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VIJAYAWADA | FRIDAY | 23 OCTOBER 2020



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COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+51,807)	(+638)
77,56,206	1,17,277
covid19india.org	
STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS	
(+1,579)	(+5)
TS: 2,27,580	1,292
(+3,620)	(+16)
AP: 7,96,919	6,524

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

4,18,28,671
DEATHS
11,40,016
COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES
213

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari; Dakshinayana
Tithi: Nija Ashwayuja Shuddha Saptami till 6.58 am
Star: Uttarashada till 1.30 am (Saturday)
Variyam: 9.10 am to 10.48 am; 5.41 am to 7.22 am (Saturday)
Durmuhurtam: 8.33 am to 9.19 am; 12.23 pm to 1.09 pm
Rahukalam: 10.30 am to 12 noon
HIJRI CALENDAR
Rabbi-ul Awwal 5, 1442 AH
PRAVERS
Fajar: 5.35 am
Zohar: 1.30 pm
Asar: 4.45 pm
Maghrib: 5.56 pm
Isha: 8.15 pm
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.02 AM
SUNSET TODAY 5.41 PM
MOONRISE TODAY 12.28 AM
MOONSET TOMORROW 00.48 PM

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Stealth submarine



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

Jagan: Comprehensive land survey from Jan. 1

MD ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 22

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Thursday directed officials to conduct a comprehensive land survey with the aim of providing permanent land ownership.

Reviewing a meeting of officials on survey of lands in the state, CM Jagan suggested that the survey could be started from January 1, 2021, and completed by August 2023, without leaving any errors. As the survey would be conducted after a long gap of about 100 years, the Chief Minister asked officials to increase the number of survey teams and use latest technologies like drones and rovers towards digitalising land records.

Jagan Mohan Reddy said land registration services should be provided within all village secretariats, along with equipment for survey, with surveyors trained in the latest technology. He wanted that the entire digitalisation process be made tamper-proof.

Officials informed the CM that the entire survey will be held in three phases and arrangements for the same are in progress. All details collected during the survey will be updated online on a regular basis directly from the drones and rovers along with a GIS-tagged picture.

The survey will be taking place over 1.22 lakh square kilometre throughout the state. 4,500 survey teams will be

surveying the entire area simultaneously. A pilot survey project is being conducted at Takkellapadu in Jaggayyapeta mandal of Krishna district using latest technology.

Officials stated that 70 base stations will be required for the survey of which a few have already been established. At the same time, necessary steps are being taken to solve pending land disputes through mobile courts in villages.

Deputy Chief Minister Dharmana Krishnadas, chief secretary Nilam Sawhney, CCLA special chief secretary Neerabh Prasad, Commissioner of Stamps and Registration Siddharth Jain and other officials participated in the review meeting.

ONION PRICE HITS ₹100/KG AS RAINS AFFECT IMPORTS

VADREVVU SRINIVAS | DC
KAKINADA, OCT. 22

Onion prices have again skyrocketed to Rs.100 per kilo in the open market in East Godavari as imports from Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kurnool of Andhra Pradesh have drastically decreased due to recent rains which badly hit the crop.

The state government is making arrangements to bring 1000 tonnes of onions to the state to be sold at Rythu bazaars, a kilo a person. This is usually the season of the arrival of onions from Maharashtra and Karnataka and the market is flooded with onions.

■ **Page 2: Export of onion stopped by rains**

AIR QUALITY IN AP IMPROVES DUE TO LOCKDOWN

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 22

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

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

■ **Page 2: PCB looks for chemicals released in air**



Amit Shah

HOME MINISTRY EASES OCI, PIO VISA CURBS

DC CORRESPONDENT
with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, OCT. 22

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

The MHA said it was giving permission to all Overseas Citizen of India and Person of Indian Origin card holders and other foreigners to visit India for any purpose, except on a tourist visa. This will enable foreigners to visit India for business, conferences, jobs, studies and research. "The government will make a graded relaxation in visa and travel restrictions for foreigners who wish to enter or leave India," the MHA order said.

Respect daughters as goddesses: PM

Recalls provision of death for offenders

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

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

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



Narendra Modi

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

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

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

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

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

Court puts off Group-1 Mains

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 22

AP High Court has directed the AP Public Service Commission (APPSC) to postpone the Group-I Mains examinations scheduled to start from

November 2. Responding to High Court's directive, APPSC secretary P.S.R. Anjaneyulu has released a statement stating that the Group-I Mains exams, scheduled to be held from November 2 to November

13, have been postponed. The revised dates for these exams will be announced on October 29 in compliance with directions issued by the court.

