


DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
NELLORE | MONDAY | 19 OCTOBER 2020

WEATHER



Max: 32.4°C

Min: 26.3°C

RH: 91%

Rainfall: 7.0mm

Forecast: clear.

Max/Min temp. 32/26 °C

COVID-19
COUNT

CASES

DEATHS

(+55,582)

(+789)

75,46,882

1,14,621

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+1,436)

(+6)

TS: 2,22,111

1,271

(+3,986)

(+23)

AP: 7,80,237

6,429

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

4,01,53,666

DEATHS

11,16,974

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES

213

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari; Dakshinayana

Tithi: Nija Ashwayuja Tadiya till 2.12 pm

Star: Anuradha till 3.53 am (Tuesday)

Variyam: 9.45 am to 11.12 am

Durmuhurtam: 12.24 pm to 1.10 pm; 2.43 pm to 3.29 pm

Rahukalam: 7.30 am to 9 am

HILIRI CALENDAR

Rabiul Awwal 1, 1442 AH

PRAYERS(SHAHI MASJID)

Fajar: 4.50 am

Zohar: 11.56 pm

Asar: 4.12 pm

Maghrib: 5.51 pm

Isha: 7.01 pm

SUNSET TODAY 5.47 PM

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.02 AM

MOONRISE TODAY 8.26 AM

MOONSET TOMORROW 9.07 PM

COUNTER POINT



I can't find a safe place to shift flood affected people, sir!

IN BRIEF

Sonia: Democracy in tough phase:

New Delhi: Congress chief Sonia Gandhi Sunday said the Indian democracy is passing through its "most difficult phase", as she chaired a party meeting during which the roadmap for its agitation over farm bills and alleged atrocities on Dalits was deliberated upon. Addressing a meeting of AICC general secretaries and state-incharges, which she presided over, she launched a scathing attack on the government over the three farm laws, the handling of the Covid-19 pandemic, economic slowdown and alleged atrocities against Dalits.

Indo-China 8th round of talks

New Delhi: The eighth round of Corps Commander-level talks between India and China is likely to take place this week with a focus on carrying forward their discussions on the disengagement process in eastern Ladakh as the region enters the harsh winter season, government sources said. There was no breakthrough on the disengagement of troops from the friction points during the seventh round of talks on October 12. Both sides had maintained that the talks were "positive and constructive".



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Mar Thoma church head passes away



WORLD | 5
Trump leans on fear tactics to win polls

SPORTS | 8
Ferguson wins the game for Kolkata Knights



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Water being released from the Srisaillam dam after the reservoir was filled due to heavy rains upstream on Sunday.

Srisaillam sets water release record

Colonies in East Godavari district still under water

D. SIVA RAMI REDDI | DC KURNOOL, OCT. 18

For the first time this decade, Srisaillam reservoir officials released over seven lakh cusecs of water in a 24-hour period by lifting 10 crest gates to the height of 33 feet.

The dam has seen huge flood water coming into it in the past three days as torrential rains in Maharashtra and upper reaches of Krishna river filled up Narayanapur dam in Karnataka and Jurala project in Telangana state to the brim.

Jurala has a live capacity of just 6.79 tmc and its full reservoir level is 318.52 tmc. As per Central Water Commission (CWC) alert, the flood trend on the Srisaillam reservoir was steady with 4.85,485 cusecs coming into the reservoir from Jurala and Sunkesula barrage across Tungabhadra river near Kurnool.

Srisaillam dam opened 10 spillway gates to a height of 20 feet on Sunday and 5,10,597 cusecs of water. The reservoir level is 884.60 feet against the total height of 885 feet. The present storage at the dam is 213.4011 tmc.

A retired engineer, who worked at Srisaillam, found fault with the authorities for holding so much water in the reservoir. He raised concern that it is against flood management and would have a devastating impact on the structural stability of the dam.

The water release from the Srisaillam dam left several residential houses in Lingala Gattu village of Kurnool district inundated. People were shifted to relief homes in Sunnipenta.

Around 450 Lingala Gattu locals, who mostly depend on fisheries, were in the grip of fear. However, revenue and police officials reached the area and alerted the villagers. The official team observed the flood situation and made arrangements for supply of food and drinking water.

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, OCT. 18

Colonies in several parts of East Godavari district including Kakinada and adjoining villages are still under stagnant waters. Residents are unable to come out of their houses to collect their daily requirements.

In Kakinada, 11 boats are being operated even now in Dal Mill area, Kacheripet, Teachers Colony, Gollapet, S. Atchutapuram, Jana Chaitanya Colony layout area, Padmanabha Nagar, Treasury Colony, Chinna Swamy Nagar and Tulasi Brindavan Colony. People moving out in emergency have to walk through four or five feet water. Milk vendors have moved their buffaloes and cows to upland areas. But they are finding it difficult to supply the milk to colonies. Even transporting milk to other cities is an issue.

Many streets in Indrapalem village have been inundated.

According to Kakinada Municipal Corporation, situation is worse in 24, 25, 37, 38, 42, 48 and 49 divisions in the city. Some residents say though they are

throwing out water using buckets or deploying motors, water is again entering their houses from neighbouring areas.

KMC commissioner Swapnil Dinkar Pundkar said due to release of surplus waters from Yeleru, canals of Gaderu and Salt-Creek are full. Surplus waters are entering the surrounding areas.

Swapnil said 14 officers are on disaster management duties. They have evacuated 745 people to Amaravathi Nursing School, AMG School, Annammaghat and other areas. He said that 8,300 food packets are being supplied to people in relief centres every day. Efforts are being made to pump out stagnant water using electric motors.

Former Kakinada MLA Vanamadi Venkateswara Rao (Kondababu) charged that due to filling of earth in mangroves of Kakinada for housing purposes, many areas like Dummulapet have got submerged. Former corporator Dusrarlapudi Ramana Raju demanded that an expert committee be appointed to find out the reasons for inundation of the city. Pratapnagar colony residents have

alleged that colonies in the area have got inundated due to encroachment of canals. Situation in Prathipadu, Gollaprolu, Pithapuram, Karapa and other areas is no better. Agriculture fields are looking like lakes. Horticulture crops like banana and vegetable plantations have been badly damaged. District collector D. Muralidhar Reddy said 42,822 hectares of paddy and 9,225 hectares of horticulture crops have been damaged. The quantum of loss is being enumerated.

Agriculture minister Kurasala Kannababu said that breaches were developed in 100 places to several reservoirs and canals and canals like Bikkavolu, Tulyabaga drains and Salt-Creek are overflowing and inundating low lying areas and agriculture and horticulture fields. He said that Rythu Bharosa financial assistance will be given to the farmers. Mr Kannababu along with Kakinada MP Vanga Githa and Anaparthi MLA Sathi Suryanarayana Reddy toured in the inundated areas in Rames-waram village in Ped-pudi mandal on Sunday by tractor.

Women head 50% BC corporations

AP appoints 12 directors for 13 dists

MD ILYAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 18

YSR Congress government has announced governing bodies for 56 BC corporations formed to develop the status of backward classes belonging to 139 castes in Andhra Pradesh.

Names of persons appointed as chairpersons of these corporations were announced at a press conference by a Group of Ministers led by BC welfare minister Chelluboina Venugopala Krishna. The ministers reiterated that Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has been giving top priority to BCs in every welfare scheme. Formation of BC corporations is a measure to ensure their development.

Minister Venugopala Krishna said as 50 per cent reservations have been provided to women, nearly 29 of the total 56 corporations will be led by women as chairpersons. In addition to this, the state government has also appointed 12 directors representing all the 13 districts to each corporation. He asserted that the Chief Minister has set up 56 corporations for the 139 BC

YSRC, TD OUT TO CONSOLIDATE BC SUPPORT

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 18

Hectic activities are underway with the ruling YSR Congress and main Opposition Telugu Desam going all-out to woo Backward Classes and get their support.

Earlier, the BCs were traditional supporters of TD but YSRC penetrated it by attracting their support, which helped them win with a landslide majority.

With BCs constituting 50 per cent of the state population, YSRC after coming to power is according priority to them and filled all BC Corporation posts in one shot.

■ Full report on Page 2

castes to focus on their all-round development. "The CM firmly believes that BCs are Backbone Classes and not Backward Classes," he remarked.

Recalling the promise of Jagan Mohan Reddy during the 2019 elections, Venugopala Krishna said, "As promised, the Chief Minister has formed separate corporations for every community, thereby standing by his word. He pointed out that after a careful study of the 139 castes, 56 castes with over 30,000 population have been given separate corporations for their development. CM Jagan has also stood by his decision to implement 50 per cent women quota and provide more posts to women," he stated.

