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### WEATHER



**Max:** 32.6°C  
**Min:** 23.4°C  
**RH:** 52%  
**Rainfall:** Nil

**Forecast:** Cloudy sky. Thundershowers likely.  
Max/Min temp. 33/24 9C

## COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+74,722)	(+902)
66,22,135	1,02,714

*covid19india.org*

### STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+1,949)	(+10)
TS: 1,99,276	1,163
(+6,242)	(+40)
AP: 7,19,256	5,981

### CASES AROUND THE WORLD

3,52,49,401

### DEATHS

10,39,543

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES **213**

*worldometers.info/coronavirus*

## ASTROGUIDE

**Sarvari:** Dakshinayana  
**Tithi:** Adhika Ashwavyuja Bahula Tadiya 10.01 am  
**Star:** Bharani till 2.54 pm  
**Varjyam:** 4.23 am to 6.11 am (Tuesday)  
**Durmuhurtam:** 12.28 pm to 1.15 pm; 2.49 pm to 3.36 pm  
**Rahukalam:** 7.30 am to 9 am

### HJRI CALENDAR

**Safar ul Muzaffar** 17, 1442 AH

### PRAYERS

**Fajar:** 5.07 am  
**Zohar:** 12.14 pm  
**Asar:** 4.21 pm  
**Maghrib:** 6.07 pm  
**Isha:** 7.15 pm

**SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.07 AM**  
**SUNSET TODAY 6.01 PM**  
**MOONSET 8.23 PM**  
**MOONRISE 8.41 AM**

## COUNTER POINT



Seat-sharing between the parties is complete... now, it's among factions of our own party!

## IN BRIEF

### Trump feels O2 dropping twice

**Washington:** Trump's medical team said the President experienced two episodes of blood-oxygen drops during his illness. They said Trump has remained without fever since Friday and was stable. He has completed a second dose of remdesivir, and his kidney and liver were normal. He could be discharged by Monday.

### ₹6.62 cr worth gold seized

**Hyderabad:** Gold bars and ornaments weighing eight kg and other valuables without proper documentation, all worth over ₹6.62 crore, were seized at the airport here, Customs officials said on Sunday. Intelligence reports said foreign-origin gold bars without proper papers were enroute Mumbai and Jaipur.

**Report on Page 2**

## War games in peace time



Indian and Bangladesh Naval Warships take part in the third edition of Coordinated Patrol during the Bongosagar-2020, the bilateral exercise between the navies of both the countries off the sea from Visakhapatnam on Sunday.

# LJP to fight Bihar polls alone

## Unhappy with Nitish Kumar being projected as NDA's CM face

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 4

Bihar's upcoming electoral battle kept getting interesting as another "front" joined the battlefield. NDA constituent Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) of Union minister Ram Vilas Paswan, announced it would go solo over "ideological differences" with Janata Dal(United) president and Chief Minister Nitish Kumar.

The BJP, which held its central election committee (CEC) meeting to discuss its candidates after the LJP made its announcement, has already made it clear that Nitish Kumar is NDA's CM face.

The CEC was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. party president J.P. Nadda, Union ministers Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh, Nityanand Rai, election in-charge and former Maharashtra chief minister Devendra Fadnavis, among others.

The LJP, which had won two Assembly seats out of 43 that it contested in the last elections, made it clear that it has a strong alliance with the BJP at the Centre. Post the polls, LJP MLAs will form government with the BJP in the state, the party said, giving an indication that the LJP chief is hoping to be a "kingmaker" in case JD(U)-BJP is short of the

halfway mark of 122. Paswans are one of the 22 Dalit castes in the state, which account for nearly 16 per cent of the total population. It would be seen whether the LJP will be able to woo the non-Paswan Dalit vote bank, a significant number of whom have been supporting Nitish Kumar.

The LJP has claimed it will contest 143 seats of the total 243. It remains to be seen how many candidates it actually fields, as it may get into "friendly fights" with the BJP in some seats if it sticks to the number. Also, it remains to be seen how the BJP's campaign will face the LJP's candidates where the JD(U) is

also contesting: The BJP leadership has asked its cadre to seek votes for the NDA candidates and not just the BJP's. The first phase of polling will take place on October 28 and the JD(U) and the BJP are yet to announce their seat sharing formula. Both had contested the polls in 2015 separately; the JD(U) was out of the NDA and had contested with the RJD and the Congress.

Speculation is rife that JD(U) could contest a couple of seats more than the BJP as it will have to accommodate the Hindustan Avam Morcha (HAM) of former chief minister Jiten Ram Manjhi from its quota.

# Newborn thrown out of moving autorickshaw

A. RAVINDRA SESHU | DC  
KHAMMAM, OCT. 4

A newborn baby girl was thrown out of a moving autorickshaw near the Jubilee Club here by unidentified persons early on Sunday morning. Passersby tried to chase the vehicle and stop it but their attempts went in vain. They then picked up the baby and handed her over to a traffic constable present there.

The baby, suffering from respiratory problems, is under treatment at the neonatal care unit of the district headquarters hos-

pital. Her condition is stated to be critical. Cops are examining CCTV footage from various places on the Wyr Road to try and trace the autorickshaw.

Two Town police station inspector C.H. Sridhar said they would catch those travelling in the autorickshaw.

Hospital superintendent B. Venkateswarlu, who is supervising the treatment of the baby, said she is suffering from neonatal respiratory disease, which is common in premature newborns born before 32 weeks of pregnancy.

District child protection

officer P. Vishnuvandana said police had handed over the baby to them after filing an FIR. They shifted her to the hospital.

"Doctors have told us that they will be able to say something about the baby's condition after 11 am on Monday. A woman attendant from ICDS is looking after the baby, who is being fed as per doctors' instructions," Vishnuvandana stated.

The baby did not receive any injury after the incident. Sources suspect that some persons from Dornakal area had resorted to this crime.

## CRIME | RECORD

## Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh top list of states in trafficking, finds NCRB data

# Human trafficking declines in Telangana

MD ILYAS | DC  
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 4

Human trafficking has seen a surge in the two Telugu states with Andhra Pradesh being the second most affected while Telangana state stands seventh.

The highest number of human trafficking cases has been reported from Maharashtra.

According to data provided by the National Crime Records Bureau, 245 cases of human trafficking were reported in 2019 in Andhra Pradesh against 240 in 2018

and 218 the year before. There has been a gradual decline in Telangana state which reported 137 cases in 2019 and 242 in 2018 and 329 in 2017.

According to the report, a majority of the victims were forced into the flesh trade, followed by domestic maids forced to work as bonded labourers.

Research by various organisations on human trafficking revealed that there is a huge demand for minor girls in brothels. Abject poverty is forcing parents to send their

minor daughters to work as housemaids. Recently, the Guntur police freed eight minor girls from bonded labour. They were brought from north Andhra by agents.

The International Day of No Prostitution is observed on October 5. The day aims at increasing awareness about prostitution. Several NGOs working against human trafficking have been urging the government to initiate measures to restrain human trafficking by strict implementation of laws.

Prof K.K. Mukherjee, former head of department of social work, Delhi University, said that besides trafficking-related prostitution, several social classes and tribal communities take up prostitution as their primary source of

income. HELP and Vimukthi organizations, which campaign for the rights of children and for the prevention of second generation prostitution, have called for the need to have measures to end human trafficking and prostitution.

HELP secretary N. Ram Mohan said 10.8 per cent of the human trafficking cases reported in the country has been registered in Andhra Pradesh, which is a big concern. He said that 99.40 per cent cases were charge-sheeted while 52

cases resulted in conviction. He said that AP is better in convictions compared to other states.

Ram Mohan said that there were only three Anti Human Trafficking Units (AHTU) cases operative in AP. AHTUs should be established in every district and should enjoy police station powers. He said that rehabilitation should be provided to the victims who are rescued so as to ensure that they will lead a new life and effectively eliminate prostitution.

# Centre, Oppn GST tug of war today

## Non-BJP states to oppose borrowing option

New Delhi, Oct. 4: The GST Council meeting on Monday may turn into a stormy affair, with non-BJP ruled states still being in disagreement with the Centre on the compensation issue.

While as many as 21 states, mostly ruled by BJP or parties which have supported it on issues, had till mid-September opted to borrow ₹97,000 crore to meet the GST revenue shortfall in the current fiscal, Opposition-led states like West Bengal, Punjab and Kerala have not yet accepted the borrowing option given by the Centre.

Sources said in the 42nd meeting of the Council on October 5, Opposition-ruled states would object to the Centre's borrowing options and demand alternative mechanism for funding GST compensation deficit. They feel that the constitutional liability of compensating states lies with the Union government. In the current fiscal, the states are staring at a staggering ₹2.35 lakh crore Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenue shortfall. Of this, as per Centre's calculation, about

## CENTRE BREACHED TRUST OF STATES ON GST: HARISH

Finance minister T. Harish Rao in an exclusive for *Deccan Chronicle* says that denying states their rightful entitlement of GST compensation in these critical times is a clear breach of trust. Harish Rao says the Centre must not force the states to make up for the shortfall of GST.

■ See Page 2

₹97,000 crore is on account of GST implementation and rest ₹1.38 lakh crore is the impact of Covid-19 on states' revenues.

The Centre in August gave two options to the states to borrow either ₹97,000 crore from a special window facilitated by the RBI or ₹2.35 lakh crore from market and has also proposed extending the compensation cess levied on luxury, demerit and sin goods beyond 2022 to repay the borrowing. Chief Ministers of six

non-BJP ruled states — West Bengal, Kerala, Delhi, Telangana, Chhattisgarh and Tamil Nadu — have written to the Centre opposing the options which require states to borrow to meet shortfall. While these states want the Centre to borrow to meet the shortfall, the Centre has argued that the revenue accruing from GST compensation cess goes to the states and the Centre cannot borrow on the security of the tax it does not own. Under the GST structure, taxes are levied under 5, 12, 18 and 28 per cent slabs. On top of the highest tax slab, a cess is levied on luxury, sin and demerit goods and the proceeds from the same are used to compensate states for any revenue loss. Attorney General of India K.K. Venugopal had given his legal view on the compensation cess issue where he has opined that there is no obligation on the Centre under the GST laws to compensate for the loss of revenue. He had opined that the GST Council has to find ways to meet any revenue shortfall arising out of GST implementation. —PTI

# Centre calls meet on Gorkhaland, angers Trinamul

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC  
KOLKATA, OCT. 4

Barely eight months before the Assembly election in West Bengal, the Centre has invited the Mamata Banerjee government to a meeting on Gorkhaland with Gorkha Janmukti Morcha in New Delhi this week, leaving the Trinamul Congress fuming and the BJP smiling.

The Modi government's move comes close on the heels of BJP MP of Darjeeling Raju Bista's statement in the last session in Parliament where he raised the demand of the people of the hills for Gorkhaland as a "permanent solution" and mentioned the BJP's electoral promise in 2019 Lok Sabha polls to fulfil it.

Recently, the ministry of home affairs in a letter to the state government requested state home secretary, Darjeeling district magistrate and principal

secretary of the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration to attend the meeting to be convened by Union minister of state for home affairs G. Kishan Reddy at 11 am on October 7.

Besides, a similar invitation has been sent to the president of GJM, the Darjeeling-based political party which spearheaded fierce Gorkhaland movement both before and after the Trinamul came to power in the state in 2011. Bimal Gurung, who founded the GJM, was its president for many years. He, however, went underground with cases against him after violence rocked Darjeeling leading to a prolonged shutdown in 2017. In November of that year, Mr Gurung was suspended by his rival camp in the party led by Binoy Tamang, while taking control of the outfit.

■ Page 4: Gurung camp builds rapport with BJP

## FARM BILLS OUT ON CONGRESS RETURN: RAHUL

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI OCT. 4

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi once again lashed out at the Central government over the passage of Farm Bills in the recently concluded Monsoon Session of Parliament.

He said that his party will scrap the three farm laws and throw them in the waste paper basket when it comes to power at the Centre. Mr Gandhi's statement comes in the backdrop of the launch of the "Kheti Bachao Yatra" in Punjab with chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh on Sunday.

Flagging off a three day tractor rally against the farm bills, Mr Gandhi said, "Their (the BJP's) only aim is to destroy MSP and food procurement. The Congress is not going to let this government to do it. I guarantee that whenever the Congress returns to power, we will remove these black laws. We will fight the government and remove these laws."



## SHORT TAKES

GOLD SEIZED  
AT AIRPORT IS  
WORTH ₹9 CRBALU PULIPAKA | DC  
HYDERABAD, OCT. 4

It wasn't just gold that was sought to be illegally transported out of Hyderabad when it was seized on Saturday at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport. On Sunday, the Central Excise and Customs department announced that the seized treasures include antique coins, loose diamonds, precious and semi-precious stones, platinum tops and stainless steel watches.

The gold was in the form of jewellery, bars of foreign origin of 999 purity.

The official statement on Sunday clarified that the seized gold weighed a total of 8 kg. On Saturday, after the seizure were conducted by the officials, word went around that the gold weighed 21 kg and its value was around ₹9 crore. The Customs department said the gold bars weighed 5.63 kg and the jewellery 2.37 kg. The value of the seized consignment is ₹6,62,46,387, it said.

The seizure was based on "specific intelligence that certain foreign origin gold bars without proper documentation are being clandestinely moved from Hyderabad to Mumbai and Jaipur via an Indigo flight."

Following receipt of the information, Customs and Excise department officers conducted a thorough verification of suspected consignments at the domestic cargo terminal at the airport and seized the gold, diamonds and other contraband.

2K QUINTALS OF  
PDS RICE SEIZED  
IN LAST 3 MONTHSRAVINDRA SESHU | DC  
KHAMMAM, OCT. 4

The Task Force police on Sunday seized 100 quintals of PDS rice from Kurnavalli in Tallada mandal in Khammam district.

The Task Force team led by sub-inspector B. Tirupathi Reddy took one person into custody. The police also seized the two lorries which were transporting the PDS rice and a Bolero.

In the last three months, there has been an increase in the cases related to the illegal transport of PDS rice. There have been 25 incidents, and the Task Force police recovered more than 2,000 quintals of rice. On average, the police seized 300 quintals of rice every three days.

The officials are surprised how the PDS rice is getting transported illegally even after the government introducing bio-metric and portability facilities in the distribution of essential commodities.

BOOKIES AMONG  
FIVE ARRESTED  
FOR BETTINGDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, OCT 4

Every game of the ongoing IPL 2020 in the UAE appears to result in not just an exciting game of cricket for fans of the sport but also an opportunity to try and make money off the games through illegal betting. On Sunday, the city police said that they had arrested five men, including bookies and punters, for betting and running of the odds on Saturday evening.

Task Force officials, on credible information, raided the office of the Manbhavana Chit Funds Pvt Ltd, at MP Mall, on Abid Road on Saturday. Anand Bhai Tapadia, the organiser and bookie, Shyam Sunder Sharma a sub-bookie, and three punters — Pamba Karandas, Tumwar Ashok and Voore Yashwanth Kumar — were arrested during the raid.

The police said the racket was being run under the direction of the main organiser identified as Alpesh, a resident of Gujarat, who led the ring that was accepting direct bets as well as online.

The police said ₹2.15 lakh was seized, along with 10 mobile phones, a television set, a set top box and remote, one calculator and a note book from the office.

■ **THE RACKET** was being run under the direction of the main organiser identified as Alpesh, a resident of Gujarat, who led the ring that was accepting direct bets as well as online.

