


DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
RAJAHMUNDRY | THURSDAY | 15 OCTOBER 2020

WEATHER



Max: 29.0°C

Min: 24.0°C

RH: 79%

Rainfall: 8.7mm

Forecast: Rain and Humid.

Max/Min temp. 29/24 °C

COVID-19 CUNT

CASES

(+64,786)

73,01,870

DEATHS

(+655)

1,11,272

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+1,446)

(+8)

TS: 2,16,238

1,241

(+3,892)

(+28)

AP: 7,67,465

6,319

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

3,85,98,519

DEATHS

10,94,040

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES

213

worldometers.info/

coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana

Tithi: Adhika Ashwayuja Bahula

Trayodasi till 8.31 am; Adhika

Ashwayuja Bahula Chaturdasi till 4.52

am (Friday)

Star: Uttaraphalguni till 5.54 pm

Varjyam: 1.16 am to 2.40 am (Friday)

Durmuhurtam: 10.05 am to

10.52 am; 2.45 pm to 3.31 pm

Rahukalam: 1.30 pm to 3 pm

HILRI CALENDAR

Safar ul Muzaffar 27, 1442 AH

PRAYERS

(ROYAL MOSQUE)

Fajar: 5.00 am

Zohar: 1.30 pm

Asar: 5.00 pm

Maghrib: 6.35 pm

Isha: 8.30 pm

SUNSET TODAY 5.41 PM

SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.56 AM

MOONSET TOMORROW 5.33 AM

MOONRISE TODAY 4.11 AM

COUNTER POINT

Flashback

What negligence...

We will make life jacket compulsory for all citizens!

Subhani, who began CounterPoint on

December 11, 1992 and took only one

break from work in his entire career, is on

personal leave of bereavement.

We present some of his best cartoons of

rib-tickling wisdom published on Page 1

and on the Edit Page till he returns.

BRIEF

Enforce interest waiver soon: SC

New Delhi:

The Supreme Court

Wednesday said the

Centre should implement

“as soon as possible” interest

waiver on loans of up to

₹2 crore under the RBI

moratorium scheme in view

of the pandemic, saying the

common man's Diwali is in

the government's hands.

The apex court sought know

from the Centre if the bene-

fit of loan interest waiver for

borrowers of up to ₹2 crore

during the moratorium peri-

od has “percolated” to the

common man.

Shobha Naidu passes away

Hyderabad:

Renowned

Kuchipudi exponent Sobha

Naidu, a recipient of Padma

Shri and numerous other

awards, passed away here

on Wednesday. Naidu, who

was in her sixties, was

undergoing treatment at a

private hospital and the end

came around 1 am on

Wednesday, sources close to

her said. Sobha Naidu's

major achievements include

choreography and presenta-

tion of ballets.

NATION | 4

Mufti, Abdullaahs to put up joint front

WORLD | 5

Feel like ‘Superman’, says Trump

SPORTS | 8

Srikanth sails into Round 2 of Denmark Open

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Rains claim 11 lives, ruin crop in 55,169 ha

41 relief camps set up; 1,966 families evacuated to safety

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 14

Heavy rains claimed the lives of 11 persons and caused damage to agricultural and horticultural crops in about 55,169 hectares so far in six districts, including Visakhapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari, Krishna, Guntur and Kadapa in AP. Visakhapatnam district saw six deaths while Guntur saw two and there was one each in East Godavari, West Godavari and Krishna. 58 mandals were affected, while 109 villages were hit by the rains. 65 houses were inundated/ marooned and 396 houses suffered damages in the five districts. 11 cattle perished in the rains as did 7,900 poultry.

The state government has set up 41 relief camps and evacuated 1,966 families to safety. 7,469 people have been accommodated in relief camps. The authorities distributed 12,088 food packets and 23,468 water packets to affected people in five districts.

In Visakhapatnam, agricultural crops like paddy, pulses, sugarcane, maize, ragi, cotton, tobacco were damaged in 2,960 hectares while horticultural crops like vegetables, banana, papaya and beetie vine were damaged in 5,480 hectares.

In East Godavari, agricultural crops in 30,149 hectares and horticultural crops in 1,619 hectares were damaged.

In Krishna district, agri-

A building collapsed near Jaggampeta due to overflowing of floodwater from Pushkar canal to Polavaram canal in East Godavari on Wednesday. — A. MANIKANTA KUMAR

CM TELLS OFFICIALS TO BE ON HIGH ALERT, TO PROVIDE ESSENTIALS FOR FLOOD-HIT

MD ILYAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 14

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy instructed the officials to be on high alert and provide all help to people taking shelter in relief camps and announced ₹500 to each person in the camp. He conducted a review meeting on flood situation in CM camp office at

cultural crops were damaged in 9,869 hectares and horticultural crops in 1,059 hectares.

In Guntur district, agricultural crops were damaged in 381 hectares while horticultural crops in 514

hectares. In Kadapa district, agricultural crops were damaged in 2,053 while horticultural crops in 189 hectares.

Damages caused to infrastructure in Visakhapatnam district include road surface damages in 157.76 kms and the estimated value for restoration is pegged at ₹6,220 lakh.

Greater Visakhapatnam municipal corporation has suffered damages to infrastructure, like roads, animation, drainage and drinking water facilities and the estimated value for restoration is ₹1,502 lakh.

■ Pg 2: Energy department suffered damages to 372 poles

■ Full report on Page 2

Private taxi operators make most of impasse between AP, TS buses

D. SIVA RAMI REDDI | DC KURNOOL, OCT. 14

Private taxi operators are making a killing by transporting passengers from Kurnool to Hyderabad and back. With the stalemate between the APSRTC and TSRTC continuing over inter-state transportation, the festival season is going to be a costly affair for those planning to go to their homes.

The distance between Kurnool and Hyderabad is 200 km on NH-44.

As the road is straight without any difficult terrain, the RTC buses complete the journey in 4 hours while the Indra bus service takes just 3.5 hours.

The buses of private travels and cars can complete the journey in just 3 hours.

It is because of this time factor, many prefer private vehicles over RTC buses.

It is a common sight to see hundreds of cars and tempos waiting at the Bellary junction, the starting point

With the stalemate between the APSRTC and TSRTC continuing over inter-state transportation, the festival season is going to be a costly affair for those planning to go to their homes.

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In Kurnool to carry passengers to Hyderabad. On normal days, cars charge ₹500 for one way while Toofan vehicle, which has a seating capacity of 15 persons, charges ₹300 per passenger.

Festival season provides the best opportunity for private bus operators to make a killing by jacking up the prices.

During last Dasara, one-way trip between Kurnool and Hyderabad was priced at ₹1500-₹2,000. This Dasara too the same fares would be collected, said Jamaluddin, a car operator. He said due to Coronavirus in the last six months, they had literally no business. He said that they hope to make a decent

business during the festive season. “I hope to make three trips per day,” he said.

Normally, the APSRTC runs about 74 buses from Kurnool to Hyderabad. During the festive season and special occasions, the Corporation runs additional bus services.

Last year, the RTC had increased the fare by 1.5 per cent during the Dasara and earned an additional revenue of ₹1.5 crore, said an RTC official. About 751 buses were pressed into service during Dasara from Kurnool last year while Telangana RTC ran 431 buses.

There is no clarity on the number of buses to be oper-

ated this season, said the official.

The stalemate between the TSRTC and APSRTC is continuing as Telangana RTC is insisting that AP buses should reduce their services to just 1 lakh kilometers against the existing 2.61 lakh km in Telangana state.

This impasse has given an opportunity for the private buses and car operators to make the extra bucks, said an RTC official.

The stretch between Kurnool-Hyderabad is prone to accidents as the vehicles travel at high speed of not less than 100 kmph at any given time. Passengers demand that speed guns must be erected at vantage points throughout the stretch to check the cruising vehicles.

A passenger said buses coming from Karnataka could cover the distance between Kurnool and Hyderabad in less than 3 hours between 3 am and 7 am.

RARE | SPECIES First voice recording was heard on Dec. 29 last year in Lankamala forest

Efforts on to spot endangered Jerdon Courser

NAGESWARA RAO BALLEDA | DC KADAPA, OCT. 14

The Andhra Pradesh forest department is set to implement a special research project on the endangered bird Jerdon Courser (Kalivi Kodli), whose recent humming has rekindled hope and researchers involved in the project will aim to spot and make efforts to protect the bird.

Natural Conservative Foundation (NCF) researcher P. Jagannadham arranged a total of 15 voice recorders

spread over the forest. The first voice recording was heard on December 29 of last year, which was submitted to forest officials.

This marks a breakthrough after three decades of research and provides evidence that Jerdon's coursers are alive in Lankamala forest. Based on the identity of this bird, the forest department initiated a long-term project and recently called for applications from various research organisations involved in research of endangered birds and animals.

Pre-eminent the National Conservative Foundation (NCF), Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History (SAON) and Popu-

lation and Environmental Education centre (NPCS) applied for the project. In fact, BNHS has filed two applications. They all were sent to the government a week ago.

Jerdon Courser is classified as critically endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). It was first discovered in Eastern Ghats in 1848 in the Kadapa-Nellore border area forest.

British soldier's doctor Thomas Caverhill Jerdon discovered this bird and hence the name Jerdon Courser. It was rediscovered more than a century later in 1986 near Reddipalli village in Kadapa district. The site where it was spotted was designated as Sri Lankamalleswara Wildlife

Sanctuary. However, the species remained untraced for the past three decades.

District forest officer Ravindra Dhama said that following the orders of the higher ups, “We have invited applications from research organisations for continuing the search for the spectacular bird. We have received five proposals, which have been forwarded to the state forest department for clearance. The government will take the final call on the research agency that will be entrusted with the project.”

ion, establishment of state/district police complaints authority and implementation of directions in paragraphs 31 of Prakash Singh judgement of Supreme Court. The paragraph 31 of the judgement says that the composition of SSC should be as per recommendations of the three committees.

The state government, in 2013, issued GO 189 accommodating the Leader of Opposition in SSC.

■ Pg 2: Govt told to issue fresh GO within one month

Secondly, the film fraternity submitted a representation to the AP government seeking waiver of minimum power charges being levied upon theatres during their closure period, sanction of concession in relevant taxes, and hike in maintenance charges up to ₹6 per seat. The state government is yet to take a decision on this.

■ Pg 2: No content available for screening

There will be no screening of films in theatres of Andhra Pradesh from October 15, as screening will not be financially unviable for theatre owners and film exhibitors.

Though the Union ministry of home affairs, while issuing Unlock 5.0 guidelines recently, allowed cinema halls and multiplexes to screen films with 50 per cent of their total capacity and in strict compliance with Covid-19 protocol from October 15, the film exhibitors and theatre owners are not willing to do so for a variety of reasons.

Firstly, theatres having either single screen or multi screens have been closed for nearly seven months with no basic maintenance due to Covid-19. Theatre owners will have to incur huge expenditure to spruce them up and resume screening of the films. According to an estimate, it costs nearly ₹10 lakh, depending upon the size of the theatre, to restore a theatre for screening films.

■ Pg 2: Govt told to issue fresh GO within one month

Priority for e-ticket holders at Srisaillam

DC CORRESPONDENT KURNOOL, OCT. 14

Srisaillam temple is all set for Dasara festivities, with Covid-19 restrictions, said executive officer K.S. Rama Rao.

He appealed to the people to book their tickets online (e-tickets) so that better arrangements could be made. He said all the sevass to goddess Brahmaramba and Mallikarjuna Swamy would be performed as Ekanta Sevass and that the public would be allowed to have darshan of the presiding deity. No outside processions would be taken up due to Covid-19 restrictions, Rama Rao said. The nine-day Dasara Utsavass will commence on October 17 and continue till October 25.

The festivities will begin with Goddess Brhamaramba in Shailla Putri avatar with dazzling radiance. This is the first of nine avatars of Nava Durga. Bhringi Vahana Seva will be performed to the processional deities in the

evening, he said. The nine-day festival will start with special pujas like Ustava Sankalpam and Ganapati pooja and Siva Sankalpa at Yagasala. The temple officials and main priest would offer special pujas for Lord Mallikarjuna Swamy and his consort Sri Brahmaramba Devi, as part of Mahotsavass.

These utsavass will end with Chandiyagam and Purnahuti event.

Elaborate arrangements are being made and all facilities are being provided for the devotees visit the shrine during the Utsavass. The important events of the utsavass are Chandiyagam, Rudrayagam, Navadurga alankaras to Goddess and Vahana Sevass to God and Goddess, besides several special pujas. Goddess Bramaramba is mainly worshipped in these utsavass. On every day of celebrations, various religious rituals like Srichakra rarchana, Navavarana puja, Anustanass, Devi Saptasathi Parayanas, and others.

