

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
KARIMNAGAR | FRIDAY | 23 OCTOBER 2020



NATION | 4

Navy gets 1st batch of women pilots



WORLD | 5

Senate panel nod to Amy's SC nomination

SPORTS | 8

Bayern off the blocks in Champs League



WEATHER

Max: 32°C
Min: 21°C
RH: 63%
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Cloudy sky. Thunder showers likely. Max/Min temp. 33/22 °C

COVID-19 CUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+51,807)	(+638)
77,56,206	1,17,277

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+1,579)	(+5)
TS: 2,27,580	1,292
(+3,620)	(+16)
AP: 7,96,919	6,524

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

4,18,28,671

DEATHS

11,40,016

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES

213

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana

Tithi: Nija Ashwayuja Shuddha Saptami till 6.58 am

Star: Uttarashada till 1.30 am (Saturday)

Variyam: 9.10 am to 10.48 am; 5.41 am to 7.22 am (Saturday)

Durmuhurtam: 8.33 am to 9.19 am; 12.23 pm to 1.09 pm

Rahukalam: 10.30 am to 12 noon

HUIRI CALENDAR

Rabbi-ul Awwal 5, 1442 AH

PRAYERS

Fajar: 5.10 am

Zohar: 12.10 pm

Asar: 4.12 pm

Maghrib: 5.55 pm

Isha: 7.03 pm

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.11 AM

SUNSET TODAY 5.49 PM

MOONSET NA

MOONRISE 12.39 PM

COUNTER POINT

Please vote for me... I have less criminal cases than other candidates!

SHORT TAKES

No foolproof anonymity: Justice

New Delhi: Retired Justice B N. Srikrishna on Thursday said anonymous data is not foolproof and can be de-anonymised in future. Legislation can only make entities de-anonymising the data answerable to the law, he added. Justice Srikrishna headed the committee on framing data protection norms, set up by the Ministry of Electronics and IT. The government in the draft personal data protection bill has favoured processing of anonymous data to protect privacy of individuals. He further said the personal data protection bill is before a joint parliamentary committee and it will be good if it comes out soon. "What is thought to be anonymous can be de-anonymised tomorrow. Therefore, there is no foolproof anonymity. All that law can say is take it as anonymous, if you do de-anonymity, identify the person, then you will be answerable to law," Srikrishna said at a FICCI event.

INSIDE

STATE... PAGE 2

Nayani cremated with state honours

CITY... PAGE 3

Kinnerasani eco-tourism project at a standstill

Stealth submarine



Anti Submarine Warfare Stealth Corvette, *INS Kavaratti* decked up during the Commissioning Ceremony at Naval Dockyard in Visakhapatnam on Thursday. — Eastern Naval Command

Kidnapped 9-year-old boy from Warangal murdered

ANUDEEP CEREMILLA | DC WARANGAL, OCT. 22

The mystery of the missing nine-year-old boy, Kusuma Deekshith Reddy, came to an end on a heart-rending note after his charred remains were found by the Mahbubabad police on the Danamaiah gutta on the outskirts of Mahbubabad town.

The deceased is the son of a local TV journalist, Ranjith Reddy, who works for a vernacular news channel and Vasantha, currently residing in Krishna colony. Revealing the identity of the kidnapper, superintendent of police N. Koti Reddy said Deekshith was picked up by Manda Sagar (23), who was Reddy's neighbour in his native village, Shanigapuram. According to the SP, on

● **THE DECEASED** is son of local TV journalist Ranjith Reddy who works for a news channel

October 18, Deekshith was playing outside his house in the evening when Sagar went up to the boy and asked him to get on his bike on some pretext.

Being acquainted with Sagar, whom Deekshith used to see during his visits to his grandmother's house in Shanigapuram, the boy agreed to go with him.

Sagar took him to the outskirts of the town where he hid the boy after sedating him. He later made the ransom call to the boy's mother through an internet call.

However, being afraid that he might be caught and unable to handle the boy alone, Sagar strangled

him first before burning his body with petrol on the same day.

Meanwhile, he continued contacting the family through internet calls for the ransom. He demanded the money be brought to Mudukotla area on Wednesday afternoon.

Hoping to bring back their child home again, Ranjith and Vasantha took the money to the said area, even as the police monitored them from the surroundings.

When the accused demanded to see the cash through skype video call, his phone number was revealed and he was traced.

About 30 suspects were interrogated in the case and roped by task force teams from Warangal and Hyderabad, apart from the cybercrime teams.

CENTRE TO TALK TO STATES ON SCIENCE POLICY

New Delhi, Oct. 22: Union minister Harsh Vardhan on Thursday held detailed consultations with the states for the formulation of Science Technology and Innovation Policy (STIP) 2020, the Department of Science and Technology said.

Addressing a virtual meeting with the state ministers and senior officials of the Ministry of Science and Technology, Vardhan said the policy aims to re-energise the country's scientific ecosystem and redefine the priorities and sectoral focus so as to directly translate efforts in S&T for the benefit of the society and economy. — PTI

TRP probe: Lens on financial deals

Mumbai, Oct. 22: The Mumbai police have started scrutinising the financial transactions of five channels, which were allegedly involved in fake Television Ratings Points (TRP) scam, an official said on Thursday.

The financial transactions that took place in the last five years are being examined, he said. "The Crime Intelligence Unit (CIU) of the Mumbai crime branch has started the process of scrutinising the financial transactions of these five channels that happened in the last five years," the official said.

It will also examine their revenue sources, he said. "During the investi-

gation conducted so far, it has been observed that there was a sudden spike in the number of transactions," he said, without giving any further details.

The police will also slap sections related to forgery in the case, including IPC sections 408, 463, 465 and 468, he said.

Meanwhile, the police recorded the statement of CFO of Republic TV channel S. Sundaram and he will again be called on Friday. Executive editor Niranjan Narayanswamy will also be called for questioning, he said. The probe team has recorded the statement of Republic TV's distribution head Ghanshyam Singh in the case, he said. — PTI

Respect daughters as goddesses: PM

Recalls provision of death for offenders

RAJIB CHOWDHURI and ANIMESH SINGH | DC KOLKATA/NEW DELHI, OCT. 22

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday called upon people to "respect daughters like Goddess Durga" and urged all citizens to "stand by" women. His message comes after the rising cases of violence against women, including rape. This was the first time that Prime Minister Modi had inaugurated a Durga Puja in West Bengal.

Speaking after "virtually" inaugurating a Durga Puja organised by the BJP at the Eastern Zonal Cultural centre at Kolkata's Salt Lake area on Mahashasti, on Monday morning, Mr Modi said:



Narendra Modi

"In Bengal, Durga is welcomed and treated as a daughter. This philosophy is the basis of our spiritual consciousness. That is why we are taught to respect all daughters like Ma Durga. On the occasion of Navratri, she is worshipped. And Durga Puja is about worshipping women's power."

With Assembly elections in West Bengal just over five months away, the

PM's address was shown by the party on television screens in all 78,000 election booth areas across the state.

Mr Modi added: "Women's power always has the ability to beat evil. It is the responsibility of all to stand by it in an organised way. This is also the BJP's culture and determination. The government is alert about the security of women. Punishment for rape has been made a lot stricter. There is also a provision for the death penalty for offenders."

In his address, the PM at several points tried to speak in Bengali, with a Hindi accent, apparently to compete with the TMC's recent Bengali sub-regionalist campaign.

Crops worth ₹8,633 crore hit

S.A. ISHAQUI | DC HYDERABAD, OCT. 21

The state government informed the Central team that according to a preliminary assessment crop loss was estimated at ₹8633 crore and loss to roads was estimated to be around ₹222 crore.

Chief secretary Somesh Kumar, gave a powerpoint presentation on the extent of damage caused due to the floods in the state to a five-member inter-ministerial team led by Praveen Vasishtha, joint secretary, government of India, at BRKR Bhavan on Thursday.

While briefing the team on the relief and rehabilitation measures being taken by the state government in the affected areas, Kumar said the loss to GHMC was estimated to be around ₹567 crore.

■ **Page 2: Breach in 3 tanks led to massive loss**

INDIA TESTS NAG, ANTI-TANK GUIDED MISSILE

PAWAN BALI | DC NEW DELHI, OCT. 22

India on Thursday successfully carried out the final trial of the third-generation anti-tank guided missile "Nag", and it is ready for induction into the Indian Army.

It will now undergo production and may also be deployed soon in Ladakh, that could see tank action in case of a renewed confrontation with China.

India was looking for an indigenous anti-tank missile and depended on imports, such as Israel's "Spike" anti-tank guided missiles. Nag will fulfil that need.

The DRDO said Nag's final user trial was done at 6.45 am Thursday from the Pokhran range. It said the missile was integrated with the actual warhead and a tank target was kept at a designated range. The missile hit the target accurately defeating the armour.

The missile has "fire and forget" "top attack" capabilities with passive homing guidance to defeat all main battle tanks that have composite and reactive armour.

HOME MINISTRY EASES OCI, PIO VISA CURBS

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, OCT. 22

The Union home ministry announced on Thursday that it had decided to restore with immediate effect all existing visas, except in the electronic, tourist and medical categories, almost eight months after being suspended following the coronavirus outbreak and the imposition of a nationwide lockdown.

The MHA said it was giving permission to all Overseas Citizen of India and Person of Indian Origin card holders and other foreigners to visit India for any purpose, except on a tourist visa. This will enable foreigners to visit India for business, conferences, jobs, studies and research. "The government will make a graded relaxation in visa and travel restrictions for foreigners who wish to enter or leave India," the MHA order said. If the validity of such visas has expired, fresh visas can be obtained from the Indian mission or post concerned.

EVERYONE MUST HELP REBUILD HYD, SAYS KISHAN

IREDDY SRINIVAS REDDY | DC HYDERABAD, OCT. 22

Minister of state for home affairs G. Kishan Reddy expressed worry over encroachments in Hyderabad. Saying that the brand image of the city has taken a beating after the rains, he added that everyone has a responsibility to protect it. "However, decisive action must be taken to help people in distress," he said.

On Thursday, Reddy visited Manikeshwarnagar and Alugadda Bhavi in the Tarnaka and Mettuguda divisions of the Secunderabad Assembly constituency that were severely affected by the recent rains. He interacted with the residents to understand their plight and assured them of relief.

During his visit to Ankamma basti, Shyamalakunta and nearby areas in Sanathnagar, he assessed the damage and urged party workers to assist those distressed.

Visiting the flood-hit areas in Secunderabad, Nampally and Amberpet of Secunderabad Parliamentary constituencies, Reddy assured assistance to the affected people.

■ **Page 2: Minister tells TS to take tough decisions**

BREATHE | EASY Pollution Control Board checks for chemicals like sulphur dioxide released due to garbage burning

Air quality in AP improves after prolonged lockdown

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 22

Ambient air quality in 15 major cities/towns in Andhra Pradesh was found to be relatively good when compared with last year, thanks to the lockdown due to Covid-19 and the incessant rainfall.

The Andhra Pradesh Pollution Control Board (APPCB) monitors ambient air quality on a regular basis in major cities/towns from January to December every year.

The air quality is checked in Srikakulam, Vizi-anagaram, Visakhapatnam, Kakinada, Rajahmundry, Eluru, Vijayawada, Guntur, Ongole, Nellore, Kurunool, Tirupati, Chittoor, Kadapa and Anantapur.

The APPCB looks for the presence of chemicals like sulphur dioxide which gets released into the atmosphere due to burning of garbage; nitrogen dioxide from burning of municipal solid waste and vehicular emissions; ammonia gas from municipal drains and public toilets and carbon

● **THE APPCB**, based on a direction from the NGT in a case, came up with an action plan on how to control air pollution and entrusted a specific task to each department

monoxide, mainly from exhaust pipes from vehicles.

Based on the direction from the national green tribunal in a case, the APPCB has come up with an action plan on how to control air pollution and entrusted a specific task to each

department to implement it. Accordingly, the APPCB has taken up the responsibility to monitor ambient air quality by setting up such stations on a permanent basis in some municipal areas in the state while municipal bodies have been asked to take up clearing of garbage at public places and ensure no open burning of garbage.

They are also asked to clear roads of dust and take up construction of cement-concrete pavements to avoid dust rising into the atmosphere. The road

transport authorities are asked to keep tab on vehicles causing pollution by regularly checking their emissions to measure pollution levels. They are also supposed to keep strict check on whether vehicles have pollution under check certificates. The police department too has its role to play in regulating vehicular traffic to avoid traffic jams so that the emissions from vehicles are not concentrated in only some areas causing air pollution.

APPCB authorities main-

tain that the data generated for ambient air quality for 10 particulate matter shows 52 micrograms per meter cube on an average from January to August, 2020, while 62 for the corresponding period in 2019, indicating that the air quality has improved.

The other reasons for such a remarkable change in ambient air quality in the state is the imposition of lockdown in several phases to contain the spread of Covid-19 and also the incessant rainfall. The centre-imposed lockdown

regulated public movement, suspension of all public transport, people staying indoors, reduced movement of vehicles and people avoiding mass social gatherings, all of which improved air quality. Closure of several manufacturing and reduction units also helped improve air quality.

Similarly, the prolonged spell of rainfall, despite the damage, helped maintain air quality with no major dust particles and other pollutants entering the atmosphere.

SHORT TAKES BREACH IN 3 TANKS LED TO MASSIVE LOSS

From Page 1

Breaches to three major tanks coupled with flooding in Musi river resulted in low-level areas being inundated.

Stating that damage to public infrastructure was enormous and the state government had already made a preliminary assessment of the damage, Kumar said that the state government has released ₹550 crore for immediate flood relief. He explained that food packets were supplied to more than two lakh people and one kilogram of bleach and three lakh chlorine tablets were supplied to affected people. He said that 15 sub stations which were submerged were brought into service within 48 hours.

Officials of the irrigation, municipal administration, R&B, GHMC, water board, agriculture, energy and panchayat raj interacted with the central team and gave an overview of the loss incurred in the state.

COPS SEIZE ₹34K FROM DUO IN BETTING RACKET

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT. 22

West Zone Task Force busted a cricket betting racket, apprehended two persons, and seized ₹34,500 from them.

On a tipoff, task force sleuths raided a house in Dilawarun area of Upper Dhoolpet under Mangalhat police station limits and arrested Harpal Singh and Anil Singh. The duo was taking bets over cellphones.

QUARRY OWNERS FLOUT POLLUTION & MINES ACT

PULI SHARATH KUMAR
KARIMNAGAR, OCT. 22

The granite quarry operators in erstwhile Karimnagar district are flouting, the 'Pollution and Mines Act' norms. By excavating granite, they are destroying the environment but, are also illegally transporting raw granite from the district to other parts of the country without paying tax, causing losses to the state government.

Several hillocks in Karimnagar, are host a variety of plants, wildlife, perennial streams and natural tanks. But, in the revenue records, these hillocks are classified as unassessed wastelands making it easy for granite quarry operators to obtain leases to quarry the stone.

Tan brown granite, a black-brown granite speckled with brownish-red mineral crystal, is found in abundance in Karimnagar. This granite is in great demand not only in the country but also in the international markets and is used widely in flooring and kitchen counters. The monthly production of the granite in the district is around 25,000 cubic metres. One cubic metre of this granite is worth between ₹20,000 to ₹25,000 in the international market. The demand for this granite has led to indiscriminate quarrying.

