

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM | SUNDAY | 25 OCTOBER 2020



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Vol. 25 No. 180 Established 1940 | 16 PAGES | ₹6.00



DC WISHES

ITS READERS A VERY HAPPY DASARA

HOLIDAY NOTICE

The offices of **DECCAN CHRONICLE** will remain closed today for Dasara. There will be no edition on Monday, October 26, 2020

WEATHER



Max: 33.0°C
Min: 23.0°C
RH: 79%
Rainfall: Nil
Forecast: Humid and Partly Cloudy.
Max/Min temp. 33/23 °C

COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+51,997)	(+626)
78,62,483	1,18,535
covid19india.org	
STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS	
(+1,273)	(+5)
TS: 2,30,274	1,303
(+3,342)	(+22)
AP: 8,04,026	6,566

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

	4,27,54,704
	DEATHS
	11,52,536
	213
COUNTRIES AREAS WITH CASES	

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana
Titih: Nija Ashwavyuja Shuddha Navami tili 7.42 am
Star: Danishta tili 4.23 am (Monday)
Variyam: 6.56 am to 8.39 am
Durmuhurtam: 4.12 pm to 4.58 pm
Rahukalam: 4.30 pm to 6 pm

HIJRI CALENDAR
Rabbi-ul Awwal 7, 1442 AH
PRAYERS (ROYAL MOSQUE)

Fajar: 5:00 am
Zohar: 1:30 pm
Asar: 5:00 pm
Maghrib: 6:35 pm
Isha: 8:30 pm

SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.58 AM
SUNSET TODAY 5.35 PM
MOONRISE TODAY 1.58 AM
MOONSET TOMORROW 01.36 PM

COUNTER POINT



I promise to get a Covid vaccine manufacturing unit in your town and provide jobs!

SHORT TAKES

TRP: Broadcasters against CBI probe

New Delhi: The News Broadcasters Association on Saturday urged the government to withdraw the CBI probe into alleged manipulation of Television Rating Points (TRP), saying the speed with which the investigation was transferred to the agency raises doubts about intentions. In a statement, the News Broadcasters Association (NBA) expressed serious concern at "the open-ended FIR registered by the Uttar Pradesh Police against the media for alleged TRP manipulation".

INSIDE

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CM seeks Central funds for Polavaram project

Dasara celebrations



A priest performs pujas for Goddess Durga during the Dasara Navaratri Celebrations organised by Bengali Association at Waltair Kalibari on the station road in Visakhapatnam on Saturday. — K. MURALI KRISHNA

REVENUE STAFF DEMOLISH GITAM COMPOUND WALL

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 24

In a midnight operation that lasted till early Saturday, revenue officials in the presence of police demolished a compound wall facing the beach road and the main gate of the campus of the GITAM deemed to be university to free 40 acres of encroached land. The campus houses an engineering college, a dental college, a medical college and other educational institutions over 120 acres of prime land. The varsity was founded by late TD member of Parliament M.V.V.S. Murthy and is being run by his grandson, TD leader M. Sri Bharat.

■ **Page 2: No notice issued, says Gitam**

DRUNKARD BEHEADS MOM FOR LIQUOR CASH

Hyderabad, Oct. 24: A man allegedly beheaded his 65-year-old mother and ran away with the severed head after she refused to give him money to buy liquor, police said on Saturday. The incident was reported from a village in Nagarkurnool district of Telangana in the wee hours of the day, the police said. The 45-year-old was caught near a tank with the chopped-off head found hurled into bushes, they said. A case has been registered and a complaint lodged by the man's older brother. —PTI

RTC special buses to run from border for Dasara

MD ILYAS I DC VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 24

With talks between the AP and TS governments over running of inter-state buses failing, the APSRTC has decided to run special buses from the borders of Telangana to various places in the state so that AP natives can return to celebrate the Dasara festival. Transport minister Perni Venkataramaiah alias Nani said special buses have been arranged

from all check posts on the Telangana state border. He said that AP transport officials had been holding talks with their Telangana state counterparts since June 18. AP had sent proposals to operate buses on over 1.61 lakh km routes, decreasing 1.04 lakh km from earlier routes. However, the talks did not yield any results.

As a result, the minister said, APSRTC buses will operate from the borders at Panchalingala,

Garikapadu, Vadapalli, Jeelugumalli and Kallugudem. He asked people to make use of these buses to reach their destinations. With the absence of direct bus services, it has been seen that people travel to the border of one state, cross a small distance using local transport and board another bus in the neighbouring state.

■ **Page 2: States got discretionary powers**

Parallel flood canal along TB put on hold

HOSKOTE NAGABHUSHANAM | DC ANANTAPUR, OCT. 24

Proposals to build a parallel flood canal for the Tungabhadra (TB) High Level Main Canal by Andhra Pradesh and a supplementary reservoir across the Tungabhadra river near Nowli by the Karnataka government have been halted temporarily following objections by irrigation officials of both states during the recent Tungabhadra Board meeting. The Board has put the issue in the courts of the Chief Ministers of the two states.

It may be noted that the Andhra Pradesh government had proposed the construction of a flood canal from the TB reservoir to the state borders

and the issue has been pending for the past two decades because of a poor response from Karnataka.

However, Karnataka proposed building a supplementary reservoir across the Tungabhadra river near Nowli upstream area and reportedly planned to mount pressure on AP irrigation officials and Board members to clear it.

In the Tungabhadra Board meeting held two days ago, AP officials objected to a supplementary reservoir even as Karnataka had prepared a detailed and substantiated project report.

Karnataka justified drawing 30 tmc feet from the augmented canal at Nowli to compensate for the heavy silt in the Tungabhadra dam.

Objecting to the proposal, Andhra Pradesh mooted a meeting of the tow Chief Ministers to resolve the issue.

Meanwhile, Karnataka objected to the parallel flood canal to use at least 25 tmc ft water from the reservoir during the rainy season. AP officials were asked to prepare proposals for the parallel flood canal from the Tungabhadra dam towards Anantapur to receive at least one tmc ft every day during the rainy season.

Irrigation expert Sharma observed that the proposal to have a meeting of the two chief ministers has again made it a political issue which cannot be solved in time.

"Only the flood canal can be a major source for Anantapur and Kadapa", he said.

SCORE | HIGH **NEET All India rankers repeat good show in TS**

AP girl student tops TS Eamcet

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC HYDERABAD, OCT. 24

A student from AP topped the agriculture and medical stream of the Telangana state Eamcet, the results of which were released on Saturday. Girls bagged the top spots in the test which was conducted by the JNTU-H on

behalf of the TS Council of Higher Education.

Guthi Chaitanya Sindhu of Tenali secured the first rank, while Bareddy Sai Thrisha Reddy of Sangareddy and Tummala Snikitha of Hyderabad secured the second and third ranks, respectively. All three are NEET All India rank holders.

Sindhu was ranked 6 in NEET and Thrisha was placed 14th and Snikitha second. This year, 78,981 candidates registered for the Eamcet A&M stream, of whom 63,857 appeared and 59,113 qualified. The qualifying percentage stood at 92.57.

Meanwhile, the first phase of web-based coun-

selling for admission into engineering and pharmacy colleges for 2020-21 was conducted for candidates from October 12 to October 22. Of the 74,094 seats available, 50,288 were allotted — 50,137 for engineering courses and 151 to pharmacy. There are 19,998 engineering and 3,808 pharmacy seats.

Festival gift: Centre okays interest sop

Interest on interest for loans up to ₹2 cr waived

Dec. 31 deadline to file I-T returns

New Delhi, Oct. 24: In a relief to borrowers at the onset of Diwali, the government late on Friday night announced waiver of interest on interest for loans up to ₹2 crore irrespective of whether moratorium was availed.

The Department of Financial Services came out with operational guidelines in the backdrop of SC's direction to implement the interest waiver scheme, which is likely to cost the exchequer ₹6,500 crore. Borrowers who availed the six-month moratorium will be compensated for the compound interest they will be charged by banks while those who paid on time will get as cashback the notional interest on the interest that they paid. The government said that banks will credit the amount into the customer's account and later claim it from the government. If the borrower has fully repaid the loan in between, the benefit will

New Delhi, Oct. 24: The government on Saturday further extended the deadline for filing returns by individual taxpayers for FY 2019-20 by a month till December 31. Also, the due date of furnishing Income-Tax Returns (ITRs) for taxpayers whose accounts require to be audited was extended till January 31, 2021.

be calculated for the moratorium period when the loan was outstanding. The rate of interest will be the rate contracted in the loan.

As per the guidelines, the scheme can be availed by borrowers in specified loan accounts for a period from March 1 to August 31, 2020.

As per the eligibility cri-

teria mentioned in the guidelines, the accounts should be standard as on February 29 which means that it should not be Non-Performing Ass=et. Housing loan, education loans, credit card dues, auto loans, MSME, consumer dur-able loans and consumption loans are covered under this.

—PTI

—Agencies

Chakrasnanam



TTD archakas perform Chakrasnanam to the processional idols Lord of Seven Hills and his Consorts in the newly built Pushkarini inside the holy shrine in Tirumala on Saturday.

Forest officials step up curbs on wildlife hunting

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 24

Foresters are on high alert to prevent hunting and poaching of wild animals like wild boar and spotted deer for their meat in the fringe areas of reserve forests and sanctuaries, given the huge demand for the meat especially during Darasa in parts of Andhra Pradesh.

This practice is prevalent in the peripheries of reserve forests and sanctuaries located in Vinukonda in Guntur; Chithapalli and Paderu in Visakhapatnam; Kukkunur and Jangareddygudem in West Godavari; Rampachodavaram and Chintur in East Godavari; Nagarjunasagar-Srisaillam tiger reserve; Sesachalam forest in Chittoor; Giddalur in Prakasam.

The flying squad of Guntur circle is sensitising villagers on wildlife protection, especially in Nehrunagar thanda, Ramidicherla, Mellavagu in Vinukonda forest range limits in the wake of past incidents of poaching of

wild animals, especially during the Dasara festivities.

Guntur circle divisional forest officer (flying squad), N. Ramachandra Rao, said "Based on the past record of poaching and hunting of wild boars, especially during the Dasara festivities, we have stepped up our vigil in vulnerable areas and are taking up night patrolling in addition to sensitising local villagers to give up such practices and not to allow outsiders to resort to them either."

Forest authorities are asking locals to alert them in case any persons resort to such illegal practices so that cases might be booked against them as per the provisions of the wildlife (protection) act, 1972.

As the wild boars and spotted deer stray in the fringe areas of reserve forests and sanctuaries where fields are located to eat the crops, the culprits set up snares to catch them. Earlier, they used electric fences to trap the wild animals and at times even bait them with explosive material.

Following high vigilance

by forest authorities, such practices are being given up.

Once the wild animals are caught in the snares, they are killed and their meat sold. On an average, it costs nearly ₹3,000 for the meat of a spotted deer per kg and nearly ₹1,500 to ₹2,000 for meat of a wild boar per kg.

To avoid detection and trouble from law enforcing authorities, culprits deliver the meat at the doorsteps of their trusted customers.

Sources say that as all the family members, kin and friends meet together during the festive days, they consider it to be a status symbol and royal to offer a feast with the meat of a wild animal.

Recently, forest officials nabbed two persons on charges of hunting a wild boar falling under Bhakarapeta forest range limits of Chittoor district and seized its carcass.

A senior forest official said "We are taking support of local villagers and members of vana samrakshana samithis and eco development committees to keep check on such illegal practices."

IN BRIEF

CM greets people on Vijayadasami

Vijayawada: Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy greeted the people of the state on the occasion of Vijayadasami. He said that the festival marks the triumph of good over evil and victory of the Gods over evil forces. The festival conveys to the world the final victory of Jaganmatha over Mahishasura, the embodiment of evil. He wished that Durga Matha would bless people of the state, usher in peace and prosperity to the state and augur well to all the families.