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SHORT TAKES

IAS OFFICER
TRANSFERRED,
DAS GIVEN FACDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 14

The State government on Wednesday abruptly transferred senior bureaucrat Neerab Kumar Prasad who is currently the special chief secretary, environment and forest and holding additional charge of Chief Commissioner of Land Administration.

He was not given any posting and asked to report to General Administration Department. Another senior bureaucrat Adityanath Das was given FAC of both forest and CCLA.

Mr Das who is tipped to be the next CS was given CCLA, which has been traditionally treated as feeder post to CS. But it is not clear why Mr Prasad was stripped off forest also and kept without posting.

CM CONDOLES
DEATH OF
SHOBHA NAIDUDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 14

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has expressed grief over the passing away of renowned danseuse and exponent of Kuchipudi dance form Shobha Naidu.

From being a disciple of Vempati China Satyam to heading the Dance Academy to train young dancers, Dr Shobha Naidu, born in Anakapalle, has done great service to Kuchipudi and her ballads and solo performances had won worldwide acclaim, the Chief Minister said and conveyed his condolences to the bereaved family members.

Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan expressed his profound grief and sadness at the sudden passing away of Dr Shobha Naidu. Mr Harichandan said Dr Sobha Naidu mastered the technique of Kuchipudi and played lead roles in dance-dramas at a very young age and her performance in the roles of Satyabhama and Padmavati were well acclaimed. Dr Sobha Naidu also contributed to the popularity of the Kuchipudi dance.

GOVT TOLD TO
ISSUE FRESH GO
WITHIN ONE MONTH

FROM PAGE 1

However, the government issued another GO amending the earlier one by removing the LOP from SSC.

The court observed that non-inclusion of LOP in SSC was in contravention of Supreme Court directions and directed the state government to issue a fresh GO within one month.

However, the government informed the court that they were in the process of bringing a comprehensive AP Police Act, 2020 within two months. But the court wanted that the issue be attended to.

PROBE JAGAN'S
ALLEGATIONS,
SAYS DORADC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 14

In a scathing letter, the former president of the advocates association of the HC of Andhra Pradesh, advocate K. B. Ramanna Dora, wrote to Chief Justice of India, Justice S.A. Bobde, seeking a probe into allegations against Justice N. V. Ramana made by AP Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy.

Stating that people have started to believe that the Telugu Desam is running a parallel government using the High Court, which is alarming and needs to be looked into, Dora pointed out that scores of negative orders passed by a few judges of the HC, unduly criticising the government gave credence to this impression.

Alleging that “those entrenched in the judicial system were playing cards in a way that is helpful to TD regardless of the party in power,” Dora suggested that this has been the case in for the last decade.

Dismissing the idea that Jagan was trying to malign the judiciary, Dora said Jagan never complained against the judiciary even when he was implicated in the quid pro quo case and sent to jail. Jagan's conduct in the last 16 months, even when unduly attacked by the judiciary, Dora claimed, and even when some judges overstepped their brief and made unwarranted comments on the state government, has been restrained.

₹500 for each inmate of relief camps: CM

Inflows at Prakasam Barrage are expected to reach 7.5 lakh cusecs due to incessant rains in TS

MD ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 14

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Wednesday announced that ₹500 will be paid to all people taking shelter in relief camps.

Addressing a review meeting on the flood situation at the CM's Camp Office in Tadepalli on Wednesday via video conference, Mr Jagan instructed district collectors to be on high alert and immediately restore power and drinking water supply in flood-prone areas.

He asked officials of particularly Krishna and Guntur districts to be wary, as inflows at Prakasam Barrage are expected to reach 7.5 lakh cusecs due to incessant rains in the Telangana region.

The Chief Minister directed officials to focus on restoring power supply and repairs to damaged roads on a war footing. At the same time, he directed authorities to prepare an action plan for making best use of floodwaters. He pointed out that despite there being 40 per cent excess rainfall in Chittoor district, only 30 per cent of the tanks in the area have got filled.

Further, Mr Jagan said safe drinking water should be supplied to people and appropriate precautions taken to prevent spread of diseases across the state. All public health centres should be stocked with necessary drugs and ensure that emergency health services are in place.

The officials informed the Chief Minister that drinking water is being supplied to all flood-affected areas through tankers. After normalcy returns, agriculture and horticulture experts from various universities and institutions will guide farmers on their next crop plan to minimise their losses.

Ministers Mekathoti Sucharitha and Botsa Satyanarayana, chief secretary Nilam Sawhney, special chief secretary Poonam Malakondaiah, principal secretary (Panchayat Raj) Gopal Krishna Dwivedi, and other officials were present at the CM's review meeting.

Meanwhile, energy minister Balineni Srinivasa Reddy has directed officials of electricity department to reconnect snapped power cables and protect submerged agriculture starters and motors.

In a statement on Wednesday, he appealed to farmers not to go anywhere near agriculture connections or touch starter boxes, which are damp, because there could be a threat of electrocution.

The minister also advised people to avoid contact with electrical poles, switch boards or service wires.

He asked them to contact the nearest electricity office if they have any issues with their power connection. He assured that electricity department officials will be available to the public round the clock.



Floodwaters breach the railway bridge on the Tandava River due to heavy inflow at Payakaraopeta in Visakhapatnam district on Wednesday.

— DECCAN CHRONICLE

Several low-lying areas
inundated in Krishna distDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 14

With the inflow of floodwaters increasing into Krishna river, all the gates of Prakasam barrage were lifted to release the same into the Bay of Bengal. The second alert warning was issued at Prakasam barrage.

On Wednesday evening, over 7.40 lakh cusecs of floodwater was discharged into the sea and 6.99 lakh cusecs of floodwater is gushing to barrage from upstream areas.

The road connectivity between old Amaravati and Vijayawada was cut off with the Kondaveeti Vagu overflowing on to the road at Peda Madduru.

The low-level bridge at Peda Maddur was marooned in the floodwaters. Plunging into action, the officials released floodwater from Kondaveeti Vagu through the lift pumping system into Krishna river.

The locals from low-lying areas of the city

were shifted to relief camps set up at the IGMC stadium in Vijayawada.

The famous Andhra Loyola College campus and adjacent roads were also marooned.

Bhupeshnagar, Tarakaramanagar, Ramalingeswarannagar, Balajinagar, Krishnalanka, Yanamalakuduru, Ranigarithota and adjacent localities on the banks of Krishna river in the city were inundated and the people living in these areas were shifted to relief camp at IGMC.

Krishna district collector A Md Imtiaz visited the IGMC relief camp and enquired the evacuees about the facilities. Mr Imtiaz said that as many as 1,323 people were shifted to 19 relief camps in the district and officials were providing food and shelter to the evacuees.

He said that besides these evacuees, another 1,000 people were living on river/canal banks who were facing difficulties due to floodwater and the officials were also trying

to help them too.

The collector said that nearly 7.30 lakh cusecs of water would reach Prakasam barrage. The irrigation, police and VMC officials formed teams and are shifting people to relief camps from low-lying areas.

He said that 25 villages were inundated and that paddy was damaged in 12,466 hectares and horticulture crops were damaged in 1,400 hectares due to the incessant rains in Krishna district.

He said that teams would be appointed to conduct enumeration after floodwater receded.

Vijayawada municipal commissioner Prasanna Venkatesh visited flood-affected areas in the city. He said that VMC set up as many as 10 relief centres in the city to shift flood victims to safer places.

The VMC started a control room which can be contacted on 0866-2424172 and on WhatsApp through 8181960909.

DEPRESSION
MOVES TO MAHA

Visakhapatnam: The depression over Telangana moved westwards with a speed of 20kmph during last six hours on Wednesday and lay centred over north interior Karnataka and adjoining Maharashtra about 40 km north of Gulbarga and 110 km east of Solapur. It is likely to move west northwest wards and gradually weaken into a well marked low pressure during the next 12 hours. Under its influence, heavy rains are likely over coastal Karantaka and Madhya Maharashtra.

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 14

As there are no checks of their activities and review of DWCRAs groups and eligibility of the members, a large number of higher-income group women are also continuing as members across the state.

Although SHGs are for BPL families, a large number of women from higher income groups are joining and benefitting from the scheme.

The total number of beneficiaries has crossed one crore. There are 10,06,332 groups with a total membership of 1,00,63,320 in the state. According to 2019 estimations, the total women population is 2.47 crore. About four lakh groups have members who are benefitting for over 10 years now. According to the norms, the group has to reveal

DAMAGES TO 372
POLES OF ENERGY
DEPARTMENT

FROM PAGE 1

The energy department suffered damages to 372 poles and the estimated value for restoration is ₹16.13 lakh.

In West Godavari, road surface was damaged on the stretch of 894 kms and the estimated value to restore it on permanent basis is ₹58,386 lakh.

In East Godavari, Yeleru canal bunds suffered breach over a stretch of three kms and three canals were damaged and the estimated loss is pegged at ₹30 lakh.

In Krishna district, road surface damaged at a stretch of 419 km and the estimated value for its restoration was ₹18,172 lakh.

Meanwhile, the Andhra Pradesh state disaster management authority has deployed five National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) teams and four State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) teams in Visakhapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari and Krishna districts for relief and rescue operations in rain-affected areas.

District collectors in affected districts were asked to keep adequate stocks of medicines, essential commodities, sanitation material like bleach, lime and phenyl in addition to keeping stocks of drinking water packets, water tankers and power generators to be used in cases of emergency.

● The AP state disaster management authority has deployed five NDRF teams and four SDRF teams in Visakhapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari and Krishna districts for relief and rescue operations in rain-affected areas.

Modi calls up CM
on flood situationDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 14

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday telephoned Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to enquire about the incessant rains and flood situation in the State.

The Chief Minister explained about the overflowing of rivers and streams due to floodwaters and measures initiated by the government to safeguard lives of the people in the flood-affected areas. He pointed out the government machinery being rushed to the affected areas, rescue operations, shifting of flood victims to relief camps and other emergency measures.

On the whole, Andhra Pradesh received 828.1 mm rainfall as against the normal rainfall of 657.0 mm as on Wednesday with a deviation of 26.0 per cent excess rainfall. Ten dis-

tricts received excess rainfall, while two Vizianagaram and Visakhapatnam received normal rainfall and Srikakulam had a deficit rainfall (-19.1 per cent).

Out of 670 mandals, 439 received excess rainfall, 189 received normal rainfall and 42 mandals received deficit rainfall, including Srikakulam 22, Vizianagaram 10, Visakhapatnam 5, East Godavari, Guntur, Prakaasam one each and Nellore 2.

The highest rainfall over the last 24 hours of 134 mm was recorded at Anasagaram of Krishna district followed by Bathupuram (Upper) 105.8 mm in Sompeta of Srikakulam, 103.5 mm in Penumantra of West Godavari, 100.5 mm in Gopalapuram of Rajam in Srikakulam district and 99.8 mm at Palacole of West Godavari district.

Naidu demands
immediate reliefMD ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 14

Telugu Desam chief N. Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday wrote a letter to Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy expressing his concern over the large-scale damage to life and property in the unprecedented heavy rains that lashed the State and triggered gales and landslides.

He urged the government to come to the immediate rescue of victims with relief measures and compensation for the massive destruction. Stating that heavy rains and gales were expected to intensify in the next four days, he wanted the State administration put on high alert and opening of call centres in every district to

attend to every SOS.

In his letter, Naidu sought ex-gratia to families of those who were killed. He suggested taking up immediate enumeration of crops that were damaged by the rains. He wanted the government to purchase food grains and a minimum support price to the aggrieved farmers.

Mr Naidu demanded urgent identification of tenant farmers who lost their crops. He further demanded that seed and fertiliser should be provided free of cost so that farmers can cultivate alternative crops. He demanded financial assistance to weavers and artisans, who had lost their livelihoods, and to fishermen to buy fishing nets and boats in place of damaged ones.

DGP EXPRESSES CONCERN OVER
OPPOSITION LEADERS TARGETING COPSPATHRI RAJASEKHAR |
DC
NELLORE, OCT. 14

Director General of Police Goutham Sawang has expressed concern over opposition parties targeting police as part of their political agenda and writing letters without ascertaining facts. He was indirectly pointing to the letter he had received from TD chief N. Chandrababu Naidu a few days back.

The DGP expressed his displeasure while he was speaking to media persons in Ongole on Wednesday after inaugurating an Integrated Command Control Centre. He pointed out that most of the allegations in letters sent to him had turned out to

be false during investigations.

