


# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA  
RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM | SUNDAY | 29 NOVEMBER 2020




## WEATHER

 **Max:** 24.0°C  
**Min:** 20.0°C  
**RH:** 73%  
**Rainfall:** 23.5 MM  
**Forecast:** Clear.  
Max/Min temp.  
24/20 °C

## COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+43,404)	(+530)
93,92,689	1,36,720
covid19india.org	
STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS	
(+753)	(+3)
TS: 2,68,418	1,451
(+625)	(+5)
AP: 8,67,063	6,981

### CASES AROUND THE WORLD

 **6,23,48,685**  
**DEATHS**  
 **14,55,254**  
**COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES**  
 **218**  
worldometers.info/coronavirus

## ASTROGUIDE

**Sarvari:** Dakshinayana  
**Tithi:** Kartika Shuddha Chaturdasi till 12.46 noon  
**Star:** Kritika till 6.02 am (Monday)  
**Varjyam:** 4.40 pm to 6.27 pm  
**Durmuhurtam:** 4.07 pm to 4.52 pm  
**Rahukalam:** 4.30 pm to 6 pm  
**HILARI CALENDAR**  
**Rabbi-ul Akhir 13, 1442 AH**  
**PRAYERS (ROYAL MOSQUE)**  
**Fajar:** 5.30 am  
**Zohar:** 1.30 pm  
**Asar:** 4.15 pm  
**Maghrib:** 5.38 pm  
**Isha:** 8.30 pm  
**SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.15 AM**  
**SUNSET TODAY 5.27 PM**  
**MOONRISE TODAY 4.48 PM**  
**MOONSET TOMORROW 5.59 AM**

## COUNTER POINT



**Don't take them seriously. The polls in Punjab and Haryana are far away!**

## SHORT TAKE

## Cold conditions prevail in N. India

**New Delhi:** Jammu and Kashmir till December 4. Kashmir experienced sub-zero night temperatures as the mercury settled several degrees below the freezing point, with Srinagar recording the minimum temperature of minus 2.2 degrees Celsius, while Qazigund (Anantnag) and Kupwara experienced a low of minus 1.8 degrees Celsius and minus 1.0 degrees Celsius respectively. Temperatures in Himachal Pradesh, Lahaul and Spiti's administrative centre Keylong was recorded as the coldest place in the state at minus 9.5 degrees Celsius.

## EPFO extends life record deadline

**New Delhi:** Retirement fund body EPFO has extended the deadline for submission of life certificates by pensioners till February 28, a move which would benefit over 35 lakh persons who could not submit the document by November due to coronavirus pandemic. The pensioners who could not submit their life certificates till November 30 deadline, would get pension every month till February. "In view of the ongoing pandemic and the vulnerability of elderly population, the EPFO has extended the time limit up to February 28, 2021.



## NATION | 5 Congress supports farmers agitation



## WORLD | 7 US court rejects Trump Pennsylvania lawsuit

## SPORTS | 8 India look to hit back in second ODI



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Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacts with Dr Krishna Ella, CMD and Suchitra Ella, JMD, of Bharat Biotech on Saturday.

# PM reviews Covid vaccine progress at Bharat Biotech

**DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs**  
HYDERABAD, AHMEDABAD, PUNE, NOV. 28

Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Coronavirus vaccine facilities at Ahmedabad, Hyderabad and Pune to review the development and manufacturing process on Monday. The visit was purely functional, and shorn of any ceremony.

Scientists, researchers and facilitators at Bharat Biotech said they were humbled by the visit of the

Prime Minister. The PM personally reviewed the vaccine development and manufacturing process.

He was briefed by the company about the human trials for which 26,000 volunteers in hospitals across the country have been enrolled.

The vaccine is being produced in the certified level 3 biosafety production unit. Modi later posted on his Twitter handle that Bharat Biotech officials had briefed him about their vaccine.

He congratulated the scientists for their progress in the trials so far.

At all the three plants, the Prime Minister, who was wearing a PPE kit during the review, was extensively briefed about the vaccine work by com-

pany officials and scientists. Modi landed at the Hakimpet Air Force station at around 1 pm and proceeded to Bharat Biotech's facility away by road. He reviewed the progress of Covaxin, a vaccine candidate being developed by the company. He also interacted with Bharat Biotech chairman and managing director Krishna Ella, scientists and senior management.

"At the Bharat Biotech facility in Hyderabad, was briefed about their indigenous Covid-19 vaccine. Congratulated the scientists for their progress in the trials so far. Their team is closely working with ICMR to facilitate speedy progress," Modi posted on Twitter.

## PUSHKARALU VISITORS BRAVE CHILLY WEATHER

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
KURNOOL, NOV. 28

With Tungabhadra Pushkaralu coming to an end in next three days, visitors are heading to Pushkar ghats all along the course of the river in Kurnool district braving rains and chilly winds.

Mantralayam and Sangameshwaram ghats are attracting most visitors. Various authorities say compared to 2008 Pushkarams, about one lakh fewer devotees reached the ghats for various rituals due to the pandemic. The number of visitors at the pump house ghat was 447 out of whom just 47 offered Pinda Pradanams. 287 had shower baths while the remaining took a holy dip despite the Covid risk. Authorities were warning through mics that taking a dip has been banned in view of Covid spreading through water from any infected persons taking a dip. Most devotees did not heed the warning.

Kaipa Venkata Murthy, a visitor from Secunderabad, said, "What is Pushkar bath without a dip? We are aware of Covid and have maintained physical distancing and have sanitised ourselves. This dip is essential to propitiate our forefathers."

M. Sridhar from Cooperative Colony in Kadapa, however, said his family had a shower bath and offered Pushkar pujas to minimise the threat of Coronavirus.

H. Hanumantha Rao from Nellore said facilities like separate enclosure for men and women to change clothes at the ghats have been really convenient.

Despite rains and chilly weather, most visitors, preferred early morning visits to the ghats.

# AP temple land sale put on hold

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
KURNOOL, NOV. 28

The proposed sale of 208.15 acres of temple lands belonging to Mantralayam Raghavendra Seamy Mutt in Aija, Rajoli and Gattu in Jogulamba Gadwal district of Telangana has been put on hold. The tender process for sale of these lands was to start from December 7.

When contacted, Mutt assistant administrative officer L. Madhava Setty said, "The decision to put off the tender process has been taken after farmers cultivating lands belonging to the Mutt requested that they be allowed to harvest the crops. He also cited the prevailing Coronavirus pandemic as another reason.

Madhava Setty maintained that the Mutt had got permission from the

state government to sell the lands in 2017 as per Endowment Act 30 / 1987 and other norms.

He denied that there has been any pressure from ruling YSR Congress party leaders on this issue.

Mantralayam Mutt is a public trust property. It is stated that the Matadhipathi of Sri Raghavendra Swamy Mutt found it difficult to personally manage the vast extents of properties endowed to the Mutt by individuals and institutions for upkeep of various religious and other activities carried out by the religious institution.

Thus, the Mantralayam Matadhipathi gave power of attorney to certain people to manage the properties.

■ **Page 3: Calling tenders big scam: Mutt staff**

## MEDICAL | ADMISSIONS

## Higher Education dept must issue GO on counselling guidelines

# NTR-UHS awaits orders on MBBS, BDS

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 28

NTR University of Health Sciences (NTR-UHS) is yet to go ahead with admissions for first year MBBS, BDS and other courses. To do so, it is awaiting orders from the state government specifying guidelines to conduct counselling for admissions into the first year.

A six-member, high-level committee, with university registrar Dr. K. Sankar as its convener, has submitted already a report with a set of guidelines on conduct of counselling to the Department of Higher Education (DHE). Basis this, DHE is supposed to

issue a GO incorporating the guidelines for counselling.

The guidelines include conduct of separate counselling for admission into first year MBBS and BDS courses. It had been a combined exercise thus far. Counselling for admission for first year Ayush courses will also be done separately.

The NTR-UHS registrar said, "Unless another GO specifying guidelines on conduct of counselling is issued, we cannot go ahead with admissions." DHE has already issued G. O. 159 on implementation of reservations for SC, ST and BC students in all higher educational institu-

■ **THE GUIDELINES include conduct of separate counselling for admission into first year MBBS and BDS courses.**

A key task of students is to exercise their one-time option of indicating their priority in choosing the medical college in which they would like to seek admission. There are 29 government and private medical and dental colleges in the state. Students will have to indicate their order of preference with regard to each of these colleges.

Students have to willy-nilly take admission in the

college for which they have been selected. Only this will enable them to take part in sliding to seek admission in another college during the next round of counselling. In case a student fails to take admission in the first college suggested, he or she will not be allowed to take part in sliding.

University authorities are very specific about guidelines for the sliding method in first year MBBS, BDS and other admissions. The Supreme Court had earlier served notice for adoption of a proper sliding method after a public interest litigation (PIL) had been filed alleging mis-interpretation of sliding

rules during admission for PG courses in 2019.

AP High Court too had recently issued directions to come up with a set of guidelines for conduct of counselling for admission into UG courses. Accordingly, the Department of Higher Education has to issue a G.O. setting the guidelines. Presently, NTR university authorities are getting ready to announce the state merit list based on NEET UG – 2020 in a few days.

Initially, only a provisional merit list will be announced calling for objections, if any, from students within two days. The final state merit list will be released only after that.

# ₹5 lakh ex gratia to kin of cyclone victims: CM

## Jagan asks officials to take up crop loss enumeration

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
NELLORE, NOV. 28

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has announced an ex gratia of ₹5 lakh each to the next of kin of eight persons (six in Chittoor and two in Kadapa districts) who died in the heavy rains triggered by cyclone Nivar.

The Chief Minister made this announcement while addressing collectors of Nellore, Kadapa and Chittoor districts at the International Airport in Tirupati after an aerial survey of the Nivar-affected areas in the three districts on Saturday.

He directed officials to make sure that power is restored as early as possible. He said the crop loss enumeration should be taken up on a war-footing and reports should be submitted by December 15 in order to offer compensation by December end.

The Chief Minister said people in relief camps should be given ₹500 each while returning home. Services of volunteers should be utilised to hand over the amount if they have already left relief camps. The CM instructed officials to give seeds at 80 per cent subsidy to the farmers in the affected areas. A decision to this effect was taken at the Cabinet meeting on Friday. He directed officials to act on humanitarian grounds in dealing with the people in the affected areas and to compensate other damages like houses and livestock as per SDRF norms. Deputy Chief Ministers K. Narayana Swami, Anjad Basha and other ministers and officials attended the meeting.



Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy makes an aerial survey to take stock of the widespread devastation caused by Cyclone Nivar across the state.

# 2 more cyclones likely to hit state

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 28

People, mainly farmers, who have already faced the worst of Nivar cyclone, are now a worried lot as Meteorological Office has warned that another two cyclones – Burevi and Taketi – may hit the state.

While Burevi is expected to hit the AP coast on December 2, Taketi will swoop in on December 7.

Farmers are extremely distressed that for the first time, a series of cyclones are hitting them. They point out that harvesting for Kharif season

starts towards November end. But majority of the farmers were forced to hurriedly harvest due to cyclone. Many say they could save only half their crops due to sudden start of rains due to cyclone.

According to agricultural department, Nivar has caused huge devastation by damaging standing crops on 2,14,420 hectares in 11 districts of the state. Paddy farmers are the worst hit, followed by those who cultivated red gram, Bengal gram, cotton and other crops.

■ **Page 2: Highest damage reported in Guntur district**

# Villages near Penna marooned

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
NELLORE, NOV. 28

Several low-lying villages along the Penna river in Nellore district were inundated after officials released of more than 2.8 lakh cuses of water from the Somasila reservoir. The reservoir had received 2.63 lakh cuses of water on Saturday.

Elsewhere, breaches to the bunds of water bodies led to inundation of villages in Kovur, Buchireddypalem and Sangam mandals apart from low-lying areas in Nellore City.

Hundreds of villages are still under the grip of darkness as stagnant water, deposited by rains accompanying Cyclone Nivar, affected the restora-



Farmers try to protect their paddy from getting inundated in Annampalli village, Mummidivaram mandal in East Godavari District on Saturday.

— DC

tion of power. In Nellore City, water entered Bhagat Singh Colony, Parameswari Nagar and Manumasiddi Nagar among others. Industries minister

Mekapati Goutham Reddy inspected the breach to a tank at Nagulavellaturu in Chjerla mandal. Minister Anilkumar visited affected areas like Porlukatta, Nellore Rural legislator

## LOW PRESSURE CONTINUES IN BAY OF BENGAL

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 28

A low pressure area lay over South Andaman Sea, adjoining areas of south-east Bay of Bengal, and equatorial Indian Ocean on Saturday.

It is very likely to concentrate into a depression during the next 48 hours and intensify further. Thereafter, it is likely to move nearly westwards and reach south Tamil Nadu coast on December 2.

Under its influence, scattered to widespread rainfall activity is very likely over Tamil Naidu, Puducherry and Kalaikal in Kerala, apart from Male, Lakshadweep, south coastal Andhra Pradesh and south Rayalaseema between December 1 and 2.

Isolated heavy to very heavy rainfall is also likely over south coastal Andhra Pradesh and south Rayalaseema, a Met office report said in its Saturday evening bulletin.