Governor conveys Dasara wishes

Vijayawada: Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan greeted the people on the joyous occasion of Vijaya Dasami in Andhra Pradesh. The Governor in a statement issued on Saturday stated that the Navaratri festival symbolises the triumph of good over evil. He said that he prayed to the divine mother to shower her choicest blessings on all the people on the happy occasion of Dasara festival.

Jayaram offers silk robes in Srisailem

Kurnool: Andhra Pradesh minister for Labour Gummanur Jayaram offered silk robes (pattu vastralu) to Lord Mallikarjunaswamy and Goddess Sri Bhramarambha Devi in Srisailem on Saturday on behalf of state government on the occasion of Dasara festival. The minister, along with family members, arrived at the Srisailem temple on Friday night and spent his night stay in the temple's guest house.

APGEA refutes APNGOA claims

Vijayawada: The Andhra Pradesh government employees' association (APGEA) refuted claims of the Andhra Pradesh non-gazetted officers' association (APNGOA) leaders about meeting Chief Minister, Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, seeking to resolve employee issues and alleged that APNGOA is a sympathiser of the earlier Telugu Desam government and is trying to appease the present YSRC government to erase its pro-TD pro reputation.

PMK FOUNDER CONGRATULATES JAGAN

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 24

Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) founder, S. Ramadoss, has written to Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, congratulating him for the state government's announcement of establishing 56 backward class corporations and the list of chairpersons to head these corporations.

In a letter addressed to Jagan, the Tamil Nadu-based PMK leader said, "I extend my congratulations to you on behalf of my party (Pattali Makkal Katchi), as the state government of Andhra Pradesh, under your leadership, has successfully announced the establishment of 56 backward class corporations for the upliftment of the backward classes and a list of chairpersons to head these corporations."

CM seeks Central funds for Polavaram project

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 24

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has sought required funds for Polavaram project without objections by the Union Government as it was a national project. He directed officials to take the issue to the notice of the Centre. He conducted a review meeting on Polavaram in his camp office Saturday night in view of funds slash by the Union Government.

The Chief Minister reviewed the latest developments on the reimbursement of balance expenditure incurred by the state to the tune of ₹4,013.65 crore, out of which ₹2,234.288 crore was proposed for EBR (Extra Budget Release) by Ministry of Finance (MOF) to Ministry of Jalshakthi (MOJS). It has been stated by MOF that the cost of irrigation compo-

Silent Dasara impacts markets across state

Market likely to recover after second wave of Coronavirus

MD ILYAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 24

The alacritous Dasara festival turned silent in Andhra Pradesh this year due to Coronavirus pandemic, untimely incessant rains and soaring prices of essential commodities. Further, news that the 'Second Wave of Virus' could be in offing restrained masses from celebrating the festival, while cash constraints discouraged people from spending.

Navaratri celebrations that used to be held in every locality were virtually absent, though the festival started on October 17 and is concluding with Teppotsavam in Krishna River on Sunday.

Every year, 70,000-80,000 devotees would daily visit Durga temple on Indrakeeladri during Dasara festivities. The rush would cross the one-lakh figure on the auspicious Moola Nakshatram Day, which is the birth star of Goddess Durga. Similar festivities would be held across all the 13 districts of the state on par with Durga temple celebrations in Vijayawada.

According to market sources, at least ₹1,000-crore turnover is registered during Dasara festivities every year. Sales of electronic goods, household items, clothes, jewellery, two/four wheelers and real estate would abnormally increase during the period. Traders are lamenting that their turnover this year has been very poor.

Senior market analyst P. Prakash said lockdown due to Covid-19 pandemic has taught a hard lesson to the public about the importance of liquid cash during crises. He pointed out that majority of people have shunned weekend entertainments and luxuries due to the cash crunch. Now, Corona's 'Second Wave' is further leading to people withholding money, which is why Dasara sales have crashed.

Senior sales manager N. Krishna rued that even price concessions with zero per cent interest finance have failed to attract customers during this Dasara. He said people are giving priority to only essential needs. Automobile industry, which witnesses sales of bikes and cars in large numbers during Dasara, is still struggling. Vehicle dealers said majority sections of the society used to purchase vehicles of their choice during Dasara, treating the period as auspicious. But this time, only a few people have purchased vehicles.

Realtor K. Siva Reddy pointed out that real estate companies would start new ventures during Dasara festival, giving various offers. This was missing this time.

Indian Chamber of Commerce leader A. Aanjaneyulu said market will recover only after the second wave of Coronavirus and return to normalcy.

● Senior sales manager N. Krishna rued that even price concessions with zero per cent interest finance have failed to attract customers during this Dasara.



A priest offers harathi to Goddess Kanakadurga, decked up in Durgadevi alankaram, on the 8th day of Dasara festival in Vijayawada on Saturday. — C. NARAYANA RAO

Rare darshan of Goddess in two avatars on one day

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 24

In what is a rare occurrence, devotees of Goddess Durga could have Her Darshan in two Avatars on the same day on Saturday. The deity appeared in Her original Durga Avatar in the morning and as Mahishasura Mardhini Avatar in the evening.

Sunday's traditional Teppotsavam (float festival), during which Durga and Malleswara Swamy are normally taken for a boat ride on Krishna River on the Vijaya Dasami (Dasara) day, has been cancelled. The cancellation is to prevent people from

gathering in large numbers on the Prakasam Barrage to view the Teppotsavam when there is a huge threat of Coronavirus.

Krishna district collector A. Md. Intiaz and Vijayawada police commissioner Battina Srinivasulu held a high-level meeting with officials of the temple and other departments on Saturday. Md. Intiaz said another reason for cancelling Teppotsavam is that Krishna River is receiving huge inflows from upstream and water is gushing out at high speeds from Prakasam Barrage into the sea.

The collector said both the Prakasam Barrage

and Durga flyover will be closed to traffic on Sunday evening while the Teppotsavam Pujas are on.

Many VIPs visited the temple on Saturday for darshan of Goddess Mahishasura Mardhini, including home minister Mekathoti Sucharitha, agriculture minister K. Kanna Babu, social welfare minister P. Viswaroop, AP DGP Gautham Sawang, MLA Vidadhala Rajini and others.

The home minister told the media that she prayed to the Goddess for prosperity of the people of Andhra Pradesh. Kanna Babu said that he prayed to the Goddess for wellbeing of farmers in the state.

STATES GOT DISCRETIONARY POWERS

From page 1

On other issues, justifying the heavy penalties being levied by AP government on traffic violators, Venkataramaiah said it is unfortunate that Telugu Desam leaders and a section of media were crying hoarse. He pointed out that the Centre has amended 31 sections of the Motor Vehicles Act, which gives discretionary powers to states, which includes levying penalties. "Will the government penalise those who are following rules," he asked.

The minister recalled how some people are circulating posts over social media about first covering the potholes on roads first before penalising traffic violators. "What is the connection between potholes on roads with traffic violations," he asked. The minister pointed out that roads eroding during the rainy season was a common phenomenon and they would be repaired once the season is over. He said the Jagan Mohan Reddy government had allocated ₹2,500 crore for road repairs.

Further the Chief Minister stressed that as it is declared a National project, it is the responsibility of the Centre as per the APR Act, 2014 and the Union Cabinet decision to complete the project. He said that the state government is only the executing authority as the project is monitored by PPA under the Union government. He stated that it is also noted that LA, R&R and works are to be considered for payment at the rates, rules and provisions existing on the date of execution and also as recom-

ishness and commissions has led to this situation. He told reporters in Vempalle on Saturday that the Polavaram project was a boon to the state of Andhra Pradesh.

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Named after Gandhi, Gitam goes the Godse way: Adeep

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 24

Brushing aside the allegations of Opposition leaders, Anakapalle MLA Gudivada Amarnath said that there was no need for the government to be vindictive towards the TD and stated that officials have taken appropriate legal action against Gitam University for encroaching government land.

Addressing a press conference here on Saturday, the MLA said that Gitam University, which belonged to the son-in-law of TD MLA and actor Nandamuri Balakrishna, has encroached upon the government lands to an extent of 40 acres worth ₹800 crore.

During the TD term, N. Chandrababu Naidu gave away valuable lands in Visakhapatnam to his family members and one among them was Gitam University. It was revealed in a preliminary inquiry by revenue officials that the University has encroached government lands and the officials took appropriate action, he said.

While the state government is responsible for safeguarding the lands and taking action against illegal encroachments, the opposition leaders are spreading false propaganda stating that the government was vindictive. The previous government failed to take action against land encroachments in Visakhapatnam and did not make the SIT report public.

"Unlike the TD government, Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has constituted SIT to investigate land scams in Visakhapatnam and will take action based on the report," he said.

Amarnath said all the TD politburo members were highly corrupt and recently the high command made K. Atchannaidu, who was involved in the ESI scam, as president of the party.

He said that only those who had encroached lands were being given posts in the TD.

Pendurthi MLA Adeep Raj criticised that the Gitam institute, which was named after Mahatma Gandhi, is indeed going Godse's way, by involving in illegal activities.

He said that people are extremely happy as the encroached valuable lands were taken back and are now in safe hands.

Reiterating that the TD leaders had grabbed lands in Visakhapatnam on a large-scale, he said that the state government will take action as promised to the people.

NAIDU, LOKESH CONDEMN DEMOLITIONS

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 24

Telugu Desam supremo, N. Chandrababu Naidu, on Saturday strongly condemned the demolitions taken up by the AP government at the Gitam university in Visakhapatnam, saying that it was a clear act of vengeance against political opponents in the state.

Gitam stood out as a glorious temple of learning which had shaped the lives of thousands of students, provided jobs to youth and helped in providing medical services, said Naidu, adding that the matter was in court but the demolitions were initiated without waiting for the final verdict.

Alleging that this was nothing but the political vengeance on the part of the ruling YSRC, Naidu said the ruling party was taking revenge out of personal jealousy and vindictiveness against opposing parties and persons.

In a separate statement, TD national general secretary, Nara Lokesh, said that the demolitions and diabolical acts of Jagan were going out of control. Gitam, which has a long history in giving good educational services, came under a meaningless attack. Jagan knows only how to demolish but not to construct.

He said the city people are aware that Gitam management has encroached upon government land, which is now worth ₹800 crore in the market. He said the revenue department's action was not a sudden decision. The officials marked the encroached land and concrete structures that were built on encroached land 40 days ago. The 70 acres of land, which was given in the past, was also alienated for a very low-price, the minister said adding that the government land was grabbed in a big way during the previous re-



Earth movers deployed to demolish the constructions on the encroached land in the Gitam Medical College premises in Visakhapatnam on Saturday. — DC

No notice issued, says Gitam official

from Page 1

A Gitam official said no notice was served to them before demolishing the walls. An official statement is yet to be issued. Before carrying out the meticulously planned 'Operation Demolition', the beach road leading to the educational institutions was barricaded. The hospital belonging to the medical college houses several Covid-19 patients.

Revenue divisional officer P. Kishore and his team conducted an inquiry and reportedly found that the Gitam campus had encroached 40.51 acres of land under various survey numbers at Rushikonda and Yendada of Vizag city following which demolition of the compound wall was taken up.

The Gtam authorities constructed compound walls and some structures in the allegedly encroached crores of worth government lands. Based on the RDO report, a special investigation team (SIT) is also probing into the matter.

The RDO said that in 1981, the Gitam management applied to the AP government for allotment of 71.15 acres of land at Rushikonda and Yendada for setting up of educational institutions. Since the land was assigned for landless poor and some in legal dispute, the then government allotted 14 acres of land to Gitam subject to certain conditions that it should purchase the lands as per the price prescribed by the government after the settlement in the court.

In 2014, the Chief Commissioner of Land Affairs visited Gitam and ordered that the 35 acres be given to Visakhapat-

Avanti: Gitam was asked to regularise lands in 2014

KMP PATNAIK | DC VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 24

Defending revenue department's action in removing encroachment of government land, which was under Gitam management, minister for tourism and culture Muttamsetti Srinivasa Rao said the revenue department's action was not a sudden decision. The officials marked the encroached land and concrete structures that were built on encroached land 40 days ago.

