


# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA  
ANANTAPUR | TUESDAY | 27 OCTOBER 2020

WEATHER



Max: 34.0°C

Min: 19°C

RH: 79%

Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Cloudy sky.

Misty morning. Max/Min temp. 34/19 °C

COVID-19

COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+81,645)	(+956)
79,44,128	1,19,491

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+ 582)

(+4)

TS: 2,31,834	1,311
(+1,901)	(+19)
AP: 8,08,924	6,606

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

4,36,10,580

DEATHS

11,62,355

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES

213

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana  
Tithi: Nija Ashwayuja Shuddha Ekadasi till 10.47 am  
Star: Satabhisham till 6.36 am  
Varjyam: 1.41 pm to 3.27 pm  
Durmuhurtam: 8.33 am to 9.19 am; 10.44 pm to 11.34 pm  
Rahukalam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm

HURI CALENDAR

Rabbi-ul Awwal 9, 1442 AH

PRAYERS

Fajar: 5.31 am  
Zohar: 12.26 pm  
Asar: 4.28 pm  
Maghrib: 6.05 pm  
Isha: 7.21 pm

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.08 AM  
SUNSET TODAY 6.25 PM  
MOONSET 12.38 AM  
MOONRISE 11.40 AM

COUNTER POINT



Don't buy... our candidates are distributing masks and sanitisers free!

SHORT TAKES

Maoists kill Home Guard

**Khammam:** Maoists killed a Home Guard after branding him a police informer on Sunday. His body was abandoned at Chennapuram crossroads in Charla mandal. The victim was identified as Nayakalapu Eswar, a native of Mallampalli, Mulugu district. Police said he was taken away by the Maoists and beaten to death.

TN agri minister critically ill

**Chennai:** Tamil Nadu agriculture minister R. Doraikkannu, admitted for COVID-19 and on life support, is critically ill, a hospital treating him said here on Monday. The 72-year-old minister, being treated for "severe COVID-19 pneumonia and its complications, continues to be critically ill," Kauvery Hospital said. "He is on maximal life support and his response to the treatment over the next 24 hours will determine the prognosis (likely developments vis-a-vis the illness)," he said. Doraikkannu was admitted to the hospital on October 13 after he tested Covid positive.

INSIDE

STATE... PAGE 2

AP to press for meet on Polavaram costs



**NATION | 4**  
**Covid caution goes for a toss**



**WORLD | 5**  
**Trump walks away from TV interview**

**SPORTS | 8**  
**CSK first team to be eliminated from IPL**



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Vol. 22 No. 48 Established 1938 | 16 PAGES | ₹6.00

## CBI spl court sentences ex-coal minister to jail

**AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, OCT. 26**

The CBI special court of Investigation in Delhi on Monday sentenced former Union coal minister Dilip Ray and two other senior ex-officials to three year prison term in the 1999 coal block allocation scam.

Special Judge Bharat Prashar also imposed a fine of ₹10 lakh on each convicted individual.

Moments after the three were awarded the three-year jail term, the court granted bail to all of them on a bond of ₹1 lakh each. The three were also given time till November 25 to appeal in the high court.

Mr Ray was minister of state (coal) in the Atal



Dilip Ray

Behari Vajpayee government. The CBI had sought life imprisonment for the convicts.

The convicts prayed to the court to be lenient due to their old age. On October 6, the court had convicted Mr Ray, two former senior officials of the Union coal ministry — Pradip Kumar Banerjee

● **MOMENTS AFTER** the three were awarded three-year jail term, the court granted bail to all of them on a bond of ₹1 lakh each. The three were also given time till November 25 to appeal in the high court.

● **RAY WAS** minister of state for coal in the Atal Behari Vajpayee Cabinet

and Nitya Nand Gautam — over the allocation of 105.153 hectares of abandoned coal mining area in Jharkhand to Castron Technologies Ltd (CTL) in 1999.

Special judge (CBI) Bharat Parashar had held Mr Ray guilty of cheating, criminal conspiracy and breach of trust.



Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy inaugurates Jagananna YSR Badugu Vikasam at the camp office on Monday.

## Jagan launches sops for SC/STs to set up industry

**SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 26**

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Monday launched 'Jagananna YSR Badugu Vikasam' as part of special industrial policy 2020-23, that will benefit industrialists from SC and ST communities.

Speaking on the occasion, he said that the new scheme was launched during the auspicious Dasara festival hoping that the people from SC and ST communities will become big industrialists in course of time.

The Chief Minister announced a series of incentives under the scheme. They include

incentive of up to ₹1 crore; compulsory allotment of land in spaces belonging to APIIC to the tune of 16.2% to SCs and six per cent to STs to help them set up industrial units; waiver of stamp duty and concession in power charges; patent registration fee and quality certification. He said that they will set up facilitation cells apart from providing training in skill development.

Referring to YSR Congress government's initiative of 'Navaratnalu' programme, he felt that all sections of people, including SCs, STs, minorities and the poorer lot from upper castes should reap the benefits of such a wel-

fare programme. It was designed in such a way that they could sustain on their own. He said that they were implementing Amma Vodi, Rytu Bharosa, Arogyasri, distribution of enhanced amount in pensions and to distribute pattas to 30 lakh houses sites to be registered in the name of women beneficiaries.

On newly introduced gram/ward volunteers and also establishment of secretariat at village/ward level, he said that nearly 82% of such jobs had gone to SC, ST, BC and minority communities and added that the total fee reimbursement was helping parents from falling into a debt trap.

## India, US sharpen focus on China ahead of 2+2

**Jaishankar, Pompeo discuss 'stability, security' in Asia**

**SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC NEW DELHI, OCT. 26**

India and the US on Monday evening discussed "shared concerns and interests, including stability and security in Asia" at what officials said was a "warm and productive meeting" ahead of the 2+2 Dialogue between the two countries on Tuesday in New Delhi at the foreign and defence ministerial level that is expected to focus on Chinese military aggression behaviour in the region.

US secretary of state Michael R. Pompeo and US secretary of defense Mark T. Esper reached New Delhi during the day. External affairs minister S. Jaishankar met with Mr Pompeo where he "shared concerns on stability and security" in Asia as well as the menace of the "completely unacceptable" cross-border terrorism from Pakistan and the Afghan peace process. Jaishankar described the meeting as productive.

Pompeo and Jaishankar welcomed the third US-India 2+2 ministerial dialogue in just over two years as a symbol of the strong partnership between India and the US.

"From addressing the shared challenges of Covid and responding to regional security issues, to collaborating on vaccine development and economic prosperity, the duo agreed that the US-India Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership is critical to the security and prosperity of both countries, the Indo-Pacific region, and the world," said Cale Brown, principal deputy spokesperson, for the US department of state. The 2+2 talks are expected to focus prominently on Indo-US strategic and defence cooperation.



Defence minister Rajnath Singh receives US Secretary of Defence Mark Esper as he arrives at South Block in New Delhi on Monday.

— PTI

## India to get American tech for precise missile strikes

**PAWAN BALI NEW DELHI, OCT. 26**

In what will help the military to launch precise missile or drone strikes during any confrontation, defence ministry confirmed that Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) for geo-spatial cooperation will be signed by India and US during two-plus-two dialogue on Tuesday

between the foreign and defence ministers of the two countries.

BECA will allow sharing of military grade geo-spatial data in real time between India and US which will be helpful to navigate missiles or drones to precisely hit their targets. BECA is one of four basic agreements which US signs with its close strategic and defence allies. US and

India have already signed three other foundation agreements which are General Security Of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA), Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) and Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA).

LEMOA allows logistics sharing between India and US military.

## India will drive energy demand: PM

**New Delhi, Oct. 26:** With the pandemic pummelling global demand, India will drive the energy consumption in the world, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Monday as he pitched for global oil and gas suppliers to adopt responsible pricing and move towards transparent and flexible markets.

Speaking at the 4th India Energy Forum by CERAAWeek, he showcased his government's reforms

in oil and gas exploration licensing policy and natural gas marketing as well as unveiled an ambitious plan to almost double refining capacity.

This while sticking to India's commitment to reduce carbon footprint, he said, adding the nation was on track to meet its target of generating 175 gigawatts of electricity from renewable energy sources such as solar and wind by 2022.

"The theme (of the conference) this year is relevant. It is - 'India's Energy Future in a world of change'. I can assure you India is full of energy. India's energy future is bright and secure," he said. "India's energy will energise the world."

The Prime Minister said 2020 has been a challenging year for the energy sector globally, with demand falling by almost one-third. Also, there were

bouts of price instability and investment decisions were impacted. "Leading global bodies project that there will be a contraction in global energy demand over the next few years also. But, these agencies project India to emerge as a leading energy consumer. India is set to nearly double its energy consumption over the long term," he said. India consumes 5 million barrels of oil equivalent daily. — PTI

### GLITCH IN SERVER HITS PROPERTY REGISTRATIONS

**SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 26**

A technical glitch in the main server caused huge losses to the state exchequer as registration of properties was getting unduly delayed for the past 10 to 15 days in the registration department.

Though a property document is supposed to be registered in an hour or so at the sub-registrar office, it is now taking several days. The technical glitch has remained unresolved.

People who visit sub-registrar offices for registration of properties in several parts in the state were a disappointed lot with the inordinate delay.

■ **Page 2: MLA appeals for quick resolution**

**FLOATING | ENERGY**

**Nedcap proposal on 1,206-acre Brahamsagar**

## Solar panels on reservoir

**NAGESWARA RAO BALLEDA | DC KADAPA, OCT. 26:**

Nedcap, the Non-conventional Energy Development Corporation of Andhra Pradesh, is identifying vacant lands in Kadapa district to set up solar power generation units. It also wants to instal floating solar panels on large reservoirs and has zeroed in on Brahamsagar reservoir in the district for the purpose.

The first floating solar power plant in AP was installed on the reservoir adjoining the Mudassarlov Park in Visakhapatnam. The plant in Brahamsagar reservoir, spread over 1,206 acres, will be along the same lines. There are 12 locations across the country where floating solar panels have

been established. The work of Nedcap is on the lines of Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's vision to promote solar energy. Solar power units are coming up in Kadapa, Kurnool, Anantapur and Prakasam districts.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, Deputy Chief Minister Amjad Basha said, "The government is encouraging private organisations to generate solar power. In the past, the government sold the lands to interested organisations to set up the solar power plants at a nominal price. Now, the regulations were changed and the lands will be issued only on lease."

He said that solar power producers have to pay a lease of ₹25,000 per annum to whoever owns the lands. Since the cost of power

through thermal plants is increasing, the government is intended to promote solar and wind power generation, Basha said.

"Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy is keen on this and is promoting solar power in Kadapa, Kurnool, Anantapur, and Prakasam districts. He is looking to generate 10,000 MW of solar power in AP. Nedcap is looking after the matter regarding the solar power generation," Basha said.

Nedcap has prepared a detailed project report to generate 252 MW of solar power from the plant over rrahamsagar Reservoir and has sent it for approval. This will enable Brahamsagar to grow as a tourism place as well. Kadapa is a district where sunlight is available for most of the day and, hence, is conducive for setting up

solar plants. Apart from Brahamsagar, Nedcap has identified about 35,977 acres of land for setting up of solar power plants, 20,000 acres in Kalasapadu mandal, 4,860 acres in Chakrayapeta, 4,500 acres in Mylavaram, 3,750 acres in Kasinayana, and 2,867 acres in Brahmagarimatham mandal. Kadapa is already generating 1,500 MW of solar power through its plants in Mylavaram and Galiveedu mandals. Of the electricity generated here, 1,000 MW is already connected to the grid. It is expected that another 3,000 MW too will be connected.

AP Mineral Development Corporation Mangampeta Barites area, Yogi Vemana University, and Idupulaya IIIT operate solar power plants to meet their own needs.

**K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 26**

The Andhra Pradesh High Court on Sunday stayed the demolition drive taken up by Visakhapatnam revenue department at the Gitam campus and posted the case to November 30 for further hearing.

Counsel for GITAM deemed to be university submitted that the local authorities without serving any notice had entered the campus and demolished the compound wall. The revenue divisional officer (RDO) defended their action stating that they served notice five months ago.

Gitam counsel replied that the country was under lockdown for seven months and educational institutions were closed

● **GITAM COUNSEL** said authorities entered the campus and demolished the compound wall without issuing notice

during that period. He said that the collector has announced that the Gitam Hospital was recognised as Covid treatment centre under AP Epidemic Diseases Regulation Covid) Act 2020. Gitam hostels were also identified to use as quarantine facilities. The Gitam hospital is even now treating Covid patients, counsel told the court.

He said the sudden demolition by district officials in the presence of the police created panic among the patients. After hearing the submissions, the High Court stayed the demolition and posted the hearing to November 30.



## IN BRIEF

## Demand to allot houses to poor

**Rajahmundry:** A round-table meeting, held at the CPI office here on Monday, demanded that the state government sanction the houses under the Township And Infrastructure Development Corporation (TIDCO) to the beneficiaries. Rajahmundry Rural MLA Gorantla Buchaiach Chowdary said that the TD government built the houses under TIDCO and the YSRC government did not complete the houses and also did not give it to the beneficiaries. He alleged that the beneficiaries list has also been changed and it was grossly unfair to the beneficiaries as they paid for the houses.

## HEAVY CURBS ON TRANSPORT OF LIQUOR INTO AP

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 26

Andhra Pradesh will impose curbs on local transport of intoxicants that are manufactured outside the state unless the manufacturers pay all relevant duties, taxes and fees payable under AP Excise Act, 1968.

The state government issued GO MS No. 310 on Monday stating that no transport of any intoxicant which is manufactured or produced outside the state and on which applicable duties, taxes, fees payable under the AP Excise Act, 1968, are not paid, will be permitted unless a permit is granted by the competent authority in advance. The order said that any transport of intoxicants in contravention of the AP Excise Act, 1968, is a punishable offence under Section 34 of the said Act.

The government issued the GO keeping in mind the abuse of permission accorded to transport three bottles of liquor from other states. The GO clarifies that no intoxicant will be permitted to be transported into the state unless its manufacturer from another state pays all relevant taxes.

At present, Andhra Pradesh is finding it tough to curb transportation of liquor from Telangana State, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Odisha and Yanam. The non-duty paid liquor from these states is denting its own sources of revenue. However, the state government allows transport of two litres of duty free liquor without any permit in respect of persons travelling from outside the country.

The state government will publish the notification in an extraordinary issue of the Andhra Pradesh Gazette on Tuesday.

● Clearance only after payment of taxes under AP Excise Act.

## MLA APPEALS FOR QUICK RESOLUTION

From page 1

According to the ruling party's Yelamanchili MLA U.V.R. Raju, "My mother-in-law went to a local sub-registrar office for registration of her farm land recently. She failed to get it done on that day as she was told that the server was down. It was done the next day. Several people complained to me that they were facing difficulty in registration of their properties. I appeal to the concerned authorities to attend to the technical issue with the main server. Otherwise, we may suffer revenue loss if the problem persists."

Registration of properties has already been affected in Krishna and Guntur districts following the state government's decision to relocate administrative and judicial capitals and prevalence of Covid-19.

On October 23, the department of registration and stamps recorded revenue collection of ₹28.76 crore while from October 1 to 23, the collection stood at ₹389.55 crore. However, cumulative collection of revenue from April 1 to October 23 was ₹2,334.32 crore against ₹2,392.07 crore collected in the corresponding period last year showing a 19.29 per cent shortfall of revenue.

Adding further trouble, maintenance of systems including ensuring their connectivity to the main server for registration of properties in sub-registrar offices are also affected as software engineers appointed by a private agency in these offices are learnt to be avoiding work as they not been paid wages for the last 10 months. Sources said that the private agency has reportedly told them that the state government has been defaulting on their bills for several months.