It is the mandal revenue officer, the tahsildar who inspect the sites and issue no-objection certificates (NOCs) to these quarries. However, some quarry owners, using political influence obtained NOCs in protected areas in the reserved forest and carrying out their mining operations causing harm, to wildlife and the villagers living in surrounding areas.

Despite the natural wealth of the state being exploited the State Mines and Geology Department granted leases to about 634 quarries for 20 years. Of which 364 permissions for granite quarries and 279 permissions for stone crushing units spread over 20,234 hectares in the district.

These quarries have destroyed fertile paddy and maize fields, and mango orchards surrounding these hillocks. The lifeline of Karimnagar district, the Manair river along with its tributaries flows through these hillocks.

The waste released by these quarries and stone crushing units has polluted the water collecting in these natural tanks, present in the region.

Following surveillance by the vigilance and enforcement authorities, the granite quarry operators increased tax payments from ₹29 crores in 2009 to ₹150 crores in 2012.

But after the formation of a separate Telangana state, some political leaders exerted pressure on the mines department, because of which many quarry owners got exempted from paying full tax to the government.

Central team takes stock of flood damages

Residents apprise team members of the agony they suffered for the past 10 days and relief measures

MADDY DEESKHITH | DC
HYDERABAD, OCT. 22

A five-member central team, led by Praveen Vasishtha, joint secretary, inspected various flood-affected areas in the city to assess the damage caused at Falaknagar road over-bridge (RoB), Al-Jubail colony, Ghazi Millat colony, Kandikal gate main road and Hafeez Baba nagar.

The teams visited all submerged colonies, houses, inspected damaged roads, bridges, breached lakes and examined restoration work. Breaches to three major tanks coupled with flooding in Musi river resulted in the low-level areas being inundated, officials told the central team. The state government had already made a preliminary assessment and the loss to Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) is estimated at around ₹567 crore.



The five-member team from Delhi assesses the damage caused due to floods in the city on Thursday. The team visited many of the affected areas including Al-Jubail Colony in Falaknagar which was submerged. — P. SURENDRA

ated at around ₹567 crore.

During their visit near the damaged RoB at Chandrayagutta, the team inspected restoration work at the bridge, debris piled in the nalas and its

removal. The teams were shocked to see the water entering into the first floor of several houses and residents still under submergence. They interacted with the

residents who explained the horror they have suffered for the past 10 days. They said that the houses and walls of structures were weakened due to the presence of water for over

a week. GHMC commissioner, Lokesh Kumar, along with chief engineer, Mohammed Ziauddin, informed the team about the RoB which got damaged.

The officials said that the Palle Cheruvu was breached and due to heavy inflows from the lake, the carriage nala, which is only seven metres, overflowed and water entered in to Al-Jubail colony, Ghazi Millat colony and other areas, leading to submergence and causing major damage in the area. The central teams also inspected damages caused to properties, household articles, roads and storm water drains.

The team visited Kandikal gate, inspected restoration work in nalas and at Phoolbagh, Chandrayagutta and interacted with flood-affected victims, while Hyderabad MP, Asaduddin

Owaisi, apprised them of the extent of damage and requested the centre to release more funds to take up relief work.

The team visited Balapur, Hafeez Baba nagar, where due to the breach of Palle Cheruvu and Gurram Cheruvu, water from Balapur Cheruvu overflowed, houses were inundated and compound walls collapsed.

Vasishtha suggested taking up strengthening the lakes as a permanent solution.

GHMC officials apprised the team that Hafeez Baba nagar was inundated due to the breach of Gurram Cheruvu, water flow was three-four metres above road level and silt accumulated upto 1-1.5 mts. GHMC officials said that 171 JCBs, 627 tractors and 30 tippers are engaged to clear the debris and silt.

The team visited Gurram Cheruvu where the breach

occurred and inspected temporary repair work. Irrigation engineers at the spot apprised them of the precautionary measures taken for uninterrupted supply of drinking water and as per recommendations of the central vigilance wing restoration works will be taken up.

Kumar informed the team that due to the breach to Pallecheruvu and incessant rains, flood water entered Balapur, Hafeezbabanagar areas and with the efforts of official machinery after three days the intensity of flood brought under control.

The team visited Appacheruvu, the nala at Gaganpahad and inspected breach restoration work.

With the breach to Appacheruvu and flood in the nala, many houses in Gaganpahad were inundated and many vehicles washed away.

Floods and aftermath



Over 2,000 houses downstream of Osmansagar got inundated as the reservoir reached its full capacity following inflows from upstream, in Hyderabad on Thursday. — DC



With drainages blocked due to overflowing of floodwater, pedestrians walk in the middle of the road in Punjagutta on Thursday. — R. PAVAN

MoS G. Kishan Reddy interacts with the flood-hit people in Mettuguda area on Thursday. He also toured other areas in Secunderabad — DEEPAK



Sadhu Vaswani mission joins flood relief activities

SANJAY SAMUEL
PAUL | DC
HYDERABAD, OCT. 22

Relief operations still continue for the flood-affected in several areas of Hyderabad.

Sadhu Vaswani mission wanted to support the victims whose houses have been devastated by the floods. On Wednesday, they supplied a thousand lunch boxes in the Rasoolpur flood-affected area. As per requirement, they will be continuing it further. Grocery kits consisting of 10kgs rice, five kgs wheat, two kgs cooking oil, one kg sugar, tea powder, chilli powder, turmeric and salt were also distributed.

Mission secretary, Heera

● REGULAR ACTIVITIES of the mission involve 'safedposh' (white collar). Senior citizens in need of supplies and underprivileged are in the same boat. The mission each month gives such people a cash voucher of ₹1,000 so that they can buy medicines or any personal requirements.

Rupani, said that from Friday onwards the distributions will take place in the areas of Rasoolpura, Chandrayagutta, Nimboliadda, Bhramanvadi, Chedarghat and a few other areas.

The mission was found-

ed by J.P. Vaswani, soon after the independence and took up the challenge to educate the underprivileged. Other focus areas are charity and health care.

Regular activities of the mission involve 'safedposh' (white collar). Senior citizens in need of supplies as well some underprivileged who are in the same boat.

The mission each month gives such people a cash voucher of ₹1000 so that they can buy medicines or any personal requirements.

The Sadhu Vaswani international school, run by the mission, has 400 underprivileged students who are given free education.

Asad appraises team of damages

ATHER MOIN | DC
HYDERABAD, OCT. 22

Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi on Thursday appraised the Centre-deputed inter-ministerial team that was in town to assess the damages due to incessant rain and inundation in Hyderabad.

The team, headed by

Joint Secretary Ministry of Home Affairs Praveen Vashista, visited Hafiz Baba Nagar, one of the worst hit areas in Old City. Owaisi gave all the details about the areas that were badly affected following floods and the causes that led to inundation and damages. He informed them that

many families had lost their entire household articles.

The team includes R B Kaul from Finance Ministry, K Manoharan from the Agriculture Ministry, S K Kushawaha from Road Transport and Highways and M Raghuram from Water Resources Ministry.

TS tells HC steps taken to prevent illegal plots

VUJINI
VAMSHIDHARA | DC
HYDERABAD, OCT. 22

Defending its stand on prohibiting registrations of unauthorised plots and layouts in the state, the Telangana government submitted to the High Court that it took this decision to prevent developers from coming up with unauthorised plots in the future.

Arvind Kumar, principal secretary of the municipal administration and urban development department, explained the reasons why the government prohib-

ed the registrations of unapproved plots or buildings and did not grant building permissions on unapproved plots.

Kumar filed the affidavit on behalf of the government, which is respondent in the PIL filed by Congress party MP, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, who challenged the GO for LRS 2020 and stopped the registrations.

The government said that the LRS scheme had been implemented several times earlier for solving the problem of common people who unknowingly

bought plots in unauthorised layouts. But taking advantage of this, some developers continue to build on unapproved layouts and plots. To put the stop to this practice, the government has taken a decision to prohibit registrations of plots that did not have authorisation, Kumar said in the affidavit.

Explaining the introduction of LRS, 2020, the government said that it was to facilitate the implementation of the master plan and improve the circulation of patterned roads etc.

Govt teachers, pensioners fume over 1-day salary cut

HARLEEN
MINOCHA | DC
HYDERABAD, OCT. 22

Aikya Vedika, a teachers' forum, has expressed outrage against the state government's announcement of one-day wage donation from government teachers and pensioners, in the name of JAC. The union said that no consent of the employees was taken before the decision was made.

Government employees have argued that a JAC does not exist in the state. They claim that all that

exists is an Aikya Vedika of employees, teachers, pensioners, public sector and contract employees. The statement by leaders of some unions without consulting Aikya Vedika is invalid, they said.

Ch Ravi, General Secretary, TSUTE, said that based on a letter by just some representatives, the state government cannot forcibly cut wages. They further added that anyone wishing to make a donation in response to the call by the Chief Minister can voluntarily send it to CMRF. In fact, a lot of gov-

ernment employees are already making donations voluntarily towards flood relief, he said.

The Aikya Vedika Steering Committee has written to the Chief Secretary and to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Finance seeking to direct the DDOs to impose a one-day pay cut, only with the consent of the employees, teachers and pensioners. The letter was signed by representatives of the Pensioners' JAC, Employees union representatives, and USPC.

MASS | LEADER Admitted a week ago for post Covid-19 complications, extensive lung damage

Nayani cremated with state honours

S.A. ISHAQUI | DC
HYDERABAD, OCT 22

Noted trade unionist, mass leader and former home minister, Nayani Narasimha Reddy, passed away at a private hospital in the late night of Wednesday, following a prolonged illness. He was 80. He is survived by his wife, son and daughter.

Reddy suffered from pneumonia and other health complications after recovering from Covid-19 about three weeks ago. According to Apollo hospitals, Reddy passed away at 12.25 am. He was admitted a week ago for post-Covid-19 complications with extensive lung damage.

The first home minister of Telangana after its for-

mation, Reddy was born to a farmer couple in Neredugommu of Devarakonda mandal in erstwhile Nalgonda district.

Inspired by his father, Deva Reddy, an active member of the socialist party founded by Ram Manohar Lohia, Reddy also joined the party after completing his HSC in 1958 and took part in various agitations.

Deva Reddy was shot dead during the police action for the merger of Hyderabad state with the Indian Union in 1948. His son started off as a labour union leader in VST industries. He continued as honorary president of Hindu Mazdoor Sangh.

Active part of the separate Telangana movement between 1969 and 1971,

Reddy was imprisoned several times during this period. He also fought against the Emergency imposed in 1975 and was jailed for nearly one-and-a-half years.

After Emergency, Reddy joined the Janata party and in 1978 elections, he got elected to the state assembly from Musheerabad, a constituency he went on to represent thrice.

He also served as the member of legislative council (MLC) from the Governor's quota whose term expired in April this year.

Continuing in the Janata party till 1999, Reddy then joined the Telugu Desam and was active in the second spell of the separate Telangana movement led



Nayani Narasimha Reddy

by current Chief Minister, K. Chandrashekar Rao, in 2001. Reddy was one of the founding members of TRS in 2001 and since the launch of TRS, he has been a close associate of Rao's.

He continued in the TRS politburo till his last breath. When TRS entered into an alliance with Congress in the 2004

Assembly elections, he served as the minister for technical education in Y. S. Rajasekhara Reddy's cabinet. Reddy became the first home minister in the newly formed TS in Rao's cabinet and remained in the post till the 2018.

Rao, Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan, TPCC president, N. Uttam Kumar Reddy and BJP state president, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, ministers and leaders of political parties condoled the death of Narsimha Reddy.

The last rites of Narasimha Reddy were performed with state honours at Mahaprasthanam in Jubilee Hills in the afternoon of Thursday. Several ministers, including IT and industries min-

ister, K. T. Rama Rao and leaders of the TRS and other political parties paid tributes.

INTUC national president, G. Sanjeeva Reddy condoled the death of Narasimha Reddy said that he was an incredible fighter for trade unions and had seen a lot of challenges in his life. While conveying his deepest condolences to the bereaved family members, Reddy said that the former home minister spent most of his life for the cause of labour and unionism. He will always be remembered for his trade-mark moustache as well as his unique attire of white dhoti along with a white khadi shirt and a dark half-coat on it and the values he represented.

MINISTER TELLS STATE TO TAKE TOUGH DECISIONS

From Page 1

Saying that strict measures should be taken to prevent the capture of rivers, lakes and ponds in Hyderabad, Reddy said that the state government should hold a meeting with all political parties and experts and take tough decisions.

In a separate video message, Reddy has appealed for safe and proper celebration of Dasara and Navratr. 'As we are all aware, we are living in unusual times imposed by Covid-19. As we continue to fight this pandemic and save millions of lives, it is important to for all of us to be mindful of the existing Covid-19 norms and safety protocols. The annual Bathukamma utsavalu celebrated in Amberpet is an event that I look forward to every year, to join my constituents in all the festivities,' said Reddy.

However, due to the restrictions on the assembly of persons, social distancing norms, and other hygiene protocols in effect, the celebrations of Bathukamma at Amberpet grounds will not be celebrated this year in the interest of public safety and health. Wishing everyone a joyful and blissful Bathukamma at their respective homes, Reddy said, 'I hope that all of us get together to have a glorious celebration next Dasara, in the midst of great culturally vibrant events and colourful flowers that form the Bathukamma.'

OTHER STORIES

CIGARETTES,
ZARDA WORTH
₹8 LAKH SEIZEDDC CORRESPONDENT
NIZAMABAD, OCT. 22

The Task Force police conducted raids in Gunj area in Nizamabad on Thursday and seized banned cigarettes and zarda worth ₹8 lakh and handed them over to the I-Town police. The police arrested, Rafiq, 38, a kirana shop owner from Nizamabad, and MD Shaif, 30, from RK kirana shop. Task Force inspector Shakir Ali and his team carried out the raids.

PD ACT INVOKED
AGAINST THREE
ROWDY-SHEETERSDC CORRESPONDENT
NIZAMABAD, OCT. 22

Commissioner of Police Kartikeya on Thursday issued orders and invoked the Preventive Detention (PD) Act against three rowdy-sheets in Nizamabad.

The accused, Arif, Osman and Ibrahim Choch committed various crimes under I, V and VI-Town police stations limits in the last one year.

Nizamabad North Rural CI Srinath Reddy said that the trio was involved in civil disputes and was disturbing law and order. Two attempt to murder cases are also registered against them, he added.

Police opened rowdy-sheets against them in September. In view of their criminal background, police invoked the PD Act.

₹300 CRORE
SOUGHT FOR
ROAD REPAIRSDC CORRESPONDENT
KHAMMAM, OCT. 22

TRS leader in the Lok Sabha, Nara Nageswara Rao inspected the roads at Penuballi built by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) on Thursday. The heavy rains damaged the roads. Vehicle drivers, particularly lorry drivers, complained about the difficulties in manoeuvring the potholes.

Mr Nageswara Rao asked the NHAI officials to sanction ₹300 crores to repair the National Highway roads in Khammam and Bhadrachalam districts. NHAI officials informed that an estimate report about the repairs is sent to the Central government, who has yet to revert.

