

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

COIMBATORE | FRIDAY 16 | OCTOBER 2020

## WEATHER



**Max:** 32°C  
**Min:** 21°C  
**Rainfall:** 1.5 mm

## ASTROGUIDE

**Sarvari:** Purattasi 30  
**Tithi:** Amavasai  
**Star:** Hastham  
**Rahukalam:**  
10.30 am to 12 noon  
**Yamagandam:**  
3 pm to 4.30 pm

### PRAYERS

**Fajar:** 4.48 am  
**Jumma:** 12.00 noon  
**Asar:** 3.16 pm  
**Maghrib:** 5.51 pm  
**Isha:** 7.02 pm

**SUNSET TODAY 5.50 PM**  
**SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.00 AM**  
**MOONRISE TODAY 5.19 AM**  
**MOONSET TOMORROW 5.42 PM**

## CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+60,199)	(+832)
73,65,289	1,12,143

covid19india.org

### STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+4,410 )  
**TN: 6,74 802** | 10,472

### WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

3,90,48,338

### DEATHS

11,00,464

COUNTRIES  
AREAS WITH  
CASES  
**214**

worldometers.info

## Go to Bombay HC is SC advice for Republic TV

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court Thursday refused to entertain a plea by the Republic Media Group seeking to quash the summons issued by Mumbai Police in connection with the Television Rating Points (TRP) manipulation case and asked it to approach the Bombay High Court. “We must have faith in high courts,” said a bench comprising Justice D Y Chandrachud, Indu Malhotra and Indira Banerjee. It said the high court has been working throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and the media group should approach it.

## India to deliver kilo class submarine to Myanmar

**New Delhi:** In a major move that is being seen as a step to checkmate China's influence in neighbouring Myanmar, India will deliver a kilo class submarine to the Myanmar Navy. This will be the first submarine of the Myanmar Navy. On Thursday evening, MEA Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said, “Cooperation in the maritime domain is a part of our diverse and enhanced engagement with Myanmar. In this context, India will be delivering a kilo class submarine INS Sindhuvir to the Myanmar Navy. We understand that this will be the first submarine of the Myanmar Navy.” He added, “This is in accordance with our vision of SAGAR – Security and Growth for All in the Region, and also inline with our commitment to build capacities and self reliance in all our neighbouring countries.”

# Let Allahabad HC deal with Hathras case: Supreme Court

**PARMOD KUMAR | DC**  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 15

The Supreme Court on Thursday reserved its order on a plea by the family of Hathras gang-rape victim seeking the transfer of the trial to Delhi while making it clear that it does not intend to interfere with Allahabad high court that is dealing with the matter.

Chief Justice Sharad A. Bobde, heading a bench also comprising Justice A.S. Bopanna and Justice V. Ramasubramanian, indi-

cated tossing all the PILs and intervention applications relating to Hathras case to Allahabad high court, including plea of the accused against media trial.

Several senior counsels appearing for different intervenors backed the victim's family's plea for transfer of trial to Delhi and expressed apprehension about the fate of the trial in Uttar Pradesh.

Mr Gonsalves urged the court that the security of the victim's family be entrusted

to the Central Reserve Police Force, raising questions about the role of Uttar Pradesh police in the case right from day when it refused to even register an FIR in the case.

Advocate Seema Kushwaha appearing for the victim's family also told the court that the status report of the CBI's investigation should be submitted directly to the court and not routed through UP DGP, a position readily backed by solicitor general Tushar Mehta.



**Huge stash of cash and gold seized from TNPCB official's house in Vellore**

**STATE | 3**

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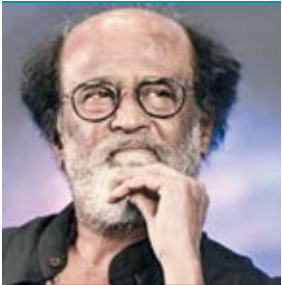
‘LEARNING EXPERIENCE,’ SAYS SUPERSTAR

# Contrite Rajini pays up ₹6.56L as property tax on wedding hall

**G. BABU JAYAKUMAR | DC**  
CHENNAI, OCT. 15

A humble Tamil phrase meaning ‘experience is a lesson’ (*Anubavame Paadam*) that actor Rajinikanth turned into a hashtag in his tweet, regretting his approaching the court for a relief in the property tax of ₹6.56 lakh levied by Chennai Corporation for Raghavendra Kalyana Mandapam, caught up like wildfire on social media with his fan using it to send across a plethora of messages, one of them being that his political entry is imminent.

Though immediate reactions to the actor's tweet in Tamil, which said “Raghavendra Mandapam's property tax... We should have appealed to the Corporation. Could have avoided the mistake. Experience is a lesson,”



● **The actor paid the tax through a cheque drawn on Karnataka Bank Ltd, which gave some grist for social media activists to make snide remarks on his choice of bank**

were rather sarcastic, fans soon latched on and had a field day calling for unity of fans of film actors and defeating the DMK.

“What leader, was the blow a bit severe?” asked one of those who responded initially, perhaps referring the Madras High Court forcing the actor to withdraw the petition with a threat of a heavier penalty, while another one said “when his system itself is not right, what to say,” taking a swipe at an earlier statement by Rajinikanth blaming the

system in the country for all the social and political ills.

Another Twitter user asked, ‘so you won't pay the tax?’ But the actor quickly paid the tax amount through a cheque drawn on Karnataka Bank Ltd, which gave some grist for some social media activists to make snide remarks on his choice of the bank, as the copy of the receipt was circulated in social media.

But the legion of fans quickly got into the act

and trended ‘*Anubavame Paadam*’ with his supporters praising him to the skies for being ‘honest’ and suggesting that he could be fighting the 2021 Assembly elections.

“Political change and regime change can be ushered in if people who think about change and a leader who thinks about people join hands. Now or never,” said a poster put out by his fans in Dindigul district.

“Greatest politician in the making,” said another tweet, while a summary of what happened regarding the actor and the Raghavendra Mandapam tax issue was shared repeatedly by the fans.

The message explained with bullet points the sequence of events leading to his paying the tax and also justifying everything he did in connection with that. ■ **P2**

# J&K parties form alliance to fight for special status

**YUSUF JAMEEL | DC**  
SRINAGAR, OCT. 15

The signatories of ‘Gupkar Declaration’ from among Jammu and Kashmir's mainstream parties held a meeting here on Thursday and named the initiative aimed at fighting for the restoration of the erst-while state's special status as ‘People's Alliance’.

Former chief minister and National Conference president, Farooq Abdullah at whose house along Srinagar's Gupkar Road the meeting, the third of the ‘Gupkar Declaration’ signatories, was held said, “Ours is a constitutional battle. We want the Government of India to return to the people the rights they held prior to August 5, 2019.” People's Democratic



Jammu and Kashmir National Conference president Farooq Abdullah along with his son Omar Abdullah and Peoples Democratic Party chief Mehbooba Mufti during a meeting of signatories to the Gupkar Declaration, at his residence in Srinagar on Thursday. — **HABIB NAQASH**

Party president and former chief minister, Mehbooba Mufti, who was released from a 14-month-long detention earlier this week, also attended the meeting. ‘Gupkar Declaration’ was a pledge for defending Article 370

and 35A of Kashmir's mainstream parties which they took at a meeting held at Mr. Abdullah's residence on August 4, 2019, a day before the state was stripped of its special status and split up into two Union Territories.

# GST: Centre to borrow ₹1.1L cr on behalf of states

**SANGEETHA G | DC**  
CHENNAI, OCT. 15

In a move that may end the impasse with the states, the Centre has decided to borrow ₹1.1 lakh crore on behalf of the states under a special window to meet the shortfall of Goods and Services Tax compensation.

Under the Special Window, the estimated shortfall of ₹1.1 lakh crore (assuming all states join) will be borrowed by Government of India in appropriate tranches, the Centre said in a release.

The amount so borrowed will be passed on to the states as a back-to-back loan

in lieu of GST Compensation Cess releases.

This will not have any impact on the fiscal deficit of the Government of India. The amounts will be reflected as the capital receipts of the state governments and as part of financing of its respective fiscal deficits.

This will avoid differential rates of interest that individual States may be charged for their respective SDLs (State Development Loans) and will be an administratively easier arrangement.

It may also be clarified that the General Government (States+Centre) borrowings will not

● **The amount so borrowed will be passed on to the states as a back-to-back loan in lieu of GST Compensation Cess releases**

increase by this step. The states that get the benefit from the Special Window are likely to borrow a considerably lesser amount from the additional borrowing facility of 2 per cent of GSDP (from 3 to 5 per cent) under the Aatma Nirbhar Package, the release said.

The release, however, did not mention who will ser-

vice the interest and principal payments.

After finding that there will be a significant shortfall in the compensation cess collected in FY21 due to the pandemic, the Finance Ministry in August had given two options to the states. As per the first option, the states can borrow ₹97,000 crore — compensation cess on account of GST implementation — of the total estimated GST compensation cess shortfall of ₹ 2.35 lakh crore for FY21.

Those choosing the second option can borrow the full estimated compensation cess amount of ₹2.35 lakh crore for FY21. ■ **P4**

# India denies Pak NSA claims of dialogue

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 15

India on Thursday said a claim by Pakistani National Security Advisor (NSA) Moeed Yusuf that India had communicated a “desire for conversation” with Pakistan was “fictitious” and that “no such message was sent” by India. Yusuf had reportedly made the claim in an interview to an Indian news website.

New Delhi also lambasted Islamabad for its “effort to divert attention from domestic failures of the present government and mislead its domestic constituents by pulling India into headlines on a daily basis”, adding that the Pakistani NSA should reserve his advice for his own country and refrain from commenting on India's internal matters.

India made it clear that “support to terrorism against India and use of derogatory and abusive language are not conducive to normal neighbourly relations”.

At his weekly briefing on Thursday evening, MEA spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said, “We have seen reports on the interview by a senior Pakistani official to an Indian media outlet. He has commented on India's internal matters. As always, this is Pakistan's effort to divert attention from domestic failures of the present government and mislead its domestic constituents by pulling India into headlines on a daily basis. The (Pakistani) official is well advised to restrict his advice to his establishment and not to comment on India's domestic policy. The statements made by him are contrary to facts on the ground, misleading and fictitious. As regards the purported message, let me make it clear that no such message was sent from our side.” He added, “Pakistan continues to support, aid and abet cross-border terrorism against India and has also been resorting to unprovoked ceasefire violations to support terrorist infiltration.



● **The statements made by Mr Yusuf are contrary to facts on the ground, misleading and fictitious. As regards the purported message, let me make it clear that no such message was sent from our side,” said ministry of external affairs (MEA) spokesperson Anurag Srivastava**

“As always, this is Pakistan's effort to divert attention from domestic failures of the present government and mislead its domestic constituents by pulling India into headlines on a daily basis,” he added

‘**ARUNACHAL PRADESH IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF INDIA**’

“The union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh have been, are, and would remain an integral part of India. China has no locus standi to comment on India's internal matters. Arunachal Pradesh is an integral and inalienable part of India. This fact has also been clearly conveyed to the Chinese side,” Anurag Srivastava said.

# India hits out at China on Ladakh issue

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 15

New Delhi slammed Beijing on Thursday, saying it “has no locus standi to comment on India's internal matters”, after China reportedly said it does not recognise the union territory of Ladakh. China also does not recognise Arunachal Pradesh as part of India. In what is being seen as a veiled reference to China's insistence that other countries follow the “One China Policy”, New Delhi “hoped that countries will not comment on India's internal matters, as much as they expect the same of others”.

Meanwhile, following the latest round of talks with China for military disengagement in the Ladakh sector, India on Thursday reiterated that the “two sides have a better understanding of each other's positions”, adding that the two countries will “maintain the current momentum of communications based on the guidance of our leadership to not to turn differences into disputes and work towards a mutually acceptable solu-

tion for complete disengagement”.

On Thursday, MEA Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said, “Our position on this has always been clear and consistent. The union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh have been, are, and would remain an integral part of India. China has no locus standi to comment on India's internal matters. We hope that countries will not comment on India's internal matters, as much as they expect the same of others. Our position on Arunachal Pradesh has also been made clear several times. Arunachal Pradesh is an integral and inalienable part of India. This fact has also been clearly conveyed to the Chinese side on several occasions, including at the highest level.”

On talks with China for military disengagement in the Ladakh sector, he added, “I would like to draw your attention to the Joint Press Release issued after the seventh round of the Senior Commanders talks held on October 12.



Vivek Oberoi with his brother-in law Aditya Alva. — **File picture**

Mahanand searched Oberoi's house in Juhu, Mumbai and questioned him about Aditya Alva.

Joint Commissioner of Police Sandeep Patil said

that Aditya Alva is absconding in the Cottonpet case.

Since Vivek Oberoi is his relative and Bengaluru police received information that Aditya Alva is in

Mumbai, the police team wanted to check the facts. Besides, there is every chance that Vivek Oberoi may know the whereabouts of Aditya Alva.

The police got a court warrant and have gone there to check the information.

Aditya Alva is son of Karnataka former minister late Jeevaraj Alva, who was a colorful politician in 80s and 90s.

His mother Nandini Alva is a famous dancer. Vivek Oberoi has married Priyanka Alva, Aditya Alva's sister.

After the death of Jeevaraj Alva, the family stayed away from politics for some time.

However, in 2014 general elections, Nandini Alva unsuccessfully tried entering politics by contesting from Bengaluru Central Parliamentary segment on JD(S) ticket.

Since then, the family has stayed away from politics. However, the family came to limelight when Priyanka Alva married Vivek Oberoi.

Later, two months ago, when CCB started cracking the drug racket in Bengaluru, the name of Aditya Alva cropped up. Aditya used to lend his resort in Bengaluru outskirts for the drug parties and he is suspected to be organising drug supply to such parties.



## SHORT TAKES

## Man held for abduction, sexual assault

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, OCT. 15

The Kalpakkam police on Thursday arrested a 22-year-old man on charges of abducting a minor girl and sexually assaulting her. Vikram, a welder, was arrested for abducting and sexually assaulting a 15-year-old minor girl.

According to police, Vikram allegedly abducted the girl on October 12 and sexually assaulted her. Based on the complaint by the girl's father, police tracked down the accused and the girl to Karaithittu area. He was arrested and a case was registered under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Pocso) Act against him.

## Rajini creates awareness on Section 105

From P1

"Speak with honesty, think with sincerity and act with integrity," said another carrying a picture of Rajinikanth atop an open jeep surrounded by a jostling crowd of people and media persons.

Another one said "we all with you", regretted that the news headlines were conveying it wrongly and urged him to make it clear. He was "setting a good example," said one and another said, "Bold men, don't play victim card". But the main message was: "Thalaivaaaaa 2021 is waiting for you."

Many tweets appreciated him for creating awareness on Section 105, under which, it was said, that there was a provision for tax exemption if a marriage hall was closed for over 30 days.

But another fan summed up the idea behind trending the hashtag: "It's been 50+ Yrs of Dravida Politics what did Happen? No Change the System is still Corrupted! 2021 Elections will be an opportunity for people to correct their Mistakes."

And, as another fan @stranger2898 put it, their main target of attack was the DMK. He gave a clarion call to fans of all film stars like Rajinikanth, Ajith, Vijay and Surya to set aside their differences, forgetting fan fights and "to gether fight hard for a goodness of our tamilnadu."