GST: States need a helping  
hand, Centre must support

States sacrificed their fiscal autonomy to facilitate introduction of GST

T. HARISH RAO

The issue of Goods and Services Tax (GST) compensation to states has taken centre-stage because of a very unreasonable stand taken by the Centre. States had facilitated the introduction of GST by sacrificing their fiscal autonomy in the interests of harmonisation and simplification of the indirect tax system.

While state taxes subsumed under the GST accounted for around 50 per cent of their own tax revenue, taxes subsumed by the Centre constituted only 31 per cent. The Centre enacted the GST (Compensation to States) Act, 2017 mandating compensation to states for loss of revenue on account of implementation of GST for a period of five years. For the purpose of compensating states, the Act envisages levy of compensation cess for five years, and beyond if the GST Council so recommends.

At GST Council in 2017, Union finance minister assured that in case GST compensation fund fell short of compensation, the GST Council shall decide mode of raising additional funds, including borrowing. As states

are recipients of compensation, assurance implied that the Centre would borrow. This was reassured by secretary of the Council in response to an issue raised by Telangana.

There was no problem in first two years. At end of 2018-19, there was a surplus of ₹47,272 crore in compensation fund, which was credited to the Consolidated Fund of India (CFI) and used by the Centre. This was in contravention of the Act that stipulates that cess collections shall be credited into a non-lapsable fund in the Public Fund. The Comptroller and Auditor General of India in his report placed in Parliament recently pointed out this impropriety. GST compensation instead of being transferred from Public Account was transferred as grants-in-aid.

In 2019-20, cess collection fell short of compensation by ₹69,751 crore. Compensation was paid to states with undue delays by utilising the cess wrongly credited into the CFI and transferring the remaining amount from the IGST balance of 2017-18.

The Coronavirus pandemic in the current year



T. Harish Rao

coupled with the slowdown in economic growth in recent years, has adversely affected the revenues of both the Centre and the states. Though nearly six months are elapsing in the current fiscal year, states have not received any compensation. In a meeting of GST Council specially called for discussing the issue of compensation, the Centre presented two options to states. Under Option-1, states have been allowed to borrow ₹97,000 crore, which is revenue loss attributable to implementation of GST, through a special window. This debt will be serviced by the Centre through extension of cess beyond five years. Under Option-2, states

● **AT GST Council in 2017, Union finance minister assured that in case GST compensation fund fell short of compensation, the GST Council shall decide mode of raising additional funds, including borrowing. As states are recipients of compensation, assurance implied that the Centre would borrow.**

were allowed to borrow ₹2.35 lakh crore, which is estimated loss of revenue on account of implementation of GST as well as loss attributable to Covid-19 pandemic. Under the second option, states will have to bear interest burden.

The Centre put forth four arguments on why states should borrow instead of Centre. One, Centre's borrowings will have macro-economic repercussions; two, no express provision in GST Act that Centre would bear liability shortfall in compensation cess, three, states (as of September 8, 2020), have borrowed only 1.25 per cent of GSDP though enhanced borrowing limit is 5 per cent and four, shortfall in cess cannot be paid out from CFI. None of

these arguments stand up to scrutiny.

Denying states their rightful entitlement of GST compensation in these critical times is a clear breach of trust. After the introduction of GST, states do not have any major source of revenue. The Centre has various sources of revenue such as income-tax, corporation tax and customs duties, which are outside the ambit of GST. Furthermore, the Centre has access to non-tax revenues, which are not sharable with states, like dividends from Central public sector undertakings, dividends from Reserve Bank of India, sale proceeds of spectrum, etc. This is not the time to leave states to fend for themselves. States are in need of a helping hand. The only viable option for bridging the trust deficit and to adhere to provisions of GST Compensation Act is Centre should borrow to fully compensate states without resorting to unlawful distinction between loss on account of GST implementation and Covid-19 induced loss.

(The writer is finance minister, government of Telangana state)

Harish: Cong is  
day-dreamingS.A. ISHAQUI | DC  
HYDERABAD, OCT. 4

Ridiculing the recent call of Manickam Tagore, AICC in-charge of Telangana Congress, to ensure a Congress win in the 2023 elections, finance minister T. Harish Rao on Sunday said the Congress was only day-dreaming.

Harish Rao was speaking after five prominent Congress leaders and municipal councillors of Medak Municipality joined the TRS in Medak in his presence.

Charging that the Congress and the BJP had entered into a secret pact in Telangana state, he pointed out that the Congress was targeting the state government instead of the NDA government at the Centre, which passed three con-

tentious agriculture bills. He wondered why the Congress did not even stage a protest against the anti-farmer bills. He said "the Congress behaviour was a clear indicator that the two national parties had arrived at a secret understanding in the state."

Harish Rao told Tagore that he should know how the Telangana state government was working for the welfare of farmers before criticising Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao.

Exuding confidence of winning the Dubbaka seat with a huge majority in the ensuing byelections, he pointed out that Congress leaders have not set a foot in the constituency even though the election schedule has been announced.

KCR fails but blames  
Centre, says BandiDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, OCT. 4

BJP state president Bandi Sanjay Kumar has questioned Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao for writing a letter to the Centre just days before the October 6 Apex Council meeting called by the Union Jai Shakti ministry to resolve river water disputes between the two Telugu states.

In a letter on Sunday, Sanjay said the CM was blaming the Centre for his failures. "You are shedding crocodile tears on the Pothireddypadu issue now after your failure to act in time and deliberately allowing damage to the interests of Telangana state all these days."

Asking the Chief Minister if he could not have discussed the issues



Bandi Sanjay Kumar

raised in his letter in the Apex Council meeting, Sanjay said, "it is only a show-off."

Sanjay said that the state had approached the Supreme Court in 2014 for setting up a tribunal for sharing of Krishna water and the court had ordered that the Brijesh Kumar Tribunal would decide on the matter. "The tribunal is hearing the matter and is likely to give its judgment any time now. Is the Centre not bound by the Supreme Court order," he

said.

Sanjay claimed that it was after he wrote a letter to the Union Jai Shakti minister requesting him to stop the "illegal" Pothireddypadu project that the Centre, through the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB), had responded and asked AP not to go ahead with it.

When the AP government did not respond, the Centre tried to convene the Apex Council meeting on August 5, Sanjay said adding, "but you (CM) asked for postponement until after August 20 only to allow Andhra Pradesh to complete the tender process." He alleged, "the fact of the matter is that you have colluded with Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy and both of you are playing a cruel game with the people of the two states."

## Deserving left out of Aasara pensions

PULI SHARATH  
KUMAR | DC  
KARIMNAGAR, OCT. 4

Hundreds of ineligible people are cornering Aasara pensions while eligible ones are being denied the same in the four TS districts of Karimnagar, Jagtial, Peddapalli and Rajanna Sircilla.

Even well-settled people owning air-conditioned cars and furnished houses are claiming pensions as bidi workers, while many old and infirm are being denied the same.

While 22,679 applications are pending approval in these districts, nearly ₹7 crore worth pensions are being cornered by underserving.

According to a survey conducted by Loksatta Udhayama Samastha (LUS), around 3,000 ineligible beneficiaries are receiving Aasara pensions in Karimnagar district alone.

The state government gives monthly pension of ₹3,001 for welfare of physically challenged while others like widows, weavers, toddy tappers, beedi workers, single women, and HIV and filaria patients get ₹2,016.

However, rich and upper middle class people are using their political influence and connections to corner these pensions, while many who are eligible under the Aasara scheme are going around government offices since one and half years for inclusion of their names under the pension scheme.

Around 9,911 applications are pending in

Karimnagar district, followed by 5,430 in Jagtial district, 3,856 in Peddapalli district, and 3,482 in Rajanna Sircilla district.

Members of LUS have demanded that the government immediately take action against ineligible persons and approve applications of those deserving. Neelam Lakshmi of Gollepelly, Lalitha of Sircilla town and Amudala Shankaravva of Lakshimpur had applied for pensions after the death of their husbands. Their applications have not yet been approved.

While this is so, there are many families wherein more than one person is receiving pension. LUS has identified 668 such persons in Karimnagar district, 632 in Jagtial district, 301 in Peddapalli district, and 233 in Rajanna Sircilla district.

Officials are also negligent about monitoring the list of beneficiaries regularly and deleting names of people who have expired.

In Sircilla town alone, there are 206 persons who have died. But their amount continues to be credited into their accounts.

On the contrary, Annarapu Mallavva (65) and Maggidi Gangaram (80), residents of Nadikuda village in Mallapur mandal, were receiving Aasara pensions until March 2020.

But they did not receive pensions from April to August when they required it the most due to financial crisis because of Coronavirus.



## PENSION PANGS

District	Double pension in a single house	Pending
Karimnagar	668	9,911
Jagtial	632	5,430
Peddapalli	301	3,856
Rajanna Sircilla	233	3,482
Total	1,834	22,679

## 45K eligible, still wait for pension in Adilabad

PILLALAMARRI  
SRINIVAS | DC  
ADILABAD, OCT. 4

Nearly 45,000 eligible elderly, widows, single women and disabled persons are among those in the Adilabad district, who have applied for pensions under

the Aasara scheme since the past one year but are yet to get it. Hundreds of new applications for these pensions are pending with MPDOs at the respective mandal headquarters. Officials concerned say they will be able to sanction pensions to eligible among

the new applicants only if the government issues orders for approving them.

Many of the elderly receiving Aasara pensions are complaining that they have to wait for long to get their monthly pensions. Instead of getting their pension amounts on the

first day of the month, they are getting them only in the last or third week of the month. ₹14.60 crore is being currently distributed in Adilabad district to 61,764 exiting pensioners under various categories including elderly, widows and disabled.

then approached the Council for Citizens Rights (CCR), which took

Many elderly, including women who have lost their husbands a year ago, have applied for pensions, which are yet to be sanctioned. There are also nearly 4,000 disabled persons who have applied for pensions after getting their SADAREM certificates.

the issue to Jagtial district collector G. Ravi.

Tagore gears up  
to challenge TRSIREDDY SRINIVAS  
REDDY | DC  
HYDERABAD, OCT. 4

Manickam Tagore, All India Congress Committee (AICC) in-charge for Telangana state Congress affairs, has sparked new hopes among state Congress leaders through his energetic functioning.

After reaching Hyderabad, Tagore has been implementing programmes to rejuvenate the party in the state as directed by the high command and taking on Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao on various issues.

Though he has brought "josh" within the Congress cadre, the topic being discussed in party circles is how to face challenges in the forthcoming elections. The Dubbaka by-election is the first test. The TRS has intensified its campaign and deployed several MLAs. The BJP has appointed former ministers and former MPs as mandal in-charges and is actively campaigning.

The Congress has so far failed in even naming a nominee. Cheruku Muthyam Reddy, Congress candidate in 2019, has joined the TRS. There are murmurs that the party has no candidate with potential.

Senior Congress leaders have been heard proposing that the ticket be given to Cheruku Srinivas Reddy, son of Cheruku Muthyam Reddy but the Congress house seems to be divided internally on the issue.

Tagore is facing challenges of not just fielding a suitable candidate, but with also matters like balancing party factions, ensuring the BJP's defeat, and working on getting a sizeable vote share.

Then there are the GHMC elections, which will be a real challenge. The Congress does not seem to be focused on channelling sentiments against the ruling party. The TRS and the BJP are already in the process of selecting candidates, whereas the Congress is yet to select its division and booth committees.

In the previous GHMC elections, Congress won only two divisions and lost its deposit in more than 100. As the Congress has only the Malkajgiri MP seat in the GHMC region, it will be interesting to see how Tagore will strengthen the Congress.

Elections to be held next year for the two graduate MLC seats will be another challenge. In the past, the Congress had to settle for

STAY IN DUBBKA  
TO WIN BYPOLL,  
CONGMEN TOLDDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, OCT. 4

Congress's TS affairs in-charge Manickam Tagore has directed party leaders to stay in the Dubbaka constituency to ensure a win in the ensuing bypolls.

On Sunday, Tagore told a meeting of senior party leaders that teams were being formed with young leaders in Dubbaka. If leaders show negligence in campaigning, it will not be spared. "If we show our commitment and work hard, we can come into power in 2023," said Tagore.

With regard to the Dubbaka nominee, he said, "After discussing with the PCC chief and leaders from Medak district, the candidate's name for the bypoll will be declared."

Tagore said that the way the Governor was treating the party cadre is saddening. When party leaders went to meet her to hand over a letter expressing their concerns over the Farm Acts, she did not give them time and did not even reply to the email.

Condemning the incident of rape of a girl at Hathras in UP, he said that the party will declare a satyagraha on Monday to protest the incident.

■ **THE CONGRESS** has so far failed in even naming a nominee. Cheruku Muthyam Reddy, Congress candidate in 2019, has joined the TRS. There are murmurs that the party has no candidate with potential. Senior Congress leaders have been heard proposing that the ticket be given to Cheruku Srinivas Reddy, son of Cheruku Muthyam Reddy.

the third place in these two seats. Tagore, however, maintains: "The Congress has a good vote-bank in Telangana state. People also respect Congress as the party which gave statehood. The party will achieve good results in all the forthcoming elections, as people will teach a lesson to KCR and corrupt TRS leaders."

Pension hopefuls, look  
forward to polls for payoutsRAVINDRA SESHU | DC  
KHAMMAM, OCT. 4

While most applicants of Aasara pensions in Khammam and Bhadradi districts are a disappointed lot, those within the Khammam Municipal Corporation (KMC) are hoping that they will finally get their pensions. This is because elections are due for KMC in March 2021.

Many pensioners are of the opinion that the state government sanctions pensions or other benefits only when polls are around. They point out how the government had previously sanctioned the doles when polls were in the offing.

Apart from polls, the way pensions may be granted

is in case some of those already getting them pass away. Others are granted pensions in their place. Wishing for pensions this way appears inhuman though.

Most pension hopefuls are a harried lot, as the TRS government has put a ban on sanction of new Aasara pensions. "These are oral orders from the government," an official said. In Bhadradi district, there are 1,03,115 Aasara pensioners, including 35,847 of old age, 12,467 disabled, 47,320 widows, 18 weavers, 146 toddy tappers, 5,805 single women, 1,058 ART (antiretroviral therapy patients), 151 filaria patients and three beedi workers. The government is paying ₹22.32 crore per

month to them. About 4,510 persons, who have applied for pensions, are yet to receive the government's nod.

In Khammam district, about 8,400 persons are awaiting sanction of their pensions. However, 1,60,485 persons are receiving them, including 57,688 people of old age, 26,336 disabled, 64,840 widows, 457 weavers, 3,154 toddy tappers, 8,009 single women and one beedi worker. They are being paid ₹34 crore monthly.

N. Bhadrarai, one of the applicants in Khammam, said, "We may die waiting for pensions. The government should find some way to at least clear pensions for old age people," he remarked.



## SHORT TAKES

COVID-19 CASES  
INCH TOWARDS  
2-L MARK IN TSBALU PULIPAKA | DC  
HYDERABAD, OCT. 4

The number of Covid-19 cases inched towards the two-lakh mark, with the state health department saying that the total infections as on Saturday evening stood at 1,99,276.

The state recorded 1,949 new Covid-19 cases on Saturday, along with 10 more deaths that took the fatalities tally to 1,163.

As many as 27,901 persons were considered as active cases currently. Of these, 22,816 were either under home or institutional isolation.