● The government land was grabbed in a big way during the previous regime, he said.

gime that forced one cabinet minister to lodge a complaint against another.

Stating that Naidu should have been blamed for the encroachment and the present demolition, the minister said former minister K. Atchannaidu himself admitted that Gitam management had encroached land but surprisingly is now condemning the latest action because it was taken up at odd hours.

"The management should have surrendered the land and protected its name," he said.

On the decision of the State Election Commission to hold local body elections, the minister said it was surprising that the same commissioner cancelled the elections in the beginning of virus infection and now wants to hold them citing Bihar elections when the infections run into lakhs of cases.

"The commissioner wants to impress Naidu since his term is coming to an end," Srinivas said.

IN BRIEF

Nine arrested for cricket betting

Vijayawada: The Vijayawada police arrested nine persons involved in the IPL cricket betting on Saturday. On a tip-off, the Taskforce police nabbed the culprits organising cricket betting in a house in Murali Nagar under the Penamaluru police station limits. Taskforce ADCP Dr K.V. Srinivas Rao said that a gang of nine were organising cricket betting through Cricket Maja 11 app and the police recovered ₹7.5 lakh, a communicator box with 20 cell phones, a television set, a laptop and 13 mobile phones. He said that the key culprits in the cricket betting racket are Veerapaneni Kalyan Chakravarthy and Kambapati Ravi Kiran. The others involved in the betting racket were identified as Keshav Reddy, Koduru Chandrasehkar, Ravela Srinivas Rao, Patamata Sudhakar, Poteneni Kutumba Rao, Md Khaleelullah and Pilli Sivashankar. The gang was organising cricket betting on the Delhi Capitals vs Kolkata Knight Riders match.

POLICE FILE CHARGESHEET WITHIN 4 DAYS

DC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, OCT. 24

The Jaddangi police filed the chargesheet within four working days in a rape case, which took place on October 18. The District Superintendent of Police Adnan Asmi said that a 38-year-old, T. Srinu alias Musalanna alias Puthika Srinu of Jaddangi village, raped a seven-year-old girl. The accused was a distant relative of the victim and was divorced twice. He went to the victim's house before afternoon on October 18 and he convinced her mother and took the victim and her younger sister on the pretext that he would provide snacks at the shop.

He took both girls to shop and purchased some snacks to them and sent the younger sister of victim back to home stating that victim would come later, with some more chocolates and then he raped the girl.

DISHA incharge DSP of Kakinada was deployed to take up the investigation of the case and the Jaddangi police filed charge sheet within four working days (five days) after registering FIR. He appreciated the investigation team and declared cash rewards to them

3 KILLED IN ROAD ACCIDENT ON NH NEAR TADA

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, OCT. 24

Three persons, including a woman and her daughter, were killed and 5 others injured critically in a ghastly road accident on the national highway near Pudi village junction in Tada mandal of SPSR Nellore district on Saturday.

The mishap took place when the car rammed into a stationary lorry while trying to avoid hitting a motorbike after the riders turned towards Pudi without giving any signal.

The deceased were passengers of the car and all of them are relatives and they belong to 4th mile in Navalac Garden at Nellore.

The deceased have been identified as Kothakota Venkateswarlu, 46, Jammu Appanamma, 31, and her daughter Jammu Dileswari, 13, of Nellore.

The injured include Jammu Venkanna, 39, Kothakota Sarala, 40, Vutikonda Venkatarao, 32, driver of the car and the bike riders Vetti Mari, 21, and Talari Uday Kumar, 28, of Pudi village.

VOLUNTEERS TOLD TO DISPLAY CROP LOSS DETAILS

DC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, OCT. 24

Amalapuram Sub-Collector Himanshu Koushik instructed the Secretariat members and volunteers to display the crop loss details and the farmers' names in secretariat offices to know the farmers and the people in the respective villages. He also said that a social audit should be conducted on the crop losses and receives objections from the people. He said the officials should enumerate the crop losses.

AP registers 3,342 new cases

W. Godavari topped the state with 551 followed by 445 E. Godavari

Officials, people apprehensive about another wave of Covid

VADREVV SRINIVAS | DC
KAKINADA, OCT. 24

Even as speculation is raging over a possible second surge of Covid-19 cases in the country, the general people seem to have lost fear of the virus.

They are now more casual about not wearing masks or maintaining social distance, if they ever were serious about it. Many people are seen removing the masks while talking or moving about in groups.

Similarly, at many shops and many public places, people are overcrowding, especially at tea stalls, eating parlours, public places, malls, markets, shopping malls, Rythu Bazaars and others, not maintaining social distance at all.

Doctors warn that the false sense of security may lead to negligence and another surge of Covid-19 cases. Further, the Dasara season has already started. Through the first four days did not see any rush in the temples, for the past three days, devotees thronged to the temples and the people

were flooding to shopping malls to purchase things. Diwali festival is in another 20 days.

Meanwhile, the government has taken a decision to re-open schools from November 2. The parents of the children fear the re-opening of schools and are already campaigning and submitting representations to the government to re-open the schools after the arrival of a Covid-19 vaccine.

According to officials, the number of cases has decreased in East Godavari district. On Saturday, 445 cases were registered in the past 24 hours and 5,550 are active out of 1,13,106 cases. 1,06,957 patients recovered from the virus and 599 have died so far.

However, it is also learnt that the majority of the people, almost 79 to 80 per cent, may have already been infected with the virus to a greater or lesser degree. Immunity levels have gone up due to consumption of more nutritious food and better eating habits in general with a fear of Covid-19 for the past seven months. "With

the decrease in cases, people feel that the virus may not infect them and behave with an apathetic attitude. But it is not good and they should be cautious," said a medical officer. He said that after celebrating Onam festival, the number of cases increased in Kerala state and the people should take care not creating such a situation here post-Dasara and Diwali.

East Godavari District collector, D. Muralidhar Reddy, said that violation of Covid-19 norms should not be excused and severe punishment should be faced by the violators. He said that people should take all precautions and maintain social distance, wear masks and wash hands with soap frequently to keep the virus away. He said that the Covid-19 awareness campaign is being intensified in the district up to October 30.

Kakinada municipal commissioner instructed ward volunteers to fix Covid-19 caution stickers in every house in their respective areas to create awareness among the citizens about the virus.

COVID PATIENT JUMPS FROM HOSPITAL

DC CORRESPONDENT
ELURU, OCT. 24

A 45-year-old Lankapalli Ranga Rao of Vangayagudem in Eluru of West Godavari District com-

mitted suicide by jumping down from ASRAM Hospital on Saturday. According to the Eluru Rural police, Ranga Rao was working in a chicken shop, and he was admitted in the hospital.

Onions bring tears



Telugu Desam women wing staged a novel protest against hike in vegetable and onion prices at Central office in Vijayawada on Saturday.

— C. NARAYANA RAO

Chakra Snanam performed to Lord

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, OCT. 24

Heralding the finale of Srivari Navaratri Brahmotsavams, Sri Malayappa Swamy was taken on a procession on the Pallaki Vahanam inside the holy shrine of Tirumala on Saturday.

Thereafter the most-revered phase of Srivari Brahmotsavams, the Chakra Snanam, was performed. Archakas dipped the Sri Sudarshan Chakrathalwar into the holy water of the newly built Pushkarini near Ayina Mahal inside Srivari temple.

Earlier, the last but one event of Srivari Navaratri Brahmotsavams, the grand Snanapana Thirumanjanam was conducted at the Ayina Mahal Mandapam. The



Snapanam is part of Agama traditions and is a revered practice ahead of Chakra Snanam.

Snapanam Thirumanjanam to Sri Malayappa Swamy, Sridevi, Bhudevi and Sri Sudarshana Chakrathalwar was performed in a grand manner amidst chanting of Veda Mantras. Panchabhisheka Snanam was performed for the deities with milk, curd, honey, turmeric and sandal paste.

In the evening, Bangaru

Tiruchi Utsavam was performed for the Utsava idols of Lord Malayappa and His consorts inside the Srivari Temple and Asthanam ritual was conducted at the Ranganayakula Mandapam.

TTD is going to organise the annual Parveta Utsavam in the Kalyanotsava Mandapam of Srivari Temple on Sunday in Ekantham.

TTD executive officer K. S. Jawahar Reddy announced that Srivari Navaratri Brahmotsavams has concluded with the Chakra Snanam on Saturday.

According to legends, Sudarshana Chakra is a spinning, disk-like weapon of Lord Maha Vishnu with 108 serrated edges. The Chakra is often depicted in an anthropo-

morphic form as Ayudhapurusha. Sudarshana Chakrathalwar was brought ceremoniously to the temple tank and immersed in the holy waters at the sacred Muhurtam.

All sacred rituals during the Brahmotsavams were held in Ekantham in accordance with the state and Central government Coronavirus guidelines.

Tirumala pontiffs Sri Pedda Jeeyar Swamy and Sri Chinna Jeeyar Swamy, AD deputy speaker Kona Raghubathi, MP Vemireddy Prabhakar Reddy, Additional EO Dharma Reddy, board members, CVSO Gopinath Jatti, chief engineer Ramesh Reddy, Peishkar Jagannathan Charyulu and others were present during the Chakra Snanam and other rituals.

Covid-19 'second wave' likely to hit public, says Naidu

MD ILYAS | DC
VUJAYAWADA, OCT. 24

Telugu Desam chief, N. Chandrababu Naidu, on Saturday called upon all sections of people to remain alert and take all preventive steps against Covid-19 till an effective vaccine is developed and made available to them.

He asked people to wear face masks and follow physical distance compulsorily considering the threat of a "second wave" of infections sooner rather than later. Mr Naidu said that more alertness would be required during the present Dasara festival celebrations as people might travel and attend crowd-based activities.

Addressing an online meeting with people affected financially under Covid-19's impact under 'AP fights Corona', Mr Naidu stressed the need for a regular audit on infections so as to ensure effective post-virus steps in order to reduce the suffering of the people.

Characterising the situation in AP as alarming with five out of the 30 worst-hit districts in the country located in the state, Mr Naidu said particularly the East Godavari situation was a matter of concern with over 1.12 lakh cases reported there. He said that only 50.1 per cent RTPCR tests were being conducted in AP as against 49.9 per cent antigen tests and sought increase of RTPCR tests for more accurate results.

Asking people not to take Covid-19 casually and looking at Kerala as the best example of what would happen when caution was thrown to winds after effective control post-Onam, Naidu explained that a the

● An easy-going attitude was harmful in this hour of crisis, Naidu strongly objected to Jagan's paracetamol and bleach 'remedies'

start, Kerala successfully controlled infections and prevented cases but after the state opened up everything for its people for Onam, the epidemic threat loomed large again there now.

Stating that an easy-going attitude was harmful in this hour of crisis, Naidu strongly objected to how AP Chief Minister, Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy set a bad precedent in the beginning itself by saying "paracetamol" and "bleach" would be enough to fight against Covid-19. He alleged that Jagan showed a lot of carelessness and held no reviews on the problems of the people during the pandemic.

Meanwhile consoling TD Kadapa district general secretary, Balisetty Hariprasad, who was arrested by Rajampet police allegedly involved in a land dispute, the TD chief seriously condemned his arrest. YSRC government anarchy is on the rise and TD leaders are being arrested on illegal charges for questioning the government's anti-people policies, he said.

Despite the land dispute in the High Court since 2003, the arrest by the police is the culmination of the anarchic rule of the YSRC.

Mr Naidu assured him of support, saying that the party will stand by him and appealed to party activists not to fear and play a key role in fighting with the anti-people decisions of the government.

Maize loading from Ongole to Tamil Nadu

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, OCT. 24

The business development unit (BDU) of Vijayawada Railway Division succeeded in attracting new traffic to the railways.

For the first time, maize loading commenced from Ongole of Prakasham district to Chavadi Palayam in Salem division of Tamil Nadu on Saturday.

According to officials concerned, Railways is specifically focusing on freight loading to capture new traffic and at the same time to retain the existing traffic.