## Puducherry adds 245 new coronavirus cases

**Puducherry, Oct. 15:** The union territory of Puducherry reported 245 fresh COVID-19 cases while two more deaths pushed the toll to 570, Health Minister Malladi Krishna Rao said on Thursday. The 245 new cases were identified at the end of examination of 4,649 samples, he told a virtual press meet. The Puducherry region had 174 of the new cases followed by Karaikal (39), Mahe (27) and Karaikal (5), he added. The Minister said that 2.5 lakh samples have been tested so far and it was found that 2.14 lakh samples out of them were negative. Rao said the fatality and recovery rates were 1.75 per cent and 84.24 per cent respectively. The Health department had discharged 213 patients from hospitals after recovery during the last 24 hours. The overall Covid-19 cases in Puducherry stood at 32,486 after transfer of four patients to Tamil Nadu), the Minister said, adding while there were 4,551 active cases, 27,365 patients had recovered and were discharged so far while the fatalities were 570. Of the two patients who died in the last 24 hours, a 68-year old woman patient died of infection in Government GH here while the other patient (male) aged 60 years died at the Government GH in Karaikal. Both were diagnosed to be Covid pneumonia patients. —PTI



People buying Kolu dolls at Mylapore on Thursday.

— DC

## More Covid preventive measures at secretariat

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, OCT. 15

The public department of the state government has escalated the preventive measures taken against the spread of Covid-19 following a spike in the number of positive cases in the various offices in the secretariat.

According to a statement, all departments had been requested to purchase a

required number of pulse oximeters to check oxygen levels and thermal scanners to check body temperature of all staff on a daily basis.

Any official with symptoms like fever, high body temperature, cold, cough and decreased oxygen saturation should be subjected to testing and further medical examination, the release said, adding that under secretaries or deputy

secretaries of the departments would be in charge of this, the release added.

Already, adequate precautions had been taken in the Secretariat premises to prevent the spread of the virus with the body temperature of all staff and visitors checked with thermal scanners and by providing for sanitisers at various places, including the connecting corridors and ATMs, the release said.

## Man flees with gold chain from jewellery shop

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, OCT. 15

In a daring daylight robbery, an unknown person fled with a gold chain from a jewellery shop in Medavakkam Bazaar after pretending to buy gold ornaments.

Police said Rathanalal, a Chennai resident, lodged a complaint with the Pallikaranai police that a man posed as a client and stole a nine sovereign gold chain.

Rathanlal owns a small jewellery shop in Medavakkam Bazaar. On Wednesday, a man entered the shop in the guise of buying jewels. When the shopowner was showing different designs of chains, the man suddenly opened the door and fled with a gold chain. The shop owner, who did not anticipate this, chased him, shouting for help, but in vain. Based on his complaint, the Pallikaranai police have registered a

case and collected CCTV footage from the shop.

Meanwhile, burglars looted gold and diamond jewels from the locked house of a retired bank employee in Madipakkam.

According to the police, Navaneethakrishnan, 73 of Karthikeyapuram in Madiapakkam, is a retired bank employee. He lived with his wife, Saraswathi, 69.

Police said the duo were tested positive for

## Kerala backwater tourism to spur TN package tours

T. SUDHEESH | DC  
CHENNAI, OCT. 15

With the Kerala government deciding to open up backwater tourism, the tour operators of Chennai, jobless since the advent of pandemic, are pinning hope on the revival of package tours.

T.G. Abhilash Kumar, deputy director, Kerala Tourism, told DC that backwater tourism in Kerala will be opened by October 18. But the tourists needing houseboat ride should register their details in the webportal 'covidjagratha'.

"We will allow all domestic tourists in the country. But only 10 people will be allowed in a boat at a time. Two people can stay inside a room. Check-in and check-out will be mandatory between 9 am and 5 pm. The boats will be disinfected after every ride. The riders will be allowed to check in only after getting their luggage disinfected. A QR code will be displayed in front of the houseboat to submit details in the covid-jagratha portal. Quarantine will be mandatory for tourists who undertake more than seven-day trips."

VKT Balan, chairman, Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India, Tamil Nadu chapter, said the Kerala development will be a boon for the tour operators in Tamil Nadu, especially as lot of families in Chennai opt for house-

## Coronavirus screening intensified on Kerala border

ARULOLI M | DC  
KANYAKUMARI, OCT. 15

As covid cases in Kerala is witnessing a surge, intensive checking is being carried out in the border check posts in Kanyakumari and Tenkasi districts, along Kerala border.

These borders were completely opened for passengers crossing the Kaliyakavilal and Marthandam areas in Kanyakumari district, and Puliayarai in Tenkasi district, since the relaxation of the lockdown.

But since a month back, health officials in these two districts bordering Kerala,

woke up to the sudden increase in the number of covid cases in Kerala, and deployed special teams comprising officials from the police, health and revenue departments, to keep tab on visitors crossing the Tamil Nadu borders, said a health official at the Kaliyakavilal check post, where on an average of 70-80 visitors from Kerala are being tested.

At the Puliayarai check post in Tenkasi district, a 12 member team led by Shengottai tahsildar, Rosham Bhegam, has been involved in vehicle checks. "Details of all passengers coming from Kerala

through Puliayarai check post have also been recorded," added Bhegam.

Such intensive prevention measures helped the district administration keep the number of cases under control.

A health official said, Tenkasi district which recorded around 7,700 covid cases since March, has drastically brought down the rate of infection spread. The average number of Covid-19 infection on the same day in September was 60, but has now come down to below 20 per day and the recovery rate in the district stands at 98.1 per cent.

boat rides in Kerala every year. "We are looking forward to approaching tourists who want to go Kerala with the festival season round the corner," he said.

Senthana Amuthan, a leading tour operator in Chennai, hailed Kerala's decision as it will give a stimulus to the tour operating business in Chennai. People choose Alappuzha because of its unique geography and tourism-friendly policies of the Kerala government. We hope the

Tamil Nadu tourism will also open its tourist destinations soon, he said.

According to the data available with Kerala tourism, around 14 lakh tourists from Tamil Nadu visited Kerala every year in the pre-Covid era. The Kerala tourism had laid down a roadmap to woo holiday enthusiasts from Tamil Nadu, organizing a meeting of representatives from travel, tour and hospitality business from Kerala and representatives in

## Newly-wed air hostess commits suicide at Air India quarters

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, OCT. 15

A 28-year-old air hostess allegedly committed suicide at the Air India quarters in Meenambakkam in the city on Wednesday.

According to police, the deceased has been identified as Anbarasi (28), working as an Air India flight attendant on a contract basis since 2017. Anbarasi, a Salem native, married one Sarankumar (30) from Tirupathi, on September 14. Sarankumar is working in a shipping company as an engineer.

The newly-married couple moved to the Air India quarters in Meenambakkam a week ago. Anbarasi's brother Aravindh was also staying with the couple. Police said the victim rejoined duty on Wednesday after taking a long leave for wedding.

The incident happened on Wednesday afternoon when no one was present in the house. At around 1:30 pm, Sarankumar stepped out to buy lunch. When he returned home in

an hour, he found the main door locked from inside. He knocked on the door and tried to reach Anbarasi through the phone. As she did not respond, he peeped through the window and found her hanging from the ceiling.

Based on the information, the Meenambakkam police rushed to the scene. They recovered the body and sent it to the Chrompet government hospital for post-mortem. Based on a complaint filed by Anbarasi's brother, the police registered a case and began an investigation.

Anbarasi's parents told police that there were no misunderstandings between the husband and wife and they were very happy together.

The police are investigating if the air hostess took her life due to work pressure.

The case was also forwarded for an inquiry by a revenue divisional officer to verify if the woman ended her life due to dowry harassment.

**According to police, the deceased has been identified as Anbarasi (28), working as an Air India flight attendant on a contract basis since 2017. Anbarasi, a Salem native, married one Sarankumar (30) from Tirupathi, on September 14. Sarankumar is working in a shipping company as an engineer**

**The newly-married couple moved to the Air India staff quarters in Meenambakkam a week ago. Anbarasi's brother Aravindh was also staying with the couple. Police said the victim rejoined duty on Wednesday after taking a long leave for wedding**



## CORONA AWARENESS

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A music and dance programme to create awareness on corona safety measures held at a traffic signal at Chrompet on Thursday. It was organised by St Thomas Mount traffic investigation wing.

— DC

## Want a clean, not crowded, Marina now

B. Vijayalakshmi

## Viewpoint

Namma Marina beach hogged the limelight this week over two inter-related issues. Considered the second longest beach in the world, Marina failed to bag the coveted Blue Flag label from an acclaimed global agency. However, for the first time, eight other beaches in our country won the certificate from the Foundation for Environment Education, Denmark, based on 33 stringent criteria relating to cleanliness, bathing water quality, facilities, environment and sustainable development.

In a related development, the Madras high court,

The crowd at the Marina beach last week.

— DC



while hearing a petition on cleaning up Marina beach and regulating fish markets, underlined the need to keep beaches free of encroachments. The court's emphasis followed

media reports of encroachments on Loop road and Marina pathway by fish sellers and squatters occupying places near the Lighthouse area. It may be recalled that the corpora-

tion had missed its June 2020 deadline to build a new fish market along Loop Road to relocate the vendors. Also, the civic body's plan to issue identity cards and push carts to vendors

on Marina beach could not be implemented due to Covid outbreak. The state government informed the court that it would file notices on setting up of the fish market during the next

hearing in November.

Despite the Madras high court passing strictures on regularisation of vendors and beach beautification measures for the last few years and the government promising steps to evict encroachers, the 13-km Marina beach is yet to regain its lost sheen. With the Supreme Court and the high court attesting the TN government's decision to make Marina a protest-free zone, Chennaiites must also do their bit in keeping the beach clean. The beach cannot look ruined with plastic carry bags, eatables, leftovers, wrappers and broken bottles. Also there have been instances, when beach visitors were surprised to see the shore filled with foam reportedly due to sewage from Cooum and Adyar rivers. Private organisations, NGOs and government agencies have embarked on cleanliness drives and removed several

hundred tonnes of garbage littering the Marina sands at regular intervals. Police and the civic body must make sure the country's longest beach is free of encroachments.

In response to HC's query on opening of beaches, the Chennai corporation commissioner said the Marina beach, closed to the public in March due to Covid-19, is likely to be reopened next month. However, regulating crowds on the beach, a place for both recreation and exercise, will pose a big challenge to authorities.

It is time massive awareness campaigns on the virus were launched and Chennaiites were educated on the need for social distancing.

People must realize the gravity of the situation and stop crowding in beaches because it might facilitate the spread of the killer virus.



## OTHER STORY

## Cong leader Raut writes to Governor

Mumbai, Oct. 15: Maharashtra minister and Congress leader Nitin Raut has demanded stern action against the vice-president of a village panchayat in Tamil Nadu for allegedly forcing a Dalit woman panchayat president to sit on the floor during a meeting. Raut, who is also the AICC SC department chairman, has written a letter to Tamil Nadu Governor Banwarilal Purohit demanding stern action against the accused. The Congress leader said he was angered and pained.

—PTI

## New scheme in 435 PDS shops from today

DC CORRESPONDENT  
THANJAVUR, OCT. 15

Bio-metric system for giving provisions to ration card holders under 'One nation, one ration card' scheme will be introduced in 435 fair price shops in Kumbakonam, Papanasam and Thiruvadamurthur taluks in Kumbakonam division in Thanjavur district, from October 16 said a press release from Collector M Govinda Rao, on Thursday. The collector said that the system would be introduced later in other shops in the district. There are 1,183 fair price shops in the district. Under this scheme, free rice and wheat and other provisions with price will be distributed to ration card holders. With respect to those who have come from other states for work, rice under central scheme at ₹3 per kg, and wheat at ₹2 per kg, will be distributed.

## Digitisation work completed

DC CORRESPONDENT  
THANJAVUR, OCT. 15

Digitisation of Marathi and Telugu palm leaf and paper manuscripts have been completed fully at the Rajah Serfoji Saraswathi Mahal library, said Collector M Govinda Rao, who is also director of the library, which is one of the biggest manuscripts library in the whole of Asia. Presiding over a meeting of the administrative committee to discuss the developments of the library here on Thursday, the collector said that with respect to Tamil manuscripts, old ones have been digitised and some new manuscripts received in the recent past are being digitised. It will be completed soon. Regarding Sanskrit manuscripts, the collector said that 65.20 per cent digitisation has been completed and the rest is being done. With respect to retirement benefits of retired pandits and staff, proposals have been sent to the government based on the seventh pay commission recommendations, and it will be processed soon. Shivaji Rajah Bhonsle, lifetime member of the administrative committee of the library, G Balasubramanian, vice-chancellor, Tamil university and Ramakrishnan, chief education officer, participated.



Tiruppur District Collector K.Vijayarathi inaugurates Co-optex Deepavali discount sale on College road in Tiruppur on Wednesday.

— DC

## HC poses queries on delay in procurement of paddy

J. STALIN | DC  
CHENNAI, OCT. 15

Taking judicial note of the fact from the media that agitations are being made by the farmers for not procuring their paddy in time, the Madras high court has posed 8 queries to be answered by the Tamil Nadu government by October 16, 2020.

A division bench comprising Justices N.Kirubakaran and B.Pugalendhi posed the queries while passing interim orders on a Public Interest Litigation filed by advocate A.P. Suryaprakasam.

The bench said the PIL has been filed by A.P.Suryaprakasam, party-in-person, pointing out certain shortcomings in procurement of paddy from the farmers at the procurement centres. Because of abundant rain, the agriculture yield is good. Therefore, the farmers are bringing more paddy to the centres. However, to their shock, it is alleged that the officials in the procurement centres are making them to wait for days together. The poor farmers, left with no other options, are made to wait on the roads. There is no place for them even to

## The 8 questions are:

1) How many procurement centres have been opened in Tamil Nadu?

2) How the paddy procured from the farmers are stored in temporary centres before being removed to the godowns/warehouses?

3) Why not the government put up temporary sheds to keep the paddy as it is alleged that more time is taken up by the officials to procure the same?



4) Whether it is a fact that gunny bags are not sufficiently available to make procurements?

5) Whether it is a fact that some of the officials demand bribes of Rs

30 to 40 per bag for making procurement?

6) Whether it is a fact that the officials are making procurement from the private traders instead from the farmers?

7) How many bags of paddy are damaged, because of rain or not properly storing them?

8) What are all the measures taken by the government to procure the paddy effectively and swiftly?

keep the paddy. Since it is a rainy season, there is a possibility of the grains getting damaged due to rain. It takes days together for the officials to procure the paddy from the farmers. However, it is alleged that the officials are procuring from private traders instead of procuring from the farmers. It is also stated that money is also demanded as a bribe from the farmers for procuring the paddy at the rate of Rs 30 to 40 per bag or 5 bags for procuring 50 days. It is also submitted

by Suryaprakasam that malpractices are being shown in the visual media and the vigilance and anti-corruption department has to take note of it, the bench added.

The bench said, "This court takes judicial note of the fact from the visual media that agitations are being made by the farmers for not procuring their paddy in time. The officials are also rejecting the paddy on the ground that the moisture content is more than that of the prescribed level". The officials were

stating that sufficient number of gunny bags were not available and therefore, the procurement was being delayed. When the yield was more, procurement centres should have been established in every taluk level to see that the procurement was made very swiftly from the farmers and interests of the farmers were protected, the bench added and posed 8 queries to be answered by the authorities. The bench posted to October 16, 2020, further hearing of the case.