Municipal administration minister Botla Satyanarayana said in a first of its kind initiative taken up by any state in the country, the state government has given equal opportunity for development of each BC caste. He slammed Telugu Desam leaders for not fulfilling promises made to BCs but only using them as a vote bank for political gains.

Ministers Dharmana Krishnadas, Anil Kumar Yadav, Ch. Venugopala Krishna and Shankar Narayana, apart from MP Mopidevi Venkataramana were present.

Covid hits rural, agency areas

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 18

While Coronavirus cases have come down in urban and city areas of north coastal Andhra, the virus is spreading into rural and agency areas, according to health officials.

A senior officer disclosed that 80 per cent of cases now being reported are from rural, semi-rural and agency areas. Citing an instance in Visakhapatnam district, the official said Narsipatnam revenue division has registered 15 per cent positive cases when the district average is less than eight per cent. Rolugunta, Natavaram and Narsipatnam are reporting more cases when compared to urban areas.

Srikakulam, Meliaputti, Patapatnam and Nandigam mandals have reported more Covid-19 cases compared to urban towns like Srikakulam, Rajam and Palasa. Srikakulam registered 168 cases on Sunday and most of them are from these three mandals.

The total Coronavirus positive cases are 42,901. Of them, 1,505 are active cases.

In Vizianagaram district, however, cases have

● A SENIOR officer said disclosed that 80 per cent of cases now being reported are from rural, semi-rural and agency areas.

come down to double digits both in urban and rural areas.

Health officials regret that people are not following Coronavirus guidelines in rural areas. This is despite government giving three masks free to every individual per month.

They hardly use sanitizers and are not very particular about washing hands with soap.

Officials say even government establishments like banks and insurance offices are not insisting on people to follow Coronavirus guidelines. "They have enough security personnel to insist on these aspects, but they are unable to handle customers," said a senior official.

Positive cases in Visakhapatnam have crossed 55,000 of which 2,119 are active. An official said only 717 patients are undergoing treatment in hospitals, while 1,190 of them are in home isolation and 284 in Covid care centres.

PANEL SEES INDIA BEAT COVID BY FEB

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC HYDERABAD, OCT. 18

A 10-member panel, headed by IIT-Hyderabad's Prof. M. Vidyasagar, claims that Covid-19 pandemic can be controlled by February with minimal active symptomatic infections if all safety protocols are strictly followed. They also cautioned that a relaxation in protective measures could lead to a rise of up to 26 lakh infections in a month.

With the festive season round the corner, the committee members, professors from other IITs and the Indian Institute of Science and scientists, warned that relaxations during the festivities and winter may increase susceptibility to the infection.

They also spoke against imposition of any fresh lockdowns at the district or state level, unless there is an imminent danger of healthcare facilities being overwhelmed.

The report has suggested that active cases had reached their peak in September, and that it was because of the imposition of an early and comprehensive lockdown that reduced the peak-load on the health-care system.

"With no lockdown, the pandemic would have hit India very hard, with a peak-load of over 140 lakh cases in June. Given our lack of preparedness, the health-care system would have been overwhelmed, leading to many more deaths", it stated.

The predictions and observations by the committee were made based on a study on "Progression of the pandemic in India: Prognosis and Lockdown Impacts", conducted by eminent scientists and academicians from IIT-H, IIT-Kanpur, CMC Vellore, ISI Kolkata, IISc Bangalore, NIE Chennai, NIV Pune, among others.

PESTICIDE | WATCH

Activists suspect political nexus after rise in illegal sale despite govt orders

Use of toxic herbicide Glyphosate increases

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC HYDERABAD, OCT. 18

Amid the debate over imposing a complete ban on the use of the weed-killing herbicide glyphosate, a report by the Pesticide Action Network (PAN) India, a pesticide watch NGO, states that there is an increase in its use across the country.

Glyphosate stood at the second position in production and consumption among herbicides. The data for production and consumption also shows a huge difference and little

information is available on its export.

The field study by PAN that was conducted in seven states — Telangana state, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu — reports the use of 24 different brands of three formulations based on glyphosate. Glyphosate-based herbicide products are also sold in areas where the crop for which it has been approved is not grown.

In Telangana state, where the use and sale is restrict-

● A FIELD study by PAN that was conducted in seven states — Telangana state, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu — reports the use of 24 different brands of three formulations based on glyphosate.

ed until the end of the Kharif season, activists have suggested that there is increasing illegal sale and use by farmers, despite the government orders, and a suspected political nexus.

"Bigger cotton farmers, especially in Mancherial, by using manual labour but no protective gear, use glyphosate extensively,

because they think that it is more economical for them than going through other processes of de-weeding their crops," said Sreeharsha T, activist with the Rythu Swarajya Vedika.

Narasimha Reddy Donthi, director of Pesticides Action Network-India added that the unrestricted access and wider

availability of glyphosate-based herbicides and poor pesticide poisoning monitoring has contributed to unreported or unrecognised occupational poisoning or self-poisoning.

"Most farmers who spray the toxic herbicide on their own or get manual labour to do so do not consider the related-safety hazards. When they are rushed to hospital and poisoning is reported, due to differences in technical pronunciation or similar issues, most of these cases don't get reported as poisoning due to glyphosate.

Hence the data is difficult to be collaborated."

The study by PAN India states that the majority of farmers and workers interviewed did not have training on glyphosate application, safety precautions, and use of personal protection kits (PPE). Moreover, none of the farmers or workers reported use of PPE while working with glyphosate or working in fields sprayed with glyphosate; rather some of them reported use of a cloth, hat, mask, glove, goggles of poor quality as safety measures.

SHORT TAKES

GOLD DEPOSITS IN PSBs FOR PAST 15 YEARS, SAYS TTD

AVINASH P. SUBRAMANYAM | DC TIRUPATI, OCT. 18

Reacting over the campaign on the TTD gold deposits by a cross-section of people, the temple body clarified that it has been depositing the temple's gold in public sector banks under the gold deposit scheme for the past 15 years.

In a statement released on Sunday, the TTD clarified that the temple trust board had earlier resolved to keep the gold reserves under the gold monetisation scheme (GMS) of the Centre so as to earn interest at 2.5 per cent which is fixed by the Centre.

According to the statement, the State Bank of India (SBI) is the primary Bank, which undertakes the gold deposits under GMS in a big way, which was announced by the Centre in 2015. Even at present, many banks are not actively coming forward to undertake the long-term gold deposits in bulk. The SBI is a renowned public sector undertaking bank and hence the TTD was depositing gold with this bank since more than a decade.

"TTD holding gold deposits of around 7,800 kgs with the SBI and it reiterates the fact of long standing banking relationship of TTD with the bank. Even in the 7,800 kgs of gold deposits, the SBI is holding around 4,470 kgs since 2017, 920 Kgs since 2018, 1,380 kgs since 2019 and the balance is from 2020," the temple body said in its statement.

The TTD also clarified that there is no hidden agenda in making gold deposit with the SBI as the Indian Overseas Bank has not accepted gold for the long-term deposit scheme. "In fact, the IOB have requested TTD to give six months to return the gold and agreed to pay the interest at 2.5 per cent which TTD otherwise would have earned by placing under the long-term gold deposit scheme. Given the circumstances, the same gold is deposited with the SBI," added in the statement.

BC-E QUOTA SOUGHT FOR SYEDS, MOGHULS

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 18

A roundtable meeting of Muslim community elders has asked the state government to initiate measures for providing reservations to all Muslims under the E category of backward classes without any restrictions. The meeting held at Kondapally on Sunday was presided over by Altaf Ali Raza, state president of Muslim Personal Law Board of India.

Muslim community and religious leaders at the meeting also passed a resolution containing several demands including protection of Wakf lands.

Altaf Raza lamented that majority of Wakf assets belonging to mosques, Dargahs and other institutions are under encroachment. But the state government has taken no action to take back the Wakf lands from encroachers.

The community leader said revenue officials are denying BC-E certificates to Syed, Moghul and Pathan Muslims in AP. Majority of these Muslims are poor and government must issue BC-E certificates to all Muslims without any restriction, he maintained.

Mentioning honorariums being paid to Imams and Muezzins, Altaf Raza said the government must give honorariums to Dargah Muzavars too, as they are caretakers of Dargahs. He requested the government to develop the 450 years' old Hazrat Syed Shah Quadri and Ali Hussein Shah Quadri Dargahs as well as the mosque beneath Kanaka Durga flyover in Vijayawada.