With 2,366 persons declared as recovered from the disease on Saturday, the number of those who overcame the disease rose to 1,70,212, the department said.

The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) area had the most number of cases on Saturday at 291, followed by 156 in Ranga Reddy, 150 in Medchal-Malkajigiri, 124 in Nalgonda, 114 in Karimnagar 85 in Khammam, 76 in Siddipet, and 71 cases in Bhadradi-Kothagudem districts.

The lowest number of cases for the day was recorded in Narayanpet district at six.

The department said 51,623 Covid-19 determination tests were conducted between Friday and Saturday of which 22,714 were on primary contacts of persons who were previously found to be Covid-19 positive. Another 6,194 tests were performed on secondary contacts of the Covid-19 victims.

● **THE GHMC area had the most number of cases on Saturday at 291, followed by 156 in Ranga Reddy, 150 in Medchal-Malkajigiri, 124 in Nalgonda, 114 in Karimnagar 85 in Khammam, 76 in Siddipet, and 71 cases in Bhadradi-Kothagudem districts.**



Dividers with stone walls constructed to set up the central lighting system as part of the beautification of Adilabad town. — DECCAN CHRONICLE

## Beautification of Adilabad town is underway

PILLALAMARRI  
SRINIVAS | DC  
ADILABAD, OCT. 4

Beautification works are going on at a war footing in the Adilabad municipality. An arch is coming up at Mavala, the entry of the town to welcome visitors entering from NH-44.

Development works of road widening, setting up divers, stone walls for setting up a central lighting system, greening the middle of the roads and beautification of various chowks are ongoing at a cost ₹50 crore.

'She' toilets are being established at various places for the convenience of women travelling in Adilabad town. As part of the beautification, the authorities are focusing on easing traffic snarls in the main areas.

Minister for municipal administration K.T. Rama Rao released ₹30 crore funds towards the development of the Adilabad town. The Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao also released ₹25 crore and the state government released ₹10 crore under the Pattana Pragati programme.

The Adilabad Municipality is also setting up an urban forest park at D u r g a n a g a r . Beautification works in Adilabad town are presently going on at

## TRS leaders rush to enrol graduates for MLC polls

RAVINDRA SESHU | DC  
KHAMMAM, OCT. 4

The Telangana Rashtriya Samiti (TRS) leaders are visiting the homes of fresh graduates in the villages to enrol their names in the upcoming Nalgonda-Warangal-Khammam Graduates MLC elections.

According to the norms, graduates wishing to enrol their names must be residents of the Khammam-Nalgonda-Warangal graduate constituency. The applicant must have done three years of graduation on November 1, 2020. Ex-graduates can re-apply.

For enrolling, graduates must produce their degree certificate. After scanning the certificate, their names get listed online.

Graduate N. Nagesh said, "TRS leaders came to my home and scanned my B.Sc degree certificate using the Adobe Scanner App. They enrolled my name and I received a copy of the same in my email inbox."

● **FOR GRADUATES who are hesitant to enrol their names; the TRS leaders are explaining the importance of getting their names enrolled. The leaders are luring graduates with the assurances that they will be able to earn a quick buck.**

Interestingly, it is the job to the sarpanches, MPTCs, ZPTCs and mandal parishad presidents, to visit the homes of the graduates and enrol their names. Sattupalli MLA Sandra Venkata Veeraiah organised a party meeting in Sattupalli, Vemsoor and other mandals in his constituency, wherein he asked the sarpanches to enrol the names of the graduates.

Vanama Raghavender, son of Kothagudem MLA Vanama Venkateswara Rao, took up the responsibility to enrol graduate

voters.

Graduate N. Arun Kumar from Kothagudem said, "The followers of Raghavender are visiting the homes of graduates and enrolling them as voters. We have never seen such activity before. The TRS is eager to win Graduate MLC elections."

Wyra MLA L. Ramulu Naik, Yellandu MLA Haripriya Naik, Pinapakka MLA Rega Kantha Rao and Palair MLA K. Upender Reddy have gone all out to enrol as many graduates as possible. Zilla parishad chairperson L. Kamalraj is looking after the process in the Madhira assembly segment.

For graduates who are hesitant to enrol their names; the TRS leaders are explaining the importance of getting their names enrolled. The leaders are luring graduates with the assurances that they will be able to earn a quick buck during the upcoming elections for their votes.

## IN THE SPOTLIGHT

## Visitors to be allowed in Shyamghad after 5 pm

## Nirmal to be developed as tourist place

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NIRMAL, OCT. 4

Minister for forest Allola Indrakaran Reddy on Sunday said that the government is looking to develop Nirmal district as the best tourist place.

He hoped that the historical Shyamghad fort would attract tourists and emerge as the best tourist spot.

Participating in ceremony to start works of setting up the LED lighting system at Shyamghad, the minister said that the Shymghad fort, Battisgadh



Minister for forest Allola Indrakaran Reddy inspects the Shyamghad fort in Nirmal district on Sunday.

fort, Soan old stone bridge developed as tourist spots. Visitors will be allowed

into the Shyamghad fort after 5 pm once the LED lighting system is functional.

A walking track and a canteen will come up in the Shyamghad fort. Boating facility will be available in the Kancharoni cheruvu located in front of the fort, after removing the 'Gurrapu Dekka' from the tank.

Lighting system along the tank is underway. Collector Musharraf Farooqui and other officials were present.

## 49% ATTEND UPSC CIVILS PRELIMS EXAM

DC CORRESPONDENT  
WARANGAL, OCT. 4

The prelims exam for the Union Public Service Commission was held at Warangal on Sunday. Candidates appeared for the exam in 16 centres across the tri-cities of Warangal, Hanamkonda and Kazipet.

Of the 6,758 candidates who registered for the exam, 3,330 attended for the first paper in the morning, 3,428 were absent and the attendance percentage was 49.3 per cent. Later in the afternoon, 3,301 attended and 3,457 were absent registering an attendance percentage of 48.8 per cent.

K. Yakub Naik, director, employment and training and district collector Raveev Gandhi Hanumanthu inspected all the exams centres. They observed the way the question papers were opened. First they examined the examination center set up in the College of Arts and Science specifically for the disabled. DRO Vasu Chandra said the tests were conducted in a calm atmosphere.



Senior police officials arrive for the meeting at Venkatapuram on Sunday.

— DC

## High-level meeting held to curb naxals

### Presence of police causes tension in Mulugu

ANUDEEP CEREMILLA | DC  
WARANGAL, OCT. 4

A high-level meeting of senior police officials of Maoist-affected areas in Telangana state, Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh was held at the Wajedu-Venkatapuram camp of the Central Reserve Police Force.

K. Vijay Kumar, senior security adviser to the Union home ministry, chaired the meeting. Kumar, who had earlier blunted red sandalwood smuggler

Veerappan, is in Telangana state for the first time.

Telangana state Director General of Police M. Mahendar Reddy, who has visited the areas twice in the last two months, participated in the meeting.

Others at the meeting were A.P. Maheshwari, CRPF DG; Ashok Juneja, SDG Naxal, Chhattisgarh; Prakash, DIG Operations CRPF; Sunder Raj, DIG Bastar range; Sunil Dutt, SP Bhadradi-K o t h a g u d e m ; Sangram Singh Patil, SP,

Mulugu; and senior officers from the state police and CRPF.

Though no details were made available, the main agenda was expected to be the increasing Maoist activities along the borders of the three states. It is expected that a strategy will be devised to uproot the Maoists.

The presence of a large number of police officials in the area caused tension among the locals in the agency areas of Mulugu district.

## FORMAT C-2

(for Political party to publish in website, newspapers, TV)

### Declaration about Criminal antecedents of candidates setup by the party

(As per the judgment dated 25th September, 2018 of Hon'ble Supreme Court in W.P. (Civil) No. 536 of 2011 ( Public Interest Foundation & Ors. Vs. Union of India & Anr.)

Name of Political Party : **TELANGANA RASHTRA SAMITHI (TRS)**

Name of Election : **By Election to Telangana State Legislative Council from Nizamabad Local Authorities Constituency**

Name of STATE/UT : **TELANGANA STATE**

1	2	3	4		5	
Sl. No.	Name of Candidate	Name of Constituency	Pending Criminal Cases		Details about cases of conviction for criminal offences	
			Name of Court, Case No. and Status of Case	Section (s) of Acts concerned and brief description of offence(s)	Name of Court & date (s) of order(s)	Description of offence(s) & Punishment imposed
1.	K.KAVITHA Alias KALVAKUNTLA KAVITHA	NIZAMABAD LOCAL AUTHORITIES CONSTITUENCY	Metropolitan Sessions Judge cum court of special sessions Judge, Nampally, Hyderabad CC No. 99of 2018 Charges not yet framed	Under Section 341,188 of Indian Penal Code - The accused person is in connection with Pro-Telangana agitation cases.	NOT APPLICABLE	NOT APPLICABLE
2.	K.KAVITHA Alias KALVAKUNTLA KAVITHA	NIZAMABAD LOCAL AUTHORITIES CONSTITUENCY	Metropolitan Sessions Judge cum court of special sessions Judge, Nampally, Hyderabad CC No. 69 of 2018 Charges not yet framed	Under Section 188,353 and 427 r/w 34 of Indian Penal Code. The accused person is in connection with Pro-Telangana agitation cases.	NOT APPLICABLE	NOT APPLICABLE

Signature of the Office bearer of the Political Party

Name: **MADIREDDY SRINIVAS REDDY**Designation: **General Secretary****TELANGANA RASHTRA SAMITHI (TRS)**

## FORMAT C-1

(for Candidate to publish in Newspapers, TV)

## Declaration about Criminal Cases

(As per the judgment dated 25th September, 2018 of Hon'ble Supreme Court in W.P. (Civil) No. 536 of 2011 ( Public Interest Foundation & Ors. Vs. Union of India & Anr.)

Name and address of Candidate : **K. KAVITHA alias KALVAKUNTALA KAVITHA Resident of H.No. 8-2-310/A/31/A, FLAT NO 202, HILL TOP RESIDECY, PLOT NO 214, ROAD NO.14, BANJARA HILLS, HYDERABAD, 500034**

Name of Political Party : **TELANGANA RASHTRA SAMITHI (TRS)**

Name of Election : **By ELECTION TO TELANGANA STATE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

Name of Constituency : **NIZAMABAD LOCAL AUTHORITIES CONSTITUENCY**

I, **K. KAVITHA alias KALVAKUNTALA KAVITHA**, a candidate for the above mentioned election, declare for public information, the following details about my Criminal antecedents:

Sl. No.	Pending Criminal Cases			Details about cases of conviction for criminal offences	
	Name of Court	Case No. and Status of Case	Section (s) of Acts concerned and brief description of offence(s)	Name of Court & date (s) of order(s)	Description of offence(s) & Punishment imposed
1	Metropolitan Sessions Judge cum court of special sessions Judge, Nampally, Hyderabad	CC No. 99 of 2018 Charges not yet framed	Under Section 341, 188 of Indian Penal Code - The accused person is in connection with Pro-Telangana agitation cases.	NOT APPLICABLE	NOT APPLICABLE
2	Metropolitan Sessions Judge cum court of special sessions Judge, Nampally, Hyderabad	CC No. 69 of 2018 Charges not yet framed	Under Section 188,353 and 427 r/w 34 of Indian Penal Code. The accused person is in connection with Pro-Telangana agitation cases	NOT APPLICABLE	NOT APPLICABLE

Sd/-

**Kalvakuntla Kavitha**  
Contesting Candidate (TRS)  
Nizamabad Local Authorities Constituency



## SHORT TAKES

## BJD MLA PRADEEP MAHARATHY DIES OF CORONAVIRUS

AKSHAYA KUMAR  
SAHOO | DC  
BHUBANESWAR, OCT. 4

Former minister and Biju Janata Dal (BJD) MLA from Pipili Pradeep Maharathy passed away on Saturday night. He was 65 and is survived by his wife, son and daughter. On September 14, the BJD leader had tested positive for Covid-19 and was undergoing treatment ever since.

Born on July 4, 1955, Maharathy was one of the towering non-Congress leaders in Odisha. Considered a close confidante of former chief minister Biju Patnaik, Maharathy began his career from student politics. He was elected as secretary, Morning College, Puri, and latter as president of SCS College, Puri. In the 1975 Emergency, he was arrested under Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA).

Known for his good sense of humour, the leader always projected him as a farmer. He always chose to raise the voice of common people both in and outside the state Assembly.

## BJP MP WARNS OF 'GUERRILLA' STYLE RALLY IN WB

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC  
KOLKATA, OCT. 4

In what may trigger controversy, BJP MP of Barrackpore Arjun Singh has threatened the Mamata Banerjee government of a "guerrilla" style rally by the saffron party which will "shake" the state secretariat Nabanna in Howrah on October 8. He also warned the Trinamul Congress that "no obstacles" would be accepted by the BJP workers in its mission.

To corner the TMC ahead of the Assembly elections in the state, the BJP Yuva Morcha has called the '*Nabanna Chalo Abhijan*' on seven issues — corruption in the SSC/TET recruitments, fair recruitment process, jobs to the unemployed, increase in age limit to appear for the examination, making the Public Service Commission free of corruption, bribery for jobs and jobs instead of allowance to the unemployed. The state secretariat houses the Chief Minister's office alongwith those of several Cabinet ministers and top bureaucrats.

## RHEA SHOULD BE RELEASED, SAYS ADHIR

**Kolkata, Oct. 4:** A day after a panel of doctors at AIIMS in Delhi ruled out murder as the cause of Sushant Singh Rajput's death, leader of the Congress in Lok Sabha, Adhir Choudhury, on Sunday demanded that the actor's girlfriend Rhea Chakraborty be released forthwith without further harassment.

Choudhury, who had said in the past that Chakraborty was being "falsely implicated" following her arrest in connection with a drug probe linked to Rajput's death, claimed on Twitter that she was a victim of a "political conspiracy".

"Now the BJP propaganda machinery may accuse the forensic team of AIIMS who has nullified the allegation that Rhea Chakraborty conspired to kill Sushant Singh Rajput," the state Congress chief tweeted.

"We are all pained by the expiry of Sushant ji but he cannot be honoured by falsely implicating a lady as an accused, I have earlier said that Rhea Chakraborty was an innocent lady, she should be released without further harassment to her, she has been the victim of Political conspiracy (sic)," he added.

## Farmers burn paddy stubble



A farmer burns paddy stubble at a farm on the outskirts of Amritsar on Sunday. The pollution and smokey haze around the adjoining states of Punjab and Haryana, especially New Delhi has been linked with stubble burning and is said to be a contributing factor for increasing air pollution.

— PTI

## ISI may take advantage of Punjab farmer strike: Intel

## Reports suggest that Pak agency is trying to take advantage of farmers stir

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 4

Central intelligence and security agencies are closely monitoring the situation in Punjab as they feel Pakistan's intelligence agency, Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) is desperate to take advantage of the ongoing farmers' agitation in the state and wants to open a new front in Punjab after Kashmir.

The situation in Punjab remains tense as farmers are protesting against the recent farm Bills

cleared by the Centre.

Intelligence sources claimed that they were in constant touch with the state authorities to monitor the situation as reports suggest that ISI would use the agitation to revive militancy in the state. Similar attempts were also made in recent months when weapons were dropped close to the border using drones from Pakistan for subversive elements in Punjab.