● **UNDER THE influence of the low pressure, scattered to widespread rainfall activity is very likely over Tamil Naidu, Puducherry and Kalaikal in Kerala, apart from Male, Lakshadweep, south coastal Andhra Pradesh and south Rayalaseema between December 1 and 2.**

Kotamreddy Sridhar Reddy, Kovur legislator Prasannakumar Reddy and Sarveypalli legislator Kakani Govardhan Reddy inspected affected areas in their constituencies.

Prasannakumar asked the people living in and around Kangiri reservoir to be alert as the reservoir is full. Water overflow poses a threat to Buchireddypalem and neighbouring villages.

Former mayor SK Abdul Aziz demanded that the authorities supply a mineral water can and food to the people living in inundated areas. Meanwhile, traffic was restored on NH 16 much to the relief of the travelling public.

■ **Page 2: Traffic allowed after damage repaired**

## 5 CRPF COBRA COMMANDOS HURT IN ATTACK

**Raipur, Nov. 28:** Five personnel of CRPF's jungle warfare unit CoBRA were injured in an IED blast triggered by Maoists on Saturday in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district, officials said.

They said the IED blast took place in the Chintafuga forest area of the district and the injured personnel are being evacuated by a helicopter. The injured troops belong to the 206th battalion of the Commando Battalions for Resolute Action (CoBRA). A joint team of CoBRA and police was out for a special operation when the blast took place, they said. — PTI



## IN BRIEF

VUNDAVALLI SEEKS  
WHITE PAPER  
ON POLAVARAMDC CORRESPONDENT  
RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM, NOV. 28

Former MP Vundavalli Arunkumar demanded that the government release a whitepaper on the status of Polavaram Project and the availability of funds for it.

He told the reporters here on Saturday that the YSRC government is not taking a firm and correct stand on the project and exerting pressure on the Union government to bear the full cost in accordance with the AP Reorganisation Act in 2014.

He said Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy need not be afraid of the cases pending against him and he should take a firm stand on the issue of Polavaram project and other promises made at the time of bifurcation. He said it was absurd on the part of the Union government to contend that Polavaram cost would be borne at 2014 rates. He wondered how anybody can execute the work in 2020 at 2014 rates.

He said that it is the right of the Andhra Pradesh people to have Polavaram Project constructed at the expense of the Union government, as it has been declared as a national project. He said that former Congress leader K.V.P. Ramachandra Rao has filed a PIL in the Supreme Court regarding the Polavaram project and other assurances of bifurcation. He himself had impeded in the case. The state government should also file an affidavit and impede itself.

He said even the former chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu did not take a correct stand on the project, but as he was an ally in BJP for four years, he somehow managed the show. Now, Jagan Mohan Reddy is finding himself in a corner, Arunkumar said.

He said that the Centre should bear the entire cost of the irrigation component of the project, including the R&R cost. He said that Niti Aayog had submitted a report on the comprehensive development of Andhra Pradesh after bifurcation. However, it was kept a secret and it should be made public.

CROP DAMAGED IN  
4.91L HECTARES  
IN STATE: MINISTERDC CORRESPONDENT  
KAKINADA, NOV. 28

The agriculture and food processing minister Kurasala Kannababu said that the crop was damaged in 4,91,316 hectares in the state including nurseries in 3828 hectares, paddy in 3,23,734 hectares, blackgram in 42,112 hectares, Tobacco in 7,680 hectares, Bengal Gram in 62,598 hectares, Cotton in 20,750 hectares and Brinjal in 7,909 hectares in 6,600 villages in 449 mandals of 13 districts due to Nivar Cyclone.

After a teleconference with the state-level officials from his camp office, Kannababu instructed the officials to complete the enumeration of crop damages and submit a report on December 10 and the compensation should be given to the farmers on or before December 30. He said that due to closure of the canals from April 1, the officials should take steps to complete the crop before March 31 by encouraging the farmers to cultivate short duration varieties.

CROP DAMAGED IN  
20,931 HECTARES  
KURNOOL DISTRICTDC CORRESPONDENT  
KURNOOL, NOV. 28

Due to the Nivar cyclone, 20,931 hectares of standing crops were damaged in the district besides several houses and other government properties that had been hit with the heavy rains.

Kurnool collector G. Veera Pandian said that 19 of 54 mandals in the district recorded more than 10 mm rainfall out with Nivar cyclone in the last 24 hours. One house was fully damaged while 34 others were partially damaged. Particularly, agriculture crop in 20931 hectares was damaged as per preliminary survey out of which 17,002 hectares of paddy got damaged.

The collector said horticulture crops, including banana and chilly, were damaged in 483.98 hectares. Also, 42 sheeps reportedly died while 3.4 km road surface was damaged and 45 electricity poles were uprooted.

However there is no human loss in the district and no evacuation was required at any villages in the district and the situation is said to be under control at present.

## Cyclone Nivar claims eight lives

Rainfall had major impact on Nellore, Prakasam, Chittoor and Kadapa districts

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 28

Heavy rainfall under the influence of Nivar cyclonic storm has claimed eight lives, including six in Chittoor and two in Kadapa, while four persons went missing in the state.

Based on a preliminary assessment, as the rainfall had a major impact on Nellore, Prakasam, Chittoor and Kadapa districts, 1.12 lakh people were affected, 6,133 houses marooned, 2,294 houses/huts damaged, 88 big animals, 2,618 small animals, 8,130 poultry birds perished.

As many as 1,597 villages/towns in 124 mandals were affected while six villages suffered inundation due to floods. The authorities have set up 223 relief camps and evacuated 40,306 persons and accommodated them in such camps while 265 medical camps were organised to provide healthcare.

As a temporary relief, ₹2.50 crore was released to the four districts for talking up immediate relief works. A special assistance of ₹500 each was given to the affected persons accommodated in relief camps.

Agriculture crops located in Nellore, Prakasam, Chittoor, Kadapa and Kurnool, suffered damages in about 2.14 lakh hectares based on preliminary reports while enumeration on the extent of the damage is underway.

In the fisheries department, cage culture units at Annamayya reservoir in Kadapa district and farms in Prakasam district were flooded causing an estimated loss of ₹51.15 lakh.

Infrastructure damage and loss to departments like roads and buildings, water resources, municipal administration, energy, panchayat raj, rural water supply, handlooms and textiles was estimated at ₹56,993.31 lakh for taking up restoration works



Paddy crop damaged due to rains at Kruththivenu mandal in Pedana constituency in Krishna district on Saturday.

■ As a temporary relief, ₹2.50 crore was released to the four districts for talking up immediate relief works. A special assistance of ₹500 each was given to the affected persons accommodated in relief camps.

both on temporary and permanent basis.

The state government deployed eight NDRF and six SDRF teams in the four districts for taking up rescue operations.

Meanwhile, two persons stranded in Mallimadugu reservoir near Renigunta in Chittoor district were rescued as were 60 stranded in a local canal at Tippapadu village of Gudur mandal in Nellore district.

## Jagan should personally visit flood-hit areas, says Lokesh

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 28

Main opposition Telugu Desam has criticised Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy for conducting only aerial surveys of flood-hit areas without personally visiting, understanding the plight, and consoling victims of floods.

Both TD chief N. Chandrababu Naidu and party national general secretary Nara Lokesh separately observed that aerial surveys are just eyewash, empty and half-hearted efforts. Such surveys would not be able to wipe the tears of farmers. Lokesh

underlined that only a field-level survey and first-hand enquiry from farmers will give a correct picture about the impact of flooding.

Lokesh commented that Jagan Mohan Reddy, who walked all along in Padayatra before elections, is now flying only in air. The CM has thus gone beyond the reach of the common public after coming to power. He asked why the Jagan regime has failed in carrying out timely enumeration of crops losses and is not extending the required compensation to farmers in times of natural disasters.

## Traffic allowed after damage was repaired

from page 1

Traffic movement was allowed after repairing the damage to the diversion road on the National Highway near Audisankara Engineering College at Gudur. The area witnessed huge floodwater obstructing movement of vehicles

between Nellore and Chennai. Chittoor Police along with State Disaster Response Force teams rescued a 60-year-old person from Neeva river in Gangadharanellor mandal in Chittoor district on Saturday.

The survivor was identified as Sk Abdullah of Kotrakona village in Gangadharnellor mandal.

which marooned him. The teams rescued the man who lost hope of survival.

DSP Sudhakar Reddy said they had instructed the irrigation officials to close four gates of NTR reservoir to carry out the rescue operation and saved Abdullah.



Manumasiddhi Nagar in Nellore is under a sheet of water on Saturday.

## Need to construct bridge at higher level: Minister

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, NOV. 28

Lamenting over plight of people living in some villages in Atmakur constituency, which were cut off following floods to Penna River, minister for industries and information technology Mekapati Goutham Reddy promised to build high-level bridges to prevent repeat of such situation in future.

The minister was visibly upset with the situation at marooned villages when he visited affected habitations such as Veerlagudi

padu in Sangam mandal and Kachadevarayapalli in Anantasagaram mandal on Saturday.

Stressing that some people are still remaining in flood-affected villages instead of going to relief camps to protect their cattle, Goutham Reddy directed the officials to provide essential commodities, drinking water and medical aid to such people without any reservations.

He instructed the officials accompanying him to check feasibility for constructing a high-level

bridge to the village.

The minister examined the flow of huge floodwaters of Penna River at Apparaopalem in Atmakur mandal.

Officials informed the minister that the Somasila project witnessed highest inflows to the extent 6 lakhs cusecs in 2001 while pointing to 4.50 lakh cusecs of inflow after 20 years. The minister also inspected the breaches to the tank at Nagulavellatur in Chejarla mandal.

He assured measures to restore power supply for Somasila reservoir.

## Ready Bills on 1st day of Session: Speaker

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 28

AP Legislative Assembly Speaker Tammineni Sitaram sought to prepare all Bills which would be introduced in the Assembly on the first day of Winter Session on Monday. He said the Assembly Winter Sessions would be held amidst Corona protocol taking all precautions. AP Legislative Council chairman M.A. Sharif directed all departments to prepare answers to the questions of legislators without fail. The Speaker and Chairman conducted a preparatory meeting with the officials on Saturday.

Sitaram and Sharif directed the police department to implement tight security following Corona protocol for the smooth functioning of Winter Sessions. They instructed the police to behave respectfully with the legislators without giving any chance for complaints.

Sitaram instructed the officials to take all necessary measures following the Covid-19 protocol for the Winter Sessions. He said that people would watch the Assembly ses-

sion live and urged the officials to provide thorough information while providing answers to the questions of the legislators. He said that people seek their questions raised in the Assembly by their legislators about their problems and they would be satisfied when the officials would provide proper information. He sought to conduct a review on questions and answers of the earlier session before starting the Assembly session to provide required information to legislators and further to people.

The Council Chairman said that getting answers during Zero Hour is the right of legislators; hence the officials should provide complete information without fail to the questions.

Chief whip in AP Legislative Council, Ummareddy Venkateswarlu, said that MLAs and MLCs would face severe problems from the public in their areas if they failed to get proper answers. He sought to conduct of petition committee meeting frequently for the smooth performance of question and answer sessions.

## NAIDU DEMANDS ASSEMBLY WINTER SESSION FOR AT LEAST 10 DAYS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 28

Telugu Desam chief N. Chandrababu Naidu on Saturday demanded that the Assembly Winter Session be extended for a period of at least 10 days to discuss many burning problems being faced by people of the state, including floods.

Naidu said the YSRC government has not only failed in solving the old problems but ended up creating new problems for people in the past 18 months of its mis-governance. He said a longer

Assembly Session will allow time for holding discussions on a wide-range of issues being faced by the public. He alleged that only statements are being issued but no real compensation is being given to affected families at the field level.

Addressing an online meeting of the TDLF Naidu charged that Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has miserably failed in delivering governance and administration. Naidu alleged that there is zero coordination with in the official machinery as it has got de-motivated.

## Crop damaged in 1L hectares in Prakasam

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, NOV. 28

Standing crops were damaged in 1 lakh hectares because of heavy rains during 'Nivar' cyclone in Prakasam district.

District collector Pola Bhaskar gave the information during a review on the damages in the presence of energy minister Balineni Srinivasa Reddy and education minister Adimulapu Suresh at Ongole on Saturday.

Collector said they have sent a report to the state government about loss to the tune of ₹111 crore to the agriculture sector and this includes ₹83 crore loss to the horticulture crops.

According to the collector, power supply was disrupted in 32 mandals because of damage to 132 substations and steps are being taken to restore power.

The financial loss pertaining to 11 main roads under pachayat raj department was put at ₹50 crore.

Similarly, 50 km of road between Nandyal and Ongole was damaged apart from 5 km road between Addanki and Darsi.

Temporary shelter was provided to 5,690 people affected by heavy rains at 44 relief centres in 35 mandals and the government has released ₹50 lakh for relief centres

and ₹30 lakh to be provided ₹500 each to rain-affected people.

Speaking on the occasion, energy minister Balineni Srinivasa Reddy instructed the officials to submit a report on cyclone damages before December 15 while pointing to the Chief Minister's commitment to offer compensation immediately for crop damages.

He told the officials not to down the guard in view of two more cyclones forecasted for the region. He asked them to add the loss of cattle in the damages report.

Mr Reddy pulled up R&B officials for ignoring repairs to internal roads near Kurnool bypass flyover in Ongole.