Pointing out that police had acted promptly in Antardvedi incident, the top police official said they have taken action against persons spreading false rumours in social media about attacks on Hindu temples.

Mr Sawang presented the “Certificate of DGP's Commendation Disc” to 12 police officers of Nellore district and 13 police officers of Prakasam for their outstanding performance during 2019. He appreciated Prakasam district superintendent of police Siddharth Kaushal for striving hard to ensure that district police department becomes technically superior.

DWCRA funds get misused

NO REVIEWS TO TAKE STOCK OF
SHG'S FUNCTIONING IN STATE

FROM PAGE 1

According to norms, each group should inform the banker about their economic activity to get loans. However, a majority of them rather than investing in ventures for monthly income are keen on using the loan amount that comes at low rate of interest and government subsidies.

The present government assured to waive-off loans of all SHG members that is to the tune of ₹27,000 crore. The first installment was paid recently.

There are 10,06,332 SHGs covering 1,00,63,320 women in the state. Surprisingly, even groups with 10 to 15 years standing have also benefited from the scheme. There are no review meetings to

take stock of their functioning and where the money is going. ‘It is true that no government dared to check SHGs activities all these years. DWCRAs has become a vote-bank. The time is ripe to check the scheme and how the beneficiaries have grown. Even 15-year-old groups are benefitting from the scheme. But who will dare touch DWCRAs groups,’ a senior official of AP Finance Department said. Meanwhile, the state government launched two special schemes Cheyutha and Asara to promote economic activities to ensure sustainable livelihood for SHG members. The government also inked MoUs with major companies and women are coming forward to establish various units.

IN BRIEF

Cardiology unit opened in GGH

Vijayawada: A modern cardiology unit was inaugurated at the Government General Hospital in Vijayawada on Wednesday. Krishna district collector A Md Imtiaz launched the unit and said that the automated detection system will help in easy diagnosis of the disease. The cardiology unit includes 2D echo, ECG/TMT, consultation room, cath lab and cardiac care unit ward. The collector also inspected and enquired about the latest medical equipment. Mr Imtiaz said that a new super specialty block was constructed on the premises of GGH and put to use immediately to treat Covid patients. He said that Covid patients suffering from heart problems would be treated in the new cardiac unit. He said that cath lab will be of great use to patients.

S'chalam temple theft: 8 held

Visakhapatnam: The crime wing of Visakhapatnam on Wednesday arrested eight persons in connection with the theft of over brass articles weighing 500 kg from Simhachalam temple in the city. A few days ago, brass articles weighing 500 kg which were offered to the presiding deity at the Simhachalam temple were reported to be missing. The stolen articles are worth ₹1.2 lakh. The police said that they have received a complaint from AEO, Simhachalam temple, P. Rama Rao citing that one bidder had purchased 665 kg of brass articles during auction. The devotees offer brass bracelets and brass replicas of bells and oxen in the hundi and these items were recently sold at a auction. However, the bidder (contractor) left them in 41 bags on the temple premises to take them later. However, it was found that on October 9, that some unknown person stole 34 bags having articles weighing 550 kg.

Teacher booked for assaulting 20-yr-old

Tirupati: Gajulamandam police registered a case against a part-time Christian preacher for allegedly sexually assaulting a 20-year-old girl at Thukivakam village in Renigunta mandal, Chittoor district, on October 3, police said. The incident came to light on Wednesday when the human rights activists and members of AIDWA and DYFI met the victim at a hospital in Tirupati where she was undergoing treatment. They extended their support in her fight for justice. Gajulamandam SI Srinivas said the 20-year-old, hailing from Irala mandal, works at a private firm owned by one Devasahayam, who is a part-time preacher. The victim girl in her complaint alleged that Devasahayam had picked her up in his car on the Tirupati-Renigunta road on October 3 around 7 pm. He later took her to an isolated place close to a private layout near the village. The girl approached the Gajulamandam police station on Oct. 12 and lodged a complaint against her employer.

No pandals for Dasara

Srikakulam: District collector J. Niwas and SP Amit Bardar told reporters on Wednesday that no permission would be given for erecting pandals for celebration of Dasara festival due to the prevalence of Coronavirus. He said a similar ban was imposed for Ganesh festival. Permission would be given to the devotees to offer prayers in the temple on the occasion of the festival.

3 youths arrested, 15 bikes seized

Tirupati: Srikalahasti town police on Wednesday arrested three youth involved in lifting high-end bikes and recovered 15 vehicles worth ₹20 lakh. According to Tirupati SP Avula Ramesh Reddy, on a tip off, police teams, led by Srikalahasti DSP D. Nagasubbanna and CI D. Nagarjuna Reddy, conducted vehicle-checking near AP Seeds Circle on the outskirts of town Wednesday morning. At this time, the police noticed three youngsters on two bikes trying to speed away from the spot. The police, however, managed to chase and nab them. The three youngsters were identified as A. Vijaya Kumar, 19, of Nellore district, K. Sasi Kiran, 19, and P. Bhaskar, 22, of Chittoor district. On interrogation, the trio confessed that they used to steal new bikes, forge documents and sell them in the second-hand market. They had stolen 15 bikes from various areas in Tirupati, Nellore and some parts of Tamil Nadu during the last one year and police have recovered all the bikes stolen by the gang.

Good catch

People were busy fishing at the outflowing points of floodwaters at Gostani river near Mangamaaripeta in Visakhapatnam on Wednesday following incessant rain for the last two days. — P. NARASIMHA MURTHY

3,892 cases, 28 deaths registered in last 24 hrs

East Godavari district recorded a highest number of 607 cases

SAMPAT G. SAMRITANJ DC VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 14

Andhra Pradesh registered 3,892 new Covid-19 cases taking the tally to 7,67,465 and 28 deaths taking the toll to 6,319 in the last 24 hours. The state health authorities have released Covid-19 bulletin here on Wednesday reporting that out of the 69,463 samples tested, 3,892 were found infected with the virus. Out of a total of 67,72,273 samples tested so far, 7,19,477 patients have been discharged after recovery while 41,660 patients are still active with the virus. Of the total new confirmed Coronavirus cases, East Godavari has registered 607 followed by 518 in West Godavari, 458 in Krishna, 405 in Chittoor,

345 in Guntur, 332 in Kadapa, 290 in Anantapur, 219 in Nellore, 163 in Visakhapatnam, 154 in Srikakulam, 151 in Vizianagaram, 146 in Prakasam and 104 in Kurnool. East Godavari has registered 1,07,888 cumulative Covid-19 positive cases followed by 76,759 in West Godavari, 71,725 in Chittoor, 61,610 in Anantapur, 60,957 in Guntur, 58,433 in Kurnool, 57,291 in Nellore, 55,246 in Prakasam, 52,982 in Visakhapatnam, 48,858 in Kadapa, 42,086 in Srikakulam, 37,825 in Vizianagaram, 32,910 in Krishna, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries. The rate of recovery among Covid-19 patients has been good with 1,00,177

patients recovering in East Godavari followed by 71,268 in West Godavari, 65,189 in Chittoor, 59,207 in Anantapur, 56,632 in Kurnool, 55,863 in Guntur, 55,475 in Nellore, 51,178 in Prakasam, 50,450 in Visakhapatnam, 45,212 in Kadapa, 40,225 in Srikakulam, 35,963 in Vizianagaram, 29,743 in Krishna, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries. With regard to daily cases of death of Covid-19 infected patients, Chittoor, Krishna and Visakhapatnam have registered four each followed by three each in East Godavari, Guntur and Prakasam, two each in Anantapur, Srikakulam and one each in Kurnool, Vizianagaram and West Godavari. Chittoor topped among cumulative cases of

death of Covid-19 patients by registering 718 followed by 576 in East Godavari, 570 in Guntur, 543 in Prakasam, 532 in Anantapur, 507 in Krishna, 481 in Visakhapatnam, 479 in Kurnool, 476 in West Godavari, 474 in Nellore, 404 in Kadapa, 334 in Srikakulam and 225 in Vizianagaram. The state health authorities have discharged 5,050 patients after recovery from various hospitals in the last 24 hours in the state. AP has carried out Covid-19 tests on 1,26,822 samples per one million population and has registered Covid-19 positive rate at 11.33 while Maharashtra has tested 62,146 samples with positive rate at 19.89 and Telangana has tested 92,216 samples with positive rate at 5.93.

MP tells volunteers to be responsible to people

NAGESWARA RAO BALLEDA I DC KADAPA, OCT. 14

Rajampet MP P. Mithun Reddy said the village and ward secretariats should play a key role in the development of the respective areas. He, along with Deputy CM Amzath Basha, Chief Whip Srikanth Reddy and MLC Zakia Khanam, inaugurated the new building of the village secretariat at Mallur village in Chinnamandem mandal on Wednesday. The village secretariat building was constructed

at a cost of ₹40 lakh. The elected representatives inspected the quality of construction of the new building and expressed satisfaction over the works. They also spoke to the staff and enquired them about the various tasks they perform regularly. On the occasion, MP Mithun Reddy said that the village secretariats and the volunteer system, which have been set up ambitiously, should provide quality services to the people of the respective areas. Secretariat officials,

staff and volunteers should act as bridge between the people and the government, he said. Deputy CM Amzath Basha said that the Secretariat system being implemented in AP should be an ideal for other states. Government Chief Whip Srikanth Reddy said the secretariats should discharge duties with accountability and transparency. Local YSRC leaders accorded a warm welcome to their party leaders who arrived for the inauguration of the building.



A woman having food near her submerged house at Pushkar Nagar near Ferry ghat at Ibrahimpatnam due to incessant rain near Vijayawada on Wednesday. —DC

ENDOWMENTS MINISTER AIRLIFTED TO HYDERABAD

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 14

Endowments minister Velampalli Srinivas Rao was air lifted to Hyderabad on Wednesday late evening and admitted into Apollo hospitals for better Covid treatment due to recurrence of symptoms. Sources said, the minister reportedly developed reaction to medicines while

undergoing treatment that forced the minister to be shifted to Hyderabad. The minister contacted GMR group and they immediately lifted him to Hyderabad. He was undergoing treatment at Apollo hospitals and his condition is said to be stable with slight lung infection. Earlier the minister was tested Covid positive soon after returning to Vijayawada

from Tirupati Brahmotsavams. He was admitted to a private hospital for treatment. After recovering from the Corona he was back to work on October 8. But three days ago the minister felt symptoms of Covid-19 and was again admitted to a private hospital. As the road transportation was cut to Hyderabad due to damaged highways, he was airlifted.

SCR to run spl trains from Oct. 20

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 14

The South Central Railway (SCR) has decided to run several festival special trains daily between various destinations from Oct. 20 to Nov. 30. Train No. 02737 Kakinada Port - Lingampalli will depart Kakinada Port at 7.10 pm on October 20, 2020 and will arrive Lingampalli at 06.05 am the next day. In return direction, Train No. 02738 Lingampalli - Kakinada Port will depart Lingampalli at 8.30 pm on October 21 and will arrive Kakinada Port at 7.20 am the next day. Train No. 02733 Tirupati-Lingampalli will depart Tirupati at 6.25 pm and will arrive at Lingampalli at 6.55 am on the next day. In the return direction, Train No. 02734 Lingampalli-Tirupati will depart Lingampalli at 5.30 pm and will arrive Tirupati at 6 am the next day. Train No. 07255 Narasapur-Lingampalli train will depart Narasapur at 6.55 pm and will arrive at

Lingampalli at 5.50 am the next day. In return direction, Train No. 07256 Lingampalli-Narasapur will depart Lingampalli at 9.05 pm and will arrive at Narasapur at 7.45 am on the next day. The special trains will consist of AC first class, AC II tier and III tier; sleeper class and reserved second sitting class coaches. The SCR will also run four more festival special trains daily between Vijayawada-Hubli-Vijayawada and Tirupati-Amaravati-Tirupati from October 21 to November 30. Train No. 07225 Vijayawada-Hubli will depart Vijayawada at 7.45 pm on October 21 and will arrive at Hubli at 11.25 am the next day. In return direction, Train No. 07226 Hubli-Vijayawada will depart Hubli at 1.30 pm and will arrive Vijayawada at 5.15 am on the next day. Train No. 02765 Tirupati-Amaravati will depart Tirupati at 3.10 pm on Oct. 20 and will arrive at Amaravati at 2.50 pm on the next day. Train nos. 07225/07226 will run daily from Oct. 21 to Nov. 30, 2020.