## AP to press for meet on Polavaram costs

Centre had restricted funding for multi-purpose irrigation project

N. VAMSI SRINIVAS | DC  
HYDERABAD, OCT. 26

Andhra Pradesh will press for convening a meeting of the governing body of the Polavaram Project Authority at the earliest to resolve the dispute arising out of the Union finance ministry's decision to restrict the Centre's funding of the multipurpose Polavaram irrigation project.

The revised cost committee (RCC), with representatives from all the stakeholder agencies including the Central Water Commission and Union Ministry of Jal Shakti, put the escalated cost of the Polavaram project at ₹47,725 crore.

But, the Union finance ministry, which is part of the RCC, recently reiterated its 2016 stand that the Centre would provide only ₹29,027 crore, the cost of the project as estimated in 2013-2014.

The Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy government is of the view that it is the Centre's responsibility to complete the project whatever the cost, as it had declared Polavaram as a national project and had committed to complete it as per the AP Reorganisation Act 2014.

"It is more of a dispute between different agencies of the Centre and we, the state government, while continuing to play the role of a facilitator, will work for resolving the dispute," sources close to the Chief Minister said.

Sources also said the state government was of the view that the Jal Shakti ministry's stand with regard to bearing the cost of only the irrigation component of the Polavaram project should not be read in isolation.

Reacting to a reply furnished by the ministry to an RTI query on the project, a senior irrigation official told *Deccan Chronicle* that rehabilitation and resettlement (R&R) cost is part of the irrigation component as defined by the CWC. He dismissed reports of the Centre refusing to bear the R&R cost. Except for the power project component, the Centre has to bear the entire cost, the official added.

Inquiries also revealed that the Union finance ministry did not involve the state government and communicated to the Jal Shakti ministry on limiting the funding to 2013-2014 estimate. It sent a communiqué to the Jal Shakti ministry with a pre-condition to agree to its proposal on restricted funding to avail fresh



Polavaram project spillway works while in progress at Polavaram in West Godavari.

● **THE Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy** government is of the view that it is the Centre's responsibility to complete the project whatever the cost, as it had declared Polavaram as a national project and had committed to complete it as per the AP Reorganisation Act 2014.

## Naidu kept mum on Centre's move: Govt

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, OCT. 26

Former chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has remained silent on the Union finance ministry's proposal to limit the funding of Polavaram irrigation project for three years before his party was rooted out of power in 2019.

The finance ministry in a memo in September 2016 made it clear that the Centre would fund the irrigation component of the project, that too at the cost estimated in 2013-14. It also made it clear that the state should bear the escalated cost, if any.

The Telugu Desam government, however, did not object to the finance ministry's decision though it was fully aware that the estimated ₹29,000 crore would not be sufficient to complete the project in the event of overrun of timelines.

Leveraging the state's silence on its proposal, the Union finance ministry is now arm-twisting the state government through the Jal Shakti ministry by asking the latter to agree to the 2013-14 estimates to avail further funding.

"Mr Chandrababu Naidu grossly compromised the state's interest out of the greed to make personal gains," alleged P. Anil Kumar, minister for irrigation. "It was an undeniable mistake on his (Naidu's) part to demand that the Centre hand over construction of the project to the state govern-

instalment of about ₹2,600 crore for Polavaram.

The state government is of the view that cost overruns are bound to happen

● **LEVERAGING THE** state's silence on its proposal, the Union finance ministry is now arm-twisting the state government through the Jal Shakti ministry by asking the latter to agree to the 2013-14 estimates to avail further funding.

ment, he said adding that Naidu did it for commission from the contract companies.

The Telugu Desam supreme also remained silent when the Union Cabinet in which two of his partymen were members, passed a resolution in March 2017 accepting the Union finance ministry's proposal of restricted funding.

A high level meeting held by Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to discuss the consequences of the Union finance ministry's proposal opined that the then government should have at least kept Polavaram out of the special package that it got the Centre to announce in 2016.

The advantage of Polavaram getting national project status is that the Centre has to bear entire cost of the project including rehabilitation and resettlement, sources said adding that it is not the case with projects included in the Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme where states have to bear the cost of several components.

for infrastructure projects of large magnitude and the RCC approving the revised cost is an acknowledgement of this fact.

## POLAVARAM IS PRESENT GOVT FAILURE, SAYS TD

NAGESWARA RAO  
BALLED A DC  
KADAPA, OCT. 26

Telugu Desam politburo member, Reddeppagari Srinivasa Reddy, blamed the state government's as the only reason for the present situation of the Polavaram project.

Almost 72 per cent of the work on the project was completed during the tenure of the Telugu government, Reddy argued, attributing the current plight to the government's inability to get full funding from the central government.

Speaking to reporters on Monday at the party office in Kadapa, the district headquarters, Reddy was incensed at the attitude of the government. He said the Polavaram project would have been completed if the TD had come to power in the last election. He said if the Polavaram project is completed, it will be of immense benefit to the people of Rayalaseema.

Deeming it unfortunate that the people's representatives in the area did not care, Reddy questioned what the state government was doing if the central government was saying that the issue of compensation to Polavaram residents was not related to them. He opined that the central government had imposed a huge cut in the funds to be given and that it would be a dream to complete the Polavaram with these funds.

Calling on all Rayalaseema MPs and legislators belonging to the ruling party to resign and prepare to fight the injustice being done to the Polavaram project, Reddy said that if the Polavaram project is not completed, Rayalaseema is in danger of turning into a desert.

Alleging that the ruling party representatives have been committing land grabs and acting in a partisan manner towards the TD party leaders, Reddy said the attacks on Gitam university and Narayana educational institutions were partisan.

Kadapa parliament TD president, Mallela Lingareddy, said the government was not paying the bills for work undertaken under the national rural employment guarantee scheme during the previous government's tenure.

officials informed the CM that Dixon company had agreed to invest ₹300 crore to set up its unit at the upcoming EMC and sounded confident that the firm would enhance its investment further.

Responding to them, the Chief Minister felt the need to develop EMC in compliance with all requisite standards so that it would attract good investments and generate employment for nearly 30,000 persons.



Chairperson of Simhachalam Temple Trust Board Sanchaita Gajapati Raju carries Pattu Vastram at the temple to present them to Pydithalli Ammavaru on the eve of Sirimanotsavam, the annual feast of the temple in Vizianagaram on Monday.

## Sanchaita breaks tradition, offers silk robes to Goddess

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC  
VIZIANAGARAM, OCT. 26

Sanchaita Gajapati Raju has broken yet another long-established tradition again by offering silk robes to Pydithalli Ammavaru at Vizianagaram town where the annual Sirimanotsavam will be held on Tuesday. The scion of Vizianagaram is also the chairperson of MANSAS Trust and Simhachalam Devasthanam.

Sanchaita surprised all when she broke the 800-year-old tradition and offered silk robes to Lord Nrusimha Swamy, the sitting deity of Simhachalam temple during annual Chandananotsavam.

She visited the temple at 6 am and after presenting the silk robes she performed puja and returned home.

"For the first time I gave 1001 coconuts that were

grown on the Fort premises. I told the temple authorities to distribute the coconuts to children, who need nutritious food during this challenging time," Sanchaita told this correspondent.

She said earlier fruits and coconuts were auctioned and sold for a meagre sum of ₹25,000. Now the sale would be stopped and fruits would be given to students as part of a mid-day meal.

Meanwhile, arrangements are being made for Sirimanotsavam. The folk festival will be held probably for the first time without crowds, cultural activities and other events due to Covid-19.

Traditionally, Sirimanu Jatara, the biggest folk festival in north-coastal Andhra Pradesh, is celebrated on the first Tuesday after Dasara. The annual fest, also known as

Sirimanu Panduga, draws three to four lakh people from different parts of Andhra Pradesh and also from Odisha and Chhattisgarh.

The devotees witness the spectacle of the priest sitting on top of the 55-foot pole (sirimanu) in regal robes to be taken around the fort. As per tradition, devotees throw bananas at the priest as they believe that the priest is possessed.

The district administration on Friday held a meeting with leaders of political parties, representatives of various associations and others on the celebration considering the Covid-19 protocol that is in place.

District Collector M Hari Jawaharlal and Minister Botsa Satyanarayana decided that the festival should be a low-key affair this year.

## Vijayasai asks IMC to act against Gitam

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 26

Rajya Sabha member and senior YSRC leader V. Vijayasai Reddy has sought action against the Gitam Deemed to be University alleging that the institute's management procured crucial permissions for setting up a medical college by submitting fake documents. In a letter to Suresh Chandra Sharma, chairman of National Medical Commission, Reddy said the institution has violated various rules and regulations and sought action under Sec 19 of Indian Medical Council Act, 1956.

Gitam started Gitam Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (GIMSIR) at Yendada village in Visakhapatnam with permission from the erstwhile Medical Council of India. It is reported that there are many irregularities and violations of NMC (erstwhile MCI) regulations in the functioning of GIMSIR.

GIMSIR was given permission to run a medical college on the basis of fake documents and also without valid legal sale deed of land and free from encumbrance. A question arises whether the erstwhile MCI had verified the genuineness of the land documents at the time of giving permission, he said.

According to MCI norms, no institution

● **Rajya Sabha member V. Vijayasai Reddy** alleged that MCI did not give permission to GIMSIR for taking admissions into MBBS courses for the academic year 2017-18 having found that there was no adequate staff, laboratories and also the medical records that were produced were found to be false and fabricated.

shall be granted recognition under the regulations of the MCI unless it is in possession of required land on the date of application and the land must be free from all encumbrances, he contended.

He further alleged that MCI did not give permission to GIMSIR for taking admissions into MBBS courses for the academic year 2017-18 having found that there was no adequate staff, laboratories and also the medical records that were produced were found to be false and fabricated. Subsequently the MCI restored the permission to admit the students based on assurances.

The institution did not fulfill the assurances while irregularities and deficiencies remained unchanged. Many faculty members are shown only on record to satisfy the norms, he added.

## TD DISTORTING HC ORDER ON GITAM, SAYS AMARNATH

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 26

Anakapalle MLA Gudivada Amarnath flayed the Telugu Desam for distorting the AP High Court order with regard to Gitam deemed to be University, which he said seemed to be more interested in acquiring land than in academics.

Speaking to the media on Monday, the MLA said the High Court had directed the state government to stop the demolition of the structures on the campus, but not those in the encroached government lands, while the TD has been propagating it differently as the university belongs to a relative of Nara Lokesh and son-in-law of TD MLA and actor N. Balakrishna.

Gitam had filed a 54-page writ petition in the High Court on a holiday, to which the court gave interim directions to the state government to stay the demolition proceedings of buildings within the campus till November 30, but it didn't issue any proceedings on taking back the government lands, Amarnath said. There is no political vendetta behind taking action on the encroached lands. He said that no common man would speak in support of the university for grabbing government lands.

## Expedite Kadapa steel plant works: CM

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC  
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 26

Chief Minister, Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, directed officials to expedite the execution of the Kadapa steel plant.

At a review meeting with officials on the execution of Kadapa steel plant and also on the setting up of Kopparthi electronic manufacturing cluster, officials informed the CM that seven prominent com-

panies were showing interest in taking up the execution of the steel plant in Kadapa and said that they would select one of them considered to be the best.

They said that it would take nearly seven weeks to select the company and assured him of efforts to start execution of the project after the selection in three or four weeks.

In response, Mr Jagan Mohan Reddy instructed them to start selection of

the best firm once they receive representations for execution of the steel plant and also laid stress to take up plant work in an expeditious manner.

Explaining the need for setting up the plant, the CM opined that it would help industrialisation of the drought-hit area and also help generate employment for local youth.

While reviewing the setting up of an electronic manufacturing cluster at Kopparthi near Kadapa,

## NATURE'S | BOUNTY

Pulicat Lake, adjacent to the Bay of Bengal, is second largest bracklish water lagoon in India

## Migratory birds arrive in Pulicat, Nelapattu

PATHRI RAJASEKHAR | DC  
NELLORE, OCT. 26

Much to the delight of the people of Nellore and adjacent Chennai, a large number of migratory birds started arriving at their winter homes, Nelapattu Tank and Pulicat Lake bird sanctuaries, from the first week of the month.

Wildlife officials have been attributing the early arrival of the birds to the abundant water at Nelapattu Tank and Pulicat Lake because of copious rains during the monsoon season, unlike in previous years.

It is going to be a virtual treat for visitors to the bird sanctuaries located 90

km from Nellore in AP as well as from Chennai in Tamil Nadu, wildlife officials said.

According to officials, as many as 17,000 birds, including greater flamingos, grey pelicans, little egret, large egret, painted stork, glossy ibis, pond heron, cattle egret, Eurasian coot, Indian moor hen, little grebe or dabchick, common kingfisher, purple swamp hen, black-winged stilt and seagulls, apart from scores of other birds have arrived from various parts of India as well as faraway countries such as Siberia to breed here.

They train their younger ones to fly so that they can return to their original



Greater Flamingoes are seen at Pulicat Lake near Sullurpeta town in SPSR Nellore district.

habitat at the end of the season.

According to wildlife officers, Pulicat and Nelapattu are paradise for hundreds of bird species and convenient breeding ground for rare and endangered species of lily grey pelicans, painted storks, egrets, grey herons, little

cormorants, open billed storks, spoon bills, white ibises and night herons among scores of others.

Pulicat Lake, adjacent to the Bay of Bengal, is the second largest brackish water lagoon in India spread over Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. Rich in biodiversity and high bio-

mass of fish, prawn, crustaceans, coelenterate and plankton, it offers an ideal setting to the migratory birds and provides protection from predators.

The historical lake is a well-known feeding place for a variety of aquatic and territorial birds. About 163 varieties of species

visit the bird sanctuary during winter every year.

Rare among the winged visitors this year is the rosy pelican and darters, similar to cormorants, but their necks resemble those of snakes.

The villagers in the region treat the birds with reverence believing them to be celestial creatures and accordingly give them protection during their five month-long stay.

The sight of the magnificent flamingos as they set to flight is an experience that is overwhelming in its sheer beauty. Villagers call them parrots of the sea — samudrapu tamachilakulu.

An environmental educa-

tion centre at Nelapattu sanctuary, a museum, library and an auditorium with audiovisual equipment provides environmental education to visitors. However, the bird sanctuary at Nelapattu is yet to be opened for visitors.

DFO (Wildlife), D. Ravindranath Reddy, hinted that they would open the sanctuary to the public soon. Pointing to the data of birds camping at Nelapattu, he said they have noticed 549 nests with eggs of openbill storks, 145 nests of white ibis, 43 nests of little cormorants and 155 nests of pelicans, apart from 15 nests of spoonbills atop the trees in Nelapattu tank.



## IN BRIEF

TWO CONSTABLES  
DETAINED FOR  
COLLECTING GOLDDC CORRESPONDENT  
ANANTAPUR, OCT. 26

Two constables on check post duty at Kodikonda on the Karnataka border have been arrested for threatening a gold trader of Proddatur and collecting gold biscuits from him. The trader lodged a complaint with the Anantapur police.

Sources said that the trader from Proddatur in Kadapa district purchased gold at Bengaluru and was returning in his car towards Proddatur in Kadapa district. He also purchased liquor bottles.

When the vehicle reached the Kodikonda check post in Chilamathur mandal on the Karnataka border, two constables on duty stopped the trader's car for a routine check.

The constables noticed gold biscuits along with Karnataka liquor bottles. They destroyed the liquor bottles for not having permits. Later, they threatened to seize the gold being carried by the trader.

After negotiations, the constables took two gold biscuits and released the car.

The trader complained to the district police authorities on Monday. Sources said that police authorities after obtaining CCTV footage from the Kodikonda check post, detained the two constables.

TD SC CELL  
SLAMS STATE  
GOVERNMENTDC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, OCT. 26

TD state SC Cell president M.S. Raju alleged that attacks on Dalits increased after Jagan Mohan Reddy came to power. Speaking to the media at the TD office on Monday, he expressed concern over forcible acquisition of nearly 3,000 acres from Dalits on the pretext of allotting house sites.