Mr Nageswara Rao asked the NHAI officials to send the proposals to him, and he would ask the Centre to release the funds. He said, "The number of accidents due to the potholes on the roads has increased. The vehicle drivers are complaining, that they have to often repair their vehicles. I too was surprised while travelling on the route, the condition of the road."

TS REGISTERS
1,456 NEW CASES,
FIVE DEATHSKANIZA GARARI | DC
HYDERABAD, OCT. 22

Due to festive season and declining trend of Coronavirus in Telangana, health authorities have in the latest round tested only 38,565 samples for the virus. 1,456 of these samples turned out to be positive. With this, the total number of Covid-19 positive cases in the state has reached 2,27,580. There have been five new deaths, which has taken the death toll in TS to 1,292.

Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation reported 254 new cases. Ranga Reddy and Medchal Malkajgiri had 98 cases. Rural areas are seeing a decline in new cases.

Skype call helped trace
out boy's kidnapper

Accused used high-tech mobile applications to evade arrest

ANUDEEP
CEREMILLA | DC
WARANGAL, OCT. 22

Manda Sagar, who kidnapped the nine-year-old, Kusuma Deekshith Reddy, for ransom, used high-tech mobile applications and evaded being seen by CCTV cameras while carrying out his crime.

Mahbubabad superintendent of police, N. Koti Reddy, said the accused prepared a plan, conducted a reconnaissance of the locality and marked a route map which did not have CCTV cameras.

He made internet calls to keep his identity hidden from the police. The VPN call shows the location of the person as elsewhere, in another country.

As a result, the police were unable to find him. Despite using the services of the cybercrime police, the accused could not be found for four days even after he called the boy's family 14 times.

However, when he demanded that the parents bring the ransom amount to Mudukotla area on Wednesday afternoon, he did not turn up.

He called them again by evening and wanted to see the cash through Skype video call for confirmation. The Skype account being associated with his mobile number made it easy for the police to locate him and take him into custody. He confessed to his crime and revealed the details and also the



Above: Police walk towards the crime scene at Danamaiah gutta. Left: CCTV footage grab, shows Manda Sagar taking Deekshith on his bike.



● THE SKYPE account being associated with his mobile number made it easy for the police to locate him and take him into custody.

location of the dead child's body. The devastated family

conducted the child's final rites at Shanigapuram on Thursday evening.



Kusuma Deekshith Reddy



Manda Sagar

Khammam corporation
gets two new DRF teamsDC CORRESPONDENT
KHAMMAM, OCT. 22

After the recent havoc caused by the heavy rains in Telangana state, the government has set up a two Disaster Response Force (DRF) in the Khammam Municipal Corporation.

Each DRF team has 10 personnel and are available 24x7. They kicked into action on Thursday, when they received a call about some fallen trees on Depot road.

They reached the spot within minutes and removed the trees.

The recent heavy rains resulted in many tanks breaching leaving many areas across various municipalities inundated. In Khammam, the Munner river flooded colonies from Danavaigudem to Prakashnagar.

As the corporations did not have disaster management teams, they found it difficult to rescue the people stranded in the flooded areas. Many places boats were required to help in the rescue operations. But, with not enough boats, the state had to reach out for help to

Andhra Pradesh for boats. In this context, the state government decided to set up the DRF team.

Khammam Municipal Corporation commissioner Anurag Jayanti said that the Corporations felt the need to set up a Disaster Response Force (DRF).

"The DRF teams are trained to rescue people caught under debris in case of a house collapse, remove fallen trees, shift people stranded in floods, and assist at accident sites", he said, adding that they will respond to any disasters.



The members of the newly established Disaster Response Force (DRF) personnel remove waste piled on the road due to the heavy rains at various places in the limits of Khammam Municipal Corporation on Thursday. — DECCAN CHRONICLE

Farmers violate prohibitory
orders, stage massive protestsNARENDER
PULLOOR | DC
NIZAMABAD/KAMAREDDY,
OCT. 22

Distressed farmers violated prohibitory orders issued by the police on Thursday and staged protests in Nizamabad and Kamareddy districts demanding Minimum Support Price (MSP) for maize and paddy.

They staged a rasta roko on National Highway 44 at Tekrial crossroads in Kamareddy. As a result, the vehicular traffic on Kanyakumari to Varanasi highway came to a halt for nearly three hours.

A tense situation prevailed during the farmers' protests. Police personnel in large numbers were present to avoid any untoward incident taking place during the protests.

The BJP and the Bharatiya Janata Kisan Morcha called for protests in Nandipet mandal headquarters on Thursday demanding purchasing centres for maize and MSP for paddy.

Because of Covid-19 pandemic, the police commissioner and District Additional Magistrate, Kartikeya had issued prohibitory orders on Thursday in Nandipet.

BJP activists along with farmers from Nandipet, Makloor and Armoor reached Nandipet and staged a protest at the Nandi statue.

BJP Armoor Assembly constituency in-charge P. Vinay Kumar Reddy demanded the state government open maize purchasing centres by the Markfed. Due to the unfavourable climatic



Farmers stage a rasta roko on National Highway-44 near Tekrial cross roads in Kamareddy district on Thursday, demanding MSP for maize and paddy.

— DECCAN CHRONICLE

● BJP ARMOOR Assembly constituency in-charge P. Vinay Kumar Reddy demanded the state government open maize purchasing centres by the Markfed.

● HE ASKED the state government to give ₹40,000 compensation per acre.

conditions, farmers have been facing problems such as traders buy crops at lower prices, he said and asked the state government to give ₹40,000 compensation per acre.

Meanwhile, in Kamareddy district hundreds of farmers under the aegis of Rythu Vedika, a non-political organisation, staged a protest at Tekrial crossroads on NH-44.

Farmers from Kamareddy, Ramareddy, Sadashivanagar, Gandhari, Tadwai, Rajampet, Machareddy mandals participated in the agitation. They demanded ₹1,869

MSP for maize and ₹2,000 for paddy. They also demanded that ex-gratia announced for farmers, who lost their crops due to the untimely rains.

Later, farmers reached the collectorate in a procession and handed over a memorandum to in-charge RDO Seenu Naik. Police tried hard to convince the agitating farmers, but they did not budge.

The farmers warned that they would continue their agitation if the government failed to rescue them. The Congress and the BJP leaders extended support to the farmers.

Fracture patients
delay their treatmentDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT. 22

More than 50 per cent of people who suffered from fractures since the Covid-19 lockdown have come late to hospitals leading to complications and mortality stated experts.

The delay has been due to a fear of Covid and now they are coming to hospitals with severe conditions.

Most of these cases are of people above 50 years of age. Sudden falls due to fragility, imbalance, slippery floors, neurological and hormonal problems leading to dizziness or partial blackout for a few seconds have caused the trauma.

Many experts state that there was data with regard to who suffered deaths at home. Even emergency care is being postponed

without realizing the consequences.

Dr Sree Sowjanya Patibanda, consultant emergency medicine physician at Continental Hospitals, says, "Due to delay there is a significantly higher mortality rate in elderly patients with fractures. Delay is also leading to permanent disability in them as they do not recover due to their age."

Elderly patients with fractures and medical comorbidities such as diabetes, hypertension, obesity and lung problems are found to be severely affected with infections and that reduces their functional ability to improve.

Due to restricted space at home too many senior citizens are having difficulty as they are confined to one place. They cannot walk inside the house and go outside.

MOCK ANTI-TERROR OPERATION AT RGIA

T.S.S. SIDDHARTH | DC
HYDERABAD, OCT. 22

The Airport Security Group (ASG) of Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) organised a full-fledged "Counter terrorist contingency" mock exercise on Wednesday at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA) around 11 am.

The operation was carried at the western departure ramp of the airport involving key airport stakeholders, apart from Octopus (Telangana Anti-Terrorist Squad) and local police. Close to 400 personnel from CISE, Octopus, Raxa (GHIAL security), Airport

Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF), GHIAL security team, terminal operations, Apollo Medical Centre and local police were involved in the high-decibel counter terrorist drill.

A mock terror situation was simulated as per SOPs with activation of relevant security protocols, leading to successful neutralisation of the mock terrorists.

RGIA comes under India's hypersensitive airports, such drills are conducted on a regular basis to ascertain the preparedness level of all key stakeholders at the airport in tandem with local authorities.

Kinnerasani eco-tourism project
at a standstill, ₹10.77 crore wastedRAVINDRA SESHU | DC
KHAMMAM, OCT. 22

The Kinnerasani eco-tourism project has come to a grinding halt. The project commenced five-and-a-half years ago, to promote tourism around Kinnerasani wildlife sanctuary.

However, there is a question mark on its completion.

TRS former MLA Jalagam Venkat Rao took a special interest in the project and approached the higher officials to sanction funds.

For this, the state and the Central governments allocated ₹10.77 crores for the project.

The Central government sanctioned, ₹3.24 crores under the Neeti Ayog and the state government allocated ₹7.53 crores.

Venkat Rao monitored the works of the project till 2018, as MLA of Kothagudem. But, in 2018 elections he lost, since then the project has been neglected.

Lavudiya Sankar, a youth, said, "The government should complete the project otherwise the funds spent so far will be wasted".

The project consists of reviving the Addhala Meda (Glass Building), built by the SCCL in 1975 but was bombed

by the Maoist, a Hairtha Hotel with 10 cottages at the Kothagudem Cross Roads. There were plans to run boat rides in the reservoir.

Bhadrachalam district is known for its dense forests, reservoirs and rivers. The Kinnerasani Wildlife sanctuary, the Kinnerasani reservoir and small islands are an attraction for nature-lovers. The government decided to develop Kinnerasani as an eco-tourism spot in the district. On its completion, hundreds of youth from the Agency would get employed either directly or indirectly.

THE BIG CAT Emphasis on breeding herbivores animals, improving water facilities

Focus on bringing tigers back to Mulugu forest

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, OCT. 22

Warangal and Karimnagar circle Chief Conservator of Forests MJ Akbar, on Thursday, stressed the need to intensify steps to save the tiger and make it reside back in the Mulugu forests again.

He spoke at a meeting organised by the forest officials in Mulugu, on the movement of tigers in the district and precautions for conservation.

He said that we should achieve complete control over the areas that the

● THE FOREST officials will monitor the tiger movement in Adilabad, Kothagudem, Khammam, Chhattisgarh and Sironcha areas of the Kawal Tiger Reserve, which is connected to the Mulugu forest area.

tiger roams. People in the vicinity of the forests, should be asked to remain alert and not go alone at night. If the tiger is harmed, we will take legal action, he said.

Vinod Kumar, field Director-Project Tiger, Kawal Tiger Reserve, said the tiger had come to Mulugu district after a gap of 10 years, because of the

forest conservation measures. They also discussed ways to protect the tigers and make them return to the forest.

Mr Vinod said, "Detecting the movements of tigers is being done with the help of the forest department as well as other departments. Issues such as breeding herbivores animals and improv-

ing water facilities are also needed."

The forest officials will monitor the tiger movement in Adilabad, Kothagudem, Khammam, Chhattisgarh and Sironcha areas of the Kawal Tiger Reserve, which is connected to the Mulugu forest area.

District Collector S. Krishna Aditya said it was a matter of pride that tigers are returning to the district. Necessary steps need to be put in place to keep the tigers here.

If proposals, about the funds required to over-

come the problems faced as part of the endeavour, are submitted, we will sanction them.

"There is a need to create awareness among the people, and for this, the district administration will assist in all possible ways," he said.

Superintendent of Police Sangram Singh G. Patil, Additional Collector (Local Bodies) Adarsh Surabhi, District Forest Officers of Mulugu, Mancherla, Warangal Urban, Bhupalpally, Peddapalli were present along with others.

SHORT TAKES

ANTI-TANK MISSILE
'INS KAVARATTI'
COMMISSIONEDDC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 22

The indigenously built anti-submarine warfare (ASW) stealth corvette "INS Kavaratti" was on Thursday commissioned into the Indian Navy by Army chief General Manoj Mukund Naravane at a ceremony held at Naval Dockyard in Visakhapatnam.

Having completed sea trials of all her equipment, Kavaratti has been commissioned as a fully combat-ready platform providing a boost to the anti-submarine warfare capability of the Indian Navy.

INS Kavaratti is the last of the four ASW Corvettes, indigenously designed by the Indian Navy's in-house organisation, Directorate of Naval Design and constructed by Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata. The ship has upto 90 per cent indigenous content.

INS Kavaratti is manned by a team comprising 12 officers and 134 sailors with Commander Sandeep Singh at the helm as her first Commanding Officer. The ship would be an integral part of the Eastern Fleet under the Eastern Naval Command.

The ship is propelled by four diesel engines. It has state of the art equipment and systems to fight in nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) warfare conditions. The weapons and sensors suite onboard is predominantly indigenous and showcases the nation's evolving capability in this niche area. Some of the major systems developed indigenously include combat management system, torpedo tube launchers and Infra-Red Signature Suppression System among others. In addition to its anti-submarine warfare capability, the ship also has a credible self defence capability and good endurance for long-range deployments.

The ship has enhanced stealth features resulting in reduced Radar Cross Section (RCS), which make her less susceptible to detection by the enemy.

Kavaratti takes her name from erstwhile INS Kavaratti which was an Arnala class missile corvette. The older Kavaratti distinguished herself by operating in support of was Bangladesh's liberation in 1971.

PROHIBITORY
ORDERS TO STOP
PUJA GATHERINGAKSHAYA KUMAR
SAHOO | DC
BHAVANIPATNA, OCT. 22

The Odisha government on Thursday decided to clamp prohibitory orders under Section 144 of Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) at Bhawanipata in Odisha's Kalahandi district to prohibit large public gatherings during the season of Durga Puja and Chhatar Jatra of Maa Manikeshwari and related pre and post rituals.

The decision was taken on Thursday to ensure strict implementation of the Covid-19 guidelines and avoid large congregations in the town, informed Kalahandi district collector Gavali Parag Harshad.

The administration also issued necessary guidelines to be followed during the festival to contain the spread of Coronavirus and ensure the safety of life of the general public.

An order issued in this regard mentioned that the prohibitory orders will remain in force from October 22 (midnight) till October 25 (midnight) to restrict the movement of the people.

BJP vows free Covid vaccine
for all in Bihar, 19 lakh jobs

Manifesto titled '5 sutras, 1 lakshya, 11 sankalp' unveiled by Nirmala Sitharaman

NAYEAR AZAD | DC
PATNA, OCT. 22

The BJP on Thursday promised free Coronavirus vaccine and 19 lakh jobs for youth in its manifesto for the Bihar Assembly elections. The manifesto titled '5 sutras, 1 Lakshya, 11 Sankalp' (5 sutras, one goal, 11 resolution) was unveiled by Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Patna.

"Bihar has set an example in its fight against Covid-19 pandemic. It is our resolve that as soon as the Coronavirus vaccine will be available after the approval by ICMR, we will provide free vaccination for people of Bihar", the BJP manifesto released on Thursday said.

The announcement has triggered a political row in the state ahead of polls as the Opposition coalition feels that the BJP is politicising the Covid-19 pandemic for electoral gains. The RJD leaders in Patna said that "the vaccine is for the entire nation and it should not be used as a political tool for winning elections".