Following this, security was increased considerably along the Indo-Pak

● **INTELLIGENCE SOURCES** claim that they were in constant touch with the state authorities to monitor the situation as reports suggest that ISI would use the agitation to revive militancy in the state.

border both by the BSF and the Punjab Police. Killing some religious and political leaders in the last few months was also seen as a desperate attempt to revive militancy in Punjab.

But now the intelligence and security agencies are extremely skeptical that in view of the ongoing agitation, the security situation might be compromised.

"In the past we have seen that ISI always tries to take advantage of such a situation. They made attempts in Kashmir Valley also following the abrogation of Article 370 but our security agencies did not let them succeed. Even in Punjab we will ensure that attempts by ISI to reactivate terror activi-

ties will fail completely," a senior security official said.

Following close coordination between Central and state security agencies, patrolling and surveillance in some sensitive areas, particularly along the border, have been increased substantially. As a preventive measure, the intelligence units in all districts have been activated in order to ensure that no untoward incidents take place in the wake of the agitation by farmers in Punjab.

## GURUNG CAMP BUILDS RAPPORT WITH BJP

From page 1

Mr Tamang was in the good books of the TMC for his pro-government stand.

Meanwhile, Mr Gurung and his camp built rapport with the BJP. His lieutenant, Roshan Giri, informed that their representative would attend the meeting. It is, however, not clear whether anyone from the state government or GTA would attend the meeting.

State tourism minister Goutam Deb alleged, "BJP is conspiring to divide Bengal. We will not allow this. We will foil this." Rejecting his claim, state BJP general secretary Savantan Basu made it clear that the saffron party is against the division of the state but it wants a "permanent solution" to the issue.

● **STATE TOURISM minister Goutam Deb** alleges that the BJP is conspiring to divide Bengal and says that they will not allow this and will foil the attempt.

## Plans to vaccinate 25 crore people by July 2021: Minister

DC CORRESPONDENT  
with agency inputs  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 4

Union health minister Dr Harsh Vardhan on Sunday said the government plans to vaccinate about 25 crore people against the Coronavirus by July next year.

He said priority would be given to health workers engaged in Covid-19 management in getting inoculated and asserted the Centre would ensure fair and equitable distribution of vaccines, once they are ready. The health ministry has asked states to submit a list of priority groups by October end, particularly the health workers, who will receive vaccine shots.

The Centre estimates to receive 40-50 crore doses of the vaccine.

During an interaction on social media platforms, Dr

Vardhan said vaccine procurement would be done centrally with each consignment tracked real-time until delivery to ensure it reaches those who need it the most and there is no black-marketing. The list of frontline health workers will include both government as well as private-sector doctors, nurses, paramedics, sanitary staff, ASHA workers, surveillance officers and many other occupational categories who are involved in tracing, testing and treatment of patients.

"The Centre is also working on plans for building capacities in human resources, training, supervision and others on a massive scale and roughly estimates to receive and utilise 40-50 crore doses covering approximately 20-25 crore people by July 2021. All this is under various stages of finalisation," he said.

## India, China to hold 7th round of talks on Oct. 12

PAWAN BALI | DC  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 4

India and China will hold the seventh round of Corps Commanders-level talks on October 12 to discuss measures to disengage their armies at the line of actual control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh where both countries are engaged in 150 days of military stand-off.

The talks are being held when some high peaks at Ladakh have already seen some initial snowfall and winter has started to set in. Both sides are prepared to keep their armies at these high altitude mountains during winters when tempera-

tures dip to below zero degrees and bone-chilling wind make survival extremely difficult.

This will be the last meeting under 14 Corps Commander Lt Gen Harinder Singh, who is to take charge as Commandant of the Indian Military Academy (IMA) later this month after completing his one-year tenure.

Lt Gen PGK Menon, who will be the new 14 Corps Commander, will also take part in the Oct. 12 meeting. Representative from the ministry of external affairs, joint secretary (East Asia) Naveen Srivastava is also expected to attend the meeting.

## Shooter Shreyasi Singh joins BJP

**New Delhi, Oct. 4:** Commonwealth Games gold medallist shooter Shreyasi Singh, whose father Digvijay Singh was a seasoned socialist leader from Bihar, joined the Bharatiya Janata Party on Sunday and may fight the state Assembly elections.

She joined the BJP at the party headquarters here in the presence of its general secretaries Bhupender Yadav, who is in charge of its Bihar affairs, and Arun Singh.

She later met party president J.P. Nadda. The 29-year-old Arjuna Awardee, who won a gold medal in the 2018 Commonwealth Games in Gold Coast, is likely to be fielded by the BJP in the Assembly polls.

Her father was elected to

Lok Sabha several times from Banka and had also served as a member of Rajya Sabha. His wife Putul Singh also represented Banka as an independent in Lok Sabha following his death in 2010.

She later joined the BJP but was expelled from the saffron party during the Lok Sabha polls last year after she filed her nomination as an independent from Banka as the seat was allocated to the JD(U).

A Union minister in the Chandra Shekhar and Atal Bihari Vajpayee governments, Digvijay Singh was with Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar for a few years before they fell out and he snapped his political association with him.

— PTI

## GET WELL SOON: SHIV SENA TO KANGANA

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC  
MUMBAI, OCT. 4

Following the AIIMS report confirming Sushant Singh Rajput's death as a suicide, Shiv Sena has taken potshots at actress Kangana Ranaut asking her to get mentally better for coming up with vile conspiracy and culture theories. Without naming her, the party said those abused Mumbai police and cast aspersions on their credibility should apologise to them unconditionally.

"After the AIIMS report, shouldn't all those who were gunning for Mumbai Police, abusing them, casting aspersions on their credibility offer them an unconditional apology? All those who came up with their vile conspiracy & culture theories should really try to get mentally better soon," tweeted Sena leader Priyanka Chaturvedi on Sunday.

The AIIMS forensic panel has ruled out a murder claim in the Sushant Singh death case, dismissing the theories of poisoning and strangling.

## 100% ELECTRIFIED RAIL TRANSPORT SYSTEM BY 2023

**Kolkata, Oct. 4:** The Railways has embarked on a massive electrification drive and by 2023, the country will have the world's largest 100 per cent clean energy-driven rail transport system, Union minister Piyush Goyal said on Sunday.

The railway minister also said that work is underway to set up an infrastructure for generating 20,000 megawatt of renewable energy, which will provide power for running the entire network. "By 2023, the Indian Railways will be the world's largest 100 per cent electrified rail transport system," Goyal said at the inauguration of an underground station of the city's East-West Metro corridor.

He contended that "no other part of the world, not even the most-developed country", has launched such an ambitious project. The entire world is watching India's massive thrust towards environment-friendly modes of transport, he said adding that the project is a crucial part of the Union government's initiatives to build a green nation. Asserting that the country is marching ahead in the direction of self-reliance, he said that the railways has become almost 98 per cent indigenous equipment procurer.

— PTI

## HATHRAS | CASE | Pehalvan's son blames victim's family, claims they keep 'changing their stand'

## Meeting at ex-BJP MLA's house defends accused

**Lucknow/Hathras, Oct. 4:** Scores of people held a meeting on Sunday outside the house of a former BJP MLA in Hathras where they defended the accused in the alleged gangrape of a Dalit woman who later died, and demanded registration of an FIR against her family members.

Heavy police force was deployed in the vicinity of the residence of former BJP MLA Rajvir Singh Pehalvan, located around 8-9 kilometres from the vic-

tim's village. One of the organisers of the meeting and Pehalvan's son Manveer Singh denied that the gathering comprised members from the upper castes and said they were from "different sections of society". "We welcome the CBI inquiry ordered by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. We have faith in the investigation," Singh said while claiming that the victim's family members were "changing their stand". "The entire

scenario has been created to blame the government. The accused persons are in favour of any type of inquiry. But the victims are changing their stand every now and then. They do not want a narco test or a CBI probe. Now they want other kinds of inquiries," he claimed.

He said an FIR should be registered by police against the complainants in the case. "Our demand is that a case should be filed against those people who had filed

the case in the first instance," he said.

The 19-year-old Dalit woman was allegedly raped by four upper caste men in Hathras on September 14. She died on September 29 at Delhi's Safdarjung Hospital. Singh also said various legal options were being explored to defend the accused in the case. He asserted that the arrest of some of the accused persons from their homes was proof of their innocence.

— PTI

## AZAD CHIEF SEEKS Y-PLUS SECURITY FOR VICTIM'S FAMILY MEMBERS

**Hathras, Oct. 4:** Bhim Army chief Chandrasekhhar Azad on Sunday visited the family of Hathras gangrape and murder victim and demanded government to allocate Y-plus security cover to them.

He also demanded that the government order an investigation into case

under the supervision of a retired Supreme Court judge.

Speaking to ANI, he said, "I demand Y security for the family or I'll take them to my house as they aren't safe here. We want an inquiry to be done under the supervision of a retired Supreme Court judge."

— Agencies



## IN BRIEF

**Shooting: Police officer killed**

**Myrtle Beach (US):** A South Carolina police chief announced early Sunday the death of an officer following a shooting in Myrtle Beach. Officer Jacob Hancher was killed while responding to a call for service late Saturday, Myrtle Beach Chief Amy Prock said at a news conference. It's unclear what led up to the shooting, but witnesses told *The Sun News* they heard several shots around 10 p.m. Police had said on social media that an officer involved shooting had occurred around that time. The South Carolina Law Enforcement Division has been called in to investigate, news outlets reported. Hancher was a community service officer for four years and had been a police officer for less than a year, Prock said.

**3 blow up ATM in restaurant**

**Philadelphia:** Three men blew up an ATM in a Chinese take-out restaurant in Philadelphia while the establishment was still open but were unable to get any cash, police said. The men entered the Golden Chinese/American takeout restaurant in northwest Philadelphia shortly after 9 pm Friday and ordered food, police said. They then placed some kind of explosive device which damaged the ATM and the window and knocked items off shelves behind the counter, police said. The three went back into the establishment but were unable to remove the cash box that was still inside the damaged ATM, police said. The three then fled, one on a bicycle and the other two on foot. Police were searching for suspects and no arrests were immediately reported.

**New Caledonia votes to be free**

**Noumea (New Caledonia):** Voters in New Caledonia turned out in large numbers on Sunday to decide whether the archipelago in the South Pacific should get independence from France and break ties that were first established in the mid-19th century. Sunday's independence referendum is part of a three-decade decolonisation effort aimed at settling tensions on the archipelago between native Kanaks seeking independence and residents willing to remain in France. More than 180,000 voters were invited to answer the question: "Do you want New Caledonia to gain full sovereignty and become independent?" "Today is not a day like any other. Everyone woke up with the will to express oneself (through the vote). This is a historic day," Robert Wayaridri, 60, said. In Noumea, the capital, large lines of people waited to vote under the hot sun, sometimes for hours. Almost 80% of voters had already casted their ballots one hour before poll stations closed, according to the French ministry of the Overseas.

**XI FOR CLOSER TIES WITH BANGLADESH**

**Beijing, Oct. 4:** Chinese President Xi Jinping said he stands ready with Bangladesh leaders to better align the two countries' strategies and jointly promote the construction of his multi-billion dollar Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to take the strategic partnership of the two countries to new heights. Xi made the remarks in an exchange of congratulatory messages with his Bangladesh counterpart, Mohammad Abdul Hamid, on the 45th anniversary of the establishment of the bilateral diplomatic ties. Xi hailed the steady and long-term friendship saying he is ready to work with Hamid to better align development strategies with Bangladesh, step up cooperation under the framework of the BRI and push forward the China-Bangladesh strategic, cooperative partnership to a new level, official media reported. With over \$26 billion Chinese investments and \$38 billion funding commitments, Bangladesh is one of the largest recipients of China's infrastructure project. China has also offered zero-tariff treatment to 97 per cent of Bangladesh's exports by adding 5,161 more items to the existing list of 3,095 duty-free products. The BRI seeks to build rail, maritime and road links from Asia to Europe and Africa in a revival of ancient Silk Road trading routes.

# Trump's condition was far worse than made public

## Starting to feel good, says Don

**Washington, Oct. 4:** US President Donald Trump's condition on Friday after testing positive for the Coronavirus was far worse than was publicly acknowledged, White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows said late Saturday.

"He's made unbelievable improvements from yesterday morning, when I know a number of us, the doctor and I, were very concerned," Meadows told *Fox News* in an interview. "I can tell you this the biggest thing we see is with no fever now, and with him doing really well with his oxygen saturation levels," he adds. "Yesterday morning we were really concerned by that. He had a fever, and his oxygen level had dropped rapidly. Yet in typical style, this president was up and walking around."

Meadows said there was never a risk Trump would have to hand over power to US Vice President Mike Pence, after a day of conflicting reports and confusion over the American leader's actual fitness.

His comments echoed remarks by White House doctor Sean Conley, who

**Washington, Oct. 4:** President Donald Trump, who was admitted to a military hospital for treatment of Covid-19, said he has started to "feel much better" and thanked the American people and global leaders for their support. "I came here. Wasn't feeling so well. I feel much better now. We're working hard to get me all the way back. I have to be back because we still have to Make America Great Again," Trump said in a video message from the military hospital in a suburb of Washington on Saturday. However, White House physician Sean

Conley has said the president is "not yet out of the woods". "While not yet out of the woods, the team remains cautiously optimistic," Dr Conley said, adding that the plan for Sunday is to continue observation in between doses of Remdesivir, closely monitoring his clinical status while fully supporting his conduct of presidential duties.

Conley, in a memorandum, said the President had received Regeron's antibody cocktail on October 2. "President Trump continues to do well, having made substantial progress since diagnosis," Conley said. — *PTI*

said Trump had "made substantial progress since diagnosis, and remained 'fever-free and off supplemental oxygen.'" Conley was evasive when asked earlier whether the Presi-

dent had received supplementary oxygen at any point since falling ill, only confirming that he hadn't received any at the hospital or on Thursday — the day of his test. — *AFP*

## PREZ DIAGNOSIS: U.S. VULNERABLE TO CORONAVIRUS

**St Charles (US), Oct. 4:** President Donald Trump's startling Covid-19 diagnosis serves as a cruel reminder of the pervasive spread of the Coronavirus and shows how tenuous of a grip the nation has on the crisis, health experts said. With US infections rising for several weeks, Trump became one of the tens of thousands of Americans who test positive each day. He went through a "very concerning" period Friday and the next 48 hours "will be critical" in his care, White House chief of staff Mark Meadows said Saturday.

That differed dramatically from the rosy assessment by Trump's staff and doctors, who took pains not to reveal the president had received supplemental oxygen at the White House before he went to a military hospital. Some of Trump's advisers and allies also have tested positive. — *AP*



Azeri protesters tear and burn an Armenia national flag as they take part in a demonstration in Istanbul on Sunday in support of Azerbaijan in the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh. — *AFP*

## COURT TO HEAR NAWAZ SPEECH BAN APPEAL

**Islamabad, Oct. 4:** A Pakistani court will on Monday hear a petition seeking a ban on airing speeches of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif on television channels, days after the top PML-N leader made blistering remarks from London targeting the country's powerful Army.

A citizen, Amir Aziz, filed the petition in the Islamabad High Court (IHC) and made 70-year-old Sharif, his brother Shehbaz Sharif, the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Pemra) chairman and others as respondents, the *Express Tribune* reported.

IHC Chief Justice Athar Minallah fixed October 5 as the date for hearing the petition, the paper said. — *PTI*

## Azerbaijan's No. 2 city hit in fighting with Armenia

**Baku (Azerbaijan), Oct. 4:** The fighting between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces continued on Sunday over the separatist territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, with Azerbaijan's second-largest city coming under attack.