He said several Dalit women attempted suicides because of the pressure to give away their land. "If the government is really serious on distributing house sites to poor, it should have purchased the lands or acquired hundreds of acres belonging to forward castes using land reforms act," Mr Raju observed.

TWO YOUTHS  
DROWN IN  
VILLAGE TANKDC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, OCT. 26

Two youths drowned in a village tank in Pathamalapuram village in Bestavaripeeta mandal of Prakasam district on Monday.

The deceased identified as Jadaboina Audinarayana, 18, and Jadaboina Ramanja-neyulu, 20, both hailing from the same village.

While Audinarayana was a tractor driver, Ramanjaneyulu was in search of a job after completing a diploma in agriculture.

Both are relatives and the mishap took place when Audinarayana, who knows swimming, was trying to save Ramanjaneyulu when he was drowning after they ventured into water for swimming.

Bestavaripeeta police fished out the bodies with the help of locals and sent them to post-mortem after registering a case.

NINE PERSONS  
ARRESTED FOR  
MURDER ATTEMPTDC CORRESPONDENT  
ELURU, OCT. 26

Eluru Two Town police arrested nine people on Monday on the charge of attempting to murder a 34-year-old man, Turupati Sanjay Dharma, a welder. The victim is an accused in case of attacking a woman.

Eluru DSP O. Dilip Kiran told the media that there were differences between Sanjay and his wife for a while now. They are living separately and Sanjay went to Rajamahendravaram to do his welding work. His wife allowed him to take their son along with Sanjay. On October 23, the wife demanded him to bring back their son to her. When Sanjay went to his wife, they were quarrelling with each other when the house owner Lanka Kumari was trying to alleviate the matter. Sanjay attacked the house owner who later lodged a complaint with the Eluru police.

Leaders under house arrest  
TD leaders planned padayatra on Handri Neeva canal worksAVINASH P.  
SUBRAMANYAM | DC  
TIRUPATI, OCT. 26Naidu condemns house  
arrest of TD leadersDC CORRESPONDENT  
TIRUPATI, OCT. 26

Telugu Desam chief N. Chandrababu Naidu expressed discontent over the house arrests of his party leaders, who planned to stage a rally from Ramakuppam to Kuppam constituency, demanding the government to complete the Handri Neeva Sujala Sravanthi works to bring water to Chittoor district.

In a video released on Monday, Mr Naidu said it was highly unfortunate that the ruling YSR Congress has been using the police department for playing pressure tactics against the opposition and suppress them from voicing their protest.

For permission, police denied permission to both parties, citing Covid-19

Condemning the house arrests, the TD supremo said that the party had tried to expose the ruling party's negligence in completing the HNSS works, which otherwise completed will quench the thirst of water-starved Kuppam constituency and other parts of the district. He demanded the speedy execution of the HNSS works. Calling the arrests of TD leaders undemocratic, he demanded the government for their immediate release and withdraw the illegal cases filed against them. He asked the state government to stop their political vengeance and start developing irrigation projects in the state to ensure assured water to the farming community.

guidelines. Police also clamped prohibitory orders under Section 144

"Kuppam and surrounding areas' farmers were demanding for the completion of HNSS. In support of their demand, our party announced a padayatra for demanding the government to speed up the works. But the police, who are acting at the behest of the ruling party, have placed our leaders under house arrest, which is undemocratic and highly objectionable," Mr Naidu said.

"The state government has failed to complete various irrigation projects in the state. They were trying to cover up their failures by resorting to pressure tactics and suppressing the public's voice, which is highly condemnable," he alleged.

of CrPc, besides increasing surveillance to prevent the possibility of the

cadres moving in groups.

Police personnel were deployed in large numbers at TD leaders' residences in the western part of the district by the morning and the leaders were not allowed to go out.

In Palamaner, former minister N. Amarnath Reddy was confined to his house, where party cadres gathered and denouncing excess police involvement.

Other TD leaders, including MLC Gounivari Srinivasulu, district party president Pulivarthi Nani, Anisha Reddy, Sreenatha Reddy, Manohar and Munirathnam were put under house arrest. Similarly, Ramakuppam mandal YSRC leader, Babu Reddy, and other ruling party leaders were also put under house arrest. In a statement, Amarnath Reddy alleged that Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy was misusing police force to prevent TD leaders from voicing their protest.

He said they will continue their fight for the cause until the government completes the project.

Srikakulam registers  
lowest cases in stateK.M.P. PATNAIK | DC  
VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 26

Srikakulam district registered only 18 Covid-19 positive cases during the last 24 hours followed by Anantapur with 21. Most of the districts registered double-digit numbers while the total cases in the state during the same period were at 1,901.

Srikakulam health officials said a total of 5,39,666 people were tested so far and the total positive cases were 43,846. During the last 24 hours, 1,091 were tested, and of them only 18 tested positive.

Around 1,283 patients are undergoing treatment at hospitals, Covid care centres and home isolation.

Anantapur registered 21 cases, Vizianagaram 58, Kurnool 63, Krishna 74,

Nellore 98, Visakhapatnam and Kadapa registered 85 each and highest number of cases were reported from West Godavari followed by East Godavari 313, Guntur 295, Chittoor 289 and Prakasam 104.

Nellore reported the lowest number of active cases with 232, followed by Vizianagaram with 406 and Kurnool 520 cases. East Godavari registered the highest number of active cases with 5,069. Anantapur reported 1,258, Chittoor 3,018, Guntur 3,614, Kadapa 1,576, Krishna 3,414, Prakasam 2,159, Srikakulam 1,133 and Visakhapatnam 2,150.

The total number of positive cases has gone up to 8,06,029 with 28,770 active cases. So far, 7,70,653 have recovered from the Covid infection.

All roads blocked  
to DevaragattuDC CORRESPONDENT  
ANANTAPUR, OCT. 26

All roads towards Devaragattu Malleswaraswamy temple in Kurnool district were blocked, and at least around 1,000 security personnel deputed at the check posts of Holagunda and Alur mandals to prevent the violent Banni festival.

Devaragattu Banni Festival, a violent cultural activity in Alur area in Kurnool district resembles a war between two villages as both the groups attack with hard sticks for the rural goddess at the temple of Malleswar Swamy. The festival takes place on Vijayadasami night during Dasara every year as a tradition for many decades. There were many instances of even deaths and injuries to a big number of participants.

Kurnool police authorities said, "This is a cultural activity that was not banned in Devaragattu, but we have been taking all measures to create awareness among the villagers not to resort violence." Further, devotees are restricted to 50 in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

At least 4,000, villagers join in the Banni Fight with sticks every year. Minister Gummaur Jayaram had interacted with the people of surrounding villages on Monday and asked not to resort violence with huge crowds. "We asked devotees of Devaragattu to participate in fewer numbers in the wake of the pandemic," he said.

No liquor was permitted a few days before the fete and in the surrounding villages.

EG collector: Take  
steps for eco tourismDC CORRESPONDENT  
KAKINADA, OCT. 26

The East Godavari district collector D. Muralidhar Reddy instructed the tourism officials to take steps for developing eco-tourism projects in the districts, especially Konaseema and Maredumilli areas. He, along with joint collectors G. Lakshminsha and G. Rajakumari, held a tourism council meeting on Monday through video conference. He said that Godavari river, forests,

philosophical places and others have a great boon to the district and the officials should tap the resources and develop the tourism projects. He suggested the revenue officials should take steps for acquiring 20 acres of land for eco-tourism projects and the tourism department should hand over the projects to the forest department, after constructions. He also suggested the tourism officials should pay attention to the development of the havelock bridge.

MINISTER PROPOSES COLD STORAGE  
FACILITY IN NELLORE FISH MARKETDC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, OCT. 26

Water resources minister Dr Anil Kumar Yadav promised to build a cold storage facility and a meeting hall at the new fish market after inaugurating the same in Nellore Sunday.

He underlined the need for a sewerage water recycling plant while pointing to the ordeals of people in the market because of the unbearable smell from the dirty water in the

market area. He said the old fish market named after former corporator late Sayyed Samdhani was modernised with an estimated cost of ₹2.80 crore.

There are facilities for sale, auction and cleaning of fish in the new building.

The minister also hinted about proposals being prepared for improving basic infrastructure at the neighbouring mutton market and the slaughterhouse.



Nara Lokesh drives a tractor on Monday.

VADREU SRINIVAS | DC  
KAKINADA, OCT. 26

A major mishap was averted on Monday when the tractor driven by TD general secretary and MLC Nara Lokesh skidded near Siddapuram village in Akiveedu mandal of West Godavari district.

Had it not been controlled by Undi MLA M. Ramaraju, who was sitting next to Lokesh, the tractor would have slid into the Salt Creek that was overflowing at the time.

There were two MLAs on the tractor and 30 Telugu Desam workers in the trolley being pulled by the tractor.

Sources said Lokesh was going around Akiveedu mandal on Monday to console farmers whose fields had got inundated. MLAs Ramaraju and Nimmala Rama Nayudu of Palakollu were sitting alongside the TD general secretary. While guiding the tractor along the path, Mr Lokesh applied brakes that led to the skid. Realising the danger, Ramaraju took the steering of the tractor and controlled it.

Later, the TD general secretary and other TD leaders abandoned the tractor and climbed on to another tractor, which again was driven by Mr Lokesh.

Addressing people at Dumpagadapa village, the TD leader lashed out at

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy saying when the Telugu Desam was in power, Jagan, as opposition leader, had demanded ₹5,000 per family and ₹25,000 per acre of compensation for flood victims. He said when TD is demanding the same

now, the Jagan government has released only ₹19 crore, with West Godavari getting only ₹1.4 crore.

Mr Lokesh said TD had completed 70 per cent of Polavaram project works, while Jagan has carried out only 2 per cent of the remaining tasks. He

recalled that during the Assembly elections, Jagan had told people that if people gave him 25 MP seats, he would bring special category status for AP from the Centre.

"What has he done when people have given him 22 MPs," he asked.

MAN STABS  
WIFE TO DEATHDC CORRESPONDENT  
KAKINADA, OCT. 26

A man stabbed his wife and she died while undergoing treatment at Government General Hospital in Vegayammamet village in Ramachandrapuram mandal of East Godavari District.

Pithani Suryanarayana sold his buffalo at ₹50,000 to another person. His wife Suryakantham objected the sale. She asked her husband why he sold the buffalo for low rate.

ONE KILLED IN  
LORRY MISHAPDC CORRESPONDENT  
KADAPA, OCT. 26

A man was killed when a lorry overturned on Monday at Guvalacheruvu Ghat near Kadapa city. Another man was trapped in the lorry's cabin with serious injuries.

The locals, who noticed this, informed the police. Along with the police, Kadapa District Assistant Fire Officer Palagiri Basivireddy rushed to the spot with his staff.

PRIME SUSPECT  
ARRESTEDDC CORRESPONDENT  
TIRUPATI, OCT. 26

Tirupati east division has busted a Ganja smuggling racket by arresting three people, including a prime suspect in a murder case for whom police issued a lookout notice, on Monday.

The police have also seized three kg of Ganja along with two motorbikes from their possession.

Tiruchanoor CI Mr M. Sudhakar Reddy disclosed this to media.

BURIAL GROUND  
WITH ₹27 CROREDC CORRESPONDENT  
TIRUPATI, OCT. 16

MLA B. Madhusudhan Reddy on Monday informed that they are going to construct one of the biggest burial grounds in the country with all modern amenities at an estimated cost of ₹27 crore on the banks of Swarnamukhi river in Srikalahasti constituency.

The legislator along participated in the groundbreaking ceremony for the burial ground here on Monday.

## GROWTH | ENGINE

Deputy CM says 62.31 TMC of water currently stored in 13 projects

## Kadapa on the path to development

NAGESWARA RAO  
BALLEDA | DC  
KADAPA, OCT 26

The in-charge minister, Adimulapu Suresh, said that Kadapa district will be taken on the path of development on the ideological lines of Chief Minister, Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy.

Claiming that the government is effectively facing the biggest Covid-19 disaster while taking all welfare schemes forward to the people, Mr Suresh complimented the services

of the medical, police and revenue departments in the district in the control of Covid-19.

Attending the district development review meeting held at the Kadapa collector's office on Monday, Mr Suresh said that Jagan is providing satisfactory welfare schemes to all sections of the people through the village secretariat system even when the state's financial situation is not good.

Deputy chief minister, S. B. Anjad Basha, lauded the district collector and

the authorities for their efforts, saying that 62.31 TMC of water was currently being stored for a maximum of 83.86 TMC in 13 projects in the district, especially in Gandikota, which currently has 17.8 TMC and 12.567 TMC in the Brahmanagar reservoir.

At the meeting, chief whip, Gadikota Srikanth Reddy, and whip, Koramutla Srinivasulu, said that if the Gandikota project, considered the heartbeat of Kadapa district, is filled with water

today, it is the result of Jagan's hard work.

MP, Y.S. Avinash Reddy, said that 244 villages in the district have been identified as over-exploiting the groundwater levels. He said that there were some obstacles in the way of laying boreholes in the villages as part of the implementation of the YSR Jalakala scheme and asked the authorities to take steps to address them. Srinivasulu said the situation is very bad in his constituency, Railwaykodur and Mydukuru and

Kamalapuram MLAs, Raghuramireddy and Ravindranath Reddy, demanded that steps be taken to remove encroachments on the irrigation tanks. They said the Nandalur irrigation tank was completely encroached upon.

District collector, Chevuri Harikiran, said that the district has received 816.9 mm of rainfall as against the normal rainfall of 494.40 mm so far this year, with a maximum rainfall of 65.20 per cent. The district has

never received such high rainfall in the last 70 years, he said.

Land acquisition work for the construction of resettlement colonies within the Gandikota reservoir is almost complete. Of this, 1100 acres of land is to be acquired. Only 20 acres are currently pending. Harikiran explained that the construction work of the resettlement colonies was also in full swing. District SP, K.K.N. Anburajan, joint collector, Midde Goutami were present.



SHORT TAKES

NADDA HITS OUT AT CONG OVER EFFIGY BURNING

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 26

Blaming Congress’ Rahul Gandhi for the burning of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s effigy in Punjab, a state which is witnessing farmers’ protests against the recently passed three legislations regarding the farm sector, BJP president J.P. Nadda on Monday claimed that the “Nehru-Gandhi dynasty has never respected the office of the PM” and its “deep personal hatred” against a person who was born in poverty and became the Prime Minister is historic.

Accusing the Congress of spreading lies against the Modi government, Mr Nadda said Mr Gandhi’s “directed drama of burning the PM’s effigy in Punjab is shameful but not unexpected.”

“Combination of despondency and shamelessness is dangerous. Congress possesses both. Empty rhetoric of decency and democracy by the mother is ‘complemented’ by live demonstrations of politics of hate, anger, lies and aggression by the son. Double standards galore,” he tweeted.

In a series of tweets, the BJP president accused the Congress of various issues while asserting that more the Congress’ lies and hate against Mr Modi increases, the more people will support the Prime Minister.

CENTRE: LAW ON STUBBLE BURNING SOON

PARMOD KUMAR | DC  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 26

The Centre on Monday informed the Supreme Court that it will soon be bringing a comprehensive legislation to deal with the recurring annual problem of stubble burning by farmers in Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh that leads to an alarming increase in air pollution in Delhi and the larger National Capital Region.

Describing the proposed move by the Centre as a “welcome step”, Chief Justice Sharad A. Bobde, heading a bench also comprising Justice A.S. Bopanna and Justice V. Ramasubramanian, put in abeyance its October 16 order setting up a one-man committee of former Supreme Court judge, Justice Madan B. Lokur, to monitor steps taken by the Punjab, Haryana and UP governments to discourage stubble burning in their states.

Appreciating the move by the government, the CJI said that this is something that the government should have acted on, without requiring a PIL, as people are choking because of pollution.

At the outset of the hearing, seeking to keep in abeyance the functioning of the Justice Lokur committee, solicitor general Tushar Mehta told the court that the Central government has proposed to bring in a comprehensive law to tackle the high level of air pollution and stubble burning.