■ **Page 2: HC: Reconsider evaluation of 5 questions**

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CAPITAL ISSUE

ENTRANCE TEST FOR RGUKT-IIT ON NOV. 28

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 22

The common entrance test (CET) for admissions into Rajiv Gandhi University of Knowledge and Technologies (RGUKT) IIT will be held on November 28.

A notification for the same was released by Minister for Education Adimulapu Suresh here on Thursday. He said that normally admissions to IIT are based on SSC marks but this time around they had decided to go ahead with the test without such a benchmark as exams were not conducted because of corona pandemic. He said the CET results would be declared on December 5.

Those aspiring for diploma courses in NG Ranga, SV Veterinary and YSR horticulture can also write the CET. Candidates have to register through www.rgukt.in.

RGUKT will offer the six-year Integrated B Tech Programme (PUC- 2 years + B Tech - 4 Years) which has 4,000 seats comprising 1,000 seats in their institutes at Ongole, Srikakulam, Nuzvid and Idupulapaya.

AP RELEASES PENDING DUES OF BAS

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 22

The AP government released ₹50 crore for clearing pending dues of the Best Available Schools Scheme on Thursday. Deputy Chief Minister Pushpa Srivani on Thursday said that all the pending dues of the previous government of the Best Available Schools (BAS) scheme for Tribal students in various districts was being cleared. She said that ₹50.31 crore was being released to clear the dues for the year 2017-18 and 2019-2020 from the funds of the Tribal Welfare Corporation.

Pushpa Srivani said that as per the BAS scheme the tribal students would pursue an education in private schools and the government would pay the fees to the private schools. She lamented that the earlier Telugu Desam government has left pending dues to the BAS, making it difficult to continue the BAS scheme. She stated that with the proactive move of CM Jagan Mohan Reddy to continue the scheme, all the pending dues are being cleared. She said that pending dues from the year 2017-18 till date to the tune of ₹50.31 crore is being cleared.

NAIDU NOT BUILT A SINGLE PERMANENT STRUCTURE: BOTSA

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 22

Minister for municipal administration Botsa Satyanarayana came down heavily on the leader of Opposition N. Chandrababu Naidu for creating a hue and cry that the present government is neglecting Amaravati region. The minister said that Naidu did not build a single permanent structure during his term. He said that on the other hand Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy government has already proposed to give municipal corporation status by merging Tadepalli and Mangalagiri regions, which includes Amaravati.

TENSION AS PRO-, ANTI-AMRAVATI SUPPORTERS STIR

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 22

Pro-Amaravati activists on Thursday conducted Maha Pada Yatra seeking protection of Amaravati as the only capital of the state from various places to Uddandarayunipalem marking the fifth anniversary of laying of the foundation stone for Amaravati. Meanwhile, supporters of three capitals also staged a parallel protest at Uddandarayunipalem, which created tension due to heated arguments between the two groups.

Bahujana Parirakshana Samiti leaders with their activists staged a rally in support of three capitals from Mandadam. They lamented that there was no use of one capital due to lack of appropriate accommodation as Amaravati did not give house sites to 52,000 housing beneficiaries. They claimed that three capitals would help develop all the regions of the State and hailed the decision of Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy.

Bala Puja



A priest performs Bala Puja at the Mallikharjuna Mahamandapam as part of Dasara festival celebrations in Vijayawada on Thursday.
C. NARAYANA RAO

INS Kavaratti formally commissioned in Vizag

ASW stealth corvette manned by a team of 12 officers, 134 sailors

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 22

Chief of Army Staff General Manoj Mukund Naravane commissioned *INS Kavaratti*, the Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) stealth corvette built under Project 28 (Kamorta Class), at a ceremony held at the Naval Dockyard here on Thursday.

Vice-Admiral Atul Kumar Jain, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command, Rear Admiral Vipin Kumar Saxena (Retd.), CMD, Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) Limited, Kolkata, and other dignitaries were present during the commissioning ceremony.

The event marks formal commissioning into the Navy of the last of four ASW corvettes designed indigenously by Indian Navy's in-house organisation – Directorate of Naval



Chief of Army Staff, General Manoj Mukund Naravane along with Commander-in-Chief of Eastern Naval Command, Vice Admiral Atul Kumar Jain CMD of GRSE Kolkata, Rear Admiral Vipin Kumar Saxena, and Commanding Officer of INS Kavaratti, Cdr Sandeep Singh pose for a group photo onboard INS Kavaratti during the Commissioning Ceremony at Naval Dockyard in Visakhapatnam on Thursday.