Maize has been loaded in a mini rake containing 21 watertight wagons of weight 1,323 tonnes despatched to Chavadi Palayam in Salem.

Traditionally, this traf-

fic used to be transported by road. However, the BDU team of Vijayawada division has been able to convince the customers to divert their transportation by Railways.

With support being rendered by the BDU team and different departments of railways, the traders and merchants are persuaded and promised to transport their consignment by rail in future.

Mr Gajanan Malliya, General Manager, South Central Railway, appreciated the efforts of the BDU team of Vijayawada Division in capturing new traffic.

He also appealed to all the traders, merchants and rail users to utilise various freight incentive schemes for transporting their consignments by rail.

5 MEN HURT IN A MISHAP AT THE TEMPLE KITCHEN IN TIRUMALA

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, OCT. 24

Five men working in the kitchen at the holy shrine in Tirumala were injured when boiling water spilled on them on Saturday.

According to a TTD press release, the mishap took place when the lid on the vessel, in which tamarind liquid is being

boiled, came off accidentally.

The victims developed boils on the body and they were treated at the Ashwini Hospital in Tirumala. Medical officers said the injuries are minor in nature.

Additional EO of TTD A.V. Dharma Reddy called on the injured at the hospital and elicited information on the incident.

SUPER | POLICE Armed with phone numbers, the team traced the names, addresses of the men

PhonePe helps police book sex offenders

PATHRI RAJASEKHAR | DC
NELLORE, OCT. 24

Sending a clear warning to persons molesting minor girls even if the victims are in sex worker homes, Prakasham district police have detained nine men on Saturday for sexually abusing a minor girl in July at Madevapuram village in Kandukur mandal.

The determination of Prakasham SP Siddharth Kaushal to apprehend the

accused led the police teams to opt for a scientific investigation and work round the clock to track down as many as 20 accused and nab nine of them on Saturday.

In fact, the police team was baffled when they found out that the woman running the sex worker home, Nadendla Madhavi, carried out all monetary transactions through the popular app.

The practice helped the police team to reach the

accused with the help of phone numbers and bank account details.

Kandukur police had held the pimp running the home, Madhavi, on July 18 this year for confining a minor girl and forcing her into sex work.

Usually such cases end after freeing the girl and sending the pimp to jail but Kaushal formed an IT team under the supervision of DSP, women's police station to trace the male customers to teach

them a lasting lesson.

The team analysed all transactions and collected the phone numbers and bank details of all the customers with the help of PhonePe, the mobile wallet app.

Armed with phone numbers, the team traced the names and addresses of the men and booked them under various sections, including the protection of children against sexual offences (POCSO) act.

The accused have been

identified as Syed Salman, 24, of Kondepi, Katragadda Sivakumar, 24, of Chowtapalam, Burransetty Ravi Teja, 24, of Singarayakonda, Gondi Vamsi Krishna, 24, of Konda m uru s u p a l e m, Kasireddy Bramha Reddy, 25, of Chintalapalem, Unnam Naveen, 31, of Ponnaluru (M), Dhanyasi Deva Prakash, 24, of Ulavapadu, Ravuri Aravind, 25, of Ponnaluru and Komatla Yedukondalu, 30, of

Kothapatnam in Prakasham district.

State women commission members and child protection officer, Prakasham district, P. Sekhar Babu, lauded Kaushal and police team for nabbing the accused.

Babu explained the recent amendments in the rules of POCSO offences by the government of Andhra Pradesh and provisions of special relief and compensation rendered to victims.



Buggana eclipsing Vijaysai role in Delhi

There seems to be more than meets the eye in Andhra Pradesh finance minister Buggana Rajendranath Reddy's frequent trips to the national capital. Within a short span, the FM called on several Union ministers, officials and NITI Aayog representatives in New Delhi. In his latest trip, he met Union minister of state for civil aviation Hardeep S. Puri and request-

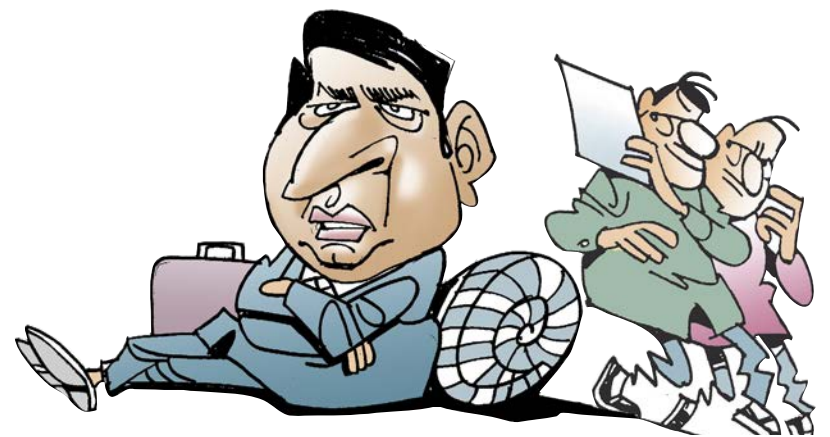
ed him to expedite clearances for the Bhogapuram international airport near Visakhapatnam and Orvakallu airport in Kurnool district. In his previous visits, he met Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Jal Shakti minister Gajendra Singh Shekawat. A little bird says that Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has given Buggana the important

task of coordinating with the Centre, and he would be going to Delhi frequently. Buggana is an ideal pick for the job as he is knowledgeable and more articulate than the other Cabinet ministers. With facts at hand, Buggana, a former chairman of the powerful Public Accounts Committee during the Naidu regime makes a better presentation of the state's requirements. What is

curious, however, is the absence of V. Vijayasai Reddy during Buggana's meetings at Delhi. Apart from being the parliamentary party leader of the YSR Congress, Vijayasai Reddy was also earlier designated the special representative of AP to pursue issues relating to the state with the Centre. Does it mean further dimming of Saireddy's 'aura' in the ruling dispensation?

CONGRESS LEADERS MADE TO PAY AND WORK

Several Congress Squealed before Manickam Tagore, the new in-charge of Telangana state party, trying to curry favour. They claimed that they had been working hard at winning the Dubbaka byelections for the party. That they thought would be enough to put them in his good books. Tagore seemed to oblige and made many of them in-charge of booths at Dubbaka. But the sting was in the tail. Tagore made it clear that they have to improve the party status, for which they would get a good position in the party, by loosening their purse strings. They cannot expect financial help from either the All India Congress Committee or the state unit to build up the party. Their hard work will be suitably rewarded in the future, Tagore told them. The leaders are now reeling under the 'zor ka jhatka dharee s' e'.



AP babu hangs out at the CMO

A P bureaucrat Karthikeya Mishra may set a record of sorts for frequenting Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's residence-camp office in Tadepalli, surpassing his senior and special chief secretary (agriculture) Poonam Malakondaiah. Mishra served as industries commissioner during the Naidu regime and used to be in the news for his foreign jaunts with Nara Lokesh. He also got

the important post of East Godavari collector in the previous regime. The Jagan government somehow did not include him in the group of officers whom it branded as 'TD men' and kept without posting for a long period. Mishra became commissioner, health and family welfare, and, after some time, was moved to finance. He has been given the most important task of mobilising finances to meet the ever-growing

welfare budget. Grapevine has it that Mishra is not enthused with his job and wants to go back as collector to any district. Normally, officers go to the camp office only on being called for a meeting by the CM or to discuss important files with his officials. But it has come to the CM's notice that Mishra is loitering around the camp office, making him wonder why the official is seen more often than needed.



REGION

SHORT TAKES

2nd counselling at Manuu's ITI

Hyderabad: The Industrial Training Institute (ITI) of the Maulana Azad National Urdu University (Manuu) is conducting the second counselling for admissions in different trades on October 28. Dr Arshia Azam, principal, said the application forms can be obtained from Manuu and ITI, Hyderabad, or can be downloaded from the university website manuu.edu.in. The last date for submission of filled in application forms is October 26.

One injured in small explosion

Hyderabad: One person was reported injured in an explosion of a small container at Asbestos Colony in Jagathgirigutta on Saturday morning. Police said that the explosion occurred when the victim, Yousuf Ali Khan, got down from an autoricknear the compound wall of a house, and stepped on the container. "The man sustained an injury on his leg following the explosion. We suspect it to be a chemical explosion. The material was seized and sent to laboratory for analysis," said A. Ganga Reddy, station house officer of the Jagathgirigutta police station.

₹113CR AID GIVEN TO 1.13L FAMILIES IN TS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT. 24

Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar said ₹113 crore flood relief aid has been disbursed to 1.13 lakh households, of which over 70,000 households were covered by 9 pm on Saturday. He said as per direction of Chief Minister N. Chandrabab Naidu to distribute ₹10,000 financial assistance to flood and rain-affected families as quickly as possible, 780 teams were sent from visit house to house and disbursed cash using mobile based app. The Chief Secretary said that the disbursement drive will continue till late in the night in most places and will resume after the Dasara holidays.

Infra gets ready for Covid shots

Med device makers rush to meet targets

KANIZA GARARI | DC
HYDERABAD, OCT. 24

Manufacturing of syringes, needles, and maintaining a cold chain is being undertaken by medical device manufacturers in the country to ensure that Covid-19 vaccine administration is not delayed due to lack of these devices.

Fifty-six million needles, auto-disposable syringes are being manufactured and will be available by March 2021. The total demand is estimated as 140 million for the vaccine alone.

The medical device industry is under a lot of stress as the manufacturers are having only 30 per cent human resources at the factories.

While the demand has doubled in the healthcare sector for these medical devices the supply is not as required. There are problems faced by small manufacturers across who are not able to pool in their human resources because of Covid-19.

A manufacturer in Hyderabad on condition of anonymity said, "Indian govern-

TS registers 1,273 cases, 5 deaths

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT. 24

With fewer people coming forward for testing, the state recorded 1,273 new Covid-19 cases and five deaths due to the disease on Friday. The toll now stands at 1,303 and the tally at 2,30,274. On Friday, 35,280 were samples tested in the state.

According to the state health bulletin issued on Saturday, the state has 19,937 active cases. Of these, 16,809 are in home and institutional isolation and only 3,000 receiving treatment at hospitals.

ment has to start creating a separate stockpile for the Covid-19 vaccine.

This is already set in motion by other countries. This will ensure that once the vaccine is available there will not be any problem in administering."

Indian government has so far taken stock

The highest number of cases continue to be reported from the GHMC limits at 227, followed by Medchal-Malkajgiri at 104 and Ranga Reddy at 102 cases. There has been a decline in cases in rural areas.

Though the case numbers are falling, the government has urged people to be cautious and follow precautionary measures. The government has asked people not to give up on the habit of wearing masks. Physical distancing and frequent hand sanitising were also stressed upon.

of the capacity of each of the manufacturers and their ability to upscale it.

But there is very little aid in terms of the gap created by human resources. Till the workers come in full force the capacity will be only 30 per cent in the production.

Rescue workers need antifungal medicines

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT. 24

Anti-fungal medicines are urgently required for residents and volunteers cleaning the muck and slush from Babanagar, Nallabagh, Alinagar, Osannagar and Al Jubail Colony in the Old City. Cleaning of knee-deep slush has been a challenge and many of them are suffering from fungal infections. It is stated that 70 per

cent of the residents and volunteers are complaining of severe fungal infections, which causes itching and rashes.

Manual removal of the muck is being taken up as the machines cannot enter these small colonies. The stagnating water is drying very slowly and the outlets are still choked.

The areas are now covered with muck, slush and waste which the floodwater car-

ried along with it. Sewage, sand, carcasses of animals and waste is now being removed but it is also adversely affecting the workers.

Azam Khan who is working with volunteers in Babanagar, says "Along with the residents, there are students, doctors, engineers, techies who are volunteering for cleaning. There is still a lot of much to be removed."