## Abdul Kalam remembered on his birth anniv

Chennai, Oct. 15: Former President, the late APJ Abdul Kalam was remembered in Tamil Nadu on his 89th birth anniversary, with leaders paying tributes to him.

In Rameswaram, the Dalai Lama interacted with the former President's family through video link and recalled his association with the late Kalam. During his interaction, he stressed the need for global peace. Later, members of Kalam's family, District Collector K. Veeraraghava Rao and others paid homage at the Kalam memorial at Peikarambu in the district which was decked up for the occasion. Rao also inaugurated a 1,000-sampling planting drive to commemorate Kalam's birth anniversary. Governor Banwarilal Purohit paid floral tributes to a portrait of Kalam at the Raj Bhavan here. Chief Minister K. Palaniswami, in a tweet, said Kalam was a guide to youngsters as he asked them to dream which will lead to thoughts that in turn will take shape into action. He also paid tributes to the former President. Makkal Needhi Maiam (MNM) chief Kamal Haasan said Kalam's achievements and vision should guide the future generation.

— PTI



OMNI BUSES GETTING READY

Workers busy cleaning private omni buses at Koyambedu terminus before commencing operations on Friday.

— DC

## Chennai streets prone to flooding even after light rain

T. SUDHEESH | DC  
CHENNAI, OCT. 15

Despite the authorities taking several steps including periodic de-silting of stormwater drains and dredging and clearing of the waterbodies to mitigate the flooding, the city streets are still prone to flooding even in a low-intensity rain.

For instance, the Tamil street in Choolaimedu was completely inundated within an hour during the rainfall on Monday evening.

Sudha Ramalingam, a local resident, says flawed road engineering and improper management of stormwater drain have caused the flash waterlogging. Even if it's a drizzle, the entire area will be submerged.

"Nobody can move around due to waterlogging. The road was under water the entire night," she said.

Ramalingam, a lawyer, demanded reconstruction of the road to prevent water logging in the area. Since it is a concrete road, there is no space for rainwater to recede. The authorities should expedite activities of clearing the stormwater drains as they are stuck," she said.

It may be recalled that the Red Atlas developed by

National Centre for Coastal Research (NCCR), an MoES laboratory, last year had warned authorities about the risk of flooding during the monsoon season in the low-lying areas like Periamet, Pattalam, Kosapet, Manali, Thiruvottiur, Chintadripet and Perambur.

The Atlas had said the streets in Edayanchavadi, Periamet, Egmore, Wadiya Nagar, Kosapet and Pattalam have a very high risk of 75 percent of the area going under three to six feet of water if the city registers 30cm rainfall in a day.

The corporation wards like Ernavoor, Manali, Madhavaram, Ganesapuram near Vyasarpadi, Moolakothalam, 150 George Town, Purasai- 153 walkam, Chetpet, Teynampet, Thousand Lights, 156 Valsarvakkam, Manapakkam, RA Puram, Velachery, Pallikarai, Thoraipakkam, Ezhil Nagar and Kannagi Nagar are also under risk.

In addition to this, north Chennai localities like Sathyamoorthy Nagar in Thiruvottiur, Chin- 79 Tadripet, Mettupalayam 80 near Perambur, Otteri, 81 Thiru-vi-ka Nagar and many streets in west 85 Chennai localities like Anna Nagar, Aminjikarai,

Shenoy Nagar and those in south Chennai including Pallikarai, Thoraipakkam, parts of Madipakkam like Ram Nagar, Ramamurthy Nagar, Rajalakshmi Nagar fall under the high-risk category.

Jayaraman, secretary, Motilal Street Residents Welfare Association, who complained to the corporation authorities to finish de-silting works before monsoon, says the unscientific construction of roads is a main reason for inundation during monsoon. "For example, the ground floor of the flat complex at our street stands below the height of the road. Hence, the rainwater would flow directly into the residential area causing water logging in the entire area very soon. If they construct the road properly so that water can flow smoothly through drains, the inundation can be averted," he said.

According to the officials, many steps including flood warning system and periodic drain clearing were initiated after the 2015 floods to avoid inundation in Greater Chennai areas. 'We have already developed a system to provide inundation levels based on various scenarios. Based on this, we can alert people about the water inundation', they said.

## FORMER MLA VETRIVEL DIES DUES TO CORONAVIRUS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, OCT. 15

Former MLA P Vetrivel, who was the treasurer of AMMK, passed away on Thursday at a private hospital, where he was admitted for Covid-19 treatment. He was 60.

Vetrivel, who was Chennai Corporation

councillor twice, was disqualified as MLA in 2017 when he threw his weight behind T T V Dinakaran.

DMK president M. K. Stalin condoled his death on behalf of the party and recalled Vetrivel's tenure as leader of the Opposition the corporation when he was the Mayor.

## For 4th straight day, Covid cases below 5K in TN

Chennai, Oct. 15: Tamil Nadu logged fresh Covid-19, cases below the 5,000 mark for the fourth straight day on Thursday as the tally rose to 6,74, 802 and 49 more fatalities pushed the death toll to 10,472.

Of the 4,410 fresh infections, Chennai reported 1,148, Coimbatore 395, Salem 263 and Chengelpet 255. The state capital accounted for 1,86,667 of the 6.74 lakh plus cumulative positive cases, a health department bulletin said.

After a gap of nearly three months, the state saw its fresh COVID-19 cases drop below the 5,000 mark on October 12.

Two men aged 33 and 90 besides a 37-year old woman were among those who succumbed on Thursday and in all 47 had co-morbidities and two no chronic illnesses.

The recoveries continued to outnumber fresh cases and with 5,055 patients getting discharged from various hospitals, a total of 6,22,458 people have got cured and correspondingly the active cases dipped to 41,872.

Barring two days, the state has been posting more recoveries than fresh cases since Oct 4.

Active cases were 39,856 as on July 1 and surged thereafter, crossing the 46,000 mark during the first week of that month. After dropping to 43,747 on Oct 12, the active cases decreased further to 43,239 the next day and on Wednesday it slid to 42,566.

As many as 90,752 samples were tested and 86,74,793 specimens have so far been examined in 192 COVID labs across the state.

— PTI

## Chief Secretary's term extended

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, OCT. 15

The term of State Chief Secretary K Shanmugam has been extended for three months till the end of January, 2021, according to a communication from the Union Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pension.

Obliging the request of the State government, the Centre approved the extension of service for the 1985 batch IAS officer of the Tamil Nadu cadre with effect from November 1, 2020.

## ₹3.25cr cash, gold, silver seized in TNPCB official's house

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VELLORE, OCT. 15

The seizure of a large amount of cash worth ₹3.25 crore, gold, silver and land related documents from the house of a senior official of the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB), Vellore district, has created a flutter here.

Sleuths of the Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption (DVAC) seized a huge amount of cash and gold jewellery from the residence of senior TNPCB official M. Paneerselvam, resident of Barathi Nagar, Ranipet, Vellore district.

Led by DSP Hemachitra, a team of DVAC officials comprising three inspectors, S Vijay, Rajinikanth and Vijayalakshmi, raided the residence of the engineer, which extended for over 19 hours.

"We have seized Rs. 3.25 crore in cash, 450 sovereigns of gold and 6.5 kg silverware from Pannerselvam's residence," said a top DVAC official. The DVAC team also seized some documents of properties in Vellore, Ranipet, Tiruvallur and Chennai, belonging to the officer's kin. Paneerselvam



counting machines were used for counting the cash.

Stocked in four iron trunk boxes: Paneerselvam's house had a large room which serves as a store room.

Inside was a big spacious loft in which four large trunk boxes were kept. DVAC sleuths brought those boxes down and found two of the boxes filled with bundles of currency notes and another box contained gold jewels, coins and cash.

Top: Seized cash.

Police guard outside the house during raid.

— K. Senthil Nathan

is alleged to have been in control of six divisions - Vellore, Vaniyambadi, Tiruvannamalai, Villupuram, Hosur and Dharmapuri. He had been serving as

District Environmental Engineer (DEE) in Vaniyambadi division, before his promotion as JCEE. Appraisers helped the officials evaluate the valuables, and cash

The fourth box contained several land related documents.

Apart from these, Paneerselvam is also said to have a locker in the bank.



## SHORT TAKES

## SHIV SENA URGES CENTRE TO RECALL MAHA GOVERNOR

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC  
MUMBAI, OCT. 15

Continuing its attack on governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari, Maharashtra's ruling party Shiv Sena has asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union home minister Amit Shah to recall him to preserve the prestige of Raj Bhavan.

"For last few months, the prestige of Raj Bhavan has been daily belittled by Koshiyari, who has shown how a person on the post of Governor should not act. His letter to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray should be called as an act of abrasiveness," said Shiv Sena in an editorial in party mouthpiece 'Saamana' on Thursday.

In a letter written to Thackeray, the Governor has questioned the state government's decision of not allowing the reopening of places of worship and asked if the Shiv Sena chief had "suddenly turned secular." His letter had evoked a sharp response from the CM, who hit back saying he does not need the Governor's certificate for his Hindutva credentials.

The *Saamana* editorial said that the Governor had no business to support the 'political agitation' of BJP, who held protests demanding reopening of places of worship.

## WORK ON ASIA'S LONGEST TUNNEL BEGINS IN J&amp;K

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC  
SRINAGAR, OCT. 15

A new tunnel, the longest in Asia, which will pass through 3,000 metre Zojila-the mountain pass of blizzards- will make road connectivity between landlocked Ladakh and Kashmir Valley possible throughout the year. At present, the stretch of the 419-km road between Srinagar and Leh remains shut for vehicular traffic for four to five months during winters.

The construction of the all-weather tunnel commenced on Thursday with blasting on both ends at Baltal in Kashmir Valley's Ganderbal and Minimarg in Ladakh's Kargil districts and was unveiled virtually by Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari. Lt. Governor of Ladakh, R.K. Mathur, and his counterpart in J&K Manoj Sinha attended the event from Leh and Srinagar, respectively.

Mr. Gadkari said that the remodelled Zojila project is expected to save about Rs. 4,000 crore in cost and about four hours in commuting time. He said that the inclusion of connectivity from Z-Morh to Zoji(la) pass tunnel with tunnels, bridges, snow galleries, etc. has further enhanced the Zojila tunnel project into a holistic one.

## INDIA'S 1ST OSCAR WINNER BHANU ATHAIYA DIES

**Mumbai, Oct. 15:** Costume designer Bhanu Athaiya, India's first Oscar winner, died at her home on Thursday after prolonged illness, her daughter said. She was 91.

Athaiya, who won an Oscar for her work in the 1983 epic film *Gandhi*, passed away peacefully in her sleep, her daughter Radhika Gupta said.

The last rites took place at the Chandanwadi crematorium in south Mumbai. "She passed away early morning. Eight years ago, she was diagnosed with a tumour in her brain. For the last three years, she was bedridden because one side (of her body) was paralysed," her daughter said. The Kolhapur-born Athaiya, who worked till just five years ago, began her career as a costume designer in Hindi cinema with Guru Dutt's 1956 superhit *C.I.D.* She went on to work in over 100 films.

She won the Academy Award for Best Costume Design in Richard Attenborough's *Gandhi*, with Ben Kingsley as the Mahatma, along with John Mollo. It's too good to believe. Thank you Academy and thank you Sir Richard Attenborough for focusing world attention on India, Athaiya had said in her acceptance speech at the Academy Awards.

The veteran who defined the aesthetics of Hindi cinema through her prolific work, created some of Bollywood's best remembered looks, including Vijayantihmal in *Aamrapali*, Waheeda Rehman in *Guide* and Zeenat Aman in *Satyam Shivam Sundaram*.



## PM LIKELY TO ADDRESS RALLY NEXT WEEK

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 15

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to address his first election rally in poll bound Bihar on October 23 or 24.

Modi may address his first rally in Arrah, which is currently represented by the RJD in the state Assembly and BJP in the Lok Sabha.

The Prime Minister, sources said, could also address around a dozen joint rallies with Chief Minister and JD(U) chief Nitish Kumar for NDA's candidates.

The first phase of three phased polling in the state will take place on October 28. The ruling NDA's poll plank is development while the Opposition camp has been highlighting "anti-incumbency" against the ruling coalition.

In 2015, Modi had announced ₹1.25 lakh crore special package for the state while addressing an official function. JD(U) was with the Opposition 'mahagath-bandhan' in 2015 which won the polls but the Nitish Kumar led outfit later rejoined the NDA camp.

Other than the Prime Minister, BJP president J.P. Nadda is likely to address more than 20 rallies, Union minister Amit Shah could address more than a dozen rallies, UP CM Yogi Adityanath and Union minister Smriti Irani could also address more than a dozen rallies.

## Nitish behaved with my father haughtily: Chirag

LJP chief denies suggestions that he parted ways with JD(U) over seat-sharing

**Patna, Oct. 15:** LJP president Chirag Paswan on Thursday trashed suggestions that he parted ways with Nitish Kumar's JD(U) because of differences over seat-sharing for the Bihar Assembly polls, and accused the Chief Minister of harming the Dalit community by creating a sub-group of Mahadalits.

Paswan said his party had fought the Lok Sabha polls last year in alliance with the JD(U) because of the "compulsions" brought on by the return to the NDA of Kumar, whose party he accused of working against LJP candidates in the general elections in violation of the coalition dharma.

The 37-year-old, who recently lost his father Ram Vilas Paswan, the charismatic LJP founder, also alleged that Kumar had behaved "haughtily" when the late Union minister had called on him last year with the request to accompany him for filing nomination papers for the Rajya Sabha.

Paswan Sr. was a Rajya Sabha member and Union minister at the time of his death.

"I met Union home minister Amit Shah and BJP chief J.P. Nadda so many times in the recent past. Not once did the issue of seat-sharing crop up," Chirag Paswan said in an interview, rubbishing suggestions that he raised a banner of revolt against the JD(U) after the latter tried to deny his party a fair share of seats.

"It must be kept in mind that the LJP has never been a fan of Nitish Kumar's style of politics. He has harmed the Dalits by creating a sub-group of Mahadalits for his own



Chirag Paswan

political gains," he said.

Chirag, who has to carry forward the impressive political legacy of his father, the tallest Dalit leader in Bihar since the redoubtable Jagjivan Ram, was bitter about how Kumar treated the LJP founder.

"Nitish Kumar remarked mockingly that my father could not have got elected to the Rajya Sabha without the JD(U)s support since we had only two MLAs. He should remember that my father was promised a Rajya Sabha berth by the then BJP chief Amit Shah himself," he said.

"And I felt so belittled when Nitish behaved in a haughty manner when my father called on him with the request that he accompany us for filing of nomination papers. He came only after the mahurat (auspicious timing) decided for the occasion had passed. No son could have taken such a treatment lying down," he said.

The LJP chief also rubbished the Chief Minister's *saat nishchay* (seven resolves) for public welfare, saying while the rest of the country was making so much progress, he was still talking about piped water and construc-

## LJP using PM's photos during campaign: HAM

NAYEAR AZAD | DC  
PATNA, OCT. 15

The NDA ally Hindustani Awam Morcha (HAM) on Thursday said that the party would write to the Election Commission to prevent Chirag Paswan's LJP from using Prime Minister Narendra Modi's photographs during poll campaigns.