Design and constructed by GRSE.

General Naravane was presented a guard of honour on arrival at the Naval Jetty. Vice Admiral Atul Kumar Jain addressed the gathering, which was followed by reading out of the Commissioning Warrant of the Ship by its Commanding Officer, Commander Sandeep Singh.

Subsequently, hoisting of the Naval Ensign onboard for the first time and 'Breaking of the Commissioning Pennant', with National Anthem being played, marked the symbolic tradition of commissioning. Army Chief later unveiled the Commissioning Plaque and dedicated the ship to the nation. He also addressed the gathering attending the commissioning ceremony.

Named after capital of the Lakshadweep group of islands, *INS Kavaratti* has been constructed using high-grade DMR 249A steel produced in India.

The sleek and magnificent ship spans 109m in length, 14m in breadth and with displacement of 3,300 tonnes. It can rightfully be regarded as one of the most potent anti-submarine warships to have been constructed in India.

The unique feature of this ship is the high level of indigenisation incorporated in its production, which is in consonance with the national objective of "Atmanirbhar Bharat".

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

PCB looks for chemicals released in air

From page 1

The air quality is checked in Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, Kakinada, Rajahmundry, Eluru, Vijayawada, Guntur, Ongole, Nellore, Kurnool, Tirupati, Chittoor, Kadapa and Anantapur.

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

Based on the direction from the national green tribunal in a case, the

APPCB has come up with an action plan on how to control air pollution and entrusted a specific task to each department to implement it. Accordingly, the APPCB has taken up the responsibility to monitor ambient air quality by setting up such stations on a permanent basis in some municipal areas in AP while municipal bodies have been asked to take up clearing of garbage at public places and ensure no open burning of garbage.

They are also asked to clear roads of dust and take up construction of cement-concrete pavements to avoid dust rising into the atmosphere. The road transport authorities are asked to keep tab on vehicles causing pollution by regularly checking

their emissions to measure pollution levels. They are also supposed to keep strict check on whether vehicles have pollution under check certificates.

The police department too has its role to play in regulating vehicular traffic to avoid traffic jams so that the emissions from vehicles are not concentrated in only some areas causing air pollution.

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

The other reasons for

such a remarkable change in ambient air quality in the state is the imposition of lockdown in several phases to contain the spread of Covid-19 and also the incessant rainfall. The Centre-imposed lockdown regulated public movement, suspension of all public transport, people staying indoors, reduced movement of vehicles and people avoiding mass social gatherings, all of which improved air quality. Closure of several manufacturing and reduction units also helped improve air quality.

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

TRAVEL | RELIEF

Railways taking care of measures for those boarding the trains

Daily trains to Hyd and Chennai resume

PATHRI RAJASEKHAR | DC
NELLORE, OCT. 22

Restoration of train services, especially to Hyderabad and Chennai, came as a big relief to the people of AP as RTC was not operating services to these two cities yet.

There are strong bonds since ages between the two cities and the people of coastal AP and they were forced to depend on private buses or hire cars these days to visit these cities because there were no daily trains.

Railway officials said the Narayanadri Express operating from Tirupati to Hyderabad was restored already and the Charminar Express from Chennai to Hyderabad also started operations on October 20.

Lauding the railways for restoring the train services to all parts of the country, a frequent traveller, P.S. Moorthy, from Nellore, lamented over non-availability of accommodation at several destinations during festivals. He said that both railways and

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, OCT. 22

South Central Railway (SCR) has sought the cooperation of its passengers to ensure a hassle-free journey during the Dasara festival.

To clear the festive, SCR is operating more than 68 festive special trains from October 20 in addition to the 42 regular services through the Division.

To stay in tune with the Covid-19 protocol passengers have been urged to strictly adhere to the guidelines like wearing masks, maintaining social distance and keeping hands hygienic.

According to a press release from the railways,

travelling public should take protective measures from Covid-19, pointing to the sudden spurt in cases after Onam in Kerala.

The superintendent of Nellore railway station, M.V.S.N. Kumar, said that

HC pulls up SEC for seeking official residence in Hyd

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 22

Andhra Pradesh High Court has pulled up state election commissioner N. Ramesh Kumar for wanting his house in Hyderabad to be declared as his official residence. The court asked whether having two official accommodations in both Vijayawada and Hyderabad was not a waste of public money.