Only a few of them have protective gumboots and gloves. Most of them are suffering from severe scratching and itching and need creams which will help them. Volunteers estimate that the work will continue for another week at least. Some residents have begun to return but many are still too scared to. A call has been given to citizens to come to these areas and provide aid that would help residents

Congress calls Central team visit an 'eyewash'

S.A. ISHAQUI | DC
HYDERABAD, OCT. 24

The Congress has called the visit of the Central team to assess the damage caused by torrential rains and floods an eyewash. The party said the Central team had failed in assessing the damage in a scientific manner.

Addressing a press conference at Gandhi Bhavan, Congress spokesperson Dr Dasoju Sravan said that the Central team had made a mockery of the suffering of lakhs of people.

He wondered how visiting officials could study such largescale loss caused by rains across the state in just two days.

"The Congress welcomed the team and wished that it would tour the state extensively to assess the largescale damage inflicted by the recent rains and bring relief to the suffering people. But

■ CONGRESS SPOKESPERSON Dr Dasoju Sravan said that the Central team had made a mockery of the suffering of lakhs of people. He wondered how visiting officials could study such largescale loss caused by rains across the state in just two days.

we are extremely disappointed to know that the visit was a mere eyewash and a drama enacted by TRS and BJP governments to fool people to hide their failures. How they can arrive at the real picture by depending on government officials, who failed to deliver their duty when rains and floods struck people," Dr Sravan asked. "Rao is probably the only Chief Minister in history who did not visit the flood-hit

areas and did not bother to console those who lost their lives due to rains. Rao did not even take up an aerial survey," said Dr Sravan.

Alleging that the Central team had not given an appointment to the Congress, which stood by the people during the floods, Dr Sravan alleged that the team members sat in a star hotel and prepared reports based on the briefing given by state officials. Demanding that the Centre announce the recent rains and floods as a national calamity, Dr Sravan urged the Central team to make more visits to the state and speak to wider sections of people to make a proper assessment of the damage.

Though Rao has promised to pay ₹10,000 as compensation to every family affected during rains, TRS MLAs and corporators are distributing much lesser amounts in the form of cash, he claimed.

JAMAAT-E-ISLAMI DEMANDS MORE AID FOR FLOOD VICTIMS

ATHER MOIN | DC
HYDERABAD, OCT. 24

The Jamaat-e-Islami claimed that 400 of its workers are extending assistance in the rescue and relief operations in rain-affected areas of Hyderabad.

It has also decided to distribute 3,000 kits containing essential items valued at ₹4,000 each to the needy families.

Moulana Hamid Mohammed Khan, state president, Jamaat-e-Islami, told the media, "In the second stage, we plan to distribute aid of ₹10,000 to those who suffered heavy damages. We have distributed more than 50,000 food packets so far."

He said the financial aid given by the government is not sufficient and demanded the government to sanction ₹25 lakh ex gratia to the next of kin of rain victims. The government should take a serious note of the damages and evolve concrete strategies to protect the people from such disasters, he said.

He asked the government to explore a permanent solution for draining out stormwater and protecting habitats from inundation.

■ MOULANA HAMID Mohammed Khan, said the financial aid given by the government is not sufficient and demanded the government to sanction ₹25 lakh ex gratia to the next of kin of rain victims.



GHMC staff sanitising public places in Musheerabad, Hyderabad, on Saturday as a preventive measure against Covid-19. — P. SURENDRA

SHORT TAKES

CORRECTION

The headline for the report on *INS Kavaratti* published in these columns on Friday, October 23, should read as 'INS Kavaratti commissioned into Indian Navy' and not as rendered. The error is regretted.

— Editor

MUMBAI WOMAN SLAPS TRAFFIC COP, ARRESTED

SAURABH JOSHI | DC MUMBAI, OCT. 24

A woman rained slaps on a traffic policeman alleging that he abused her, soon after he had intercepted their two-wheeler for riding without a helmet in south Mumbai's Kalbadevi area on Saturday. The video of a woman beating up the policeman went viral following which the 30-year-old woman and her 26-year-old friend were taken into custody. The officials stated that the policeman had not abused them and had asked for a penalty to be paid for riding without a helmet.

The officials said that the policeman Eknath Parte who was posted at the busy Kalbadevi Naka when he intercepted the two-wheeler being driven by Mohsin Khan on which Sadhavika Tiwari was pillion. When Eknath stopped them and confronted the rider not wearing a helmet, he picked up a fight with the official. Sadhavika got violent and manhandled Ekanth alleging he had hurled abuses at her. Soon after she began slapping him with people witnessing the same.

Meanwhile, the traffic police in an official statement, said that Ekanth had not used foul language and had addressed both the accused in a polite manner. Joint Commissioner of Police (Traffic) Yashasvi Yadav praised the constable for not losing his temper and being patient while being thrashed.

SURVEILLANCE DRONE SHOT DOWN BY ARMY AT LOC

Srinagar, Oct. 24: A surveillance drone of Chinese make was on Saturday shot down by Army troops shortly after it crossed into this side of the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Kupwara district, officials said.

The DJI Mavic 2 Pro drone, fitted with cameras, was spotted hovering in air by the alert troops in Keran sector and subsequently shot down, the officials said. They said the drone was seized and further investigation is on.

There has been a spurt in the use of drones from Pakistani side over the past few months to smuggle arms and narcotics.

Earlier in June, an attempt to drop weapons through drone was scuttled by BSF personnel

— PTI



MLA PUTS UP SIGNBOARD IN TULU LANGUAGE

GURURAJ A PANIYADI | DC MANGALURU, OCT. 24

While people and elected representatives from coastal Karnataka have been pressing to add the Tulu language in the 8th Schedule and holding various types of campaign, Belthangady MLA Harish Poonja has gone a step ahead by putting up his office signboard in Tulu language.

Though there are scriptures and inscriptions of Tulu script, it has been almost forgotten during recent years. For the last few years, Tulu activists have been toiling to familiarise the script and many have shown interest in learning and writing in Tulu script. Techies too have developed fonts for computers. Though Tulu is a spoken language, people use Kannada and English script to write in Tulu language also. However, the unique move of Harish Poonja has now gone viral on social media and received appreciation from the people.

Tulu is the language of the Dravidian family, spoken in Dakshina Kannada, Southern part of Udupi district, and Northern part of Kerala's Kasargod district. People from this region are settled in various parts of the country and abroad.

Unfazed by threats, Nusrat lights up Durga Puja



Actress and Trinamul MP Nusrat Jahan (2nd from right) along with other women takes part in Maha Ashtami celebrations at a community Durga Puja pandal in Kolkata on Saturday. Last month she had received death threats on social media for dressing up as Goddess Durga for advertisements for a clothing line that she posted on Instagram on September 17. Dismissing criticism she was quoted as saying: 'I'm God's special child. I celebrate all festivals. I respect humanity and love more than anything.'

— PTI

J&K PARTIES FORM ALLIANCE, ELECT FAROOQ AS ITS PRESIDENT

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, OCT. 25

Jammu and Kashmir's half-a-dozen mainstream regional political parties along with the CPM's local unit on Saturday formally structured their alliance and unanimously elected former chief minister Farooq Abdullah as its president.

Abdullah who heads the erstwhile state's oldest political party National Conference told reporters, "Ours isn't an anti-national group. Our aim is to ensure that the rights of people of J&K and Ladakh are restored."

He alleged that attempts are being made to drive a wedge between various communities in what are now known as twin Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh and said that the new alliance would defeat such designs as well. He said, "Attempts of dividing us in the name of religion will fail. It's not a religious fight."

The signatories of 'Gupkar Declaration' met at the residence of former chief minister and PDP president Mehbooba Mufti here earlier to discuss the political situation and other important issues faced by J&K and Ladakh. A spokesman of the group said that during the meeting the participants put forth their valuable suggestions.

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, OCT. 24

The BJP has demanded arrest of former chief minister and PDP president Mehbooba Mufti after she said that she wouldn't hold any other flag unless and until Jammu and Kashmir's state flag is restored.

The Congress also criticised her for showing disrespect to the national flag. She has been trolled widely also on social media platforms for her

remarks.

On Friday, Ms Mufti had while addressing her maiden press conference after her release from a 14-month-long detention said that she wouldn't raise any flag other than that of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir till its special status is restored.

"I won't hold any other flag until our state flag is returned," she said when asked about her statement that there would be no one left in J&K to raise the

Indian national flag if Article 370 was abrogated that she gave days before the erstwhile state was stripped of its special status and split up into two Union Territories on August 5 last year.

Narinder Raina, president of BJP's J&K unit, termed Ms Mufti's remarks as "seditious" and said that she should be booked for the same and arrested immediately. Asserted that "no power on earth can either hoist the state flag again or

restore Article 370", he told reporters in winter capital Jammu, "I request lieutenant governor Manoj Sinha to take cognisance of the seditious remarks of Mehbooba Mufti, book her for the seditious act and put her behind bars."

Mr Raina pledged to "shed every drop of our blood for our flag, country and motherland" and said that J&K is an integral part of the country and, therefore, only one flag can be hoisted here.

Why are Gandhis mum over Punjab rape: BJP

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, OCT. 24

Questioning the "complete silence" of the Congress leadership over the rape and attempt to burn the body of a six-year-old Dalit girl of a migrant labour from Bihar in Punjab's Hoshiarpur, the BJP on Saturday asked where are the "brother sister duo" (Rahul Gandhi-Priyanka Gandhi) who had shown "enthusiasm almost as though they were going for a picnic" to reach Hathras in Uttar Pradesh.

Taking on the Congress, in particular its former president Rahul Gandhi, Union minister and BJP leader Nirmala Sitharaman said "Not a

word from the tweet friendly leader Rahul Gandhi (on the Hoshiarpur incident)... no outrage on this no picnic on this... In Hathras, 35 senior MPs from all over the country, flamboyant in their statements on Twitter, wanting to go marching to Hathras asking for justice... where are those 35 today. No sense of outrage if it's a Bihari Dalit child and because the unfortunate incident happened in Punjab." Ms Sitharaman also took on the RJD and its leader Tejashwi Yadav, who had shared dais with Mr Gandhi on Friday during a campaign rally, and asked whether or not Mr Yadav was answerable for the Bihari family

RJD manifesto is Hamara Pran

NAYEAR AZAD | DC PATNA, OCT. 24

RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav reiterated his commitment for 10 lakh jobs to state's youth and promised overall development of Bihar while releasing his party's separate manifesto for Bihar elections on Saturday.

Major points included in the RJD manifesto titled 'Hamara Pran' (our pledge) is employment, scrapping of farm laws enacted by the central government, better education and health system, smart villages and infrastructure development for the growth of industries and agriculture.

"This is our pledge, not a manifesto. Our party's resolution is to bring overall

development in Bihar," RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav said while releasing his party's manifesto in Patna.

Using the occasion to lash out at the BJP for promising 19 lakh jobs in its manifesto which was released a week earlier, Tejashwi Yadav said that "the BJP is trying to fool people by its fake commitment."

He said, "There is a difference between employment and earning. Providing 10 lakh jobs to state's youth is our top priority which we will sanction immediately after the grand alliance is elected to power. We could have promised more than 50 lakh or one crore jobs but our party doesn't make false commitments."

India sees 53,370 Covid-19 cases, 650 deaths in a day

DC CORRESPONDENT New Delhi, Oct. 24

India's national recovery rate has reached close to 90 per cent after 70.16 lakh persons have recovered from Covid-19 out of the total positive cases detected so far. On Saturday, India's total Covid-19 tally reached 78.15 lakh with detection of 53,370 fresh cases. In comparison to fresh cases, 67, 549 persons were discharged from medical supervision taking the national recovery rate to 89.78 per cent.

The total deaths due to the virus has reached 1.18 lakh out of which 650 fatalities took place in the

last 24 hours. The Covid-19 case fatality rate has further declined to 1.51 per cent.

According to the Union health ministry, the active cases are less than seven lakh for the second consecutive day and stand at 6.81 lakh and active cases comprise only 8.71 per cent of the total positive cases of the country. Sixty-one per cent of the total recovered cases are from Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi. Maharashtra has contributed the maximum with more than 13,000 single day recovery.