"We are getting complaints from several constituencies that LJP is using the photograph of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to influence voters. LJP is not part of the NDA in Bihar and if this continues then we will write to Election Commission and also lodge complaints against LJP candidates who have been doing this. Those who did not do anything for Bihar are trying to mislead the voters by using Prime Minister's photograph during their poll campaigns", HAM Spokesperson Danish Rizwan said.

Before the announcement of seat sharing a week earlier, the LJP had pulled out of the NDA

recent burning alive of a woman after rape took place in Buxar district.

"And communalism? What does he have to say about the comments of Nityanand Rai? He owes an answer. Unlike us, he is still a part of the NDA in Bihar," Paswan said.

Rai, the Union minister of state for home and a

● **LJP has clarified that the party's ties with BJP remain intact and it will not field candidates against the saffron party during Bihar elections.**

defying the leadership of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar.

The LJP had, however, announced that the party's ties with BJP will remain intact and it will not field candidates against the saffron party during Bihar polls.

The LJP has fielded 42 candidates against the JD(U) and two smaller NDA partners HAM and VIP for the first phase of polls. However, no candidate has been fielded against the BJP.

"Those who are saying that my party is using the Prime Minister's photograph to influence voters must understand that I have been connected and influenced by his ideas. Our party is in alliance with the BJP nationally and hopes that the next government will be formed by the BJP-LJP in Bihar.

those who claim to be with him remained tightlipped over the issue", LJP Chief Chirag Paswan said while talking to a TV channel in Patna on Thursday.

The 37-year-old leader also said that he was instigated by his father to fight Bihar polls alone to expand the party's base.

Talking to reporters, Chirag Paswan further said that "Bihar first Bihari first" is the key for the development of the state and he wants the idea to be included into the agenda of the government after the elections.

"After Chief Minister Nitish Kumar announced his party's vision *saat nishchay* (seven resolves) part two, I was left with no option. I had to take a tough stand as I feel that the idea of *saat nishchay* cannot take the state towards the development", Chirag Paswan said. He further said that his party is in alliance with the BJP nationally and hopes that the next government will be formed by the BJP-LJP in Bihar.

senior BJP leader, was recently panned by the Opposition for his remark at a recent poll rally that the RJD's victory will turn Bihar into a safe haven for Kashmiri terrorists.

His comment was seen by the NDA's rivals as an attempt at communal polarisation ahead of the elections.

— PTI

## CONG GIVES TICKET TO SHATRUGHAN SINHA'S SON

NAYEAR AZAD | DC  
PATNA, OCT. 15

The Congress is all set to launch Shatrughan Sinha's son Luv Sinha in politics by giving him a ticket from Patna's Bankipore seat which is considered a BJP's stronghold.

He has been pitted against BJP's three-time MLA Nitin Navin. Bankipore assembly seat comes under the Patna Sahib constituency that elected Shatrughan Sinha twice in 2009 and 2014 when he was in the BJP.

Sources said that the Congress, which is an ally of the RJD in Bihar, is trying to use the popularity and political influence of Shatrughan Sinha by giving the ticket to his son Luv Sinha from the seat.

As per the seat-sharing formula in the opposition coalition, the RJD which is the largest party in the grand alliance is contesting on 144 seats, the Congress 70 and Left parties 29 seats.

The Congress on Thursday released the second list of 49 candidates for the Bihar elections. Congress insiders said that "the party is distributing symbols to candidates after analyzing their political influence in their constituencies. People of Bihar are fed up with the current government and want a viable alternative".

Sources, however, said that a large section in the Congress is reportedly unhappy and resentment is brewing over the selection of candidates. Many senior political leaders feel that their suggestions were ignored by the state leadership while selecting candidates for polls.

## Finishing touches



An artisan gives final touches on an idol of Goddess Durga in Chennai on Thursday, ahead of the Durga Puja festival. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said cancelling Durga puja celebrations was not an option, and urged people to maintain all Covid-19 safety protocols during the five-day revelry.

— PTI

## 10 ACCUSED IN GOLD SMUGGLING CASE GET BAIL

Kochi, Oct. 15: A court here on Thursday granted conditional bail to 10 accused arrested by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in connection with the Kerala gold smuggling case. The Special NIA court, however, dismissed bail pleas of three key accused. Two other prime accused in the case Swapna Suresh and Sarith PS withdrew their bail pleas on Thursday.

Granting bail to the ten accused with stringent conditions, the court directed them to execute a bond for Rs 10 lakh each with two solvent sureties each for the like-sum.

Meanwhile, the Kerala High Court on Thursday directed the Enforcement Directorate not to arrest M. Sivasankar, former principal to chief minister, till October 23 in a case booked under Prevention of Money Laundering Act.

## Centre agrees to borrow on behalf of state govts

From Page 1

Under the first option, the borrowing limit was raised to Rs 1.1 lakh crore instead of Rs 97,000 crore on Monday. The government also had said that states going for the first option were entitled to get unconditional permission to borrow the final installment of 0.50 per cent of GSDP out of the 2 per cent additional borrowing permitted by the Centre under the stimulus package announced in May.

On Tuesday, 20 states, including Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, who had gone for the first option, were permitted to borrow a total of Rs 68,825 crore through open market borrowings. On Wednesday, Tamil Nadu also joined the list and had received permission to raise Rs 9627 crore.

A few states have been

opposing both the options and had asked the Centre to borrow the money on their behalf. This included Punjab, Kerala, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh and Telangana.

However, with the Centre relenting and deciding to borrow the compensation shortfall, the impasse between the Centre and states seems to have ended.

"It is a welcome step, though it does not meet our full demand. But the Centre has to come back to the discussion table and negotiate with the states on the issues pending. We have been allowed to increase our FRBM limit under conditions by 2 per cent. By giving up this we are losing some Rs70,000-80,000 crore. That should be negotiated," Thomas Issac, Finance Minister of Kerala told Financial Chronicle.

Further, there should be a formal decision on the amount to be raised in the

GST council. Increase the additional borrowing limit by 0.5 per cent and that will give us some more space to manage the finances and then negotiate on the amount that should be raised, he added.

According to him, out of the total shortfall of Rs 2.35 lakh crore, an amount of Rs 1.25 lakh crore will be remaining after paying Rs 1.1 lakh crore. Of this around Rs 50,000 or Rs 60,000 crore will be paid from current year's cess. The remaining will be paid from the cess collected after 2022.

"The decided option is iteration to the earlier proposed Option 1 by the Central Government; with this seemingly aiding in operational convenience and uniformity in interest rate on the proposed borrowing. It would need to be seen now if the same is acceptable to all the states," said Abhishek Jain, tax partner, EY.

## TS flood toll 50; Cm seeks ₹5K cr central aid

S.A. ISHAQUI | DC  
HYDERABAD, OCT. 15

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao put the initial estimate of the damage caused by rains and floods in the state at ₹5,000 crore, in a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday.

He urged the Centre to release ₹1,350 crore immediately, ₹600 crore for farmers and ₹750 crore for taking up relief and rehabilitation measures.

Officials put the toll at 50, 11 of them dead in the city. They said that 20,540 houses in 144 colonies at 72 places in the city were under floodwaters and 35,000 families affected.

The CM announced ₹5 lakh as immediate compensation each to the families of the dead.

The Chief Minister said that new houses would be built for those whose houses were destroyed. Electricity authorities were told to restore power supply to apartments situated in low-lying areas only after draining out the cellars, though this may delay things. Restoration of power supply without clearing the water could be dangerous, the CM said.

Officials told CM Rao that crops were submerged in 7.35 lakh acres. Even if there is 50 per cent of damage to crops, the loss would be to the tune of ₹2,000 crore. They said that the GHMC limits had received 31 cm rainfall, the first since 1916, which resulted in inundation of several areas, especially colonies which were constructed within the full tank levels of water bodies. In Hyderabad 14 houses were damaged and 65 houses partially damaged.

● **OFFICIALS PUT the toll at 50, 11 of them dead in the capital city; 20,540 houses in 144 colonies in the city were under floodwaters.**



## IN BRIEF Kyrgyzstan Prez steps down

**Moscow:** Kyrgyzstan President Sooronbai Jeenbekov announced his resignation Thursday in a bid to end the turmoil that has engulfed the Central Asian nation after a disputed parliamentary election. Jeenbekov, who has faced calls to step down from protesters and political opponents, said in a statement released by his office that holding onto power wasn't "worth the integrity of our country and harmony in society". "For me, peace in Kyrgyzstan, the country's integrity, the unity of our people and the calm in the society are above all else," Jeenbekov said. Kyrgyzstan, a country of 6.5 million people located on the border with China, was plunged into chaos following an Oct. 4 vote that election officials say was swept by pro-government parties.

## Raid on HK media tycoon's house

**Hong Kong:** Hong Kong police raided the private offices of media tycoon and pro-democracy activist Jimmy Lai on Thursday, according to his aide Mark Simon who wrote in a post on Twitter that 14 police officers visited Lai's office and confiscated documents. Lai, 71, is an outspoken pro-democracy figure who regularly criticizes China's authoritarian rule and Hong Kong's government. He is also the founder of media company Next Digital, which operates pro-democracy newspaper *Apple Daily*. "I spoke with police they said they would remain until our lawyer arrived," Simon wrote. "They did not, they took documents and departed before our lawyer arrived." Police confirmed that they had conducted a search operation inside an office in Kwun Tong district on Thursday.

## Plea for equality law in Japan

**Tokyo:** Sexual minority groups and human rights activists launched a petition on Thursday calling for an LGBT equality law in Japan in hopes that it can be enacted next year, when the country is to host the Olympics and will be the focus of international attention. "In this country, equal rights for LGBT people are not guaranteed by law or in their social lives," said Yuri Igarashi, co-representative of the Japan Alliance for LGBT Legislation, one of several organisers of the petition. "We call for the passage of an LGBT equality law in time for the Tokyo games, and as an Olympic legacy." Japan has slowly shown an increased awareness of sexual diversity but it is often superficial. Pressure to conform still forces many lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people to hide their sexual identities, even from their families.

## SPACE PROBE MAKES 1ST VENUS FLY-BY

**Berlin, Oct. 15:** A spacecraft bound for Mercury swung by Venus on Thursday, using Earth's neighbour to adjust its course on the way to the solar system's smallest and innermost planet.

Launched almost two years ago, the European-Japanese probe BepiColombo took a black-and-white snapshot of Venus from a distance of 17,000 kilometres (10,560 miles), with some of its own instruments in the frame. The fly-by is the second of nine so-called planetary gravity assists that the spacecraft needs for its seven-year trip to Mercury.

The first, around Earth, took place in April. The European Space Agency has described the 1.3 billion-euro (\$1.5 billion) mission as one of its most challenging yet. Mercury's extreme temperatures, the intense gravity pull of the sun and blistering solar radiation make for hellish conditions.

BepiColombo will make one more fly-by of Venus and six of Mercury itself to slow down before its arrival in 2025. Once there, the spacecraft will split in two, releasing a European orbiter nicknamed Bepi that will swoop into Mercury's inner orbit while Mio, built by the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, gathers data from a greater distance.

Both probes are designed to cope with temperatures varying from 430 degrees Celsius (806 degrees Fahrenheit) on the side facing the sun, and -180 degrees Celsius (-292 F) in Mercury's shadow.

# Europe reels as it sets records

## France slaps 9 pm curfew on many of its cities, Londoners face travel restrictions

**Berlin, Oct. 15:** Fears rose Thursday that Europe is running out of chances to control its fall Coronavirus outbreak, as infections hit record daily highs in Germany, the Czech Republic, Italy and Poland. France slapped a 9 p.m. curfew on many of its biggest cities and Londoners faced new travel restrictions as governments imposed increasingly tough measures.

New infections have surged across Europe over recent weeks as the fall kicks in, prompting authorities to start re-imposing restrictions relaxed over the summer. The Czech Republic, Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain, France and Britain are among the countries causing particular concern. The head of the World Health Organisation's Europe office urged governments to be "uncompromising" in controlling the virus. "These measures are meant to keep us all ahead of the curve and to flatten its course," Dr. Hans Kluge said, while wearing a mask.

"It is therefore up to us to accept them while they are still relatively easy to follow instead of following the path of severity," Kluge cited epidemiological models that suggested if 95% of people wear masks and follow other social distancing measures, Europe could avoid about 281,000 deaths by February. But he warned that relaxing measures could lead to a five-fold increase in deaths by January. European nations as a whole have seen nearly 230,000 confirmed deaths from the virus — more than the nearly 217,000 reported virus deaths so far in the United States. —AP

## EU CHIEF LEAVES SUMMIT TO GO INTO QUARANTINE AFTER STAFFER IS +VE

**Brussels, Oct. 15:** European Union chief Ursula von der Leyen was forced to leave an EU summit Thursday shortly after it opened because one of her close staffers tested positive for Covid-19.

She said that she herself tested negative but "as a precaution I am immediately leaving the European

an Council to go into self-isolation." Von der Leyen had already been mingling with other EU leaders ahead of the formal opening of the two-day summit. Organisers had taken special precaution to keep leaders apart and make sure they respect all health regulations. —AP

## SINGAPORE AND HONG KONG AGREE ON BILATERAL AIR TRAVEL BUBBLE

**Singapore, Oct. 15:** Singapore and Hong Kong have agreed on a bilateral air travel bubble, which will exempt travellers from the mandatory quarantine upon arrival, as the rate of Coronavirus infection declines in both regional aviation hubs.

To avail the flights, travellers will have to test negative in the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test for Covid-19, Singapore's Ministry of Transport

(MOT) on Thursday.

Travellers under the bubble will not be subject to mandatory quarantining, the release said, adding that there will be no restrictions on travel purposes and no need for a controlled itinerary. The MOT said the bubble can be "scaled by adjusting the number of dedicated flights upwards or downwards, or even suspended, in line with the latest developments". —PTI

## CHINA FIRES TWO HEALTH OFFICIALS

**Beijing, Oct. 15:** A hospital president and the director of the health commission in the northern Chinese city of Qingdao have been fired after China's latest Coronavirus outbreak, authorities said Thursday.

A brief notice on the official microblog said Health Commission Director Sui Zhenhua and Deng Kai, president of Qingdao's thoracic hospital, were placed under further probe. —AP

## DON SON BARRON TESTED POSITIVE

**Washington, Oct. 15:** Barron Trump, the teenage son of US President Donald Trump, contracted Coronavirus after his parents tested positive for Covid-19 but has since tested negative, First Lady Melania Trump has said. In a blog posted on the White House website, she said that Barron, 14, exhibited no symptoms, a departure from herself and the president, who have both said they experienced mild symptoms. —PTI

# Thailand declares emergency after unprecedented protest

**Bangkok, Oct. 15:** Thailand's government declared a strict new state of emergency for the capital on Thursday, a day after a student-led protest against the country's traditional establishment saw an extraordinary moment in which demonstrators hekked a royal motorcade.

After the pre-dawn declaration, riot police moved in to clear out demonstrators who after a day of rallies and confrontation had gathered outside Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha's office to push their demands, which include the former general's stepping down, constitutional changes and reform of the monarchy.

Several top leaders of the protest movement were taken into custody, with one later declaring on his Facebook page that he had been denied access to a lawyer and was being forced onto a helicopter and taken to a city in the country's north.