High Court bench headed Justice B. Devanand was hearing a case in this regard on Thursday. Referring to the affidavit filed by the petitioner (state election commissioner) attaching pending bills, the court observed that some bills amounting to ₹40 lakh were related to making arrangements for conduct of polls. That

● The court also reserved its order on an interlocutory application filed by the state election commissioner complaining about no assistance and no support from the state government to the State Election Commission for holding elections in a free and fair manner.

amount had already been released by the state government. The court took note of other pending bills of ₹10 lakh for payment of fees to advocates.

When the petitioner informed the High Court that some posts had not been filled up by the state government in the State Election Commission, the court asked for details of the posts. The petitioner said a letter had been

written by him asking for appointment of attenders for him at his residence in Hyderabad, which had to be declared as the official residence of AP state election commissioner.

The judge took serious note of this and questioned the need for an official residence of AP State Election Commissioner in Hyderabad in addition to such a facility in Vijayawada. The judge wanted to know whether it would not be wastage of public money.

The court also reserved its order on an interlocutory application filed by the state election commissioner complaining about no assistance and no support from the state government to the State Election Commission for holding elections in a free and fair manner.

HC: Reconsider evaluation of 5 Group-1 queries

From page 1

The High Court's directive on postponement of Group-I Mains came while a High Court bench, headed by Justice R. Raghunandan Rao, was hearing a batch of petitions on Thursday. The bench also ordered the APPSC to reconsider evaluation of five questions in the Group-I Preliminary exams and prepare a fresh list of preliminary results.

In the petitions filed on conduct of Group-I Preliminary examinations, petitioners sought cancellation of the exam complaining that there were 51 translation errors from English to Telugu in the question paper. They further complained that APPSC had not allowed candidates to carry non-programmable calculators to use them for solving questions related to maths.

Counsel for the commission contended that in case of any translation errors, the candidates had been informed that they must refer to the English version, which was authentic. The counsel maintained that the English used in the question paper was of Class X standard, while the candidates appearing for the exam are going to work as Group-I officers.

The court, however, dismissed the petition seeking cancellation of the Group-I preliminary exam.

Similarly, with regard to a petition contending that the commission did not follow reservations for selection of candidates appearing for Group-I Mains, the APPSC counsel informed the court that there was no such rule. The counsel also pointed out that marks

obtained in Group-I prelims will not be considered for preparation of final merit list.

Accordingly, the court also dismissed the petition and upheld selection of candidates for Group-I Mains on 1:50 ratio without any reservation.

With regard to petitions challenging correctness of the final key of preliminary exams, the court directed the commission to reconsider evaluation of answers for five questions after taking the opinion from subject experts concerned and issue a fresh merit list of those qualified to appear for Group-I Mains exams. Meanwhile, sources in the APPSC have maintained that they have already started the exercise of referring the five questions to the expert panel to find out appropriate answers. Once, the correct answers are finalised, answers of candidates who failed to qualify for the Group-I Mains exams will be checked with the revised answers for the five questions. In case, they get requisite marks to be declared as qualified to appear for Group-I Mains exams, their list will be announced.

Candidates who have qualified to appear for the Group-I Mains exams have appealed to the APPSC to expedite conduct of the mains exams. However, those who are expecting to get qualified after the revised evaluation of five questions want adequate time for preparation.

EXPORT OF ONION STOPPED BY RAINS

From page 1

But when the crop was coming to the harvesting stage, the rains hit and onion transactions, including exports, were stopped. "The consumption of all types of onions are 100 tonnes daily and Tadepalligudem traders are the main exporters of the onions. But now, not even 40 tonnes of onions are arriving in East Godavari. Automatically, the prices of onions has increased," said K. Babu Rao, a wholesale onion dealer at Kakinada.

The government was trying to bring onions from other states and open special onion counters for consumers, Rao said, hoping it will give some relief to the consumers. He opined that the situation would have been worse, as arrivals in the market have suffered for the past two months. However, an exporter in Tadepalligudem has made all arrangements to export onions to Bangladesh. But due to the lockdown, the cargo was halted at the borders. The exporters got the cargo back and sold it at cheaper prices and that's why onion prices are increasing at a slower rate. He said that the onions were sold at ₹170 to ₹190 per kilo during the same period last year.

The state government is making arrangements to sell the onions at ₹40 per kilo without compromising on quality. Agriculture minister, Kurasala Kannababu, said the government is procuring 1000 tonnes to sell through Rythu Bazaars on the basis of Aadhaar card.

The extent of the crop has also decreased from 28,000 hectares to 25,000 hectares, said Kannababu, adding that due to the rains, 2600 hectares of the crop has been damaged.

trains, Kumar said that only passengers with RAC and confirmed tickets are allowed into the stations. The railways are taking care of Covid-19 preventive measures for passengers boarding the trains, said Kumar, and it is the responsibility of the state government to screen the passengers alighting at stations.