FADNAVIS TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC MUMBAI, OCT. 24

Leader of Opposition in Maharashtra Devendra Fadnavis who is also the BJP's in-charge in Bihar assembly election campaign, has tested positive for Covid-19. Keeping his promise that he will not go to a private hospital for Covid treatment, Mr Fadnavis got himself admitted to state-run St George hospital.

In a series of tweets, Mr Fadnavis said, "I have been working every single day since the lockdown but now it seems that God wants me to stop for a while and take a break! I have tested #COVID19 positive and in isolation. Taking all medication & treatment as per the advice of the doctors. Those who have come in contact with me are advised to get covid19 tests done. Take care, everyone! (sic)."

Dr T.P. Lahane, director and nodal officer (COVID-19), Directorate of Medical Education and Research (DMER) said, "Mr Fadnavis is admitted at St. George. He is symptomatic and his oxygen levels are normal."

On Friday, Fadnavis got himself tested after returning from Bihar poll campaigning.

DELHI SCHOOLS NOT TO OPEN FOR NOW: KEJRIWAL

New Delhi, Oct. 24: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday ruled out reopening of schools in the national capital for now.

"Schools are not reopening for now," Kejriwal told reporters on sidelines of an event.

The government had earlier announced that schools will continue to remain closed till October 31 in view of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Universities and schools across the country have been closed since March 16, when the Centre announced a countrywide classroom shutdown as part of the measures to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus.

A nationwide lockdown was imposed on March 25.

While several restrictions have been eased in different phases of "unlock", educational institutions continue to remain closed. However, as per "unlock" phase guidelines, states can take a call about reopening schools in phases.

Earlier, schools were allowed to call students from class 9 to 12 to school on voluntary basis from September 21. However, the Delhi government decided against it.

— PTI

RJD anarchy drove away Nitish: Nadda

Bihar Sharif/ Lakhsarai, Oct. 24: The RJD is

"predisposed towards anarchy" and the realisation had led Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar to snap ties with the party and return to the NDA, BJP national president Jagat Prakash Nadda asserted on Saturday.

Nadda also alleged that the state had remained deprived of many medical facilities during the period the RJD shared power with Kumar on account of the "indolence" of Tej Pratap Yadav, elder son of party supremo Lalu

Prasad, who then held the health portfolio in Bihar.

"The RJD is predisposed towards anarchy and lawlessness. And they remain unrepentant. It is the very reason why Nitish Kumar had to dump them and return to the BJP after which the state resumed its march towards progress", the BJP said in Lakhsarai district.

Kumar, the JD(U) president, had resigned in July, 2017 after his then deputy and Prasad's younger son Tejashwi Yadav's name cropped up in a money laundering case.

— PTI

UNITY IN | DIVERSITY

Fellow villagers from all faiths cooperate to make puja a grand success, says Kohinoor Islam

Muslim leads Dasara festivities in Odisha's village

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BARIPADA, OCT. 24

A 65-year-old Muslim man has been at the forefront of the Dasara festivities for decades at Tentulidinda village near Baripada in Odisha's Mayurbhanj district. Kohinoor Islam diligently supervises each and every detail of the Durga Puja, from the selection and making of idols to their immersion.

While the Sarbajanina Saradiya Durga Puja Pandal or community puja pandal at Tentulidinda village epitomises the communal harmony between Hindus and Muslims in the region, Kohinoor appears to be the torchbearer.

It all started in 1984 when Kohinoor evinced his interest in organising the puja at his village.

With the support from elders, he went ahead in promoting communal harmony with this unique idea.

Since then Kohinoor has been initiating special measures for the conduct of puja in the village.

"On the request of villagers, I took the responsibility of conducting the Dasara festival at the Sarbajanina Saradiya Durga Puja Pandal. None has ever any issues with me leading the arrangements as people from both the communities live together peacefully. I get full cooperation from all my fellow villagers to



Kohinoor Islam at the Durga Puja pandal in Odisha's Tentulidinda village.

make this puja a grand success," Kohinoor said. He is not only known for his organisational skills, but he can also recite several Vedic slokas (hymns)

and mantras at ease.

"Kohinoor Islam has been doing a great job in promoting communal harmony. Despite being a Muslim, he has acquired

lot of knowledge about Hindu rituals and even the Bhagwad Gita. He is no different from anyone of us in the village," said Anil Nayak, a resident.

During the festival people of all communities visit the pandal and offer prayers. They also share together the bhoga or offering given to Goddess Durga.

"The uniqueness of our Dasara festival here has given us a different identity. Not only people from our neighbouring villages come here, but also curious devotees from West Bengal also arrive here to see for themselves how two communities are celebrating this festival with equal zeal and fervor," said the locals.

Shiv Sena to hold its Dasara rally indoors

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC MUMBAI, OCT. 24

For the first time in the history of Shiv Sena, the party will hold its annual Dasara rally closed doors in an auditorium. Owing to the coronavirus-induced restrictions, the Sena will not organise the rally at the Shivaji Park ground at Dadar, the traditional venue of the event.

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, who is president of the Shiv Sena, will address the party workers from Swatantryaveer

Savarkar auditorium opposite the Shivaji Park ground at Dadar at 7pm. A select group of 50 people will have the access to the auditorium, including ministers and leaders. The event will be telecast live on all the social media accounts of the party.

There were apprehensions whether Shiv Sena will be able to hold its Dasara rally this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The party was also contemplating to hold a virtual rally with Uddhav addressing activists.

DECCAN Chronicle

25 OCTOBER 2020



Kushalrani Gulab

Off the beaten track

A woke Navaratri, and a happy Dasara!

As a responsible citizen aiming to be a non-participant in the pandemic (I suffer absolutely no FOMO or fear of missing out, particularly when it comes to Covid-19, thank you very much), you will not be surprised to learn that I have set not so much as the tip of a toe anywhere near a puja pandal this Navaratri/Durga Puja.

To be fair to the SARS-CoV-2 virus — which has had bad press since the moment it was born and needs to be shown by us woke people that circumstances of birth alone is no reason to be cast out of society — I also have not been near any puja pandal in the last 30 years if not longer, because I am the Indian version of Scrooge. From the moment we hit August every year, which, depending on what the lunar calendars are up to at the time, marks the beginning of the festive season, you hear me bah, humbugging all over the place, with emphasis on the 'bah'.

I do not enjoy crowds. I especially do not enjoy crowds in a hot and sweaty climate punctuated by distinctly uncooling monsoon showers that set my sinuses aflame and cause me to sneeze like a machine gun on speed. I do not enjoy amplified *aartis* by priests so *besura* that even Cacofonix the bard would be dashing about with gags and ropes to tie them to trees while Asterix and Obelix stuff their ears with broccoli and tuck into roast boar. I do not enjoy the 'talent shows' organised by cooperative housing societies in which uncles attempt stand-up comedy so bad that the YouTube shows look good in comparison, aunts explore their inner item girl and give themselves displaced vertebrae for life and children run even more amuck than they normally do, only this time on a stage with amplifiers.

Finally, I absolutely do not enjoy my eardrums being shattered day after day by the techno-Bollywood remixes that our gods and goddesses are apparently fond of, according to puja and dandiya organisers, with *Sheila ki jawani* at No. 1 on the pandal charts, *Lungi dance* at No. 2 and *Chammak challo* at No. 3, all at ear-splitting volume.

So I was delighted when I read the rules for Navaratri in Mumbai this year. Keep it low key, urged the state government. Do not do anything that involves mass gatherings; there will be no garba and no dandiya; discuss viruses and dengue-bearing mosquitoes whenever it appears that a crowd is gathering — that will send everyone home.

Meanwhile, in Kolkata, the High Court demanded barricades outside the pandals and a maximum of only 45 people inside at any point depending on the size of the pandal, thus ensuring that 90 per cent of the population of the city would push and shove their way to the barricade, thus maintaining what we might now name 'antisocial distance' just to add another virus-related phrase to the Oxford English Dictionary.

"Aha," said my Scrooge, rubbing its hands with glee as it read these rules in the newspapers. "Maybe I'll get through this year with my eardrums and sanity intact."

And so far, dear reader, this whole puja season I have not had to use my ear plugs at all. Instead, there is a blessed silence every day — or at least what passes for silence in urban India with its daily aural mix of shattering power drills, blaring car horns, screaming food processors, piercing pressure cooker whistles and the occasional cawing crow.

And I have to admit it: I am bored witless.

Where are the social media posts about divine *bhogs* that I look forward to every year with my tongue hanging out? *Bhog* is not permitted, say the state governments. It might contain a certain virus.

How will I know if *Sheila ki jawani* is still No. 1 on the pandal charts 10 years after it first released or if *Chammak challo* has finally climbed to the top, pulling the lungi down and revealing its underwear and banian, all modesty damned?

How can I perfect my sneer at the residents of my cooperative housing society when it's time for them to display their untalents on Navaratri nights? (Note for grammar Nazis: if you can unfriend people on social media, you can certainly display an untalent.) I usually get a refresher course during the festive season, but not this year.

I feel so bereft without everything I hate about Navaratri and the pujas, that I might actually do the unthinkable today: 30 years or more after I told my parents that if I was old enough to vote, I was old enough to stop participating in the annual family pandal hop, I might just step out of the house and visit a puja pandal. Since it's the last day of the puja, I doubt if there will be a crowd.

And with a little bit of luck, I will not be hit by an unseasonable monsoon shower, find my sinuses inflamed, sneeze like machine gun on speed, and be arrested for spreading a certain virus.

Kushalrani Gulab is a freelance editor and writer who dreams of being a sanyasi by the sea

Subhani

AIR IN INDIA IS FILTHY — TRUMP

COVER YOUR NOSE PROPERLY



Will the BJP use Nitish to get own CM in Patna?



Anand K. Sahay

Far & Near

There are two somewhat related perspectives to keep in mind with regard to the coming Bihar Assembly elections, where the first votes are to be cast on Wednesday, October 28. These have been largely overlooked in the media and in the facile opinion polls, which appear to have partly relied on the 2015 polling data on caste arithmetic as if this was the sacred *gayatri mantra* itself, besides strongly hinting that the presumed magic of Prime Minister Narendra Modi could safely take the ruling alliance home.

As we'll see below, at least some crystal-gazers may be rather hoping that it will be just one part of the NDA — namely the BJP — that will reach the dry shores, no matter what the overt optics.

The first consideration stares us in the face, though we have been oblivious. It is quite simply the fact that the failure of the three-time chief minister Nitish Kumar's government in coping with the dreaded Covid-19 pandemic, besides the mass return home of the poor from the country's major cities regarded by Bihar's massive pool of the labour force as the nation's employment capitals in the absence of any worthwhile prospects at home, and the recent floods that played havoc with people's already wretched lives, are stark truths that frame the real narrative for this election. Without ambiguity

these point to the Nitish government's casual disregard of the suffering of some of the poorest people that there are in the country. This can be seen in leaders of the ruling alliance speaking without pause about roads repaired or built more than 10 years ago, and their breathlessly recalling the serious uptick in crime that was relevant two decades ago, before the new generation of voters was born.

Parroting pre-history is part of an untidy and scarcely convincing strategem of the JD(U) and BJP to hide policy failures and executive inaction, and meant to help them smoothly glide over the wretchedness they have presided over for most of their 15 years in office — in other words, to trick voters.

Does the trick work? Among some sections, yes — defined in the main by class. The bulk of these are the state's upper caste and upper crust, not that anyone's vote can still be thought of as being immutable.

But ordinary folk have not forgotten the humiliation and the hurt caused by the CM urging them not to come trudging back to the state though, with the national lockdown suddenly announced by the Prime Minister in March, it was clear that they had no money to pay rents in metropolitan cities and no money to eat. They also calculated that, if the disease took them, it was better to die in their unpretentious homes in

the village than on the uncaring roads of the big cities. Mr Kumar's self-serving statements are being recalled at election time.