SPL RITUAL TO CONTAIN PANDEMIC

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, OCT. 14

TTD EO Dr K.S. Jawahar asserted that the unique spiritual programme of S h o d a s a d i n a S u n d a r a k a n d a Parayanam has been observed with an objective to contain the spread of Covid-19 and hoped that the disease would come under control with the blessings of Lord Balaji. The TTD EO participated in the Purnahuti event heralding the conclusion of the S h o d a s a d i n a S u n d a r a k a n d a Parayanam at the Dharmagiri Veda Vignana Peetham in Tirumala on Wednesday. Dr Reddy reminded that he had served as the principal secretary of health and family welfare and strived to contain the pandemic with scientific and technical parameters.

“Now as TTD EO, I will strive through spiritual means to end Coronavirus with the blessings of Lord Venkateswara,” he asserted.

JUMBO TRAMPLES MAN TO DEATH

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, OCT. 14

A driver working on contract basis for the forest department was trampled to death by a wild elephant on Wednesday at D i g u v a k u n t h a l a Cheruvu forest beat in Yadamarri mandal under Chittoor west forest division while he was on duty. The deceased was identified as Satish Raju, 40, a native of Chittoor city. The incident took place between 6-6.30 pm when an elephant chased and crushed him to death while he was on duty along with a beat officer in the forest area. “Satish Raju and a forest beat officer were posted on job at the forest area, situated close to Parandami village on AP-TN border. They were coming down to their vehicle after the duty when an elephant suddenly appeared before them and attacked them. Before the driver could escape, the jumbo trampled him to death,” police said.

SOLVE POCSO CASES IN A MONTH: KURNOOL SP

DC CORRESPONDENT KURNOOL OCT. 14

Kurnool district SP K. Fakeerappa directed the police officials to focus on resolving atrocity cases against women on priority basis. During a video conference with his subordinates, the SP said efforts must be made to convict the accused within a month of filing POCSO cases. He said serious action would be taken if any police personnel would exhibit negligence in this matter. He directed them to complete all pending cases by expediting enquiry. The SP said that all the police, including constables, SIs, CIs and DSPs, must regularly interact with people and should work with a service motto for the protection and safety of the people. He said that cops should give importance to friendly policing and save people from disasters. He urged the police personnel to use the latest technological devices like drones, and CC cameras and check the increasing crime rate in the society. He also directed to focus on controlling burglaries and also to ensure that all the stolen property from the house owners were recovered at the earliest.



A farmer of Regulagadda village showing the damaged cotton crop due to Pulichintala project backwaters to continuous rains and inflows from Nagarjuna Sagar at Regulagadda village of Guntur district on Wednesday. The village is one of the submerged villages under Pulichintala project. — DC

TEMPLE SENIOR ASSISTANT SUSPENDED

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 14

Senior Assistant of Sri Varaha Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Devasthanam at Simhachalam Paluri Narasinga Rao was suspended for his involvement in illegal activities and an order was issued on Wednesday. Issuing the suspension orders, the Commissioner of Revenue (Endowments), P. Arjun Rao, said that it has come to his notice that Narasinga Rao has been indulging in various unlawful activities like encouraging illegal constructions, interfering in the postings, threatening the guards post-

ed on duty on the temple precincts and leaking certain confidential information. The Commissioner said that Narasinga Rao is the kingpin in the illegal levelling of the 13.4 acres of land belonging to the temple though the High Court had ordered status quo in the matter. Mr Arjun Rao said that the senior assistant has been placed under suspension as his continuation in the post will hamper not only the inquiry but also the mass encroachment of the land belonging to the temple. The Executive Officer of the temple has been asked to take necessary further action in this regard.

TWO PERSONS KILLED IN ROAD ACCIDENT

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, OCT. 14

Two persons, belonging to Prakasam district, were killed when a speeding car hit their motorcycle near Teddupadu village in Duttalur mandal of SPSR Nellore district on Wednesday afternoon. The deceased have been

identified as Vuyyala Anjaiah, 41, of Ballikurava mandal and P. Nageswar Rao, 60, of Addanki mandal. Both of them suffered severe head injuries and died on the spot. SI of Duttalur J. Kumar said they have sent the bodies to the government hospital for post-mortem after registering a case.

DASARA FESTIVITIES TO BE LOW KEY AFFAIR AT RAJARAJESWARI TEMPLE

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, OCT. 14

In view of Covid-19, Mala dharana, bhajan, circumambulations, mass puja, distribution of food and procession of the goddess have been put off during the ensuing Navaratri festival at the popular Sri Rajarajeswari shrine in Nellore. Temple EO V. Srinivasa Reddy told reporters here about the Covid-19 changes on Wednesday. The Navaratri festival is scheduled in temple from

October 17 to October 25 and a review meeting to take stock of the arrangements was held on Wednesday. Nellore rural segment in-charge Kotamreddy Sridhar Reddy and Nellore RDO Hussein Saheb took part in the meeting. The legislator appealed to the devotees to wear masks and follow physical distance norms while visiting the shrine. Assistant Commissioner of Endowments Srinivasa Rao, temple chairman Sobha Rani and others were present.

SHORT TAKES

CORONAVIRUS RECOVERIES CROSS 63L-MARK

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 14

India’s overall cases of Coronavirus reached 72.39 lakh on Wednesday after 63,509 new infections were detected in a day. The Covid-19 death toll reached 1,10,586 with the virus claiming 730 lives in the last 24 hours. India is just behind the US in terms of the highest number of cases in the world. The US has close to 81 lakh total cases till now.

The number of people who have recovered from Covid-19 has crossed 63 lakh taking the recovery rate to 87.05 per cent while for the sixth consecutive day now the active cases have remained below 9 lakh.

There are 8.27 lakh active cases of Covid-19 infection in the country which comprises 11.42 per cent of the total case-load. The case fatality rate was recorded at 1.53 per cent.

Union health ministry officials said India is registering new recoveries more than the new cases consistently in the recent days, as a result, the active cases are steadily declining and comprise only 11.42% of the total positive cases of the country. “74,632 Covid cases have recovered and discharged in the last 24 hours whereas the new confirmed cases stand at 63,509. Higher number of recoveries has aided the national Recovery Rate to further improve to 87.05%,” officials said.

BIEGUN STRESSES ON INDIA-US PARTNERSHIP

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 14

Ahead of the Indo-US 2+2 Dialogue at the Foreign and Defence ministerial level that could take place towards the end of this month before the United States Presidential elections, US Deputy Secretary of State Stephen E. Biegun—who completed a three-day visit to India on Wednesday—“underscored the importance of the US-India partnership, particularly in advancing a free and open Indo-Pacific” and also “emphasized” the importance of the four-nation Quad “toward a region protected and made prosperous in equal measure by strong and peaceful nations in the Indo-Pacific”, a veiled reference to the Chinese military threat in the region.

Interestingly, Mr. Biegun also met Bhutanese Ambassador to India Maj. Gen. Vetsop Namgyel to “reaffirm the United States’ close relationship with the people of Bhutan”. China has a territorial dispute with Bhutan too which is a decades-old close friend of India. The US official will now visit Bangladesh.

Mr. Biegun had also held an important meeting with Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla earlier on Tuesday in which they had “reviewed the entire gamut of engagements under the India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership, including political, security and defense, economic, commercial, technology and people-to-people contacts”.

SENTENCING OF DILIP RAY ON OCT. 26

AKSHAYA KUMAR
SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, OCT. 14

The CBI special court, New Delhi, on Wednesday reserved its verdict on the quantum of punishment against former union minister Dilip Ray and others who were convicted in the coal block allocation case, till October 26.

On October 6, the court had convicted Ray, two former senior officials of the union coal ministry — Pradip Kumar Banerjee and Nitya Nand Gautam — and director of Castron Technologies Ltd (CTL) Mahendra Kumar Agarwalla and Castron Mining Ltd (CML) in the case pertaining to allocation of 105.153 hectares of abandoned coal mining area in Brahmadiha coal block in Giridih district of Jharkhand to CTL in 1999.

Special Judge (CBI), Bharat Parashar held Ray guilty of offences like cheating, criminal conspiracy and breach of trust.

The CBI had framed charges against Ray and others under sections sections 120-B and 120-B/409/420 of Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Sections 13 (1) (c) and 13 (1) (d) of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988.



Former chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir and president of People's Democratic Party Mehbooba Mufti interacts with J&K National Conference president Farooq Abdullah and leader Omar Abdullah at her residence in Srinagar on Wednesday.

— PTI

Mufti, Abdullahs to put up joint front

Signatories of the ‘Gupkar Declaration’ to meet on Thursday to discuss future strategy

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR, OCT. 14

Jammu and Kashmir’s mainstream political icons and former chief ministers Farooq Abdullah, Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti have resolved to put up a joint front along with other like-minded political parties and leaders against the Centre’s “onslaught” against the erstwhile state’s unique identity, the political and economic interests of its people and for seeking restoration of the special status it enjoyed prior to August 5, 2019.

The Abdullahs on Wednesday called on People’s Democratic Party (PDP) Mufti at her official residence here to discuss briefly with her the contours of a broader alliance, the foundation of which would be the ‘Gupkar Declaration’.

‘Gupkar Declaration’ is a pledge of Kashmir’s mainstream parties which they took at a meeting held at Senior Abdullah’s residence along Srinagar’s Gupkar Road on August 4, 2019, a day before the state was stripped of its special status and split up into two Union Territories (UTs).

It had warned the Centre that abrogation and even modification of Articles 35A and 370 of the Constitution and delimitation or trifurcation of the state would be seen as an “aggression” against its people and fought back tooth and nail.

The meeting had also unanimously declared that all the parties would be united in their resolve to protect and defend identity, autonomy and special status of the J&K against all “attacks and onslaughts”.

Last month, the leaders of National Conference

(NC), PDP, Peoples National Conference, CPIM and Congress issued a joint statement here saying that they are “wholly bound” by the ‘Gupkar Declaration’ and “will unwaveringly adhere to it.”

Earlier, the NC’s political affairs committee had authorised its president Farooq Abdullah “to widen the acceptance of the ‘Gupkar Declaration’ among all the sections in Kashmir, Jammu and Ladakh”.

The signatories of the declaration are scheduled to meet at Farooq Abdullah’s residence here on Thursday afternoon to discuss their future strategy. Mufti, who could not attend the last meeting, will also participate in the deliberations, the PDP and NC sources said.

This will be the third meeting of the political parties which are part of ‘Gupkar Declaration’.

Omar Abdullah tweeted, “My father & I called on @MehboobaMufti Sahiba this afternoon to enquire about her well-being after her release from detention. She has kindly accepted Farooq Sb’s invitation to join a meeting of the Gupkar Declaration signatories tomorrow afternoon”. (sic)

Mufti retweeted Abdullah’s tweet with her comment, “It was nice of you & Farooq sahab to come home. It gave me courage listening to him. I’m sure together we all can change things for the better”.

Soon after her release from a 14-month-long detention on Tuesday night, Mufti had in an audio message put on her twitter handle sought restoration of J&K’s pre-August 5, 2019 constitutional position and resolution of the Kashmir issue.

Mufti, 61, termed August 5, 2019 as a “black day” in the history of J&K and the move taken by the central government on that day as “black” too and said it continued to cause smack her heart and soul during her incarceration.

She said all the people of Jammu and Kashmir “must have been passing through the same situation”.

She said, “None of us will ever forget the dacoity committed and dishonour shown to us on that day. Now everyone has to renew and reiterate our pledge to fight for the return of what was snatched from us undemocratically, unconstitutionally and illegally by Delhi darbar on August 5 last year”.

Seeking an urgent resolution of the Kashmir problem, for which, she said, people have rendered enormous sacrifices, she asserted though this was not an easy task ahead she was quite confident that the unwavering and determination of the people will make the journey easy.

Mufti was among hundreds of politicians and other activists taken into preventive custody ahead of abrogation of Article 370 on August 5 last year.

Many of these leaders and activists including the PDP president were subsequently formally detained under J&K’s stringent Public Safety Act (PSA).

Although most key political figures including two other former chief ministers Farooq Abdullah and Omar Abdullah were freed earlier this year, Mufti remained incarcerated even after being shifted to her home in capital Srinagar which had been declared a ‘subsidiary jail’ in April.

Art. 370: Karan Singh hits out at Farooq Abdullah

New Delhi, Oct. 14: Senior Congress leader Karan Singh on Wednesday said National Conference leader Farooq Abdullah’s remarks on restoring the special status of Jammu and Kashmir were “totally unacceptable” and could provoke “unrealistic expectations” among the people of Kashmir.