Education minister Adimulapu Suresh praised the administration for containing property and human loss during the cyclone. He advised the officials to launch awareness programmes for the public in the next 50 days to prevent a second round of Covid-19.

Chirala legislator Balaram Krishnamoorthy urged the officials to restore damaged water schemes in his segment.

MLC Pothula Suneetha, joint-collectors J. Venkata Murali and T.S. Chetan and DRO K. Vinayakam were present among others.

## PARTY AFFAIRS

## Two groups in Amalapuram and Rajamahendravaram organising party programmes separately

## Rifts surface in YSRC East Godavari district unit

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KAKINADA, NOV. 28

Internal rifts are continuing to surface within the East Godavari district unit of ruling YSRC Party at all levels, including MLAs and MPs, despite warnings that Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy is viewing the matter seriously.

Recent clash between Kakinada MLA Dwarampudi Chandrasekhara Reddy and MP Pilli Subhash

Chandra Bose would have turned into a huge controversy but for intervention of the CM. The two leaders subsequently came together and dismissed the incident as a storm in the tea cup. However, such rifts within ruling party leaders are continuing to surface in some of the constituencies of East Godavari district.

For example, there are two groups working at cross purposes in Amalapu-

ram and Rajamahendravaram to the extent of organising party programmes separately. Leaders of one group are not participating in functions organised by the other group.

Differences have arisen in who will occupy the mayor's post in Rajamahendravaram. Rajya Sabha member Subhash Chandra Bose has also trained his guns at former MLA and Mandapeta YSRC in-charge Thota Trimurthulu over

the issue of tonsuring head of a person belonging to the Scheduled Caste.

At a meeting in Pithapuram, the leader of one group quarrelled with officials for not inviting him for the function. Pithapuram MLA Pendem Dorababu is said to be tired of sorting out such problems. Second-rung leaders feel party leaders should not be invited on the dais at all for official meetings. Only this can avoid group rival-

ries from surfacing in the public.

The P. Gannavaram MLA told this reporter after the meeting that many roads between Appanapalli and Pasarlupudi, Appanapalli and Pedapatnam Lanka, Ambajipeta and Pulletikuru, Gantipedapudi and Gannavaram; and Amalapuram to Mukkamala have been sanctioned at a cost of ₹50 crore. The dispute is in construction of buildings for village secretariats at Krapa and

a slip of the tongue.

The P. Gannavaram MLA told this reporter after the meeting that many roads between Appanapalli and Pasarlupudi, Appanapalli and Pedapatnam Lanka, Ambajipeta and Pulletikuru, Gantipedapudi and Gannavaram; and Amalapuram to Mukkamala have been sanctioned at a cost of ₹50 crore. The dispute is in construction of buildings for village secretariats at Krapa and

Sankarayagudem in the constituency.

Though he had proposed sanction of funds for Sankarayagudem building, officials sanctioned the same for Krapa. Chittibabu wants officials to instead sanction funds for Sankarayagudem.

According to some party leaders, YSRC supremo Jagan may soon crack down on party leaders who do not work in coordination with each other.



## SHORT TAKES

CALLING  
TENDERS BIG  
SCAM: STAFF

FROM PAGE 1

Mutt employees' association president V. Narayana has alleged that calling for tenders is a big scam. He urged people and devotees of Sri Raghavendra to protect properties of the Swamy. Narayana charged that Mutt officials are playing a game about selling Mutt lands on the pretext that they are yielding very less income from their lease.

The Mutt has more than 5,000 acres of land in different locations of the country. Several court cases are pending with regard to some of these lands in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu states.

Meanwhile, addressing media in Kurnool city on Saturday evening, Telugu Desam Mantralayam in-charge P. Tikka Reddy, along with party Kurnool unit president Somisetty Venkateswarlu, found fault with Mutt authorities in calling for the tender. They maintained that the move has been devised only to benefit YSR Congress party leaders. First it was Tirupati Venkateswara Swamy lands and now it is the turn of Mantralayam lands. YSRC is bent on weakening Hindu religious institutions, the TD leaders alleged. BJP district secretary K. Narsimha Varma said the Mutt has no right to dispose of its lands even though the state government may pressurise temple authorities in this regard. He said it is unfortunate that only Hindu temples are being targeted and their assets are being sold away.

"This is not at all acceptable to Hindus," the BJP leader asserted.

TWO BROTHERS  
DIED IN  
ACCIDENTDC CORRESPONDENT  
KAKINADA, NOV. 28

Two brothers- Kodudula Thambi, 29, and Kodudala Suresh, 27, died in a road accident on Saturday between Borrapalem and Pallampatla village of T.Narasapuram Mandal of West Godavari District.

According to T.Narasapuram Police, these two youth belonging to Gopannapalem village of Denduluru mandal in West Godavari District and they were going to Borrapalem to attend an engagement function to their relatives by bike, a speeding lorry hit them. They died on the spot. T.Narasapuram police registered a case.

SP OPENS  
WOMEN  
HELP-DESKDC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, NOV. 28

Prakasam District SP Siddharth Kaushal inaugurated new two-room women help desk at the Ballikurava police station in Prakasam district as part of the implementation of Dasa Sutras devised by him.

FIVE MILITIA  
MEMBERS  
SURRENDERDC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 28

Five militia members of the outlawed Maoist party surrendered before the ASP Visayasagar Naidu in Chintapalle in Visakhapatnam district on Saturday.

They were identified as Mattam Matyaruju, 26, of Mynakota village, Korra Sanyasi Rao, 40, of Guralagondi village, Korra Hari, Bagguraj village, 35, Mattam Bhagat Ram, Mynakota village, 25 and Korra Purnachander, 26, also from Mynakota village.

With this surrender, 13 militia members surrendered from Chintapalle sub-division alone in November, Mr Naidu said. He said efforts of community policing created awareness among the active members and the local people in general.

Volleyball matches and medical camps were organised in a big way in the agency areas, and the response has been overwhelming, he added.

He said CRPF personnel organised civic action programme and came close to the militia members and the local youth. The surrendered militia members also gave assurance to the police that they would not go back to the Maoists.

TTD releases white  
paper on its assets

Vaikunta Dwaram to be open for 10 days: TTD

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, NOV. 28

Putting the criticism over not disclosing the details of TTD assets to rest, TTD Trust board has released a white paper, on Saturday, on its assets which include 1,128 assets extending in an area of 8,088.89 acres across the country, apart from details of properties auctioned since 1974 with the survey number, place, board resolution, and auctioned date.

The Trust Board meeting took place at Annamaiah Bhavan in Tirumala on Saturday.

Speaking to media persons after the meeting, TTD Trust Board chairman Y.V. Subba Reddy said they have resolved to open the Vaikunta

## KEY DECISIONS

- To make Tirumala as a Holy Green City and pollution-free pilgrim centre. As part of it, decided to run 100 to 150 electric buses to Tirumala with APSRTC.

- As a pollution check measure, to utilise more non-conventional sources of energy, including wind and solar.

- Gold Malam works of Maha Dwaram, Dwajasthambam, Balipeetham in Srivari temple.

- To take up the gold malam works for Surya Prabha Vahanam at Sri Padmavati Ammavari temple with 11.7 kg of gold.

- Advance payment of ₹10,000 to the artists of Annamacharya Project as they do not have programs due to Covid.

- Decided to take up Sanatana Hindu Dharma Prachara with Prachara Rathams. Some board members have come forward to donate for these special vehicles.

- To reintroduce Kalyanamastu, a mass, free wedding programme to the underprivileged couples with a new set of guidelines.

- Boys Hostel for S.V. Balamandiram at ₹10.75 crore

- Decided to continue its deposits in scheduled banks

Dwaram for 10 days Ekadasi day for the ben- visiting pilgrims to  
starting from Vaikunta efit of a multitude of Tirumala temple.

ATM cash loader nabbed,  
₹10.38 lakh recovered from himDC CORRESPONDENT  
ANANTAPUR, NOV. 28

The One Town police nabbed a cash loader in ATM counters and recovered ₹10,38,970 cash and several ATM debit cards on Saturday. The cash loader had stolen cash from various ATM counters and escaped for the past few days.

According to one town inspector Prathap Reddy, Devarakonda Saikumar of Syndicate Nagar in Anantapur

was working as cash loader under Ritters Business Service Pvt Ltd for the past nine months. He was appointed to load cash at ATM counters of Anantapur, Garladinne and Kudair areas in the district. He developed faith during his work as the company officials believed his services. Saikumar hatched a plan to steal cash from ATM centres during loading at various centres. Even after other employees and security

were with him, Saikumar started stealing cash in the name of rechecking the Automatic Teller Machine. A total of ₹18.97 lakh cash was stolen by Saikumar from various counters during the cash loading process for the past few days. The private services branch head S. Ramanjineyulu lodged a complaint with the one town police against the cash loader Saikumar who was absconding. Inspector Prathap

Reddy, sub-inspectors Chand Bhasha and Vijayabhaskar and team launched a hunt for the ATM cash loader who was in the dark for the past few days.

The police nabbed Saikumar near APSRTC bus stand area. The CI said ₹10.38 lakh cash was recovered from Saikumar as against the total of ₹18.97 lakh that was stolen from the ATM centres. The remaining cash was already spent by the accused.



Sri Vijayendra Saraswathi Swamy of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham had the darshan of Lord Venkateswara at Tirumala on Saturday. Later, he took part in Bhagavat Gita Parayanam at Nada Neerajana Mandapam. In his religious discourse after the Parayanam, the seer said that Gita provides the ultimate solution to all the problems being faced by human beings and makes them lead a righteous path. He said all the Parayanam programmes mulled by TTD were reaching millions and millions of devotees across the globe via SVBC live and lauded the efforts of TTD authorities in spreading Sanatana Hindu Dharma Prachara. TTD Chairman Y.V. Subba Reddy, EO Dr K.S. Jawahar Reddy, board members Govinda Hari, D.P. Ananta, Krishnamurthy Vaidyanathan, Additional EO A.V. Dharma Reddy also participated.

## TD MLA stops construction of wall in AU College

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 28

The third time MLA and senior TD leader Velagapudi Ramakrishna Babu stood by the shop keepers and successfully stopped the construction of a compound wall on Andhra University Engineering College Road under the Three Town police station limits on Saturday. It may be recalled that the Andhra University (AU) authorities with the GVMC personnel demolished all the shops that were located in the engineering college road last month. The MLA, however, could not prevent the demolition as there was a large presence of police personnel who did not allow him to go near the spot.

On Saturday when the AU officials were preparing for construction of the compound wall, the MLA along with his followers, reached the spot and had arguments with the AU officials. He told them that the land on which the shops were built belonged to the AP irrigation department,

- When the AU officials were preparing for construction of the compound wall, the MLA reached the spot and had arguments with the AU officials. He told them that the land on which the shops were built belonged to the AP irrigation department

but the AU officials demolished the shops.

The MLA told the AU officials that the matter of demolition was in the high court and they had no right to build any compound wall till the court disposed the issue. The petition will come up for hearing on December 11, and till then none has the right to interfere in the said land, the MLA told the officials.

The MLA called the collector V. Vinay Chand and vice-chancellor of Andhra University Prof. P.V.G.D. Prasad Reddy, but there was no response from them.

Meanwhile, the police officials entered the area and pacified both the parties. The AU engineering staff called off the work.



Shopkeepers stage protest against the construction of boundary walls at AU Engineering College Road in Visakhapatnam on Saturday.

AP records 625  
new Covid casesDC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 28

The prevalence of Covid-19 seems to be under control in AP as more number of districts are registering less than 100 daily positive cases, and only a few districts are registering deaths.

Accordingly, AP registered 625 new Covid cases taking the tally to 8,67,063 and five deaths raising the toll to 6,981 in the last 24 hours.

The state health authorities issued Covid bulletin on Saturday reporting that out of 49,348 samples tested, only 625 persons were found to be infected with the virus and out of a total number of 99,62,416 samples tested so far in the state, 8,48,511 patients were discharged after recovery, while 11,571 patients are still active with the virus.

Krishna district registered 103 daily cases of Covid, while the remaining districts registered less than 100 including 93 in West Godavari, 88 in Visakhapatnam, 68 in Guntur, 61 in Chittoor, 54 in East Godavari, 29 in Vizianagaram, 27 in Prakasam, 24 in Nellore, 22 in Kurnool, 21 in Anantapur, 19 in Kadapa and 16 in Srikakulam.

East Godavari topped the state for having the highest number of total Covid active cases with 3,945 while Krishna stood in the second position with 1,530 and Guntur with 1,361

- Krishna district registered 103 daily cases of Covid, while the remaining districts registered less than 100 including 93 in West Godavari, 88 in Visakhapatnam

occupied third position.

However, Visakhapatnam registered 974 followed by 892 in West Godavari, 701 in Nellore, 573 in Chittoor, 412 in Prakasam, 314 in Srikakulam, 269 in Anantapur, 211 in Kadapa, 196 in Kurnool and 193 in Vizianagaram.

East Godavari continued to lead in the rate of recovery of Covid patients with 1,17,625 patients recovering followed by 90,846 in West Godavari, 82,181 in Chittoor, 70,737 in Guntur, 65,797 in Anantapur, 60,438 in Prakasam, 60,170 in Nellore, 59,526 in Kurnool, 56,604 in Visakhapatnam, 53,617 in Kadapa, 44,776 in Srikakulam, 43,093 in Krishna, 40,206 in Vizianagaram, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

Among daily cases of Covid deaths, Krishna and West Godavari registered two each followed by one in Visakhapatnam.