TD DEMANDS PROBE INTO STATIONERY

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 18

Former minister and Telugu Desam leader Devineni Umamaheswara Rao on Sunday demanded the YSR Congress government to put facts before the people on the irregularities committed by the contractors in supply of stationery to the AP State Secretariat in Amaravati. He alleged that crores of public funds were being swindled.

YSRC, TD out to consolidate support of BCs

Once bitten twice shy TD has started giving preference to BCs in the party and appointed 10 leaders

MD ILYAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 18

Hectic activities are underway with the ruling YSR Congress and main opposition Telugu Desam going all-out to woo Backward Classes and get their support.

Earlier the BCs were traditional supporters of TD but YSRC penetrated it by attracting their support, which helped them win with a landslide majority.

With BCs constituting 50 per cent of the state population, YSRC after coming to power is according priority to them and filled all BC Corporation posts in one shot.

The once bitten twice shy TD has started giving preference to BCs in the party and recently appointed 10 leaders from the community in the parliamentary constituencies to win back their support.

After facing defeat in 2014, YSRC found that the lack of BCs support had caused the debacle. They delved into why BCs were supporting the TD. TD founder N.T. Rama Rao gave preference to BCs and the strategy was continued by N. Chandrababu Naidu, which helped TD to come to power several times.

Before the elections, YSRC had appointed BC Adhyana Committee led by BC leader Janga Krishnamurthy to interact with BC groups and to understand their problems and aspirations.



Ministers Botsa Satyanarayana and Dharmana Krishnadas before announcing the BC Corporation chairman and directors at the media conference on Sunday. — DC

YS. Jagan Mohan Reddy drew a strategy to woo BCs and the poll manifesto promised BC Sub-plan and YSRC Cheyutha scheme for BC women, which clinched the issue in YSRC favour. Interestingly, Mr Naidu also announced a BC plan but it did not work.

Senior political analysts stated that Jagan Mohan Reddy on coming into power implemented welfare schemes as promised during elections, including to BCs.

They said that earlier TD used to fill nominated posts one year before the

elections, which has boomeranged. With 50 per cent of AP's population and as they are decision makers, Jagan Mohan Reddy formed 56 BC Corporations. They stated that to regain their support, TD has appointed BCs as presidents in 10 of the 25 Parliament committees.

Ministers Gummanur Jayaram and Muttamsetti Srinivas Rao (Avanti Srinivas) and other leaders alleged that TD never worked for the development of BCs hence they dealt a humiliating defeat to them in 2019. They said

that Jagan Mohan Reddy was a man of integrity.

TD MLA Anagani Satya Prasad and other leaders said that Jagan Mohan Reddy was doing everything possible to break the backs of BCs. They alleged that the YSRC was just giving Chairman and Directors' posts to the BC corporations of different castes only for political rehabilitation. They claimed that the ruling party was not interested in real welfare of the BCs as was evident from lack of funds to corporations for implementing self-employment schemes.

Drone camera helps restore power in rain-hit villages

VADREVU SRINIVAS | DC KAKINADA, OCT. 18

Drone cameras are being used for multiple purposes, including surveillance, mapping and weddings while the government makes optimal use of them during floods and other natural disasters.

For the first time, officials of the AP Eastern Power Distribution Company Limited (EPDCL) used drone cameras for restoration of power in six villages — Kolimeru, Subbayamma Pet, Gandhinagar, NSV Nagar, N.Suraram and Kotaiah Palem village in Tuni Rural mandal. Thanks to the usage, they were able to restore within 24 hours to nearly 4,500 services, including agriculture connections.

According to sources, due to heavy rains, the Tandava River gates were lifted and the overflowing flood waters caused erosion of bund sides of the river and many trees and electric poles fell into the

river. This resulted in a complete night blackout on October 14. Spotting and connecting electrical poles, which fell on either side of the river, was a Herculean task.

Even swimmers did not dare to dive and fix wires to the conductors while revenue officials did not agree to operate boats for the purpose.

Meanwhile, officials proposed to supply power to the village with an alternative line from Kotananduru mandal. Deputy executive engineer of APEPDCL of Tuni mandal, Ch. Meena Kethana Rao, stated that power could be restored by connecting conductors by making use of drone cameras. In Kolimeru village, B.V. Ramana, who uses drone cameras to cover marriages, came forward to help the officials.

"Initially, we made an experiment that linked wires making use of the thread of fishing net and later a rope, both of which

were successful. Then two electrical conductors were connected with wires to two poles of both sides of the river with the help of drone cameras. This helped restore power supply to the villages within hours," said Meena Kethana Rao.

He said that the experiment proved that electrical conductors and wires can be connected with the help of drone cameras during catastrophes.

The locals recalled that they faced severe hardships when cyclone Neelam wreaked havoc in the district. There was no power in the villages for almost six days.

Divisional engineer of Jagampeta division Y. David said that was for the first time in electricity department's history that drone technology was used to restore power. Superintendent engineer Surya Prakasa Rao has given green signal to make use of the technology during future exigencies.

JANA SENA DEMANDS INVESTMENT BY FARMERS TO BE COMPENSATED

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 18

Jana Sena Political Affairs Committee (PAC) chairman and former Assembly Speaker Nadendla Manohar demanded the government to pay the total investment as compensation for the damage to the crops to farmers. He insisted that the Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan

Mohan Reddy to give assurance to the farmers during such a massive catastrophe.

Mr Manohar on Sunday toured the flood-hit areas in the Krishna river basin in Guntur district on the advice of party president Pawan Kalyan. He visited Veerilapalem and Pedakonduru villages in Mangalagiri constituency, Bommuvaniapalem in Tenali constituency.

LIVING | DANGEROUSLY

About 35 residential colonies on the hillocks in Visakhapatnam

Thousands of families face landslide threats

V.K.L. GAYATRI | DC VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 18

Though a landslide threat faces thousands of families, the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) is not taking concrete steps to prevent disaster.

Every monsoon, there are fatal incidents reported but the GVMC is not constructing retaining concrete walls to save families located on the hillocks in the city.

With the continuous heavy rains, a large number of houses constructed on the hillocks are in danger after the soil has eroded, and the residents are tense. In the recent heavy

rains, two deaths reported in a landslide, and many houses are in danger.

With a large number of guest workers, particularly from the working class, in the city, living space has become a problem and they take shelter on the hill slopes. Some influential local leaders are making money by constructing houses and sheds for the weaker sections and selling them. With this, a large number of residential colonies have developed on the slopes. In several areas, the residents have become big vote banks for political leaders.

The GVMC is constructing staircases, providing street lighting and water

supply to these houses and collecting taxes from the residents. According to GVMC statistics, there are about 35 residential colonies on the hillocks located in

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Women outnumber men in BC corp posts

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 18

For the first time in AP history as many as 29 women and 27 men got chairman posts for the 56 BC Corporations' chairperson posts announced here on Sunday.

The women appointed as chairpersons to Thogata Corporation: Gaddam Sunitha (Anantapur), Kunchitiga Vokkaliga Corporation: Dr. B Nalini (Anantapur), Vannia Kula Kshatriya Corporation: K Kalyani (Chittoor), Eediga Corporation: K. Shanthi (Chittoor), Gandla: S Bhavani Priya (East Godavari), Perika: Purushottam Ganga Bhavani, Ayyaraka: Avala Rajeshwari (East Godavari) and Vaddera: Devalli Revathi.

Krishna Balija / Pusala: Kola Bhavani (Guntur), Padmashali: Vijaya Lakshmi (Kadapa), Noor Basha Dudekula: Apsari Fakurbi (Kadapa), Sagara Uppara: Ganugapenta Ramanamma (Kadapa), Vaddelu: Saidu Gayatri Santosh (Krishna), Bhatraju: Kurapati Gitanjali Devi (Krishna), Kurmi / Karikala: Butta Saradamma (Kurnool) and Jangam: Prasanna

(Nellore). Muslim Nomadic Tribes: Syed Asifa (Nellore), Arekatika: Dada Kumar's Lakshmi (Prakasam), Medara: K Lalitha N a n c h a r a m m a (Prakasam), Polinatti Velama: P Krishnaveni (Srikakulam), Kurakula / Pondara: Rajapu Hymavathi (Srikakulam), Srisaina: Cheepuru Rani (Srikakulam), Nagarala: Pilla Sujatha (Visakhapatnam), Yatha: Pili Sujatha (Visakhapatnam), and Nagavamsa: Boddu Appala Kondamma (Visakhapatnam). Shishta Karanam: Kantimahanti Anusha Patnaik (Vizianagaram), Dasari: Rangumudri Ramadevi (Vizianagaram) and Surya Balija: Setti Anantha Lakshmi (West Godavari).