To avoid unauthorised entry into the station, passengers are allowed into the station only through the western entrance. Passengers have been asked to come to the station one hour before departure for thermal screening and sanitising baggage and hands. "Passengers are provided with sanitisers for use at entry and exit points of railway stations. They must also make use of face masks without fail during the entire journey," Kumar said, adding that passengers are not being allowed to use lifts or foot-over bridges in Nellore because of the possibility of the spread of the virus.



COUNTER POINT



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

OTHER STORIES

65 tonnes of oil pumped out of ship

Visakhapatnam: A private agency Gill Marine pumped out 65 tonnes of furnace oil from Bangladesh vessel MV Maa, which ran aground near Tenneti Park on October 14. The vessel as per preliminary estimates had 44 tonnes of furnace oil and nine tonnes of diesel. Diesel will be pumped out from Friday, said managing director of Gill Marine Surender Singh Gill.

Fake cop makes youth shave their heads

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 22

Jealous of good hairstyles, a 27-year-old man from Sangareddy district of Telangana impersonating as a police officer forced several young men to cut their hair or shave their heads. He was taken into custody by the Anakapalle police when he forced a youth to shave his head. The youth got a call from this fake circle inspector and immediately obeyed him. However, he later got suspicious and lodged a complaint.

Circle Inspector of Anakapalle town Bhaskara Rao told this correspondent that the man was identified as Manchukonda Pandari. After dropping out of school, he became a shepherd and living on the family income. After he obtained a high-end mobile phone, he began watching various programmes and was obsessed with hairstyles. He became

● **27-YEAR-OLD** Manchukonda Pandari from Sangareddy district of Telangana impersonating as a police officer forced several young men to cut their hair or shave their heads.

jealous and started calling a few men after tracing their numbers through the internet. So far, he called eight people and made them trim their hair or shave. They were sending back their pictures to him.

However, the Anakapalle youth gained courage and lodged a complaint. After tracing the calls, the police identified his location and arrested him. He was brought to Anakapalle and produced in the court. He was remanded to judicial custody.

Cases under various sections 419, 506 and others of IPC and IT Act were registered against him.

Vizag cops arrest 9 for various crimes

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 22

The Visakhapatnam police arrested nine people and took one juvenile into their custody for allegedly being involved in five various cases, on Thursday.

Giving details of the arrests, deputy commissioner of police (Crimes) V. Suresh Babu said that in one case a 20-year old youth K. Premchand of JNNURM Colony, Parawada area, was arrested and taken into custody for allegedly being involved in two snatching offences under the Duvvada police station limits.

On September 18, the duo was going on a bike and snatched a gold chain from a woman who was going on a scooter at Rajeev Nagar area. In another case on October 19, the duo grabbed a bag from a woman near Agnampudi toll gate.

The police have recovered ₹11.7 gm of gold jewellery, a

mobile phone and a few other items from them.

Liquor theft: In two liquor theft cases under the Kancharapalem police station limits, the police arrested six people, at a bar and restaurant at Kapparada area on September 18 late night. The accused made good with 126 liquor bottles worth ₹60,000. Acting on a tip-off, police arrested five people, while one more person is yet to be nabbed.

In another case, the police arrested P. Teja (24) of ITI junction, Kancharapalem for theft of several liquor bottles worth ₹50,000.

Gutka and khaini: The police arrested N. Venkata Suresh of Nakkavanipalem area for allegedly storing banned gutka and khaini packets, altogether 24,000 pouches worth ₹3.60 lakh.

In the fifth case, the police arrested one Satyanarayana, 22, of NGOs colony for allegedly committing theft of half tola gold chain in the city.

ATM cut open, ₹9.5 lakh cash robbed

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 22

Unidentified persons using gas cutters broke open the ATM of State Bank of India at Sundarnagar in Old Dairy Farm under Arilova police station and decamped with ₹9.55 lakh cash.

The incident took place after Wednesday midnight. The entire cash was filled in the ATM by the Writer Safeguard Pvt Ltd, who replenish the cash in SBI ATMs.

Deputy commissioner of police V. Sureshbabu said the persons cut off the CCTV connection at the ATM before entering into it and later pulled down the

shutters. They later cut open the machine using gas cutters.

The entire cash seems to have been taken by the intruders, he said.

The CCTV footage before they entered the premises had no clear images. The entire system was sent to IT experts to salvage the images.