SURRENDER BY GURUNG TRIGGERS RALLIES

**Kolkata, Oct. 26:** Days after the supreme of the undivided Gorkha Janamukti Morcha supremo Bimal Gurung surfaced in Kolkata after being in hiding for three years, Darjeeling hills witnessed rallies by his supporters and detractors welcoming him and opposing his return respectively. Gurung had made a dramatic reappearance in Kolkata on October 21, quit the BJP-led NDA and aligned with TMC asserting that the saffron party has “failed to find a permanent solution” for the Hills which had witnessed major unrest over demand for a separate state in 2017.

The Binay Tamang faction of the hill party, currently in political control of the Darjeeling hills, took out protest rallies on Saturday and Sunday claiming that Gurung’s return meant reverting to violence. Gurung will not be allowed to enter Darjeeling hills, the Tamang faction asserted.

The Tamang faction of GJM is scheduled to take out more rallies on Tuesday and Wednesday to pressurize the state government to stop Gurung’s return to the hills.

The GJM Gurung faction too took out rallies in Darjeeling in his support and demanded that he be allowed to return immediately.



BJP MP Manoj Tiwari leaves in a helicopter after an election campaign rally ahead of the Bihar Assembly polls in Kaimur district on Monday.

— PTI

Covid caution goes for a toss

People jostle to occupy vantage positions at election rallies in Bihar

**Patna/Bhagalpur/Gaya a, Oct. 26:** With the campaign for the Bihar assembly election reaching a fever pitch, the Election Commission’s warning of stern action for violation of Covid-19 protocol has gone unheeded with people gathering in huge numbers at rallies without wearing masks or caring for social distancing.

Several senior leaders including Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi, BJP incharge for Bihar polls Devendra Fadnavis, former union minister and Chakra MP Rajiv Pratap Rudy, his Gaya counterpart Vijay Manjhi, BJP national spokesman Syed Shah Nawaz Hussain and former state minister Narendra Singh have fallen victim to the contagion.

However, these have not had any salutary effect and the crowds remain unrestrained as people jostle for occupying vantage positions at election rallies.

Strict Covid-19 protocol was maintained at the rallies addressed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Dehri, Gaya and Bhagalpur, and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi’s public meetings at Hisua and Kahalgaon on Friday, but elsewhere the crowds throw caution to the wind in their unbridled enthusiasm.

The Election

Commission had on October 21 directed Bihar’s Chief Electoral Officer and district administrations to “invoke appropriate and relevant penal provisions” under the Disaster Management Act and the Indian Penal Code against candidates found violating its orders.

“Instances of such public meetings have come to notice of the Commission, where large numbers of crowds have assembled in utter violation of social distancing and the political leaders/campaigners are addressing the gathering without wearing masks in complete disregard of the guidelines/instructions issued by Election Commission,” the poll panel had said.

Candidates and organisers found violating the poll watchdog’s instructions could face cases and imprisonment up to two years under the relevant sections of the Disaster Management Act, 2005, and the IPC.

Hundreds of people are still seen attending the rallies of top leaders including Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and the grand alliance’s chief ministerial candidate Tejashwi Yadav without wearing face masks and pushing and shoving each other for space.

“When questioned why are they not wearing face masks, they come up with

● **SEVERAL SENIOR** leaders including Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi, BJP incharge for Bihar polls Devendra Fadnavis, former union minister and Chakra MP Rajiv Pratap Rudy, his Gaya counterpart Vijay Manjhi, BJP national spokesman Syed Shah Nawaz Hussain and former state minister Narendra Singh have fallen victim to the contagion.

● **HOWEVER, IT DID NOT** have any salutary effect and the crowds remain unrestrained as people jostle for occupying vantage positions at election rallies.

lame excuses like they forgot it at their home or fish out one from their pocket saying they find it difficult to put it on due to oppressive heat,” said a police officer.

Additional chief Electoral Officer Sanjay Kumar Singh said magistrates deployed at rally venues have been instructed to strictly enforce Covid-19 norms, including wearing of masks and maintaining social distancing.

“We are trying to enforce the Election Commission’s guidelines to the extent possible. If someone is

found deliberately trying to violate the social distancing norm, then a case will be lodged against them,” he said. He said several cases have been registered against those found violating the Covid-19 protocol but expressed his inability to share the exact number.

PTI reporters covering election rallies found leaders on the dais wore masks and maintained appropriate physical distance from each other, but people tumbled over one another to have a glimpse of helicopters landing at the rally grounds.

A Bhagalpur report said the dais was choc-a-bloc with people at Tejashwi Yadav’s public meeting at Sanokha on Tuesday. “Right now we have to defeat Nitish Kumar. We can defeat corona later,” said a supporter, and joined the chorus of *Tejashwi Yadav zindabad*.

Similar was the situation at the rally of Bhojpuri singer-actor and North East Delhi’s BJP lawmaker Manoj Tiwari at Sharda school compound in Kahalgaon.

BJP candidate Pawan Kumar Yadav said that many people wore masks but social distancing could not be maintained despite the circles drawn on the ground because of the heavy rush.

Nitish Kumar is addressing 4-5 rallies every day,

and the situation is more or less the same. “Corona will strike people like Lalu Prasad and his partymen who turned the state into jungle raj,” said an attendee at Kumar’s rally in Bhore in Gopalganj district.

Chaos prevailed at a grand alliance rally at SBJ High School in Madhepura’s Bihariganj where Subhashini Yadav, daughter of socialist veteran Sharad Yadav, is in the fray on a Congress ticket.

“We will get jobs if he comes to power. Can there be a bigger issue for people like us who don’t have jobs?” said a grand alliance supporter, brushing aside questions about not wearing a mask at Tejashwi Yadav’s rally in Aurangabad.

There have been some instances where organisers of such rallies have been booked for violation of the Covid-19 norms.

The Gaya district administration lodged an FIR against the organisers of a rally of BJP president J.P. Nadda on October 11 where social distancing norms were allegedly violated.

The FIR was registered on a complaint by circle officer Rajiv Ranjan. An FIR was also registered against Sadhu Yadav, the estranged brother-in-law of RJD supremo Lalu Prasad, in Gopalganj.

Another jawan in J&K ends life, 6th suicide in 3 weeks

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC  
SRINAGAR, OCT. 26

Another security forces jawan deployed in restive Jammu and Kashmir has ended his life by shooting himself with his service rifle. The officials said that a constable with D-Coy of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)’s 141 battalion, succumbed to injuries in Srinagar’s Sri Maharaja Hari Singh late Sunday night, days after he had shot himself inside its camp at nearby Shergari.

Nath is the sixth security personnel who has committed suicide in J&K during past three weeks. A constable P.G. Naidu who was a resident of Andhra Pradesh ended his life in similar way in City’s Mehjoor Nagar area earlier. Before him, Jagjit Singh, an Army soldier, committed suicide at a military camp in the central Ganderbal district and 22-year-old soldier, Rakshit Kumar, shot himself with a service rifle in the border district of Baramulla. Another Army jawan N.K. Mullia Raj of 25 Madras deployed in Naugam sector of the Line of Control committed suicide on October 11 and Amit Kumar, a constable at the 37th battalion of Sashastra Seema Bal ended his life by shooting himself with his service weapons in neighbouring Handwara area a day later.

The officials said that inhouse investigations in each case are underway and results as to why these security personnel took extreme steps would be known soon.

But these incidents already serve a grim reminder of the incidence of suicides and fratricide being on the rise among security forces on counterinsurgency or law and order assignments in J&K.

As per official statistics, hundreds of incidents of fratricide and suicide have taken places within the security forces in J&K in past over three decades. Stress is mainly believed to be the root cause of the incidence although the Army as well as paramilitary forces have initiated ‘concrete steps’ in the light of in-depth analysis of past incidents and identification of windows of prevention which, the concerned officials claim, have helped in addressing the issue greatly.

Psychologists say security forces personnel often commit suicides or target their colleagues under duress as they per-

● **PSYCHOLOGISTS ARE** of the opinion that security forces personnel often commit suicides or target their colleagues under duress.

form long-term duties in unfamiliar environments and unfavorable conditions and that the level of frustration in them increases when they are denied leave to go home.

Kashmir’s leading psychiatrist Dr. Abdul Waheed Khan told this newspaper, “Violence and bloodshed have been going on in Kashmir for many years. As a result, the security forces are more prone to trauma than the general population. When they wear bulletproof jackets before taking part in an operation or are sent out of the barracks to perform duty somewhere, they immediately feel strongly that they are about to go through a traumatic situation”.

He added, “When this situation takes the pressure on a soldier’s mind to an unbearable level, he vents his anger either on himself or on one of his comrades. It is easy for him to do so because he is already armed”.

However, officials say a number of measures have been taken to reduce the stress on soldiers and provide them with recreational opportunities, which has significantly reduced their tendency to think negatively.

CRPF Director General for North India Zulfiqar Hassan said, “We have launched a number of programmes to reduce stress in our boys and provide them with better opportunities for rest and recreation. They are now allowed to go home on vacation. We strongly hope that the situation with regard to suicide among our boys will get better in the future”.

He also claimed that the rate of fratricide and suicide among the security forces particularly the CRPF deployed in J&K was the lowest among various states in India.

Explaining recent decisions to relax strict rules for security personnel to go home on holiday, CRPF spokesman Junaid Khan said, “There is no problem for our men in their going home on holiday. In the event of a death in the family or any other emergency, a jawan or officer also gets leave which is not due. And as far as obligatory holidays are concerned, they are given on time. There has been any problem in such cases ever”.

Roadside barber tries his luck in bypolls

CHIRAG ALLEGES MAJOR SCAM IN NITISH’S ‘SAAT NISCHAY’ SCHEME

NAYEAR AZAD | DC  
PATNA, OCT. 26

LJP chief Chirag Paswan has created a flutter in Bihar politics by alleging a major scam in state government’s ‘Saat Nischay’ (seven resolves) scheme and promised to send all those who are found guilty to jail including Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar if his party is elected to power.

He also targeted the Chief Minister’s pet project liquor prohibition by calling it a breeding

ground for mafias and corruption in the state.

“How is it possible that he (Nitish Kumar) is not aware of the corruption and scam taking place in the state? There will be a probe and those who are found responsible will go to jail, no matter who the person is. I am not saying this but people in the state feel that Nitish Kumar is also involved and all these things will come out in the probe.” Paswan said.

AKSHAYA KUMAR  
SAHOO | DC  
BALASORE, OCT. 26

Amid the hustle and bustle of high-voltage campaigns by the ruling BJD, BJP and Congress in Balasore Sadar assembly constituency, a 80-year-old man — Benudhar Barik — is trying his luck for the seat, quite silently.

He has no motor vehicles, nor large band of followers and high decibel loudspeakers to make his campaign visible and impressive. His bicycle,

quite old and rusty, is his only constant companion.

Barik, a resident of Gudipada in Balasore town, ekes out his living by giving haircuts to poor people under a tree. The eldest among his six siblings, the octogenarian has been rendering his service for six decades now.

“I know I’m a mismatch to the BJD, BJP Congress candidates locking their horns in this battle. I don’t have much money to print enough banners and posters. I’m pedaling my

bicycle from village to village, making personal appeals to the voters to cast their ballot in favour of me. I promise one thing to them — uncompromising fight against corruption and irregularities and ensuring socio-economic justice to all,” said Benudhar.

Initially, Benudhar’s campaign evoked lukewarm response from voters. But as the November 3 poll date approaches, he is seen to be attracting quite a good number of people. Several Odia film industry

and opera actors, including Rani Panda, have expressed their solidarity with him.

This is not the first time Benudhar is fighting an election. Earlier, he had unsuccessfully contested in the civic body elections around a decade back.

A father of four, Benudhar has never gone to school. In his affidavit, he has mentioned that he can read and write Odia. He does not own any agricultural land nor has any savings. He has borrowed ₹10,000 for his poll deposit.

“I’m quite confident that a large number of voters will vote for me on my symbol ‘kettle’ this time. They will choose a simple and committed man like me over the rich and powerful candidates of registered political parties.

Benudhar began his journey as a barber when he was only 18-year-old. Unable to earn more in his native Bishnupur village he moved to Balasore town in 1945. Since then he has become a pillar of support for the poor and downtrodden of Gudipada.

FRESH | ROW Assam has estimated 64 lakh Bengali Muslims, total Muslim population in state is around 1 crore

Plea for museum for Bengali-speaking Muslims rejected

MANOJ ANAND | DC  
GUWAHATI, OCT. 26

In what has snowballed into a major controversy, Assam health minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has outrightly rejected a proposal of a Congress legislator to facilitate space in a heritage museum for displaying the culture and heritage of the people living in the *char-chaporis*, the riverine island of Assam.

The majority of the people living on these islands are from the “Miya” community — the name given

to Bengali-speaking Muslims in the state, who are often tagged as illegal immigrants from Bangladesh.

The controversy started with a letter of Congress MLA Sherman Ali Ahmed of Bagbar to Assam’s Director of Museums suggesting to set up a museum to preserve the culture of the *char-chaporis* inside Srimanta Sankar Dev Kalakshetra in Guwahati. He wrote the letter referring to the recommendation of the department related standing committee of the Assam assembly.

“I would like to inform you that one museum reflecting the culture and heritage of the people living in *char-chaporis* of Assam, in the premises of Srimanta Sankar Dev Kalakshetra in Guwahati, was recommended by DRSC (department-related standing committee) on Education, 2020-21 in its 47th report on art and culture,” he wrote requesting to expedite the process of implementing the recommendations.

Justifying his plea Mr Ahmed said, “As the people in char areas are most-

ly referred to as ‘Miya’, I have proposed to the government to establish a museum for them. The museum should be established at Sankardev Kalakshetra to highlight and reflect the culture and heritage of the Miya people.”

Assam health minister while posting the letter on his social media posts said, “In my understanding there is no separate identity or culture in *char anchal* (riverine area) of Assam as most people had migrated from Bangladesh. Obviously in

Srimanta Sankaradeva Kalakshetra (a cultural institution that documents the culture of communities in the state) we cannot allow any distortion. Sorry, MLA saheb.”

Assam has an estimated 64 lakh Bengali Muslims. The total Muslim population in the state is around 1 crore. The “char” referred to by both Mr Ahmed and Mr Sarma are riverine islands that refer to the Brahmaputra river and its tributaries. These islands and islets are found mostly in Western Assam, where Bengali-

speaking Muslims are in majority in terms of population.

However, the minister had to face a volley of attacks as Congress leaders pointed out that the proposed museum was recommended by the 15-member committee of legislators in which party wise strength was — BJP-6, AGP-2, BPF-2, Congress-3 and AIUDF-2.

Referring to the party wise position of the assembly committee dominated by BJP and AGP, Adv. Nilay Dutta in a social media post tagged

Mr Sarma and many civil society leaders including some MPs and dared them to start a public debate on this issue.

Following Mr Sarma’s outright rejection of the *Miya* museum proposal, Congress MP Abdul Khaleque also responded to Mr Sarma’s post and said, “Sorry sir (Himanta Biswa Sarma)... Ancestors of these people migrated from erstwhile Bengal, which was an integral part of undivided India. Kindly don’t distort history more just (for the) sake of getting power.”



## IN BRIEF

**Airstrike kills 50 fighters in Syria**

**Beirut:** A Syrian opposition spokesman and a war monitor say an airstrike on a training camp in the last rebel enclave in northwestern Syria has killed over 50 fighters.

Youssef Hammoud, a spokesman for the Turkey-backed Syrian opposition groups, said the airstrike on Monday is believed to have been carried out by Russia. Hammoud said it targeted a training camp in Idlib province run by Failaq al-Sham, one of the largest rebel groups in the Turkey-backed opposition. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which monitors the war in Syria, said the strike killed 56 fighters and wounded nearly 50. Rescue missions are still underway, the Observatory said.