The state health authorities discharged 1,186 Covid infected patients after recovery in the last 24 hours in the state.

AP conducted Covid tests on 1,86,562 samples per one million population with a positive rate at 8.7.

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 28

The police arrested two youngsters on Saturday who robbed ₹77 lakh from State Bank of India, Nadikudi branch a week ago. The two persons inspired by movies (like *Julayi* Telugu movie) and YouTube videos committed the crime to earn money swiftly without leaving any evidence to settle their lives but the police traced the mystery through scientific investigation.

The robbery took place on 21 November in which the culprits did not leave any evidence but the police got a slip on which a phone number was written, a small video footage and with the phone number and other scientific methods, the police cracked the mystery.

Addressing a press meet at Guntur on Saturday, Guntur rural SP Vishal Gunni said that the police arrested 21-year-old Kedari Prasad and 37-year-old Vinay Ramulu relatives and natives of Gandhinagar of Miryalaguda in Telangana State and recovered the booty. He said that the duo accused studied Class X and intermediate and they

- The robbery took place on 21 November in which the culprits did not leave any evidence but the police got a slip on which a phone number was written, a small video footage and with the phone number

planned to earn money in a swift way inspired by movies and YouTube videos which showed various types of bank robberies without leaving evidence.

He said that the duo used to visit Dachepalli for works, observed SBI at Nadikudi situated in inner lanes, conducted reece and robbed ₹77 lakh by cutting chest with gas cutter wearing gloves, detaching CCTV cameras and sprinkled chilli powder to mislead sniffer dogs.

SP Vishal Gunni said that the police formed eight teams which arduously worked with the help of a small video footage. He said that the police arrested the duo and recovered ₹77 lakh cash from them. He said that this is the first of its kind robbery and recovery case which was resolved in seven days in the country. He appreciated the police teams and said that they will be recommended for AP Police awards.

₹10 LAKH TO  
SEXUALLY ABUSED  
CHILD VICTIMDC CORRESPONDENT  
KAKINADA, NOV. 27

The women and child welfare minister Taneti Vanitha said that the state government fixed ₹10 lakh deposit in the name of a five-year-old sexually abused victim and ₹1 lakh will be given to her family as financial assistance.

Vanitha visited the Government General Hospital (GGH) on Saturday and consoled the victim's parents. She inquired about the health condition of the victim with medical officials of the GGH. She said that the Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has instructed her to visit the hospital, and he wants not to occur such incidents in future. She gave ₹25,000 cheque to the girl's parents. She said that the accused would be punished severely and special police teams were searching for the accused. She said that one person missed after the incident and the teams are searching for him. She told the parents of the girl that the government would help them. She instructed the medical officials to give better treatment. She said that at present the girl's health condition is not good.

Ms Vanitha said that Disha Act would punish such victims severely and the action would be taken against the accused as nobody can dare to do such acts in future.

The district collector D. Muralidhar Reddy, Kakinada MLA Dwarampudi Chandrasekhara Reddy, Kakinada MP Vanga Gita, District Superintendent of Police Adnan Nayeem Asmi, ICDS project director Pushpa Mani and others accompanied Vanitha.

Later, the BC welfare minister Ch. Srinivasa Venugopala Krishna along with Kakinada MLA Dwarampudi Chandrasekhara Reddy visited the government general Hospital and consoled the girl's parents. He said that 15 police teams are searching for the accused, and stringent action would be taken against him. He requested the people to inform the accused to the officials if they find the accused.

BOOZERS STAB 3  
CONSTABLES NEAR  
KONDAPPAPALEMDC CORRESPONDENT  
KAKINADA, NOV. 28

Four boozers have stabbed three constables in a drunken stage on the midnight of Friday in a conflict.

The constables were admitted in Government General Hospital (GGH) in Kakinada.

According to The Two Town police, when the accused were going to Kondappapalem, two youngsters were chatting with each other on the road. The accused expressed anger over the youngster, and it led to quarrel among them. The accused beat up the youngster, who fled away from the spot and went to his house. The accused went to the youngster's house and started a quarrel.

Meanwhile, the youngster's relative, who was a constable in ANS, came out and tried to pacify them, but in vain. Another two constables working in ANS and Armed Reserve came to the spot and tried to pacify the accused. One of the accused stabbed the three constables with a knife. The constables Ramalakonda Balureddy (ANS), Ramalakonda Veerabhadra Reddy (ANS) and Yatla Balu Reddy (AR) were injured and were admitted in GGH for the treatment. The Two Town police registered a case.

The Superintendent of Police Adnan Nayeem Asmi visited the hospital and enquired their health. He requested the medical officials to render better treatment for them.

He said that the accused would be given severe punishment.

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**CORRIGENDUM**  
Tender Notice No.ET No.76/2019-20, Item No.04  
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SHORT TAKES

2 KIDS OF A FAMILY DIE, 8 HURT IN MISHAP

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, NOV. 28

Two children of a family were killed in a road accident and eight others were injured when the car they were travelling in crashed into a parked lorry at Nandigama early on Saturday morning.

The victims were identified as Adil Khan, 13, and Mahabub Khan, 7. They were traveling with their family, residents of Chandrayangutta, towards Shadnagar when the mishap occurred.

"The incident occurred at Mekaguda bypass road. The car driver who sustained injuries was shifted to a hospital. The rest of the family members will be identified after they receive medical attention," said the police.

The police rushed to the spot after learning the accident and rescued those stuck inside the car. A case has been registered by the police and an investigation was launched.

PIL FILED AGAINST MLC NOMINATIONS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, NOV. 28

A petition was filed before the Telangana High Court seeking to quash the GO and notification regarding the recent nomination of three MLCs by the Governor.

The petitioner, advocate T. Dhanagopal Rao, said that the process to nominate the MLCs — Gorati Venkanna, Baswaraju Sariah and Boggarapu Dayanand — had not been followed with regard to the provisions laid down in Article 171(3) of the Constitution read with Clause 5.

The petitioner said that the Governor has the discretion to nominate MLCs who have special knowledge and practical experience in specialised subjects like literature, science, art, social service or co-operative movement as per clause 5 of Article 171.

Here, the Governor nominated the MLCs based on the recommendations of the Cabinet, which is contrary to the prescribed provisions.

The petitioner sought that he be nominated MLC in place of those three, and urged the High Court to tell the government to consider his name.



Dr Surekha Omprakesh Beeshwa

GUNFOUNDRY DOCTOR ENTERS FRAY

SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL | DC  
HYDERABAD, NOV. 28

It was during the Coronavirus lockdown that Dr Surekha Omprakesh Beeshwa, a resident of Gunfoundry, decided that it was time she did something about the civic conditions in her municipal ward.

An Ayurvedic practitioner, Dr Surekha, said Gunfoundry, Ward No 78, is confronted with problems like lack of sanitation, many other basic amenities despite the locality being in the heart of the city.

"I was born and brought up in this division. Though situated in the centre of the city, the division is without basic civic amenities. It needs better sanitation, a revival of the library which was highly patronised in the past, proper maintenance of the community hall and some fitness centres and parks," she said.

People, she said, are vexed with the pathetic civic infrastructure in the area, and "when we ladies were debating during these lockdowns and the floods, I decided that I should do something. I need to get into politics and serve."

The division has a high percentage of families that are well educated and is home to several reputed educational institutions, many commercial establishments and hospitals.

● **PEOPLE**, she said, are vexed with the pathetic civic infrastructure in the area, and "when we ladies were debating during these lockdowns and the floods.

# Jobless make money from poll campaigns

## Parties paid them up to ₹5K for participating in rallies

MADDY DEEKSHITH | DC  
HYDERABAD, NOV. 28

Election rallies by all major political parties have come to the rescue of domestic helps and daily wage workers, who were braving economic hardships since the lockdown.

Many of them pointed out that the rallies have ensured that they can meet ends for at least a month.

Political parties have paid amounts ranging from ₹1,000 to ₹5,000 to those participating in the rallies and campaigns since the commencement of electioneering.

Sujatha, from Baghlingampally, said she was sacked as a

domestic help by her employer in April. This pushed her into a financial crisis. Her husband and two children were also jobless.

She could get a job only in August. "I agreed to work for a 50 per cent wage cut and the employers are promising full payment only after January, and that too if their financial position improves," Sujatha told *Deccan Chronicle*.

Election rallies have come as a blessing. "The parties in the beginning offered ₹500 each to me and my children and ₹1,000 to my husband. Now, they are offering me ₹1,500 and my husband ₹2,500," she said.

Her family has earned

₹30,000 in a week, while continuing to work elsewhere. Additionally, there is the prospect of election-day money. Free transport is on offer or fuel if they have their own vehicles.

Venkateshwarlu, a daily-wage worker in Barkatpura, said he has been participating in multiple rallies on the same day. Each party was offering him ₹1,000 per rally and he could earn ₹3,000 every day, and food came free.

"If a political leader addresses a public meeting, we get ₹2,000, party T-shirts, face masks and caps, which have been extremely useful for us during the crisis. I have collected about 10 face masks and T-shirts for

each person in our family."

He said parties have offered money for votes, which is a bonus. The money he has earned in the last 10 days would see him through for three months.

Venkateshwarlu said that people like him were saved by election rallies in these difficult times.

A few participants said there were special payments to cheer for the leader from atop buildings or sunshades, or by standing on barricades. The location would be selected by the local political leaders and payments, ranging from ₹2,000 to ₹5,000, based on the risk, would be made on the spot.



Union minister G. Kishan Reddy campaigns at Gandhinagar on Saturday. — By arrangement

# Kishan Reddy questions CM's silence on city floods

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, NOV. 28

Union minister of state for home G. Kishan Reddy said that the time had come to question the TRS government's failures. He criticised Chief Minister K. Chandrababhai Rao for failing to build double bedroom houses for the poor, though he had the time to construct a luxurious house for himself.

Kishan Reddy was speaking at an election meeting in Gandhinagar division in the Musheerabad Assembly constituency. The minister said that on coming to know of the tragedy following the rains and flooding in October, he had rushed from New Delhi whereas the Chief Minister had not bothered to come out of his farmhouse to

● **THE UNION minister pointed out that during the recent rains in Hyderabad, over 10 lakh people were affected and many had died.**

visit the affected families.

"I am wondering how TRS leaders can ask for votes. I wish to remind that KCR had promised to clean Tank Bund and provide drinking water from Hussainsagar. I wish to exhort people to ask TRS candidates who visit them for votes, to first drink Tank Bund water," Kishan said.

He alleged that when MIM leaders give orders, TRS big guns obliged like puppets. He wondered why the CM did not react when MIM leader Akbaruddin Owaisi spoke of the demolition of PV Ghat

## TWO HELD FOR CHEATING WITH FAKE PORTAL

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, NOV. 28

The Hyderabad cyber-crimes police arrested two persons — Prem Muley, 31, and Mahesh Kumar Dandote, 26, of Bidar district in Karnataka — for cheating people with a fake 'Dharani portal application'. The arrest was made on a complaint from officials at the TS Technology Services Limited here, who said that fake mobile applications which are in circulation in the name of 'Dharani mobile app'.

"They accused developed a mobile application in the name of 'Dharani Telangana Land Records' and mentioned it as 'Telangana Dharani app', designed to search land record details, ROR, Phani and Form B1 details in Telugu language. They made this app available for download on playstore and were cheating the public by posing as government officials," said the CCS police.

# Sikhs to celebrate Prakash Utsav on November 29 & 30

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, NOV. 28



Guru Nanak Dev

Sikhs will celebrate the 546th Prakash Utsav, birth-day celebrations, of the first Sikh Guru, Guru Nanak Dev, on November 29 and 30. To mark the occasion, the Prabhanda Committee of Gurudwara Saheb, Secunderabad (GSS), will organise two deewans (congregations) on November 30, from 9.30 am to 2.30 pm and from 9.30 pm to 2 am.

GSS Prabhanda Committee president S. Baldev Singh and secretary S. Avtar Singh said the event will be marked by the recitation of Gurbani keertans by reputed ragi jathas (religious preachers) who are being specially invited from various parts of the country.

Bhai Amarjit Singh of Patiala, Punjab, Giani Jagdev Singh, the GSS head

priest, and Bhai Harpreet Singh Hazari Ragi Jatha and others will recite shabad keertans and kathas and throw light on the teachings of Sikh Gurus.

On November 29, two deewans will be held at the Secunderabad Gurudwara premises, from 5 am to 10.30 am and 7 pm to 9 pm. After the culmination of the congregation Guru Ka Langar (free community kitchen) will be served to the devotees.

# 35 workers from Odisha rescued from brick kilns in Kamareddy district

NARENDER PULLOOR | DC  
KAMAREDDY, NOV. 28

As many as 35 brick kiln workers from Odisha were rescued and shifted to their native places from Kamareddy district on Saturday. Among the victims, officials found the elderly, women and children.

The rescue took place after a relative of the victims complained to the District Legal Services Authority (DSLA) in Nizamabad about the misery of the Odisha workers in Machareddy mandal. Treating it as Suo moto case, Kamareddy district additional judge B. Sattiah directed officials to identify the workers.