Men were appointed as chairman to Rajaka Corporation: S. Rangananna (Anantapur), Kuruba Corporation: Koti Suryaprakash Babu (Anantapur), Palakari: T. Muralidhar (Chittoor), Muddaliar: Tirupatur Govindaraju Suresh (Chittoor) (East Godavari), Agnikula Kshatriya: Bhandana Hari (East Godavari).

YSRC HAILS BC CORPNS, TERMS BCs BACKBONE

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 18

YSR Congress MLAs Jogi Ramesh and Karumuri Venkata Nageswara Rao hailed Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy for appointing chairpersons for 56 Backward Class Corporations and said that it was a boon for the weaker sections of the society.

Addressing the media on Sunday, MLA Jogi Ramesh said it was for the greater good that Jagan Mohan Reddy called the BCs as the Backbone Classes of the society by incorporating 139 BC sections in the 56 corporations. He said the great decision of setting up 56 BC Corporations and the appointment of 672 directors would remain as a major one in the annals of the history of Andhra Pradesh.

Mr Ramesh said the decision was taken by the Chief Minister in Eluru before the elections when Jagan Mohan Reddy declared that he would keep the BCs close to his heart and that they can live with dignity.



Lord Malayappa taking a celestial ride on 'Simha Vahanam' inside Tirumala temple on Sunday as part of the ongoing Srivari Navaratri Brahmotsavams.

Lord Malayappa on Simha Vahanam blesses devotees

AVINASH P. SUBRAMANYAM | DC TIRUPATI, OCT. 18

On day three of ongoing Srivari Navaratri Brahmotsavams on Sunday, Lord Malayappa Swamy rode out on the Simha Vahanam in Abhaya Ahwana Narasimha Swamy Alankaram and blessed devotees. Because of restrictions due to Covid-19, Vahana Seva was organised at the Kalyana

Mandapam inside the Srivari temple on Tirumala.

The Simha Vahana Seva represents incarnation of Lord Vishnu as Mrugendrudu (Lion) to punish wrongdoers and protect the righteous in society. In Yoga Shastra, lion is an embodiment of power and speed. The valour of Lord Venkateswara, who rides such an animal as His vehicle, is displayed in abundance through the Simha

Vahana Seva. Statues of lions at Ananda Nilayam, idol of Narasimha in Yoga Mudra in Srivari temple and statue of Lakshmi Narasimha on way to Tirumala along the Alipiri foot route exhibits the significance of lion in the celestial entourage of Lord Venkateswara.

Later in the evening, Lord Malayappa took a pleasure ride on the pearl-studded 'Muthyapu Pandiri Vahanam' inside the temple. Legend says

Muthyam (pearl) symbolises peace, tranquillity and serene love. Lord graces the pearl canopy Vahanam to shower His benign blessings on devotees.

Tirumala pontiffs Pedda Jeeyar Swamy and Chinna Jeeyar Swamy, TTD executive officer K.S. Jawahar Reddy, MP Vemireddy Prabhakar Reddy, Additional EO A. V. Dharma Reddy, JEO P. Basant Kumar and others were present.

OTHER STORIES

COVID DEATH: LAST RITES PERFORMED WITH VOLUNTEERS

PATHRI RAJASEKHAR | DC NELLORE, OCT. 18

Volunteers assisting the Red Cross Society to dispose of bodies of Covid-19 victims at the mobile crematorium have helped a family to perform final rites of a loved one after their relatives and friends failed to help them at Nellore on Sunday.

The volunteers, Shaik Rahul and S. Sai Teja, volunteered after the staff manning the mortuary at the GGH told them about the inability of family members to collect the body or perform last rites.

While the wife of the deceased is ill, one of her daughters is mentally challenged and another is working in a hotel near the RTC bus stand at Nellore. The hotel staffer daughter said that the volunteers helped her shift the body to the graveyard and cremate it in the mobile crematorium.

Rahul said they purchased a garland and gave it to her. A priest came just before placing the body in the crematorium to help the daughter to perform the last rites.

She said her father succumbed to kidney ailment at the GGH and he was tested positive for Covid-19 after death.

She said she was running the family after her father was bedridden six months back. She thanked Rahul and Teja for coming to her rescue.

MODERATE RAIN LASHES NELLORE CITY

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, OCT. 18

Moderate rain lashed Nellore city since Saturday night. The rain was almost continuous at night and turned intermittent from Sunday morning.

Several low-lying areas were inundated following the down-pour.

According to weather officials, Nellore city recorded 7 mm of rain till 8.30 am on Sunday and 15.3 mm from 8.30 am to 3.30 pm on Sunday.

Meanwhile water storage level increased to 74.5 tmc.ft in Somasila project with an inflow of 13,273 cusecs and outflow of 14,546 cusecs on Sunday morning. At Kandaleru, the water stood at 55.95 tmc.ft with inflows of 8,183 cusecs and outflow of 3,480 cusecs.

INDIA, LANKAN NAVIES EXERCISES FROM TODAY

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 18

The Eighth Edition of annual Indian Navy-Sri Lanka Navy bilateral maritime exercise SLINEX-20 is scheduled off Trincomalee, Sri Lanka from Monday. The three-day event will conclude on October 21, a release from Eastern Naval Command, Visakhapatnam said on Sunday.

The Sri Lanka Navy will be represented by *Sayura* (Offshore Patrol Vessel) and *Gajabahu* (Training Ship) led by Rear Admiral Bandara Jayathilaka, the Flag Officer Commanding Naval Fleet, Sri Lanka Navy.

Indigenously built ASW corvettes *Kamorta* and *Kiltan* under the command of Rear Admiral Sanjay Vatsayan, Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet, will represent the Indian Navy.

In addition, Indian Navy Advanced Light Helicopter and Chetak helicopter embarked onboard Indian naval ships and Dornier Maritime Patrol Aircraft will also be participating. The previous edition of SLINEX was conducted off Visakhapatnam in September 2019.

SLINEX-20 aims to enhance inter-operability, improve mutual understanding and exchange best practices and procedures for multi-faceted maritime operations between both navies.

In addition, the exercise will also showcase capabilities of our indigenously constructed naval ships and aircraft. Surface and anti-air exercises, including weapon firing, sea-ship evolutions, manoeuvres and cross deck flying operations are planned during the exercise, which will further enhance the high degree of inter-operability already established between the two friendly navies.

● **THE EXERCISES** are being conducted in a non-contact 'at-sea-only' format in the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic.

State crosses 70 lakh mark of Corona tests

The recovery rate continues to increase, reaches 94.53%

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 18

Andhra Pradesh has crossed the 70-lakh mark in Corona tests, apart from recording the lowest 23 Covid-19 deaths on a single day in the past three months on Sunday.

The dropping of Corona positive cases continued with registration of 3,986 new positive cases against an earlier average of 10,000 cases per day.

The total Corona positive cases reached 7,83,132 on Sunday in which 7,40,229 are recoveries, 36,474 active cases and 6,429 deaths. The recovery rate continues to increase and has reached 94.53 per cent on Sunday.

West Godavari district is on top by recording single day highest Corona cases of 528 on Sunday. 4,591 patients in the district have been discharged after cure in the past 24 hours.

Highest number of four deaths each have been registered in the past 24 hours in Chittoor, Guntur

● **AP HAS** tested a total of 70.66,203 samples for Corona till date and is at the top place in Covid-19 tests conducted in the entire country.

and Krishna districts, followed by two deaths each in Anantapur, B.G. Nellore and WG districts, and one each in Kadapa, Prakasam and Visakhapatnam districts. East Godavari registered a total 1,10,092 cases and is top among all districts and WG is in the second place with 79,131 total positive cases.

As many as 74,945 Corona tests have been conducted in the past 24 hours in which 3,986 have been diagnosed as Covid-19 positive. The single day highest number of 528 Corona positive cases has been registered in WG district, increasing the total to 79,131 in which 4,495 are active cases. The second single day highest number of 503 Corona positive cases has been registered in Krishna district, increasing the total to 34,598 in which 2,618 are active cases. The third single day

highest number of Corona positive cases of 496 has been registered in Guntur district, increasing the total to 62,348 in which 3,839 are active cases.