**Bodies of migrants found in shipment**

**Asuncion (Paraguay):** Paraguayan officials say workers have discovered the remains of seven people — apparently would-be migrants — in a shipment of fertiliser from Serbia.

Three of the men were Moroccan and one was from Egypt, the chief investigator, Marcelo Saldivar said. The other three had not yet been identified. Investigators said the shipment left Serbia along rivers on July 22 and the migrants apparently had hoped to get off at some point along the trip, which wound up in the South American nation.

**UN: 11 drown in shipwreck in Libya**

**Cairo:** At least 11 migrants trying to reach Europe, including a pregnant woman, drowned on Sunday when their boat capsized off the coast of Libya, the UN migration agency said, making it the third migrant shipwreck in the Mediterranean Sea in a week. Safa Msehl, spokeswoman for the International Organisation for Migration, said fishermen and the Libyan Coast Guard rescued at least 10 other migrants and returned them to shore.

On Tuesday, at least 15 migrants drowned after their boat capsized off Libya. The IOM said five people also died when their boat capsized Thursday off the coast of Lampedusa, Italy.

**POPE DECLARES FIRST PERSON OF COLOUR CARDINAL**

**Vatican City, Oct. 26:** Pope Francis on Sunday named 13 new cardinals, including Washington D.C. Archbishop Wilton Gregory, who would become the first person of colour US prelate to earn the coveted red hat.

In a surprise announcement from his studio window to faithful standing below in St. Peter's Square, Francis said the churchmen would be elevated to a cardinal's rank in a ceremony on Nov. 28.

Francis asked for prayers so the new cardinals "may help me in my ministry as bishop of Rome for the good of all God's faithful holy people."

The selection of Gregory won praise from LGBTQ advocates in the United States, days after Pope Francis grabbed headlines for voicing support for civil unions for gay couples.

Other new cardinals include an Italian who is the long-time papal preacher at the Vatican, the Rev. Raniero Cantalamessa, who is a Franciscan friar; the Kigali, Rwanda, Archbishop Antoine Kamukamba; the Capiz, Philippines, Archbishop Jose Feurte Advincula, and the Santiago, Chile, Archbishop Celestino Aros Braco.

In 2010, while preaching at a Good Friday service attended by the then-pontiff Benedict XVI, Cantalamessa upset both Jewish and sex abuse survivors' group when he likened allegations that the pope had covered up sex abuse cases against clerics to the "more shameful aspects of anti-Semitism." The Vatican quickly distanced Benedict from Cantalamessa's remarks. Another Franciscan who was tapped is Friar Mauro Gambetti, in charge of the Sacred Convent in Assisi. The pope, when elected in 2013, chose St. Francis of Assisi as his namesake saint.

Earlier this month, the pontiff journeyed to that hill town in Umbria to sign an encyclical, or important church teaching document, about brotherhood.

Gambetti was so surprised, at first he thought the pope was joking when he heard he was named, convent spokesperson the Rev Enzo Fortunato said.

# Over 58.7 mn votes cast, but wait for results could be long

In 2016 polls, around 58.3 million pre-election ballot were declared

## Trump's assault on Biden intensifies in Pennsylvania

**Harrisburg (US), Oct. 26:** In a late gambit to win the battleground state of Pennsylvania, President Donald Trump and his GOP allies have intensified attacks on Joe Biden over fracking, hoping to drive a wedge between the former vice president and the white, working-class voters tied to the state's booming natural gas industry.

That assault is playing out in a barrage of TV ads and conservative and right-wing websites, and is repeated at every Trump rally in the state.

It relies on a series of confusing statements from the former vice president — including remarks on the oil industry from last week's debate — to claim he intends to "ban" or end



Donald Trump

national gas extraction, although that is not the Democrat's official position.

Trump's fracking play comes as polls show the president is struggling to overtake Biden in Pennsylvania and in need of a boost from the rural and exurban white voters

who helped him to a narrow victory in Pennsylvania in 2016.

It also shoots to snap the tightrope that Biden is walking between the Democratic Party's left wing, which is hostile to fossil fuels, and its bedrock blue-collar union base that is building an expanding network of gas pipelines, power plants and processing facilities in Pennsylvania.

Biden's climate change plan aims to reach net-zero greenhouse gases emissions by 2050, and does not involve banning fracking, the process formally named hydraulic fracturing that along with horizontal drilling made the United States an oil and gas superpower over the past decade. —AP

## DON LEAVES INTERVIEW, CLIP GOES VIRAL

Footage of the US president abruptly walking out of a CBS 60 Minutes interview has been released by the network, in a row that has been rumbling since the interview was taped on Tuesday.

Donald Trump had already posted clips on his own social media, in an effort to show he had been mistreated by the interviewer, Lesley Stahl. He had called the segment "fake" and "biased" in advance, according to The Guardian.

Trump had told Stahl: "You brought up a lot of subjects that were inappropriately brought up." She replied: "Well, I said, I'm going to ask you tough questions." After a question about whether his use of social media and name-calling was "turning people off", Trump brought the recording to an end. —Agencies

## FBI to probe Boston ballot box that was set afire

**Boston, Oct. 26:** A fire was set Sunday in a Boston ballot drop box holding more than 120 ballots in what appears to have been a "deliberate attack," Massachusetts election officials said.

The state has asked the FBI to investigate the fire that was set around 4 am in a ballot drop box outside the Boston Public Library downtown, Massachusetts

Secretary of the Commonwealth William Galvin's office said.

In a joint statement, Galvin and Boston Mayor Marty Walsh called it a "disrespect to democracy, a disrespect to the voters fulfilling their civic duty, and a crime."

"Our first and foremost priority is maintaining the integrity of our elections process and ensuring

transparency and trust with our voters, and any effort to undermine or tamper with that process must be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law," they said in the emailed statement.

There were 122 ballots inside the box when it was emptied Sunday morning, and 87 of them were still legible and able to be processed, Galvin's office said. —AP

## CHILEANS VOTE ON DRAFTING OF NEW CONSTITUTION

**Santiago, Chile, Oct. 26:** Amid a year of contagion and turmoil, Chileans were voting on Sunday on whether to draft a new constitution for their nation to replace guiding principles imposed four decades ago under a military dictatorship.

The country's conservative government agreed with the center-left opposition to allow the plebiscite a month after the outbreak of vast street protests that erupted a year ago in frustration over inequality in pensions, education and health care in what has long been one of South America's most developed nations.

Center-right President Sebastián Piñera said after voting that he assumed the measure will be approved. "I believe the immense majority of Chileans want to change, modify our constitution," he said.

If the measure is approved, a special convention would begin drafting a new constitution that would be submitted to voters in mid-2022.

Chile's current constitution was drafted by the dictatorship of Gen. Augusto Pinochet, and was sent to voters at a time where political parties had been banned and the country was subject to heavy censorship. —AP

## Students take to the streets in Belarus



Riot police officers detain students who took part in a nationwide strike pressing for the resignation of the country's authoritarian leader Alexander Lukashenko, in Minsk on Monday.

— AFP

## WHO calls for solidarity on vaccine

**Berlin, Oct. 26:** The head of the World Health Organization (WHO) on Sunday called for global solidarity in the rollout of any future coronavirus vaccine, as the number of cases soared across the world.

In a video address at the opening of the three-day World Health Summit in Berlin, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the only way to recover from the

pandemic was together and by making sure poorer countries had fair access to a vaccine.

"It is natural that countries want to protect their own citizens first but if and when we have an effective vaccine, we must also use it effectively. And the best way to do that is to vaccinate some people in all countries rather than all people in some countries,"

he said.

"Let me be clear: vaccine nationalism will prolong the pandemic, not shorten it." Scientists around the world are racing to develop a vaccine against Covid-19, which has killed over 1.1 million people.

Several dozen vaccine candidates are currently being tested in clinical trials, ten of which are in the most advanced "phase 3"

stage involving tens of thousands of volunteers.

The European Union, the United States, Britain, Japan and a slew of other nations have already placed large orders with the companies involved in developing the most promising vaccines.

But concerns are growing that countries with smaller wallets could be left at the back of the queue. —AFP

## Imran accuses Macron of 'attacking Islam'

**Islamabad, Oct. 26:** Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan accused French President Emmanuel Macron on Sunday of "attacking Islam", after the European leader criticised Islamists and defended the publication of cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohammed.

Khan's comments follow statements Macron made last week after a French teacher was beheaded near Paris after he had shown cartoons of the Prophet during a class he was leading on free speech.

Macron said the teacher "was killed because Islamists want our future." In a series of tweets, Khan said the remark would sow division.

"This is a time when Pres Macron could have put healing touch & denied space to extremists rather than creating further polarisation & marginalisation that inevitably leads to radicalisation," Khan wrote.

"It is unfortunate that he has chosen to encourage Islamophobia by attacking Islam rather than the terrorists who carry out violence, be it Muslims, White Supremacists or Nazi ideologists." Macron already sparked controversy earlier this month when he said "Islam is a religion that is in crisis all over the world".

The French teacher became the target of an online hate campaign over his choice of lesson material — the same images that sparked a bloody assault by Islamist gunmen on the offices of satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo, the original publisher, in January 2015.

Caricatures of Mohammed are forbidden by Islam. Blasphemy is an explosive issue in ultra-conservative Pakistan, where anyone deemed to have insulted Islam or Islamic figures can face the death penalty.

"By attacking Islam, clearly without having any understanding of it, President Macron has attacked & hurt the sentiments of millions of Mus-

## ERDOGAN DOUBLES BACKLASH AGAINST FRENCH PREZ

**Istanbul, Oct. 26:** The backlash against President Emmanuel Macron's comments on Sunday, with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan again urging him to have "mental checks" and protests in Muslim-majority nations.

The French foreign ministry meanwhile called on authorities in affected countries to ensure the security of French citizens.

It described some social media calls for protests as "heinous", lamenting manipulations "by a radical minority" and dubbing nascent boycotts of French goods "groundless".

Speaking after teacher Samuel Paty was beheaded for showing caricatures of the Prophet Mohammed to pupils in a lesson on free speech earlier this month, Macron vowed France would "not give up cartoons" and said Paty "was killed because Islamists want our future".

But Erdogan on Saturday urged Macron to have "mental checks" for treating "millions of members from different faith groups this way" — comments which prompted Paris to recall its envoy to Ankara.

The Turkish leader doubled down on Sunday, again contending that Macron "really needs to have checks" and this time also accusing him of being "obsessed with Erdogan day and night". —AFP

lims in Europe & across the world," Khan said.

In an address to the United Nations last month, Khan, a populist leader who has been known to play to Pakistan's hardline religious base, blasted Charlie Hebdo for republishing the cartoons, saying "wilful provocations" should be "universally outlawed". —AFP

## Sharif attacks Pak Army, ISI chief

**Karachi, Oct. 26:** Pakistan's deposed prime minister Nawaz Sharif has blamed Army chief Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa and ISI chief Lt. Gen. Faiz Hameed for the current political situation in the country, as the Opposition parties held their third massive joint rally against Prime Minister Imran Khan-led government.

The Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), a coalition of 11 Opposition parties, was formed to oust Khan from power on September 20. The alliance held two massive back-to-back gatherings in Gujranwala and Karachi this month. The third rally was held in Quetta, capital of the restive Baluchistan province, on Sunday.

Addressing the gathering via video link from London, the three-time prime minister and chief of the Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) again blamed Army chief Bajwa and ISI Director General Hameed for Pakistan's current situation.

"Gen. Bajwa, you will



Nawaz Sharif

have to answer for record rigging in the 2018 elections, for horse-trading in Parliament, for making Imran Niazi prime minister against people's wishes and [by] tearing apart the Constitution and laws, for pushing people towards poverty and hunger." 70-year-old Sharif said.

Sharif, who is entangled in a number of corruption cases, has been in London since November last year after the Lahore High Court granted him permission to go abroad for four weeks for treating the heart disease and an immune system disorder. —PTI

## WHITHER | JUSTICE Sentenced to death in 1986, freed African American wants Trump to be defeated at polls

# Wrongly jailed for 30 yrs, POC says justice needs voting

**Montgomery, Oct. 26:** Anthony Ray Hinton, an innocent man, spent 30 years on death row in Alabama because, he says, he was "person of colour and poor." His name finally cleared, he now campaigns for justice — which he says can only be achieved by beating Donald Trump at the ballot box.

The 64-year-old African-American, his hair and beard graying, has mixed

memories of the fateful day of April 3, 2015.

After three decades behind bars — and under constant threat of execution — he regained his freedom on that day to start the second phase of his life.

"It was like I was walking on clouds" as he fell into the arms of welcoming relatives, he recalled.

But his sense of joy was tempered. "It was good

that I was finally free. It was bad that my mother was no longer here on this Earth to see her baby boy walk out of prison."

That day — which he had dreamed of so often before waking up, innocent, in a claustrophobic "five by seven" foot cell — finally ended his judicial nightmare.

Arrested in July 1985, Hinton was sentenced to death the following year, at

the age of 29, for allegedly murdering two employees of fast-food restaurants, killed in separate armed hold-ups in Birmingham, the largest city in the southern state of Alabama.

His court-appointed lawyer, Hinton later told talk-show host Oprah Winfrey, had rejected his protestations of innocence, telling him "All of y'all is always doing some-

thing, and then saying you didn't do it." There was no fingerprint evidence against Hinton and the testimony of a ballistics expert hired by his attorney was torn apart when it emerged the man was half-blind. Nor did an alibi from Hinton's employer help.

He was convicted largely because bullets recovered at the scene appeared to come from a gun owned by

Hinton's mother, with whom he lived.

"The state of Alabama, in one word, kidnapped me," he said firmly, speaking in his deep, sonorous voice. "Because we have a system that, if you are born person of colour and poor in America, the system can pretty much do with you as it pleases."

It was not until 1999, when lawyer Bryan Stevenson — founder of the Eq-

ual Justice Initiative (EJI) — took up Hinton's case that the truth began to emerge. Very, very slowly.

Hinton was to spend another 16 years on death row, saved only by a new ballistics test, an intervention by the US Supreme Court and a second trial.

For years in prison he obsessed over the thought of gaining revenge for his wrongful conviction. —AFP



## DECCAN Chronicle

27 OCTOBER 2020

### Govt needs its critics, can't trample rights

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was on the list of the 100 most influential people drawn by *Time* magazine last month but the honour came with a strong indictment of the leader of the world's largest democracy. Underlining the importance of the rights of those who did not vote for the winner in a democracy, it said Mr Modi has governed by othering the dissenters or even those who did not subscribe to his ideas.

The pattern of events that preceded Mr Modi's selection has not changed since; in fact, it continues in a virulent form. It is very plain: use the teeth of the law to incarcerate people who voice their protest against the government or those who support the government's opponents. Fr Stan Swamy, the 83-year old Jesuit priest working among the tribals in Jharkhand, has not been the last. The Parkinson's disease patient has been held in connection with the Elgar Parishad case of 2018. The government has jailed a number of poets, activists, intellectuals and academics on the premise that they were all in league with the people who were behind the violence in Bhima Koregaon, a Maharashtra village. A journalist who works for a Malayalam portal has been picked up on his way to Hathras in Uttar Pradesh where a dalit teenager was gangraped and killed. Many university students across the country, especially those in the national capital, who protested against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 face the same fate.

In almost all these cases, the victims have been slapped with sections in the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, which has strict and impossible conditions for bail.

With the courts opting to be silent spectators, save the occasional intercession, all those who have been picked up by the National Investigation Agency have been languishing in jails for varying periods. The Supreme Court directive to Dr Sudha Bharadwaj, a trade unionist, that she was entitled to proper bail but needed to approach a lower court perplexed even people who served in the judicial service. Poet Varavara Rao's family has now moved the apex court seeking humane treatment of the octogenarian suffering from a series of diseases including early symptoms of dementia during the time of the pandemic.