Officials identified the 35 Odisha workers from brick kilns in Ugravai and Bhavanipet villages in Machareddy mandal. It is alleged, brick kiln owners—

Anjan Reddy and Prabhakar Reddy harassed the workers, and did not provide them with proper food and accommodation. The duo would beat and scold the workers.

Unable to bear the harassment, the victims brought the issue to the notice of their relatives in Odisha who in turn complained about it in the Kamareddy district court.

In the presence of the district additional judge B. Sattiah, the police and labour department officials arranged a special vehicle and shifted the workers back to their native places.

Assistant labour commissioner Prabhudas, Kamareddy labour officer Salam, Kamareddy rural CI Chandrasekar Reddy, Devunipally SI Jyothi, court liaison officer Kanthaiah and others were present.



Rescued Brick kiln workers being shifted to their native places in Odisha from Bhavanipet village in Machareddy mandal of Kamareddy district on Saturday. — DC

## LESSONS | LEARNT Academy wins praise from all quarters of society, is role model

# Karimnagar CPTC is new forest learning centre

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KARIMNAGAR, NOV. 28

The Karimnagar Police Commissionerate by implementing the Yadradri model of the Miyawaki method of planting at the City Police Training Centre (CPTC) is now a study centre for officials of the forest department.

As part of their field visit, forest officials from Bhupalpally, Mulugu, Warangal, Jangaon, Karimnagar, Siricilla, Peddapalli and Jagtial districts, visited the CPTC in Karimnagar on Saturday, to study how the mini forest was grown on a small piece of land.

During the implementation of the Hariitha Haram programme in the state, the police officials of the Karimnagar police commissionerate planted as many as 12,500 saplings of 33 varieties under project-1 in one acre of land.

Under project-2, 14,800 saplings were planted in 1.14 acre of land in the CPTC present in the heart of Karimnagar city in 2017.

Appreciating the initiative, Chief Conservator of Forests M.J. Akbar, appreciating the effort said that the CPTC has become a model for the state and is competing with the



Commissioner of Police V.B. Kamalasan Reddy along with the forest officials of united Warangal and Karimnagar district take a walk through the Miyawaki forest in the City Police Training Centre during their field visit in Karimnagar district on Saturday. — DC

Forest College Research Centre at Jogulamba in Gajwel district.

He said, "Even though the land is not suitable for grow-

ing plants, with dedication, the Karimnagar police turned the entire area into fertile land by developing the area into a mini forest using

the Miyawaki method."

DFO of Warangal urban and Jangaon districts, Dr Ramalingam, expressing surprise over the steady growth

● **DFO OF Warangal urban and Jangaon districts, Dr Ramalingam, expressing surprise over the steady growth of the mini-forests, said that the low-lying area present along with the shore of the Lower Manair Dam in the CPTC was not suitable for growing plants. But, the Karimnagar police had made it possible using organic farming techniques and drip irrigation.**

of the mini-forests, said that the low-lying area present along with the shore of the Lower Manair Dam in the CPTC was not suitable for growing plants. But, the Karimnagar police had made it possible using organic techniques and drip irrigation.

Commissioner of Police, V.B. Kamalasan Reddy explained to the forest officials how they raised the saplings and transformed the area into a mini forest.

He said, "Developing a small piece of land into a mini-forests in the CPTC is a small contribution from the police department side. We never expected this huge response from all sections of people."



## SHORT TAKES

NAGA, ASSAM  
ENGAGE IN UGLY  
BORDER SPATMANOJ ANAND  
GUWAHATI, NOV. 28

After Mizoram row, the inter-state border conflict has erupted between Assam and Nagaland with local organisations of Assam imposing an indefinite economic blockade thereby halting all economic activities between Assam and Nagaland at Mariani in Jorhat district.

Tension had started at the inter-state border since November 10 following the construction of a temporary structure allegedly by Mokokchung district administration within the Dissoi Valley Reserve Forest under Mariani range of Jorhat Forest Division of Assam. The problem aggravated with the Mokokchung district administration posting armed Nagaland policemen at the site.

In response the Assam Police on November 11 also deployed its personnel in temporary camps near the place where Nagaland policemen were camping in order to prevent any further encroachment by Nagaland.

The local students organisation — the All Tai Ahom Students Union (ATASU), which opposed the move to what they called encroachment of Assam's land by the neighbouring state of Nagaland, has launched a movement since November 10 which was suspended for three days on assurance of the administration to resolve the issue.

K'TAKA CM'S  
AIDE ATTEMPTS  
'SUICIDE'

**Bengaluru, Nov. 28:** Karnataka Chief Minister B. S. Yediyurappa's political secretary and relative N. R. Santosh who was hospitalised following alleged suicide attempt, is 'stable and cheerful', and may be discharged in a day or two, doctors treating him said on Saturday.

According to sources, Santosh is said to have attempted suicide by consuming sleeping pills on Friday night.

On finding him unconscious at his Dollars Colony residence here, family members have rushed him to Ramaiah Memorial Hospital.

Santhosh (31) was brought at about 8.30 pm with an alleged history of consumption of sleeping tablets at around 7 pm, the Hospital President Dr Naresh Shetty said in a statement.

Noting that on admission he was drowsy, the doctor said appropriate treatment was administered immediately and all investigations were carried out.

"He has been taking sleeping tablets occasionally for his sleep disturbance as per past history. On Saturday morning, the patient is stable. He had his breakfast and is cheerful. The plan is to shift the patient to the ward post noon on Saturday. He may be discharged in a day or two based on his health status and recovery," the statement added.

OPPN FIRM ON  
DEMAND FOR EXIT  
OF MIN SAHOOAKSHAYA KUMAR  
SAHOO | DC  
BHUBANESWAR, NOV. 28

The Odisha government, under pressure from the Opposition and facing large-scale public outrage over the soft-peddling the investigation into the murder of five-year-old girl, on Saturday agreed to institute a probe by a court-monitored five-member Special Investigation Team (SIT), on Saturday.

The SIT will be headed by Inspector General of Police (IGP) Arun Bothra, who had cracked the 2018 Patnagarh parcel bomb case in which a newly-wed couple and their grandmother were killed.

State parliamentary affairs minister Bikram Kesari Arukha made the announcement in the Assembly. The announcement came a day after the Opposition parties attacked the Naveen Patnaik government over the ambiguity in the announcement by the latter regarding a SIT probe made on the floor of the House through video-conferencing on Friday.

The CM had said, "If required, the state government will order SIT probe into Pari murder case."

Arukha's announcement failed to pacify the Opposition which continued its attack on the government, forcing Speaker S.N. Patro to adjourn the proceedings till 3 pm.

## UP 'love jihad' law gets Gov. nod

Jail term up to 10 years and fine of ₹50K for those violating its clauses

**Lucknow, Nov. 28:** The Uttar Pradesh ordinance aimed at curbing forcible or fraudulent religious conversions including those for the sake of marriage has got the assent of state Governor Anandiben Patel with the new law providing for a jail term of up to 10 years for any violations.

The law, which has been published in the UP gazette, comes into force at once, an official spokesperson said on Saturday. The ordinance was promulgated by the Governor on Friday with immediate effect.

Under the law which deals with different categories of offences, a marriage will be declared "null and void" if the conversion of a woman is solely for that purpose,

and those wishing to change their religion after marriage need to apply to the district magistrate.

The Yogi Adityanath government on Tuesday approved the draft of the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Ordinance, 2020, which also curbs religious conversions only for the sake of marriage, dubbed by BJP leaders as 'love jihad'.

"The way in which religious conversions are done using deceit, lies, force and dishonesty is heart wrenching, and it was necessary to have a law in this regard," Cabinet minister and UP government spokesperson Sidharth Nath Singh had said.

Conversion for the alleged purpose of mar-

riage is, however, only one aspect of the ordinance.

The new law was opposed by the opposition Samajwadi Party.

Hours after the governor's nod, SP president Akhilesh Yadav said his party will oppose the Bill when it comes up in the state Legislature for passage.

"The Samajwadi Party is not in favour of any such law. We will oppose it (when it comes up in the assembly)," the former chief minister told a press conference.

The new law also has a provision under which if

someone returns to their original religion, it shall not be deemed a conversion.

The onus to prove that the conversion has not been done forcibly will lie

on the person accused of the act and the convert, it said.

In cases of violations of the law, the ordinance stipulates that the court shall grant appropriate compensation payable by the accused to the victim of conversion which may extend to a maximum of ₹5 lakh in addition to the fine.

The ordinance mainly envisages that no person shall convert, either directly or indirectly from one religion to another by use or practice of misrepresentation, force, undue influence, coercion, allurement or by any fraudulent means or by marriage nor shall any person abet, convince or conspire such conversion.

Minister Sidharth Nath Singh on Tuesday told

reporters that the punishment under the new law is a jail term from one to five years, and a fine of ₹15,000.

But if the woman involved is a minor or belongs to a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe, the jail term would range from three to 10 years, he said.

But if the woman involved is a minor or belongs to a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe, the jail term would range from three to 10 years, he said. The fine would increase to Rs 25,000.

"In the case of mass conversions, the punishment is from three years to 10 years and a fine of Rs 50,000 on the organisations which indulge in it," he added.

— PTI

India, Nepal put  
'sour' ties back  
on friendly trackSRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 28

With India declaring it is "Nepal's foremost friend and development partner", bilateral ties are once again firmly back on track following the successful two-day visit of foreign secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla to Kathmandu this week. Sources said recently that both sides "noted the special relations between India and Nepal, and the importance of respecting each other's sensitivities", adding that the two sides "shared their perspectives on boundary matters and discussed ways to take it forward under the appropriate bilateral mechanisms".

The visit comes even as China — much to India's concern and dismay — has extended its influence in the Himalayan nation enormously in the past few years especially after the Nepalese Communists assumed office.

It may be recalled that ties between India and its Himalayan neighbour had soured in the summer months this year after Nepal went ahead and unveiled a new map that showed portions of territory in India's Uttarakhand state — Limpiyadhura, Kalapani and Lipu Lekh — as part of Nepal.

New Delhi had objected to that move. But much water has flowed under the proverbial bridge in the past few months. The ice had initially been broken in August after Nepalese Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli had called up Prime Minister Narendra Modi then to wish him on the occasion of India's 74th Independence Day, with both leaders "expressing mutual solidarity" and agreeing to strengthen cooperation.

Foreign Secretary Mr. Shringla said in

Kathmandu during his just-concluded visit that culminated on Friday that "aside from our common civilisational inheritance, India's relationship with Nepal rests on four pillars — development cooperation; stronger connectivity; expanded infrastructure and economic projects; easier and enhanced access to educational opportunities in India for the young people of Nepal". He had also declared that "underlying all of these is a steadfast principle: we will work to Nepal's priorities".

The Foreign Secretary also "assured the people of Nepal that, once a vaccine is rolled out, meeting Nepal's requirements would be a priority for us". He had added, "Given our genetic profiles, what works for India is likely to work for Nepal as well. Together we will recover from the pandemic and together we will protect our people."

During his two-day visit, Mr. Shringla had called on Nepalese PM Oli, which included a one-on-one meeting, and had also called on the Nepalese President and the Foreign Minister, apart from holding talks with the Foreign Secretary of Nepal. Nepalese PM Oli had also conveyed Nepal's desire to build on the momentum in the bilateral relationship and enhance the level of bilateral engagement.

During the visit, discussions had taken place on "specific measures that could be taken to finalise key projects at the earliest, including the Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project, as well as launch new economic initiatives". Discussions had also taken place on "specific meetings that could be scheduled to maintain high level engagement, and address issues of mutual interest".



Bharatiya Kisan Union members attempt to cross a barricade at Ghazipur border to enter Delhi, during their Delhi Chalo protest against the Centres new farm laws, in New Delhi, on Saturday.

— PTI

Centre ready for farm talks: Shah  
Cong hits out at Modi govt  
over 'Delhi Chalo' march

**New Delhi/Chandigarh, Nov. 28:** Thousands of farmers dug in their heels at Delhi's border points, their numbers swelling through the day as many more joined them, and hundreds gathered at the city's Burari grounds on Saturday, disparate but united in their determination to hold protests against the new farm laws.

With many roads and entry points blocked, Union Home Minister Amit Shah appealed to the farmers to shift to the Burari ground and said the Centre is ready to hold discussions with them as soon as they move to the designated place.

He said a delegation of the farmers has been invited for discussion on December 3, adding now that some of their unions have demanded that talks be held immediately, the central government is ready to do so as soon as the protestors shift to the ground in Burari.

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh termed Shah's offer to hold discussions at the earliest as the best in the interest of the farming community and the nation at large. He urged the farmers to accept the appeal and shift to the designated place for their protest.

After a restive Friday that saw police using teargas shells, water cannons and multi-layer barriers to block the protesters and some farmers pelting stones and breaking barricades in their determination to push through as

**New Delhi, Nov. 28:** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday alleged that a soldier was pitted against an old farmer due to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "arrogance".

The Congress also said it would have been better if the prime minister talked to the protesting farmers instead of getting "himself photographed in corporate offices". "This is a very sad photo. Our slogan was 'Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan', but today a soldier is standing against the farmer due to PM Modi's arrogance. This is very dangerous," he said in a tweet in Hindi along with the picture of a soldier showing a baton to an old farmer.

part of their 'Delhi Chalo' march, it was a quieter Saturday.

But the tension persisted with restless crowds milling around the city's edges and beyond and settling down from another night out in the cold.