The DCP said special teams have been formed to nab the persons. The gas cutting equipment left by them was also being checked for the agency which supplied or sold them.

Writer Safeguard Pvt Ltd lodged a formal complaint with the Arilova police station.

AP records 3,620 new Covid cases, 16 deaths

3,723 infected patients discharged after recovery in last 24 hrs

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 22

Andhra Pradesh has registered 3,620 new Covid-19 positive cases, raising the overall tally to 7,96,919, apart from 16 deaths in the state during the last 24 hours, taking the death toll to 6,524.

The Coronavirus bulletin released here on Thursday by state health authorities listed that out of the 76,726 samples tested during the last 24 hours, 3,620 individuals have been found to be infected with Covid-19. Out of a total 73,47,776 samples tested so far in the state, 7,58,138 patients have been discharged after recovery, while 32,257 are still active with the virus and undergoing treatment.

Among the daily Coronavirus positive instances, West Godavari district registered the highest 631 cases, followed by 492 in

Training to teachers

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, OCT. 22

Given the re-opening of schools from November 2, special training is being given to the teachers across AP to identify students with Covid-19 symptoms and prevent the spread of the dreaded virus.

East Godavari, 412 in Chittoor, 385 in Guntur, 370 in Krishna, 311 in Prakasam, 212 in Kadapa, 196 in Anantapur, 171 in Visakhapatnam, 126 each in Srikakulam and Nellore, 122 in Vizianagaram and 66 in Kurnool.

East Godavari district recorded the highest number of 1,12,186 cumulative Covid-19 cases, followed by 81,252 cases in West Godavari, 75,343 in Chittoor, 63,849 in Guntur, 63,307 in

As part of the initiative, pulse oximeters are being supplied to the schools.

Across Prakasam district, 4,450 pulse oximeters are being distributed to the schools, and the teachers are being trained to make effective use of the meters to check oxygen level in the blood.

Anantapur, 59,027 in Kurnool, 58,668 in Nellore, 57,636 in Prakasam, 54,475 in Visakhapatnam, 50,586 in Kadapa, 43,136 Srikakulam, 38,573 in Vizianagaram, 35,986 in Krishna, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

The rate of recovery among Coronavirus-infected patients has been good in East Godavari with total 1,05,656 recoveries, followed by 77,141 in West Godavari, 70,843 in Chit-

toor, 60,987 in Anantapur, 59,547 in Guntur, 57,799 in Kurnool, 57,610 in Nellore, 54,286 in Prakasam, 51,807 in Visakhapatnam, 48,123 in Kadapa, 41,598 in Srikakulam, 37,495 in Vizianagaram, 32,351 in Krishna, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

Guntur district registered four deaths during the last 24 hours, followed by two each in Chittoor, East Godavari, Krishna and Prakasam, and one each in Anantapur, Kadapa, Visakhapatnam and West Godavari districts.

Chittoor district has registered the highest number of total 754 deaths due to Coronavirus, followed by 598 in Guntur, 595 in EG, 565 in Prakasam, 543 in Anantapur, 539 in Krishna, 496 in Visakhapatnam, 486 in WG, 483 in Nellore, 480 in Kurnool, 421 in Kadapa, 338 in Srikakulam and 226 in Vizianagaram district.

MINORITY LEADER WARNS OF FAST-UNTO-DEATH

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 22

The Indian Union Muslim League (IUM) AP president Basheer Ahmad threatened to launch a fast-unto-death protest if the government fails to develop the 450-year-old Hazrat Syed Shah Quadri and Ali Hussein Shah Quadri dargahs and mosque situated beneath Kanaka Durga flyover here.

Basheer Ahmad said that the then TD government acquired land of dargah for flyover promising to develop the shrine and further to pay compensation. He said minority leaders had several times appealed to the government and had met Deputy CM Amzath Basha to intervene but to no avail.

He alleged that the CM was being biased against Muslims as he had visited the Durga temple on Wednesday but did not visit the dargah which is situated on the footsteps of the hill. He lamented that the CM was not keen on developing dargahs.

TTD presents silk robes to Goddess

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 22

The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD) presented silk robes to Goddess Durga during the Dasara Navaratri festival on Thursday. The Goddess adorned as Lalitha Tripura Sundari Devi gave darshan to devotees on the sixth day. The TTD team led by MLA K. Parthasarathy presented silk robes on behalf of TTD to goddess Kanaka Durga.

Durga temple executive officer M.V. Suresh Babu, Vedic priests, welcomed Parthasarathy. Later the

portrait of the Goddess and prasadam was given to the MLA.