The people who man the NDA dispensation need no lecture on democratic rights, including the right to dissent, as most of them, including Mr Modi and law minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, were leaders of the anti-Emergency agitation in the 1970s seeking restoration of human and democratic rights and the right to dissent. They also know how totalitarian regimes that smother human rights have ended up in history but the NDA government has shown no signs that it has a plan to learn from history. It's sad that a leader who got an unequivocal mandate from the people on the promise of a better tomorrow for all his people is being rated as being partisan and that his fellow citizens have to fear for their liberties for speaking up against the powers-that-be. The government must rethink its policy on dealing with legitimate voices of dissent and adopt one that suits the spirit of democracy.

### Power shift in Parivar

The traditional Vijayadashami address of the RSS *sarsanghchalak* or organisational head, delivered by Mohan Bhagwat on Monday, in which he backed even the recently passed controversial Central laws on farmers' remuneration and markets for their produce, touchy subjects on which BJP's oldest North India ally Akali Dal quit the Narendra Modi government, besides endorsing the Modi government's policy on foreign investment while all along RSS has stood for *swadeshi* that was indistinguishable from autarky, can cause amusement in RSS and BJP circles or possibly even some consternation among the old school.

This is because Mr Bhagwat's speech is suggestive of the fact that the balance of power between the BJP and the RSS would appear to have tilted heavily in favour of the former, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi being not only head of government but also the de facto Pied Piper of the BJP.

The annual Vijayadashami speech was once a much-anticipated event in the RSS calendar. This was when the chief gave the tactical line to the rank and file. The BJP and its earlier incarnation heard it with attention and shaped its own positions to be in line with the mother-body. However, the positions Mr Bhagwat has taken on a range of issues makes his peroration a repeat of official policy, in effect something akin to what the Press Information Bureau does.

It is unusual for the RSS's top leader to be critical of the BJP's political opponents since Hindutva's mother outfit has, for the sake of form, held that it is non-partisan and concerns itself with social issues and those relating to the propagation of ancient 'Hindu' culture and there is no discrimination on party lines. But, abandoning caution, Mr Bhagwat reportedly noted that the Opposition parties and the "*tukde-tukde* gang" were "trying to weaken Indian society by creating social strife".

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Printer & Publisher

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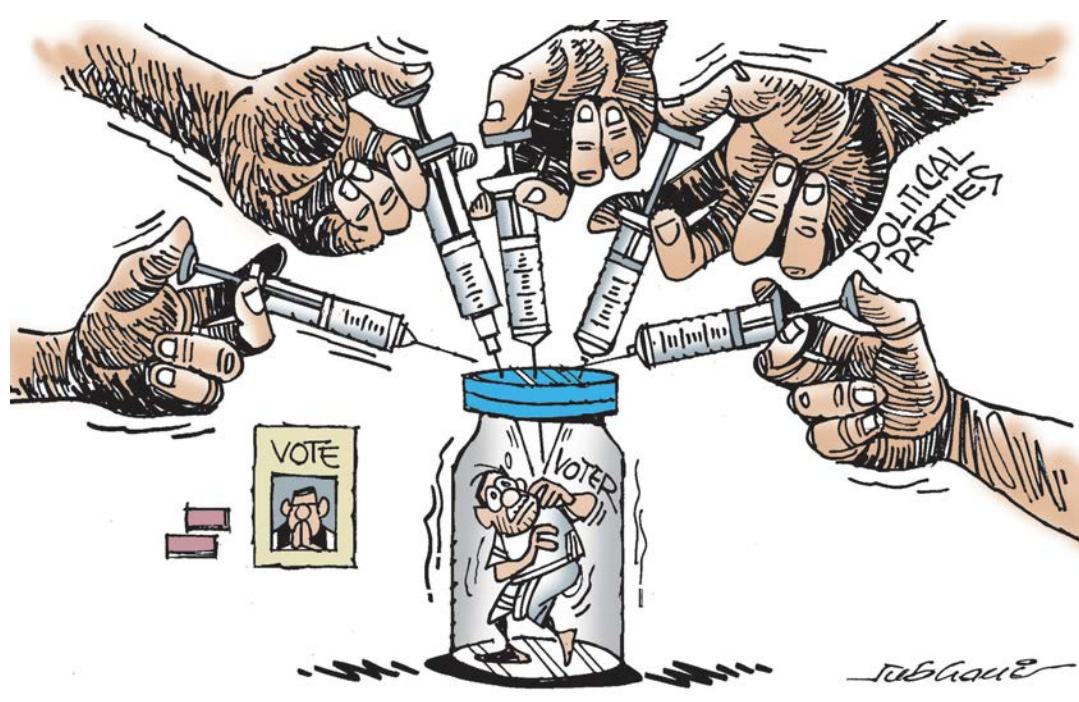
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Gram: CHRONICLE Postal registration no: H/SD-348/2006-08

Subhani



## Talk ties mindfully, do not squander options



Manish Tewari

State of the Union

On October 27, the foreign and defence ministers of India will sit down with their US counterparts for what is called a 2+2 dialogue. The dialogue would take place exactly one week before the US Presidential elections scheduled for 3<sup>rd</sup> of November 2020. Former Vice-President Joe Biden has a 10-point lead over the incumbent President Donald Trump in the national polls. However, given the manner in which the US electoral college system is structured, it does not guarantee a victory on election night. Hilary Clinton and much of the world's liberals realised it much to their peril despite Mrs Clinton leading in the polls by a wide margin in 2016.

The 2+2 dialogue is taking place when the Sino-Indian border situation remains tense and peace is at best fragile. On the agenda is the signing of the last of the foundational agreements — BECA (Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement). It will enable the sharing of advanced geo-spatial intelligence between the US and India and enable better targeting of armed drones and missiles.

Earlier in August 2016, The Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) was signed between the two nations that gave basing facilities to each other's militaries, especially both the navies. Later in September of 2018 India and the US signed The Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) that allows for encrypted communications between the defence establishments of the two nations — a la dedicated WhatsApp or Telegram.

This troika of foundational agreements marks the conclusion of a process that commenced three decades back when the Agreed Minute on Defence Relationship was signed in 1995. It was followed by

extended continent hopping dialogue between Late Jaswant Singh and Strobe Talbot post the nuclear tests of 1998. That conversation set the tone for the reset of the Indo-US relationship. It was followed by the Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP) in 2003, New Framework for the Indo-US Defence Relationship in 2005 and the Indo-US civil nuclear deal in 2008, Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) in 2012, the Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region in 2015 and the US-India Knowledge Partnership in Defense Studies to flag but a few key milestones of this momentous journey.

Out of all these agreements, the 2005 New Framework for Defence Cooperation was seminal. Signed on the 28<sup>th</sup> of June 2005 between the US defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld and the Indian defence minister Late Pranab Mukherjee it crossed the rubicon of distrust and ushered in a new era in defence cooperation. Its objectives were as follows — maintaining security and stability; defeating terrorism and violent religious extremism; preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction and associated materials, data, and technologies; and protecting the free flow of commerce via land, air and sea lanes. The agreement envisaged that the Defense Policy Group shall continue to serve as the primary mechanism to guide the US-India strategic defence relationship.

The reason why this agreement is important — it surmounted a trust deficit that had bedeviled the Indo-US strategic paradigm despite the US helping India in the Sino-India border war of 1962. At that critical point in time India reached out to the US when the erstwhile Soviet Union winked, nudged, looked the other way and essentially greenlighted the Chinese aggression in 1962 so that the Chinese would

not break ranks with the broader Communist bloc over the Cuban missile crisis.

However the roots of the Indo-US mistrust pre-date this brief period of cooperation if not bonhomie in 1962. It had everything to do with Pakistan. There was a sizeable body of opinion in India that believed that the creation of Pakistan had less to do with the Chowdhary Rehmat Ali, Iqbal and Jinnah combine and more to do with the Anglo-American alliance looking for a reliable buffer in West and Central Asia against Soviet expansionism post World War-2. This theory gained credence when Pakistan in the May of 1954 signed the Mutual Defence Assistance Agreement with the United States. Later in that year it became a member of the South-East Asian Treaty organisation SEATO along with United States, Britain, France, Thailand, the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand.

On 24<sup>th</sup> February 1955, it joined the Baghdad Pact-Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO), another mutual defence organisation along with Britain, Turkey, Iran and Iraq. The United States was the linchpin of this arrangement. Early in 1959, Pakistan signed (as did Turkey and Iran) a bilateral Agreement of Cooperation with the United States, which was designed further reinforce CENTO. In December 1971 at the height of the war to liberate Bangladesh the US attempted to intervene in Pakistan's favor when the US Navy's Task Force-74 of the Seventh Fleet steamed into the Bay of Bengal in conjunction with a British naval group led by the aircraft carrier, *HMS Eagle* with commando carrier

*HMS Albion*, several destroyers that headed into India's territorial waters from west.

India requested Moscow for help under the August 1971 treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation. Responding to India's request with alacrity Moscow on December 13, 1971, dispatched a nuclear-armed flotilla, the 10th Operative Battle Group (Pacific Fleet) from Vladivostok, under the Command of Admiral Vladimir Kruglyakov. Russia deployed two task groups; in total two cruisers, two destroyers, six submarines, and support vessels. A group of IL-38 Anti Submarine Warfare aircraft from Aden air base in Yemen provided support. India's relationship with two super powers had traversed the whole nine yards in the nine years between 1962 and 1971.

With the People's Liberation Army of China menacing India's northern borders it is quite natural for India to look for military allies. The US by far remains the most powerful outside power balancer even today in every part of the world. The quad is also anchored by the US for all intents and purposes. However, defence relationships define a country's foreign and strategic policies in the global arena. It would have implications qua Russia and even the other mid-sized powers around the world. Moreover, if Joe Biden were to become the US President, the US may look for a reset of its relationship qua China. The Democrats have a far different worldview from the current incumbent of the White House. India should evaluate its options with open eyes and not without a full debate in Parliament. For the only logical step after this would be to become a non-Nato ally of the US, just as Pakistan and 16 other countries are. Incidentally, despite leading the US up the garden path post 9/11, the Pentagon and the Pakistani deep state remain very close.

*The author is a lawyer, Member of Parliament and former Union information and broadcasting minister. Twitter handle @manish Tewari.*

**If Joe Biden were to become the US President, the US may look for a reset of its relationship qua China. The Democrats have a far different worldview from the current incumbent of the White House.**

(voters have to request for a mail-in ballot which is sent to them, and which they can then post back) or voting in person at the designated voting booth, which opens three weeks before the official voting day.

The counting of votes does not begin till the last day, as it would in other countries. This ensures that there is no advantage or perception of one side appearing to be so far ahead in early voting as to discourage the other side's voters from showing up. Though this is not a new system and has been around for many years, it is without doubt that it is going to help American voters and officials reduce the Covid-19 transmission risks in a way that Bihar will not be able to.

A record number of people are expected to vote in this year's US election and even with that it is indisputable that the mail-in ballots and the in-person advance voting system gives America a great advantage. Indeed, the safety of the voting process is also one reason why the numbers of those showing

#### LETTERS

##### COVID IN CHINA

From the start of Covid, many people followed without questioning the government's appeal to quarantine at home, even for those living far from Wuhan. But how has China avoided a second wave? The answer is that its authorities, after being overwhelmed in Wuhan, have fine tuned an emergency response for surprise cluster outbreaks.

Charith Betha  
Visakhapatnam

##### POLAVARAM

The Centre's indifferent attitude in releasing funds to Polavaram project is unwarranted (*CM seeks central funds for Polavaram project, DC, Oct. 25*). Why do they not take into effect inflation when releasing funds for projects when salary and perks to MPs and employees are based on inflation? It may not be wrong to assume that by keeping the project unfinished, it might play its political gamble in future in Andhra Pradesh.

Udatha Rama Chandra Rao  
Yeleswaram, East Godavari

##### GITAM DEMOLITION

It is ridiculous to think that government officials will take up demolition of an alleged illegal structure without issuing a notice. The official of Gitam University was blatantly lying. Ever since YSRC government took over the reigns in the state and started action against the corrupt practices in the previous government.

Govardhana Myneedu  
Vijayawada

#### 50 YEARS AGO IN

### DECCAN Chronicle

#### Indo-Nepal trade talks begin

NEW DELHI, Oct. 26.

Talks between India and Nepal opened here today for the conclusion of a new treaty of trade and transit. The existing treaty is due to expire on October 31.

The talks are being held at official level. The Nepalese team being led by Mr. Pushkar Nath Pan, secretary, Ministry of Industry and Commerce and the Indian side by Mr. K.S. Raghupathy, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Trade.

At today's meeting, they are understood to have decided to set up three working groups to study in depth (1) arrangements for mutual trade, (2) problems posed by manipulation by private trading parties and (3) facilities at the Calcutta and Haldia ports to meet the growing export and import needs of Nepal.

Aakar Patel



### Draw lessons from US, make voting in India better & safer

India's electoral system, run by the Election Commission of India, is one of the world's wonders. It was not too long ago (and in fact many of us can remember those days) when Bihar's elections were associated with violence and booth-capturing. A series of innovations from the Election Commission under T.N. Seshan and his successor M.S. Gill resulted in violence reducing considerably. And also the introducing of machines ensured that voting happened smoothly and counting quickly.

Many things have changed in the democratic space in India but it is still the case that almost all parties believe or assume that the autonomous Election Commission run by 300 officials in New Delhi is independent of the government. The EC also has an international reputation because of its accomplishments, and officials from Russia, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Indonesia, South Africa, Bangladesh, Thailand, Nigeria, Namibia, Bhutan,

Australia, Afghanistan and even the United States have visited it to see how they can improve their own systems better.

Voting systems in older democracies come from tradition and are difficult to change both from the point of view of the State and the voting citizen. It is for this reason that the broad and quick reforms and their wide acceptance in India is all the more remarkable.

Having accepted all this, it must be asked if we cannot further reform the process and also learn from practices that other nations follow that might help us. Bihar is going to the polls in three phases between October 28 and November 7. This splitting of voting will help the state machinery manage its resources such as security personnel better and reduce the load on the EC.

However, the phase-wise voting will not be of any use in reducing the risks of Covid-19 transmission. The number of people queuing up to vote in any given polling station will remain the same.

Is there a way that this can be addressed? We could look at what is happening in the United States, which is going to the polls on November 3 to elect the President, one third of the Senate and the entire House of Representatives. As of October 24, about 5.5 crore Americans had already voted in that election. This was a figure that was 40 per cent of the total votes that had been polled for the 2016 presidential election. This means that these 40 per cent voters would not have to show up in the queue on November 3, greatly reducing the risk of the coronavirus' spread overall.

In the days that lead up to the election, it is possible that another 30 per cent or more people will also have voted in advance, or have mailed in their ballots, and that will reduce the stress and risk at the polling booth for officials and for voters. Voting rules in the US are a state and not federal subject and so each of the 50 US states has its own rules. They allow for voting by mail

up to vote is so high.

The hope is that the Bihar election also passes safely, but we are entering into a fairly long election season when large states like West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh are going to vote. India needs to examine some way in which, assuming that there is either no vaccine or a delay in administering it to everyone, voting can be made safer. This will have to be done with the consent of all parties, but it needs to be considered. It is one of the things that America does better and can be examined.

Of course it is the case that our system is superior to most in some ways. In a part of the world where there was endemic electoral violence and controversy, the most important element — counting — has been comprehensively solved. But the times we are in require even this great and proven system to be more flexible in the interest of public safety.

*The writer is a columnist and a senior journalist*



quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	40,145.50	-1.33
Nifty 50	11,767.75	-1.36
S&P 500*	3,384.81	-2.33
Dollar (₹)	73.85	-0.32
Pound Sterling (₹)	96.14	0.31
Euro (₹)	87.28	-0.14
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	50,965▲126	0.25
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	40.49	-1.28
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.834	-0.010
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.809	-0.032

\* As of 9:30 PM IST

Gland Pharma gets Sebi nod to float IPO

Gland Pharma has received capital markets regulator Sebi's go-ahead to launch an initial public offer that includes fresh issue of shares worth up to Rs 1,250 crore. Apart from the fresh issue, there is an offer for sale (OFS) of a little over 3.4 crore shares as part of the initial public offering. The Hyderabad-based company, backed by China's Fosun Pharma, develops, manufactures and markets complex injectables.