Though there was no clear roadmap, the farmers, belonging to multiple groups, including 30 from Punjab, appeared clear in their resolve, some saying

Farmers from Punjab and Haryana continued their protests against the new farm laws, with many of them blocking traffic on the national highway after the police stopped them from their 'Chalo Delhi' march.

Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala accused Modi of getting pictures clicked in corporate offices while farmers are protesting on Delhi roads. "Wish the PM talks to farmers on the road instead of flying in the aircraft," he said in a tweet, after Modi visited a company in Ahmedabad which is engaged in the Covid-19 vaccine research.

Another spokesperson Abhishek Singhvi

claimed whoever protests against the Modi government is "deemed a terrorist".

"Poor farmers from Punjab pointing out genuine grievances have been labelled khalistani. Why doesn't Modi come out and address the Annadata however, only demands of them during elections," he tweeted.

Party leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra also tweeted similar pictures of farmers being prevented by the police from marching towards Delhi, where they wish to hold a protest against the new farm laws. She said it is right if the government frames laws against farmers, but it is wrong when farmers wish to make their voice heard in Delhi.

— PTI

## GOOD | NEWS

Over 35L could not submit their documents due to pandemic

## EPFO extends deadline for pensioners

**New Delhi, Nov. 28:** Retirement fund body EPFO has extended the deadline for submission of life certificates by pensioners till February 28, a move which would benefit over 35 lakh persons who could not submit the document by November due to Coronavirus pandemic.

The pensioners who could not submit their life certificates till November 30 deadline, would get pension every month till February. "In view of the

ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and the vulnerability of elderly population to Coronavirus, the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has extended the time limit up to 28th February 2021 for submission of Life Certificate (Jeevan Pramaan Patra-JPP) in respect of the Pensioners drawing pension under EPS 1995 (Employees' Pension Scheme-1995) and whose Life certificate is due in

● **THE PENSIONERS** who could not submit their life certificates till November 30 deadline, would get pension every month till February.

● **PRESENTLY, A PENSIONER** can submit JPP anytime during the year up to 30th November, which is valid for a period of one year from the date of issue. All such pensioners can submit life certificates till February 28, 2021.

any month till February 28, 2021," a labour ministry statement said.

Presently, a pensioner can submit JPP anytime during the year up to 30th November, which is valid

for a period of one year from the date of issue. All such pensioners can submit life certificates till February 28, 2021.

During this extended period, pension will not be

stopped in respect of 35 lakh pensioners who could not submit JPP during November 2020, the ministry added.

Multiple modes for submission of JPPs including 3.65 lakh Common Service Centres (CSCs), branches of pension disbursing banks, 1.36 lakh post offices, postal network of 1.90 lakh postmen and Grameen Dak Sevaks under the Department of Post can be availed by pensioners.

— PTI



## DECCAN Chronicle

29 NOVEMBER 2020



Sanjeev Ahluwalia

Off the beaten track

## Different, and same: Pandemic musings

Big calamities induce great change. The Fukushima disaster 2011 in Japan left behind 16,000 dead and the haunting image of the Emperor Akihito, kneeling before aged victims— a never before, mutely humane gesture expressing remorse and reassurance.

April 2020, India. A possible 10 million emigrant workers abandon locked down cities. Some walk to distant villages with their family in tow and their meagre possessions on their heads — a replay of the post-Partition mass exchange of the dispossessed in 1947 — except this is just one-way.

Media reports kindle public sympathy. Yogi Adityanath mobilises hundreds of buses to ferry “his” people home to Uttar Pradesh. Their cousins from Bihar are left to brave the searing summer heat and exhaustion — some die on the way.

November 2020, New Delhi, Mumbai — lockdowns are long over but most people now carry documents to prove residence, drown themselves in vitamins and track the apps for movement restrictions. The worst is over. The Covid monster is dying. But the fear is palpable of being dragged under by its distended death spasms.

The ongoing pandemic’s most telling debris — other than heightened neurosis and germaphobia — are the ubiquitous masks. Masks everywhere in a macabre caricature of a Venetian Carnival — except here masks are the vehicle to scurry home not strut the streets and party.

Product design lags horribly. The masks either keep pollution out or the deadly spiked pathogens. You must choose between the two — a senseless game of Russian roulette. Pollution choked lungs gasp for air through impermeable medical grade masks. But there are eyes watching everywhere now. Furtively, you avert your face, tug downwards and gulp in the air quickly, lest someone fingers you for violating the Covid regulations. Some are complicit out of propriety; others to escape the Rs 2,000 fine.

Sitting next to a stranger on a bus, in an aircraft or even in a waiting room is so off-putting that it makes you shun all human contact and become a mole. Voluntary social distancing is not going away anytime soon.

For the well-off, excluding others from physical proximity, unless they are suitably bathed and clad, was always the norm. South Asians smarten up before they go to beg for relief for a Bahubali (big man). It is not just hotels and the military, which enforce daily dress and hygiene inspections. Privileged homes also follow this rule, requiring house help to change into “clean uniforms” before going about their work.

It all goes back to the Raj, when *mem-sahibs* would drill the women of the “coolie lines” — people not like them — on the basics of hygiene, partly, to forestall the spread of classless contagion to the “main house”.

Hawking or spitting is second nature to South Asians. An early morning ritual which requires the most labored exertions to eject yesterday’s detritus from around our gullets, in a fluid heave by contracting the stomach and gagging ferociously. Sensible Europeans brush their teeth post dinner. Asians must do it early in the morning, before eating anything, or lose their meal.

Touching and feeling anything and everything is second nature. It could be a door frame, the back of a chair or even the person ahead of oneself in a queue. Does “connecting” physically create a human chain of reassurance circling the Globe?

With masks obscuring the face, all-American, blindingly white teeth and a now-it’s-on, now-it’s-off toothy smiles are yesterday’s asset — dentists, beware of your declining profits. Today it is the eyes which are once again the windows to a person’s soul.

And don’t forget how voice and audio have eaten into video’s share as the principal tool for business and social communication, to access knowledge, music, shows or catch-up on current affairs because pod casts allow you to “multitask” — the holy grail of the 2020s, also known by the less flattering epithet of “shared attention” — as by a mother of quintuplets.

Personal vehicles, insanely popular in South Asia because of poor public transport, soar in appeal. They extend the bubble of “safe social isolation” to the street. The purveyors of the virtues of “shared mobility” need to come up with very rigorous sanitisation options before people go back to Uber and Ola. One option is drive through UV sanitizers — giant versions of the smaller ones for home use, to disinfect mobiles and parcels, now available at between ₹2,000 to ₹10,000 apiece.

Accessing doctors is, at once convenient and yet dreadfully stressful. Letting a doctor look down your gullet online whilst lying in your bed is sheer luxury, as is ordering medicines like pizza. The bad old days of heaving yourself to a hospital or a clinic for a doctor’s appointment or to get a medical test done, are now mere memories, except for the truly ill, who now need generous insurance policies and “connections” for non-Covid medical help.

Dying at home was once a preferred eventuality for the aged. Today they are denied even this final dignity. Doctors hesitate to certify the cause of death. Even the dead must pass by a hospital to be stamped as “non-Covid” before being cremated or buried. Some say, the movers and shakers, who know how to live and die comfortably, get certificates prepared in advance, just to avoid the detour. Kafka rules now more than ever.

The writer is adviser, Observer Research Foundation

Subhani



## At best, farm laws pass reform buck to big biz



Pavan K. Varma

Chanakya’s View

As I saw thousands of farmers being tear-gassed and drenched by water cannons, and the mass of lathi wielding policemen and barbed wire barricades put up to prevent farmers coming to Delhi to protest against the recent farm bills, I was reminded of Tulsidas’ remarkably insightful lines in the *Ramcharitmanas*: *Nahin kou asa janama jaga mahin, prabhuta pai jahi mada nahin*: Never was a creature born in this world, whom power did not intoxicate. How else can one explain the arrogant manner in which the BJP government has handled the entire project of farm reforms? It is a classic case of hubris derailing even a well-intentioned attempt of change.

Firstly, it was the manner in which the three agricultural bills were passed in Parliament last September. This is a government with an overwhelming majority in the Lok Sabha, and a manageable preponderance in the Rajya Sabha. It is in a position on a simple numerical basis to get its legislative agenda through. Why then were these bills passed in a tearing hurry, without a structured discussion, through a voice vote, and without sending the bills for wider consultations and thorough consideration to the select committee?

Let us accept, too, that there is a need to replace the stranglehold of middlemen in agricultural trade and do away with the APMC Act. However, if the farmers are protesting the move it is not

because they have shrunken craniums that prevent them from realising what is good for them. The question is not that agricultural commerce needs to be opened up, but what is going to replace it. The government says that removing unproductive middlemen and allowing farmers to sell to whomsoever they want is good for farmers. It will open the way for corporate India to buy from farmers, enhance business investment in the agricultural sector, facilitate healthy price competition and thereby increase farmer remuneration.

The fact of the matter is that, while this sounds great in theory, marginal and small farmers with less than five hectares of land account for 86 per cent of total farmers in India. No attempt has been made, as part of preparatory steps leading up to this reform legislation, to aggregate them or to encourage cooperatives. They have been given the freedom to sell outside the APMC, but given their indigent and scattered status, are without the power to negotiate the best deal for themselves.

It is true that there are only some 7,000 APMC mandis across the country, and farmers can theoretically sell to anyone they wish to. In fact, some states like Bihar, Kerala and Manipur have scrapped the APMC Act. But has the condition of the small and marginal farmers really improved in these states? The truth is that the old system — which does need reform — guaranteed to most farmers through the MSP, a mini-

**The government feels that these farm bills will facilitate investment by the corporate sector. However, has the government come out with the requisite tax incentives and fiscal policies that will encourage such investment?**

mum floor price for their hard earned produce. The much maligned middlemen or adhatitis provide a support system to farmers for transporting their produce and selling it; they also are a part of a familiar socio-economic eco system available to farmers in times of need, such as a temporary loan for marriage ceremonies or child education. Now the assurance of the old system is being removed, and there is no explicit guarantee in the law for MSP.

Reforms, although necessary, need to be prepared for and properly transitioned. Suppose, the government made a peremptory announcement that henceforth everybody will travel in New Delhi only by public transport. The step can be justified as a ‘reform’ because it will save fuel, encourage savings, and reduce pollution. But the ordinary person will ask the basic question: Is the existing public transport infrastructure good enough to meet this increased demand? If the answer is no, then people will protest.

The guarantee of MSP has led farmers, especially in Punjab and Haryana, but also elsewhere, to grow crops, such as paddy, even when government godowns are unable to efficiently store the grains, and rats consume a great deal of it. But why are farmers growing paddy in Punjab and

other states? It is successive governments that have for vote bank politics guaranteed them free water and free electricity. Now that they have utilised this largesse to cultivate paddy, the government suddenly has a change of heart and says it will not buy, and wants corporate India to step in. A businessman, who is given certain inputs for production free, and encouraged to make a particular product which the government guarantees it will buy at remunerative prices, will change his production line to respond to such a situation. Suppose, after he has done so, the government says that its decision was wasteful, and it will not guarantee purchase, would not the businessman feel he has been cheated?

The agricultural sector is crying out for greater investment. The government feels that these farm bills will facilitate this but by the corporate sector. However, has the government come out with the requisite tax incentives and fiscal policies that will encourage such investment? Besides, there is a point beyond which governments — both at the centre and in the states — cannot abdicate their own responsibility. Systemic investments in modernising the food supply chain should have been made in much greater measure by governments. The buck is now being passed on to the private sector, on the uncertain premise that they will do what successive governments did not.

We need agricultural reform. But it must be done through consultation with the stakeholders and systematically prepared for. Teargassing farmers and intimidating them is not the answer.

The writer, an author and a former diplomat, is in politics

## LETTERS

### GRILL Dr RAMESH

The Swarna Palace fire mishap should be taken to its logical conclusion. Those responsible must be punished. Compensation must be paid for all the loss incurred on account of the mishap. On top of it all, Dr Pothineni Ramesh, who was the ultimate beneficiary of the Covid care centre, should be booked for disrespect to laws and punished accordingly. The government of the day ensured payment of compensation to all victims’ families. Even that amount should be recovered from the doctor.

Govardhana Myneedu  
Vijayawada

### CARE FOR FARMERS

Agriculture is the primary source of income to many across the nation (*Farmers get permission for Delhi Protest, DC, Nov. 28*). Farmers only want to be assured of a feasible and viable return for their produce. It is not rocket science to understand the basic economic factor. Hope the government will work out an amicable solution on the Central component of MSP for farmers.

Dr C. Ghanshyam  
Visakhapatnam

For a month, Punjab farmers have conducted rail roko and lifted it as it was boomeranging on their economy. Now, amidst Covid threat and severe winter, a section of farmers are on Delhi Chalo campaign against Centre’s new farm laws. No other Congress-ruled state farmers are agitating and all over the country, farmers are not as vociferous as Punjab farmers. The Centre may not yield to pressure tactics of the Congress-sponsored Punjab farmers agitation.

Parthasarathy Mandadi  
Tirupati

Keeping in view the farmers agitation, the Farmers Bill does seem to be resented like no other with no respite in the near future. In this scenario it is best the government withdraws the Bills for the sake of peace in the country. It should not be taken as a prestige issue.