Azerbaijani officials said Sunday that Armenian forces attacked Ganja, the country's second largest city. Hikmet Hajiyev, an aide to the Azerbaijani president, tweeted a video depicting damaged buildings, and called it the result of "Armenia's massive missile attacks against dense residential areas" in Ganja. It wasn't immediately possible to verify the authenticity of the video. Hajiyev said in another tweet that attacks on Ganja and other areas in Azerbaijan were launched "from territory of

Armenia." Armenia's Defence Ministry said that "no fire of any kind is being opened from the territory of Armenia in Azerbaijan's direction."

But Nagorno-Karabakh's leader, Arayik Harutyunyan, confirmed on Facebook he ordered "rocket attacks to neutralize military objects" in Ganja. His spokesman, Vahram Poghosyan, said the territory's army destroyed a military airport in Ganja, a claim Azerbaijani officials denied. The attack on the city killed one civilian and left four others wounded, the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry tweeted. Harutyunyan said he ordered his forces to stop the attacks on Ganja to avoid civilian casualties. Nagorno-Karabakh's leader added that "proportionate and crushing" strikes targeting the

opponent's forces would continue, if Azerbaijan fails "to draw appropriate lessons." The fighting, which broke out on September 27 and has continued for eight straight days, is the biggest escalation in years in the decades-long dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh. The region lies within Azerbaijan, but is controlled by local ethnic Armenian forces backed by Armenia. Both sides said the hostilities have spread beyond the break-away territory and accused each other of attacking areas outside Nagorno-Karabakh.

Ganja, with a population of more than 330,000, is located roughly 100 kilometres (about 60 miles) north of Stepanakert, Nagorno-Karabakh's capital. — *AP*

# Bumpy situation till X-mas: Boris

## UK records over 10K Covid cases in a day for the first time since mass testing began

**London, Oct. 4:** Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Sunday warned of a "bumpy" ride at least through to Christmas in December, as the UK recorded more than 10,000 Coronavirus cases in a day for the first time since mass testing for the deadly virus was put in place.

According to official figures, there were 12,872 new cases on Saturday, while a further 49 people have died within 28 days of testing positive for Covid-19. However, the government said a technical issue meant some cases from earlier in the week were not recorded at the time so these were included in Saturday's data. In his interview, the UK PM tried to strike a note of optimism over progress in beating the virus and said he believed over the "next few weeks and months" the "scientific equation will change, whether that is vaccines or testing". "I've got to tell you in all candour it's going to continue to be bumpy through to Christmas, it may even be bumpy beyond," Johnson told the BBC.

"This could be a very tough winter for all of us — we've got to face that fact," he said. While insisting his government was working "flat out" to fight the pandemic, Johnson said he took "full responsibility for everything that has happened since the pandemic began", admitting the National Health Service (NHS) led Test and Trace system was "not perfect". But he said scientific advisers had told him that by spring in March/April 2021 "things will be radically different and we will be in a different world".

Johnson said he understood people's "frustration" at differing rules and restrictions for different parts of the country but stressed that localised lockdowns was the right way to go and wait to see if the R number — of the rate at which the infection is transmitted — comes down as a result. "I'm a freedom-loving Tory. I don't want to have to impose measures like this, are you crazy? This is the last thing we want to do. But I also have to save life. And that's our priority," he said. "And as Prime Minister I couldn't take a course that could expose us to tens of thousands more deaths in very short order...we've got to continue to bear down on this virus, whilst protecting the economy. That's the balance we've got to strike," he added.

The interview this week coincides with his Conservative Party's annual conference, being conducted virtually for the first time due to coronavirus restrictions on mass gatherings. The Tories have created a 3D virtual conference with a computer-generated auditorium, foyer and fringe meeting rooms. However, the system has not been smooth-sailing as the virtual platform crashed during a session with UK Cabinet Office minister Michael Gove. — *PTI*

## Market capitalism has failed: Pope

**Rome, Oct. 4:** Pope Francis says the Coronavirus pandemic has proven that the "magic theories" of market capitalism have failed and that the world needs a new type of politics that promotes dialogue and solidarity and rejects war at all costs. Francis on Sunday laid out his vision for a post-Covid world by uniting the core elements of his social teachings into a new encyclical, "Fratelli Tutti" (Brothers All), which was released on the feast day of his namesake, the peace-loving St. Francis of Assisi.

The document draws its inspiration from the teachings of St. Francis and the Pope's previous preaching on the injustices of the global economy and its destruction of the planet and pairs them with his call for greater



Pope Francis

human solidarity to address today's problems. In the encyclical, Francis rejected even the Catholic Church's own doctrine justifying war as a means of legitimate defense, saying it had been too broadly applied over the centuries and was no longer viable. "It is very difficult nowadays to invoke the rational criteria elaborated in earlier centuries to speak of the possibility of a 'just war,'" Francis wrote. — *AP*

## Israel environment minister tests +ve

**Jerusalem, Oct. 4:** A member of Israel's Cabinet has tested positive for the Coronavirus as the country remains under lockdown while battling a second wave of infection.

Gila Gamliel, Israel's environmental protection minister and a member of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party, announced on Twitter Sunday that she had tested positive. She was the fourth minister in Israel's government to test positive for Covid-19 since March. "I feel good and

hope to recover quickly with God's help," she wrote on social media.

The Israeli government imposed a nationwide lockdown on September 18 ahead of the Jewish High Holidays in an effort to rein in a runaway outbreak of the Coronavirus. The country has one of the highest daily infection rates per capita in the world. According to Health Ministry figures, Israel has recorded over 264,000 cases and almost 1,700 deaths since the beginning of the pandemic. — *AP*

annual conference, being conducted virtually for the first time due to coronavirus restrictions on mass gatherings. The Tories have created a 3D virtual conference with a computer-generated auditorium, foyer and fringe meeting rooms. However, the system has not been smooth-sailing as the virtual platform crashed during a session with UK Cabinet Office minister Michael Gove. — *PTI*

## Russia reports 10,400 new daily cases

**Moscow, Oct. 4:** Coronavirus infections in Russia hit a new record on Sunday, with the government reporting over 10,000 new confirmed cases for the first time since mid-May. The 10,499 new cases

reported on Sunday bring the country's total to over 1.2 million. Russia currently has the fourth largest caseload in the world and has so far reported over 21,000 deaths. The Russian authorities insist there are no plans to impose a second lockdown in the country that has lifted most of the virus-related restrictions imposed in the spring.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Friday another lockdown is currently not being discussed in the government. At the same time in Moscow, which reported over 3,000 new cases on Sunday in the biggest surge in months, officials have recommended the elderly to self-isolate at home. — *AP*

# Rahman PDM head in Pak

**Islamabad, Oct. 4:** Firbrand cleric-cum-politician Maulana Fazlur Rahman has been unanimously appointed as the chief of the newly-formed Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), an anti-government alliance launched by 11 Opposition parties to oust Prime Minister Imran Khan. The decision was taken on Saturday during a virtual meeting of the Opposition parties attended by Pakistan Muslim League-

Nawaz (PML-N) supremo and three-time former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Balochistan National Party chief Sardar Akhtar Mengal among other senior politicians.

According to PDM's steering committee convener Ahsan Iqbal, Sharif proposed 67-year-old Rahman's name as the alliance president and it was endorsed by PPP chair-

man Bilawal and others, the *Dawn* newspaper reported. Sharif had initially proposed that Rahman should be appointed as the president on a permanent basis, but the idea was opposed by Bilawal and Awami National Party (ANP) leader Amir Haider Hoti, who suggested that the office should be given on a rotational basis to leaders of the constituent parties, the paper reported, citing sources. — *PTI*

## CURBS | LIFTED

## Muslims from outside the Kingdom could be allowed to perform pilgrimage from Nov. 1

# Pilgrims return to Mecca as Saudi eases virus restrictions

**Riyadh, Oct. 4:** A very small, limited number of people donning the white terrycloth garment symbolic of the Muslim pilgrimage circled Islam's holiest site in Mecca on Sunday after Saudi Arabia lifted Coronavirus restrictions that had been in place for months.

The kingdom had taken the rare step of suspending the smaller "umrah" pilgrimage that draws millions year-round from across the world in early March as the Coronavirus morphed into a global pan-

demic and prompted countries to impose lockdowns and curfews to slow down transmission. But as nations begin to ease those restrictions, the Saudi government on Sunday started allowing a maximum of 6,000 pilgrims a day to enter the sprawling Grand Mosque in Mecca.

Only Saudi citizens and residents will be permitted to enter the mosque during this first phase of reopening, and each person has up to three hours to complete the pilgrimage. The Grand Mosque,

which is being sterilised and cleaned multiple times a day, houses the cube-shaped Kaaba that observant Muslims pray toward five times a day. Before visitors can enter the mosque to pray or perform the umrah, they have to apply and reserve a specific time and date through an online application to avoid crowding and maintain social distancing. Visitors can also select via the app their means of transportation and meeting points.

State TV showed on Sunday what appeared to be

fewer than 50 people circling the Kaaba at the same time and walking several metres (feet) apart. Typically, the mosque would be packed with worshippers from around the world crowded shoulder-to-shoulder at all times of the day and night. The second phase for loosening restrictions at the Grand Mosque comes into effect on October 18, allowing a maximum of 15,000 pilgrims and 40,000 for prayer from among residents and citizens based on allocated times via the app.

Muslim travellers from outside Saudi Arabia could be allowed to perform the umrah pilgrimage as early as November 1, the Interior Ministry has said. Saudi Arabia recently began easing some restrictions on international flights for the first time since March. The kingdom held a dramatically downsized, symbolic hajj pilgrimage in July due to concerns that it could easily have become a global super-spreader event for the virus.



Muslims pray around the Kaaba on Sunday. — *AP*



# DECCAN Chronicle

5 OCTOBER 2020

## Trump Covid +ve: The danger is still very real

America's President Donald Trump testing positive for Covid-19 was a surprise many may have anticipated. There is **rum irony** in dramatic events culminating in his coming down with the Coronavirus just hours after having said that "the end of the pandemic is in sight." At 110 kg, his obesity would itself have placed him among the vulnerable and at the age of 74 he did himself no favours by playing down the threat for months on end while trying to open up the economy so that his prospects as a President seeking re-election would not be affected. Science may admit to no karmic influence handing down penalties like sicknesses but Trump did set himself up as a prime candidate for the omnipresent virus by ignoring most protective protocols like wearing a mask, which he did only on occasion while denigrating those like his opponent Joseph R. Biden for sporting a big mask at their infamous first debate. More significantly, Trump scorned the advice of scientists while imperilling millions of Americans.

A source of comfort even as doctors say he is not yet "out of the woods" is humanity has had considerable experience with this virus for having studied it clinically in over nine months. Treatment protocols are far more advanced than when his friend from across the Atlantic, British PM Boris Johnson, suffered a near-death experience while in ICU last April. Campaigning fiercely while egging his nation on towards normalcy even as millions fell sick and more than 2,09,000 Americans died, Trump was flaunting his bravery while downplaying the threat to the world, dabbling in prophylactic doses of HCQ and even floating the wild idea of injecting patients with bleach. With his opponent also having to quarantine since he was at the debate with Trump, the American election scene has been thrown into total disarray and the presidential race fundamentally altered. And Trump personally does not have the cushion of secretiveness of times past when US Presidents were seriously ill, including Woodrow Wilson in the 1918 pandemic.

The Trump saga serves a dire warning that no one is immune to this insidious threat of a Coronavirus and he is not necessarily more fortunate because he is the leader of a country very advanced in science and possessing most modern healthcare facilities. While Trump is getting the finest treatment possible, including Remdesivir and experimental cocktail of antibodies, most of 35 million patients around the world have had to do with much less while more than a million have died. The number of new cases is growing faster than ever before, not least in India where 80,000 plus cases on Sunday took the people infected past the 65 lakh mark. Good public health practices would still be masks, social distancing and hygiene, long after an effective vaccine is certified and manufactured on a scale proportionate to global population. No greater lesson on the need for humility may have been served to the world, especially in the face of an illness science does not yet fully understand. "Stay safe" is a message worth shouting from rooftops.

## No one killed Sushant Rajput

There were no injuries on the body of deceased actor Sushant Singh Rajput other than those of hanging. No marks of a scuffle were present on his person, the AIIMS Forensic Medical Board, in its report submitted to the CBI, stated. This gives the lie to the entire charade enacted by TV channels as well as state governments and police administrations investigating a purported murder and connection to a drug cartel following the death. Rajput's family had earlier accused his former live-in partner, Rhea Chakraborty, of abetting his suicide. This was used by some channels as well as the social media to run a vilification campaign against her. It was notwithstanding the fact that circumstances and evidence are crucial to prove that a person actually instigated another to take their own life. Mens rea cannot be assumed to be ostensibly present but has to be visible and conspicuous, the Supreme Court recently said. For the wrong decision taken by a... man of frail mentality another person cannot be blamed, the Punjab and Haryana High Court in 2018 had said while quashing another case.

Ms Chakraborty and her brother now face a bail hearing in the Bombay high court in an NDPS Act case involving criminal conspiracy and "financing illicit traffic". Last month, the BJP had launched a "Justice for Sushant" campaign for the Bihar Assembly election, now less than a month away. Many believe that the entire show of investigation, and prosecution, accompanied by shrill and nonstop media broadcasts, have been aimed at both entertainment as well as a play at a competitive son-of-the-soil politics, to be rendered irrelevant as soon as the polls end.

Incidentally, the actor's autopsy report from Cooper Hospital mentioned that the ligature knot was present on the back of the neck that ruled out forcible hanging. Why then did some media outlets peddle hearsay, publicise conspiracy theories of a random hospital staffer about fractures and needles? Shouldn't these outlets be named and shamed?

Strangling and poisoning, the two allegations made by the actor's family, finally stand ruled out after the report's publication. The CBI, which has distinguished itself by being assigned, for the first time, to probe what had actually been a suicide, now has little option but to close the case.

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DECCAN CHRONICLE offices are located at:

**Hyderabad:** 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad - 500 003, Ph: 040-27803930-4; Fax : 040-27805256  
**Vijayawada:** No.C-3 & 4 Patamata, Industrial Estate, Auto Nagar, Vijayawada (A.P.), Ph: 0866-255284/255287; Telefax: 0866-255234  
**Visakhapatnam:** Survey No.1/3A Beach Road, Near Kailasagiri Ropeway, Sector-9 MVP Colony, Visakhapatnam - 530 017 (A.P.), Ph: (0891)-2552333/2552334; Fax: (0891)-2755285  
**Rajahmundry:** Vemagiri, Dhawaleswaram Rd, Rajahmundry, Ph: 0883-2417618/2417208; Telefax: 0883-2417208  
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**Nellore:** Survey No.527/2, Burrampur Village, Venkatachalam (M), Chermudugunta Panchayat, Nellore, Ph: 0861-2348581/82; Telefax: 0861-2348580  
**Chennai:** SP-3 Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, Ph: 044-22254747/ 48/50/51; Advt Fax: 22254765/22254766/42305325  
**Bengaluru:** 5th Floor, BMTC Commercial Complex, 80 Feet Road, Koramangala, Bengaluru-560 095 Ph: 080-43460500; Fax: 080-22960552  
**Coimbatore:** 77, Vivekananda Road, Ramnagar, Coimbatore - 641 009, Ph : 0422 231255  
**Kochi:** No.3-B, 3rd Floor of DD TRADE TOWER, Kaloor-Kadavanthara Road, Ernakulam, Ph: 0484-4039408  
**Thiruvananthapuram:** St Joseph's Press, TC 15/1040, Cotton Hill, Thycaud (PO), Thiruvananthapuram 695 014  
**Kozhikode:** Door No 6/1002 E, First Floor of City Mall, Opp. YMCA, Kannur Road, Kozhikode - 673 001, Fax : 0495 4019 018  
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Subhani



# Democracy's discontent: Is India for the people?

Shikha Mukerjee

I deliberately ignoring the message delivered by spreading discontent reflected in hundreds of small to large, but certainly not mammoth protest meetings, rallies, highway blocks, railway blocks, stone pelting, mostly organised by mass organisations of farmers, workers, dalits and women, the Narendra Modi government on the one hand and the ruling BJP's other poster boy, Yogi Adityanath as Uttar Pradesh chief minister, are taking a calculated risk.