“My old friend Farooq Abdullah has made an astounding statement to the effect that Article 370 will be restored with China’s support,” Singh said.

“I can understand his rage and frustration at recent events, including the fact that he was under house arrest for a year, an emotion that large sections in the Kashmir Valley share. However, his recent articulation is totally unacceptable. It will tend to, once again, provoke totally unrealistic expectations among the people of Kashmir,” he said in a statement.

The NC has denied Abdullah said Article 370 would be restored with “China’s support”.

It asserted that Abdullah never justified China’s expansionism or its aggression during his interview to a TV channel on Sunday.

Meanwhile, Singh, the former Sadr-e-Riyasat and ex-governor of J&K, welcomed the release of former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Mehbooba

Mufti after 14 months in detention and hoped she and Abdullah will strengthen the democratic process by taking their agenda to the people once elections take place.

“That is the only way political stability can be restored in the state so that developmental activities in both the regions can gather momentum,” he said.

In a related development, the Rashtriya Bajrang Dal held a protest against National Conference president Farooq Abdullah here against his alleged statement that Article 370 would be restored with the help of China.

Amid chants of *desh ke gaddaro ko, goli maro saalo ko* (shoot the traitors), dozens of RBD activists led by their leader Rakesh Bajrangji appeared at the Residency Road here and tried to move towards the headquarters of the National Conference.

However, policemen who were posted in strength foiled their attempt and pushed them back.

“Our protest is against the National Conference president Farooq Abdullah for his recent statement that Article 370 would be restored with the help of China. Jammu belongs to nationalist people and we will not tolerate such kind of statements, Bajrangji told reporters.

BJP WARNS ABDULLAHS AFTER MEET WITH MUFTI

Jammu, Oct. 14: Jammu and Kashmir BJP chief Ravinder Raina reacted sharply to the meeting between NC president Farooq Abdullah, his son Omar Abdullah and PDP president Mehbooba Mufti on Wednesday and warned them of “serious consequences” for conspiring to “bleed Kashmir”.

“Farooq and his son Omar Abdullah met Mufti and discussed how to carry forward the Gupkar Agenda, which is the agenda of anti-national elements and an agenda of Pakistan. The people of J&K had nothing to do with this agenda,” the Jammu and Kashmir BJP chief said in a statement here this evening.

He said the people of Jammu and Kashmir have already “thrown this agenda to the dustbin”.

“They want to save themselves and hide their sins (under this agenda). They are making conspiracies and those who are behind conspiracies cannot save themselves,” he said.

Raina said the people in J&K want peace and development and upholding of the communal harmony.

“Over the past 70 years, Article 370 has done great injustice with Pakistani refugees, Gujar and Bakerwal communities, Valmiki and Gorkha communities, women and nationalists and also gave birth to terrorism and separatism in Jammu and Kashmir,” the BJP leader said, adding that the Article has become a history and can never be restored.

SHIVRAJ FLAYS KAMAL NATH FOR ‘CALLING HIM NAMES’

RABINDRA NATH
CHOUDHURY | DC
BHOPAL, OCT. 14

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Wednesday took a dig at his predecessor and Congress veteran Kamal Nath for ‘calling him names’, even as Chouhan launched no-holds-barred attack against him while campaigning for his party for the November 3 by-elections in 28 Assembly constituencies in the state.

Chouhan has accused Nath of getting personal while criticising him at his election meetings.

“I am a 5-time-MP, 5-time-MLA and 4-time-Chief Minister. Is it appropriate to call me names? Nath calls me an accomplished actor in real life”, Chouhan said.

Nath had earlier poked fun at Chouhan for kneeling down before people in his election meetings, saying that the Chief Minister was a very good actor in real life and can even beat the likes of Shah Rukh Khan and Salman Khan in acting.

He had earlier also taken a jibe at Chouhan for going on a spree of laying foundation stones for various projects ahead of the November 3 Assembly by-elections, saying “the Chief Minister carries a coconut with him wherever he goes and cracks it whenever he gets the opportunity”.

“Nath sees wrong in whatever I do. I exhort him to advise me what to do, whether to stand or sit. I will certainly accede to his suggestion”, Chouhan said.

SOUMITRA CHATTERJEE STILL CRITICAL

Kolkata, Oct. 14: The health condition of veteran actor Soumitra Chatterjee continued to be “critical” on Wednesday, though his parameters are normal, doctors attending to the thespian said.

The 85-year-old Dadasaheb Phalke awardee is in a “confusional state” but his fever has subsided, they said. “He is stable but critical. He had slept well last night. All of his parameters are normal but sodium-level is high. We are keeping a close watch on his health condition,” they said.

Intermittent non-invasive ventilator support is being provided to the veteran actor whose oxygen saturation has improved, the doctors said. He is likely to undergo another Covid-19 test during the day, they said. “Chatterjee is still in a confusional state which is progressive in nature with Covid-related encephalopathy and metabolic encephalopathy. He continues to be restless, arousable and has mild agitation and involuntary limb movements but no focal or generalised seizure event occurred,” they said.

15-year-old Dalit gangrape victim ends life in Chitrakoot

UP GOVT. URGES SC TO MONITOR CBI PROBE INTO HATHRAS GANGRAPE

PARMOD KUMAR | DC
NEW DELHI, OCT. 14

Ahead of Supreme Court hearing on Thursday on the gangrape and murder of a teenage Dalit girl in a village of Hathras, the Uttar Pradesh government on Wednesday has urged the top court to monitor CBI probe into the incident.

In an affidavit filed on Wednesday, the state gov-

ernment has urged the top court to seek a fortnightly report from the CBI.

In an affidavit filed in pursuance to the top court’s order to provide security to the victim’s family and witnesses, the state government has said the family has been given a 3-layered security and assured the court that it is committed to give full security to the family.

— PTI

Minor girl held captive for 22 days, raped by 2

AKSHAYA KUMAR
SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, OCT. 14

Odisha police on Wednesday rescued a minor girl who was allegedly held captive by two youths in an abandoned poultry farm for 22 days and raped several times by the accused.

As per sources, the victim was rescued by a team of the Bhubaneswar-Cuttack Commissionerate police from an abandoned poultry farm at Gatiroutapatna in Cuttack city, 40 km from here.

The police later handed over the victim to Childline officials.

During counseling by the Childline authorities, the 15-year-old revealed that she hailed from Tirtol area of Jagatsinghpur district. She had recently come to Cuttack and was staying with her elder sister. However, after some altercation, she was asked by her sister to return to the village.

While on her way back, she came in contact with a stranger, who took her to Badambadi on the pretext of providing a job.

The youth later took her to the poultry farm where he along with one of his associates raped her.

One of the youths allegedly recorded a video of the incident and blackmailed her and repeatedly abused her for 22 days.

On Wednesday, the police after receiving some inputs, raided the area and rescued the girl.

Based on the allegations by the girl, Childline authorities have filed a complaint at Chauhlaganj Police Station in connection with the incident.



IN BRIEF

Holocaust aid for survivors

Berlin: Germany has agreed to provide more than a half billion euros to aid Holocaust survivors struggling under the burdens of the Coronavirus pandemic, the organisation that negotiates compensation with the German government said Wednesday. The payments will be going to approximately 240,000 survivors around the world, primarily in Israel, North America, the former Soviet Union and Western Europe, over the next two years, according to the New York-based Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, also referred to as the Claims Conference. With the end of World War II now 75 years in the past, Holocaust survivors are all elderly, and because many were deprived of proper nutrition when they were young today they suffer from numerous medical issues.

Lebanon, Israel begin border talks

Naqoura (Lebanon): Lebanon and Israel began indirect talks Wednesday over their disputed maritime border, with American officials mediating the talks that both sides insist are purely technical and not a sign of any normalisation of ties. The US has been mediating the issue for about a decade, but only earlier this month was a breakthrough reached on an agreement for a framework for US-mediated talks. The development comes against the backdrop of Lebanon's spiralling economic crisis and following a wave of US sanctions that recently included two influential former Cabinet ministers allied with the militant Hezbollah group. Israel, the United States, as well as some other Western and Arab countries consider the Iran-allied Hezbollah a terrorist organisation.

Copters collide, 9 Afghan troops die

Lashkar Gah (Afghanistan): Two Afghan army helicopters collided while transporting wounded soldiers in the southern Helmand province, killing nine Afghan service members, the country's Defence Ministry and local officials said Wednesday. The two Soviet-era Mi-17 helicopters crashed due to technical problems while taking off in Nawa district, the Afghan Defence Ministry statement said. The nine dead were all Afghan crew and soldiers who had been on board the aircraft. Omer Zwak, a spokesman for Helmand's provincial governor, said the helicopters were carrying wounded soldiers when they crashed late Tuesday. He said that over the past week, Taliban fighters have launched coordinated attacks in different parts of Helmand province, which have intensified in recent days. Three local officials in Helmand province said the helicopters were deploying Afghan commandos to repel a Taliban attack in Nawa district.

CANNIBALISM: LIFE TERM FOR GUILTY MAN

Jeffersonville (US), Oct. 14: A southern Indiana man convicted of killing his ex-girlfriend and eating parts of her body was sentenced Tuesday to life in prison without parole. Joseph Oberhansley was found guilty September 18 of murder and burglary in the death of Tammy Jo Blanton. Clark Circuit Judge Vicki Carmichael sentenced Oberhansley based on a jury recommendation. The body of Blanton, 46, was found at her home the morning of September 11, 2014, badly mutilated with more than 25 sharp force injuries and multiple blunt force injuries, authorities have said. Oberhansley testified that "two Black guys" had been at the victim's home when he arrived around 4 a.m. that day and said they were responsible for Blanton's death and knocking him out. He awoke when police knocked on the door looking for the victim. Oberhansley also was sentenced to six years to be served concurrently on the burglary charge, the News and Tribune reported. Prosecutors dropped an attempt to seek the death penalty last year. Jurors were drawn from Allen County in northeastern Indiana because of the intense media coverage the case has received in the southern part of the state.

Sea of protesters in Bangkok



Pro-democracy protesters take part in an anti-government rally in Bangkok on Wednesday.

— AFP

Feel like 'Superman': Trump

President boasts about new immunity after experimental treatment

Washington, Oct. 14: US President Donald Trump has said that he felt like a "Superman" after his experimental Covid-19 treatment and boasted about his new immunity to the disease which has claimed the lives of 216,000 Americans. Trump, who tested positive for Covid-19 on October 1 and was admitted to a military hospital for three nights and four days, declared himself cured after he was treated with an experimental antibody drug cocktail.

White House doctors have now cleared him for holding election rallies. Holding his second rally since contracting coronavirus, Trump told a crowd of his supporters packed onto an airport tarmac in Johnstown, Pennsylvania that he felt like "Superman" after the treatment. Trump was briefly forced to pause his re-election campaign after he tested positive for Covid-19 and he returned to the campaign trail from the battleground State of Florida on Monday.

Addressing his supporters in Pennsylvania, another battleground state, Trump, 74, thanked the doctors that treated him. "All I know is I took something, whatever the hell it was, I felt good very quickly. I don't know what it

OVER 4 MN TESTS CONDUCTED IN CHINA'S QINGDAO

Beijing, Oct. 14: Over 4 million Coronavirus tests have been conducted in China's Qingdao city where a local virus cluster was detected over the weekend, officials said. The Coronavirus has killed 4,634 people with 85,611 confirmed infections, including 241 active cases, in China.

No additional Covid-19 cases have been reported in Qingdao as of Tuesday, following an outbreak of new cases that appeared over the weekend, officials said, adding that over 4.2 million people in the city have been tested out of its 9 million population.

— PTI

was, antibodies, antibodies. I don't know. I took it, I said I felt like Superman," Trump said. "Then I said, let me at 'em. Nah, and I could've been here four or five days ago. It's great, we have great doctors. I want to thank the doctors at Walter Reed and Johns Hopkins, and — great doctors," he said.

Trump said, that "one

Don playing with people's lives: Joe

Washington, Oct. 14: Donald Trump's handling of the Coronavirus pandemic has been "erratic" just like his presidency, his Democratic challenger Joe Biden has said, terming the US president's leadership as "chaotic and divisive" that has cost Americans far too much. The former vice president said Trump was playing games with people's lives and "the only senior Donald Trump seems to care about" is himself.

"His handling of this Coronavirus pandemic has been erratic just like his presidency. And it has prevented Florida seniors and people all across the

country from getting the relief that they need," Biden said at a campaign event in Florida on Tuesday. Florida is a battleground State which was won by Trump in the 2016 elections. According to Real Clear Politics, which tracks major opinion polls, Biden is leading the state by 3.7 percentage points. However, Trump has been attracting thousands of people to his election rallies in Florida, despite coronavirus social distancing measures in place. Biden claimed that Trump just hasn't been willing to do the work.