Political analysts feel that the 19 lakh job announcement by the BJP could also be an attempt to divert public attention from RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav who has been holding the NDA responsible for unemployment in the state and also recently announced around 10 lakh government jobs for youth after winning the election.

Talking about the issue, BJP state president Sanjay Jaiswal said, "Those who are making big announcements before the polls will start thinking about their families once they are in power." The manifesto was released a day before Prime Minister Narendra



Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Tejashwi Yadav addresses an election campaign rally in Kaimur district on Thursday, ahead of Bihar Assembly polls.

— PTI

Modi is to begin his election campaign in Bihar.

The BJP also talks about turning Bihar into an IT hub, providing higher technical education including Engineering and Medical in Hindi to ensure that a large section of students benefits from the National Education Policy, better and stronger industrial base and making around one crore women self-reliant in the next five years if the NDA is voted to power.

"People of Bihar are politically sensitive and well informed. They are well aware and understand the promises political parties make. If anyone raises questions about our party's manifesto, we can answer them with confidence as we have fulfilled what we promised," Nirmala said.

Poll fever set to rise further with
Modi, Rahul campaigning today

Patna, Oct. 22: The political temperature in Bihar is set to go up substantially as Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi take a direct plunge in electioneering on Friday, addressing a series of rallies for their respective alliances in the state.

Prime Minister Modi will address three rallies — at Dehri-on Sone (Rohtas district), Gaya and Bhagalpur — to seek support for NDA nominees for different Assembly constituencies going to vote in the first phase on October 28.

According to BJP sources and reports from the districts on Thursday, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar will join Modi at the rallies in Dehri and Bhagalpur. In Gaya, JD(U) leader in the Lok Sabha Rajiv Ranjan Singh Lallan will share the dais with Modi along with former chief minister and president of Hindustani Awam Morcha Jitan Ram Manjhi.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is also slated to launch his campaign in Bihar elections on Friday. He will address two ral-

lies Friday — at Hisua in Nawada and Kahalgao in Bhagalpur district.

Sources in the Congress as well as in the RJD said that Tejashwi Yadav, the chief ministerial face of the Mahagathbandhan, will join Gandhi at Hisua, where Congress nominee Neetu Singh is taking on sitting BJP MLA Anil Singh. In Kahalgao, Rahul Gandhi will be accompanied by Shaktisinh Gohil and other senior party leaders, besides some district-level office bearers and candidates of the coalition partners. — PTI

Twitter puts Leh
in China, India
warns network

New Delhi, Oct. 22: India has warned Twitter over its location setting that showed Leh in China, saying any disrespect of the country's sovereignty and integrity is totally unacceptable.

In a strongly-worded letter, Ajay Sawhney, secretary in the ministry of electronics and information technology (MeitY), asked Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey to respect the country's sensitivities, sources in the ministry said.

Twitter came under heavy criticism and faced backlash from social media users after its geotagging feature displayed 'Jammu & Kashmir, People's Republic of China' in a live broadcast from Leh's Hall of Fame, a war memorial for fallen soldiers in the Union Territory of Ladakh.

This triggered angry responses from netizens who demanded that stringent action be initiated against the micro-blogging platform. Twitter, earlier this week, called it a techni-

cal issue which has been swiftly resolved.

Sources said Sawhney, in the letter sent on Wednesday, warned Twitter that any attempt to undermine the sovereignty and integrity of India will not just bring disrepute to the micro-blogging site but also raise questions about its neutrality and fairness as an intermediary.

Conveying strong disapproval of the government over misrepresentation of the map of India, Sawhney in his letter reminded Twitter that Leh is the headquarters of the Union Territory of Ladakh. And that both Ladakh as well as Jammu and Kashmir are integral and inalienable parts of India, governed by the Constitution of India. The government has asked Twitter to respect the sensitivities of Indian citizens and made it clear that any attempt by it to disrespect the sovereignty and integrity of India is totally unacceptable and unlawful. — PTI

SHIVRAJ TO
MOVE SC OVER
VIRTUAL RALLIESRABINDRA NATH
CHOUDHURY | DC
BHOPAL, OCT. 22

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Thursday cancelled his two poll meetings, scheduled to be held in Ashok Nagar district in the state, in the wake of restrictions imposed on election rallies by a local court in view of the pandemic.

Chouhan who had announced to challenge the directive by Gwalior bench of the MP High Court to nine district collectors in the state not to allow candidates or political parties to hold election rallies without compelling reasons, was scheduled to attend public meetings in Shadora and Bhandar in Ashok Nagar district ahead of the November 3 by-elections. "We will challenge the court's directive in the SC. A bizarre situation has emerged following the court order. In some parts of MP election rallies are allowed, while in some other parts they are not allowed. Even in Bihar, rallies and public meetings are held. There cannot be two laws in one land," he said.

PSU whistleblower to move HC against govt

DC CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI, OCT. 22

The whistleblower in the ₹500-crore cashew import scam involving public sector Kerala State Cashew Development Corporation (KSCDC) has said he will move the high court challenging the state government decision not to grant the investigation agency permission to prosecute the accused.

"It was shocking that the state government has denied the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) permission to prosecute the accused, including then KSCDC chairman and R. Chandrasekharan and managing director K.A. Ratheesh," Kadakampally Manoj, who in 2015 got the Kerala High Court order a

CBI probe into the allegations of corruption in the import of cashew by KSCDC, told *Deccan Chronicle* on Thursday. "I have discussed the matter with my lawyer. I am trying to get the relevant documents."

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said in press conference on Thursday said that the government conducted a detailed examination of the findings of the CBI and found them lacking in merit.

"It's not just about one or two points," he said in Thiruvananthapuram. "All the findings lacked merit. We cannot sanction prosecution based on such a report. There is nothing to implicate the people involved as the processes were continuation of what

had been going on in the company."

Manoj said the CBI had completed its investigations and written to the state government in May this year seeking the permission to go ahead with the prosecution.

"To the best of my understanding, the vigilance and the department of cashew has cleared the file for prosecution but the state cabinet decided otherwise," he said.

The case pertains to the import of cashew between 2005 and 2015 in which the corporation allegedly incurred a loss of over ₹1,200 crore.

Two committees, headed by senior IAS officers P.H. Kurian and Dr K.M. Abraham had found serious irregularities in the func-

tioning of the corporation, including the import deals. The committee headed by Kurian had even recommended summary supercession of the board of directors headed by Chandrasekharan.

The High Court, before ordering a CBI petition in September 2015, had perused two reports submitted by Dr Abraham, which reportedly listed instances of corruption in the case.

Manoj had moved the High Court seeking a CBI probe as the government did not allow the state Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau to go ahead with the investigation despite its quick verification finding that there was corruption in the deals.

COMPLAINT AGAINST
KANGANA FOR
MALIGNING JUDICIARYDC CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, OCT. 22

A Mumbai-based lawyer on Thursday filed a complaint against actress Kangana Ranaut for allegedly maligning judiciary in her social media posts. The lawyer approached a magistrate court in Andheri accusing Ranaut of allegedly posting a malicious tweet against the judiciary after another magistrate court in Bandra ordered the registration of an FIR against her. Following the Bandra court's order to the police to register a First Information Report against her, Ranaut posted "malicious and defamatory" tweets against the judiciary, terming it as "Papu Sena", lawyer Ali Kaashif Khan Deshmukh stated in his complaint before the Andheri court.

Deshmukh also accused Ranaut of sedition and causing disharmony between two religious groups through her tweets. The actor had "no respect for varied communities of India, law of the land and authorised government bodies" and even made fun of the judiciary, it stated. Last week, the Bandra court had ordered the police to investigate a complaint filed by one Munawwar Ali Sayyed which referred to Ranaut's and her sister Rangoli Chandel's tweets and other statements.

CBI consent withdrawn to
stop its misuse: DeshmukhSONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC
MUMBAI, OCT. 22

Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh on Thursday said that 31-year-old 'general consent' given by the state to the CBI has been withdrawn so that the central agency cannot be misused for political purposes.

On Wednesday late night, his department issued a notification stating the general consent withdrew to the CBI. Maharashtra is the fourth state in the Country to withdraw the general consent to the apex agency. Meanwhile, the BJP slammed Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray led Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government for this move.

Deshmukh said that CBI should not be used to settle the political scores. "Therefore, we have come out with the order yesterday (Wednesday) for the CBI in Maharashtra. If the CBI wants to take over any case, it needs to get the prior consent from the Maharashtra government," the home minister said.

The Maharashtra government's move came

close on the heels after the central agency took over a case registered by the UP Police against "unknown" channels and persons over alleged fudging of TRPs in Lucknow.

The development created apprehensions in the Maharashtra government that the CBI would take over a similar case on alleged fudging of TRPs registered in Maharashtra in a bid to move it away from the jurisdiction of Mumbai police.

Referring to the apprehension, Deshmukh said that the government wanted to avoid such a thing happening.

The home department's order said, "In exercise of the powers conferred by section 6 of the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946, the government of Maharashtra hereby withdraws the consent accorded to the Members of the Delhi Special Police Establishment vide Government Order dated 22nd February 1989."

A senior home department official said that the order does not have any impact on the previous cases.

However, the CBI now needs to take a case to case basis consent from the Maharashtra government for all cases in future.

Meanwhile, the BJP leader Kirit Somaiya said that the Congress, NCP and Shiv Sena are scared of the CBI because their scams could be exposed.

Shiv Sena spokesperson Sanjay Raut said that the CBI has a right to probe all cases of national importance. But the cases which are being probed by Mumbai police are being simultaneously transferred to the central probe agency by filing fresh FIR in a different state, which recommends CBI probe, resulting in landing of CBI in Maharashtra. "Now, we decided to not allow such things. The Mumbai police has its own rights, which are provided by the constitution of India. It should not be violated by anyone," Raut said.

Earlier, investigation into actor Sushant Singh Rajput's alleged suicide case filed by Mumbai police was transferred to the CBI after the actor's family filed abetment to suicide case in Bihar.

Navy's 1st batch of women pilots
'operationalised' on DorniersRAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC
KOLKATA, OCT. 22

The first batch of women pilots of the Indian Navy has been operationalised on Dornier aircraft by the Southern Naval Command (SNC) at Kochi. They are Lieutenant Divya Sharma from Malviya Nagar in New Delhi, Lieutenant Shubhangi Swaroop from Tilhar in Uttar Pradesh and Lieutenant Shivangi from Muzaffarpur in Bihar.

The three women pilots were part of the six pilots of the 27th Dornier Operational Flying



From left- Indian Navy pilots Lt Shivangi, Lt Shubhangi Swaroop and Lt Divya Sharma who were part of the six pilots of the 27th DOFT Course.

Training (DOFT) Course, who graduated as 'Fully operational Maritime Reconnaissance (MR) Pilots' at a passing out ceremony held at INS Garuda, Kochi on Thursday. She has asNC Chief Staff Officer (Training) Rear

Admiral Antony George presented awards to the pilots who are now fully qualified on Dornier aircraft for all operational missions. These officers had initially undergone basic flying training partly with the IAF and partly

with the Navy prior to the DOFT course. Amongst the three women pilots operationalised for MR flying, Lt Shivangi was the first to qualify as a naval pilot on December 2 last year.

The course comprised of one month of the ground training phase, which was conducted at various professional schools of the SNC and eight months of flying training at the Dornier Squadron of SNC, INAS 550. Lt Divya Sharma & Lt Shivam Pandey were adjudged 'First in Flying' and 'First in Ground' subjects, respectively.



IN BRIEF

London gas explosion: 2 die

London: Two people were killed after a suspected gas explosion that led to a building collapse in Southall, the west London suburb with a large Punjabi-origin Indian diaspora population. The explosion occurred at a hair salon and phone shop underneath a set of flats on Wednesday. Four adults and one child, of Punjabi-origin, were rescued at the rear of the property using a ladder, while several people from nearby homes evacuated the King Street area of Southall as London Fire Brigade worked on the "protracted" incident. The Metropolitan Police said the two people killed in the explosion are yet to be formally identified but some local reports indicate that the victims may be of Indian-origin. "A large explosion was found to have taken place inside a shop. Emergency services entered the building and sadly, two people were pronounced dead at the scene. Formal identification has not taken place."

Indonesia mine landslide: 11 die

Jakarta: Intense rains caused a landslide at a coal mine on Indonesia's Sumatra island that killed 11 miners, authorities said Thursday. The slide occurred Wednesday in a mine tunnel about 20 metres (65 feet) deep at Tanjung Lalang village in Muara Enim district of South Sumatra province, according to National Disaster Mitigation Agency spokesman Raditya Jati. Local rescuers have recovered all the bodies. Seasonal rains and high tides in recent days have caused dozens of landslides and widespread flooding across much of Indonesia, a chain of 17,000 islands where millions of people live in mountainous areas or near fertile flood plains close to rivers. Indonesia's Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Agency said the area could see light to moderate rainfall for the next three days. Most parts of Indonesia have entered the rainy season this October. In addition, the La Nina phenomenon in the Pacific Ocean can set off intense rainfall across the islands.

Trio who lived on ISS return to Earth

Moscow: A trio of space travellers safely returned to Earth on Thursday after a six-month mission on the International Space Station. The Soyuz MS-16 capsule carrying NASA astronaut Chris Cassidy, and Roscosmos' Anatoly Ivanishin and Ivan Vagner landed on the steppes of Kazakhstan south-east of the town of Dzhezkazgan at 7:54 a.m. (2:54 GMT) Thursday. After a brief medical checkup, the three will be taken by helicopters to Dzhezkazgan from where they will depart home. Cassidy will board a NASA plane back to Houston, while Vagner and Ivanishin will fly home to Star City, Russia. The crew smiled as they talked to masked members of the recovery team, and NASA and Roscosmos reported that they were in good condition. As part of additional precautions due to the Coronavirus, the rescue team members meeting the crew were tested for the virus.

LTTE DE-LIST MOVE: LANKA LODGES PLEA

Colombo, Oct. 22: Sri Lanka has appealed against a judgement from Britain's Proscribed Organisations Appeal Commission, which has delisted the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) as a proscribed terrorist organisation. A foreign ministry statement issued here said that Sri Lanka has been made aware of the Open Judgement by the Commission on Wednesday. It said the decision of the Commission arises from an appeal filed in May 2019 by an LTTE front organisation challenging the decision of British Secretary of State for Home Affairs dated March 8, 2019, which refused the application by the group to de-proscribe the LTTE from the list of Proscribed Organisations under the UK Terrorism Act of 2000. While Sri Lanka was not a party to these proceedings at the Commission and could not make direct representations, the Lankan Government assisted the British government by providing relevant information with regard to continued terrorist activities.

Iran behind emails to intimidate voters: US

Nat'l intel director says aim was to hurt Don in election

Washington, Oct. 22: US officials have accused Iran of being behind a flurry of threatening but fake emails sent to Democratic voters in multiple battleground states in a late-stage efforts to sway public opinion and interfere in the presidential election.

Purportedly from far-right, pro-Trump groups like the Proud Boys, the fake emails were apparently aimed at intimidating voters. John Ratcliffe, the government's national intelligence director, said the aim was to hurt President Donald Trump in the contest against Democrat Joe Biden, though he did not elaborate on how.