Minister Kodali Sri Venkateswara Rao along with his family members visited the temple for darshan of Goddess Durga. Temple EO Suresh Babu welcomed the minister. After the darshan the EO presented the minister with a goddess portrait and prasadam.

About 50 vedic archakas were being honoured by the Kanaka Durga temple trust board chairman P. Somi Naidu on Thursday. Each vedic archaka was rewarded with ₹3,500 cash, prasadam and clothes.

LORD TAKEN OUT ON SURYAPRABHA, CHANDRAPRABHA VAHANAMS

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, OCT. 22

On the seventh day morning of Srivari Navaratri brahmotsavams Lord Malayappa Swamy was taken out on *Surya Prabha vahanam* in Trivikrama avatar on Thursday.

Lord Malayappa was seated majestically in the *Surya Prabha vahanam* at Kalyanotsava mandapam inside Srivari temple in Tirumala.

Later, in the evening, Lord Malayappa Swamy was taken on *Chandraprabha Vahanam* inside the temple.

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SHORT TAKES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NAYEAR AZAD | DC
PATNA, OCT. 22

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

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

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

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

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



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

— PTI

Modi is to begin his election campaign in Bihar.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Active cases in
India below 10%DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 22

The trend of steady decline in active cases in India continues as active cases are now below 10 per cent of the total cases for the last three days suggesting only 1 in 10 cases are active Covid-19 patients across the country. Presently, the active cases comprise 9.29 per cent of the total positive cases of the country that stands at 7.16 lakh.

The overall cases in India reached 77.07 lakh out of which 55,839 cases were detected in the last 24 hours. With 702 new fatalities, the total number of deaths in India are over 1.16 lakh.

According to Union health ministry, the daily Positivity Rate has also been less than five per cent over the past three days indicating that the spread of infection is being effectively contained. The daily Positivity Rate on Thursday was 3.8 per cent. Officials said the decrease in the daily positivity rate is simultaneously mapped by the falling active cases, which continue to be under 7.5 lakh on Thursday.

The total recovered cases are close to 69 lakhs and the difference between

TN CM ASSURES
FREE VACCINE
TO ALL IN STATE

Pudukottai (TN), Oct. 22: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister K. Palaniswami on Thursday assured free immunisation against Coronavirus for all sections of people in the state as soon as a vaccine is made available.

"I would like to announce that as soon as the vaccine is developed (and made available to states) all people in Tamil Nadu will be immunised and the government shall bear the cost," he said here during an official visit.

Union health minister Harsh Vardhan has last week said India is expected to have a Covid-19 vaccine in a few months and the country should be in the process of delivering it to people in the next six months. — PTI

een active cases and recovered cases is consistently increasing and stands at 61.59 lakh. In the last 24 hours, 79,415 patients recovered taking the national Recovery Rate to 89.20 per cent.

PM REMAINED MUM ON MANY ISSUES
BUT SPEECH WAS 'CRISP': SHIV SENA

Pune, Oct. 22: Taking a swipe at PM Narendra Modi over his address to the country, Shiv Sena mouthpiece *Saamana* said on Thursday that he remained silent on major issues, but it was "one of the best speeches" made in the last few months.

There was nothing to dislike in Modi's Tuesday's address, and the PM had a "radiant glow" on his face which will rid the

country of its problems, the editorial in the Marathi daily said in a sarcastic tone. "What did Modi tell the countrymen through his address? What was new? Did he give any assurance to the flood-hit people in Maharashtra? Which monetary package was announced? All such criticism can be directed at the speech, however, the speech was short and effective," it said. — PTI

Twitter puts Leh
in China, India
warns network

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

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

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

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

cal issue which has been swiftly resolved.

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

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

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

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

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

PSU whistleblower to move HC against govt

DC CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI, OCT. 22

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

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

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

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

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

had been going on in the company."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Maharashtra government's move came

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



IN BRIEF

London gas explosion: 2 die

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

Indonesia mine landslide: 11 die

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

Trio who lived on ISS return to Earth

Moscow: A trio of space travellers safely returned to Earth on Thursday after a six-month mission on the International Space Station. The Soyuz MS-16 capsule carrying NASA astronaut Chris Cassidy, and Roscosmos' Anatoly Ivanishin and Ivan Vagner landed on the steppes of Kazakhstan southeast of the town of Dzhezkazgan at 7:54 a.m. (2:54 GMT) Thursday. After a brief medical checkup, the three will be taken by helicopters to Dzhezkazgan from where they will depart home. Cassidy will board a NASA plane back to Houston, while Vagner and Ivanishin will fly home to Star City, Russia. The crew smiled as they talked to masked members of the recovery team, and NASA and Roscosmos reported that they were in good condition. As part of additional precautions due to the Coronavirus, the rescue team members meeting the crew were tested for the virus and the number of people involved in the recovery effort was limited. Cassidy, Ivanishin and Vagner spent 196 days in orbit, having arrived at the station on April 9. They left behind NASA's Kate Rubins and Roscosmos' Sergey Ryzhikov and Sergey Kud-Sverchikov, who arrived at the orbiting outpost a week ago for a six-month stay.

