himself "ridiculously fortunate" to have enjoyed a career spanning 20 years.

The 39-year-old retired from international cricket in 2016 and bid adieu to the Australian Big Bash league last year.

"It all started as a dream as a young kid saying to my Mum, as I watched a Test match, that I want to play for Australia. Now as I officially announce my retirement from all cricket I feel crazily lucky to live out my dream," Watson said on his YouTube channel, a link of which was posted on his Twitter handle.

"It really does feel like the right time. Knowing



that I've played my last game of cricket ever, for my beloved CSK, who've been so incredibly good to me over the last three years.

"To think that I'm finishing up my playing days as a 39-year-old after all of my injury setbacks that I've had along the way, I feel so ridiculously fortunate."

In his spectacular international career, Watson played 59 Tests,

190 ODIs and 58 T20is, scoring 10,950 runs and taking 291 wickets for Australia.

A sought-after player in the T20 format, Watson also has 3,874 runs in 145 IPL games with four hundreds and 21 fifties. Watson scored 299 runs in CSK's IPL campaign this year which ended on Sunday with the side failing to qualify for the playoffs for the first time. — *PTI*

Leicester power into second place

London, Nov. 3: Leicester swept into second place in the Premier League with an impressive 4-1 victory at Leeds, while Fulham beat West Bromwich Albion 2-0 to finally clinch their first win of the season on Monday.

Brendan Rodgers' side are just one point behind leaders Liverpool after winning five of their first seven games in a top-flight season for the first time in their history.

Harvey Barnes and Youri Tielemans put Leicester two up before half-time at Elland Road.

Stuart Dallas got one back for Leeds but Jamie Vardy's eighth goal of the season and

a late Tielemans penalty wrapped up Leicester's fourth successive away league win.

After the disappointment of missing out on a place in the Champions League last term, Leicester have shown they are capable of mounting another challenge to make it to top four.

Even a title push might not be impossible given they have already thrashed Manchester City 5-2.

"We were technically brilliant. We had the quality to play when we had the opportunities. I thought we were amazing right across the team," Rodgers said. — *APP*

Shuttlers return home after testing -ve

New Delhi, Nov. 3: Forced to pull out of the SaarLorLux Open in Germany and stay in quarantine there because of Covid-19 fears, an Indian badminton contingent, including defending champion Lakshya Sen, on Tuesday returned to the country after testing negative for the infection.

Lakshya's dreams of defending the title had come crashing down when he had to withdraw from the tournament after his father-cum-coach D.K. Sen tested Covid-19 positive. He, however, had no symptoms. Two other Indian shuttlers — former world number 13 Ajay Jayaram and 2018 winner Subhankar Dey, who had arranged funds to participate in the German tourney after the Denmark Open, also had to withdraw owing



Lakshya Sen



Subhankar Dey



Ajay Jayaram

to contact with senior Sen. Lakshya, Jayaram, Dey and physio Abhishek Wagh had tested negative ahead of the tournament.

The Indian contingent, however, had to spend five days in quarantine before fresh test results found them to be negative, clearing their return to the country following the ordeal.

"We reached Bangalore at home this morning

around 5am. We all are fine and healthy," a relieved D.K. Sen said.

"We were in quarantine since my first Test came positive. The German official did the second Covid Test for all five of us on November 1 and thankfully the reports came negative, so we immediately returned home."

While Lakshya, his father and physio reached Bangalore, Dey

and Jayaram took a flight from Frankfurt to Delhi.

Lakshya, who claimed five titles in the senior circuit last year including two BWF World Tour Super 100 top honours, had received a bye in the opening round of the event along with Dey.

Jayaram, on the other hand, had won his opening-round clash but the Covid concerns brought an unfortunate end to

India's campaign at the tournament.

"... This situation prevented the players from competing in the event and local authorities putting them in isolation," the Prakash Padukone Badminton Academy, where Lakshya is a regular, said in a statement.

"The timely intervention of Badminton Association of India, German Badminton Association and Badminton World Federation ensured that after 5 days of isolation, all of them were again put through a Covid test on Sunday which turned out negative."

"This helped the players, coach and physio to return back to India. Earlier the local authorities in Saarbrücken insisted on all the players and support staff to remain in isolation till the 10th of November 2020." — *PTI*