Police made 22 arrests. Despite a new ban against large public gatherings, several thousand people answered calls to rally in another area of the city later Thursday. The text of the emergency declaration said it was needed because "certain groups of perpetrators intended to instigate an untoward incident and movement in the Bangkok area by way of various methods and via different channels, including causing obstruction to the royal motorcade." The protest in



A pro-democracy protester reacts as police try to detain him during a rally in Bangkok on Thursday. — AFP

tion said it was needed because "certain groups of perpetrators intended to instigate an untoward incident and movement in the Bangkok area by way of various methods and via different channels, including causing obstruction to the royal motorcade." The protest in

Bangkok's historic district was the third major gathering by student-led activists who have been pushing the boundaries of what is considered acceptable — and legal — language by publicly questioning the role of Thailand's monarchy. The royal family has

long been considered sacrosanct and a pillar of Thai identity. King Maha Vajiralongkorn and family members are protected by a lese majeste law that has been used to silence critics who risk up to 15 years in prison if deemed to have insulted the institution. —AP

# Citizenship: Joe woos immigrants

**Washington, Oct. 15:** Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden has vowed to provide citizenship to 11 million illegal immigrants if voted to power in the November 3 presidential election.

Biden identified this as one of his priorities in addition to beating the Coronavirus pandemic, rebuilding the economy and figuring out how to restore American leadership around the world. Responding to a question at a virtual fundraiser on Wednesday, Biden said there is a need to deal

with what's going on at the border.

"We're going to have to deal with the immigration crisis we have. I'm going to send the House and Senate an immigration bill that's going to provide access to citizenship to 11 million people," he said. President Donald Trump has been repeatedly calling for the quick deportation of illegal immigrants who "invade" the US and lamented that the current immigration system is "unfair" to those who came legally to America. —PTI

## DUELLING TOWN HALLS FOR TRUMP, BIDEN AFTER DEBATE PLAN NIXED

**Washington, Oct. 15:** President Donald Trump and challenger Joe Biden will compete for TV audiences in duelling town halls instead of meeting face-to-face for their second debate as originally planned. They will take questions in different cities on different networks Thursday night: Trump on NBC from Miami, Biden on ABC from Philadelphia. Trump backed out of

plans for the presidential faceoff after debate organisers shifted the format to a virtual event following his Covid-19 diagnosis.

As the pace of the campaign speeds up, the two candidates first are taking care of other electoral necessities Thursday: Trump has a midday rally in battleground North Carolina, and Biden is raising campaign cash at a virtual event. —AP

# Navalny poisoning: Curbs on Russians

**Brussels, Oct. 15:** The European Union on Thursday imposed sanctions on six Russian officials and one organisation over the poisoning of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny with a Soviet-era nerve agent.

The move came a day after Russia's foreign minister warned that Moscow might respond with similar measures. The decision was agreed upon among the 27 EU envoys to Brussels. "The adopted restrictive measures consist of a travel ban to the EU and an asset freeze for individuals, and an asset freeze for the entity," the EU said in a statement.

The list includes two high level officials in the Presidential Executive Office, a director of the federal security service and two deputy ministers in the Russian defence ministry. The EU is also targeting the State Scientific Research Institute for Organic Chemistry and Technology.

EU foreign ministers agreed Monday to impose the sanctions, following a push by France and Germany to freeze the assets of those suspected of involvement and ban them from travelling in Europe under sanctions to combat the use and



Alexei Navalny

spread of chemical weapons. Navalny, an anti-corruption investigator and major political opponent of Russian President Vladimir Putin, fell ill on Aug. 20 during a domestic flight in Russia. He was flown to Germany for treatment two days later and is still recovering there.

Last week, tests conducted at labs designated by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons confirmed that Navalny was poisoned by a Novichok nerve agent. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said in an interview on Wednesday that "the Germans are not planning to provide any facts, despite all international and legal obligations. We respond in kind. This is diplomatic practice." —AP

# China slams US over Tibet

**Beijing, Oct. 15:** China on Thursday slammed the US for appointing a Special Coordinator for Tibetan issues, describing Washington's move as political manipulation aimed at destabilising Tibet. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Wednesday named Robert Destro, Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labour, as the Special Coordinator for Tibetan issues.

Destro will focus on advancing dialogue between the Communist-run government in Beijing and the Dalai Lama, protecting the distinct religious cultural and linguistic identity of Tibetans, improving respect for their human rights and

much, much more, Pompeo said. Reacting to Destro's appointment, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said that the US move amounted to interference in China's internal affairs.

He said, "the setting up of the so-called special coordinator for Tibetan issues is entirely out of political manipulation to interfere in China's internal affairs and destabilise Xizang," the Chinese name for Tibet. Chinese officials in recent times have been referring to Tibet only as Xizang. "China firmly opposes that and never recognise that. People of ethnic groups in Xizang are part of the big family of Chinese nation," Zhao said. —PTI

## BEIJING TRACKS U.S. NAVY SHIP'S PASSAGE THROUGH TAIWAN STRAIT

**Beijing, Oct. 15:** China says it tracked a US Navy warship as it passed through the Taiwan Strait and has its forces in the area on high alert, as tensions between the world's two largest economies and rivals for regional influence continue to simmer. The spokesperson for its Eastern Theater Command, Maj. Zhang Chunxuan, said air and sea forces were mobilized to keep tabs Wednesday on the USS Barry, an Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer.

Zhang said the US has recently been sending

"the wrong signal" to proponents of independence for Taiwan, a pro-US self-governing democracy that China claims as its own territory, to be annexed by force if necessary. Although the Taiwan Strait is a public waterway, China is extremely sensitive to all US military moves in its periphery amid heightened tensions over Taiwan, the South China Sea, trade disputes and other issues. The US has been "seriously undermining peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait region". —AP

# Provocations: France warns Turkey

**Ankara, Oct. 15:** France warned Turkey on Thursday that it could face European Union sanctions for its "provocations," after Ankara redeployed its search vessel on a new energy exploration mission in the eastern Mediterranean. Speaking in Paris after a meeting of the French-German-Polish 'Weimar Triangle', French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian reiterated the EU stance that unless Tu-

rkey shows "respect for the integrity of Greece and Cyprus" then the European Council will consider initiating sanctions.

"We are forced to note that there are permanent acts of provocation on the part of Turkey which are not bearable, and therefore we really wish that Turkey clarifies its positions and returns to a spirit of dialogue," he said.

Turkey redeployed its search vessel, Oruc Reis,

near the Greek island of Kastellorizo, reigniting tensions between Greece and Turkey over sea boundaries and energy drilling rights, and putting the future of the planned resumption of talks between Athens and Ankara to resolve disputes into doubt. Those talks were last held in 2016.

Those tensions had flared up over the summer, triggering fears of a confrontation between the two

historic rivals and NATO allies. German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said he understood Greece's unwillingness to engage in dialogue due to Turkey's decision to again dispatch its ship. Given Berlin's efforts to mediate between the parties "the behaviour by Turkey to conduct another provocation, resulting in the agreed process of dialogue not taking place, is annoying," Maas said. —AP

# 450 Pak Oppn workers booked on rally eve

**Lahore, Oct. 15:** Over 450 workers from Pakistan's Opposition parties have been booked in Lahore and other areas of Punjab province ahead of the first grand anti-government rally on Friday by an alliance formed to oust Prime Minister Imran Khan.

On September 20, the leaders of 11 major Opposition parties announced formation of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) and launch of a three-phased anti-government movement under an "action plan" starting with countrywide public meetings, protest demon-

strations and rallies before a "decisive long march" towards Islamabad in January 2021. The first anti-government rally is scheduled on Friday in Gujranwala city, some 80 kms from Lahore, followed by another rally on October 18 in Karachi, in Quetta on October 25, Peshawar on November 22, Multan on November 30 and then a rally in Lahore on December 13.

The Opposition leaders announced that they would use all political and democratic options, including no-confidence motions and mass resignations

from Parliament to seek "the selected" prime minister's resignation. The Opposition parties have accused the powerful army of rigging the 2018 elections that brought Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party to power.

The Opposition parties are openly opposing the military's interference in politics and elections for the first time in the recent history of the country.

The PDM comprises mainly three mainstream Opposition parties — PML-N of Nawaz Sharif, PPP of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Jamiat Ule-

ma-i-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) of Maulana Fazlur Rehman.

Launching a crackdown ahead of PDM's first major anti-government show, Punjab police got into action and booked over 450 workers, mostly of PML-N, in different parts of Punjab province under Covid-19 violations and also arrested scores of PDM workers. Police stations in Gujranwala, Mandi Bahuddin and Lahore registered cases against over 450 Opposition workers under sections 269 and 188 of Pakistan Penal Code for holding a public gathering without

observing Covid-19 SOPs.

Former prime minister and PML-N supreme leader Nawaz Sharif, who is London since November last year, in a tweet, said that police should refrain from arresting the PDM leaders. "Police must NOT comply with Imran Niazi's workers, raid their homes or hinder their travel to Gujranwala," he said.

Former premier and PDM leader Shahid Khaqan Abbasi said the government's panic over the first public meeting of Opposition has exposed its reality.

—PTI

**11 parties formed the Pakistan Democratic Movement and launch of a three-phased anti-govt movement**

**06 rallies: In Gujranwala (Oct. 16), Karachi (Oct. 18), Quetta (Oct. 25), Peshawar (Nov. 22), Multan (Nov. 30) & Lahore (Dec. 13).**

"Pokharel, who is known for his tilt towards the North, has been transferred to the Prime Minister's Office, apparently in a signal to New Delhi ahead of the forthcoming visit to Nepal by the Indian Army chief," senior journalist and editor of *Janamanch Weekly* Pralhad Rijal said. Indian Army chief Gen. M.M. Naravane is scheduled to visit Nepal in the first week of November and the details of the visit is being worked out, a Nepal Army spokesperson said in a statement. —PTI

## OLI RESHUFFLES CABINET, KEEPS DEF MINISTRY

**Kathmandu, Oct. 15:** Nepal's Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli has reshuffled his Cabinet, keeping the key defence portfolio with himself, in a bid to strengthen his grip within the fractious ruling party and to allow smooth functioning of his government. Oli has inducted three new ministers, including Finance Minister Bishnu Poudel, and changed the portfolio of Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Ishwor Pokharel.

However, the dissident faction of the ruling Communist Party of Nepal led by executive chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' was not satisfied with Oli's latest move, which they considered as one-sided, a source close to the ruling party said.

Oli and Prachanda, bitter political rivals, have been trying to shore up their base within the party in recent months. The finance ministry had remained vacant for some time and the nomination of Poudel, who is also the general secretary of the ruling party, to the department was a normal phenomena, the party source said.

However, Oli's move to relieve Pokharel from the defence ministry and retain the portfolio with himself has sparked speculation in the Nepalese political spectrum and the media.

"Pokharel, who is known for his tilt towards the North, has been transferred to the Prime Minister's Office, apparently in a signal to New Delhi ahead of the forthcoming visit to Nepal by the Indian Army chief," senior journalist and editor of *Janamanch Weekly* Pralhad Rijal said. Indian Army chief Gen. M.M. Naravane is scheduled to visit Nepal in the first week of November and the details of the visit is being worked out, a Nepal Army spokesperson said in a statement. —PTI



# DECCAN Chronicle

16 OCTOBER 2020

## Rainy spotlight on bad urban planning

The overnight heavy rains that pounded Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and parts of Karnataka and Maharashtra have claimed scores of lives and caused destruction of property worth crores of rupees on Wednesday and if the weatherman gets it right, the region will continue to face the threat in the coming days, too. Apart from the loss of lives, the rains left several busy residential areas and commercial streets in Hyderabad flooded and houses and shops inundated. Power supply was disrupted for hours together. Even the road to the airport was washed away in the rains, marooning the city for all practical purposes.

The way the rain fury threw life out of gear in the Telangana capital leaves some disquieting questions about our urban planning. It is unacceptable that one night's rain can bring the civic life of a growing city to halt. The threat is not specific to Hyderabad — Chennai and Mumbai had similar experiences in the recent past while the others are waiting for their turn. True, the impact of global warming and sudden changes in the weather patterns are tough to handle at the local level but the citizen's and official culpability should not go unnoticed. It's a shame that the cities which were built with proper drains decades or even centuries ago now drown in flood waters. Hyderabad had a proper way out for water in the form of River Musi but it has now become a waste dump and a victim of mindless encroachment despite several recovery plans. The smaller ones have been lost forever.

It is not that the planners cannot foresee this happening and ensure that life is not completely disrupted overnight. Adequate warning and advance planning can ameliorate the hardship of the people and reduce the loss of property. The disastrous cyclones that regularly visited the eastern coast, especially Odisha, and claimed thousands of lives no more repeat their dance of death now, thanks to the improved advance warning systems and an efficient governmental machinery that ensures that the cyclone passes its way as is its wont but no lives are lost. Thiruvananthapuram, the capital city of Kerala, was saved from the devastating floods in 2018 and 2019 after a project named Operation Anantha was implemented with focus on clearing the drains five years ago. It was made possible by the determination of a team of officials, led by the chief secretary, and helped by the stringent provisions of the National Disaster Management Act, 2005.

An action plan on a similar pattern which uses technology and concepts of advance planning must be introduced in our cities to save them from such calamities. The bodies responsible for disaster management at the national, state and district levels must be made operational full-time. Laws on urban planning must be implemented strictly, violators punished ruthlessly and bureaucrats responsible for the lapses made accountable. No society which swears by rule of law can allow the situation where law-breakers thrive at the cost of the lives and livelihoods of the rest. This is the least the government can do for the city

## Hate squad's scary agenda

So frightening has the monster of social media grown that it is causing serious concern in responsible quarters about the cohesiveness of our Armed Forces. This was recently conveyed in an open letter to President Ram Nath Kovind by more than one hundred veterans from the Army, Navy and the Air Force. The retired personnel, including former Chiefs, have urged that action be taken against fake social media posts that spread divisiveness within the forces on the religious basis.

Social media posts have spread the canard that a "Muslim Regiment" of the Army had to be "dismantled" when it refused to take up arms in the 1965 war against Pakistan. The truth is that such a regiment never existed. But social media posts seek to exploit the ignorance of the people, and their gullibility, when they circulate false, malicious, communal propaganda.

Since such posts are not sent out by stray, well-meaning but ignorant individuals, but typically by tens of thousands of organised foot soldiers of hate squads that occupy the Internet highway, it is time the government stepped in with alacrity to punish those who attempt to sow discord and mistrust within the Armed Forces.

At a time when our forces are busy dealing with the twin menace emanating from Pakistan and China, these cyber armies with their disturbing agenda may, sometimes even unwittingly, have become instruments of psy-ops (psychological operations) of forces hostile to India.

In India's Armed Forces, soldiers of all faiths have distinguished themselves, and they are not grouped on a religious basis but fight in multi-class formations in the singular cause of defending this country. The example of Havildar Abdul Hamid, who was posthumously awarded the Param Vir Chakra for his gallantry against the Pakistan Army in the 1965 war, is of course legendary. But there are so many others. The antecedents of those posting about the so-called "Muslim Regiment" must be examined and suitable punishment awarded quickly.

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Flashback



## The 'beauty of oneness': Has today's India lost it?



Karan Thapar

As I See It

I admit memories can be deceptive and as you grow older they could even become misleading, but the India I recall from my teens seems a very different country to the one I live in today. Of course, we were a poorer country, few people travelled abroad whilst most hankered for foreign goods. Simple telephones were a luxury, trunk calls a nightmare, journeys by plane a treat and there was only black and white television. On the other hand, Coca Cola cost 25 paise and five rupees was considered generous pocket money for a 13-year-old. But these are not the differences I have in mind.