With the aim of building a strong caste support base of the poorest sections in his favour, Mr Kumar's self-serving administrative decisions divided and sub-divided big chunks of the OBCs and the SCs into super-fine strips till they could not be sliced up any further and gave them some benefits in the early part of his tenure to secure their undying loyalty.

However, if the wildly cheering, pressing, crowds at the poll rallies of young RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav, the CM candidate of the Mahagathbandhan — the alliance of the RJD, Congress, and all shades of the Left in Bihar, which are ranged against the ruling NDA — are any indication, then attempts to chisel the caste arithmetic may prove to be of little avail for the chief minister.

And the reason for this is plain enough. Mr Yadav speaks only of the crushing burden of unemployment, which has made even the upper castes reel, as he promises a million jobs on arrival (as CM — replacing Mr Kumar). It is this which makes the sentiment for "*badlao*" (change) in Bihar palpable, although elections

Ordinary folk have not forgotten the humiliation and the hurt caused by the CM urging them not to come trudging back to the state after the national lockdown was suddenly announced by the Prime Minister

are notoriously hard to call. The media, except in the past few days, and the opinion polls, missed this, though it was out there, large as a football.

So gobsacked is the ruling alliance that the BJP is now promising the Covid vaccine free (only) for Bihar, such is the desperation. In the event of an anti-climax, it is the EVM factor that is likely to be blamed, and people are watching keenly. The political timbre and mak-eup of Bihar is different from next-door Uttar Pradesh, although both are Hindi-speaking. Bihar can be volatile across the board. This is where Jayaprakash Narayan's all-encompassing movement was bred, and also Communists of every hue.

The second factor to watch out for, mentioned above — relating to JD(U) leader and CM Nitish Kumar's unravelling — is the ambition nursed in the BJP's bosom to have its own chief minister in Bihar for the first time, even if as part of an alliance. Other than Punjab and J&K (now, alas, only a UT), Bihar is the only state in North India where there has never been a CM from the BJP. That is Bihar's uniqueness among the Hindi-speaking states.

If this is understood, then the side-court play — the Chirag Paswan phenomenon and the rushing of key RSS people to get the election nomination of Mr Paswan's LJP, otherwise no great shakes as a political force — does not remain obscure. It is not clear how it will pan out, but one thing is clear — Mr Kumar may get to rue that he let the BJP ride the waves stepping on his shoulders even as he fooled himself that he stood for secular politics and secular values while canoodling with the BJP-RSS.

LETTERS

COVID VACCINE

When the nation is eagerly waiting for vaccine, such promises are unwarranted (*BJP vaccine card unethical, DC, Oct. 24*). Is the Central government planning to segregate people who voted in favour and against it? When states are begging for their share of GST, this promise will complicate the Centre-state relations.

P. Ramakrishna
Rajahmundry

FILTHY COMMENT

It is preposterous and unpardonable of US President Donald Trump to declare India, China and Russia filthy when his own reign is not perfect (*India, China 'filthy', says Don, rejecting climate talk, DC, Oct. 24*). American voters of Indian, Chinese and Russian origin must teach him a lesson in etiquette by voting for Biden. His antipathy towards Indian immigrants and are clear as day for all to see.

Parthasarathy Mandadi
Tirupati

ONION PRICES

The soaring onion prices are breaking the back of poor and middle class. We have had a history of governments losing elections when onions prices were skyrocketing. It seems the government has not learnt any lessons from the past (*Onion price hits ₹100/kg after record rains, DC, Oct. 23*). Our onion surplus country, in spite of lack of storage facilities, the traders are making a killing by creating artificial scarcity. Governments should deal with an iron hand the illegal hoarders.

Udatha Rama Chandara Rao
Yelawaram, East Godavari

TRANSPORT FINES

Not only trade unions, but also the general public oppose the amended Motor Vehicle Act, 1988 imposing heavy fines for violating traffic rules (*Autotrickshaw drivers oppose amended MV Act, DC, Oct. 24*). First of all government should provide better road infrastructure. Then the enhancement of fines may be five per cent as many are in crisis.

P. Govardhana Rao
Kankipadu, Krishna district

50 YEARS AGO IN

DECCAN Chronicle

Pakistan to use U.S. arms against India

UNITED NATIONS, OCT. 24 Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and US Secretary of State William Rogers discussed for forty minutes last night on Indo-American problems. During the talks Mrs. Gandhi expressed concern over U.S. arms sales to Pakistan.

Mrs. Gandhi reportedly told Mr. Rogers that this was bound to affect Indo-US relations, hamper Indian efforts to normalise and establish friendly relations with Pakistan, and as in 1965 might even encourage Pakistan to use the arms against India.

Meanwhile Pakistan made clear today that it was seeking arms only to use against India and force India to give up Kashmir. This made nonsense of Mr. Rogers' explanation to Mrs. Gandhi that the arms were intended to wean Pakistan away from China.

The Gandhi-Rogers meeting took place in Hotel Carlyle.

Rana Mitter



Xi's world: How Covid accelerated China's rise

Back in February, the Chinese State appeared in trouble. A terrifying virus had infected thousands of people and the country's social media exploded in anger against the authorities faster than Chinese censors could scrub away the critical comments. Like governments elsewhere, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) turned to the emergency analogy of choice, the Second World War. Channelling Mao Zedong's guerrilla campaign against the Japanese in the 1930s, state media declared that China was fighting a "people's war" against the virus.

As in that earlier war, China's conflict with the virus has shifted from a defiant retreat to a declaration of victory. Nor is this just bluster. The latest economic figures suggest its economy is the only one in the world that will make a full recovery from the virus — growing by two per cent while America's falls by five per cent, the Eurozone by eight per cent and Britain by 10 per cent. Justin Yifu Lin, former chief economist of the World Bank, thinks China is on track to become the world's biggest economy by 2030. Beijing can now look forward, while other major economies are

still working out how to manage the damage while racking up staggering amounts of debt.

None of this could have happened had China not dealt so swiftly (often brutally) with Covid-19. This week, the Chinese media has been full of images of people queuing for the new anti-viral vaccine — it feels there that the crisis is genuinely over.

Yet when I call friends in Shanghai, they point out that after the institution of an efficient (and highly intrusive) track-and-trace system and harsh lockdowns, life is pretty much back to normal.

Back in the spring, observers queried whether China's high figures for suppression of the virus could possibly be real. Xi Jinping, China's President and CCP secretary-general, can survey the state of his country and reflect that it is far better off than anyone might have expected when the pandemic started. The regime will have been further encouraged by opinion polling that suggests positive ratings for the government's performance among Chinese citizens, with one survey suggesting 80 per cent satisfaction rates. The CCP has used this to justify doubling down on surveillance of its citizens, and the

pandemic will almost certainly be taken as a pretext to clamp down on dissidence.

Not so long ago, it seemed as if Xi's grand Belt and Road Initiative — designed to bring billions of dollars of infrastructure investment to a swath of territory from Western Europe to Southeast Asia by way of East Africa — might not live up to his grand ambitions. Had he overreached? But the pandemic has changed the balance of global trade in ways that might now make China seem like an attractive partner for developing nations.

China's opportunity is clear. Previously, the Western world could dangle the prospect of generous investment to countries such as Pakistan or Myanmar through institutions such as the World Bank, tied as they are to norms of good governance and democracy. In a post-Covid world, in which there will be less trade, less travel, less globalism, how can the West continue to influence such countries?

Xi's China has ended up in a strange position; expecting a lower growth rate than was predicted at the end of 2019, yet relatively stronger than many of its global rivals in terms of capacity to act. Still, there is no clear path from

here to the next "people's victory". The impressive economic figures conceal a longer-term problem, as the economist George Magnus has argued, of an unbalanced economy marked by under-consumption, a rising trade surplus, and debt still rapidly rising.

The "dual circulation" idea that China can simply separate its domestic and international economies is unsustainable in the long term; major structural reforms will still be needed. And there are other issues, such as pollution, climate change, and demographic decline — from 2029, there will be five million fewer Chinese per year, and the population will be rapidly ageing.

China's higher global status creates new vulnerabilities too. Beijing is having to come to terms with the reality that the oppression of the Uighurs and the constraining of freedoms in Hong Kong are not simply internal matters for a country that wants to achieve global influence through "a community of common destiny", because the result is that Chinese businesses and investment become negatively associated with the authoritarian values of their homeland. The single greatest obstacle to the

CCP's power, however, lies not in Beijing but in Washington. A second Donald Trump term, more virus-driven economic panic, and more chaos in the liberal global order, could end up further boosting Beijing's message of economic success and authoritarian government. A Joe Biden administration may find it easier to bring China-sceptic forces together. The fear of a new US administration may be behind the latest war metaphors coming out of Beijing. On VJ day in August, China stressed internationalism when it commemorated its founding role in the UN in 1945. This autumn, however, the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 has dominated China's official media channels. In Chinese, that conflict is known as Kangmei — the "Resist America" war. In Beijing's mind, the US is down, not out. America remains the only real challenge to China's global future.

Rana Mitter is a professor of history professor at Oxford University and the author of China's Good War: How World War II is Shaping a New Nationalism. By arrangement with the Spectator.

IN BRIEF

Actor Arnold feels 'fantastic' after op

Los Angeles: Veteran Hollywood star Arnold Schwarzenegger has revealed that he underwent a second heart operation and is now feeling absolutely fine. In a post on Instagram, the 73-year-old actor said he had been given a new aortic valve. "Thanks to the team at the Cleveland Clinic, I have a new aortic valve to go along with my new pulmonary valve from my last surgery," Schwarzenegger said. "I feel fantastic and have already been walking the streets of Cleveland enjoying your amazing statues. Thank you to every doc and nurse on my team!" he added. The actor also shared photos that showed him giving a thumbs-up from his hospital bed and exploring Cleveland.

Cameroon arrests ivory smugglers

Yaound: Cameroon authorities arrested four ivory smugglers attempting to transport nearly 120 elephant tusks through the country's south, officials said on Friday. The group had trafficked nearly 675 kilograms (1,500 pounds) of the illicit cargo from neighbouring Gabon, which is home to more than half of Africa's remaining forest elephants. They hid their haul in the bottom of a van with a false compartment, state television reported. It was the biggest ivory seizure in the West African nation for five years, customs officer Jean-Claude Ekoube said. Ivory trafficking is fuelled by strong demand in Asia and the Middle East, where elephant tusks are used in traditional medicine.

Roadside bomb kills 9 in Afghan

Kabul: A roadside bomb killed nine people in eastern Afghanistan on Saturday, after it struck a minivan full of civilians, a local official said. Ghazni province police spokesman Ahmad Khan Sirat said that a second roadside bomb killed two policemen, after it struck their vehicle that was making its way to the victims of the first explosion. Sirat added that the bombings had wounded several others, and that the attacks were under investigation. No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attacks. The provincial police spokesman claimed the Taliban had placed the bomb. The upsurge in violence between Taliban and Afghan forces comes as representatives of the two warring sides are beginning peace talks in Doha to end the decades-long war in Afghanistan.

INDIAN BOY'S EASY SOLUTION TO HANG HEAVY OBJECTS

Dubai, Oct. 24: A sixteen-year-old Indian boy based in the UAE has come up with an innovative solution to hang weighted items from the wall without drilling holes, as part of a school assignment, which has now become a business idea for his family, according to a media report.

Ishir, a student of GEMS World Academy in Dubai, had to submit an innovative project for his Grade 10 International Baccalaureate (IB) course when he noticed how walls get damaged when nails are drilled into them, the *Khaleej Times* reported. "While screw and nails have been in use since time immemorial, they pose problems for people on a daily basis such as damage to walls, outsourcing labour, dust pollution and other dangers of drilling," Ishir told the daily, adding that he wanted a non-intrusive solution to this issue.

Though Ishir had a fair idea as to how he wanted to execute the project, he reached out to his elder brother Avik, an engineering student at Purdue University in the US, for further guidance.

"When we put our minds together, the solution, like all great ideas, was elegantly simple," Ishir told the *Khaleej Times*. The solution included two steel tapes and a strong magnet which holds the entire assembly together. "The steel tape that adheres to the wall is known as the 'alpha steel tape' and the one on the object to be hung as the 'beta steel tape'."