The leadership reflects the BJP's unshakeable confidence in its simple and direct appeal to right-thinking Hindus, who comprise the vast majority of voters in India. The rest don't really count.

Other identities, of the farmer, worker, women wanting to be safe, dalits expecting respect and dignity, are apparently so insignificant that they can be dismissed as politically irrelevant, because at the intersection between the BJP on the one hand and the Opposition, distributed across a multitude of political parties including the Congress, the appeal of Hindutva and Narendra Modi's popularity appears to be invincible. As of now, there is no data, no election results, nothing to suggest that the BJP is wrong in its assumption.

The growing international concern that human rights are being trampled in India, that labour rights are being trashed, that the rights of Muslims and other minorities, the marginalised, specifically dalits and women, are being dishonoured clearly means nothing to a sanguine BJP and its government at the Centre and the governments it controls in the states. Even the exit of its oldest ally, the Shiromani Akali Dal, from the BJP-led National Demo-

cratic Alliance over the three farm bills seems not to have disturbed the BJP.

This level of confidence manifesting itself as a supreme disregard or supercilious contempt of people's voices implies that the BJP is absolutely complacent and it believes it represents enough numbers of voters to win intensely competitive elections, including Bihar, in the foreseeable future. What would have been dangerously risky for other political parties seems to be easily disregarded by the BJP. The fact that farmers, which includes the rich landlords and the rest, that is about 80 per cent who are small cultivators, tenant farmers or share croppers, are equally angry and are collectively opposing the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, and the Essential Commodities Amendment Bill, because it strips both the rich and the poor of all protection as sellers and gives buyers infinite freedom to fix the market has cut no ice with the BJP. That farmers in Punjab, in Haryana, in Maharashtra, in some pockets of Uttar Pradesh, in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Kerala and in the rest of India are against the changes in the laws has made no difference to Prime Minister Modi, who tweeted that history had been created.

The BJP has not reacted to the farmer-worker joint call for an all-India shutdown, or bandh, against the farm bills and the three labour codes passed by Parliament — the Industrial Relations Code Bill 2020, the Code on Social Security 2020 and the Occupational Health and Safety Bill 2020. These changes

effectively strip workers in about 80 per cent of units where they are employed from the right to strike, make them work longer hours and deny them overtime. The changes alarmed the International Labour Organisation sufficiently for it to issue a statement saying that the law was in violation of workers' rights which India is promised to uphold.

That there is an intersection between the rural and the urban and there is growing unrest that is impossible to ignore in rural and urban areas would have warned any other ruling party that there is political risk in persisting in dismissing protests by accusing the representative organisations of misleading the masses from which they draw their members and get support. There is mobility between rural and urban labour. The shock to the economy after demonetisation in 2016 sent urban labour back to the villages. The shock of the unplanned, abrupt lockdown of March 24 this year and the distress it triggered sent urban labour back to the villages.

There is no sign that the buildup of unrest, despite the convergence of urban and rural discontent, has reached a critical mass, which is why the BJP and the Narendra Modi government at the Centre are unperturbed. Even though the urban working class is accessing free kitchens run by trade unions, political parties, civil society organisations, and thousands have shifted into street vending as an alternative means of survival, the discontent has oddly and intriguingly bypassed and instead channelised its frustrations and anger against governments at the

state level. This transference of blame indicates that the credibility of the governments run by regional parties in the states, like Trinamul Congress, has sunk to an absolute low. Or that the BJP has succeeded in selling the idea to the masses that it is still their best bet in a very bad situation.

What makes the BJP the best bet for the economically and socially marginalised or vulnerable is that it is the big party, the party with the most power and popular projection via television and social media that is accessible on smartphones in even the most isolated communities in India. There must be something mesmerising about the big party that can reject the articulation of discontent by farmers and labour, magisterially push aside issues like the number of migrants who died en route to their villages, the mismanaged movement of migrants and the government's indifference to the human disaster.

It will take time for dalits and women in rural and urban areas, who are unsafe because powerful predators are being shielded to internalise the meaning and message of Hathras, which is that UP is run by a government that operates outside the limitations set by the principle of the rule of law. Each movement — farmers, labour, dalits, women — represent a set of discontents. By ignoring these representations, the BJP may assert itself as the big party, but it equally clearly signals itself to be an outsider to democratic politics, where the Opposition is not the party that lost in the elections but equally the institutions that represent segments of citizens with identities like peasant, labour, women and dalit. It brings the BJP irrevocably close to ticking all of the boxes that classify a political organisation as fascist — anti-labour, sexist, contemptuous of human rights and all the rest, militant nationalism, obsession with national security and majoritarian politics.

The writer is a senior journalist in Kolkata

**The BJP has not reacted to the farmer-worker joint call for an all-India shutdown, or bandh, against the farm bills and the three labour codes passed by Parliament**

### LETTERS

#### HOLDING EXAMS

I am an ordinary student who is experiencing trauma due to exams when I read news about increase in Covid-19 cases.

However, the government still wants to hold exams. If today's youth are India's future, is this how they care about us?

Geetha Lily  
Hyderabad

#### DHARANI PORTAL

In order to upload property details on Dharani portal, it is mandatory to enter the Aadhaar card number. Many property owners are NRIs and they don't have Aadhaar card. Applying for it is mandatory to stay in India for 182 days in a year. As such many NRIs can't even apply. We request the Centre to accept passport or give other options like husband or parents' Aadhaar card that must be allowed as an option.

B.R.C. Reddy  
Hyderabad

#### TRUMP POSITIVE

US President Donald Trump being Covid positive does not come as a surprise as the virus does not discriminate. Trump is paying the price for being irresponsible. The incident should serve as an eye-opener to our politicians who violate Covid protocols indiscriminately. It is proved that winning over the virus is not as easy as rulers silencing opponents.

Kshirasagara Balaji Rao  
Hyderabad

## 50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

### Flood relief on a war-footing in City

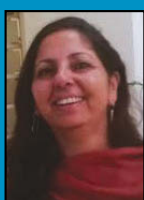
HYDERABAD, October 4  
The unprecedented rains and the consequent floods that hit the twin cities last month left a toll of 55 dead and over 4,000 houses damaged says a Government press note.

Rs. 6.4 lakhs was also sanctioned for disbursement among the victims, it was stated.

The torrential rains and consequent floods caused great havoc both in terms of loss of life and damage to property. The Governmental machinery was quick to mitigate the hardship of the flood stricken people by providing food and shelter immediately, followed by clothing and cash etc. The Municipal Corporation, the Collectorate of Hyderabad acting in concert conducted the relief operations with the assistance of the Army, the PWD and CRP.

Anita Katyal

Political Gup-Shup



## Tejashwi, Chirag play long game; Hathras wakes up sleepy Mayawati

Lok Janshakti Party's national president Chirag Paswan and Rashtriya Janata Party leader Tejashwi Yadav have been in the news in recent weeks for the same reason: both young leaders were seen driving a hard bargain with their respective alliance partners in the seat-sharing negotiations for the forthcoming Bihar Assembly polls. But the two also have something else in common. According to reports from Patna, young Paswan and Yadav have been in touch with poll strategist Prashant Kishor who has told them that they should not be impatient as their electoral prospects in the coming poll are not very bright. He has instead advised them to bide their time and focus on the 2025 Assembly election by which time they would have added to their experience and attained a degree of gravitas. Realising that there's merit in Kishor's argument, Paswan and Yadav have decided on using this election to build their profile as both see themselves as future chief ministers. This exp-

lains their recent tough posturing.

After losing two allies, the Shiv Sena and the Shiromani Akali Dal, the Bharatiya Janata Party has stepped up efforts to persuade the AIADMK to formalise its entry into the National Democratic Alliance. The AIADMK has one foot in the door already as it has been extending full support to the Narendra Modi government on all major issues. The Southern party has apparently been offered a Cabinet berth to sweeten the deal. Given its brute majority in the Lok Sabha, the BJP actually does not need the crutch of alliance partners. But if the AIADMK comes on board, it will help the BJP correct the public perception that it is arrogant and is driving away its allies. At the same time, the BJP hopes such a development will strengthen its presence in Tamil Nadu as it one of the Southern states where it wants to expand its footprint.

Ever since it stormed to power in 2014 and emerged as the dominant political force in

the country, the Bharatiya Janata Party has adopted a pragmatic approach when it comes to inducting leaders from other political parties. The saffron party has been happy to give them tickets if they have the potential to win an election. Similarly, the party has no problem in inducting these "outsiders" as ministers. There was a time when the BJP drew the line at accommodating them in key party positions but not any more. This was once again evident from the composition of party president J.P. Nadda's new team members. A number of leaders once dubbed "outsiders" like D. Purandeswari, D.K. Aruna, Mukul Roy and Tom Vadakkan were given prominent positions in the party, once the preserve of those who had risen from the ranks and were steeped in the party ideology. Though this has led to a lot of resentment among the loyalists, the party is unconcerned as these appointments have been made with a firm eye on spreading its wings in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and West Bengal, the states

these "newcomers" come from.

With speculation rife that Uttarakhand chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat is on his way out, his rivals in the Bharatiya Janata Party are busy positioning themselves for the top post. State tourism minister Satpal Maharaj is the latest to join the long list of chief ministerial contenders. Satpal Maharaj's ministry has recently hired a private public relations firm ostensibly to promote tourism in the hill state but the fact is that it has been promoting the minister. As a result, Satpal Maharaj's visibility in the press has increased. The minister has also visited Delhi several times in recent weeks despite the coronavirus pandemic as he believes his status as a religious guru gives him an edge over the others. But Satpal Maharaj faces tough in-house competition. Union minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank and BJP media chief Anil Baluni are also in the race and both have a hotline to the leadership.

The outrage over the Hathras tragedy finally pushed the otherwise somnolent Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati to put out a statement demanding the dismissal of the Yogi government in Uttar Pradesh. This is a change from the recent past when Mayawati was virtually invisible and refrained from attacking the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Yogi government. Her periodic outbursts were instead directed at the Congress, especially its general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra who has made a conscious effort to woo the Dalits in Uttar Pradesh, the BSP's support base. On her part, Priyanka makes it a point to visit victims of violence, particularly dalits, while tweeting regularly on the law and order situation in Uttar Pradesh. Realising that she could end up losing the perception war and the loyalty of her core voter, Mayawati finally roused herself to take on Yogi Adityanath.

Anita Katyal is a Delhi-based journalist



quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
aSensex	38,697.05	1.65
Nifty 50	11,416.95	1.51
S&P 500*	3,348.44	-0.96
Dollar (₹)	73.15	0.83
Pound Sterling (₹)	94.15	0.50
Euro (₹)	85.81	0.79
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	51,389▼37	0.07
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	39.27	0.00
IN 10-Yr bond yield	0.704	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.692	0.015

\* As of 9:30 PM IST

FPIs pull out ₹7,780 cr from stocks in Sept.

Snapping their three-month buying spree, overseas investors turned net sellers in Indian markets in September, withdrawing Rs 3,419 crore on net basis, due to uncertainty ahead of the US presidential polls and surging coronavirus cases. Foreign portfolio investors withdrew a net Rs 7,783 crore from equities while the debt segment saw inflows of Rs 4,364 crore. FPIs had been net buyers in India in the three months to August. .

China's Jingye shows interest in Tata Steel UK



Chinese steelmaker Jingye Group Co is exploring a takeover of the UK's biggest steel producer, Tata Steel Ltd, Sky News reported, citing unidentified banking sources. The firm, which took over British Steel earlier this year, has expressed a "tentative" interest to Tata Group as well as the UK government, but has failed to make substantial progress so far. There is no formal sale process at this stage, Sky said.

Tagoor Labs to produce favipiravir

Hyderabad-based Tagoor Laboratories said it has received licence from the drugs controller to manufacture favipiravir. The company said it is planning to enhance its production capabilities. Dr. P. Kasi Viswanadha Raju, managing director, said his company is aiming to manufacture favipiravir in quantities sufficient to meet the growing domestic demand. Favipiravir is a broad spectrum anti-viral agent.

Dassault, Shiv Nadar varsity set up research unit

Software industry major Dassault Systemes has established a research centre in collaboration with Shiv Nadar University in Uttar Pradesh's Greater Noida. The Shiv Nadar University-Dassault Systemes Centre of Excellence (SDC) is for research, innovation, design and entrepreneurship, and is also aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of multidisciplinary education, the varsity said in a statement.



■ Saudi Arabia's pre-budget estimates Oil seen hovering around \$50 till '23

ABEER ABU OMAR & MATTHEW MARTIN OCT. 4

Saudi Arabia's finance ministry seems to think that oil prices will stay around \$50 a barrel for at least the next three years. That's according to Goldman Sachs Group Inc's analysis of the kingdom's pre-budget statement released on September 30.

"Using our own estimates for the breakdown of government revenues, we calculate that the numbers presented in the budget statement are based on an average oil price of around \$50 a barrel between 2020 and 2023," said Farouk Soussa, a London-based analyst at Goldman.

Brent crude fell 6.3 per cent to \$39.27 a barrel last week as more countries tightened restrictions to counter the coronavirus pandemic and US president Donald Trump got infected, causing traders to fret about the outlook for energy demand.

While oil at \$50 would represent a 25 per cent rise from current prices, it would still be far below the pre-pandemic level of around \$65 and less than Saudi Arabia needs to balance its budget.

Goldman's calculations are roughly in line with those of Cairo-based investment bank EFG Hermes, which said Saudi Arabia is basing next year's budget on an oil price of \$50 to \$55. Goldman is itself more



CHEVRON NIGERIA TO CUT 25% WORKFORCE

RUTH OLUROUNBI & CHUKWUDI EJIMOFOR OCT. 4

Nigeria's Chevron unit said it plans to cut 25 per cent of its workforce to become more efficient and reduce operating costs, the latest sign demand for global oil is wobbling under coronavirus and new restrictions to contain it.

"The aim is to have a business that is competitive and an appropriate-

ly-sized organisation," a company statement said. "We must make the necessary adjustments in light of the prevailing business climate."

The International Energy Agency last month trimmed its forecasts for fuel consumption for the rest of the year, warning th

at the global oil market was increasingly "fragile" as new outbreaks of coronavirus derail the recovery.

—Bloomberg

bullish, forecasting that Brent will climb to \$65 by the end of 2021.

Saudi officials expect the country's fiscal deficit to narrow to 5.1 per cent of gross domestic product in 2021 from 12 per cent this year as they cut spending, according to last week's statement.