— PTI

great job." Boasting about his new immunity to the disease, Trump said, "And now I'm immune they tell me. I'm immune. I could come down and start kissing everybody. I'll kiss every guy — man and woman. Look at that guy how handsome he is. I'll kiss him. Not with a lot of enjoyment." — PTI

WB APPROVES \$12B TO FINANCE VIRUS VACCINES

Washington, Oct. 14: The World Bank has approved \$12 billion in financing to help developing countries buy and distribute Coronavirus vaccines, tests, and treatments, aiming to support the vaccination of up to 1 billion people. The \$12 billion "envelop" is part of a wider World Bank Group package of up to \$160 billion to help developing countries fight the Covid-19 pandemic, the bank said in a statement late Tuesday. The World Bank said its Covid-19 emergency response programmes are already reaching 111 countries.

Citizens in developing countries also need access to safe and effective Covid-19 vaccines, it said. "We are extending and expanding our fast-track approach to address the Covid emergency so that developing countries have fair and equal access to vaccines," said bank's president, David Malpass. "Access to safe and effective vaccines and strengthened delivery systems is key to alter the course of the pandemic," he said. — AP

Pompeo defends Hong Kongers

CHINA WANTS UNIPOLAR WORLD WITH ALL NATIONS TRIBUTARIES: U.S. OFFICIAL

Hong Kong, Oct. 14: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo defended the 12 Hong Kong residents who were detained by China while allegedly trying to flee to Taiwan by boat in August, saying that they had "committed no crime." "They simply believe that they are worthy of freedom and the unalienable rights due to every person," Pompeo said in virtual remarks delivered at the John S. McCain Freedom Award Ceremony on Wednesday.

"They aren't alone in that belief. America stands with them." The 12, some of whom are linked

to anti-government protests and were facing charges in Hong Kong prior to their arrest, are being held in the southern city of Shenzhen where they await prosecution. Two of them are suspected of organising an illegal border crossing, while the other 10 are suspected of entering mainland waters illegally. The group was believed to have been headed for self-governed Taiwan when they were arrested, following China's imposition of a sweeping national security law targeting political expression in semi-autonomous Hong Kong.

Taiwan is a popular choice among Hong Kong residents looking to leave the city. Relatives say that they are being held incommunicado and have not been granted access to lawyers.

US National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien said the world was slowly entering into a multipolar situation. "They want to have a P-2 instead of P-5. I don't think we're going to have a bipolar situation in the world right now," O'Brien said. — PTI

— AP

China, far left desperate for Biden win: Don

Washington, Oct. 14: China and the far left are "desperate" for Joe Biden's win as the Democratic presidential candidate will "surrender" jobs to China, President Donald Trump said as he returned to the battleground State of Pennsylvania after being treated for Covid-19. In his first political rally in Pennsylvania, which sends 20 electoral college votes, after he was tested positive for Covid-19, Trump on Tuesday hit hard at his political opponent, alleging that the former vice president is known for "surrender".

"Biden will eliminate tariffs on China. He's already said he's going to take the tariffs off China. There goes your steel industry. There goes your aluminum industry. There goes everything. Allowing them to plunder without consequence," he said, addressing thousands of his supporters in Johnstown, Pennsylvania.

"The one constant in Biden's platform is surrender. He surrenders. He surrenders, whether it's China, whether it's Cuba. How about Cuba? How about the deal they made with Cuba? How bad was that one? I ended it," he said. "That's why both China and the far left are desperate for a Biden win because he will surrender our jobs to China. China will own the US if that sleepy guy gets the position, okay," Trump said. Trump said that over the next four years, he will make America into the manufacturing superpower of the world. "And

BIDEN IS WORST CANDIDATE IN U.S. POLITICS

Washington, Oct. 14: US President Donald Trump has described his presidential challenger Joe Biden as "the single worst candidate in the history of America", referring to a few recent gaffes of the Democratic leader who is challenging him.

Republican incumbent Trump, 74, and challenger Biden, 77, are locked in a close contest for the November 3 elections. "I'm running against the single worst candidate in the history of American presidential politics and you know what that does? That puts more pressure on me. Can you imagine if you lose to a guy like this?" Trump told his supporters in the battleground state of Pennsylvania on Tuesday.

— PTI

We'll end our reliance on China once and for all. That's already happening. We'll hire more police, increased penalties for assault on law enforcement, and we will ban deadly sanctuary cities that people don't want," he said. "Unlike 'sleepy' Joe Biden, I will never abandon our nation, and I would never abandon its values. My goal is not to make friends in the DC swamp. My goal is to fight for you and fight for your family," he said. — PTI

Pak re-elected to UN rights body

PPP: MILITARY'S ECO INTERESTS BEHIND COUP

Islamabad/United Nations, Oct. 14: Pakistan along with China, Russia and Cuba won seats on the UN Human Rights Council despite strong opposition from activist groups over their abysmal human rights records. In a secret-ballot voting in the 193-member UN General Assembly on Tuesday, Pakistan secured 169 votes, Uzbekistan received 164, Nepal 150 and China 139. Saudi Arabia lost the race with just 90 votes.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo slammed the UN body for electing China, Russia and Cuba to the agency tasked with defending human rights. "The election of China, Russia, and Cuba to the UN Human Rights Council validates the US decision to withdraw from the Council in 2018 and use other venues to protect and promote universal human rights." At #UNGAThis year, we did just that," Pompeo tweeted.

"US commitment to human rights is far more than just words. We have identified and punished human rights abusers in Xinjiang, Myanmar, Iran, and elsewhere, and call for all nations to take this moment to recommit to the #UDHR," he said in another tweet.

Last week, a coalition of human rights groups from Europe, the US and Canada called on UN member states to oppose the election of China, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Cuba and Uzbekistan, saying their human

rights records make them unqualified. "The bad news: Governments just elected China to the UN Human Rights Council despite its severe repression in Xinjiang, Tibet, and Hong Kong. The good news: the number of governments voting for it declined from 180 last time to 139 now. The fear is melting." Human Rights Watch executive director Kenneth Roth tweeted after the vote. Pakistan is currently serving on the HRC since January 1, 2018.

— PTI

ORBITING | OUTPOST Astronauts trying a two-orbit, three-hr approach to Int'l Space Station

Russian-US crew launches to the space station

Moscow, Oct. 14: A trio of space travelers has launched successfully to the International Space Station, for the first time using a fast-track manoeuvre to reach the orbiting outpost in just three hours. NASA's Kate Rubins along with Sergey Ryzhikov and Sergey Kud-Sverchkov of the Russian space agency Roscosmos lifted off as scheduled Wednesday morning from the Russia-leased Baikonur space launch facility in Kazakhstan for a six-month stint on the station. For the first time, they are trying a two-orbit, three-hour approach to the orbiting space outpost. Previously it took twice as long for the crews to reach the station. They will join the station's Nasa commander, Chris Cassidy, and Roscosmos cosmonauts Anatoly Ivanishin and Ivan Vagner, who have been aboard the complex since April and are scheduled to return to Earth in a week.

Speaking during pre-launch news conference at Baikonur, Rubins emphasised that the crew spent weeks in quarantine at the Star City training facility outside Moscow and then on Baikonur to avoid any threat from the Coronavirus. "We spent two weeks at Star City and then 17 days at Baikonur in a very strict quarantine," Rubins said. "During all communications with crew members, we were wearing masks. We made PCR tests

twice and we also made three times antigen fast tests." She said she was looking forward to scientific experiments planned for the mission. "We're planning to try some really interesting things like bio-printing tissues and growing cells in space and, of course, continuing our work on sequencing DNA," Rubins said. Ryzhikov, who will be the station's skipper, said the crew will try to pinpoint the exact location of a leak

at a station's Russian section that has slowly leaked oxygen. The small leak hasn't posed any immediate danger to the crew. "We will take with us additional equipment which will allow us to detect the place of this leak more precisely," he told reporters. "We will also take with us additional improved hermetic material which will allow to fix the leak."

In November, Rubins, Ryzhikov and Kud-Sverchkov are set to greet Nasa's

SpaceX first operational Crew Dragon mission, bringing Nasa astronauts Mike Hopkins, Victor Glover and Shannon Walker, and Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency astronaut Soichi Noguchi to the space station aboard the Crew Dragon vehicle. It follows a successful Demo-2 mission earlier this year. The Crew Dragon mission was pushed back from Oct. 31 into November, and no new date has been set yet. — AP

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	40,794.74	0.42
Nifty 50	11,971.05	0.31
S&P 500*	3,488.24	-0.67
Dollar (₹)	73.30	0.08
Pound Sterling (₹)	94.55	1.10
Euro (₹)	86.08	0.43
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	51,367*631	0.00
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	43.02	0.57
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.900	-0.004
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.717	-0.010

India's public debt ratio to rise to 90%: IMF

India's public debt ratio, which remained stable at around 70 per cent of the GDP since 1991, is projected to jump by 17 percentage points to nearly 90 per cent due to higher public spending due to Covid-19, IMF said. "In our projections, the increase in public spending, in response to Covid-19, and the fall in tax revenues and economic activity, will make public debt jump...to almost 90 per cent of GDP, Vitor Gaspar, a director of IMF, said.

WPI inflation hits to 7-month high of 1.32% in Sept.



Spiralling prices of food items, especially vegetables, pushed up the wholesale inflation to a seven-month high of 1.32 per cent in Sept. and cements the likelihood that the Reserve Bank will continue with status quo on interest rates. The Wholesale Price Index-based inflation was at 0.16 per cent in Aug. The WPI-based inflation seems moving in sync with CPI -based retail inflation, which rose to 7.34 per cent in Sept.

FlexPay offers credit on UPI for salaried class

Hyderabad-based NBFC Vivifi India Finance Pvt Ltd has launched FlexPay, which offers credit on UPI. Anil Pinapala, founder and CEO of Vivifi, said FlexPay facilitates instant fund transfer between two bank accounts on a mobile platform. The 'Scan Now & Pay Later' feature of FlexPay enables the salaried class and the self-employed to use a line of credit when they do not have money available in their bank accounts.

India to have 60,000 start-ups, 100 unicorns

India is expected to have 60,000 start-ups and 100 companies with valuation of over \$1 billion by 2025, a TIE Delhi-NCR report, in association with Zinnov, said. It business recovery of start-ups is back on track after the lockdown. However, 12-15 per cent of start-ups are facing risk of survival and a similar percentage of start-ups have closed their business. There are around 38,000 active start-ups today.



Firm raises annual revenue forecast Infosys profit jumps 26.6%

VIBHUTI SHARMA BENGALURU, OCT. 14

Infosys Ltd on Wednesday raised its annual revenue growth forecast, after the Indian software services firm posted a better-than-expected quarterly profit, buoyed by growth in client demand for its digital services during the pandemic. The company revised its annual revenue forecast to between 2 per cent and 3 per cent in constant currency terms, from an earlier expectation of revenue being flat to up 2 per cent. Bengaluru-based Infosys, which provides services such as cloud, data and analytics to companies across the world, said it will also roll out salary increases and promotions across all levels effective January 1. "Infosys results today ... signifies how important it has become for enterprises to invest in IT to weather any disruptive situation—be it pandemic or an economic recession," Forrester analyst Ashutosh Sharma said. Infosys reported quarterly operating margin of 25.4 per cent, up from 21.7 per cent last year, following rivals Tata Consultancy Services that posted a 2.2 per cent rise in operating margin to 26.2 per cent while Wipro saw its margin rise to 19.2 per cent for the period. Consolidated net profit for Infosys in the September quarter climbed 26.6 per cent to Rs 4,845 crore (\$661.35 million). Analysts



TO ROLL OUT SALARY HIKES FROM JAN.