EG district is in the fourth place, registering 481 new positive cases in the past 24 hours, increasing total positive cases to 1,10,092 in which 6,326 are active cases. 453 new Corona positive cases have been registered in Chittoor district, increasing total positive cases to 73,655 in which 4,605 are active cases. 334 new Corona positive cases have been registered in Prakasam district, increasing total positive cases to 56,582 in which 3,141 are active cases.

Kadapa district recorded 266 new Corona positive cases in the past 24 hours, increasing total positive cases to 49,863 in which 2,813 are active cases. 218 new Corona positive cases

have been registered in Visakhapatnam district, increasing total positive cases to 53,806 in which 2091 are active cases.

Anantapur district registered 201 new cases in the past 24 hours, taking the total positive cases to 62,469 in which 1,862 are active cases. 196 new Corona positive cases have been registered in Nellore district, increasing total positive cases to 58,125 in which 1,182 are active cases. 168 new Corona positive cases have been registered in Srikakulam district increasing total positive cases to 42,606 in which 1,337 are active cases.

The second least number of single day 82 new Corona positive cases during the last 24 hours has been registered in Vizianagaram district, increasing total positive cases to 38,180 in which 1,195 are active cases. The least number of 55 new Corona cases have been registered in Kurnool district, increasing total positive cases to 58,782 in which 970 are active cases.

SBI CASHIER ARRESTED IN FAKE GOLD LOAN CASE

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, OCT. 18

The Amalapuram Rural police arrested State Bank of India cash officer B.V.V.S.S. Sarma on Sunday on the charge of taking gold loans of more than ₹1 crore without mortgaging gold with their relatives' names.

Police said the official got 25 loans and invested in aqua ponds. However, due to losses in aqua fields, he could not clear the debt. The internal audit teams found the scam, he said.

The Amalapuram Rural Circle Inspector Mr Suresh Babu, Sub-Inspector Mr Rajesh and others were present. The Amalapuram Police registered a case.

MAOISTS ISSUE WARNING TO PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVES

ANUDEEP CEREMILLA | DC WARANGAL, OCT. 18

In the last few days, Naxalites have written open letters warning the local public representatives in the wake of the police focusing on the movements of the Maoists in the districts bordering Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh. On Sunday, a letter was found, in Pambapur village of Mahamut-haram mandal in Jayashankar Bhupalpally district warning local representatives.

The leaflets, purportedly written on behalf of CPI (M) Karimnagar-Khammam-Warangal Area Committee, said that the anarchy of public representatives has increased in villages.

It stated that the village presidents, sarpanch Bantu Ramesh, would be punished in the public court for illegally accumulating wealth.

Mentioning four public representatives who gathered a lot of assets in erstwhile Warangal, Karimnagar and Khammam, the Maoists warned that they would face the same fate of Venkateswara Rao who was killed in Borlagudem eight years ago.

● **IT STATED** that the village presidents, sarpanch Bantu Ramesh, would be punished in the public court for illegally accumulating wealth.

Two chain snatchers held in Tirupati

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, OCT. 18

Alipiri police arrested two seasoned chain snatchers and recovered 71 grams gold and one two-wheeler from the accused.

The accused were identified as R. Nagendra Babu, 19 hailing from Sanjay Gandhi nagar in Tirupati and S. Siva, 30 from Chintamani taluk in Karnataka state.

Disclosing details to media persons, Tirupati



Police personnel attend duty wearing PPE kits at the entrance of sanctum sanctorum of Kanaka Durga temple during Dasara celebrations in Vijayawada on Sunday. —DC

10,655 devotees visited Durga temple on Sunday

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 18

Goddess Kanaka Durga was adorned in Bala Tripura Sundari as the Devi Avatar (attire) on the second consecutive day on Sunday in the Dasara Navarathri festival on the hilltop Indrakeeladri Durga temple. The devotees, following the Covid-19 protocol, visited the temple and performed pujas worshipping Bala Tripura Sundari Devi.

Temple priests explained that Tripura is the first goddess in the Tripura traya and she is the main

goddess of all in the Sriyantra.

They said that without having got the mantra of Bala one is not eligible to perform the Sri Yantra puja. They stated that in the first Amnaya of Srichakra Bala resides, so without worshipping Bala, one cannot perform puja to Sridevi.

They further noted that Kanaka Durga is decorated as Bala as Sri Adi Shankara, has established Srichakra here and so to beget the *Anugraha* of Bala she is decorated as Bala. One has to see her beauty in this *alankaram*.

They mentioned that worshipping the goddess was the vital part of the Shakti puja.

Temple executive officer M.V. Suresh Babu and Trust Board chairman P. Somi Naidu said that as many as 10,655 devotees took darshan of Goddess Durga on Sunday.

They said that the temple had earned ₹8,25,100 revenue through sales of laddus, tickets and saree auctions on Sunday. They expressed hope that goddess Bala Tripura Sundari Devi would shower good health, peace and happiness to the devotees.

Improve quality of services to devotees, TTD EO instructs

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, OCT. 18

TTD EO Dr K.S. Jawahar Reddy inspected the Matrusri Tarigonda Vengamamba Annaprasadam Complex (MTVAC) and Vaikunta queue complex at Tirumala on Sunday and gave instructions to employees to improve quality of service and amenities to devotees.

The TTD EO along with additional EO A.V. Dharma Reddy also par-took *annaprasadam* at the MTVAC during the inspection and appreciat-

● **TTD EO** inspected the Vaikuntam queue complex and reviewed the system for depositing mobiles, footwears, supply of annaprasadam, etc.

ed the quality of food items given to devotees.

Speaking to media persons near the MTVAC, he said devotees coming for Srivari darshan were happy about all the facilities being provided by TTD in Tirumala like quality *annaprasadam*

and accommodation etc.

At the MTVAC, he inspected the cold storage, kitchen and the dining halls and lauded the services of staff after interaction with the devotees for providing delicious and quality food items.

TTD EO further inspected the Vaikuntam queue complex and reviewed the system for depositing mobiles, footwears, supply of *annaprasadam*, coffee, tea and milk, phone facility and dispensaries for emergency medical treatment to devotees in the queue compartments.



Mayura vahana seva performed at Srisaillam Sri Bhramaramba Mallikarjuna Swamy temple as part of Dasara festivities on Sunday. —DC

9 held for illegal transport of liquor

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, OCT. 18

The Katrenikona police of Konaseema arrested nine persons and seized 397 liquor bottles worth ₹39,700 from them.

The Amalapuram DSP Shaik Masoom Basha told the reporters on Sunday that the crime police recently conducted raids on some places on liquor dens.

The team found a few people selling liquor which was being illegally transported from Yanam, a Union Territory enclave of Puducherry, by boat.

The police caught the liquor bags and the boat, but the accused atta-

cked the police and grabbed the cell phone from a constable recently.

The Mummidiavaram CI Janakiram and Katrenikona SI Jabbar have investigated the incident and arrested the accused. Mr Basha said that a special vigil is kept on the transport of illegal liquor, illegal sand mining and transport and others.

SP Adnan Nayeem Asmi and Special Enforcement Bureau additional SP Sumit Garud deployed special teams to arrest such activities for suppressing it with an iron hand. He said that nobody would be spared such illegal activities.

RLYS TO RUN SPECIAL TRAIN FOR DASARA

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 18

East Coast Railways will run special trains to clear extra rush of passengers during the festive season.

A release from Waltair division of East Coast Railway on Sunday said Puri-Chennai Central special express will leave Puri on every Sunday at 17.30 hrs from October 25 to November 29 which will reach Chennai Central at 14.55 hrs the next day. In return direction the train will leave Chennai Central on every Monday at 16.25 hrs from October to November 30 which will reach Puri at 15.10 hrs on the next day.

The Visakhapatnam-Chennai Central special express will leave Visakhapatnam on every Monday at 19.05 hrs from October 26 to November 30 which will reach Chennai Central at 08.55 hrs on the next day.

In return direction the train will leave Chennai Central on every Tuesday at 21.10 hrs from October 27 to December 1 which will reach Visakhapatnam at 10.25 hrs on the next day.

Similarly two special trains will run from Visakhapatnam to Nizamuddin and one each to Rayagada, Gandhinagar, Cuddapah, double decker train to Vijayawada. The other special trains include Bhubaneswar-Tirupati, Bhubaneswar-Chennai Central, Bhubaneswar-Bangalore Cant, Bhubaneswar-Puducherry and Bhubaneswar-Rameswaram.