The kingdom tends to take a relatively conservative view of crude prices in drawing up its budget and doesn't divulge its assumptions, leaving analysts to estimate them from other

projections. The finance ministry didn't immediately respond to a request for comment on Sunday.

Saudi Arabia would need oil to trade at \$66 to balance its budget in 2021, according to estimates from the International Monetary Fund.

Saudi Arabia's caution on prices comes as oil giants including BP Plc and Total SE predict the era of growing global demand for energy is over or coming to an end barely a decade from now.

—Bloomberg

RRBs incur net ₹2,200-cr loss

Mumbai, Oct. 4: Regional rural banks (RRBs) as a group reported net loss of Rs 2,206 crore in the fiscal year ended March 31, 2020, as against Rs 652-crore net loss in FY19, according to data published by Nabard.

During FY2019-20, 26 RRBs earned profit of Rs 2,203 crore, while 19 incurred losses of Rs 4,409 crore, the data showed.

The data on RRBs, recently published by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Nabard), is based on the data uploaded by the RRBs in the Ensure portal.

As on March 31, 2020, there were 45 RRBs working in 685 districts of 26 states and three union territories. These RRBs were sponsored by 15 commercial banks and operating through a network of 21,850 branches.

Gross non-performing assets (GNPAs) as a percentage of gross loans outstanding of RRBs marginally declined to 10.4 per cent as on March 31, 2020, from 10.8 per cent a year ago. The share of

standard, sub-standard, doubtful and loss assets stood at 89.6 per cent, 3.6 per cent, 6.5 per cent and 0.3 per cent, respectively.

Eighteen of the 45 RRBs (as against 20 out of 53 RRBs as on March 31, 2019) had GNPA above 10 per cent as on March 31, 2020.

RRBs, at aggregated level, achieved a growth of 8.6 per cent in business in FY20 compared to a growth of 9.5 per cent in the previous year. Their total business stood at Rs 7.77 lakh crore.

Deposits and advances of RRBs increased by 10.2 per cent and 9.5 per cent, respectively.

Gross outstanding loans stood at Rs 2.98 lakh crore as against Rs 2.80 lakh crore in FY19.

Priority sector loans constituted 90.6 per cent or Rs 2.70 lakh crore of the gross loans outstanding of RRBs as on March 31, 2020. Share of agriculture and MSME sectors in total loan outstanding stood at 70 per cent and 12 per cent, respectively, the data showed.

—PTI

KUWAIT CENTRAL BANK DENIES PLAN TO DEVALUE DINAR

ABBAS AL LAWATI & FIONA MACDONALD OCT. 4

The Central Bank of Kuwait, which pegs the dinar to a basket of currencies dominated by the US dollar, affirmed its commitment to the country's exchange-rate policy, responding to reports of an impending devaluation.

"In light of recent online reports falsely speculating on the intent to devalue the national currency, the Central Bank of Kuwait reiterates its commitment to maintaining the Kuwaiti dinar exchange rate at a level that protects its purchasing power," it said in a statement on Sunday. "CBK will continue its adherence to policies that aim to bolster the local currency."

The speculation started swirling after the passing last week of Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who has been succeeded by his half brother Kuwait is facing the highest budget deficit in its history, brought on by the drop in oil prices and the coronavirus pandemic. A potential solution to its liquidity crisis has been blocked by parliamentary opposition to a law that would allow the government to borrow.

Twelve-month forward contracts on the Kuwaiti dinar rose almost 60 points to 270 in the offshore market last month, signalling traders' concerns over the risk of a devaluation in the currency peg.

—Bloomberg

Micro units to gain from interest waiver

SANGEETHA G. CHENNAI, OCT. 4



The government's suggestion of waiving compound interest on delayed payments during the moratorium period would predominantly benefit micro enterprises. While some small enterprises would also benefit from the waiver, medium-sized firms are feeling discriminated against. Industry is also keen to know whether banks will refund those who have already paid the compound interest.

The government on Saturday filed an affidavit in the Supreme Court that it was ready to bear the burden of an interest waiver for small borrowers.

Any individual or entity whose loan amount is less than Rs 2 crore, irrespective of whether they have availed of loan repayment moratorium or not, will be eligible for waiver of the compounding of interest. This includes micro small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), education, housing, consumer durable, credit card, automobile, personal, and consumption loans.

Among the MSMEs in

India, only 15 per cent have access to the formal banking system. Reports suggest that 45 to 50 per cent of the MSMEs with loan outstanding have availed of moratorium.

According to Rajive Chawla, chairman of IamSMEofIndia, all the micro enterprises which have availed of the moratorium would benefit from the government decision and some of the small enterprises, too.

Medium enterprises are not likely to benefit from the waiver. "It is good that micro enterprises will get relief. But I wish they would have given it to all MSMEs, as it is not a waiver of interest but a waiver of interest of interest," he said.

"Even within MSMEs, medium enterprises are being discriminated against in very many ways. Most of the policy support goes to micro and small enterprises. The policy biases force them to remain dwarfs without growing large," said Anil Bharadwaj, secretary general, Federation of Indian MSMEs (Fisime).

Faiz Askari, founder of SMEStreet, fears the waiver may disincentivise banks from providing loans to MSMEs in the future. "The number of MSMEs which are into the formal banking system itself is miniscule. Government should fully compensate the banks for the waiver so that they won't be reluctant to lend to MSMEs in future," he said.

However, Chawla believes banks will continue to lend MSMEs to meet priority sector lending targets. "Further, they lend to us for a higher interest rate compared to large corporates and there are a lot of other charges. The NPAs are also lower among MSMEs," he said. MSMEs also want to have clarity on whether those who have already paid the compound interest to the banks will receive a refund.

Australia to pay half wages of trainee workers

TRACY WITHERS OCT. 4

Australia will provide a wage subsidy to encourage businesses to hire as many as 100,000 new apprentices or trainee workers as part of its budget strategy to

create jobs and boost incomes.

The A\$1.2 billion (\$860 million) program, which will pay for half of the apprentice's wage in the first year, will be available from Oct. 5, Prime Minister Scott Morrison

said Sunday in an emailed statement. "Apprenticeships are an important pathway to get young people into jobs and to ensure there is a skills pipeline to meet the future needs of employers," Morrison said.

—Bloomberg

Changi Airport warns of 'daunting' future

REINIE BOOYSEN & KRYSTAL CHIA OCT. 4

Changi Airport Group said the impact from the Covid-19 pandemic isn't abating as officials behind the world's best airport warned of a "daunting" period ahead.

Passenger traffic for Changi for the fiscal year ended March declined for the first time in more than a decade, as a slump in the last two months of the peri-

od wiped out earlier gains, serving as a harbinger of a deeper slump. To brace for "a prolonged crisis", Changi suspended operations in two terminals to save on operating costs as flights dropped to the lowest levels in its history.

"The battle with Covid-19 has only just begun," the company said in its annual report. "The future does appear daunting with the situation showing no signs of abatement."

According to the

International Air Transport Association, 25 million jobs are at risk in airlines and associated businesses such as travel and tourism. A third of the world's 26,000 passenger jets remain grounded, aviation data provider Cirium says.

Amid all the gloom in May, Changi was voted the world's best airport for an eighth consecutive year, according to a ranking by Skytrax.

—Bloomberg

RECORD RESERVES SIGNAL SHIFT IN RBI'S FOREX POLICY

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, OCT.4

RBI's pro-foreign portfolio investors (FPI) forex reserve policy is likely to continue but with lesser dollar buying, going forward. The central bank may allow the rupee to depreciate after amassing enough fire power to tackle the currency's volatility, analysts said.

The Reserve Bank of India has built all-time-high foreign exchange reserves (\$542 billion as on Sept. 25), which is positive for higher FPI inflow as sufficient reserves cut

exchange rate risks.

In September the rupee's stability against the US dollar improved as it hovered in the range of 72.75 to 74.05 compared to 76-77 in April-June.

Last month, the RBI bought \$8.7 bn of forex reserves up to Sept. 25 (vs. \$12.9 bn each in June and July) and India's forex reserves touched a record \$545 bn on Sept. 18 before declining by \$3 bn in the following week.

The RBI has returned to forex reserve adequacy after nearly 10 years and the rupee is now past the risks of large deprecia-

tion seen in 2011, 2013 and 2018, said a report by Bank of America Securities.

"India's ability to manage a scenario of capital flight is supported by its ample forex reserves (at \$542 bn: up \$72 bn year to date) which cover around nine times import, five times short-term debt and are around three times the IMF reserve adequacy measure," said Nomura.

With adequacy of reserves, RBI will be more relaxed about buying foreign currency than before, Bank of America Securities said.

FLUSHING MICROFIBRE Garments dislodge woven fibre particles into laundry wastewater

Washing machine is a heavy polluter

MARGARET RHODES OCT. 4

Mojca Zupan was a corporate lawyer doing just fine in 2016, when a museum exhibit changed her life.

The Plastic Garbage Project depicts the "the origins, life cycle, sense, and senselessness of plastic products." "I saw these big microscopic pictures of microfibrils," Zupan says of the tiny grains of plastic that slough off synthetic textiles and seep into bodies of water. "It's ridiculous. Washing machines pollute so heavily."

She did some research. Technically, a solution for catching microfibrils existed. But awareness of the issue was low. "I didn't

get the feeling that something would be done about it in the near future," Zupan says. "I became determined to change the washing machine industry." Within a year, Zupan had started PlanetCare and begun selling the company's first product, a filter that attaches to household washing machines and catches those tiny, polluting microfibrils before they reach the world's oceans.

A washing machine generates microfibre waste in the course of doing its job. By soaking, churning, and scrubbing a garment, it inevitably dislodges woven fibre particles into the laundry wastewater.



Roughly the size of a water bottle, the PlanetCare filter sticks onto the side of the machine and has nozzles on either side connecting to the water hose and to the drain. The filter itself is a three-dimensional mesh sieve designed to catch fibers as small as 0.1 millimetre, or 90 per cent of the microparticles that

would typically flow back into the water supply. A starter pack with seven filter cartridges costs \$112. PlanetCare is based in Ljubljana, Slovenia, Zupan's home. While most of its customers are in Europe, it does ship to the US.

These devices will hardly fix the world's microfibre problem, which is made more complicated by a lack of consensus around how to measure it. Some reports have found that a single garment sheds around 2,000 fibres in one wash cycle; others say a single load of laundry releases 700,000 fibres, flushing trillions of microfibrils into waterways. In August, the journal Nature

published a study documenting high levels of ocean microplastics, with a possible 12 to 21 million tonnes near the surface of the Atlantic. Prior to that, a 2015 Science report put that number at 12 million tonnes, max.

"This is of great societal concern," says Richard Lampitt, a scientist at the National Oceanography Centre in the UK and one of the authors of the report. Underfunded research, he adds, is part of the problem. "We still need more evidence on [how lethal this is]. But if it is, we need to make strenuous efforts to prevent this material from getting into the ocean."

—Bloomberg

OVER 1 LAKH LOCAL SHOPS, KIRANAS TO JOIN AMAZON FESTIVE SALES

New Delhi, Oct. 4: Amazon India on Sunday said it has enabled over one lakh local shops, kiranas and neighbourhood stores across the country through its various initiatives, a move that will help serve more customers this festive season.

More than 20,000 offline retailers, kiranas and local shops from "Local Shops on Amazon" programme will participate in "Great Indian Festival" for the first time, selling various items like daily essentials, large appliances and home decor products, a statement said.

This format helps shop owners establish a digital presence and expand their reach, while allowing customers to shop from local stores in their city.

The programme, which was launched in April this year, now has more than 20,000 retailers in 400 cities, including Meerut, Ludhiana, Saharanpur, Surat, Indore, Ernakulam and Kanchipuram. More than 40 per cent of the sellers are coming from outside the top 10 cities.

Amazon India's other programmes include Amazon Easy stores, "I Have Space" and Amazon Pay Smart Store.

"This festive season, we are focused on helping our sellers and other MSME partners grow their business and bounce back from the recent challenges. In the last few months we have seen businesses of all sizes increasingly adopt technology into their business," Amazon India vice-president Manish Tiwary said.

The integration of Amazon's programmes with one lakh-plus ubiquitous neighbourhood stores is a testament of the adaptability and inventiveness of Indian entrepreneurs, he added.



SHORT TAKES

Kitata runs away with London title

**London:** Eliud Kipchoge's four-year winning run at the London Marathon ended on Sunday as Shura Kitata emerged from the rain and the gloom to become the new champion.

There was no upset in the women's race with world record holder Brigid Kosgei winning her duel with fellow Kenyan Ruth Chepngetich, the world champion, who was eventually pipped for second by Sara Hall of the United States.

The race, originally scheduled to be run in April, was adapted to 19.7 laps of St James's Park rather than the traditional street route, and was restricted to elite runners only, due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Kitata of Ethiopia claimed victory in two hours, five minutes and 41 seconds, pipping Vincent Kipchumba of Kenya on the line after a thrilling sprint finish. — AP

Barca beat Real in women's tie

**Madrid:** Barcelona crushed Real Madrid 4-0 in the first ever women's Clasico on Sunday, with Madrid president Florentino Perez deciding against attending the club's inaugural women's match.

Goals from Patri Guijarro, Lieke Martens and Alexia Putellas, as well as an own-goal by Madrid goalkeeper Maria Rodriguez, gave Barca an expected victory.

This was the first ever official fixture played by Madrid's women's team and the first ever against Barca, the club's most prestigious rival and the reigning Primera Division champions.

Luis Rubiales, the president of the Spanish football federation, and Spain women's coach Jorge Vilda were both at Valdebebas to watch the game. But Perez was absent, choosing instead to travel to see Madrid's men's team play against Levante in La Liga later on Sunday. — AFP

Chennaiyin rope in Brazil's Memo

**Chennai:** Two-time champions Chennaiyin FC have roped in Brazil's Emerson Gomes de Moura, better known as Memo, on a free transfer for the 2020-21 season of the Indian Super League starting next month.

The 32-year-old joins CFC on the expiry of his contract at Jamshedpur FC, having spent the previous three campaigns there, the club said in a statement on Sunday.

Known for his versatility as a defensive midfielder and central defender, Memo is set to add experience and stability to Chennaiyin's ranks.

"I am delighted to be a part of the Chennaiyin family. The upcoming season will be fantastic, I am certain. It is a pity we won't be able to feel the warmth of the fans in the stands, as they are truly incredible and loyal," Memo said.

"Every time I have played in Chennai, I have truly felt their passion. A unique ISL awaits us, which will be a spectacle in itself," he added. — PTI

Live on TV

CRICKET

IPL: Royal Challengers Bangalore vs Delhi Capitals from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

TENNIS

French Open: Matches from 2.30 pm on Star Sports, Select 2

WWE RAW

Bouts from 5.30 am (Tuesday) on Sony Ten 1, HD

Watto comeback!

Watson roars back to form as Chennai floor Punjab

**Dubai, Oct. 4:** Shane Watson and Faf du Plessis conjured up commanding unbeaten half-centuries as Chennai Super Kings demolished Kings XI Punjab by 10 wickets to snap their string of losses in the IPL here on Sunday.

CSK relished a much-needed victory after three defeats in a row, overhauling a 179-run target with remarkable ease.

Watson (83 not out) and Du Plessis (87 not out) ensured that there was no close finish this time, reducing the match to a 'no-contest' with their authoritative batting.