There was something else about the old India that we took for granted in the 1960s which we are in danger of losing today. Long before Sunil Khilnani coined the evocative phrase "the idea of India", we lived it every day at Doon School. We had no idea of our caste or what it implied. Religion, which is tearing us apart, seemed irrelevant. Rich or poor, intelligent or dim, fat or thin, fair or dark, short or tall, these attributes did not create divisions between us. They did not matter. We were one. Strange as it may sound, we were so similar it felt as if we were the same.

It's this sentiment the now withdrawn Tanishq advertisement sought to celebrate. Created to promote its Ekavatam brand of jewellery — and remember that word means oneness — this is what the company itself says of the advertisement: "The idea behind the Ekavatam campaign is to celebrate the com-

ing together of people from different walks of life, local communities and families during these challenging times and celebrate the beauty of oneness." So it wasn't simply selling golden baubles. It was promoting, actually reveling in, "the beauty of oneness". That's an elevated and captivating phrase for what politicians prosaically call "unity in diversity".

This is the silken thread that binds together the many different people of India. We speak in a multitude, even a babel, of languages, prefer contrasting cuisines, dress differently, look dissimilar and pray to a perplexing pantheon of gods. Yet each of us calls himself Indian and is proud of it. This is because "the beauty of oneness" is an instinctive part of us. You could even say it's our raison d'être.

Yet this was the target the trolls were after when they attacked Tanishq's Ekavatam campaign. The advertisement they excoriated celebrated the love of a Muslim mother-in-law for her Hindu daughter-in-law. It's a love that transcends the foolish but often impregnable walls that rigid faith can erect between people. A love that gives meaning and fulfilment to the relationships that really matter in our lives.

The trolls, however, called it "love jihad". Not only is this oxymoronic but it mocks and challenges the belief our different religions do not divide the Indian people. The fact some pray westwards facing Mecca whilst others do so blowing conch shells in temples does not preclude affection for each

other. Some may wear a cross, others a *tilak* or *topi*, but these differing symbols of faith do not separate us or, even, define us. There is a lot more that we share in common. This is the idea of India and the trolls were trying to tear it apart.

Tanishq has allowed them to succeed. But I don't blame the company alone. That would be too narrow. The Tata Group cannot escape responsibility. Let me explain why. How could they not have been aware of the deeper, stronger, richer message that the advertisement sought to convey? Indeed, how could they not have intended it? The advertisement was not created in a fit of forgetfulness nor was it accepted without considering the consequences that could follow. After all, it was so obviously doing more than just selling jewellery. It was a haunting picture of something the Tatas know we are in danger of losing — "the beauty of oneness". It was a call to awaken India. A reminder of what makes us one country.

So when the Tatas withdrew this advertisement, they also turned their back on this message. I am pretty certain they know this and I believe they must be embarrassed by it. Consider carefully their explanation for what they have done. It's not just weak and unconvincing, it's actually contradictory. "We are

deeply saddened with the inadvertent stirring of emotions", it begins. So what do they do? Stand up and fight back, as their convictions would expect of them? No. They decided to "withdraw this film keeping in mind the hurt sentiments and well-being of our employees, partners and store staff". But whose sentiments did that advertisement hurt? Only that of the trolls. And if there is any threat to the well-being of their employees, partners and store staff — and, sadly, that could be so — it's enhanced security that they need, not a cowardly retreat.

The Tata Group has let down India. There's no denying that fact. However, corporations don't think in these grandiloquent terms except when their chairmen are making speeches to attract public attention. What's more surprising is that the Tatas have also let themselves down. This is a company that's always been credited with a vision that encompasses more than growth and profit. It's created an image of the Tata Group that we have all bought into. Now that picture has developed cracks.

I don't know Ratan Tata well. However, on the few occasions we have met I sensed there was more to him than just an outstandingly successful businessman. My hunch is that he knows this too. I would say he values this extra quality. He's probably silently proud of it. But, today, when he looks at himself in the mirror, will he be happy with the image that is reflected back? I know he will see the difference. But will it upset him? Or will he comfort himself with the excuse that this is a change which is necessary to succeed in Narendra Modi's India?

The writer is a television commentator and anchor

The Tata Group cannot escape responsibility. Let me explain why. How could they not have been aware of the deeper, stronger, richer message that the advertisement sought to convey? Indeed, how could they not have intended it?

### LETTERS

#### 'SUPERMAN' TRUMP

US President Mr Donald Trump has reportedly expressed great happiness that he received the best medical attention which helped him recover achieve immunity from the deadly coronavirus. That's indeed very good news but Mr Trump perhaps also needs to give serious thought to the fact that more than two lakhs of his fellow citizens have already lost their lives to this deadly disease. Be it the head of state or any ordinary citizen, every life is equally important and needs to be saved. Why couldn't lakhs of Covid patients, for instance, not have access to the similar highly effective, latest medical facilities which Mr Trump had apparently got? Surely, he could have acted much more effectively by taking major steps on war footing much earlier, using his vast powers and resources to ensure that if not all, at least some valuable lives were not lost.

A. Mohan, Chennai

#### RAJINI'S PLEA

IT IS really shocking that actor Rajinikanth filed a case against the Corporation of Chennai which has rightly asked him to pay ₹6.5 lakh as property tax for his marriage hall. He has also urged the court to restrain the Corporation from levying 2 per cent penalty with interest for non-payment of the tax under question. Thankfully, the case has been summarily dismissed by the Madras high court. While dismissing the case, the judge has also sternly warned Rajinikanth of imposing cost on him for rushing to the court and wasting judicial time. On hearing the caustic comments made by the judge and in great embarrassment, the actor has rushed to withdraw the writ petition filed by him.

Tharcus S. Fernando, Chennai

#### FAN'S TRIBUTE TO DHONI

DESPITE THE Chennai Super Kings is having a poor run in the current IPL season, it is heart-warming to note that a die-hard fan of the franchise from a village near Cuddalore in Tamil Nadu has painted his house in the thematic yellow colour with the CSK logo, and the front walls with the portraits of MS Dhoni. This ardent fan has explicitly expressed his love and admiration for the legendary cricketer and CSK, which is truly remarkable. The fan's tribute to Dhoni shows the way Chennai and the State of Tamil Nadu have 'adopted' him over the years.

R. Sivakumar, Chennai

Skand Tayal



## India weighs options as it faces Chinese intransigence

The seventh round of the corps commander-level talks between India and China on Monday has not led to any notable advance on the Indian demand of a comprehensive disengagement by China from all the areas of the ongoing standoff in Ladakh. The prospects are receding for any significant reduction in force mobilisation before the onset of winter.

This round was held in the background of the foreign ministers' meeting of India, the United States, Japan and Australia in Tokyo on October 6 under the "Quadrilateral" security dialogue format. In these days of most high-level meetings being virtual, the Quad ministers met in person, in a sign of both the agenda's urgency and the imperative of confidential confabulations secure from any cyber snooping. US secretary of state Mike Pompeo travelled to Tokyo despite President Donald Trump being stricken by the Wuhan virus.

Mr Pompeo did not mince words and named Chinese Communist Party for its "exploitation, corruption and coercion". He elaborated: "We have seen this in the South, in the East China Sea, the Mekong, the

Himalayas, the Taiwan Straits."

In contrast, India's external affairs minister S. Jaishankar refrained from pointing any finger at China, let alone the CCP, despite the ongoing aggressive actions by the People's Liberation Army in Ladakh.

On the same day, the German delegation at the UN General Assembly delivered a joint statement on behalf of 39 countries conveying their "grave concern on the human rights situation in Xinjiang and the recent developments in Hong Kong". The statement called on China to "respect human rights, particularly the rights of persons belonging to religious minorities, especially in Xinjiang and Tibet".

The statement was signed inter alia by India's three Quad partners — the US, Japan and Australia — and also by several other important strategic partners like Canada, France, Britain and Germany. But India was conspicuous by its absence from the list of signatories.

In an angry response, the Chinese ambassador to the UN termed the well-founded accusations as "groundless" and said that China "opposes interference in internal affairs". This is ironic as China has repeatedly

backed Pakistan in its futile efforts to raise the Kashmir issue at the UN Security Council, which is clearly an internal matter of India.

India has also refrained from making any official statements on possible upgrading of its ties with Taiwan or on the unilateral actions by China in Hong Kong in violation of its treaty obligations with Britain.

This cautious approach by South Block is in contrast with strong public opinion across this country, expressed vociferously in the mass media, that India openly favour Taiwan's independence and Tibet's autonomy. On October 7, many Indian newspapers carried full-page advertorials by the Republic of China (Taiwan) celebrating its October 10 national day. The Chinese embassy was hurt by this pinprick and in an open letter reminded its "media friends" that "there is only one China in the world".

South Block is carefully calibrating its response to China's aggression in Ladakh by going full throttle on military preparations, mobilising our strategic partners and sensitising public opinion for a lengthy standoff, but simultaneously keeping the dia-

logue with China civil and keeping all channels of communication open. South Block is taking care not to take formal positions in multilateral fora from which it may be difficult to walk back if the border standoff is resolved.

The forthcoming American presidential election is of critical importance for a global response to an aggressive and unilateralist China and its "wolf warriors". While President Donald Trump has openly identified China as the US's main future adversary on all fronts — technological, economic and strategic — and has the toughness and resolve to strongly push back, it will take time for a future Joe Biden administration's China policy to evolve. Recent Democratic Presidents like Bill Clinton and Barack Obama made tough statements on China, but practised a non-confrontational policy, allowing China to expand its occupation of the South China Sea and emasculate the manufacturing sector in the US and elsewhere, including India.

In television appearances after returning from the Tokyo Quad meeting, Mr Pompeo criticised China's aggressive behaviour and

noted that "Indians are seeing 60,000 Chinese soldiers on their border". The Trump administration is sending a strong signal to China that it stands by India by scheduling the next 2+2 dialogue of the foreign and defence ministers of the two nations on October 26-27, 2020, a week before the November 3 election.

The two principal options for India are either to declare open adversarial relations with the world's second biggest economic and military power or, in Mr Jaishankar's words, to seek a "new equilibrium with China". The Narendra Modi government is now following the second option of not engaging in verbal duels with China in full view of the world, defend its interests robustly at the borders and negotiate with China both at the military and diplomatic levels. The basic premise is that both China and India would prefer to avoid an all-out confrontation. This is the basis on which the new equilibrium is being sought in India-China ties, while keeping all options on the table.

The writer is a retired diplomat and has served as India's ambassador to South Korea



quick  
BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	39,728.41	-2.61
Nifty 50	11,680.35	-2.43
S&P 500*	3,461.45	-0.78
Dollar (₹)	73.37	-0.08
Pound Sterling (₹)	95.22	-0.70
Euro (₹)	85.96	0.13
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	51,503.32	0.06
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	42.52	-0.80
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.898	-0.003
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.711	-0.011

\*As of 9:30 PM IST

Lakshmi Vilas  
gets board nod  
for rights issue

Cash-strapped Lakshmi Vilas Bank said its board has approved plans to raise up to Rs 500 crore through a rights issue. Last week, the private sector lender had informed exchanges about receiving a non-binding offer from Aion-backed NBFC Clix Group for a merger. The old-generation Chennai-based private bank, faced a blow in late September when its shareholders voted out seven directors.

Sensex loses 1066 pts on profit-booking  
Rally comes to  
an abrupt haltRAVI RANJAN PRASAD  
MUMBAI, OCT. 15

A second wave of Covid infection in Europe, leading to severe restrictions, and fading US stimulus hopes led to a sell-off in global markets, triggering profit-taking in IT and financial stocks in the Indian market after a run-away 10-day rise.

The Sensex fell 1066 points to close below the 40000 level at 39728.41, down by 2.61 per cent. The Nifty-50 closed at 11680.35 down 290.70 points, or 2.43 per cent.

The market erased the last six days' gains in a single session and investors lost more than Rs 3.25 lakh crore of their wealth in a day.

Market volatility could rise in the near term—the volatility index, NSE's India VIX, rose 9.14 per cent on Thursday.

Both foreign portfolio investors and domestic institutional investors were net sellers of equities worth Rs 604.07 crore and Rs 808.29 crore, respectively.

Deepak Jasani, head of retail research, HDFC Securities, said, "Bank Nifty led the fall, erasing 3.36 per cent to close at 23,072. Weakness in the European markets led to a fresh bout of selling in our markets post 1300 hours. European stocks slumped, with investors concerned about the impact of a second wave of coronavirus on the economy without any imminent stimulus to



cushion the blow."

The top losers among the financials included ICICI Bank (-4.07 per cent), HDFC Bank (-3.54 per cent) and SBI (-3.62 per cent).

The Nifty IT Index fell 2.87 per cent despite Infosys announcing over 26 per cent rise in July-September quarter profit and raised annual revenue forecast. Infosys shares closed 2.09 per cent down at Rs 1,113.25 on the NSE.

Other major losers included Reliance Industries (-3.68 per cent), TCS (-2.69 per cent) and Bajaj Finance (-4.98 per cent). Prasanna Pathak, head-equity & fund manager, Taurus Mutual Fund, said, "The market reacted to probability of US stimulus getting pushed after presidential elections, concerns about Trump's prospects in the elections and second round of lockdown starting in key European countries."

Stalled vaccine trials and Brexit clouds also played a part in the sentiments

weakening. In India we additionally had reports of a MFII defaulting on debt servicing due to internal fraud and a financial service firm facing forensic audit directed by the regulator.

The Nifty, after so many attempts, has failed to go above the January high of 12431. A large bear candle at the top could result in more weakness if Nifty does not stop falling in the next one-two days. On falls the Nifty could take support in the 11522-11605 band.

Ajit Mishra, VP-research, Religare Broking, said, "the benchmark indices opened flat and gradually inched lower in the first half however decline in IT, banking and energy majors intensified the fall as the session progressed...This fall has engulfed the gains of the last six sessions and derailed the momentum as well. We believe 11600 would be the next critical support in Nifty.

Real estate,  
infra funding  
down 82%  
this yearSANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, OCT. 15

An 82 per cent fall in investments in real estate and infrastructure has pulled down the total PE and VC investments in the first nine months of 2020, despite the \$11.7 billion funding received by Reliance and Jio platforms.

At \$2.9 billion, investments in real estate and infrastructure in January to September 2020 was down 82 per cent against \$16.1 billion during the same period last year. "At \$16.1 billion real estate and infrastructure had accounted for 44 per cent of all PE/VC investments in Jan-Sept. 2019. In 2020, these sectors have received only \$2.9 billion in investments till date, accounting for just 10 per cent of total PE/VC investments

PE/VC investments during the Jan-Sept period declined by 21 per cent to \$28.9 billion compared to \$36.4 billion in the same period last year. "If we exclude one-off PE investments in the Reliance Group entities, PE/VC investments in 2020 would be significantly lower at \$17.2 billion, a 53 per cent decline, said a IVCA-EY report.

Real estate investments were down to \$2.3 billion in the nine-month period against \$5.3 billion in the year ago period, according to Knight Frank India.

MFIs could return to  
pre-Covid levels soonSANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, OCT. 15

With collections improving to around 80 per cent of year-ago levels, the microfinance industry is expecting the business to return to pre-Covid levels in two to three months.

"Collection efficiencies have improved to 80-85 per cent levels by September. Some states like Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan have seen up to 90 per cent collections and some like Odisha and West Bengal are lagging behind with 75-80 per cent. Overall, by this month-end we would reach 90 per cent levels and probably in a month or two to 99 per cent levels," said Manoj Nambiar, chairperson of MFNI.