One possibility is the messages may have been intended to align Trump in the minds of voters with the Proud Boys after he was criticised for failing to unequivocally denounce the group during the first presidential debate. The threatening emails officials did not lay out specific evidence for how

Don mismanaged Covid-19: Obama

Washington, Oct. 22: Former US president Barack Obama delivered a diatribe against his successor Donald Trump on Wednesday, accusing him of mismanaging the pandemic, as he appealed to the people to come out and vote in favour of Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden.

Jumping into the electoral campaign in support of his former vice president Biden and his running mate Senator Kamala Harris, Obama appealed to the people to defeat Trump and elect the

they came to pinpoint Iran, but the activities attributed to Tehran would mark a significant escalation for a country some

Biden-Harris team on November 3. "They have a plan for the economy and the Coronavirus pandemic," Obama said in his maiden campaign appearance, asserting that the "Biden-Harris team will bring character and leadership back to government". Obama spoke as the sun set, the sky going from pink to gray, framed by the clouds and the Lincoln Financial Field behind him. He stood by himself on stage, far from even the cars in the lot. His podium was sanitized before he spoke. — PTI

cybersecurity experts regard as a second-rate player in online espionage. — AP

AFTER CHAOTIC DEBATE, TRUMP, BIDEN TRY AGAIN

Washington, Oct. 22: After meeting last month in perhaps the most chaotic debate in modern history, President Donald Trump and his Democratic rival, Joe Biden, will take the stage Thursday to give it another go.

The bar to improve upon their last prime-time meeting is low: Their first debate was punctuated by frequent interruptions, mostly from Trump, leaving the two men talking over each other and Biden eventually telling the president to "shut up."

A planned second debate didn't happen after the president was diagnosed with the Coronavirus and refused to participate in a virtual format. Biden and Trump instead participated in duelling town halls. — AP

Nigerian prison set afire after protesters shot



A general view of smoke arising from the Ikoyi prison that is on fire in Lagos on Thursday. Gunshots could be heard and smoke was billowing from the prison in central Lagos as fresh unrest rocked Nigeria's biggest city after the shooting of protesters. Police close to the scene told AFP that assailants had attacked the detention facility in the upscale Ikoyi neighbourhood. — AFP

SENATE JUDICIARY PANEL NOD TO DON NOMINEE BARRETT

Washington, Oct. 22: The Senate Judiciary Committee pushed through US President Donald Trump's conservative pick for the Supreme Court, Amy Coney Barrett, Thursday as Democrats boycotted the vote saying it was too close to the November 3 election.

The unanimous vote, with all Democrats absent, sets the stage for full Senate approval at the beginning of next week on Barrett, who will tilt the high court firmly to the right.

On Wednesday Democrats labelled the nomination process a "sham" that broke former Republican promises to never vote on a Supreme Court nominee so close to a presidential election.

"My Democratic Senate colleagues and I boycotted the Supreme Court nominee committee vote today," Senator Kamala Harris, a committee member who is the Democratic nominee for vice president, said.

"Let's be clear: This nomination process is a sham and shows how Republicans will stop at nothing to strip health care from millions of Americans with pre-existing conditions," she said, referring to Republican efforts to have the Supreme Court strike down a popular national health care program.

But Republican committee chairman Lindsey Graham dismissed their action, and, taking advantage of their absence, moved up the vote by almost four hours.

"That was their choice," he said before the vote. — AFP

Oxford vaccine trial on amid participant's death

London, Oct. 22: The University of Oxford says the late-stage trial of its Covid-19 vaccine in Brazil will continue following reports of a participant's death.

The university said it can't comment on specific incidents but an independent review found no reason to be concerned about the safety of the Brazilian trial. It says an "independent review, in addition to the Brazilian regulator, have recommended that the trial should continue." The Oxford vaccine is being developed in conjunction with the international pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca. Trials are underway in the United States and the UK, as well as Brazil, to determine whether the potential vaccine is safe and effective in humans.

A team at Bristol University used recently developed techniques to validate that the vaccine accurately follows the genetic

instructions programmed into it by the Oxford University team.

The experts say that the novel analysis provides even greater clarity and detail about how the vaccine successfully provokes a strong immune response. "This is an important study as we are able to confirm that the genetic instructions underpinning this vaccine, which is being developed as fast as safely possible, are correctly followed when they get into a human cell," said Dr David Matthews, Reader in Virology from Bristol's School of Cellular and Molecular Medicine (CMM), who led the research.

"Until now, the technology hasn't been able to provide answers with such clarity, but we now know the vaccine is doing everything we expected and that is only good news in our fight against the illness," he said. — PTI

SAKHAROV PRIZE

Lukashenko won his 6th term in a poll widely seen as rigged

EU awards HR prize to Belarus Oppn

Brussels, Oct. 22: The European Union has awarded its top human rights prize to the Belarus opposition movement and its leader, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, for their challenge to President Alexander Lukashenko's long, hard-line reign.

"It is an honour to announce that the women and men of the democratic opposition in Belarus are the 2020 Sakharov Prize

laureates," European Parliament president David Sassoli said. They have on their side something that brute force can never defeat: The truth. Do not give up on your fight. We are by your side."

The 27-nation bloc agreed this month to impose sanctions against officials suspected of election misconduct and a brutal security crackdown on protesters in Belarus. The EU has

● **SINCE THE** Aug. 9 polls that handed Lukashenko a victory with 80% of the vote, mass protests have rocked the ex-Soviet nation sandwiched between Poland and Russia.

warned it is ready to sanction Lukashenko himself if he fails to enter into talks with the opposition

H-1B speciality jobs: US against issuing biz visas

Washington, Oct. 22: The State Department has proposed not to issue temporary business visas for H-1B speciality occupations which allowed several companies to send their technology professionals for a short stay to complete jobs on site in the US, a move which could affect hundreds of Indians. The proposal, if finalised, will eliminate any misconception that the "B-1 in lieu of H policy" provides an alternative avenue for foreign professionals to enter the US to perform skilled labour that allows, and potentially even encourages them and their employers to circumvent the restrictions and requirements relating to the H non-immigrant classification established by Congress to protect the US workers, the State Department said.

The move, made public on Wednesday, less than two weeks ahead of the November 3 presidential election, is likely to impact several Indian companies which send their technology professionals on B-1 visas for a short stay to complete jobs on site in the US.

● **THE MOVE,** made public on Wednesday, less than two weeks ahead of the November 3 presidential election, is likely to impact several Indian companies which send their technology professionals on B-1 visas for a short stay to complete jobs on site in the US.

On December 17, 2019, the Attorney General of California announced a \$800,000 settlement against Infosys Limited to resolve allegations that approximately 500 Infosys employees worked in the state on Infosys-sponsored B-1 visas rather than H-1B visas, the State Department said. "The proposed changes and the resulting transparency would reduce the impact of foreign labour on the US workforce of aliens performing activities in a specialty occupation without the procedural protections attendant to the H-1B classification," it said.

In its federal notification issued on Wednesday, the State Department said the

US architecture firm seeking protection from rising labour costs in the country might believe it could lay off its US architects and contract for the same professional architectural services to be provided by a foreign architecture firm. If the foreign firm sought H-1B visas for its architects, it would be required to pay the prevailing wage for architects in the area of intended employment in the United States, presumably the same wage the US architects had been paid, and meet the other requirements enacted by the Congress to protect US workers.

But under the B-1 in lieu of H policy, the foreign architects could ostensibly seek B-1 visas and travel to the US to fill a temporary need for architecture services, as long as they retained a residence in the foreign country and continued to receive a salary, perhaps significantly lower than what is customary for US architects, dispersed abroad by the foreign firm (or under the auspices of a foreign parent or subsidiary), the State Department said. — PTI

Deport Nawaz: Pakistan requests UK third time

Islamabad, Oct. 22: Pakistan has requested the UK for a third time to deport former prime minister Nawaz Sharif from London to serve his prison term in the country after being sentenced in corruption cases, according to a media report on Thursday. Sharif, the 70-year-old supremo of the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) who was ousted from power in 2017 by the Supreme Court on corruption charges, is in London for medical treatment.

A letter for the deporta-

tion of the three-time prime minister was handed over personally to the British High Commissioner here some three weeks ago, *Dawn* newspaper reported.

Through the letter, the Pakistani government asked the British authorities to consider cancelling Sharif's visit visa, which has allowed him to live in London on medical grounds since November. The letter has cited Britain's own immigration laws of 1974 under which any person sentenced to impris-

onment of more than four years had to be deported to the country of his/her origin. When contacted, Shahzad Akbar, Adviser to Prime Minister Imran Khan on Accountability and Interior confirmed that the government has made three requests to the UK authorities to deport Sharif, with the last being on October 5.

The previous letter, he said, had been dispatched after the cancellation of Sharif's bail by the Islamabad High Court last month. — PTI

Withdraw from UN N-ban treaty: US to countries

United Nations, Oct. 22: The United States is urging countries that have ratified a UN treaty to ban nuclear weapons to withdraw their support as the pact nears the 50 ratifications needed to trigger its entry into force, which supporters say could happen this week. The US letter to signatories, obtained by *The Associated Press*, says the five original nuclear powers — the US, Russia, China, Britain and France — and America's NATO allies "stand unified in our opposition to the potential repercussions" of the treaty.

It says the treaty "turns back the clock on verification and disarmament and is dangerous" to the half-century-old Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, considered the cornerstone of global nonproliferation efforts. "Although we recognize your sovereign right to ratify or accede to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), we believe that you have made a strategic error and should withdraw your instrument of ratification or accession," the letter says.

The treaty requires that all ratifying countries

"never under any circumstances ... develop, test, produce, manufacture, otherwise acquire, possess or stockpile nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices."

It also bans any transfer or use of nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices — and the threat to use such weapons — and requires parties to promote the treaty to other countries. Beatrice Fihn, executive director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize-winning coalition whose work helped spearhead the nuclear ban treaty, said Tuesday that several diplomatic sources confirmed that they and other states that ratified the TPNW had been sent letters by the US requesting their withdrawal. She said the "increasing nervousness, and maybe straightforward panic, with some of the nuclear-armed states and particularly the Trump administration" shows that they "really seem to understand that this is a reality: Nuclear weapons are going to be banned under international law soon." — AP



Donald Trump

U.S. TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN RETURNING: DON

Washington, Oct. 22: The US has had enough of 19 years in Afghanistan, President Donald Trump has said, reiterating that American troops, who are the greatest soldiers in the world but acting as a "police force" in the strife-torn country, are returning.

Trump has repeatedly said that he would bring home all the US troops from "endless wars". It was also one of the promises he made during his 2016 Presidential campaign. Last month, he said that the United States will reduce the number of its troops in Afghanistan to 4,000 in a very short period of time. "We never had anything like it — and sacrificing American blood and treasure in endless foreign wars in countries that you've never even heard of. And they're all coming back. You know that, right? I hope nobody objects," Trump told his supporters on Wednesday at an election rally in Gastonia, in the battleground state of North Carolina.

"I think 19 years in Afghanistan is enough, wouldn't you say? We're like a police force over there. We have the greatest soldiers in the world, but over there we're like a police force. 19 years is enough," he said. "You think it's easy getting out with all the military-industrial complex, right? The military — beware the military-industrial complex. They are right but we are all coming home. — PTI

DECCAN Chronicle

23 OCTOBER 2020

Bihar: Lalu son handful, but contest is wide open

Assembly polls in any state are consequential in the larger framework of our democracy, and in the case of Bihar they give us a feel of the political currents in the Hindi heartland which, historically, has had a particular salience in shaping the politics of the country. The three-stage state election in Bihar kicks off on October 28 and the result will be known on November 10, but so close to voting day it is not quite clear which way the wind is blowing. In the ordinary course, the outright win of the JD(U)-BJP alliance that chief minister Nitish Kumar leads might have been taken for granted since there are no known stars in the fray on the opposite side. This is indeed what media reporting and anecdotal evidence initially appeared to suggest.

But with the campaign picking up, the turbulence in the waters of the Ganga, Kosi, Gandak and the Son are becoming more evident.

In the normal course, the fortunes of the CM, who has been in office for three consecutive terms, may have been the focal point of interest. But this time around there is a related issue that will be keenly watched, namely the trajectory of the BJP. But for a short break between 2015-17, Mr Kumar has been a steady ally of the BJP, helping the saffron party to consolidate its hold in the Gangetic plain. But there are signs that the BJP may have its own CM in the state. Like in neighbouring UP, where BJP by turns partnered the SP and the BSP before it raised its sights to include the CM's chair, in Bihar too the BJP may be getting ready to quit being bridesmaid. Chirag Paswan, the young, inexperienced, LJP leader, was thought to be its pawn in this venture. But there could be trouble ahead. If LJP cuts into JD(U) votes in any substantial way, its game may end up helping the RJD-Congress-Left Mahagathbandhan (Grand Alliance) pose an even bigger challenge to the JD(U)-BJP alliance, with JD(U) weakened on account of Mr Paswan's effort. Thus, the game that BJP-LJP is accused of launching may just turn out to be a double-edged sword.

Lalu Yadav's young son Tejashwi, who had been written off as a factor since his father is still languishing in jail and is not available to campaign, is actually turning out to be quite a handful with his promise of 10 lakh jobs the minute he takes office. The unemployment issue is serious all over India but has a special resonance in Bihar since the state saw the largest number of very poor returnees from the big cities in the wake of the coronavirus-related lockdown. In contrast, the CM's campaign is lacklustre, still harping on issues of a decade ago. The NDA is hoping that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will electrify the mood for the incumbents. If Mr Kumar beats the odds, he could remain CM even if the BJP does well. If he slips, and the BJP doesn't have a clear majority on its own (an unlikely scenario), the BJP may be pushed to scout for post-poll friends. That could muddy the waters.

Can America rein in Google?

The tech titan Google is facing an anti-trust suit filed by the US Justice Department accusing it of maintaining an illegal monopoly over Internet search and search advertising. This is the most significant step in years in which a backlash has been gaining strength, first in Europe and now in US, against the big four of the new economy — Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon. Spurred on by a collection of lawyers, economists and activists, governments have been pushed into questioning them for their monopolistic business practices. The big question to be answered now is whether Google has become far too successful for the good of technology and the free market that created such behemoths.

The tech battle isn't new. More than two decades ago, Microsoft was in the crosshairs for perversely abusing its domination of personal computer software. The seminar tech giant escaped any great fetters on its operations even as the tech world evolved with alternatives including Apple's operating system. Like Big Pharma and Big Oil, Big Tech had made its own rules for decades in attaining its Unicorn status. It bought out budding competitors or simply trampled upon them by virtue of deep pockets created by market capitalisation of more than trillion dollars and billions of reserve cash, some owed to miserly but clever tax non-compliance practices across nations.

Microsoft wriggled out of its existential crisis of 1998 and rebuilt. Google, with its virtual search engine monopoly, its most popular web browser Chrome, its Android technology and its unique business model in which the user does not have to pay a cent to access its search engine will doubtless employ the best legal brains to stretch out this battle against the Justice Department in years to come. The larger issue is should monopolies be broken up in countries that swear by free markets and capitalism in the fond hope of creating a democratic level playing field for all. Do regulators know enough on how technology works to write new regulations to rein in Google with its 2019 revenue of \$161 billion?