New Delhi, Oct. 14: Infosys' second-largest IT services firm Infosys on Wednesday said it will roll out salary hikes and promotions across all levels from January 1. Infosys is also giving 100 per cent variable pay, along with a special incentive for the second quarter. The firm has 2,40,208 employees as of the September quarter. "Recognising the continuing stellar commitment from our employees during these times, we are paying out variable pay for the quarter at 100 per cent. We will pay a one-time special incentive in Q3 for our junior employees," Infosys CEO and MD Salil Parekh said during a virtual briefing. The salary hike process will restart now and will be effective on January 1, 2021, he added. "We restarted promotions in the last quarter at our junior levels, and this will now be expanded to all our levels," Parekh said. Infosys had earlier said it was suspending promotions and pay hikes amid the epidemic-led slowdown in business. Infosys COO Pravin Rao said the quantum of salary hikes will be identical to those seen in previous years. —PTI

on average had expected a profit of Rs 4,519 crore, according to Refinitiv data. The company's upbeat profit this quarter comes in contrast to peers TCS and Wipro, which saw their profit drop 7.1 per cent and 3.4 per cent, respectively. Revenue for Infosys climbed to Rs 24,570 crore from Rs 22,629 crore in the quarter. This compares with analysts' estimate of Rs 24,191 crore. During the quarter, Infosys had a gross addition of 96 clients. —Reuters

Honda Amaze Spl edition for ₹7 L



MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, OCT. 14

Japanese car giant Honda has launched the special edition of its family sedan Honda Amaze to lure customers in this festive season priced between Rs 7 lakh and Rs 9.10 lakh at Delhi showroom. The Honda Amaze competes with other compact sedans like the Maruti Suzuki Dzire, Hyundai Aura, Ford Aspire and Tata Tigor in the market. The Honda Amaze special edition, costs Rs 12,000 more than the equivalent S trim. For this price you get features such as a 7-inch touchscreen infotainment system with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, unique seat covers, a sliding centre front armrest, body graphics on the doors and a special edition badge over the regular S variant.

Isuzu drives in BS6 D-Max



MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, OCT. 14

Isuzu Motors, the Japanese automaker, on Wednesday introduced the BSVI-compliant D-Max range of models priced between Rs 7.84 lakh and Rs 10.07 lakh at Mumbai showroom. While the D-Max Regular Cab range starts from Rs 7.84 lakh, the D-Max S-Cab trims are priced at Rs 9.82 lakh and Rs 10.07 lakh. A new variant D-Max Super Strong priced at Rs 8.39 lakh has also been introduced with a 1,710 kg payload.

Labour codes could come in force from April '21: Secy

New Delhi, Oct. 14: All four labour codes are likely to be implemented in one go from April 1, the beginning of the next fiscal year, labour secretary Apurva Chandra said on Wednesday. Parliament in its just concluded session passed three labour code bills: the Industrial Relations (IR) Code; the Social Security Code; and the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code (OSH). The Wage Code Bill, 2019 was passed by Parliament last year. Last month, labour minister Santosh Gangwar had said that efforts would be made to implement the all four labour codes by December this year. Talking to reporters, Chandra said, "We have started work on firming up draft rules of the recently passed three labour codes in Parliament. We are trying to notify draft rules by middle of November to seek feedback. We will give 45 days time for feedback." He further said that the four codes are likely to be implemented from April 1, with notification of firmed-up rules. Initially, draft rules under a law is notified with a stipulated time period (45 days) to receive feedback. Thereafter, these rules are finalised and implemented for bringing the law into force. —PTI

RBI lists eligible cases for loan restructuring

FC BANKING BUREAU MUMBAI, OCT. 14

- Loans that are not standard as of March 1 are excluded
- Farm credit for allied activities, viz., dairy, fishery, poultry and bee-keeping, are excluded
- Loan against property included if it's not personal loan

The central bank has clarified that loan accounts which have remained standard without any defaults as of March 1, 2020, will be eligible for restructuring under the resolution framework for Covid-19 related stress. The scheme was announced by the RBI on August 6. "Borrowers should be classified as standard, but not in default for more than 30 days with any lending institution as on March 1, 2020. The actual debt that may be considered for resolution will be outstanding as on the date of invocation," said the Reserve Bank in a clarifications issued late Tuesday. The RBI said that all the farm credit exposures of all lending institutions, including NBFCs, except for loans to allied activities, viz., dairy, fishery, animal husbandry, poultry, bee-keeping and sericulture are excluded from the scope of the 'resolution framework.'

However, loans given to farmer households would be eligible for resolution under the scheme if they do not meet any other conditions for exclusions specified by the central bank. Loans against property will also be eligible for recast if they don't fall under the personal loan category. All microfi-

nance institution/self-help group loans meeting the basic eligibility criteria, unless covered by the specific exclusions, are eligible resolution but personal loans from these categories will not be recast. Similarly investment exposures that are credit substitutes like corporate bonds and commercial papers are also eligible for resolution, the RBI said. Similarly, restructuring of under-implementation project loans involving deferment of date of commencement of operations (DCCO) are excluded from the scope of resolution framework and that such accounts will continue to be governed by the Feb. 7, 2020, and the other relevant instructions. Also, in case of multiple lenders to a single borrower whose resolution is undertaken, all lending institutions will have to enter into an intercreditor agreement.

GST: Tamil Nadu gets nod to raise ₹9,600 cr

SANGEETHA G. CHENNAI, OCT. 14

Tamil Nadu has joined the list of states that have accepted Option-1 suggested by the Centre to raise funds to meet the revenue shortfall arising from GST implementation. The Ministry of Finance on Wednesday granted permission to Tamil Nadu to raise an additional amount of Rs 9,627 crore through open market borrowings. On Tuesday, Centre had granted permission to had

issued permission to 20 states to raise Rs 68,825 crore through open market borrowings. With Tamil Nadu also joining the list, permission has been granted 21 states to mobilise Rs 78,542 crore so far. Apart from TN, Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, Sikkim, Tripura,

Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, Union territories Delhi and Jammu and Kashmir have also settled for Option-1. Punjab, West Bengal, Kerala, Chhattisgarh and Telangana are some of the states opposing the Centre's options. The borrowing permission issued to the 21 states is over and above the borrowing permission of around Rs 1.10 lakh crore to meet the revenue shortfall arising out of GST implementation.

US watchdog probes Page Inds.

SACHIN RAVIKUMAR & CHANDINI MONNAPPA BENGALURU, OCT. 14

A top apparel industry watchdog has launched an investigation into underwear maker Jockey International's Indian partner Page Industries Ltd following allegations of human rights abuses at one of its factories, the watchdog told Reuters. The investigation by US-

based Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production (Wrap) comes after Norway's \$1 trillion sovereign wealth fund dropped Page from its investment portfolio due to concerns of human rights violations at "Unit-III" - one of Page's Jockey manufacturing sites in Bengaluru. Page has denied wrongdoing and called allegations of verbal abuse and workplace intimidation

here against employees as "outrageous". It did not answer questions about the Wrap probe, but said it has evidence which "flatly disproves" the allegations. In an email, Wrap spokesman Seth Lennon said such violations could normally result in a factory losing its certification. Wrap said it makes certification decisions on a facility-by-facility basis. —Reuters

E-COMM VOLUMES GROW 31% IN SEPT. QUARTER

SANGEETHA G. CHENNAI, OCT. 14

Increased usage of digital platforms due to the pandemic has helped e-commerce industry witness an order volume growth of 31 per cent for the September 2020 quarter as compared to the same period last year. However, the growth in gross merchandise value was a tad below at 24 per cent as the average order volume declined 5 per cent in the September quarter year-on-year, according to Unicommerce, e-commerce-focused SaaS platform.



While people are ordering more online, they are ordering lesser value products. Further, the category mix also has changed, and the higher share of personal care and health & pharma categories is driving the overall order value down. Tier-III and beyond cities have showed a

growth of over 90 per cent, almost double the growth recorded in the Unicommerce' annual report released in August. Unicommerce expects this growth to taper down in the coming months when the workforce, which had gone to their hometowns, start returning to metro and tier I cities. "The pandemic has changed the dynamics of the retail ecosystem substantially. E-commerce is no longer the supporting vertical and has now taken a front seat," said Kapil Makhija, CEO Unicommerce.

KILLER | APP The iPhone 12 and iPhone 12 Pro will come out on Oct. 23 iPhone 12 models win praise for lower prices

MARK GURMAN & JERAN WIT-TENSTEIN OCT. 14

Apple Inc. unveiled its latest range of iPhones, a product line that Wall Street expects will kick off a new cycle of sales growth for the world's largest technology company. At a virtual event on Tuesday, the company showed off the iPhone 12 in black, red, blue, green and white with a 6.1-inch screen. It starts at \$799. A smaller version, the iPhone 12 mini, costs \$699. The phones use aluminum sides. There's also an iPhone 12 Pro, starting at \$999 and a iPhone 12 Pro Max that costs at least \$1,099, both with stainless steel edges. The Max has a 6.7-inch (17 cm) screen, Apple's largest ever, while the regular Pro has a 6.1-inch display. They come in blue, gold,



graphite or silver. Some analysts praised Apple's pricing strategy, especially the \$699 mini handset which may entice users with older, smaller iPhones to upgrade. "The pricing dynamics are the killer app for the phone launch," Harsh Kumar of Piper Sandler & Co. wrote in a research note. "Pricing was lower than our expectation, which is important in the current global pandemic."

Cheaper devices may help increase Apple's installed base of devices, driving further growth of more profitable services, he added. The front of the phones looks similar to last year's iPhone 11, but the edges are now flat instead of curved. They all support 5G, a new wireless standard that can transmit data as much as 10 times faster than the current 4G LTE technology. The Cupertino, California-based technology giant has generated relatively little sales growth from its marquee product in recent years as consumers hold onto their phones for longer. Quarterly revenue from this segment peaked in the first quarter of Apple's 2018 fiscal year. This year's crop of new iPhones marks the first major redesign in three years, which could prompt more upgrades and a new spurt of

growth. Investors and analysts are also bullish on sales in China, where 5G networks are more built-out than in the US. "With our estimation that 350 million of 950 million iPhones worldwide are currently in the window of an upgrade opportunity, we believe this will translate into an unprecedented upgrade cycle for Apple," Dan Ives, an analyst at Wedbush Securities, said. The handsets have a faster A14 processor and updated cameras and use sharper OLED screens, an improvement from last year's cheaper LCD screens, Apple said. The company showcased major improvements to the iPhone 12 Pro Max cameras, including with video recording and zooming in during picture taking. The iPhone 12 and iPhone 12 Pro come out on Oct. 23, while the iPhone 12 mini and iPhone 12 Pro Max arrive Nov. 13. —Bloomberg

STATES TOLD TO CUT REALTY STAMP DUTY

New Delhi, Oct. 14: Housing and urban affairs secretary Durga Shanker Mishra on Wednesday asked states to reduce stamp duty on registration of properties, as it will help reduce the overall real estate cost and boost housing sales. Addressing a Credai webinar, Mishra said the government has taken various measures in the past six years for revival of this sector such as enactment of realty law Rera. "Measures taken during the past six years and also during the lockdown have started showing results," Mishra said. The secretary noted that the property registrations in Mumbai have improved and are back to pre-Covid-19 level. He said Maharashtra has taken a good decision to reduce the stamp duty. —PTI

SHORT TAKES

Joshna enters quarters in Egypt

Cairo: India's leading squash player Joshna Chinappa, playing her first tournament in six months, has reached the quarterfinals of the CIB Egyptian Open here.

The world number 11 was pushed to the limit by 38th ranked Farida Mohamed who staged a valiant comeback after losing the first two games to level the match.

In the decider, the Indian managed to see off the Egyptian for a 11-7, 11-6, 7-11, 10-12, 11-9 win in the third round.

Joshna meets world number two Nour El Sherbini in the quarterfinals.

India's highest-ranked male player, Saurav Ghosal, lost his third round match against Egypt's Mezan Hashem 8-11, 9-11, 8-11.

It was the first event too for Ghosal since March when the COVID-19 outbreak led to a nationwide lockdown. — PTI

NZ cricket great Reid dies at 92

Auckland: New Zealand's oldest surviving Test cricketer and former captain John Reid has died here at the age of 92, the country's cricket board said on Wednesday.

Reid, regarded as one of the world's best all-rounders during his heyday in the fifties and early sixties, captained New Zealand in 34 Tests including, most notably, the country's first three victories.

"He was, and will remain, a household name in this country, having helped pave the way for everything that has come in his wake," New Zealand Cricket chief executive David White said in a statement offering his tributes.

The NZC release, however, did not specify the cause of Reid's death. Born in Auckland, and educated in Wellington, Reid played 246 first-class games and scored 16128 runs at 41.35, including 39 centuries, while taking 466 wickets at 22.60. — PTI

Another 1st round exit for Murray

Cologne, Germany: Andy Murray suffered another first-round elimination, this time at the Cologne Indoors at the hands of out-of-form veteran Fernando Verdasco.

Verdasco exploited Murray's fragile serve to win 6-4, 6-4 in a match which finished after midnight German time.