Iran behind emails to intimidate voters: US

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

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

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

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

Don mismanaged Covid-19: Obama

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

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

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

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

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

AFTER CHAOTIC DEBATE, TRUMP, BIDEN TRY AGAIN

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

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

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

Deport Nawaz: Pakistan requests UK third time

Islamabad, Oct. 22: Pakistan has requested the UK for a third time to deport former prime minister Nawaz Sharif from London to serve his prison term in the country after being sentenced in corruption cases, according to a media report on Thursday.

Sharif, the 70-year-old supremo of the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) who was ousted from

power in 2017 by the Supreme Court in lieu of corruption charges, is in London for his medical treatment.

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

Through the letter, the Pakistani government as-

ked the British authorities to consider cancelling Sharif's visit visa, which has allowed him to live in London on medical grounds since November.

The letter has cited Britain's own immigration laws of 1974 under which any person sentenced to imprisonment of more than four years had to be deported to the country of his/her origin. — PTI

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

Washington, Oct. 22: The State Department has proposed not to issue temporary business visas for H-1B speciality occupations which allowed several companies to send their technology professionals for a short stay to complete jobs on site in the US. On December 17, 2019, the Attorney General of California announced a \$800,000 settlement against Infosys Limited to resolve allegations that approximately 500 Infosys employees worked in the state on Infosys-sponsored B-1 visas rather than H-1B visas, the State Department said. "The proposed changes and the resulting transparency would reduce the impact of foreign labour on the US workforce of aliens performing activities in a speciality occupation without the procedural protections attendant to the H-1B classification," it said.

The State Department said the US architecture firm seeking protection from rising labour costs in the country might believe it could lay off its US architects and contract for the same professional architectural services to be provided by a foreign architecture firm. — PTI

Withdraw from UN N-ban treaty: US to countries

United Nations, Oct. 22: The United States is urging countries that have ratified a UN treaty to ban nuclear weapons to withdraw their support as the pact nears the 50 ratifications needed to trigger its entry into force, which supporters say could happen this week.

The US letter to signatories, obtained by *The Associated Press*, says the five original nuclear powers — the US, Russia, China, Britain and France — and America's NATO allies "stand unified in our opposition to the potential repercussions" of the treaty.

It says the treaty "turns back the clock on verification and disarmament and is dangerous" to the half-century-old Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, considered the cornerstone of global nonproliferation efforts.

"Although we recognize your sovereign right to ratify or accede to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), we believe that you have made a strategic error and should withdraw your instrument of ratification or accession," the letter says.

The treaty requires that all ratifying countries

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

It also bans any transfer or use of nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices — and the threat to use such weapons — and requires parties to promote the treaty to other countries.

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

— AP

OXFORD VACCINE TRIAL ON AMID PARTICIPANT'S DEATH

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

The university said it can't comment on specific incidents but an independent review

found no reason to be concerned about the safety of the Brazilian trial. It says an "independent review, in addition to the Brazilian regulator, have recommended that the trial should continue."

— PTI

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LTTE de-list move: Lanka lodges plea

Colombo, Oct. 22: Sri Lanka has appealed against a judgement from Britain's Proscribed Organisations Appeal Commission, which has delisted the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) as a proscribed terrorist organisation.

A foreign ministry statement said that Sri Lanka has been made aware of the Open Judgement by the Commission. It said the decision of the Commission arises from an appeal filed in May 2019 by an LTTE front organisation challenging the decision of British Secretary of State for Home Affairs dated

March 8, 2019, which refused the application by the group to de-proscribe the LTTE from the list of Proscribed Organisations under the UK Terrorism Act of 2000.

While Sri Lanka was not a party to these proceedings at the Commission and could not make direct representations, the Lankan Government assisted the British government by providing relevant information with regard to continued terrorist activities. Sri Lanka maintains that it has sufficient evidence to prove that the remnants of the LTTE and groups are active in foreign countries. — PTI