N.S. Sharma  
Visakhapatnam

## 50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

### Licensing policy may not be relaxed

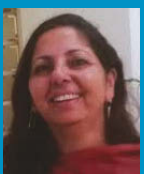
NEW DELHI, Nov. 28

The Ministry of Industrial Development is understood to have informed the Planning Commission that there would be no further liberalisation of licensing policy and it would go ahead, with the consent of the Cabinet with projects that would ensure over-all growth of the economy.

In the course of exchange of views it has had with the Planning Commission, the Ministry is believed to be of the view that if private sector did not come forward to help achieve the Fourth Plan targets in the industrial sector, the public sector would step in. Already, the Ministry has pointed out, some of the shortages that have developed in consumer goods, such as man-made fibres, were being overcome through the public sector. The Ministry feels strongly that the private sector should not be allowed to make money out of raw materials produced by the public sector.

Anita Katyal

Political Cup-Shup



## Despite defeat, Rahul vac was on track; Patel’s unenviable role

Over the past few days, there have been numerous accounts of how Ahmed Patel managed affairs in Congress president Sonia Gandhi’s office as her political secretary. Among the various responsibilities entrusted to the late leader was to keep his boss out of the line of fire. It was left to him to tactfully handle delicate situations. A phone call from Patel generally meant he was ringing to convey some bad news. This happened with senior Haryana leader Birender Singh (now with the BJP) when he was getting ready to leave for the Rashtrapati Bhavan to be sworn in as a minister in the Manmohan Singh government in 2013. Minutes before Mr Singh stepped out, he got a call from Patel. When Mr Singh heard who the caller was, he realised he would not be joining the Union Cabinet. “I knew immediately I was out... because Ahmed Patel would not be calling to congratulate me,” says Mr Singh whenever he recounts this story. This was not the first or the last time that Mr Patel was called upon to perform

such an unpleasant task. But he handled it tactfully, breaking the news in his inimitable gentle style. His general refrain was, “*Sorry yaar, tumhara kaam nahin hua. Dekho, agli baar shayad kuch ho payega.*”

Thanks to the enthusiastic response RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav got at his election rallies, Rahul Gandhi was convinced that their alliance was all set to form the next government in Bihar. In fact, he was so confident that he took a break in the midst of the election campaign and went off for a short holiday to Shimla at his sister, Priyanka’s house. The Nehru-Gandhi scion had even planned to go on a desert safari to Jaisalmer before the declaration of the Bihar poll results. However, these plans came unstuck because Rahul Gandhi was denied permission by the security agencies as Prime Minister Narendra Modi was due to visit the forward areas and spend his Diwali with the jawans. This was just as well as the Bihar poll results proved to be a real letdown

for the Rahul-Tejashwi duo. However, this did not stop Rahul Gandhi from proceeding on vacation to Goa later with Sonia Gandhi.

Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has put the proverbial cat among the pigeons with his recent announcement that he is in no hurry to expand his Cabinet. This has obviously come as a rude shock for former ministers Tulsī Silawat and Govind Rajput who had to resign their posts in October as they had failed to get elected as MLAs in the stipulated six months following their induction into the Cabinet. Both Silawat and Rajput are Jyotiraditya Scindia loyalists who had crossed over to the BJP from the Congress along with 20 other MLAs which led to the downfall of the Kamal Nath government. The two were hoping to get back their ministries after they were re-elected in the recent Madhya Pradesh bypolls. They are naturally depending on Mr Scindia to push their case but their mentor is him-

self waiting for the ministerial berth promised to him by the BJP as reward for bringing down the Congress government.

Ahmed Patel’s untimely demise is undoubtedly a blow for the Congress but it is a personal setback for former Rajasthan deputy chief minister Sachin Pilot who had led a rebellion against the Ashok Gehlot government earlier this year but backed off subsequently. The Congress leadership had then set up a three-member committee, comprising Patel, K.C. Venugopal and Ajay Maken to hear out Mr Pilot’s grievances and find an alternate role for him. This was in July but the panel has yet to submit its report. With Patel’s departure, it is highly unlikely that Mr Venugopal and Mr Maken will be in a rush to send in their recommendations. As it is, Mr Venugopal and Mr Maken were depending on the more senior and experienced Patel to find an amicable solution to the Gehlot-Pilot rivalry. This is certainly not good news for Mr Pilot who has

been waiting to be rehabilitated for the past five months.

Soon after BJP Rajya Sabha MP and Amit Shah confidant Bhupendra Yadav was given charge of the poll campaign for the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation, he immediately got down to business. He has set up shop in Hyderabad and has been approaching local Congress leaders for induction into the BJP. Realising that the Congress is on a weak wicket, Yadav and his team has been sending out feelers to the rival party’s leaders, even going to the extent of calling on them at their homes. This is the same pattern adopted by the BJP in West Bengal as the saffron party is determined to expand its footprint in the East and South. Unlike Trinamul chief Mamata Banerjee who is putting up a tough fight in West Bengal, there is no one in the Congress to counter the BJP’s expansionism.

Anita Katyal is a Delhi-based journalist



## IN BRIEF

PAKISTAN,  
U.S. RESTORE  
MONASTERY

**Peshawar, Nov. 28:** Pakistan and the US have jointly completed restoration work at the Takht-i-Bahi Buddhist monastery in northwest Pakistan under the \$230,000 cultural preservation project.

US Consul General Gregory Macris virtually participated in the closing ceremony of the project at the monastery in Mardan in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province.

"The US mission in Pakistan is committed to working with local partners to support conservation and preservation of sites of great cultural significance across Pakistan," said Macris.

The Humanitarian and Facilitation Organisation (HAFO) received a US grant to execute the two-phase project at Takht-i-Bahi.

OLI SUBMITS  
SEPARATE  
DOCUMENT

**Kathmandu, Nov. 28:** Nepal's protracted political crisis deepened on Saturday after embattled Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli rejected Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda's" accusations that he was running the government without consulting the party, and instead blamed his rival for non-cooperation in handling the party's affairs.

In the much-awaited Central Secretariat meeting of the ruling Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) on Saturday, Prime Minister Oli submitted a separate 38-page political document in response to the allegations made by party's executive chairman "Prachanda".

Oli was responding to the allegations made against him by "Prachanda" in his 19-page political paper presented at the Secretariat meeting on November 18. In his report, Prachanda had accused Oli of running the government without consulting the party, failing to abide by the party's due procedures and engaging in corruption.

Oli dismissed the allegations levelled against him by "Prachanda" while submitting the separate report, according to a senior Standing Committee member of the party.

FUTURE OF WALES  
GANDHI'S STATUE  
IN QUESTION

**London, Nov. 28:** There is a question mark over the future of a statue of Mahatma Gandhi in Wales after an official Welsh government review into Britain's colonial and slave trading history drew up a list of memorials that require a rethink. "The Slave Trade and the British Empire: An Audit of Commemoration in Wales" report released this week also shortlists the commemoration of Britain's war-time Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Robert Clive, referred to as Clive of India for his role in establishing Britain's colonial hold in India, as "persons of interest" to move to a second stage of the review process.

Wales has a bronze sculpture of Gandhi at Cardiff Bay, unveiled in 2017 to mark the 148th birth anniversary of the leader of the Indian national movement.

In the audit, he has been classified under Category E of persons of interest who "require examination as having been highlighted by campaigners".

INDIAN MAN ON  
TOURIST VISA  
MISSING IN UAE

**Dubai, Nov. 28:** An Indian man, who reached the UAE on a tourist visa to seek a job, has been missing since November 9, a media report has said.

Amrithalingam Samayamuthu, 46, a father of four from the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu, had come over to take up a job in the UAE, the *Gulf News* reported on Friday. Samayamuthu's nephew Durai Maniraja, who is a fisherman in Ras Al Khaimah, said his uncle came with three people from Tamil Nadu on November 8.

"They stayed in an accommodation in Hor Al Anz. His roommates said the next morning he went to the workplace. After he came back, they went for work at night," Durai said. He said Samayamuthu was upset as he would be alone in the room and also wanted to go.

"But the others told him not to. There was no news about him later is what they told us," Durai said. Samayamuthu had not called home as he did not have a UAE SIM card. His brother-in-law Kannan Nagoorankani, said he approached the Al Muraqqabat Police Station to file a complaint.



This picture taken with a fisheye lens on Friday shows coworking rooms of the capsule hotel Anshin Oyado Shinjuku, Tokyo, which has been renovated into a coworking space without the upper and lower partitions of the capsule. Facing unprecedented challenges due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the capsule hotel renovated an entire floor to be used as a coworking space, offering office necessities such as high speed internet required for telework and web conferencing, including computer hardware and other computing devices.

— AFP

Germany hits mn cases as Russia  
links up with India on vaccine

**Berlin, Nov. 28:** Germany, once a beacon of hope in Europe's Coronavirus nightmare, logged more than one million cases on Friday, while Russia asked India to help mass produce its controversial Sputnik vaccine.

Although the virus spread is slowing thanks to weeks of tough restrictions, Europe remains at the heart of the pandemic, recording more cases than the United States in the past week.

The pandemic is spreading fastest in Asia and Latin America, and is up by a worrying 113 percent over the week in Mexico.

Until recently, Germany's relative success in containing the virus had offered some sense of hope, with authorities putting in place some precautions that still allowed life to carry on almost as normal. However, its measured approach has failed during the second wave, endangering the health of Europe's biggest economy and weighing on the mood as the northern hemisphere heads into the winter holidays.

Germany's Robert Koch Institute recorded more than 22,000 new daily cases on Friday, pushing the overall total beyond the one-million mark.

The number of Covid-19 patients in intensive care has soared from around 360 in early October to more than 3,500 last week.

Most countries hope to ease their virus rules for Christmas and New Year.

— AFP

**Paris, Nov. 28:** Coronavirus deaths topped 400,000 Saturday in Europe, the world's second worst-hit region, as parts of the continent began to reopen shops for the holiday season. But across the Atlantic fearful US shoppers turned to online outlets for a massive Black Friday sale, while densely populated Los Angeles county announced a ban on gatherings of people under a new "safer-at-home order".

Persistent high case

numbers loom over governments' hopes to ease their virus rules for Christmas and New Year.

Europe on Saturday crossed a grim barrier, registering 400,649 deaths. Stores began lifting their shutters in France on Saturday, while Poland's shopping centres will also reopen.

"I'd rather avoid the internet, I'm going to buy things in the shops. They need it," said Anne Dubois, one of the first customers applauded through the doors by staff at

Paris' vast Galeries Lafayette department store.

"Whether or not there's people here, at least we've got our daily life getting back to normal," said 36-year-old Aurelie, a manager in the L'Oreal section at Galeries Lafayette.

Belgium will allow shops to reopen from December 1, but keep the current semi-lockdown in place possibly until mid-January. The move mirrors similar easing in Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands.

— AFP

Scientists to detect  
single virus particles

**Tokyo, Nov. 28:** Scientists have developed a new method for identifying single virus particles based on changes in electrical current when they pass through ultrasmall pores, an advance which they claim may lead to new rapid Covid-19 tests.

The study, published in *ACS Sensors*, demonstrated a new system for identifying single virus particles using an algorithm trained to detect changes in the current passing across silicon nanopores. According to the scientists,

the work may lead to fast and accurate screening tests for diseases like Covid-19 and influenza.

In the new method, the scientists said a layer of the compound silicon nitride just 50 nanometres (nm) thick has tiny nanopores added.

The motion of the ions can be monitored by the current they generate, and when a viral particle enters a nanopore, it blocks some of the ions from passing through, leading to a transient dip in current.

— PTI

CONGRESSMAN  
TESTS POSITIVE  
FOR VIRUS

**Miami, Nov. 28:** South Florida Congressmember-elect Carlos Gimenez has tested positive for Coronavirus, his campaign announced Friday.

The former Miami-Dade County mayor and his wife, Lourdes, tested positive Thursday for Covid-19 after having mild symptoms, according to a statement. They said they're self-isolating at home, in accordance with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines.

— AP

India, Lanka, Maldives to bolster  
maritime security cooperation

**Colombo, Nov. 28:** Top security officials of India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives on Saturday agreed to further strengthen cooperation and ensure peace for common benefit as they took stock of the current maritime security environment in the region during the high-level trilateral dialogue which was held here after a gap of six years. National Security Advisor Ajit Doval took part in the dialogue along with Sri Lankan Defence Secretary Major Gen (Retd.) Kamal Gunaratne

and Maldivian Defence Minister Mariya Didi. Sri Lanka hosted the fourth National Security Adviser-level trilateral meeting on maritime security cooperation with India and the Maldives.

It took place after six years — the last one was held in New Delhi in 2014. According to a joint statement issued by Sri Lanka's Ministry of Defence, the three countries — recognising the significance of the forum for promoting meaningful cooperation in the Indian Ocean

Region on common issues pertaining to maritime security — took stock of the current maritime security environment in the region.

They discussed mutual cooperation in the areas of Maritime Domain Awareness, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief, Joint Exercises, Capacity Building, Maritime Security and Threats, Marine Pollution, and Maritime Underwater Heritage, it said. They agreed to further strengthen cooperation in dealing with these chal-

lenges, to ensure peace and security in the region for common benefit, the joint statement said.