The seasoned Australian punished the KXIP bowlers with 11 fours and three sixes in his 53-ball unbeaten knock while Du Plessis hit 11 fours and a six from 53 balls to also remain not out.

Except Mohammed Shami, KXIP did not have a bowler who could trouble the opposition batsmen and CSK exploited it to the fullest. CSK moved to sixth spot from bottom with this confidence-boosting win.

Skipper KL Rahul had hit a well-paced 63 to lead Kings XI Punjab to a competitive 178 for four after electing to bat but in the absence of good bowlers it was an onerous task to stop the experienced CSK brigade.

Rahul's risk-free 63 came off 52 balls with the help of seven fours and a six as he shared a 61-run stand with fellow opener Mayank Agarwal (26) and then raised a 58-run partnership with Nicholas Pooran (33 off 17).

KXIP looked set for a bigger total but both Pooran and Rahul were dismissed by pacer Shardul Thakur off successive balls in the 18th over.

CSK, like their rivals, also got to a solid start with openers — Du Plessis and Watson — creaming off 60 runs in the Powerplay overs.

They did not exactly set the field on fire but an effective strokeplay helped them begin the chase in right earnest.

The Australian-Protea duo blended caution with aggression, picking the right deliveries to attack. They raised the team hundred in the 10th over.

Watson got to his fifty with consecutive boundaries off Chris Jordan while Du Plessis raised his own with a single off the same bowler.

With Nothing working for KXIP, Watson and Du Plessis only became more dominant as the



CSK opener Shane Watson en route to his unbeaten 83 against Kings XI Punjab in an IPL game in Dubai on Sunday.

game progressed.

Earlier, Rahul and Agarwal were cautious. No lofted shot was played till the last over of the Powerplay with the two batsmen preferring to drive along the ground. It was also because Deepak Chahar and Sam Curran hardly pitched it short.

Even if Agarwal and Rahul opened their arms it was to slap the balls outside the off stump, when there was enough room to do that. CSK captain MS Dhoni introduced spin in the seventh over with Ravindra Jadeja, who created a chance too but Agarwal's hit fell just short of a diving Du Plessis.

SHANE WATSON			
R	B	6s	4s
83*	53	3	11

SCORECARD

**Kings XI Punjab:** KL Rahul c Dhoni b Thakur 63, M. Agarwal c Curran b Chawla 26, Mandeep Singh c Rayudu b Jadeja 27, N. Pooran c Jadeja b Thakur 33, G. Maxwell (not out) 11, S. Khan (not out) 14. **Extras (lb 1, w 3) 4. Total (for four wickets in 20 overs) 178.**

**FoW:** 1-61, 2-94, 3-152, 4-152.

**Bowling:** D. Chahar 4-0-39-2, Bravo 4-0-38-0, Jadeja 4-0-30-1, Chawla 2-0-22-1.

**Chennai Super Kings:** S. Watson (not out) 83, F du Plessis (not out) 87. **Extras (w 11) 11. Total (for no loss in 17.4 overs) 181.**

**Bowling:** S. Cottrell 3-0-30-0, M. Shami 3-4-0-35-0, H. Brar 4-0-41-0, C. Jordan 3-0-42-0, R. Bishnoi 4-0-33-0.

RCB run into charged Delhi

**Dubai, Oct. 4:** A back-in-form Virat Kohli's tactical acumen will be put to test against Shreyas Iyer's unassuming but dynamic brand of captaincy when the two most impressive teams of the ongoing IPL — Royal Challengers Bangalore and Delhi Capitals — face each other here on Monday.

Both DC and RCB have looked solid so far and are among the top teams with three wins out of four games each.

While Iyer has shown great form in his team's four matches, Kohli finally got his act together in RCB's last game against Rajasthan Royals, striking a fluent half-century.

On Saturday, Iyer (88 not out off 38 balls) again showed his class after Prithvi Shaw's (66) opening act as Delhi beat Kolkata Knight Riders by 18 runs.

**It's going to be a good challenge. They (RCB) have got a pretty good line-up, and have some big names. But, I think we have got a good team as well and the guys have been training really well. If we just execute our skills, perform the way we have been, I think it's going to be a very good game, and I'm sure we can out skill them**

— ANRICH NORTJE

Delhi Capitals pacer says his team are capable of outperforming their opponents on Monday.

Kohli too finally got his touch back after three ordinary outings with an unbeaten 72 off 53 balls to guide RCB to a comfortable eight-wicket win over Rajasthan Royals.

And come Monday, the two skippers would look to lead from the front and outwit each other in what promises to be a thrilling contest.

While Shaw has so far looked quite in control at the top of the order for DC, Shikhar Dhawan's form would be a cause of concern for Iyer.

But on the brighter side,

Delhi seem to have finally got Rishabh Pant back in form as he dusted off his rustiness with a quick-fire 17-ball 38 against KKR.

To add to it, there is Marcus Stonis and Shimron Hetmyer waiting in the wings.

On the bowling front, Kagiso Rabada is the go-to man for DC even though he leaked runs against KKR the other day.

South African pacer Anrich Nortje has been brilliant for DC in the opening and slog overs

and bowled a brilliant penultimate over against KKR on Saturday.

Harshal Patel, as Ishant Sharma's replacement, did well enough to finish with 2 for 34 in 4 overs but the fit-again Ravichandran Ashwin and Stoinis went for runs.

RCB, on the other hand, have been served well by the young Devdutt Padikkal at the top. The left-hander, considered the next big thing in Indian cricket, is fourth in the run-scorers' tally with 174 from four games, including three fifties.

And if Aaron Finch too gets going, it would be difficult for any side to stop the marauding Bangalore openers.

Kohli's return to form is a relief for RCB's batting unit, which also has the likes of the in-form AB de Villiers, Shivam Dube and Gurkeerat Singh among others. — PTI

NUMBERS GAME

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL:

- Matches: 23
- RCB: 14
- Delhi: 8
- No result: 1

MEETING IN 2019

- Delhi Capitals beat RCB by 4 wickets in Bengaluru.
- Delhi Capitals beat RCB by 16 runs in Delhi.

FOR THE RECORD

- Yuzvendra Chahal who has taken 197 wickets at an average of 23.77 in 174 innings needs three more to become the fifth Indian and 39th bowler overall to complete a double century of wickets in T20.
- Shikhar Dhawan who has scored 956 runs at an average of 34.14 needs 44 runs to become the eighth batsman from Delhi to complete 1000 runs in IPL.

— S. PERVEZ QAISAR

IPL POINTS TABLE						
Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
Mumbai Indians	5	3	2	0	6	+1.214
Delhi Capitals	4	3	1	0	6	+0.588
Royal Challengers Bangalore	4	3	1	0	6	-0.954
Kolkata Knight Riders	4	2	2	0	4	-0.121
Rajasthan Royals	4	2	2	0	4	-0.317
Chennai Super Kings	5	2	3	0	4	-0.342
Sunrisers Hyderabad	5	2	3	0	4	-0.417
Kings XI Punjab	5	1	4	0	2	+0.178

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

Quinton takes Mumbai to top

**Sharjah, Oct. 4:** Quinton de Kock was back amongst the runs with a sizzling 39-ball 67 before the bowlers did a commendable job in batsmen friendly Sharjah to power Mumbai Indians to a clinical 34-run win over Sunrisers Hyderabad in the Indian Premier League here on Sunday.

The swashbuckling duo of Hardika Pandya (28) and Kieron Pollard (25 not out) scored at their usual brisk pace but it was Krunal who propelled MI to 208 for five with 20 runs off a mere four deliveries in the last over.

Then, the MI bowlers did just enough to restrict SRH to 174 for seven.

Chasing 209, a formidable target even on the small Sharjah ground, SRH began with Jonny Bairstow sending Trent Boult's third delivery into the stands. Two fours and a six followed before Boult had the Englishman for a 15-ball 25.

David Warner (60 off 44 balls) got into the act with a couple of boundaries off Jasprit Bumrah. Manish Pandey had raced to 16 when Hardik Pandya dropped a sitter, his view blocked by the evening sun.

Pandey lofted Rahul Chahar over long-on for a massive six and Warner followed suit, hitting the leg-spinner for another maximum in the same over as SRH kept pace with the required run-rate.

The prolific Australian then cut his compatriot James Pattinson through the point region before smashing Krunal for a six and four to help SRH past the 100-run mark in the 11th over.

Attempting an upper cut against Boult, Kane Williamson was out caught by Quinton de Kock, after Bumrah bowled an excel-

SCORECARD

**Mumbai Indians:** R. Sharma c Bairstow b Sandeep Sharma 6, Q de Kock c & b Rashid Khan 67, S. Yadav c Natarajan b Kaul 27, Ishan Kishan c Pandey b Sandeep Sharma 31, H. Pandya b Kaul 28, K. Pollard (not out) 25, K. Pandya (not out) 20. **Extras (lb 1, nb 1, w 2) 4. Total (for five wickets in 20 overs) 208.**

**FoW:** 1-6, 2-48, 3-126, 4-147, 5-188.

**Bowling:** S. Sharma 4-0-41-2, T. Natarajan 4-0-29-0, S. Kaul 4-0-64-2, A. Samad 2-0-27-0, R. Khan 4-0-22-1, K. Williamson 2-0-24-0.

**Sunrisers Hyderabad:** D. Warner c Ishan Kishan b Pattinson 60, J. Bairstow c H. Pandya b Boult 25, M. Pandey c Pollard b Pattinson 30, K. Williamson c de Kock b Boult 3, P. Garg c Chahar b KH Pandya 8, Abhishek Sharma b Bumrah 10, A. Samad c Sharma b Bumrah 20, R. Khan (not out) 3, Sandeep Sharma (not out) 0. **Extras (lb 5, w 10) 15. Total (for seven wickets in 20 overs) 174.**

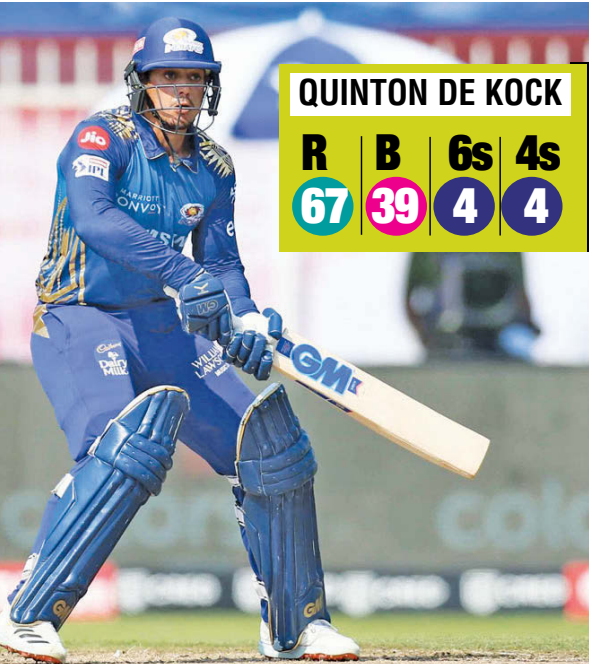
**FoW:** 1-34, 2-94, 3-116, 4-130, 5-142, 6-168, 7-172.

**Bowling:** T. Boult 4-0-28-2, J. Pattinson 4-0-29-2, K. Pattinson 4-0-35-1, J. Bumrah 4-0-41-2, K. Pollard 3-0-20-0, R. Chahar 1-0-16-0.

lent six-run over.

Last match hero Priyam Garg failed to replicate his performance but it was the big wicket of Warner, in the 16th over bowled by Pattinson, that almost sealed the game in MI's favour even as the required rate soared past 14 runs an over. For MI, there were two wickets apiece for Boult (2/28), Pattinson (2/29) and Bumrah (2/41).

Earlier, Rohit Sharma plonked Sandeep Sharma over mid-wicket for a six to start the proceedings but the MI skipper was out caught behind the very next ball as he chased a wide delivery, only to nick it to Jonny Bairstow. — PTI



Mumbai Indians opener Quinton de Kock plays a shot against Sunrisers in Sharjah on Sunday.

QUINTON DE KOCK			
R	B	6s	4s
67	39	4	4

Karthik should bat after Morgan & Russell: Gauti

**Sharjah, Oct. 4:** Two-time IPL winning Kolkata Knight Riders captain Gautam Gambhir believes current skipper Dinesh Karthik should bat after Eoin Morgan and Andre Russell and also wants Sunil Narine to be dropped from the top of the order.

Apart from a 23-ball 30 coming at no 3 against Mumbai Indians, Karthik has failed to produce any significant score despite batting ahead of Morgan so far in the tournament.

The wicket-keeper batsman scored 6 after coming on to bat at no 5 against Delhi Capitals on Saturday even as Morgan (44 off 18) and Rahul Tripathi (36 off 16) raised hopes of a successful chase after batting



Dinesh Karthik

at no 6 and 8 respectively.

"Rahul Tripathi goes up the order, Dinesh Karthik plays at no 6, not before Morgan and not before Russell as well. Probably Sunil Narine goes to bat at 8 or 9. If Morgan bats no 4 and Russell at 5 and Dinesh Karthik to follow," Gambhir told

ESPNewsInfo.

The former India opener also felt Karthik miscalculated by giving the 19th over to spinner Varun Chakravarty (1/49) as it yielded 20 runs.

"Your best bowlers need to ball the 18th, 19th and 20th over, unfortunately it didn't happen. Pat Cummins, Sunil Narine -- if a spinner has to bowl. Even Mavi, he did a fabulous job in the previous games and so did Andre Russell. You have to go to give your best bowlers," he said.

"Yes Varun Chakravarty did bowl well in the first few overs but you cannot expect a young spinner to be bowling the 19th over and that too in Sharjah, probably it was a miscalculation," he added. — PTI

It's all about smart work, says Shreyas



Shreyas Iyer is leading Delhi from the front.

**Sharjah, Oct. 4:** Delhi Capitals skipper Shreyas Iyer doesn't consider himself a "gifted player" and has attributed all those big sixes against Kolkata Knight Riders to the enormous "hard and smart work" that he had put in the gym sessions.

Iyer hit 88 off 38 balls with six sixes and seven fours in Delhi's 18-run win over KKR in an IPL game here on Saturday.

"I know the hard work and the smart work I have put in through my gym sessions, so I wouldn't say I am a very gifted player," Iyer said at the post-match presentation ceremony.

"It was really necessary for me to take time at the start which I did in the ear-

lier games as well. It was the right time for me to take on the bowlers and then rotate strike as well after that.

"Luckily it worked out for me. We keep talking about close victories and this was one of them. Really satisfied with the way everyone stepped up," he added.

Losing captain Dinesh Karthik rued missing out on a couple of sixes in the middle overs which he felt probably cost them the match. "Maybe in between 10-13 overs we didn't get many boundaries, we lost a couple of wickets as well which sets you back in such run chases. To be honest, couple more sixes and we would have crossed the line," Karthik said.

Delhi seamer Anrich Nortje, who captured three wickets for 33, said they tried to exploit the conditions and focussed on mixing up the deliveries.

"We wanted to use the conditions to the best of our ability. There was a little bit of dew. Myself and KG (Kagiso Rabada) tried to get a few to go through. We did it at the start. It got a little bit tough in the end, the ball was coming on nicely," he said.

"It's great bowling with him (Rabada), really enjoying the time we spend together. Trying to feed off each other, trying to find out what he thinks, what he does and it's nice to be in the same team with him," he added. — PTI