"The neodymium magnet holds the entire assembly together, including the object being mounted," Ishir elaborated. This non-intrusive method to hang weighted objects from the wall has been named 'KLAPIT' based on the 'clap' sound produced when the two magnets click.

Biden promises free vaccine for everyone in US if elected

Biden slams Trump for his policies to combat Covid pandemic

Washington, Oct. 24: Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden has pledged that if elected as president in the November 3 election, he will ensure free Covid-19 vaccination for all Americans, laying out his pandemic response plan just days before the US presidential polls.

In a major policy speech on the Coronavirus in his home state of Delaware, Biden on Friday flayed US President Donald Trump for his policies to combat the Coronavirus pandemic that has killed over 2,23,995 people and has had a devastating impact on the country's economy. "President Trump said we're rounding the corner, it's going away, we're learning to live with it. They are quotes. But as I told him last night, we're not learning to live with it. We're learning to die with it. This is a dark winter ahead," Biden, 77, said.

Already more than 2,20,000 people in the US have lost their lives to this virus. Worse yet, a new study from Columbia University suggests that between 1,30,000 and 2,10,000 of those deaths were avoidable, he said.

"Once we have a safe and effective vaccine, it has to be free to everyone, whether or not you're insured," the former vice president said. He said that if elected, he would direct the federal government to "bulk-purchase as many doses as necessary of the Covid-19 vaccine so we can provide it free to those who are uninsured, under-insured or Medicaid-eligible."

"Covid-19 dwarfs anything we've faced in recent history and it isn't showing any signs of slowing down. The virus is surging in almost every state. We passed 4.8 million cases. And when Trump was asked this week what he'd do differently to get the pandemic response right from the start his answer was and I quote, 'Not much. Not much.'" he



Jeremy Bines, choir director of the Deutsche Oper, and singers from the choirs of the Staatsoper Unter den Linden, the Deutsche Oper Berlin, the choir soloists of the Komische Oper Berlin and the RIAS Kammerchor Berlin sing with protective face masks during an acappella demo concert #KulturVerbindetAlle (Culture brings all together) at the Gendarmenmarkt on Saturday.

— AFP

US sets infection record as fatalities near 2,24,000

Boise (US), Oct. 24: The US Coronavirus caseload has reached record heights with more than 83,000 infections reported in a single day, the latest ominous sign of the disease's grip on the nation, as states from Connecticut to the Rocky Mountain West reel under the surge. The US death toll, meanwhile, has grown to 2,23,995, according to the Covid-19 Dashboard published by Johns Hopkins University. The total U.S.

caseload reported on the site Friday was 83,757, topping the 77,362 cases reported on July 16.

The impact is being felt in every section of the country — a lockdown starting on Friday at the Oglala Sioux Tribe's reservation in South Dakota, a plea by a Florida health official for a halt to children's birthday parties, dire warnings from Utah's governor, and an increasingly desperate situation at a hospital in northern

Idaho, which is running out of space for patients and considering airlifts to Seattle or Portland, Oregon.

"We've essentially shut down an entire floor of our hospital. We've had to double rooms. We've bought more hospital beds," said Dr. Robert Scoggins, a pulmonologist at the Kootenai Health hospital in Coeur d'Alene. "Our hospital is not built for a pandemic."

— AP

Indian-Americans stand with Biden, call Trump 'foe'

Washington, Oct. 24: Joe Biden and his running mate Senator Kamala Harris have the best understanding of the Indian-American community, the diaspora leaders supporting the two Democratic candidates have said, describing US President Donald Trump as a "foe" who criticises India on the world stage.

With less than a fortnight to go for the November 3 presidential election, Indian-Americans on Friday asserted that Biden, first as a US Senator and thereafter as the vice president, has a strong track record of helping the community.

grandchildren will not have the same opportunities as we had. We need a leader who understands our community, our values, our pride and appreciates our hard work and gives equal opportunity and say in his administration," said Ajay Jain Bhutoria, a Silicon Valley-based entrepreneur.

Bhutoria said that Biden and Harris are the leaders who will lead the country

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out of this mess and restore its soul, revive the middle-class economy and re-establish America's leadership on the world stage and best relationship with India. Referring to the final presidential debate between Trump and Biden on Friday, Bhutoria said that the president criticised India on the world stage. "The community understands who the real friend of India is, who the foe. Trump is a foe. Most recently on the debate stage saying: you cannot trust India's Covid-19 numbers and India is filthy. He has suspended the H1 Visa Programme, put trade deals with India in jeopardy, and has used (Indian Prime Minister Narendra) Modi's friendship for photo opportunities only," he alleged.

— PTI

Americans have always done: come together and meet the challenge with grit, compassion, and determination," he said.

Revealing his plan, Biden said he would immediately put in place a national strategy that will position the country to finally get ahead of this

virus and get back the lives. Biden said he will ask the new Congress to put a bill on his desk by the end of January with all the resources necessary to see how both the public health and economic response can be seen through the end what is needed.

— PTI

US finds first ever nest of hornets

Los Angeles, Oct. 24: After months of meticulous tracking, authorities in the western US state of Washington on Friday said they had uncovered the first ever nest of the deadly Asian giant hornet in the country.

The nest was found on Thursday by Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) entomologists on a property in Blaine, near the border with Canada, the agency said in a statement.

It added that an attempt to eradicate the nest of wasps — the world's largest hornet species also known as the "murder hornet" — would take place on Saturday.

"The successful detection of a nest comes after a WSDA trapper collected two live Asian giant hornets on October 21

(Wednesday), caught in a new type of trap the agency had placed in the area," the statement said.

"Two more hornets, also living, were found in another trap the morning of October 22 when WSDA staff arrived in the area to tag the previously trapped hornets with radio trackers and follow one back to its nest," it added.

Scientists in the state have been actively searching for the Asian giant hornet since the first such insect was detected in December 2019 and after one of the wasps was trapped in July in Whatcom County, where Blaine is located.

Several more of the invasive pest not native to the US were subsequently caught, all in the same region.

— AFP

Ethiopia says will not 'cave in' after Trump slams dam

Addis Ababa, Oct. 24: Ethiopia vowed on Saturday not to "cave in to aggressions of any kind" after US President Donald Trump lashed out over the country's Nile River mega-dam and suggested Egypt might destroy it.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's office defended the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, set to become Africa's largest hydropower plant, and said Ethiopia was working to resolve longstanding issues over the project with downstream neighbours Sudan and Egypt.

"Nonetheless, occasional statements of belligerent threats to have Ethiopia succumb to unfair terms still abound. These threats and affronts to Ethiopian sovereignty are misguided, unproductive, and clear violations of international law," his office said in a statement. "Ethiopia will not cave in to aggressions of any kind," the statement added. A separate version of the statement issued in Amharic featured more muscular language.

"There are two facts that the world has certified. The first is that there has been no one who has lived in peace after provoking Ethiopia. The second is if Ethiopians stand united for one purpose, it's inevitable, they will triumph," it said.

Abiy's office did not explicitly mention Trump, but its statement came the morning after the US president weighed in on the dam dispute in support of Egypt.

"It's a very dangerous situation because Egypt is not going to be able to live that way," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office Friday during a

TRUMP CALLS 'BORAT' STAR AN UNFUNNY 'CREEP'

Washington, Oct. 24: President Donald Trump says he thinks Sacha Baron Cohen, the comedian behind the "*Borat*" films, is "a creep." Baron Cohen's new movie, "*Borat Subsequent Moviefilm*," shows Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani in a compromising position in a hotel room with a young woman acting as a journalist.

Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One on Friday night that he didn't know what happened with Giuliani.

"But, you know, years ago he tried to scam me," Trump said of Baron Cohen. "And I was the only one that said, 'No way. This guy is a phony guy.'" "I don't find him funny," Trump said, adding, "To me, he's a creep."

Trump appeared briefly on HBO's "*Da Ali G Show*" in 2003, but walked away from an interview with Baron Cohen's Ali G character after just a minute.

One scene in Baron Cohen's new movie scene shows Giuliani on a bed, tucking in his shirt with his hand down his pants after the woman helps him remove recording equipment. Giuliani called the scene "a hit job" and said he realised he was being set up.

— AP

ceremony marking a breakthrough normalisation deal between Israel and Sudan.

— AFP

UK's famous Diwali event turns virtual

London, Oct. 24: They are referred to as the biggest Diwali celebrations outside of India but this year the city of Leicester in the UK will be marking the festival of lights virtually, in keeping with the Covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

Leicester City Council said that with strict measures in place to stop the spread of Coronavirus, crowds will not be gathering on Belgrave Road this year for the traditional entertainment and fireworks.

But instead Leicester residents and others are being invited to be part of the city's first virtual "Diwali Day" celebration from the "safety of their homes".

"We all need to find different ways to celebrate important festivals like Diwali and Christmas this year. Although we can't meet up with our extended families in person this year, our virtual Diwali celebration will help bring people together for an experience they can share with a family member or a friend — wherever they are in the world," said Leicester's Indian-origin Deputy City Mayor, Councillor Piara

● **AS PART** of the celebrations for Diwali Day on November 14, people can send in their personal video messages, which could feature in an hour-long package of entertainment that will be streamed on the Visit Leicester portal.

Singh Clair.

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People are being encouraged to use their video to wish a friend, or a family member, a Happy Diwali — or they could share their tips for a socially-distanced, yet joyful, Diwali celebration with people around the world.

"We hope that people will enjoy recording their messages, and we look forward to sharing as many of them as possible as part of our Diwali Day programming," added Singh Clair.

— PTI

HUNGRY | BIRDS

More than 400 diners checked in at Changi Airport for lunch

Travel starved diners eat in parked jets

Singapore, Oct. 24: Hundreds of travel-starved diners ate lunch and watched seat-back films aboard two parked Singapore Airlines jets turned into pop-up restaurants on Saturday.

With the aviation industry in deep crisis due to the Coronavirus pandemic, airlines have turned to alternative ways to raise cash, from offering "flights to nowhere" to tours of aircraft.

Singapore's flag carrier, which has cut thousands of jobs and grounded nearly all its planes this year, offered passengers the chance to dine on board two A380 superjumbos — the world's biggest passenger jet.

On Saturday more than 400 diners checked in at Changi Airport and went through the usual security checks before arriving at



A Singapore Airlines stewardess smiles while serving food in business class during the inaugural lunch at Restaurant A380 @Changi onboard a Singapore Airlines Airbus A380 plane at Changi International Airport in Singapore on Saturday.

— AFP

the aircraft for lunch.

"The food is pretty amazing, it's better than the one they serve during the flight," Zhou Tai Di, a 17-year-old student in econo-

my class, said as he tucked into his soy sauce-glazed chicken with spicy fried eggplant and rice.

Some settled in for a nap while waiting for their

meals to be served, while others watched movies on the seat-back entertainment systems.

About half the seats were left empty, in keeping with social-distancing guidelines.

Calvin Teo, a 29-year-old civil servant and aviation buff, paid Sg\$321 (\$236) to be served a six-course meal in business class, saying he missed flying and hoped to recreate the experience.

"Of course the feeling of actually flying will be better, because there's the excitement of going to a new destination, to explore a new destination, and even though we can't do it now due to Covid, this is a good substitute for now, to recreate the feels of taking a long-haul flight," he said.

The most expensive option is a Sg\$642 eight-

course meal in a first-class suite, while the cheapest costs Sg\$53 and consists of a three-course meal in economy class. A limited number of diners were also able to tour the double-decker aircraft and take selfies with pilots in the cockpit.

The tarmac meals proved surprisingly popular — the airline announced six additional sessions after more than 900 lunch tickets sold out within 30 minutes of bookings opening earlier this month.

The airline is also offering home deliveries of plane meals, but it has ditched plans for "flights to nowhere" — short journeys starting and ending at the same airport — following an outcry over the potential environmental impact.

— AFP