P.N. Vasudevan, MD and CEO of Equitas Small Finance Bank, too finds that collections have been steadily improving and have reached 80-85 per cent levels.

At a webinar by CRIF High Mark, Vasudevan said the industry will get back to pre-Covid levels in two to three months.

"Once the collections return to earlier levels, there will be demand for fresh loans. This is just around the corner and in two to three months, the industry will be back to pre-Covid levels," he said.

While collections have been improving month-on-month, disbursements are still at 50 per cent of pre-pandemic levels.

"The demand is there. People are in need for



## EQUITAS SFB'S IPO FROM OCT. 20

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD  
MUMBAI, OCT. 15

Chennai-based Equitas Small Finance Bank, a subsidiary of Equitas Holdings, aims to raise Rs 517 crore through an initial public offering in the price band of Rs 32-33 per share of Rs 10 face value. The public issue opens on October 20.

The IPO initial public

offering consists of a fresh issue aggregating up to Rs 280 crore and an offer for sale of up to 7.2 crore equity shares by Equitas Holdings, which is already listed on the stock exchanges.

The offer includes a reservation aggregating up to Rs. 51 crore for subscription by eligible Equitas Holdings shareholders. The public offer closes on October 22.

additional credit. But before we start providing them additional credit, we have to be sure about the resumption of their economic activity. Else, the loans will end up in delinquencies," said Nambiar.

According to him, NBFC-MFIs are extra cautious while lending. The credit checks have become more stringent and lenders are ensuring that the borrower has paying capacity.

"While the economic activity has not returned to normalcy, the level of

stress is different in different states. Some states like Rajasthan, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu have seen higher economic activity compared to some others. Migrant labourers are also returning with the resumption of activity," he said.

With the beginning of the festive season, the demand for credit also will be more. Once the collections improve and lenders regain the confidence, in a month or two, industry will return to normalcy, he added.

## COFFEE-BREAK

## Your day today

By Dr C.V.B. Subrahmanyam



**Aries:** Legal problems may worsen and reach a climax. You'll consider developing new contacts for sharing your feelings. Financial status improves though it'll still trouble you.



**Taurus:** Payments from long-distance clients may face last-minute obstacles. Higher-ups recognise your services and talents. Strictly avoid speculative activities.



**Gemini:** The expected change of place may not happen. You'll get anxious about failures at home and work. Professional incomes increase in every sphere.



**Cancer:** Status quo remains in business dealings. Your intransigence poses problems to family elders, robbing you off a golden academic opportunity.



**Leo:** Your exuberance benefits you. Delegating responsibilities help complete work on time. Your convincing talks help you sidestep a major responsibility.



**Virgo:** You'll enjoy your social life. Your handling of family matters infuses good spirits. People can cheat; take care. Your contribution to family affairs will matter to your family. Speak less and listen more.

## You share your b'day with

Hema Malini is an Indian film actress, writer, director, producer, dancer and politician. She is known for her roles in the films like *Johnny Mera Naam*, *Seeta Aur Geeta*, *Sholay*.



**Libra:** You'll make the most of an unexpected love. A property issue requires your consent before it's decided in anyone's favour. Consider taking a loan. Avoid office politics or you'd become its victim.



**Scorpio:** Important figures, previously in the way of your progress, turn congenial suddenly. Make the most of this opportunity and keep your documents in order.



**Sagittarius:** Respect a family member's diverse experience. Parents encourage a talented child to start an artistic project. Tiny disagreements slow your progress.



**Capricorn:** Someone's angry with you; be careful. You'll inspire family members. You'll lose money because of some friends or governmental agencies.

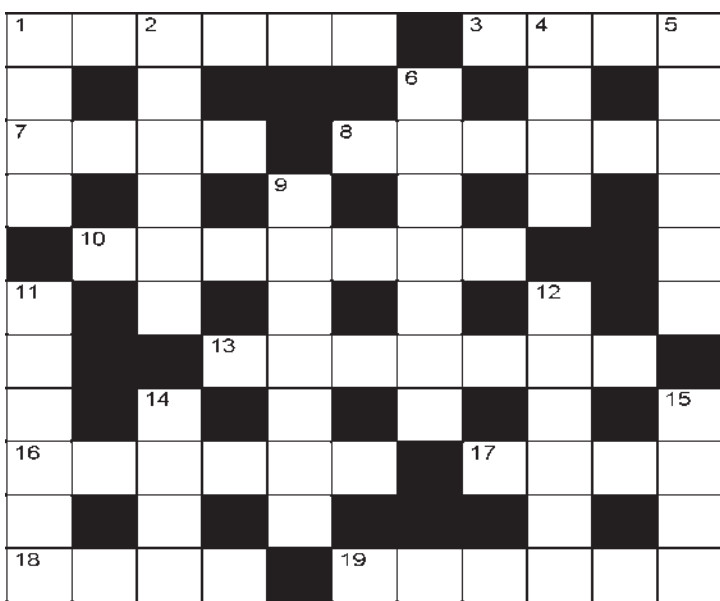


**Aquarius:** Unfavourable events may continue to haunt you. Heavy work dose exhausts women. Income for educational field professionals increases.



**Pisces:** You may not clinch big deals. Those planning immovable-property purchase may not succeed. Your position helps improve the present disposition. People abroad can expect a change in the nature of their job.

## QUICK CROSSWORD



## Across

1. Knighted (6)
3. Espy (4)
7. Coffin cloth (4)
8. Prosper (6)
10. Tongs (7)
13. Predicted (7)
16. Go over (6)
17. Stratagem (4)
18. Exhibit (4)
19. Window-shop (6)

## Down

1. Hoodwink (4)
2. Election (6)
4. Duo (4)
5. Fortification ditch (6)
6. Big lie (7)
9. Light motor cycle (7)
11. Angler's boots (6)
12. Candle fat (6)
14. Repeat (4)
15. Funeral fire (4)

## YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

Across: 1. Preferred, 6. Gavel, 7. Fault, 9. Vied, 10. Peeped, 12. Tassel, 14. Tall, 17. Elate, 18. Osier, 19. Teaspoons.

Down: 2. Revue, 3. Felt, 4. Rafter, 5. Equip, 6. Gavotte, 8. Tiddler, 11. Rebels, 13. Stave, 15. Align, 16. Solo.

## Word Mine

H  
DUO  
LOATD

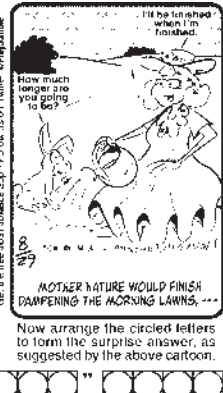
TODAY'S RATINGS: 8 AVERAGE: 10  
GOOD: 12 OUTSTANDING

How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown in today's puzzle? In making a word, each letter may be used once only. Each word must contain the letter at the top of the pyramid. There should be at least one nine letter word. Plurals, foreign words and proper names are not allowed.

## jumble

VOEMI  
IMLT  
MEDATN  
TAULNW

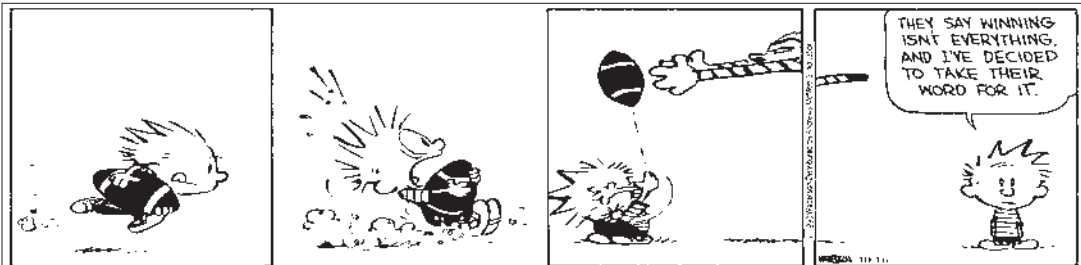
Yesterday's Jumble: OZONE SNACK RUTANE EXODUS  
Answer: The first positive number had a big ego and was proud to be — SECOND TO NONE



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers Monday)

## CALVIN AND HOBBS | Bill Watterson



## THE WIZARD OF ID | Parker and Hartsd



## ARCHIE | Bill Henry Scarpelli &amp; craig boldman



## BLONDIE | Dean Young and John Marshall



## ANDY CAPP | Reg Smythe



## TARZAN | Edgar Rice Burroughs



bridge

PHILLIP  
ALDERTHEY BOTH  
PLAYED THEIR  
LEADING  
ROLES

Look only at the West hand in today's diagram. What would you lead against three no-trump? South has a balanced 15-17 points with a doubleton spade, and North has 10-15 points with five spades (and probably no singleton). Dame Jane Goodall, world-famous primatologist and anthropologist, said, "Every individual matters. Every individual has a role to play. Every individual makes a difference."

At the bridge table, the declarer is an individual; the dummy has no active role to play. But each defender might -- or might not -- have to remember their lines, as it were. The best defenses are when both players must make winning choices. How did the defense go against three no-trump in this deal? The auction followed a very straightforward transfer route, North's three no-trump

North		South	
♠ A Q 10 5 2		♠ A 8 5	
♥ A 2		♥ K 8 4	
♦ A 10 9		♦ 7 6 2	
♣ A 4 3		♣ K 9 2	
		♣ 10 7 2 2	
Declarer: South		Defender: North	
Contract: 3NT		Result: 3NT	
Opening lead: ♠		AJPP	

asking partner to decide between that game and four spades.

West, with 12 high-card points, knew that her partner had a very weak hand. So, leading a heart or a club rated to cost a trick. A spade couldn't be right, given the five-card suit in the dummy. So she chose the diamond jack. The defense was still alive!

Declarer, a robot at Bridge Base Online, won with the queen, cashed the diamond

king and spade king, and continued spades, putting East in with his jack. After South had discarded one club and one heart, it was East's moment in the spotlight -- what did he do? East found the killing continuation -- he led the club jack. Then the defenders took one spade, three clubs and one heart. East and West bowed to each other.

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## SHORT TAKES

Commentator  
Bhimani no more

**Kolkata:** Veteran sports journalist and cricket commentator Kishore Bhimani died at the age of 80, family sources said on Thursday. He is survived by his wife Rita and son Gautam who is also a well-known TV personality.

"He had suffered a cerebral attack a few days back and was undergoing treatment," a family source said. Bhimani was one of the most recognised English voices of the 1980s. Bhimani was commentating when Sunil Gavaskar became the first player to reach 10,000 runs in Test cricket, during the drawn match against Pakistan in Ahmedabad in 1987.

One of the most sought-after Indian cricket writers who would be wooed by British publications in the 1980s, Bhimani was also on air during the final moments of the famous 1986 tied Test against Australia at Chepauk. — *PTI*

Medvedev rallies  
to beat Gasquet

**St. Petersburg:** Top-seeded Daniil Medvedev recovered from a shaky start to begin his defense of the St. Petersburg Open title with a 3-6, 6-3, 6-0 win over Richard Gasquet on Wednesday. Medvedev hit 22 aces to secure his first win since losing to Dominic Thiem in the U.S. Open semifinals, having lost in the first round in Hamburg and at the French Open. Medvedev set up a second-round match with Reilly Opelka, who earned a 3-6, 7-6 (5), 6-2 win over qualifier Nino Serdarusic. Stan Wawrinka booked his spot in the quarterfinals with a 6-1, 3-6, 6-3 win over Evgeny Donskoy, a wild-card entry who has now competed in the St. Petersburg tournament 12 times. — *AP*

Weightlifting's Oly  
future in doubt

**Dusseldorf:** The future of weightlifting at the Olympic Games was put in further doubt on Wednesday after the governing body's interim president was ousted and the International Olympic Committee expressed concern. Interim president Ursula Garza Papandrea said that board members voted to remove her from office Tuesday during a virtual meeting which she did not attend, after she had called the meeting for Wednesday. She said that first vice-president Intarat Yodbangtoey of Thailand was appointed in her place. Papandrea, a former weightlifter and coach from the United States, questioned the board's authority to remove her before a full electoral congress. She said board members repeatedly thwarted her attempts to reshape the IWF after an investigation alleged long-running corruption and doping cover-ups. Papandrea said the IWF was "dysfunctional" and long-serving officials were hostile to reform. — *AP*

Raja-Ram out of  
Spain Challenger

**Alicante:** The top-seeded Indian team of Ramkumar Ramanathan and Purav Raja bowed out of the ATP Alicante Ferrero Challenger following a straight set defeat, here on Thursday. Raja and Ramkumar lost 2-6 2-6 to local unseeded combination of Gerard Granollers and Pedro Martinez. Ramkumar has already exited from the singles event of the euro 44820 clay court tournament after losing to Carlos Alcaraz. In the doubles, India's challenge is still alive as N Sriam Balaji had reached the quarterfinals with his Swiss partner Luca Margaroli. They are up against French pair of Enzo Couacaud and Albano Olivetti. — *PTI*

Regd. No.  
TNENG/2010/35692

Printed & Published by  
**K. Sudhakar** on behalf of  
Deccan Chronicle Holdings  
Limited and Printed at  
Deccan Chronicle Press situated at  
No 2/22, Sengalipalayam Road,  
N.G.G.O Colony Post,  
Kurudampalayam Village,  
Coimbatore - 641 022. RNI  
Registration No: TNENG/2010/35692  
Ph No : 2231252, 253, 255, 257 & 358  
Editor: **KAUSHIK MITTER**

THE BOSS IS BACK  
Gayle returns with a bang as Kings XI pip RCB

**Sharjah, Oct. 15:** K.L. Rahul played a captain's knock and Chris Gayle fired in his first game since January as Kings XI Punjab finally ended their five-match losing streak with an eight-wicket win over Royal Challengers Bangalore in an IPL match here on Thursday.

Chasing 172 in a must-win game, the in-form opening pair of Rahul (61 not off 49) and Mayank Agarwal (45 off 25) got off to a flying start before Gayle (53 off 45) joined his skipper in the middle to get KXIP close to the finishing line.

Needing seven off the final two overs with nine wickets in hand, KXIP somehow managed to take the game to the last ball with Nicholas Pooran finally hitting the winning six.

Both Rahul and Gayle smashed five sixes each, rendering the opposition attack helpless.

Batting first, skipper Virat Kohli top-scored with 48 off 39 balls in his 200th game for RCB before Chris Morris' 25 off 8 in the death overs took the team to 171 for six.