Oil drops on rising virus cases, more Libyan output



Oil prices fell on Monday, extending last week's losses, as increasing coronavirus cases in the United States and Europe raised worries about energy demand, while Libya's fast growing production also weighed on prices. Brent was down 80 cents, or 1.9%, at \$40.97 by 1121 GMT. U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) dropped 82 cents, or 2.1%, to \$39.03. Both contracts fell almost 2.5% last week.

Sebi bans Birla Pacific Medspa, Yash for 2 years

Sebi has barred Birla Pacific Medspa Ltd, Yashovardhan Birla and eight others from the securities market for two years for mis-utilisation of the IPO proceeds. Birla Pacific Medspa Ltd (BPML), which came out with offer documents in March 2011, had floated its over Rs 65-core initial public offering (IPO) in June 2011. The regulator found that the company made mis-statements in the prospectus in respect of the objects of the IPO.

Muthoot Finance plans to raise ₹2,000 cr bonds

Muthoot is offering its 23rd series of Public Issue of Secured Redeemable Non-Convertible Debentures of face value of ₹1,000 each. The Issue is with a base issue size of ₹100 crore with an option to retain oversubscription up to ₹1,900 crore aggregating up to tranche limit of ₹2,000 crore. The issue opens on October 27 and closes on November 20 with an option to close on such earlier date or extended date as may be decided by the Board of Directors or NCD committee.



Future, Reliance to move ahead with deal despite interim order

SIAC's interim order asks Future Group to hold its deal with Reliance

SANGEETHA G. CHENNAI, OCT. 26

Future Group and Reliance Industries have claimed that they will go ahead with the proposed deal unhindered by the interim order from the Singapore arbitration panel. While Future hinted at approaching Indian arbitration forum, both Future and Amazon seem to have agreed upon the Singapore panel in its 2019 agreement. On Monday, Future group acknowledged that Future Retail has received an interim order from the Singapore International Arbitration Centre under shareholders' agreement between Amazon, Future Coupons and the promoter group. Future Group said that Future Retail was not a party to the agreement under which Amazon has invoked arbitration proceedings. Future Retail would take appropriate

STOCK MARKET SINKS ON INTERNATIONAL WORRIES

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, OCT. 26

The Sensex fell over 700 points intra-day on weak global cues as Covid-19 second wave in US and Europe is leading to high rise in fresh cases and fresh US fiscal stimulus hopes are fading. Reliance Industries' 3.97 per cent fall also weighed on the market as Reliance-Future Group deal was put on hold by Singapore based single bench arbitration panel after Amazon questioned the deal.

Sensex finally settled 540 points or 1.33 per cent lower at 40,145. Nifty-50 closed 162.60 points or 1.36 per cent down at 11,767.75. Only eight of the Sensex 30 pack managed to close in the green while in the Nifty-50 only 11 advanced and 39 declined. The top losers in the Nifty-50 pack were Hero MotoCorp (-6.2 per cent), Bajaj Auto (-6.01), Hindalco (-5.29), Mahindra & Mahindra (-4.68) and JSW Steel (-4.44). Shrikant Chouhan, executive vice president- Equity Technical Research, Kotak Securities said, "After the

massive struggle for the last five days to sustain and close above 11850 levels, finally, the Nifty gave up. The Nifty closed below the level of 11800 following hefty selling in index giants namely Reliance Industries, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank and Infosys Technology." The broader market fell sharply too with the Mid-cap index down by 1.77 per cent and Small-cap index down by 0.88 per cent. BSE Metal (-3.37 per cent) & Auto indices (-3.28 per cent) fell the most among the sectoral indices.

board, which are in full compliance of the relevant agreements and eminently in the interest of all stakeholders cannot be held back in arbitration proceedings initiated under an agreement to which Future Retail is not a party," it said. As part of the deal agreement entered while buying 49 per cent stake in Future Coupons, Amazon would have a call option to acquire all or part of the promoters' shareholding in Future Retail of 47.02 per cent between the third and tenth year of the transaction and this would be subject to law. In future, Amazon could own 47.02 per cent in Future Retail apart from 3.6 per cent through Future Coupons. "The agreement had also mentioned that the approval of Amazon, Premji Invest and Blackstone has to be taken for any further development regarding the deal," said a source.

Gold slips on strong dollar, US stimulus doubts

New York, Oct. 26: Gold fell below the key psychological level of \$1,900 on Monday to its lowest in more than a week, pressured by a firmer dollar and stalled progress in talks for a new U.S. coronavirus aid package. U.S. gold futures fell 0.3% to \$1,900.50. "There seems to be a

lack of impetus to find extra buyers (for gold)... A lot of it is because we're trading in the looming shadow of the U.S. elections and stimulus speculation," said IG Markets analyst Kyle Rodda. The dollar rose 0.3% against a basket of other currencies.

U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Sunday said the Trump administration was reviewing the latest plan for more COVID-19 relief and that she expected a response on Monday. But with the presidential elections fast approaching, analysts said a victory for

Democrat rival Joe Biden could help gold rally on a potential large stimulus package, especially amid COVID-19 cases surging in the United States. France registered a record increase in infections over the weekend and Spain announced a state of emergency as cases surged through

Europe. Widely viewed as a hedge against inflation and currency debase-ment, bullion has gained 25.1% this year as central banks and governments unveiled unprecedented stimulus to cushion the economic fallout from the pandemic. —Reuters

China to impose sanctions on US firms over Taiwan arms sales

BEIJING, Oct. 26: The People's Republic of China will impose sanctions on Lockheed Martin, Boeing Defense, Raytheon and other United States companies it says are involved in Washington's arms sales to Taiwan (Republic of China), a foreign ministry spokesman said on Monday. Zhao Lijian told journalists that China was acting to protect its national interest, but did not spell out what form the sanctions would take. The United States State Department has approved the potential sale of three weapons systems to Taiwan, including sensors, missiles and artillery that could have a total value of \$1.8 billion, the Pentagon said last week. Beijing considers Taiwan, also known as Republic of China, a wayward province it has vowed to bring under control, by force if necessary. "To safeguard our national interests, China decided to take necessary measures and levy sanctions on United States companies such as Lockheed Martin, Boeing Defence, and Raytheon, and those individuals and companies who behaved badly in the process of the arms sales," Zhao said. China has imposed sanc-

tions on Lockheed Martin and other U.S. companies in the past for selling weapons to Taiwan, though it is unclear what form the penalties have taken. The United States, like most countries, has no official diplomatic ties with Taiwan, but Washington is bound by law to provide the island with the means to defend itself. The Donald Trump-led administration has ramped up support for Taiwan through arms sales and visits by senior U.S. officials, adding to tensions in relations between Beijing and Washington, already strained by disagreements over the South China Sea, Hong Kong, human rights and trade. A spokesman for Boeing said in an emailed statement that the company's partnership with China's aviation community had long-term benefits and that Boeing remained committed to it. Lockheed Martin said in an emailed statement that all of its international military sales are strictly regulated by the U.S. government, and that its presence in China is limited. Raytheon did not immediately respond to emailed requests for comment. —Reuters

Telcos flag E&V bands, other issues with Trai

New Delhi, Oct. 26: Telcos, under the aegis of COAI, have jointly pitched for spectrum allocation in E and V bands only through an auction and urged the regulator to expedite the process of fixing floor tariffs for data at a recent meeting with the new Trai chief, industry sources have said. Other issues highlighted by the top industry representatives at the meeting include a reduction in levies and review of the regulatory stance on over-the-top (OTT) communication services. These issues were flagged by the industry at a meeting with the new Trai Chairman last week, sources told PTI. It is pertinent to mention that P D Vaghela took over as the new Chairman



of Trai from October 1. The sources said the industry maintained that spectrum in highly commercial and valuable E and V bands should not be delicensed. All licensed private access service providers are prepared to bid and buy spectrum in these bands through an open and transparent bidding

process, generating revenues for the government, the industry contended. The industry has, therefore, urged the regulator to recommend to the government for allocation of spectrum in E and V bands only through transparent auction to licensed access service providers. The telecom industry – which wants Trai to set

floor tariffs for data – has urged the regulator to expedite the consultation process in this regard by initiating open house discussion, and issue a regulation on the floor tariffs. When contacted, Cellular Operators' Association of India (COAI) Director-General SP Kochhar confirmed the meeting, saying the industry held "frank and open" discussions with the regulator, highlighting various issues, including E and V bands, the floor price for tariffs, and OTT matter. It may be recalled that last month COAI had written to Communications Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on the E and V band issue, where it called for the allocation of spectrum in these specified

bands "through transparent auction to access service providers immediately". COAI had cautioned that any decision on delicensing or administrative allocation of E and V band spectrum would be against the prevailing policy framework, create non-level-playing-field for licenced telcos, cause huge revenue loss to the government, and would be legally untenable. Radiowaves in E band, which falls in 71-76 GHz and 81-86 GHz, and V band in 57-64 GHz can transmit data at very high speed, and the method of spectrum allotment in these bands has been a subject of high-voltage debate in the sector, and within the government circle. —PTI

Death sparks Samsung hopes

Seoul, Oct. 26: Shares in Samsung Electronics Co Ltd and affiliates rose on Monday after the death a day earlier of Chairman Lee Kun-hee sparked hopes for stake sales, higher dividends and long-awaited restructuring, analysts said. Investors are betting that the imperatives of maintaining Lee family control and paying inheritance tax - estimated at about 10 trillion won (\$8.9 billion) for listed stock-holdings alone - will be the catalyst for change, although analysts are divided on what form that change will take. Shares in Samsung C&T

and Samsung Life Insurance closed up 13.5% at a two-month high and 3.8%, respectively, while shares in Samsung SDS also rose. Samsung Electronics - the jewel in the group's crown - finished 0.3% higher. Son and heir apparent Jay Y. Lee has a 17.3% stake in Samsung C&T, the de facto holding firm, while the late Lee was the top shareholder of Samsung Life with 20.76% stake. "The inheritance tax is outrageous, so family members might have no choice but to sell stakes in some non-core firms" such as Samsung Life,

IT MAY be likely for Samsung C&T to consider increasing dividends for the family to cover such a high inheritance tax. JEONG DONG-IK Analyst said NH Investment Securities analyst Kim Dong-yang. "It may be likely for Samsung C&T to consider increasing dividends for the family to cover such a high inheritance tax," KB Securities analyst Jeong Dong-ik said. Lee, 78, died on Sunday,

six years after he was hospitalised due to heart attack in 2014. Since then, Samsung carried out a flurry of stake sales and restructuring to streamline the sprawling conglomerate and cement the junior Lee's control. Investors have long anticipated a further shake-up in the event of Lee's death, hoping for gains from restructuring to strengthen de facto holding company Samsung C&T's control of Samsung Electronics, such as Samsung C&T buying an affiliate's stake in the tech giant. — Reuters

BAJAJ'S NEW BIKE LAUNCHED AT ₹46,432

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, OCT. 26 Bajaj Auto, India's motorcycle specialist, on Monday launched an updated version of its most affordable bike, the CT100 kick-start, at Rs 46,432 at Delhi showroom to woo buyers during the on-going festive season. At this price, it costs around Rs 2,000 more than the model it replaces. The entry level 2020 CT100 gets eight new features. Among them are the new tank grips – an old-school feature that is making a comeback, thanks to the TVS Radeon. Other new features include fork gaiters, a cross tube on the handlebar, a larger grab handle and clear-lens indicators. However, the new feature that will be the most appreciated is the fuel gauge. "The brand CT has always delivered on its strong build, robust engine, high reliability and great mileage making it one of the best motorcycles in the commuter segment," Narayan Sundaraman, Head of Marketing at Bajaj Auto, said. The Bajaj CT range has sold over 68 lakh motorcycles since inception. — Reuters

British companies dread a Brexit border breakdown

Sevington, Oct. 26: Deal or no deal, British companies will have to confront a wall of bureaucracy that threatens chaos at the border if they want to sell into the world's biggest trading bloc when life after Brexit begins on January 1. When Britain casts off from the European Union, firms that drive nearly \$1 trillion in annual trade will have to navigate myriad new rules and red tape that will increase costs

just as COVID-19 bleeds the economies of the West. Outside the EU single market where trade flows freely, Britain's exporters will have to complete a raft of paperwork including customs and safety declarations and navigate multiple IT systems to gain entry to Europe. But with a matter of weeks to go, companies used to trading as easily to Berlin as to Birmingham are yet to see the new IT systems.

Customs brokers have not been trained, operators do not know what information is required nor how the rules will be enforced. Many have predicted chaos. Even the government has said 7,000 trucks could be held in 100-km queues in Kent, south-east England, if companies do not prepare. "It's going to be carnage," Tony Shally, managing director of freight specialist Espace Europe,

told Reuters. "We'll be fire-fighting from the 1st of January." The current row over whether Britain leaves the EU with or without a deal has helped mask the fact that the deal on offer represents the biggest change to UK trade since the formation of the single market in 1993. Outside the bloc, companies will have to complete paperwork and submit papers for random checks to cross borders, increas-

ing both the cost and time it takes to do business. In 2019 Britain imported EU goods worth 253 billion pounds (\$331 billion) and exported 138 billion pounds-worth to the bloc, when removing goods like oil and gold which distort trade flows. To keep goods moving after Brexit, the government has published a new 271-page Border Operating Model, covering everything from the trade of rough diamonds to mol-

lucses, chemicals and cultural goods. A step-by-step guide on one of the main customs clearance sites gives a flavour of what traders can expect. Points 12 to 15 state that "A Movement Reference Number" is generated by a "Transit Accompanying Document" and "Exit Summary Declaration", and should be lodged with the "Goods Vehicle Movement Service". — Reuters



## SHORT TAKES

## Leon wins chess title in Hungary

**Chennai:** Young Indian International Master Leon Luke Mendonca earned his maiden Grandmaster norm after winning the title in Rigochess International Festival tournament in Hungary. The 14-year old Mendonca won six games, drew two and lost one to emerge winner in the 10-player field which included three GMs and was played over the board. He secured seven points from nine rounds in the tournament.

The Goa-based player (Elo 2499) won his opening round match against fellow IM William Paschall before going down to lower-rated Alex Krstulovic (Elo 2341). He drew his third round match and then won five games on the trot, beating two GMs — Nguyen Huynh Minh Huy and David Berceç — on the way. — PTI

## Entire S. African board resigns

**Johannesburg:** Cricket South Africa's 10-member Board of Directors has resigned, clearing the decks for an interim administrative structure in the crisis-ridden body as sought by the country's olympic committee. Six directors, including former acting president Beresford Williams, had stood down following a meeting on Sunday.

The remaining four quit on Monday. "After the Members' Council had deliberated and resolved that in order to best serve the interest of cricket in South Africa, the entire Board should resign — which they did.

All Independent and Non-Independent Directors have now resigned," CSA said. The development comes just days before the start of the domestic season on November 2. England's men's team also arrives next month to play three ODIs and three T20Is. — PTI

## Vardy hurts Arsenal again

**London:** Jamie Vardy kept up his brilliant scoring record against Arsenal by coming off the bench to earn Leicester a 1-0 win at Emirates Stadium in the Premier League.

Restricted to just the final half-hour while he manages his return from a calf injury, Vardy had enough time to net his 11th league goal against Arsenal the most he has scored against a single opponent in the competition.

It was an excellent goal, too, with a fine pass over the defense by Youri Tielemans setting free substitute Cengiz Under, who crossed for Vardy to stoop and head home from close range in the 80th minute. — AP

## Masia gets 800th GP win for Honda

**Aragon, Spain:** Jaume Masia on the NSF250RW took a thrilling win at the Teruel GP of the 2020 MotoGP World Championship, the 800th win for a Honda mounted rider in Grand Prix history. Honda has written an incredible story from the first win of Australian Tom Phillis on the Honda RC143 in the 125cc Spanish GP of 1961, to Sunday where Jaume Masia rode a masterful race to cross the line for Honda's 800th win — a feat no other manufacturer has achieved.