‘TS to become a fish hub soon’

DC CORRESPONDENT JAGTIAL, OCT. 18

Welfare minister Koppula Eshwar participated in various developmental activities in Dharmapuri in Jagtial district on Sunday.

The minister laid the foundation stone for renovation works of a mini Tank Bund at the cost of ₹92.77 lakhs, distributed 150 dual desk benches to the ZP High School in Dharmapuri and released 6.1 lakh fish seed in the Yellampalli reservoir Backwater of the Godavari river on Sunday.

The minister said, “With the completion of several water projects,

the income of fishermen in the state has increased leading Telangana towards becoming a fish hub in the country.”

The government is taking several steps to develop the economy in rural areas by giving a boost to caste-based professions.

Determined to improve the welfare of the fishermen community, the government introduced the Comprehensive Fisheries Development Scheme, distributed fish seed at 100 per cent subsidy, along with necessary equipment and has handed over complete rights of water bodies to the local fishermen societies.



IN BRIEF

Museum on ex-Prez Pranab in the offing

Berhampore: A museum will be built in the memory of former president Pranab Mukherjee in West Bengal. It will come up at his residence in Jangipur of Murshidabad, former Congress MP and Mukherjee's son Abhijit Mukherjee informed. Pranab Mukherjee, who was a two-time MP from Jangipur and held several ministerial portfolios including finance and external affairs from time to time during the Congress rule at the Centre, died on August 31 in Delhi after a prolonged illness. At a condolence meeting in memory of his father at Rabindra Bhavan in Jangipur Abhijit said, "My father had built a house at Deuli on the outskirts of Jangipur and named it as Jangipur Bhavan. We have decided to build a museum at the ground floor of the house very soon." The leaders many photos and mementos received from foreign countries would be showcased in the museum.

MAR THOMA CHURCH HEAD PASSES AWAY

Thiruvalla, Oct. 18: Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan, the primate of the Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church, died early on Sunday at a private hospital here after battling cancer, church sources said.

The 90-year-old head of the Marthoma community was under treatment for pancreatic cancer and breathed his last around 2.30 am, hospital sources said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi condoled the death of the spiritual leader, saying the Metropolitan was a remarkable personality who served humanity and worked hard to improve the lives of the poor.

"His Grace the Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan was a remarkable personality who served humanity and worked hard to improve the lives of the poor and down-trodden. He was blessed with abundance of empathy and humility. His noble ideals will always be remembered. RIP," Modi tweeted.

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said the demise of the Metropolitan was not only a loss to the church but to the society as a whole. "He worked for the liberation and welfare of the homeless and marginalised people in the society. His involvement in rehabilitating children from the Red Street in Mumbai and uplifting transgender persons into the mainstream shows how he battled for the down-trodden," Vijayan said in a statement.

Born as P.T. Joseph to Alakunnathu T. Lukose and Mariamma couple at Maramonin Pathanamthitta district, Joseph Mar Thoma became Mar Thoma metropolitan in October 2007 after the then Mar Thoma, Philipose Mar Chrysostom, expressed his desire to transfer responsibilities of the church to his successor due to his deteriorating health.

SENA ACCUSES BJP OF USING GUVs AS AGENTS

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC MUMBAI, OCT. 18

Maharashtra's ruling party Shiv Sena has accused the BJP of using the Governors as its "political agents" to destabilise all the governments run by the Opposition parties. This is not a sign of a good ruler, said senior leader Sanjay Raut.

"In Maharashtra, the BJP has engaged in anti-government propaganda since there is a non-BJP government in the state. In fact, wherever there are Opposition governments, the BJP has trained its guns at them by appointing governors as their political agents," said Raut in his weekly column in the Sena mouthpiece *Saamana* on Sunday.

The Sena leader cited several states where Governors are at loggerheads with the governments of Opposition parties. "In West Bengal, Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar is seen posing daily challenges to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who is not budging to him. In Delhi too, there is a clash between Arvind Kejriwal and the lieutenant-Governor. There is no trouble in Punjab due to the fear of invoking the wrath of the Sikh community. In Maharashtra, the Thackeray government is stable despite various attempts from the Governor, whereas all efforts to destabilise the Ashok Gehlot government were foiled in Rajasthan," he added.

Raksha Bhavan to be razed

Shram Shakti Bhavan also to be demolished for controversial Central Vista

ANIMESH SINGH | DC NEW DELHI, OCT. 18

Raksha Bhavan, which houses the accommodation suites of officers attached with the prestigious National Defence College (NDC), as well as Transport Bhavan (office of the road transport & shipping and tourism ministries) and Shram Shakti Bhavan (which houses the labour, water resources and power ministries), are all set to be demolished under the controversial Central Vista project.

Transport Bhavan and Shram Shakti Bhavan will make way for chambers for MPs next to the proposed new Parliament building, while Raksha Bhavan will be replaced by the common Central Secretariat (CCS) build-

ings that will house the offices of all Central ministries, top sources aware of these development told this newspaper.

The much criticised Central Vista project — which envisions the building of a new Parliament House, a new accommodation for the Prime Minister and offices of all Central ministries at the 3 km stretch between Rashtrapati Bhavan and India Gate — entails shifting the entire staff of these ministries as well as officers' suites of the NDC to the under construction Grameen Vikas Bhavan, which was earlier supposed to be the new address of the rural development ministry.

The entire cost of shifting the staff of the ministries as well as that of

the NDC officers' suites to the under-construction erstwhile Grameen Vikas Bhavan and its fresh construction will come to around ₹350 crores, the sources added. They claimed that this cost will be less than the cost of building the new office of the rural development ministry.

The proposal has been approved by the urban affairs and the defence ministries, the sources said. The erstwhile Grameen Vikas Bhavan will be known as General Pool Office Accommodation (GPOA) building.

The proposed Grameen Vikas Bhavan, which had been sanctioned by the rural development ministry in November 2018, as its new address, and whose construction had

begun in July 2019, was abruptly stopped after it was decided in December 2019 by the Centre that all ministries will be accommodated in the CCS buildings under the Central Vista project.

At the time of halting its construction, the government had already spent around ₹12 crores on Grameen Vikas Bhavan, sources privy to the details said.

Subsequently, according to highly-placed sources, it was decided that the under-construction Grameen Vikas Bhavan or the proposed GPOA building will now house the twin offices of all these five ministries as well as suites for the NDC officers.

Keeping security aspects in mind, the GPOA build-

ing will have separate entry and exit points for civilian and military establishments, and even the basement parking area will be partitioned by walls so that there is no intermingling of ministries' staff with that of the NDC officers.

The Central Vista project has been shrouded in controversy ever since it was officially announced in September last year. It has faced allegations ranging from seeking hasty approvals, lack of transparency and absence of public consultation, and seeking the advice of experts as well as not taking the all-important approval of Parliament, and going ahead with it despite the fact that the Coronavirus pandemic is raging in the country.

Minister confirms Covid community transmission

New Delhi, Oct. 18: Union health minister Harsh Vardhan on Sunday said community transmission of the Coronavirus infection is restricted to certain districts in a limited number of states, clarifying that "this is not happening across the country".

The minister said this during an interaction with his social media followers on the sixth episode of "Sunday Samvaad".

He was responding to a question from a participant, who cited West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's remark that there are instances of community transmission in her state and asked the minister which are the states that have witnessed community transmission of the disease.

"In different pockets across various states, including West Bengal, community transmission of Covid-19 is expected to occur, especially in densely-populated areas. However, this is not happening across the country. Community transmission is limited to certain districts, occurring in a limited number of states," Vardhan said.

He added that as yet, no mutation of the Coronavirus has been detected in India that is either more transmission-efficient or more pathogenic.

The Centre so far has denied community transmission of the Coronavirus infection in

● **HARSH VARDHAN** says community transmission of the Coronavirus infection is restricted to certain districts in a limited number of states and that this is not happening across the country.

the country. Health ministry officials had said the World Health Organisation (WHO) has not given any standard definition of community transmission. It permits its member nations to assess the spread of the disease, based on their own analysis of the situation, and do their reporting, which the global body shows on its website.

Broadly, if it is not possible to trace the transmission chain, it means there is community transmission, officials said. The Centre has maintained that there are clusters of cases and there are pockets of localised transmission.

Meanwhile, with Kerala witnessing a spike in Coronavirus infections recently, Harsh Vardhan said the state was paying the "price for gross negligence" during Onam festivities when unlocking of services along with an increase in travel for trade and tourism led to the spread of Covid-19.