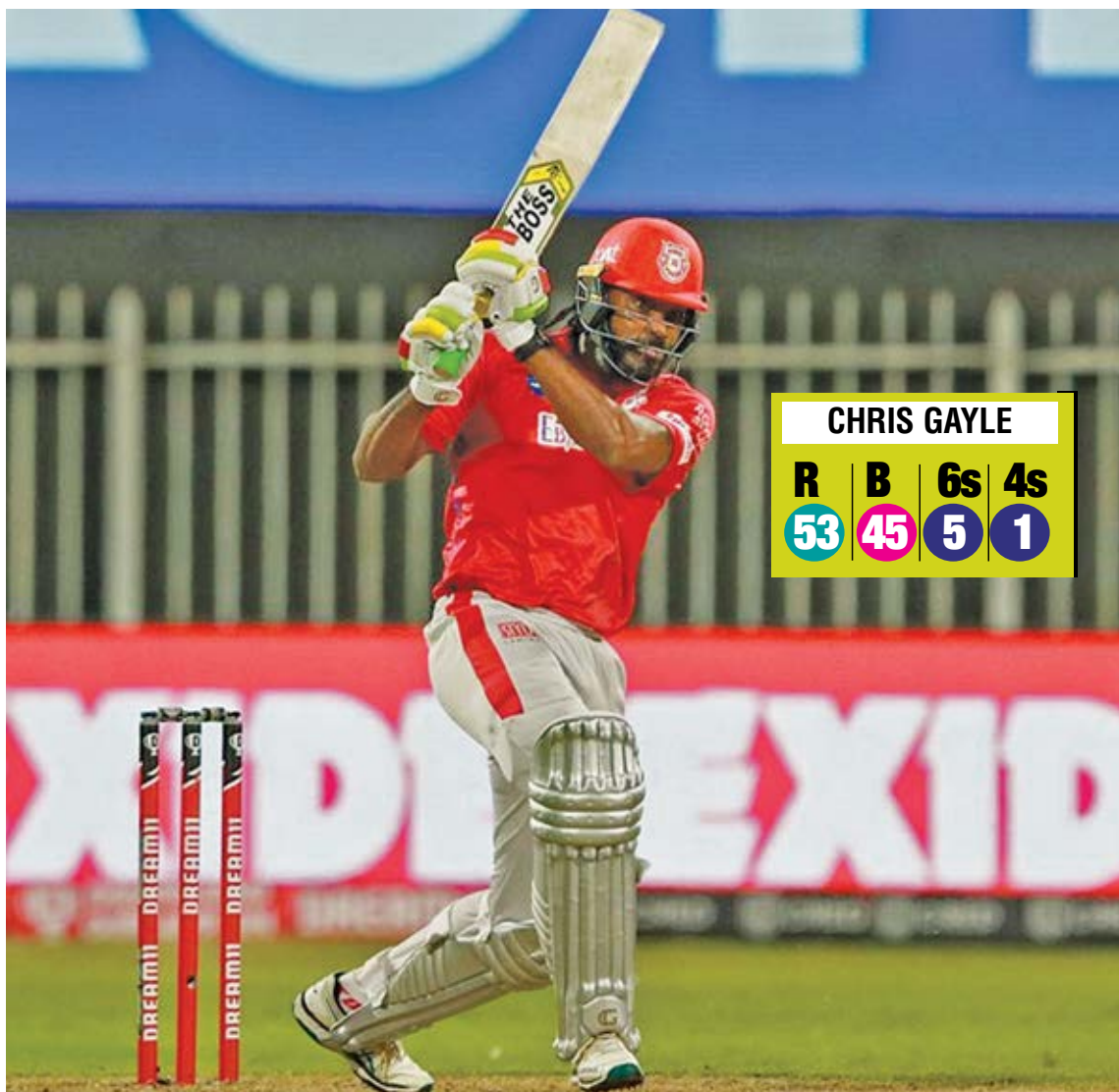
It was a rare all-round effort from KXIP who had failed to close out games earlier in the competition.

Mohammad Shami (2/45) conceded 24 runs in the final over that spoiled his figures after he got rid of Kohli and AB de Villiers but overall it was a much improved bowling effort by KXIP especially in the death overs.

Leg spinner M. Ashwin struck twice and pacer Chris Jordan took his first wicket of the tournament.

The run chase was supposed to be straightforward after Agarwal took the opposition to the cleaners in the powerplay before Rahul took over. As usual, the 41-year-old Gayle, batting at three, took his time early on before going ballistic.

Earlier, KXIP conceded only 25 runs from over 16-19 before Morris and Isuru Udana hammered Shami for three sixes. — *PTI*



Kings XI Punjab's Chris Gayle plays a shot against Royal Challengers Bangalore during an IPL game in Sharjah on Thursday. — *BCCI*

## IPL POINTS TABLE

Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
Delhi Capitals	8	6	2	0	12	+0.990
Mumbai Indians	7	5	2	0	10	+1.327
Royal Challengers Bangalore	8	5	3	0	10	-0.139
Kolkata Knight Riders	7	4	3	0	8	-0.577
Sunrisers Hyderabad	8	3	5	0	6	+0.009
Chennai Super Kings	8	3	5	0	6	-0.390
Rajasthan Royals	8	3	5	0	6	-0.844
Kings XI Punjab	8	2	6	0	4	-0.295

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

## SCORECARD

**Royal Challengers Bangalore:** A. Finch b Ashwin 20, D. Padikkal c Pooran b Arshdeep Singh 18, V. Kohli c Rahul b Mohammed Shami 48, Washington Sundar c Jordan b Ashwin 13, S. Dube c Rahul b Jordan 23, AB de Villiers c Hooda b Mohammed Shami 2, C. Morris (not out) 25, I. Udana (not out) 10. **Extras (b 4, lb 2, w 6) 12. Total (for six wickets in 20 overs) 171.**

**For:** 1-38, 2-62, 3-86, 4-127, 5-134, 6-136. **Bowling:** Maxwell 4-0-28-0, M. Shami 4-0-45-2, Arshdeep Singh 2-0-20-1, Ravi Bishnoi 3-0-29-0, M. Ashwin 4-0-23-2, C. Jordan 3-0-20-1.

**Kings XI Punjab:** KL Rahul (not out) 61, M. Agarwal b Chahal 45, C. Gayle run out (Padikkal/de Villiers) 53, N. Pooran (not out) 6. **Extras (lb 3, w 9) 12. Total (for two wickets in 20 overs) 177.**

**For:** 1-78, 2-171. **Bowling:** Morris 4-0-22-0, Saini 4-0-21-0, Chahal 3-0-35-1, Udana 2-0-14-0, M. Siraj 3-0-44-0, Washington 4-0-38-0.

## NUMBERS GAME

## HEAD TO HEAD

## OVERALL:

- Matches: 26
- Mumbai: 20
- Kolkata: 6

## MEETING IN 2019

- KKR beat Mumbai by 34 runs at Kolkata.
- Mumbai beat KKR by 9 wickets at Mumbai.

## MEETING IN 2020

- Mumbai beat KKR by 49 runs at Abu Dhabi.

## FOR THE RECORD

- Andre Russell who has hit 99 fours in 54 innings for KKR needs one more to complete a century of fours.

- Rohit Sharma who has scored 3,944 runs at an average of 31.80 in 146 innings needs 56 runs to become the first batsman from Mumbai Indians to score 4,000 runs in IPL.

— *S. PERVEZ KAISER*

## Mumbai have edge over KKR

**Abu Dhabi, Oct. 15:** An explosive batting line-up and a lethal-at-death bowling attack will give defending champions Mumbai Indians a definitive edge over Kolkata Knight Riders when the two teams clash in an IPL game here on Friday.

The defending champions are on a roll having won their last four games, while there are problems aplenty for KKR, who were decimated by the Royal Challengers Bangalore by 82 runs in their last game.

Mumbai Indians are thus unlikely to tinker with their playing XI.

For KKR, questions remain as to whether their key spinner Sunil Narine, who has been once reported for suspect bowling action, will play or not. He had missed the game against RCB even as KKR hoped for an "early resolution" to the



Mumbai Indians opener Quinton de Kock (left) and Rohit Sharma. — *BCCI*

issues surrounding his controversial action.

In the event of Narine missing out again, Mumbai will fancy their chances even more at the Sheikh Zayed stadium, where skipper Rohit Sharma has scored both his half-centuries this season.

Sharma (216 runs), on his day, can pummel any

attack to submission and particularly enjoys playing against Kolkata. When the two teams met last, Mumbai rode on his belligerent 80 to register a 49-run win.

Apart from Sharma, the Mumbai top and middle-order is in good form to be it South African opener Quinton De Kock (191 runs) or Suryakumar

Yadav (233 runs), who would like to continue in the same vein.

Ishan Kishan (186 runs) underlined his potential with a blistering 99 against RCB, but the Jharkhand player needs to convert his starts into big scores to make his presence felt.

Mumbai Indians coach Mahela Jayawardene would be pleased with the likes of Hardik Pandya and swashbuckling Kieron Pollard, who have been launching into the opposition attack with their big-hitting prowess along with Krunal Pandya.

Given the trio's abilities, they can rip apart the KKR attack, especially one sans Narine. On the bowling front too, Mumbai looks a settled unit with Trent Boult and Jasprit Bumrah providing early breakthroughs. — *PTI*

## DENMARK OPEN | BADMINTON

Srikanth storms  
into last-8 stage

**Odense, Oct. 15:** Ace Indian shuttler Kidambi Srikanth stormed into the Denmark Open quarterfinals with a straight-game win over Canada's Jason Anthony Ho-Shue here on Thursday.

The fifth seeded Indian took 33 minutes to get the better of his Canadian opponent 21-15 21-14 in the men's singles second round of the \$750,000 Super 750 tournament, the only world tour event happening this year in a calendar thrown haywire by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The BWF was forced to cancel multiple tournaments and postpone the Asia leg and the World Tour Final to January next year due to the pandemic.

"It was close until 11 in both games. I'm just happy that I could continue that form throughout the match. I had to be alert to get back his shots," Srikanth told BWF.

The 27-year-old is likely to face world no.2 Chou Tien Chen of Chinese Taipei, who meets Ireland's Nhat Nguyen later in the day.

Talking about Chou Tien Chen, Srikanth said: "He's been playing well the last few years. It's definitely a match where I can understand where I'm at. That's the whole idea of playing this tournament."

"He hits hard, he's someone who has an overall

game, he has a hard smash, he knows when to attack and when to defend. He has matured. It's always good when you play a top 4 player."

In the opening game, Srikanth zoomed to a 9-4 lead before grabbing a three-point advantage at the break.

The Indian then reeled off six points to create a huge gap, which Jason couldn't bridge.

Srikanth fell behind 5-8 in the second game but bounced back with six straight points to reach 11-8 at the interval. The Canadian made it 10-11 after resumption.

Srikanth then stepped up the pace and was immediately rewarded as he opened up a 15-10 lead.

He constructed the rallies well to quickly jump to 19-11. Srikanth soon garnered 8 match points but sent one to the net and couldn't reach the shuttle next to concede two.

But his opponent went wide next and Srikanth sealed it comfortably.

The other Indian in the competition, Lakshya Sen, will be up against local challenger Hans-Kristian Solberg Vittinghus in his second round match later in the day.

Subhankar Dey and Ajay Jayram were also in the fray but made first round exits on Wednesday. — *PTI*

Didn't know I bowled  
IPL's fastest ball: Nortje

**Dubai, Oct. 15:** South African speedster Anrich Nortje, who set the Indian Premier League ablaze by bowling the fastest delivery in the tournament's history, says he was unaware of the feat until after the end of the match.

The 26-year-old pacer clocked a breathtaking 156.2 kmph while bowling to Jos Buttler in the third over of Rajasthan Royals' run-chase against Delhi Capitals on Wednesday. He bettered compatriot Dale Steyn's (154.4 kmph) record in the process.

"I heard about it afterwards. I did not know about it at the time," Anrich told his Capitals teammate Shikhar Dhawan in a video posted by *IPLT20.com*.

Nortje added that he has been working hard on injecting pace in his deliveries. "I have been working really hard to get my pace up, been a couple of seasons. Been working on my

braced leg and my front arm... simple stuff. Happy to get some pace behind it but you obviously need to get it in the right area, that's the most important thing."

Bowling the fastest delivery did not have the desired result for Nortje as Buttler scooped it for a boundary. The Englishman had played the same shot in the previous delivery.

However, the duel didn't last long as the South African claimed Buttler's wicket with a 155 kmph thunderbolt, the second fastest ball in IPL history.

"Yeah, the battle against Buttler was interesting. I know he plays the scoop shots, but when he played the first one, it took me by surprise," Nortje said.

"I did not think he would do it again, but he played the shot once again on the next delivery. He played really well, but I stuck to my strength," Nortje added. — *PTI*

## Mbappe fires France past Croatia; England stumble

**Paris, Oct. 15:** England's prospects of returning to the finals of the Nations League suffered a big hit as Gareth Southgate's side lost 1-0 at home to Denmark on Wednesday, while Kylian Mbappe gave World Cup holders France a 2-1 victory in Croatia and Portugal won without Cristiano Ronaldo.

Harry Maguire was sent off for England in the first half at Wembley for two clumsy yellow cards, and Christian Eriksen then converted a 35th-minute penalty on the occasion of his 100th cap to put the Danes ahead.

They held on to inflict a first home defeat on England in two years, with the hosts also having young Chelsea full-back Reece James sent off for dissent after the final whistle.

"He is a top player, he is a massive part of what we do," Southgate said in

defence of Maguire, who has struggled for Manchester United since his involvement in a brawl on the Greek island of Mykonos in August.

"He is having a period where is having a lot of stick thrown his way and he is big enough to deal with that."

England got to the four-team finals of the inaugural Nations League last year but their chances of getting there again this time are very much in the balance with Belgium two points ahead of Southgate's team and the Danes atop League A, Group 2.

Belgium won 2-1 in Iceland on Wednesday with Romelu Lukaku scoring twice. They host England in Brussels on November 15.

In Zagreb, Paris Saint-Germain star Mbappe missed an open goal early on but got the winner in

the 79th minute as France beat Croatia 2-1 in their latest re-run of the 2018 World Cup final.

Antoine Griezmann had put France ahead with Nikola Vlasic equalising in the second half for Croatia before around 7,000 fans.

Les Bleus have still never lost to Croatia and are level with Portugal on 10 points at the top of League A, Group 3.

Double for Jota,  
Lewandowski

Portugal, winners of the inaugural Nations League, shrugged off the absence of Ronaldo because of a positive Covid-19 test as they beat Sweden 3-0 in Lisbon.

Liverpool's Diogo Jota set up Bernardo Silva for the opener then scored two of his own, one either side of half-time.

"This team will always be better with Cristiano,

but they showed they can still compete," said Portugal coach Fernando Santos.

Meanwhile, the prolific Robert Lewandowski scored a brace as Poland beat Bosnia and Herzegovina 3-0 in Warsaw. Karol Linetty got the other goal and Poland are top of Group A, a point above Italy and two ahead of the Netherlands.

The Dutch came from behind to draw 1-1 with Italy in Bergamo, with Donny van de Beek netting for Frank de Boer's side after Lorenzo Pellegrini put Italy ahead.

Scotland continue  
revival

Below the top tier, Scotland continued their tentative revival by beating the Czech Republic 1-0 at an empty Hampden thanks to an early goal by Newcastle United's Ryan Fraser.

After edging Israel on penalties to reach the Euro qualifying play-off final, Scotland beat Slovakia 1-0 at the weekend.

They are now unbeaten in eight matches and are four points clear of the Czechs at the top of League B, Group 2, and five ahead of Israel who came from 2-0 down to win 3-2 in Slovakia with a hat-trick from PSV Eindhoven's Eran Zahavi.

In Group 4, Wales won 1-0 in Bulgaria with a late Jonny Williams goal.

They are unbeaten in eight competitive games, and Ryan Giggs' side are top with 10 points, a point ahead of Finland.

Stephen Kennedy is still waiting for his first win as Republic of Ireland manager after a 1-0 defeat in Finland left his side out of contention for top spot in that group. — *AFP*



France's Kylian Mbappe reacts after scoring a goal against Croatia in Zagreb. — *UEFA*