## Live on TV

## CRICKET

**IPL:** Sunrisers Hyderabad vs Delhi Capitals from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

## HOCKEY

**FIH tournament:** Netherlands vs Great Britain (women) from 9 pm; Netherlands vs Great Britain (women) from 11.30 pm on Star Sports Select 2, HD

## FOOTBALL

**Champions League:** Lokomotiv Moscow vs Bayern Munich from 11.25 pm on Sony Ten 2; Shakhtar Donetsk vs Inter Milan from 11.25 pm on Sony Six; Atletico Madrid vs Salzburg from 1.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony Ten 3; Borussia Monchengladbach vs Real Madrid from 1.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony Six; Marseille vs Manchester City from 1.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony Ten 2; Liverpool vs Midtjylland from 1.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony Ten 1

Regd. No. H/SD/509/2018-20

Printed and Published by K. Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited. Printed at Deccan Chronicle Press situated at Anantapur: Thapovan colony, Bangalore By-Pass Road, Anantapur - 515004, Ph: 08554-276903; Fax: 08554-276904. RNI Registration No. 3081/1957. Editor: Kaushik Mitter

## Kings crush Knights

## Punjab put up all-round show in big win over Kolkata

**Sharjah, Oct. 26:** Kings XI Punjab beat Kolkata Knight Riders by eight wickets in an Indian Premier League game here on Monday.

Chasing 150, Chris Gayle (51, 29b) and Mandeep Singh (66 not out, 56b) posted half century each as Punjab reached the target in 18.5 overs and grabbed the fourth spot on the points table. Punjab skipper K. L. added 28 to complete the rout. This was the fifth win in a row for KXIP.

Earlier, Kings XI Punjab dished out a disciplined bowling show, especially at the back-end, to restrict Kolkata Knight Riders to a modest 149/9.

Mohammed Shami (3/35) was the pick of the Kings XI Punjab bowlers while leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi (2/20) and Chris Jordan (2/25) claimed two wickets apiece to put brakes on KKR who were invited to bat first.

After a familiar jittery start, KKR got the momentum going with opener Shubman Gill (57 off 45 balls) and skipper Eoin Morgan (40) firing all cylinders inside the Powerplay.

But KXIP's last match hero Jordan pulled things back for his team by brilliantly mixing up his slow deliveries, while Bishnoi took the prized scalp of Morgan after KKR reached 54/3 inside the Powerplay. — PTI



Chris Gayle of Kings XI Punjab en route to his 51 against Kolkata Knight Riders in an IPL match at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium on Monday. — BCCI

## SCORECARD

**Kolkata Knight Riders:** Shubman Gill c Pooran b Shami 57, Nitish Rana c Gayle b Maxwell 0, Rahul Tripathi c Rahul b Shami 7, Dinesh Karthik c Rahul b Shami 0, Eoin Morgan c M Ashwin b Bishnoi 40, Sunil Narine b Jordan 6, Kamlesh Nagarkoti b M. Ashwin 6, Pat Cummins lbw b Bishnoi 1, Lockie Ferguson (not out) 24, Varun Chakravarthy b Jordan 2, Prasidh Krishna (not out) 0. Extras (lb-3 w-3) 6. **Total (for 9 wks, in 20 overs) 149.**  
**ForW:** 1-1, 2-10, 3-10, 4-91, 5-101, 6-113, 7-114, 8-136, 9-149.  
**Bowling:** Glenn Maxwell 2-0-21-1, Mohammed Shami 4-0-35-3, Arshdeep Singh 2-0-18-0, Murugan Ashwin 4-0-27-1, Chris Jordan 4-0-25-2, Ravi Bishnoi 4-1-20-2.  
**Kings XI Punjab:** K. L. Rahul lbw b Varun 28, Mandeep Singh (not out) 66, C. Gayle c Prasidh Krishna b Ferguson 51, N. Pooran (not out) 2. Extras (lb-2, w-1) 3. **Total (for 2 wks, in 18.5 overs) 150.**  
**ForW:** 1-47, 2-147.  
**Bowling:** P. Cummins 4-0-31-0, M. Prasidh Krishna 3-0-24-0, C. Varun 4-0-34-1, S. Narine 4-0-27-0, L. Ferguson 3.5-0-32-1.

## IPL POINTS TABLE

Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
Mumbai Indians	11	7	4	0	14	+1.252
Delhi Capitals	11	7	4	0	14	+0.434
Royal Challengers Bangalore	11	7	4	0	14	+0.092
Kings XI Punjab	12	6	6	0	12	-0.049
Kolkata Knight Riders	12	6	6	0	12	-0.479
Rajasthan Royals	12	5	7	0	10	-0.505
Sunrisers Hyderabad	11	4	7	0	8	+0.029
Chennai Super Kings	12	4	8	0	6	-0.602

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

## SUPER KINGS ARE FIRST TO BE ELIMINATED

**Dubai, Oct. 26:** Three-time champions Chennai Super Kings have been knocked out of the race to secure an IPL play-offs' berth for the first time in 13 years after Rajasthan Royals defeated Mumbai Indians by eight wickets in Abu Dhabi.

The M.S. Dhoni-led side had made it to the play-offs in each of the 10 IPL seasons that they participated since the league started in 2008. However, CSK endured an inconsistent run in this IPL.

Dhoni's men on Sunday notched up an eight-wicket win over Royal Challengers Bangalore on Sunday to keep their slim chances alive for a few hours but all hopes ended when RR beat MI later in the day. The win over RCB took CSK to 8 points from 12 matches but they can only achieve a maximum of 12 points if they win their last two games, which won't be enough. — PTI

## DC eye playoff berth in clash against Sunrisers

**Dubai, Oct. 26:** Delhi Capitals would look to complete the unfinished business and seal their place in the playoffs when they take on Sunrisers Hyderabad in a crucial IPL match here on Tuesday.

Two back-to-back defeats against Kolkata Knight Riders and Kings XI Punjab must be hurting but DC need to shrug it off and add two points to take their tally to 16, which will elevate them to the top of the table.

On the other hand, Sunrisers' hopes to reach the playoffs are hanging by a thread. David Warner and his men occupy the penultimate spot with eight points from 11 outings.

To reach the qualifiers they must win their remaining three games and hope all other results go their way. The Capitals possess

## NUMBERS GAME

OVERALL:	HEAD TO HEAD
● Matches: 16 ● Hyderabad: 10 ● Delhi: 6	MEETING IN 2019
● Sunrisers Hyderabad beat Delhi Capitals by 5 wickets in Delhi.	● Delhi Capitals defeated Sunrisers Hyderabad by 39 runs at Hyderabad.
● Delhi Capitals beat Sunrisers Hyderabad by 2 wickets at Visakhapatnam (Eliminator).	MEETING IN 2020
● Sunrisers Hyderabad beat Delhi Capitals by 15 runs in Abu Dhabi	FOR THE RECORD
● David Warner is the only batsman who made fifty 50 plus scores in IPL. He scored 4 hundreds and 46 fifties in 137 innings of as many matches.	● Kagiso Rabada is highest wicket taker in this IPL with 23 wickets at an average of 14.52 in 11 innings of as many matches.

— S. PERVEZ KAISER

an explosive batting department as well as a formidable bowling unit. They have not been dependent on any one person, as different players have raised their hands at different

points of time to deliver the goods for the team.

However, apart from Shikhar Dhawan, the Delhi batsmen have been very inconsistent in the last three games. — PTI

## HARDIK TAKES A KNEE IN IPL FOR A CAUSE

**Abu Dhabi, Oct. 26:** Mumbai Indians all-rounder Hardik Pandya has become the first player in the ongoing Indian Premier League to take a knee in support of the 'Black Lives Matter' movement.

Pandya's gesture came during the game against Rajasthan Royals here on Sunday.

The Mumbai Indian all-rounder smashed 60 run from just 21 balls.

After reaching his half century in the 19th over, he went down on a knee with his right arm raised to show solidarity with the movement against racism.

West Indies all-rounder and Mumbai's stand-in skipper Kieron Pollard responded by raising his right fist.

After the match Pandya even tweeted a picture of himself with the caption "#BlackLivesMatter". — PTI

## AUSTRALIA | TOUR

## Rohit out, Rahul is new white ball V-C

**New Delhi, Oct. 26:** India's limited-over vice-captain and senior opener Rohit Sharma was on Monday left out of all three squads for the tour of Australia due to a recurring hamstring injury which is set to oust him from the remainder of the Indian Premier League as well.

In Rohit's absence, the in-form K.L. Rahul will be Virat Kohli's deputy in the white ball teams and is also back in the Test squad after a considerable period of time. Wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant failed to make the cut for the limited overs even though he retained his place in the Test squad.

"The BCCI Medical Team will continue to monitor the progress of Rohit Sharma and Ishant Sharma," BCCI secretary Jay Shah said in a press release announcing the squads.

The tour of Australia comprises three T20 Internationals, as many ODIs and four Tests. It is set to get underway from November 27.

It is learnt that in case of Rohit, it might take a good six to eight weeks for complete recovery from the injury that he picked up during the IPL.

"It is unlikely that Rohit

## THE SQUADS

■ **T20I:** Virat Kohli (captain), Shikhar Dhawan, Mayank Agarwal, K. L. Rahul (vice-captain and wicketkeeper), Shreyas Iyer, Manish Pandey, Hardik Pandya, Sanju Samson (wicketkeeper), Ravindra Jadeja, Washington Sundar, Yuzvendra Chahal, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohd Shami, Navdeep Saini, Deepak Chahar, Varun Chakravarthy.

■ **ODI:** Virat Kohli (captain), Shikhar Dhawan, Shubman Gill, K. L. Rahul (vice-captain & wicketkeeper), Shreyas Iyer, Manish Pandey, Hardik Pandya, Mayank Agarwal, Ravindra Jadeja, Yuzvendra Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohd Shami, Navdeep Saini, Shardul Thakur.

■ **Test:** Virat Kohli (captain), Mayank Agarwal, Prithvi Shaw, K. L. Rahul, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane (vice-captain), Hanuma Vihari, Shubman Gill, Wriddhiman Saha (wicket-keeper), Rishabh Pant (wicket-keeper), Jasprit Bumrah, Mohd Shami, Umesh Yadav, Navdeep Saini, Kuldeep Yadav, Ravindra Jadeja, Ravichandran Ashwin, Mohammed Siraj.

will take any further part in this year's Indian Premier League. He will have to go back to India and be at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) for the rehabilitation," a senior BCCI source said. — PTI



Mohammad Ikram plays snooker with his chin at a local club in Samundri town in Pakistan on Sunday. — AP

## No arms, no issue for snooker player

**Samundri, Oct. 26:** Mohammad Ikram leans over the snooker table, his face at almost touching distance behind the white ball as he assesses his options, then knocks it with his bearded chin.

At the other end of the table a moment later, a red ball sinks into the corner pocket.

With a twist of the neck this way, or a lighter nudge another, the 32-year-old Ikram has worked out how to pot snooker balls without the use of a cue stick.

He was born without arms. He lives in a dusty rural town in the northeast of Pakistan in Punjab province. He hasn't let anything stop him from fulfilling his childhood dream of playing the game of snooker.

Ikram remembers watching other children playing on dusty pool tables outside his home when he was a 10-year-old kid. He always wished one day he could also play the game, but just needed to work out how. "At that time I wished I

● **Ikram lives in a dusty rural town in the northeast of Pakistan in Punjab province. He hasn't let anything stop him from fulfilling his childhood dream of playing the game of snooker.**

had arms so that I could play the game, too," Ikram told The Associated Press.

Eventually he devised his own style and later went to a nearby club, looking for a game.

"People didn't believe me in the club that I could play with my chin," he said, "but they gradually started admiring my skills when I started hitting the cue ball with the chin."

Mohammad Nadeem, owner of the Cue Club in Samundri, recalled the time about 10 or 12 years ago when Ikram approached him with a request to play snooker. — AP

## Stokes finally found his mojo in IPL with superb knock



Hemant Kenkre  
Silly Point

One got afflicted with a heightened sense of déjà vu as the week ended thanks to two unrelated episodes involving Englishmen. Cricketers that had hogged the lime-light for different reasons, with decades between them. The first, an incredible player called Ben Stokes who finally found his mojo in the Indian Premier League (IPL) with a stupendous knock against table leaders Mumbai Indians (MI). The second, Sir Geoffrey

Boycott, who celebrated his 80th birthday on Wednesday locked up in a castle in his home state, Yorkshire with close family members.

Rajasthan Royals were faced with a daunting task to score 196 in order to keep their nose above the water line. They had seen their fellow wooden spooners, Chennai Super Kings (CSK) beat Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) with ease at Dubai and still in the race to qualify for the playoffs as RR skipper Steve Smith

walked out for the toss. With two wickets down (including that of Smith) at 44 runs, the total to chase became even more imposing than it was for Stokes who had the unpredictable Sanju Samson for company.

The 152-run stand that Stokes stitched together with the young marvel from Kerala not only kept his team afloat in the competition but has given them a sense of confidence to march ahead with two more matches to go. Looking back, the drama that was played out at Abu Dhabi had featured another protagonist — New Zealander Trent Boult. The wiry Kiwi left arm seamer must have gone back to July 14, 2019, with memories of Stokes' heroics in the International Cricket Council (ICC)

World Cup final at Lord's.

Boult's mind must have processed how Stokes had slowly taken the coveted championship away from his team in the company of Jos Buttler with a 110-run partnership and carried on with England's tail (which contributed to only 12 of the 45-runs) to tie the match and win in the super over. On Sunday night, Stokes and Samson decided to give Buttler, the third protagonist of the two games, a rest while they sealed the deal for RR, making their win the highest scored against an in-form MI who had looked at being the first team to qualify for the IPL playoffs.

Four days earlier, when Sir Geoffrey went past 80-years, the mind wandered to the early 70s when one was growing up wanting to play the game in a cricket

crazy city. Coaches then used to tell us to learn from Sir Geoffrey whose batting technique they used to gloat about. We were bereft of videos then, and word of mouth, from the lucky few, who had seen the Yorkshireman accumulate runs against the best was enough to paint a picture in one's head about what batting technique was all about.

The first time I saw Sir Geoffrey batting was at Lord's in a One Day (ODI) international against the West Indies in 1980. More than many heroes playing that match, the excitement was of watching the famed opener pit his skills against the pace quartet featuring Andy Roberts, Mike Holding, Joel Garner and Malcolm Marshall. While walking past the stall of bookmakers

Ladbroke's one saw the board that displayed the odds for punters. The odds for Sir Geoffrey becoming the man of the match were listed at 70-1. Those who may have placed their bets on Sir Geoffrey must have popped corks of champagne as he achieved that with a belligerent innings to 70 runs.

The second time one met him was during England's tour of India when they played a charity match on my club's home ground, the Brabourne Stadium, in 1981.

Sir Geoffrey had wanted a private net session and the club had young Bombay bowlers delighted to bowl to the legendary opener. Sir Geoffrey struggled in the nets and what we heard were more curses than the sweet sound of the ball hitting the middle

of his bat.

Dissatisfied with himself, he let loose on a few club staff members who were sleeping in the stands by calling them 'lazy and lackadaisical' only to be told that they were resting in between duties.

From 1981 till now, Sir Geoffrey has taught me many things as suggested by my coaches of yore of batting and cricket. As a batsman one learnt from him the grammar of correct batting technique and how to put a big price on one's wicket. As far as cricket (and life) goes, his history of disrespecting fellow players and colleagues, raving and ranting as a crusty old curmudgeon (bordering on being racist) also taught me what \*not\* to do in one's quest of becoming a better human being.