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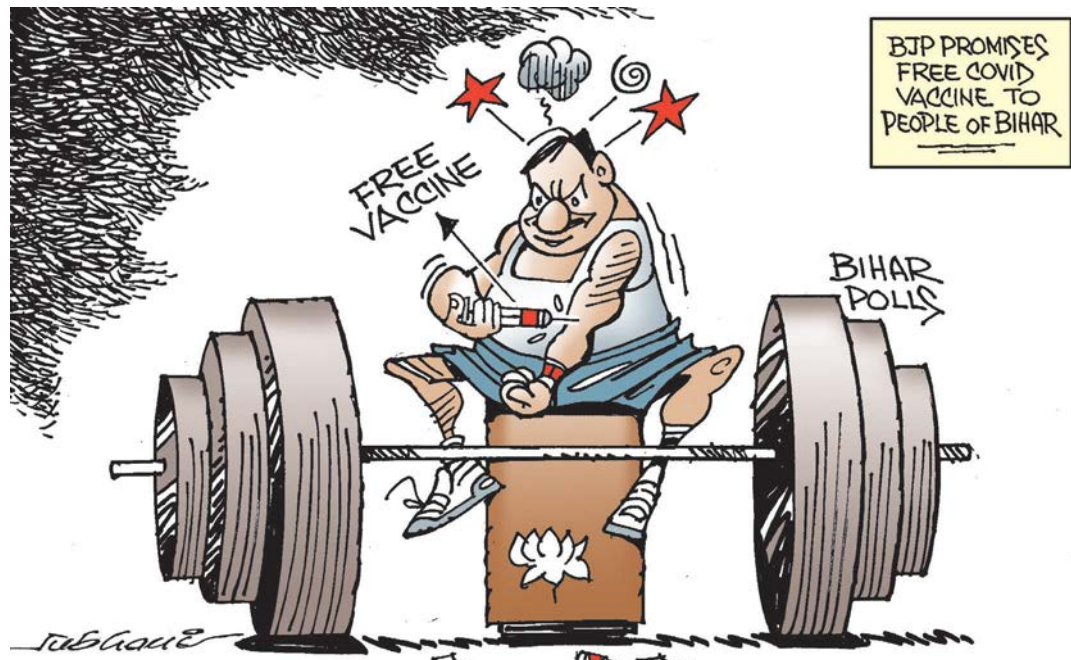
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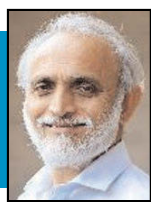
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Subhani



Hindutva a stumbling block for BJP in Bihar



Parsa Venkateshwar Rao Jr

In 2015, flush with the dramatic victory in the 2014 Lok Sabha election, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and then BJP president Amit Shah hoped to sweep the Assembly elections in Bihar, the other major Hindi-belt state in northern India. The first is of course Uttar Pradesh, the so-called cockpit of Indian politics, and in UP the BJP's calling card was Hindutva. Mr Shah thundered that if the BJP were defeated, crackers would be burst in Pakistan. And Mr Modi announced a huge financial package from the Central government in the loudest of tones. But Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal (United) and Lalu Prasad Yadav's Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), along with the Congress, scored an impressive victory. The Modi magic did not work. The BJP's defeat was also a rejection of Mr Modi at a time when it seemed that he was riding the crest of popularity, with an overwhelming victory in neighbouring UP in the 2014 general election. The victory of the Nitish-Lalu duo was interpreted as the unbeatable caste combine of all backward castes and the significant Muslim minority in the state.

Nitish Kumar was not really the lily-white "secularist" that he projected himself to be because he was in alliance with the BJP in the 2005 and 2010 Assembly elections in the state, and the BJP's saffron hue was as prominent then as it ever was. His disapproval of Mr Modi's saffronism did not carry much conviction. But

after the 2015 Assembly poll victory, Nitish Kumar could not bear with the aggressive pressure tactics and intrusion of the impetuous and young Tejashwi Yadav, who was the deputy chief minister. And with a little help from Bihar BJP leader Sushil Kumar Modi, who conjured up a "crime", which is what the BJP has always been good at, Mr Kumar slipped out of the strangling grip of Lalu Yadav's family. And he was back with his old mate, the BJP, in 2017.

The present speculation about the outcome in the Bihar Assembly elections flows from the developments of 2015 and 2017. It is being argued that this is Nitish Kumar's "last stand", and the BJP is preparing to push him off the stage once the election is won because Mr Modi and Mr Shah have not forgiven Nitish Kumar's "betrayal"! There are of course serious flaws in the assumptions of the analysts, if not that of the BJP leaders themselves. The BJP is a second party in Bihar. It cannot hope to become the party of first choice. The BJP's hopes lie in the fact that after two decades of being the second party in Maharashtra, the BJP moved to the first position, edging out the Shiv Sena. But then the Shiv Sena chose to walk out of the alliance, and the BJP's lead position in Maharashtra came to nought.

It is keeping in mind the Maharashtra experience that Mr Shah, the BJP's spokesperson though he is not the president of the party any more, declared quite early that Nitish Kumar

would be the chief ministerial candidate of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), comprising the JD(U), BJP and Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) of the late Ram Vilas Paswan. More than the Machiavellian plot to avenge Nitish Kumar, the BJP leaders are reconciled to the fact that they cannot win without the JD(U). There is the plausible argument that Nitish Kumar and the JD(U) are in the same position as the BJP, and that Nitish Kumar can never hope to win an Assembly majority without the BJP.

There is the fact that Nitish Kumar is the last of the "big" leaders in the BJP camp, and he along with Lalu Prasad Yadav and Ram Vilas Paswan had been Bihar's political heroes. It is now time for a generational change. There is no leader in the JD(U) who can take Nitish Kumar's place. The BJP in Bihar does not have either first-rung or second-rung leaders, though there has been speculation that Union minister for law and justice, information technology and communications Ravi Shankar Prasad is a potential chief minister waiting in the wings. But he does not enjoy the same popular base that Nitish or Lalu do, and Paswan did in his own small limited way, and all of them had emerged from the Jayaprakash Narayan students' movement of the 1970s. It is too early

There is the fact that Nitish Kumar is the last of the 'big' leaders in the BJP camp, and he along with Lalu Prasad Yadav and Ram Vilas Paswan had been Bihar's political heroes. It is now time for a generational change.

to speculate whether Tejashwi Yadav will be the Gen Next leader of Bihar. Bihar's politics seems to be at the end of its political tether, though anti-BJP partisans would like to place their bets on Tejashwi Yadav and the RJD. The political formations as they exist now are caged in their caste grooves. No party can command the approval of the people across the caste barriers.

There is a political vacuum in Bihar, and there is room for some of the existing players to grab the opportunity and fill it up. The BJP could have done it, but it has shown that it is not confident about its ability to make it on its own. The deference shown by the BJP to Nitish Kumar is not pure goodwill. The diffidence of the BJP in Bihar perhaps could be traced back to then chief minister Lalu Yadav's assertive act of stopping Lal Krishna Advani from going to Ayodhya on his infamous "rath-yatra" in late 1990. It was a figurative act, and the BJP seems to have been stuck at the Bihar barricade. The Hindutva card has no resonance in Bihar and Mr Shah and Mr Modi are acutely aware of it. The poll surveys show that Mr Modi enjoys high popularity ratings, but they do not seem to be sufficient for the BJP to dare to go on its own in the state.

Two of the influential Hindi states are stuck in a past which they are not able to free themselves from, Bihar more so than even UP. The people in the state are hugely political, but they are not able to forge their political destiny. This election is much more than the victory or defeat of the major players in the fray. It is Bihar standing on the edge of an uncharted future.

The writer is a Delhi-based commentator and analyst

LETTERS

HYDERABAD FLOODS

Residents of Vinayaknagar Colony, Boduppal, were affected by floods twice this week and are having a very bad time. We were provided with food by the municipality in our locality for two days. However, not even one politician the area. We incurred huge losses and are not even able to step out to buy essentials. Stagnant water has caused pungent smell in the area. We request authorities to take action.

Navya Hyderabad

LAKE STILL DRY

After the torrential rains, all lakes are overflowing (*Lakes hit by incessant rains in city, DC, Oct. 22*). However, the RK Puram lake (Mukidi Cheruvu in Neredmet near Ramakrishnapuram railway station) is still empty. Ever since it was dredged for beautification two summers ago, it has remained bone dry. Beautification works are not complete with only partial weak embankment works carried out. Now, with puddles of water and wild vegetation, it is an eyesore.

Sanjukta Ghosh Hyderabad

FESTS IN PANDEMIC

In the PM's recent address to the nation, the focus was on festivals during the pandemic. However, schools are reopening in AP. Students are asked to report on alternate days. I wonder how citizens will understand the gravity of this situation when the government is itself is not serious about it?

Sana Khan Hyderabad

Pak offer for talks on Kashmir

UNITED NATIONS, OCT. 22. Pakistan offered today to open talks with India on the mutual withdrawal of their forces from Kashmir.

President Yahya Khan, declared: "Let us move towards peace by holding discussions about the withdrawal from Kashmir so that its people are enabled to decide their future without any constraint or coercion from outside."

Gen. Yahya Khan made the offer during a policy statement before the 25th anniversary session of the UN General Assembly.

Saeed Naqvi
Wide Angle



Only Walter Mitty can dream Afghan troop withdrawal before US election

It always seemed an exaggeration that a dramatic announcement from Doha on the eve of the American elections on troop withdrawals would cause American voters to march to the polling booths doubly enthused to re-elect President Donald Trump. US chief negotiator Zalmay Khalilzad does not in the slightest resemble James Thurber's notorious daydreamer Walter Mitty to push for unrealistic deadlines. He is an eager beaver, but not desperately unrealistic.

When President Barack Obama had set firm deadlines for withdrawal, I made an extensive survey of the country for the Observer Research Foundation. I had concluded that the US is "not leaving Afghanistan today; it is not leaving it tomorrow". A superpower enters a major theatre with one set of interests but, over a period of time, develops multiple compelling interests.

Withdrawing empty-handed would be an admission of defeat. Since this is not on the cards, the only conclusion one can draw is that a plan for the future is not being disclosed for now.

The US involvement in Afghanistan has been a great

tragedy, but its frequent false starts in a rush to the exit door and announce withdrawal is material for a spoof by someone like Michael Moore. Take, for instance, the peace agreement the US signed with the Afghan Taliban on February 29 in Doha. So eager was US negotiator Zalmay Khalilzad to flourish a peace agreement just when the election campaign in the US was picking up that he would have inserted into the agreement anything that the Taliban wished. Read the title headline of that agreement — it is patently absurd: "Agreement for bringing Peace to Afghanistan between the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (*which is not recognised by the United States as a state, and is known as the Taliban*) and the United States of America."

The fragility of the agreement is transparent in the pulls and counter pulls that had obviously gone into the headline. There is an unbridgeable distance on Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's role, for instance. The Taliban will not talk to Mr Ghani, whom they describe quite brazenly as a US "toady".

Mr Ghani deludes himself if he imagines he is being "firm". He is coming across to the world at large

as a leader with a very thick skin. New Delhi wishes to keep up appearances. In the trapeze act, South Block does not wish to be seen loosening the clasp of Mr Ghani's hand midair. The zero-sum game with Pakistan may operate as a factor but, in deference to realism, not a defining one.

One of the advantages the US extracts from being a superpower is to keep making mistakes almost wilfully without any fear of being called to account. It is almost a forgotten story that in December 2001 that Nato, helped by Russia, Iran, India and the Northern Alliance based in the Panjsher Valley defeated Taliban and Al Qaeda. Panjsher was also the operational headquarters for Tajik hero Ahmad Shah Masoud. So strong was Masoud's opposition to the Taliban and Al Qaeda that he travelled extensively to acquaint various international bodies of the danger that Al Qaeda and the Taliban posed to Afghanistan. His summer 2001 address to the European Parliament, months before 9/11, was historic by any yardstick. The complete silence on this Masoud speech is surprising. His forces had picked up chatter about a possible Al Qaeda action

in the US mainland. He was speaking in Brussels. On September 9, precisely two days before September 11 (9/11), two Arabs disguised as journalists visited him in his hideout near the Tajik border for an interview. Their passports, it was revealed much later, had been forged in Brussels. These "journalists", while saying goodbye to Masoud, detonated their vests. All three died instantly. Two days later, the Twin Towers came down in New York. Is there nothing here that deserves investigation?

Maybe not before the November 3 US election, but is the curtain is about to be brought down on US involvement? Whether Mr Trump or Joe Biden wins, China, Russia, Iran are likely to remain America's principal adversarial concerns. And Afghanistan is a supreme vantage point from where to needle them.

A little over a year ago, just when US military involvement in Syria was winding down, one common chatter was about Jabhat al Nusra and its variants being flown to newer theatres of action. Russia's deputy foreign minister Morgulov Igor Vladimirovich told a high-powered conference in New Delhi,

with Zalmay Khalilzad in attendance, that militants were being flown from Syria to northern Afghanistan. "Only the Afghan government and the US controls the Afghan airspace." The blame cannot be placed at any other door. Mr Khalilzad mounted a token protest, but nothing more.

The following Friday, Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was more specific: Daesh groups were being flown to Afghanistan. The distinguished chronicler of the West Asian scene, Robert Fisk of London's *Independent*, made similar allegations. The allegation fitted neatly into the thesis that militants, trained to kill, cannot be sent to the slaughterhouse. They have to be deployed in other theatres where they are proximate to the Muslim population into which militancy has to be injected to stir up the Islamic cauldron — Xinjiang, the Caucasus and a handful of Sunni enclaves in Iran. Now comes the news that fighters from Idlib are being flown to Nagorno Karabakh.

The writer is a senior journalist and commentator based in New Delhi

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	40,558.49	-0.37
Nifty 50	11,896.50	-0.35
S&P 500*	3,436.26	0.02
Dollar (₹)	73.54	0.08
Pound Sterling (₹)	96.57	-0.57
Euro (₹)	87.16	0.09
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	50,709*624	-1.22
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	42.66	0.93
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.915	0.003
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.826	0.010

* As of 9:30 PM IST

Bajaj Auto profit declines 18.8% to ₹1,138 cr in Q2

Bajaj Auto on Thursday reported an 18.8 per cent year-on-year decline in July-September quarter standalone profit to ₹1,138.2 crore. This is even in its first full quarter of operations after India eased lockdown curbs as sales continue to remain under pressure. Income from operations declined 7.2 per cent year-on-year to ₹7,156 crore in Q2 FY21, with sales volume declining 10.2 per cent y-o-y to 10.53 lakh units.

Siberia holds world's biggest gold deposits



Polyus PJSC, Russia's largest gold producer, said its untapped Sukhoi Log deposit in Siberia holds the world's biggest reserves. An audit showed Sukhoi Log has 40 million ounces of proven reserves, CEO Pavel Grachev said. That means the field — accounting for more than a quarter of Russian gold reserves — is bigger than Seabridge Gold Inc.'s KSM Project in Canada and Donlin Gold in Alaska.