Verdasco, at 36 one of the few players older than the 33-year-old Murray in the tournament, broke Murray's serve four times once to love and three times to 15. Murray lost in the second round of the U.S. Open and in the first round of the French Open. He used wild cards for both of those Grand Slam tournaments and again in Cologne for his first loss on an indoor hard court since the 2015 tour finals.

Verdasco will take on top-seeded Alexander Zverev in the second round after the German player had a bye in the first round. — AP

Golfer Johnson tests Covid +ve

North Las Vegas: Dustin Johnson became the most prominent player to test positive for the coronavirus since golf resumed in June, forcing him to withdraw from the CJ Cup at Shadow Creek.

The PGA Tour said in a statement that Johnson notified officials he was experiencing Covid-19 symptoms and was given another test that came back positive. Johnson is the No. 1 player in the world and the reigning PGA Tour player of the year after winning the FedEx Cup for the first time. He has not played since he tied for sixth at the U.S. Open last month. "Obviously, I am very disappointed," Johnson said. "I was really looking forward to competing this week, but will do everything I can to return as quickly as possible. I have already had a few calls with the tour's medical team and appreciate all the support and guidance they have given me."

— AP

Live on TV

CRICKET

IPL: Royal Challengers Bangalore vs Kings XI Punjab from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

BADMINTON

Denmark Open: Matches from 5.30 pm on Star Sports 2 HD, 3

TENNIS

St Petersburg Open: Matches from 3.30 pm on Sony Six, HD

DELHI DELIGHT

Capitals beat Royals by 13 runs to regain top spot

Dubai, Oct. 14: Delhi Capitals beat Rajasthan Royals by 13 runs in an Indian Premier League game on Wednesday.

Batting first, Shikhar Dhawan (57 off 33 balls) and skipper Shreyas Iyer (53 off 43 balls) scored half-centuries but Delhi lost momentum towards the end to be restricted to 161 for seven.

Jofra Archer (3/19) and Jaydev Unadkat (2/19) were impressive with ball for Rajasthan.

In reply, Rajasthan Royals scored 148 for 8 in 20 overs with debutant Tushar Deshpande taking 2 for 37. Ben Stokes too scored with 41 off 35 balls for the Royals.

Earlier, Dhawan and Iyer hit stroke-filled half-centuries but Delhi Capitals lost momentum towards the end to be restricted to 161 for seven.

Earlier, DC had a disastrous start to their innings after opting to bat as they lost Prithvi Shaw off the first ball of the match with a gem of a delivery from Archer that jagged back in after pitching and crashed into the middle stump after getting an inside edge.

To make matters worse for DC, Ajinkya Rahane was holed out to Robin Uthappa off Archer at mid-on an over later.

But then skipper Iyer (53 off 43) joined hands with Dhawan (57 off 33) and the duo initially played cautiously before opening up

● **Shikhar Dhawan (57 off 33 balls) and skipper Shreyas Iyer (53 off 43 balls) scored half-centuries to take Delhi to 161/7. In reply, the Royals could manage just 148 for 8.**

to take DC forward.

They shared 85 runs for the third wicket off 55 balls to keep DC's momentum going after the early jolts. Dhawan looked in great nick from the onset, often finding the boundary with his trademark pulls and shots square off the off side.

In the process he scored his 39th fifty in the IPL off just 30 balls but soon after reaching the feat he departed while trying to force the pacer, caught at short third man by Kartik Tyagi off leg-spinner Shreyas Gopal.

His runs came off 33 balls which had six boundaries and two hits over the fence. After Dhawan's dismissal, Iyer took the onus on himself and upped the ante with some lusty hits and in the process got to his fifty off 40 balls in the 15th over bowled by Jaydev Unadkat, that yielded 17 runs, including two sixes.

But soon after, Iyer departed, caught by Archer at long-off off Kartik Tyagi as he went for another big hit. — PTI



Ravichandran Ashwin (left) of Delhi Capitals celebrates the wicket of Rajasthan Royals captain Steve Smith in an Indian Premier League match at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium on Wednesday. — BCCI

SCORECARD

Delhi Capitals: P. Shaw b Archer 0, S. Dhawan c Tyagi b Gopal 57, A. Rahane c Uthappa b Archer 2, S. Iyer c Archer b Tyagi 53, M. Stoinis c Tewatia b Archer 18, A. Carey c Archer b Unadkat 14, A. Patel c Tyagi b Unadkat 7, R. Ashwin (not out) 0. **Extras:** (lb-2, w-6, nb-2) 10. **Total (for 7 wks, in 20 overs) 161.**

Forw: 1-0, 2-10, 3-95, 4-132, 5-153, 6-157, 7-161

Bowling: Archer 4-0-19-3, Unadkat 3-0-32-2, Tyagi 4-0-30-1, Stokes 2-0-24-0, Gopal 4-0-31-1, Tewatia 3-0-23-0.

Rajasthan Royals: B. Stokes c sub (Lalit Yadav) b Deshpande 41, J. Buttler b Nortje 22, S. Smith c & b Ashwin 1, S. Samson b Patel 25, R. Uthappa b Nortje 32, R. Parag run out (Patel) 1, R. Tewatia (not out) 14, J. Archer c Rahane b Rabada 1, S. Gopal c sub (Lalit Yadav) b Deshpande. **Extras:** (b-1, nb-1, w-3) 5. **Total (for 8 wks, in 20 overs) 148.**

Forw: 1-37, 2-40, 3-86, 4-97, 5-110, 6-135, 7-138, 8-148.

Bowling: K. Rabada 4-0-28-1, T. Deshpande 4-0-37-2, A. Nortje 4-0-33-2, R. Ashwin 4-0-17-1, A. Patel 4-0-32-1.

IPL POINTS TABLE

Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
Delhi Capitals	8	6	2	0	12	+0.990
Mumbai Indians	7	5	2	0	10	+1.327
Royal Challengers Bangalore	7	5	2	0	10	-0.116
Kolkata Knight Riders	7	4	3	0	8	-0.577
Sunrisers Hyderabad	8	3	5	0	6	+0.009
Chennai Super Kings	8	3	5	0	6	-0.390
Rajasthan Royals	8	3	5	0	6	-0.844
Kings XI Punjab	7	1	6	0	2	-0.381

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

IT WAS CLOSE TO PERFECT GAME FOR US: DHONI

Dubai, Oct. 14: Relieved and ecstatic in equal measure, Chennai Super Kings skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni lauded his team's "close to perfect" show in the triumph over Sunrisers Hyderabad on Tuesday that infused fresh life into its faltering IPL campaign.

"Ultimately what really matters is you getting two points. Today I felt we did a very good job even in batting," said Dhoni after the match.

Before Tuesday's game, Dhoni had likened his side to a sinking ship with too many holes to plug, listing batting as the main worry.

"There was some purpose with the bat and the batsmen assessed the situation very well.

"The fast bowlers did the job, the spinners came into play and it was one game that was as close to being perfect." — PTI

Gayle set for IPL 2020 debut

Sharjah, Oct. 14: Kings XI Punjab will be hoping that Chris Gayle fires on his much-awaited return and they, for once, put up a complete performance in their must-win game against a high-flying Royal Challengers Bangalore here on Thursday.

The inability to produce an all-round show and close out games they should have won has led to KXIP losing six out of their seven matches.

But KXIP can take confidence from the fact their only win in the tournament has come against RCB, who look a much more potent squad since their last meeting on September 24.

Though the Sharjah wicket has been slowing gradually, the smaller ground dimensions are ideal for someone like Gayle to go on a six-hitting spree.

However, it certainly won't be easy for the 41-



NUMBERS GAME

HEAD TO HEAD	FOR THE RECORD
OVERALL: ● Matches: 25. ● Punjab: 13. ● Bangalore: 12	● Lokesh Rahul's unbeaten 132 in the first meeting against Royal Challengers Bangalore in Dubai was the highest ever individual score in the IPL.
MEETING IN 2019	● Virat Kohli, who hits 494 fours in 176 innings of 184 matches, needs six fours to become only the second batsman to hit 500 or more fours in the IPL.
● Royal Challengers Bangalore beat Kings XI Punjab by 8 wickets in Mohali	— S. PERVEZ KAISER
● Bangalore beat Punjab by 17 runs in Bangalore	
MEETING IN 2020	
● KXIP beat RCB by 97 runs in Dubai.	

year-old to get going from ball one, having not played earlier in the competition.

He would have played the last two games but could not due to food poisoning. Having recovered fully, it will be interesting to see who he replaces in the side.

Benching a yet to fire Glenn Maxwell is one option or the team can bring Gayle at the expense of an overseas bowler and replace him with the available Indian talent.

KXIP are languishing at the bottom of the table despite having the top-two leading run-getters of the tournament in skipper K.L. Rahul (387 at strike rate of 134.84) and his opening partner Mayank Agarwal (337 at 48.14).

They run into a RCB squad which has grown in confidence by leaps and bounds since their last meeting. — PTI

DENMARK OPEN | BADMINTON

Srikanth sails into Round 2

Odense (Denmark), Oct. 14: Indian ace Kidambi Srikanth on Wednesday outclassed England's Toby Pentty in straight games to enter the Denmark Open second round here and likened his return to international badminton after a coronavirus-forced hiatus to "an adventure".

The former world number one, who had claimed four Super Series titles in 2017, beat Toby 21-12, 21-18 in 37 minutes, as the sport finally got going after a seven-month-long break.

"I started off well, but he was good in the second game. I'm playing after a long time. It's like an adventure. This situation is something new. I've never been away for this long, and I'm happy with the way it went," he told Badminton World Federation.

The fifth seed will face either fellow Indian Subhankar Dey or Canada's Jason Anthony Ho-Shue in the next round.

"The last time I played was at the All England where I lost in the first round, so I've not had much of match practice. But I think I'm slowly getting back.

"It will definitely take some time, as there are no tournaments after this one. There will be a pause in the

● **The former world number one, who had claimed four Super Series titles in 2017, beat Toby 21-12, 21-18 in 37 minutes.**

season, so it might take time to get used to the match feeling."

Srikanth spent the early part of the lockdown at his home town, where he was unable to train at his normal level. It was an opportunity for him to reflect on life outside badminton.

"I was trying to enjoy whatever came my way. You couldn't go out, do anything, so you had to say at home. People started to like what they have. That's something very important.

"After the All England I went back to my home town (Guntur), and was there for four months. I returned to Hyderabad in the first week of August, so I trained for that month thinking of the Thomas Cup," he said.

"I wasn't able to train at top intensity at all. At my place, there aren't many facilities, so I couldn't train at the highest level. But when I came back to Hyderabad I had to take time to get back to my past intensity." — PTI



JAPAN SWIM CHAMP SETO SUSPENDED FOR AFFAIR

Tokyo, Oct. 14: Japan's top Olympic swimmer Daiya Seto has been barred from competitions and official training until the end of the year as punishment for an affair exposed by a tabloid.

The star athlete was caught on camera in September by a gossip magazine, which chronicled the married 26-year-old's movements as he picked up his girlfriend, took her to a "love hotel", then went to pick up his daughter from nursery.

Seto apologised for his "irresponsible behaviour" in a statement on Tuesday, saying he accepted the sanctions from the Japan Swimming Federation, which include events at home and abroad.

It means that Seto — the

reigning world champion in the 200m and 400m individual medley — will miss a national competition in December.

But he will still be allowed to take part in the Games next summer and can also practise in private, the swimming federation said.

Seto will also have to complete the Japan Olympic Committee's "integrity education" programme among other courses, according to his management. "I intend to sincerely give my full attention to swimming... So that I may regain the trust of my family, whom I hurt deeply with my irresponsible behaviour, and regain the acceptance of my family as well as all of you as a swimmer," Seto said. — AFP

Pressure on Loew as Germany hold Swiss

Cologne (Germany), Oct. 14: Joachim Loew's 14-year reign as Germany head coach is under pressure after his side's run of poor results continued on Tuesday as they had to come from two goals down to limp to a 3-3 draw against Switzerland in the Nations League.

Germany have drawn four of their last five games — surrendering the lead on three occasions — to leave them second in their Nations League group behind Spain.

They squeezed past Ukraine 2-1 in Kiev on Saturday and after a 3-3 friendly home draw

against Turkey last Wednesday, Loew's side were once again guilty of poor defending.

SPAIN GO DOWN IN UKRAINE

Substitute Viktor Tsygankov's strike gave Ukraine a surprise 1-0 win over Spain in their Nations League clash in Kiev.

The 22-year-old Dynamo Kiev player had not long been thrown into the fray by coach Andriy Shevchenko when he latched onto Andriy Yarmolenko's superb through ball and fired past an exposed David de Gea in the 76th minute. — AFP

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