The minister said this ought to serve as a good lesson for all the state governments that were being negligent in planning for the festival season. — PTI

Lights of victory



Iconic Howrah Bridge illuminated with the official colour of historical Mohun Bagan Club after the official handover of the I-League 2019-20 trophy to the champions Mohun Bagan at Hyatt Regency Hotel in Kolkata on Sunday.

— PRITAM BANDYOPADHYAY

BJP-Cong spar over Tharoor's remarks

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, OCT. 18

Berating the Congress over its senior leader Shashi Tharoor's remarks at the recent Lahore Think Fest, where he criticised the Indian government's handling of the Covid-19 situation, "bigotry and prejudice" against Muslims and "problem with northeast citizens who look different."

Describing Tharoor's virtual address as a Congress "debut rally" in Pakistan, the BJP asked whether Congress leader Rahul Gandhi intends to contest elections in Pakistan. It said that henceforth, the Congress leader should be called "Rahul Lahori."

Hitting back, the Congress said that the BJP had always responded to substance and facts with "jumlebaazi (rhetoric)" and that such reactions from the ruling party "ridicule" the debate and "diminish us as a democracy."

Citing Congress leaders including Rahul Gandhi's earlier statement on nullification of Article 370, P. Chidambaram's tweet on restoration of Article 350, Mani Shankar Aiyar's statement during a Pakistani TV debate in 2015 and Salman Khurshid's remarks at an event in Islamabad, BJP national spokesperson Sambit Patra said, "We want to ask andhi whether he is planning to contest from Pakistan."

● **SHASHI THAROOR** at the recent Lahore Think Fest criticised the Indian government's handling of the Covid-19 situation, "bigotry and prejudice" against Muslims and "problem with northeast citizens who look different."

"...Tharoor said Gandhi should get credit which he is not getting in India or by the Indian media but seems he is getting much affection from Pakistan... Tharoor has already held the debut rally(of Congress) there (Pakistan)," Dr Patra said. He questioned the need to discuss Indians from the northeast at a Pakistani forum while adding that "there is no country in this world as democratic and just as India."

Taking on the Congress over Tharoor's remarks on Indian Muslims, Patra asked did the Congress leader or its leadership ever dare to ask how minorities are treated in Pakistan and how Hindus, Christians, Buddhists and Sikhs are forcefully converted or killed.

Hitting back, Congress spokesperson Abhishek Singhvi said, "The BJP has always responded to substance and pointed facts with 'jumlebaazi'. The BJP has always believed in rhetoric, not substance. Yes, it does sometimes catch you by the eyeballs or the eardrums when you hear it, but, within seconds, logic takes over and tells you how empty a rhetoric the BJP is indulging in."

Nath's reference of woman mantri as 'item' sparks row

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, OCT. 18

Congress veteran Kamal Nath on Sunday joined ranks of politicians who have made crass, sexist remarks by reportedly describing Madhya Pradesh women and child welfare minister Imarti Devi, who hails from a dalit community, as an 'item'.

Addressing an election meeting at Dabra under Gwalior district in MP, Nath, 74, said, "Who is she...(the crowd calls out Imarti Devi's name)... why should I take her name... you all should

have warned me... what an item!). Shockingly, former minister and senior Congress leader Bijoylaxmi Sadho who was present at the dais burst into laughter along with others while reacting to Nath's sexist remarks.

Devi, who is contesting from Dabra Assembly constituency in the November 3 by-elections as a BJP candidate, was also a minister in the Kamal Nath government which fell in March this year following the resignation of 22 Congress MLAs.

BJP took strong exception to the 'derogatory'

remarks by Nath against the woman minister and moved the Election Commission demanding to bar him from campaigning in the state.

The party declared to move the women commission and national scheduled caste commission demanding action against Nath for making insulting remarks against the woman minister.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan expressed shock and dismay at Nath's 'outrageous' utterances against a woman minister, saying it smacked of his arrogance and narrow mindset.

OFFICIAL | APATHY

Bridge built to ease transportation to local markets, hospitals

Villagers build timber bridge over river

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, OCT. 18

Residents of Birindipada, a remote forest village under the K. Nuagaon block in Odisha's Kandhamal district, have built a timber bridge over the local Kalipan river to establish physical links with the local markets, hospitals, schools and colleges.

The locals on Sunday said they have been deprived of basic transport and communication facilities for decades and all their appeals to build a concrete bridge over the river always fell on "deaf ears" of the administration.

Despite repeated appeals

and petitions to the local representatives of the state administration, no step was taken to construct a bridge.

As a result, they always crossed the dangerous Kalipan river with the help of cables tied to the trees on both sides of the river.

"We have appealed to the local MLA and MP umpteen times. They have always assured us that they will look into our request. Unfortunately, they never made any move to build a bridge here. Pregnant women and ailing people were left to their fate as we could not carry them to the nearby hospitals," said the villagers.

They added that the gov-



The timber bridge constructed by villagers of Birindipada in Odisha's Kandhamal district.

— DC

ernment-supplied ration often did not reach them as the river served as a barrier.

"Earlier we used to cross the river with the help of metal cables tied to big trees on both the sides of the river. When our plight

was highlighted by the media, the administration removed the cables, pushing us to utter confinement. Our brothers and fathers collected logs from the forest and made this timber bridge. If the government removes it, we

will once again be stranded and will be paddling through water risking our lives," said a pregnant woman.

Though no government official was forthcoming on the allegation of apathy made by the villagers, sources said the government has constructed a bridge over the river six km upstream from the village. However, the villagers are not using that bridge as they have to travel that extra distance.

"The government is still considering building a bridge at Birindapada. We have drawn the attention of the higher authorities and a decision will be taken soon" a senior government official who did not want to be quoted said.

IN BRIEF

16 killed in Pak landslide

Islamabad: At least 16 people were killed on Sunday when a bus they were travelling in fell into a deep ditch after being struck by a landslide in Gilgit-Baltistan region, according to a Pakistani media report. The bus was going from Rawalpindi to Skardu when it was hit by the landslide which was so massive that it pushed the vehicle into a deep ditch, killing at least 16 people in the Roundo area in Gilgit-Baltistan, the Radio Pakistan reported. Landslides are common in the region which is famous for its scenic beauty as well as treacherous roads.

Plan to retrieve Titanic radio

Norfolk (US): People have been diving to the Titanic's wreck for 35 years. No one has found human remains, according to the company that owns the salvage rights. But the company's plan to retrieve the ship's iconic radio equipment has sparked a debate: Could the world's most famous shipwreck still hold remains of passengers and crew who died a century ago? Lawyers for the US government have raised that question in an ongoing court battle to block the planned expedition. "Fifteen hundred people died in that wreck," said Paul Johnston, curator of maritime history at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. "You can't possibly tell me that some human remains aren't buried deep somewhere where there are no currents." The company, RMS Titanic Inc., wants to exhibit the ship's Marconi wireless telegraph machine.

UAE min accused of sex assault

London: The chair of Britain's Hay literary festival said Sunday the event will not return to Abu Dhabi after one of the festival's curators alleged that she was sexually assaulted by the tolerance minister of the United Arab Emirates while working with him. Caitlin McNamara alleged she was attacked in February by Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, a member of Abu Dhabi's ruling family, the *Sunday Times* reported. The *Times* said McNamara, who had travelled to the UAE to work on the launch of the literary festival there, claimed she was assaulted by the sheikh when they met at a remote island villa. The Foreign Ministry of the UAE, a federation of seven sheikhdoms on the Arabian Peninsula also home to Dubai, said it does not comment on personal matters. When asked about the case, Britain's Metropolitan Police confirmed that a woman contacted the force on July 3 to report an allegation of rape, and said an initial statement has been taken from her. The *AP* does not usually name sexual assault victims, but McNamara agreed to be identified by the *Times*, which ran her picture on the front page. Festival chair Caroline Michel said her colleagues are committed to supporting McNamara.

AFGHANISTAN CAR BOMBING KILLS 13

Kabul, Oct. 18: A suicide car bombing on Sunday killed at least 13 people and wounded around 120 others in Afghanistan's western Ghor province, officials said. The head of a hospital in Ghor, Mohammad Omer Lalzad, said emergency staff were treating dozens of people with both serious and light injuries from the bombing. He expected the death toll to rise. Interior Ministry spokesman Tariq Aran said the car bombing struck near the entrance of the provincial police chief's office and other nearby government buildings in the area. No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack in Ghor, which comes amid an uptick in attacks by the Taliban as representatives of the group and Afghan government officials hold their first-ever face-to-face talks in Qatar, where the Taliban have had a political office for many years. The negotiations are meant to end the country's decades-long war. Arif Aber, spokesman for the provincial governor in Ghor, said the blast was so strong that its sound could be heard across Feroz Koh, the capital city of the province. "It damaged and partially destroyed a few government buildings, including the police chief's office," Aber said.