L&T Finance posts 79% jump in Q2 profit at ₹265 cr

L&T Finance Holdings Ltd has reported a 79 per cent jump in net profit at ₹265.12 crore for the period ended September 30, 2020 as against net profit of ₹148.31 crores for the period ended June 30, 2020. The total income was ₹3,508.91 crore during Q2FY21 as compared to ₹3,397.53 crore during the period ended June 30, 2020. The company has reported EPS of ₹1.32 for the period ended September 30.

NTPC tops PSUs in Forbes' best employer list

State-run power giant NTPC on Thursday said it has featured on the top on the list of Indian PSUs under 'World's Best Employer 2020', published by Forbes. The employers were also judged based on their Covid-19 responses, image, economic footprint, talent development, gender equality and social responsibility. The final list comprised 750 multinational and large corporations headquartered in 45 countries.



RBI calls for universal QR codes for payment

Sets March 31, 2022 deadline; bans new proprietary codes

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, OCT. 22

In a move that would make it convenient for customers to transact digitally, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Thursday asked Payment System Operators (PSOs) that use proprietary Quick Response (QR) codes to move to one or more interoperable QR codes by March 31, 2022.

The RBI also prohibited launch of any new proprietary QR codes by any payment system operator for any payment transaction.

The central bank said that the two interoperable

QR codes in existence — UPI QR and Bharat QR shall continue as at present. "The above measures are expected to reinforce the acceptance infrastructure, provide better user convenience due to interoperability and enhance system efficiency," said the central bank in a notification.

A QR code is a machine-readable code consisting of an array of black and white squares typically used for storing large amounts of information and facilitates mobile payments at the point of sale.

"Payment System Operators (PSOs) that use proprietary QR codes

shall shift to one or more interoperable QR codes; the process of migration shall be completed by March 31, 2022. No new proprietary QR codes shall henceforth be launched by any PSO for any payment transaction. The RBI shall continue a consultative process to standardise and improve interoperable QR codes, to enable beneficial features identified by the Phatak Committee," the RBI said.

A key hurdle in expansion of the ecosystem is that several payment operators use their own closed-loop system for payment processing. A close-loop QR system only accepts

payments from the mobile application of its deployer which goes against the principle of interoperability agreement between the third party payment application and the banks that govern the UPI ecosystem.

The RBI had constituted a committee led by Professor Deepak Phatak to review the current system of QR Codes in India and suggest measures for moving towards interoperable QR Codes. The new norms are based on the recommendations of the committee.

The RBI also said the PSOs may take initiative to spread awareness about interoperable QR codes.

Global trade drops 5% in Sept quarter

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, OCT. 22

Despite making some recovery over the June quarter, global trade was still down five per cent in the September quarter. UNCTAD has revised the global trade projection from a decline of 20 per cent to 7-9 per cent drop for 2020. The UN trade body has also noted that India has made four per cent growth in exports in September.

UNCTAD found a five per cent drop in world trade in the third quarter of 2020 is an improvement from a 19 per cent decline witnessed in the second quarter but insufficient to pull trade out of the red.

The trade body expects the frail recovery to continue in the fourth quarter, with a preliminary forecast of three per cent degrowth compared with the last quarter of 2019.

"The uncertain course of the pandemic will continue aggravating trade prospects in the coming months," UNCTAD secretary-general Mukhisa Kituyi said.

"Despite some 'green shoots' we can't rule out a slowdown in production in certain regions or sudden increases in restrictive policies," Kituyi added.

It expects the value of global trade to contract by 7 to 9 per cent with respect to 2019 after revising the earlier projection of a 20 per cent decline.

Since the June quarter, trade trends have improved with earlier than expected resumption of economic activities in Europe and east Asia.

China has in particular restarted its economy much earlier than initially expected.

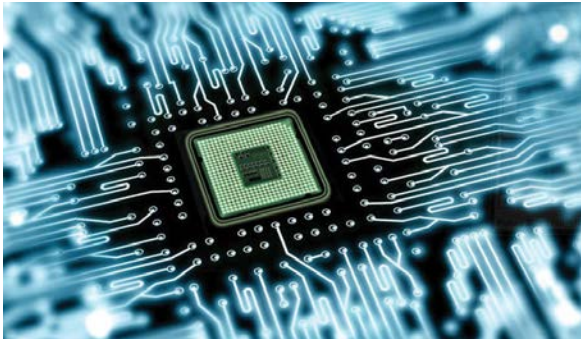
Berlin/Taipei, Oct. 22: On a scorching hot day in late August, representatives of Taiwan's government and industry crowded into the clinical cool of a state-of-the-art semiconductor facility for a symbolic moment in the global tech conflict.

They were attending the opening ceremony for a training centre built by Dutch company ASML Holding at a cost of about \$16 million, small change for an industry used to spending \$10 billion or more on a single advanced manufacturing plant.

The real value of the site in Tainan is strategic: It's one of just two such facilities outside the Netherlands capable of training semiconductor engineers to fabricate cutting-edge chips on ASML machines. Fellow US ally South Korea hosts the other — and Washington is working hard to ensure China never acquires the same technology.

As the US-China confrontation takes root, the ability to craft chips for everything from artificial intelligence and data centers to autonomous cars and smartphones has become an issue of national security, injecting government into business decisions over where to manufacture chips and to whom to sell them. Those tensions could kick into overdrive as Communist Party leaders set a five-year plan that includes developing China's domestic technology industry, notably its chip capabilities.

Semiconductors made from silicon wafers mounted with billions of microscopic transistors are the basic component of modern digital life and the building blocks of innova-



tion for the future. They are arguably one of the world's most important industries, with sales of \$412 billion last year; scale that up to the electronics industry that depends on chips, and it's worth some \$5.2 trillion globally, according to German manufacturers.

At once highly globalised and yet concentrated in the hands of a few countries, the industry has choke points that the US under the presidency of Donald Trump has sought to exploit in order to thwart China's plans to become a world leader in chip production.

Washington says Beijing can only achieve that goal through state subvention at the expense of US industry, while furthering Communist Party access to high-tech tools for surveillance and repression. For both sides, Taiwan, which is responsible for some 70 per cent of chips manufactured to order, is the new front line.

Beijing is increasingly hostile toward Taiwan. Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co.'s status as the world's largest contract chipmaker — a trend taking over the industry — the go-to supplier for Apple Inc. and the focus of next-genera-

tion chip-making, adds another dimension to China's enmity.

Just a couple of kilometers from the new training center, cranes dot a massive construction site where TSMC is building "fabs" in which it will manufacture the most advanced chips in the world — chips that are no longer available to China's Huawei Technologies due to US export controls.

China's intentions are so alarming to America because chips can be dual-use items with military applications, according to a former official familiar with the US administration's efforts.

China — the world's biggest semiconductor market, accounting for more than 50 per cent of all chips sold — isn't standing by as its high-tech ambitions are kneecapped.

China's five-year plan for the chip industry will lend it the same strategic importance Beijing gave to its atomic bomb programme. What's more, a law passed on October 17 may allow China to hit back at the United States, with speculation that it could prompt export controls on rare earths used in chip production.

— Bloomberg

MNREGA pulls down employment rate in Oct

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, OCT. 22

After recording a month-on-month recovery till September from the lows of April, the employment rate has once again dropped in the first three weeks of October. The significant drop in MNREGA man-days has pulled down rural jobs and stagnated the employment rate.

The employment rate of 2019-20 stood at 39.4 per cent. It fell to 27.2 per cent in April 2020 but recovered to 30.2 per cent in May. In June, it further recovered to 36.2 per cent and then to 37.6 per cent in July. There was a marginal drop in August to 37.5 per cent, but September once gain saw a recovery to 38 per cent.

However, the first three

weeks of October show signs of continued stress. The employment rates of the first three weeks were 37.6 per cent, 37.5 per cent and 37.9 per cent, as per CMIE's Consumer Pyramids Household Survey.

Fall of the employment rate revealed in the first three weeks of October 2020 is entirely because of a fall in the employment rate in rural India.

More electric vehicle firms queue up to go public

Detroit, Oct. 22: Missed out on the Tesla rally but still want to surf the electric vehicle wave?

A stream of EV-related startups backed by blank-check firms are lining up to go public so there's plenty of choice. But like Tesla in the early days, few have products ready to sell or any likelihood of generating significant revenue anytime soon.

Instead, investors will be relying on rosy production, sales and revenue forecasts for new cars, trucks and batteries, all

set to be jostling for a slice of markets that will be far more crowded than when Tesla's cars first hit the road.

Take Fisker Inc, for example. It was launched in 2016, just three years after the bankruptcy of its predecessor and early Tesla rival Fisker Automotive. In July, Fisker Inc announced a \$2.9 billion reverse merger deal with Spartan Energy Acquisition Corp, a Special Purpose Acquisition Company (SPAC), and is planning to go public later this year.

● INVESTORS WILL be relying on rosy production, sales and revenue forecasts for new cars, trucks and batteries, all set to be jostling for a slice of markets that will be far more crowded than when Tesla's cars first hit the road.

It has no revenue and its Fisker Ocean electric sports-utility vehicle (SUV) is at least two years away from production in a project heavily dependent on nailing down deals

with partners who will build the car and provide key components.

That's not particularly unique for young companies in the sector looking to use SPACs to go public and bypass the scrutiny of a traditional IPO process, according to company presentations and interviews with executives and investors.

That also didn't seem to be an issue earlier this year when US electric truck maker Nikola Motors used a SPAC to go public. Shares in the com-

Boycott China call fails to hit China handsets 3 in every 4 smartphones sold in India are Chinese

New Delhi, Oct. 22: Smartphone segment in India rebounded after the lockdown to touch an all-time high of 50 million units in September quarter with Chinese companies collectively holding 76 per cent market share, according to research firm Canalys.

All the top five smartphone vendors — Xiaomi, Samsung, Vivo, Realme and Oppo — saw their shipment grow in the third quarter compared to the year-ago period.

"Smartphone shipments in India recovered in Q3 2020, posting 8 per cent growth to 50 million units (from 46.2 million units in year-ago period). This is an all-time record for smartphone shipments in a single quarter in India," Canalys said in a statement.

Xiaomi remained the market leader with 26.1 per cent share, shipping 13.1 million units.

Samsung reclaimed the second place from Vivo,

● Ongoing tension between India and China has been a hot topic in the past few months, but we have yet to see a significant impact on purchase decisions of mass market customers

VARUN KANNAN, Canalys analyst

with 10.2 million units (20.4 per cent share) — helped by its aggressive product portfolio and pricing strategy in the low-end paid off, it added.

Vivo had 17.6 per cent share (8.8 million units), while Realme had 17.4 per cent share (8.7 million units) and Oppo had 12.1 per cent share (6.1 million units) in the said quarter.

Apple regained momentum in India in the third quarter with double-digit growth to nearly 8,00,000 units.

Despite a call to boycott Chinese products after a

bloody border clash in Ladakh, Chinese vendors collectively comprised 76 per cent of total smartphone shipments this quarter, which has grown from 74 per cent a year ago. This is, however, slightly lower than the June 2020 quarter, when Chinese companies had around 80 per cent cumulative share.

"Ongoing tension between India and China has been a hot topic in the past few months, but we have yet to see a significant impact on purchase decisions of mass market customers," Canals Research Analyst Varun Kannan said.

However, the tensions have caused Chinese smartphone brands to act conservatively in recent months, reducing their marketing spend, and carefully trying to project the image that they are important contributors to, and stakeholders in, the economic future of India, he added. — PTI

Real estate sees hope in future

FC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, OCT. 22

The future sentiments in the real estate market have turned positive for the first time this year, though the current sentiments still remain negative.

The Future Sentiment Score for Q3 2020 of the Knight Frank-Picci-Naredco Real Estate Sentiment Index, which shows the sentiments of the stakeholders of the industry for the next six months, climbed the optimistic zone at 52 points for the first time in 2020. It moved up from 41 in the previous quarter. The Current Sentiments Score, an indicator of past six months, also recorded a significant improvement from the previous quarter low of 22 points to 40 points in Q3 2020.

A score of above 50 signifies 'optimism' in sentiments, a score of 50 means the sentiment is 'same' or 'neutral', while a score below 50 shows 'pessimism'.

This revival in sentiments is attributed to the remarkable upturn seen

in the real estate business, especially in the residential segment, in the third quarter of 2020 as a result of the unlocking process.

In Q3 2020, residential launches and sales bounced back from the Covid-induced decline, across cities. The office sector also resumed operations, at varying occupancies across markets as occupiers took steps to ensure continuity in business operations to their highest potential. These developments have turned the stakeholder outlook on the real estate sector to optimism, as reflected in the Future Sentiment score of Q3 2020.

"Low home loan rates and discounts and attractive offers for residential homes, have pushed sales velocity in the third quarter. While the volumes are yet to catch up to the pre-Covid levels, the spurt has been instrumental in perking up sentiments. Similar positivity is visible for the office sector as well, where we have seen a revival of leasing activities," said Shishir Bajjal, chairman and MD, Knight Frank India.

DRL servers face cyber attacks

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, OCT. 22

Dr Reddy's Laboratories Ltd, the country's second drugmaker by market value, said on Thursday that it had isolated all its data centre services as a preventive measure after it detected a cyberattack.

"We are anticipating all services to be up within 24 hours and we do not foresee any major impact on our operations due to this incident," Dr Reddy's chief information officer Mukesh Rathii said, commenting on the development.

The company, which has tied up with Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) for conducting clinical trials of Sputnik-V Covid-19 vaccine in India, did not reveal the source of the attack.

The breach could possibly aimed at accessing classified information from the servers.

As per the tie-up, RDIF will supply 100 million doses of the vaccine to Dr Reddy's upon regulatory approval in India.

According to sources, the company had temporarily closed down its plants in the United States, United Kingdom, Brazil, India and Russia because of the breach.

Honda exports over 2,000 bikes

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, OCT. 22

The emission technology upgrade to BS-VI has Indian OEMs a new opportunity for sales exports. Thus, the made-in-India badge is now expanding its footprint to all corners of the world.

The Japanese automaker Honda Motorcycle & Scooter on Thursday said it has exported more than 2,000 completely knocked down or CKD kits of its next generation 125cc, advanced and stylish bike SP125 to Europe since August 2020.

The company has an export portfolio of 18 two-wheeler models and supplies to 25 export markets led by Asia, Middle East and Latin America.

The SP125 BS VI bike is currently manufactured at the Tapukara plant in Rajasthan, which has a manufacturing capacity of 1.2 million units a year.