The three countries also exchanged views on common security threats and agreed to broad base cooperation by expanding the scope to improve intelligence sharing and include issues like terrorism, radicalisation, extremism, drugs, arms and human trafficking, money laundering, cyber security and effect of climate change on maritime environment, it said.

— PTI

## DETERIORATING | CONDITION

## PM invites singer to contribute to protected areas expansion initiative

## Imran lauds Cher efforts to relocate elephant

**Islamabad, Nov. 28:** Prime Minister Imran Khan on Friday appreciated efforts of US celebrity singer Cher to relocate Kaavan, dubbed as the world's loneliest elephant, from a Pakistani zoo to Cambodia for better conditions. Cher, who called on the Prime Minister in Islamabad, has been campaigning for retiring Kaavan, the country's only Asian elephant, to an elephant sanctuary. The story of Kaavan, who is 35 years old, attracted world attention after reports went viral about the deteri-

orating condition of the zoo in Islamabad where the elephant was kept.

Khan "thanked Cher for her campaign and role in this regard," according to his office. He said that "it was indeed a happy moment for all of us that after giving joy and happiness to the people of Islamabad and Pakistan for about 35 years, Kaavan will now be able to retire with other elephants in a specialised sanctuary in Cambodia."

The Prime Minister also invited the singer to participate and contribute tow-

ards the government's initiative for the expansion of protected areas, to which she agreed.

Cher also tweeted about her meeting with Khan. "Just Came From Meeting To Thank Prime Minister Imran Khan For Making It Possible For Me To Take Kaavan To Cambodia," she said. The Pakistan government on Monday issued a permit to transfer the elephant and sources said Kaavan will be flown to Cambodia on November 29.

The elephant was already handed over to experts who

● **PRESIDENT ARIF** Alvi attended a function at the Marghzar Zoo in Islamabad to mark the handing over of the elephant to experts to finalise its shifting to Cambodia.

were dealing with its transfer. President Arif Alvi along with his wife Samina attended a function on November 24 at the Marghzar Zoo in Islamabad to mark the handing over of the elephant to

Court rejects Don  
Pennsylvania suit

## Observes voters, not lawyers choose Prez

**Washington, Nov. 28:** In a fresh setback to US President Donald Trump's efforts to reverse the November 3 presidential election result in the battleground state of Pennsylvania, a court has dismissed a lawsuit filed by his team, observing that "voters, not lawyers choose the president." The judgement came four days after Pennsylvania certified Trump's Democratic rival Joe Biden as the winner in the state which has 20 electoral college votes.

Trump, a Republican, has refused to accept defeat in the November 3 presidential election, and told reporters on Thursday that it would be "hard" to concede to Biden, a Democrat. The President has said that he would leave the White House if the Electoral College declares Biden as the winner, but made clear he is not prepared to "concede" the election. He has launched a slew of lawsuits in key states, but has not provided any evidence to back his claims of electoral fraud.

Many of the lawsuits have been dismissed by courts. The three-judge panel of the 3rd US Circuit Court of Appeals on Friday upheld a previous ruling that dismissed the Trump campaign's request for an injunction in the case in Pennsylvania to challenge the election results and slammed the lawsuit. "Free, fair elections are the lifeblood of our democracy. Charges of unfairness are serious, but calling an election unfair does not make it so. Charges require specific allegations and then proof. We have neither here," Judge Stephanos Bibas said in his order.

"The campaign cannot win this lawsuit," said Bibas, who was appointed by Trump. He authored the order along with two other judges on the bench, Chief Circuit Judge Brooks Smith and Judge Michael Chagares, who were appointed by former Republican president George W. Bush. Trump has refused to concede the November 3 election to Biden and has

Biden to represent  
best in us: Harris

**Washington, Nov. 28:** Joe Biden will be a president who represents the best of America, his deputy and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris has said, asserting that he is a leader the world will respect. Lavishing praise on the 78-year-old US President-elect, Harris on Friday said that Biden will be a president for all Americans.

"Know that" Biden "will be a president who represents the best in us. A leader the world will respect and our children can look up to," Harris said in a tweet.

Harris, 56, the daughter of an Indian immigrant from Chennai, has created history by becoming the first Black American woman to be elected as the

country's Vice President. While Indian-origin politicians have been elected as heads of the state in various parts of the world in the last several decades, from Mauritius to Fiji, Harris as the vice president of the United States would be the most powerful politician ever.

Biden, in a series of tweets, called for unity in the country. "This is our moment — ours together — to write a newer, bolder, more compassionate chapter in the life of our nation," Biden said in a tweet. "Each of us has a responsibility in our own lives to do what we can to slow the virus. Every decision we make matters. Every decision we make can save a life."

— PTI

QUANTANAMO:  
SOME MAY BE  
RELEASED

**Washington, Nov. 28:** The oldest prisoner at the Guantanamo Bay detention centre went to his latest review board hearing with a degree of hope, something that has been scarce during his 16 years locked up without charges at the US base in Cuba.

Saifullah Paracha, a 73-year-old Pakistani with diabetes and a heart condition, had two things going for him that he didn't have at previous hearings: A favourable legal development and the election of Joe Biden. President Donald Trump had effectively ended the Obama administration's practice of reviewing the cases of men held at Guantanamo and releasing them if imprisonment was no longer deemed necessary.

— AP

US curbs on Russian, Chinese  
firms for Iran missile supportKILLING OF SCIENTIST: KHAMENEI  
CALLS FOR 'DEFINITIVE PUNISHMENT'

**Tehran, Nov. 28:** Iran's supreme leader on Saturday called for the "definitive punishment" of those behind the killing of a scientist linked to Tehran's disbanded military nuclear programme, a slaying the Islamic Republic has blamed on Israel.

Israel, long suspected of killing scientists a decade ago amid tensions over Tehran's nuclear programme, has yet to comment on the killing Friday of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh.

However, the attack bore the hallmarks of a carefully planned, military-style ambush.

The slaying threatens to renew tensions between the US and Iran in the waning days of President Donald Trump's term, just as President-elect Joe Biden has suggested his administration could return to Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers

from which Trump earlier withdrew.

The Pentagon announced early Saturday that it sent the USS Nimitz aircraft carrier back into the Mideast.

In a statement, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei called Fakhrizadeh "the country's prominent and distinguished nuclear and defensive scientist."

Khamenei said Iran's first priority after the killing was the "definitive punishment of the perpetrators and those who ordered it."

He did not elaborate. Speaking to a meeting of his government's Coronavirus task force earlier Saturday, President Hassan Rouhani blamed Israel for the killing. Rouhani said that Fakhrizadeh's death would not stop its nuclear programme, something Khamenei said as well.

— AP

VIDEO OF COPS  
BEATING POC A  
SHAME: MACRON

**Paris, Nov. 28:** French President Emmanuel Macron has said video images showing police officers beating up a Black man "shame us," and condemned violence both by and against the police. Macron asked the government to quickly come up with proposals "to reaffirm the link of confidence that should naturally exist between the French and those who protect them" and to better fight discrimination.

— AP



## SHORT TAKES

## Hamilton takes Bahrain GP pole

**Manama:** Newly-crowned seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton claimed pole position for Sunday's Bahrain Grand Prix with an impeccable record-breaking lap on Saturday as Mercedes dominated the floodlit qualifying session. He clocked an all-time track record lap in one minute and 27.264 seconds to outpace team-mate Valtteri Bottas by 0.289 seconds, the pair delivering Mercedes' 11th front row lock-out of the season.

It was Hamilton's record-increasing 98th career pole position and the fluency and speed of his driving endorsed his status as the outstanding man to beat at Sakhir's Bahrain International Circuit. — *AFP*

## Jehan pips Mick for F2 podium

**Bahrain:** Rising Indian racer Jehan Daruvala earned his maiden Formula 2 podium after pipping championship leader Mick Schumacher in a gripping battle for the third place at the Bahrain Grand Prix support race, here. Starting eighth on the grid, Jehan gained two places and stayed sixth for a few laps. However, in Lap 5, he lost two places and was forced off the circuit. The resulting loss of speed cost him more positions. He stayed in tenth place for a few laps before pitting to change tyres. Jehan emerged from the pits down in the 18th place but quickly climbed up the order. He gained more positions as others pitted and was running sixth by lap 19 of the 32 lap race. — *PTI*

## TIME TO PONDER

With no Plan 'B' in place, India need their 'A' game to save ODI series

**Sydney, Nov. 28:** India's battered bowling unit will have little time to regroup and limited resources at its disposal in a desperate bid to perform a redemption act and save the ODI series against Australia in the second game here on Sunday.

It wasn't just about the margin of defeat but the manner in which the home team exposed India's vacant cupboard of all-rounders that will give Virat Kohli and Ravi Shastri numerous points to ponder.

Hardik Pandya's 76-ball-90 was at best a good innings but the sparkling knock was never going to help India win the contest.

Adding insult to injury the was Pandya's frank admission that he is not bowling anytime soon and even if he rolls his arm over, it is likely to be in 20-over World Cups.

So with no back-up all-rounders or a plan B in place, India will have to execute their plan A perfectly.

That leaves Kohli with bowlers who can't bat and a top-order where none can bowl. Kohli did bowl an over or two but that is history as far as the skipper is concerned.

With Australia's top order firing Jasprit Bumrah and company will have no option but to pick up the pieces and give a better account of themselves on a strip that promises to be a belter.

— *PTI*

India captain Virat Kohli (right) talks with teammates before the start of their one-day international match against Australia at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Friday. — *AFP*

## Smith finds his rhythm back

**Sydney, Nov. 28:** Australian batsman Steve Smith found his "rhythm" with a cracking hundred against India in the first ODI but admitted that there wasn't much pressure unlike other times.

Smith struck 105 off 66 balls in Australia's lopsided 66-run win in the first ODI.

"I just found a nice rhythm again," Smith said while crediting his skipper Aaron Finch for setting up a nice platform with a 156-run opening stand with David Warner.

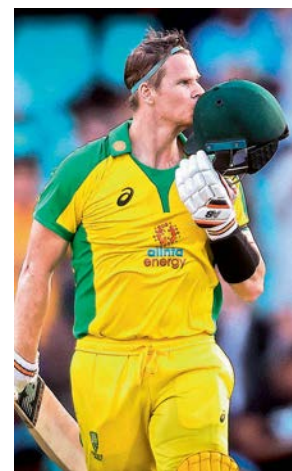
"It was just see-ball, hit-ball and obviously the foundation had been set so I could be quite aggressive," Smith said.

Having found his "hands" as he had said prior to the match, Smith was happy that he could decide which bowlers to attack even though the entire Indian bowling line-up was at the receiving end of his onslaught.

"I picked my bowlers and where I wanted to hit them, and just played some good shots to the areas of my strengths."

By his own admission, the pressure was less unlike some other times when quick wickets have fallen around him.

"There wasn't a whole lot of pressure. Probably, at other times, when I have batted my best, it's been when the team has been under a bit of pressure and I have had to play almost



Steve Smith

an anchor role to help us get a total," he said.

Smith said that trying to switch from his natural style of building the innings to a more T20 friendly mode of power-hitting did affect his game.

"I haven't felt quite right for a while and maybe that's T20 cricket, trying to be a bit more powerful and probably not playing as much to my strengths as I'd like," Smith said.

What Smith did before this series was to get back to normal grip.

"So I've been getting myself back to my normal grip and finding it," he added.

The former skipper is hopeful that he can continue with his rich vein of form during the entire summer. — *PTI*



Former India off-spinner Archana Das of Hyderabad poses with her childhood coach K. Saibaba of the Sports Coaching Foundation in Masab Tank at her marriage to K. Abhishek Reddy, a software professional, at a hotel in Begumpet, Hyderabad, on Friday. Archana is now based in Mumbai where she works for the Western Railway.

## Hyderabad draw with Bengaluru

**Margao, Nov. 28:** Hyderabad FC settled for their second successive draw, a stalemate, in the Indian Super League, splitting points with Bengaluru FC at the Fatorda Stadium, here on Saturday.

Getting four points from two outings is best start in the league for Hyderabad.

However, it was a frustrating evening for Bengaluru FC, who are yet to taste a win this season.

The two sides showed attacking intent from the word go and BFC had their first attempt as early as the fifth minute. Ashique Kuruniyan tried his luck from a distance

but his effort took a deflection before being collected by Hyderabad custodian Subrata Paul.

Hyderabad's adamant defending frustrated Bengaluru, who struggled to take the ball up to their attacking trio of Sunil Chhetri, Kristian Opseth and Udanta Singh. Trying to find an alternative, Bengaluru engaged in long-range shots, which proved futile.

Despite making a half-time change, replacing Kristian Opseth with Dimas Delgado, Bengaluru had nothing different to offer as their opponents continued to dominate the play. — *PTI*

## BELIHU, GEMECHU EYE DOUBLE DELIGHT

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 28

Two-time winners Andamlak Belihu and Tsehay Gemechu are not only ready to defend their titles, but are also determined to break the course record this year at the Delhi Half Marathon here on Sunday.

Ethiopia's Belihu will be bidding for his third successive crown but the course he will cover is radically different to the one he conquered in 2018 and 2019.

Belihu's compatriot Gemechu rewrote the women's course record when winning in both 2018 and 2019 and it currently stands at 66:00. She is raring to go even faster this year.

BAPINEEDU B PRESENTS  
SVCC  
SRI VENKATESWARA CINE CHITRA LLP

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