The SP125 was the first BS-VI motorcycle launched by Honda in November 2019. It has 19 new patent applications, a completely new 125cc HET engine with eSP technology that delivers 16 per cent more mileage. — Reuters



SHORT TAKES

Badminton World Jr event is off

New Delhi: The 2020 World Junior Badminton Championship, which was postponed to be held in New Zealand in January, was on Thursday cancelled in wake of Covid-19 pandemic. The competition was originally planned for September-October but was pushed to January amid the raging pandemic. "...the entry restrictions in place and complexities related to the Covid-19 situation makes it impossible for the event to be planned and therefore hosted in New Zealand in January 2021 as currently scheduled," said Badminton World Federation (BWF) Secretary General Thomas Lund. However, Badminton New Zealand are still committed to hosting the BWF World Junior Championships and the BWF has accepted a proposal for them to stage the 2024 edition as a replacement for the edition lost. — PTI

Football great Pele turns 80

Sao Paulo: Brazilian football great Pele turns 80 on Friday, but the celebration will have to wait. The three-time World Cup winner will spend the day isolated with a few family members outside Sao Paulo, where he is expected to receive a flood of tributes from players, fans, celebrities and politicians. His long-time spokesman, Pepito Fornos, said Pele will likely spend his birthday at his mansion in the beachfront city of Guarujá, on the coast of Sao Paulo state, where he has been since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. He also has residences in Santos and Sao Paulo. He will only stay with his family. Fornos said Pele isn't speaking publicly because he is still mourning his brother Jair, who died of cancer in March. — AP

World's top trio sign for Big Bash

Sydney: All three of the world's top-ranked Twenty20 players have signed on for Australia's Big Bash League with Afghan spin king Rashid Khan Thursday confirming his return to the Adelaide Strikers. The 10th season of the eight-franchise tournament is set to start on December 3 and end with the final on February 6, with the Sydney Sixers defending their title. Rashid will be back for a Strikers side coached by Jason Gillespie. His return follows the signings this week of England's top-ranked batsman David Malan for the Hobart Hurricanes and Afghan allrounder Mohammad Nabi by the Melbourne Renegades. Others on board include English internationals Alex Hales (Sydney Thunder), Tom Banton (Brisbane Heat) and Tom Curran (Sydney Sixers). — AFP

Tennis champ Julia calls it a day

Berlin: Germany's Julia Goerges, a Wimbledon semi-finalist in 2018, announced her retirement from tennis on Wednesday. "I have always known that I would feel it when the right time has come to say goodbye — and the moment is here," the 31-year-old, currently ranked 45th in the world, posted on social media. "Thank you for everything you have given me", Goerges wrote in a love letter to tennis, "you will be in my heart forever". Goerges won a total of seven singles and five doubles titles on the WTA tour. — AFP

Live on TV

CRICKET
IPL: Chennai Super Kings vs Mumbai Indians from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD
FORMULA ONE
Portugese Grand Prix: Practice 1 from 2.25 pm; Practice 2 from 6.25 pm on Star Sports Select 2, HD
FOOTBALL
English Premier League: Aston Villa vs Leeds United from 12.30 am (Saturday) on Star Sports Select 2
WWE SMACKDOWN
Bouts from 5.30 am (Saturday) on Sony Ten 1

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Sun too hot for RR

Holder, Pandey script warm win against Royals

Dubai, Oct. 22: Sunrisers Hyderabad defeated Rajasthan Royals by eight wickets in their Indian Premier League match here on Thursday. Sent into bat, Rajasthan Royals scored 154 for 6 in the allotted 20 overs. In reply, SRH chased down the target with 11 balls overs to spare at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium. Manish Pandey top-scored for the winners with an unbeaten 83 off 47 balls while Jason Holder was the most impressive bowler with excellent figures of 3/33 in four overs. Sunrisers opted to bowl after winning the toss at the Dubai International Stadium.

Playing his first match of the tournament, Holder came up with an impressive bowling effort while also affecting a run out to destabilise the RR innings. Rashid Khan (1/20) and Vijay Shankar (1/15) picked a wicket each.

For RR, Sanju Samson (36 off 26 balls) was the top scorer. Put in to bat, Robin Uthappa looked in rampaging form, hitting the first four and six of the innings. He quickly raced to 19 off 13 balls.

However, his time in the middle was short lived. After Ben Stokes (32) hit Holder for back-to-back boundaries in the fourth over, the West Indies skipper effected Uthappa's run out as the Indian was late to turn back at the non-striker's end. — PTI



Manish Pandey of Sunrisers Hyderabad hits a six against Rajasthan Royals during their IPL match at Dubai International Cricket Stadium on Thursday. — BCCI

SCORECARD

Rajasthan Royals: Robin Uthappa run out 19, Ben Stokes b Rashid Khan 30, Sanju Samson b Jason Holder 36, Jos Buttler c Nadeem b Vijay Shankar 9, Steve Smith c Pandey b Holder 19, Riyan Parag c David Warner b Holder 20, Rahul Tewatia not out 2, Jofra Archer not out 16. **Extras:** (W-2) 2. **Total (for 6 wickets in 20 overs) 154.**

FoW: 1-30, 2-86, 3-86, 4-110, 5-134, 6-135. **Bowling:** Sandeep Sharma 4-0-31-0, J. Holder 4-0-33-3, Vijay Shankar 3-0-15-1, T. Natarajan 4-0-46-0, Rashid Khan 4-0-

20-1, Shahbaz Nadeem 1-0-9-0.

Sunrisers Hyderabad: David Warner c Ben Stokes b Jofra Archer 4, Jonny Bairstow b Jofra Archer 10, Manish Pandey not out 83, Vijay Shankar not out 52. **Extras:** (LB-1, W-6) 7. **Total (for 2 wickets in 18.1 overs) 156.**

FoW: 1-4, 2-16. **Bowling:** Jofra Archer 4-0-21-2, Ankit Singh Rajpoot 1-0-11-0, Kartik Tyagi 3-1-0-42-0, Ben Stokes 2-0-24-0, Shreyas Gopal 4-0-32-0, Rahul Tewatia 4-0-25-0.

IPL POINTS TABLE

Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
Delhi Capitals	10	7	3	0	14	+0.774
Royal Challengers Bangalore	10	7	3	0	14	+0.182
Mumbai Indians	9	6	3	0	12	+1.201
Kolkata Knight Riders	10	5	5	0	10	-0.828
Sunrisers Hyderabad	10	4	6	0	8	+0.092
Kings XI Punjab	10	4	6	0	8	-0.177
Rajasthan Royals	11	4	7	0	8	-0.620
Chennai Super Kings	10	3	7	0	6	-0.463

Tabulated as Played, Won, Lost, No Result, Points, Net Run Rate

MCCULLUM NOT HAPPY WITH KKR APPROACH

Abu Dhabi, Oct. 22: Disappointed with his team's "timid approach" with the bat, Kolkata Knight Riders head coach Brendon McCullum has admitted that the crushing defeat against Royal Challengers Bangalore would definitely affect the morale of the side, but their destiny is still in their hands.

He believes KKR can go all the way to the final, despite just hanging on to the fourth spot.

McCullum admitted that they were not good enough and lacked intent in the lop-sided contest against RCB.

"This (loss) is going to affect a little bit in terms of our confidence. We need to work hard on ensuring our morale doesn't drop at the same time having those honest conversations around how we improve," McCullum said. — PTI

Virat handing me new ball boosted confidence: Siraj

Abu Dhabi, Oct. 22: Royal Challengers Bangalore pacer Mohammed Siraj, who ripped through Kolkata Knight Riders' top-order with a "magical performance", said skipper Virat Kohli's surprise decision to hand him the new ball lifted his confidence in the IPL match here.

Siraj's first three wickets came without conceding a run as he became the first bowler in IPL history to bowl two maidens in a single game. RCB restricted KKR to a paltry 84/8 and chased down the target in 13.3 overs.

Once Chris Morris generated swing early on, Siraj was asked to bowl the second over following a discussion with wicket-keeper AB de Villiers.

"We hadn't planned that I would open but when we went out, Virat bhai said 'Miyen, ready ho jao (Sir, get ready!),' you will have



Mohammed Siraj (right) of Royal Challengers Bangalore and captain Virat Kohli.

to bowl..." It boosted my confidence," the Hyderabad pacer said.

"Initially, I didn't think it would swing so much after seeing the wicket. I just backed my strength and really enjoyed a lot," he added.

Brought in the second over, Siraj struck in his third ball with a good

length ball that went away of Rahul Tripathi.

In his next delivery, he cleaned up Nitish Rana and in the next over, he accounted for Tom Banton with another outswinging delivery.

His bowling figures became the most economical this season.

— PTI

'SLOW WICKET ALLOWS ME TO ATTACK MORE'

Sharjah, Oct. 22: MI leg-spinner Rahul Chahar on Thursday said the pitches getting gradually slower in the UAE and bigger grounds than India has allowed him to attack the batsmen consistently in the IPL.

Chahar has taken 11 wickets in nine games with a decent economy rate of 7.40.

Asked to compare between the pitches here and the Wankhede in Mumbai, Chahar said, "In the starting matches, we felt that the wickets (here) were similar to the Wankhede stadium easy for batsmen."

"Like at Wankhede a spinner had to bowl on a shorter side, like five meter length, but here we are bowling fuller, because the grounds are big and pitches are slightly slow, we can bowl fuller, and can attack batsmen," added Chahar. — PTI

CSK up against formidable MI

Sharjah, Oct. 22: Their campaign turning from bad to worse, CSK are expected to try out a few of their younger players when they take on defending champions MI in an IPL match here on Friday.

Though skipper M. S. Dhoni conceded after the loss against RR that the season might be already over them, CSK can still get to 14 points if they win their remaining four games, giving them an outside chance of making the play-offs.

Things have gone pear-shaped for CSK since their win over MI in the tournament opener on November 19.

The team received a hammering at the hands of RR and would be without the services of the injured Dwayne Bravo, who is out of the tournament.

Dhoni himself has not been at his best along with the others barring Faf du Plessis.

However, they would be up against a formidable MI side which won five games in a row before KXIP halted the juggernaut, turning the tables in a double Super Over on Sunday night.

The four-time IPL champions have been in ominous form and the varied bowling attack could prove a challenge for the CSK batters, who are low on confidence.

Also, the MI batting line-up has been in good nick

NUMBERS GAME

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL:

- Matches: 29
- Mumbai: 17
- Chennai: 12

MEETING IN 2019

- Mumbai Indians defeated Chennai Super Kings by 37 runs at Mumbai (League)
- Mumbai Indians beat Chennai Super Kings by 46 runs at Chennai (League)
- Mumbai Indians beat Chennai Super Kings by 6 wickets at Chennai (Qualifier 1)
- Mumbai Indian beat Chennai Super Kings by one run at Hyderabad (final)

MEETING IN 2020

- Chennai Super Kings beat Mumbai Indians by 5 wickets at Abu Dhabi

FOR THE RECORD

- Rohit Sharma who scored 3988 runs at an average of 31.65 and a strike rate of 130.54 in 148 innings of 152 matches, needs just 12 runs to become the first batsman to score 4000 or more runs for Mumbai Indians in IPL.
- Ravindra Jadeja who claimed 85 wickets at an average of 26.60 in 99 innings of 112 matches, will become the first Chennai Super Kings player to bowl in 100 innings in IPL.

— S. PERVEZ KAISER

with Quinton de Kock in splendid form while Rohit Sharma, Suryakumar Yadav and Ishan Kishan have had their moments. That's not all, the power-hitting abilities of Kieron Pollard and Hardik Pandya have rescued Mumbai Indians when the big guns have not fired. — PTI

ANDHRA | T20 LEAGUE

Titans, Chargers begin with wins

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT. 22

The Titans and Chargers got off to winning starts in the Andhra T20 League that commenced at the RDT Sports Complex in Anantapur on Thursday.

While the Titans beat Kings by six wickets in the opener, the Chagers laid Legends low by 56 runs in the afternoon game.

Narenreddy (64 — 34b, 3x4, 6x6) of the Kings and K. S. Bharat (64 — 39b, 7x4, 3x6) of the Chargers were the best batsmen on show, scoring a half-century each while K. P. Sai Rahul of Chargers took the bowling

honours by grabbing 4 wickets while conceding a mere 9 runs in the match against Legends XI.

BRIEF SCORES

■ Kings XI 144/5 in 20 overs (C. R. Gnaneswar 35, Narenreddy 64 (34b, 3x4, 6x6), D. Swaroop 2/27) lost to Titans XI 146/4 in 19.3 overs (Gulfaam Saleesh 47 (45b, 2x4, 3x6), D. Chaitanya 41 (37b, 2x4, 2x6, P. Tapaswi 2/21).

■ Chargers XI 138/7 in 20 overs (K. S. Bharat 64 (39b, 7x4, 3x6), S. K. Rashid 22 n.o, M. Harishankar Reddy 2/22, Ashish Reddy 2/15) bt Legends XI 82 in 18.4 overs (K. P. Sai Rahul 4/9, Ch Siddharth 2/23).

INDIAN TEAM ALLOWED TO TRAIN IN QUARANTINE

Sydney, Oct. 22: Sydney and Canberra are set to host the white-ball leg of India's tour of Australia after the New South Wales government allowed the visiting team to train during its mandatory quarantine upon arrival.

ESPNewsinfo on Thursday reported that New South Wales government and Cricket Australia have struck a deal to allow Indian and Australian players returning from IPL to train in Sydney while quarantining.

The Indian team was initially supposed to land in Brisbane but the Queensland state health authorities did not relax their 14-day quarantine rule to allow Virat Kohli and Co to train during that period.

India are scheduled to play three T20s, three ODIs and four Tests in Australia. The first two ODIs are set to be held on November 27 and 29 at the Sydney Cricket Ground before final game of the series in Canberra's Manuka Oval. The first T20 will also be played in Canberra.

The pink-ball Test will be at Adelaide from December 17 to 21. The Boxing Day Test from December 26 could also be held in Adelaide if the Covid-19 situation in Melbourne doesn't allow the authorities to host the game at the iconic MCG. — PTI

Reds pip Ajax, City win big

Paris, Oct. 22: Bayern Munich began their defence of the Champions League title in ominous fashion by crushing Atletico Madrid 4-0 on Wednesday, while Liverpool and Manchester City also won but Real Madrid suffered a shock defeat.

Liverpool shook off the absence of Virgil van Dijk to edge Ajax 1-0 behind closed doors in Amsterdam in Group 'D'.

Van Dijk is set to miss the rest of the season with a knee injury but Jurgen Klopp's side kept a clean sheet and took all three points after Nicolas Tagliafico turned a wayward Sadio Mane shot into his own net on 35 minutes. Madrid, the record 13-time European champions,

Bayern Munich	4	Manchester City	3
(Coman 28, 72, Goretzka 41, Tolisso 66)		(Sergio Aguero 20-pen, Ilay Gundogan 65, Ferran Torres 73)	
Real Madrid	0	FC Porto	1
(Modric 54, Vinicius Junior 59)		(Diaz 14)	
Shakhtar Donetsk	3	Inter Milan	2
(Tete 29, Varane 33-og, Solomon 42)		(Lukaku 49, 90)	
Ajax	0	Borussia Moenchenglbadach	2
(Tagliafico 35-og)		(Ramy Bensebaini 63-pen, Jonas Hofmann 84)	
Liverpool	1		

THE RESULTS

individual effort to wrap up the victory at an empty Allianz Arena.

In between Leon Goretzka and Corentin Tolisso were also on target for the German champions, with the latter's strike a stunner from long-range.

Meanwhile, Real were 3-0 down at half-time against

Shakhtar at the Alfredo di Stefano stadium and fell short with a second-half fightback to get their European campaign off to a disastrous start.

Strikes from Tete and Manor Solomon, either side of a Raphael Varane own-goal, gave them a three-goal half-time lead. — AFP



Sergio Aguero (left) of Manchester City and his teammate Ilkay Gundogan (centre) fight for the ball with Porto's Pepe during their Champions League Group 'C' match at the Etihad stadium in Manchester on Wednesday. City won 3-1. — AFP