Covid vaccine deployment in UK by New Year: Report

The vaccine has a Serum Institute of India tie-up as it undergoes trials

Living Covid found on frozen food packaging

London, Oct. 18: One of the UK's senior-most medical chiefs has indicated that a vaccine against Covid-19 could be ready to be deployed by the start of the New Year, according to a media report on Sunday. Jonathan Van-Tam, England's Deputy Chief Medical Officer and one of the government's advisers on the Coronavirus pandemic, has reportedly told members of Parliament (MPs) that the vaccine created at Oxford University and being manufactured by AstraZeneca could be ready for rollout soon after Christmas in December.

In India, the vaccine has a Serum Institute of India tie-up as it undergoes trials. "We aren't light years away from it. It isn't a totally unrealistic suggestion that we could deploy a vaccine soon after Christmas. That would have a significant impact on hospital admissions and deaths," *The Sunday Times* quoted Van Tam as telling the MPs during a briefing last week.

An MP who attended another briefing with Van-Tam told the newspaper that the medic was "very bullish about the third

Beijing, Oct. 18: China's health authority has confirmed the detection and isolation of living Coronavirus on the outer packaging of imported frozen marine fish in the port city of Qingdao, in what it described as the first detection of its kind on the cold food chain in the world. The authorities in Qingdao, where a new cluster of Covid-19 cases were reported recently, conducted tests on all of its about 11 million population. No new clusters of cases were found after the tests, the local authorities said. In July, China suspended imports of frozen

stage AstraZeneca results, which he expects between the end of this month and the end of next." "Van-Tam expects it to protect the elderly and vulnerable. He gave us to understand that it stopped the virus

shrimp after the deadly virus was found on packages and the inner wall of a container.

The Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on Saturday said it detected and isolated the living Coronavirus on the outer packaging of imported frozen cod (large marine fish) in Qingdao. The finding was made during an investigation to trace the source of recent infections reported in the city. It has proved that contact with packaging contaminated by living Coronavirus could lead to infection, state-run *Xinhua* news agency reported,

'shedding' in the young. He said he would expect vaccination to start in January," the MP was quoted as saying.

It comes as the UK government introduced new laws on Friday that would

allow larger numbers of healthcare workers to administer flu and potential Covid-19 vaccines. "Covid-19 vaccines are being developed at speed which, if successful, will save lives," said Van-Tam. — *PTI*

quoting the CDC statement. It, however, did not mention the country from where the package was imported. It is the first time in the world that living Coronavirus has been isolated from the outer packaging of cold-chain food, the statement said.

The agency said the risk of cold-chain food circulating in China's market being contaminated by the Coronavirus is very low, citing recent nucleic acid test results for samples taken from the business. A total of 2.98 million samples had been tested across the country by September 15. — *PTI*

AIRLINES PUSH FOR TESTS OVER QUARANTINES

Frankfurt, Oct. 18: What will it take to get people flying again? International air traffic is down 92 per cent this year as travelers worry about catching Covid-19 and government travel bans and quarantine rules make planning difficult.

One thing airlines believe could help is to have rapid virus tests of all passengers before departure. Scattered experiments on improving safety are under way around the world, and a UN organisation is leading talks to set guidelines. There is a lot at stake.

With no end in sight to the pandemic, the near total halt to international travel will hinder economies as they try to bounce back from recession and return to normal levels of business activity. Millions of jobs at airlines, airports and travel related businesses are affected. — *AP*

Don plays fear tactics to win Midwest states

Janesville (Winconsin), Oct. 18: President Donald Trump leaned into fear tactics Saturday as he accused the Left of trying to "destroy the American way of life" in a late reelection pitch to voters in Michigan and Wisconsin — two Midwestern states that were instrumental to his 2016 victory but may now be slipping from his grasp.

In back-to-back rallies, Trump accused the Left of wanting to "erase American history" and "purge American values". He claimed, with no basis, that Democratic rival Joe Biden would put communities at risk. Trump offered the dark message as he faces headwinds not only in national polling, which shows Biden leading, but also in key battleground surveys. His comments come after his campaign, with far less cash than Biden's, largely retreated from TV advertising in the Midwest, shifting much of its money to Sun Belt states such as Florida, North Carolina, Arizona and Georgia, as well as Pennsylvania.

As he tries to energise his base and keep on the fence voters from turning against him, Trump sought to paint Democrats as "anti-American radicals" and said moderates had "a moral duty" to join the Republican Party. "The Democrat Party you once knew doesn't exist," he said. It was the same on issue after issue, as he claimed in hyperbolic terms that Biden's election would spur "the single biggest depression in the history of our coun-

The left is trying to destroy the American way of life and purge American values. Democrats are anti-American radicals. Moderates have a moral duty to join the Republican Party.

DONALD TRUMP, US President

try" and "turn Michigan into a refugee camp."

Addressing the Coronavirus crisis, Trump warned that Biden would "shut down the country, delay the vaccine and prolong the pandemic". Public health experts say the nation would be in far better shape had Trump's administration taken more aggressive action early on. And while he repeatedly predicted victory, Trump seemed to grapple throughout the day with the prospect that he could indeed lose in November. In Michigan, he quipped that, in January, he "better damn well be president". In Wisconsin, he wondered how he would process a loss. "Can you imagine if I lose? I will have lost to the worst candidate in the history of American politics," he said.

"What do I do?" Trump has continued to hold rallies despite the threat of the Coronavirus, which hospitalised him for several days earlier this month. Wisconsin broke the record for new positive virus cases on Friday — the third time that's happened in a week. — *AP*

US, Israeli envoys in Bahrain to ink deals

Jerusalem, Oct. 18: A joint American-Israeli delegation headed Sunday for Bahrain, where officials will be signing a number of bilateral agreements following an announcement last month to normalise relations.

US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's national security adviser, Meir Ben-Shabbat, led the delegation that flew out of Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion airport. Israel's commercial El Al flight 973 — a nod to the international dialing code for Bahrain — will fly through Saudi Arabia's airspace en route to Manama, where dignitaries from all three countries will speak at a ceremony after landing.

US, Israeli and Bahraini flags festooned the tarmac before take-off. Ben-Shabbat, one of the key Israeli officials involved in negotiations with Bahrain, said ahead of take-off that the visit will "translate plans to actions and concrete agreements" with the signing of a range of deals involving finance, investment, trade, tourism, communications, technology and agriculture. Another Israeli official said the visit represents the official establishment of diplo-

● **AN ISRAELI official said the visit represents the official establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries with the sides expected to sign a joint statement establishing full diplomatic relations.**

● **THE DECISION to establish ties with Israel has outraged the Palestinians, whose leadership has blasted the Bahraini move, and a similar Emirati deal, as a betrayal and an undermining of the Arab stance.**

matic relations between the two countries with the sides expected to sign a joint statement establishing full diplomatic relations.

The decision to establish ties with Israel has outraged the Palestinians, whose leadership has blasted the Bahraini move, and a similar Emirati deal, as a betrayal and an undermining of the Arab stance that recognition of Israel should come only after Palestinians achieve an independent state of their own. Bahraini civil society groups and opposition figures have also spoken out against normalisation with Israel. — *AP*

CHINA RESTRICTS SENSITIVE EXPORTS WITH NEW LAW

Beijing, Oct. 18: China has passed a new law restricting sensitive exports to protect national security, allowing Beijing to reciprocate against the US as tensions mount between the sides over trade and technology. The law, which will apply to all companies in China, was passed on Saturday by the National People's Congress Standing Committee and will take effect on December 1.

Under the law, China can take "reciprocal measures" toward countries or regions that abuse export controls and threaten its national security. It will apply to civilian, military and nuclear products. — *AP*

Parisians pay respects to Samuel Paty



People gather on Place de la Republique in Paris on Sunday, in homage to history teacher Samuel Paty two days after he was beheaded by an attacker who was shot dead by policemen. — *AFP*

INDIAN-ORIGIN BUILDER WHO KILLED 3 FREED

London, Oct. 18: An Indian-origin builder who was arrested in connection with the killing of three men, also of Indian origin, following a deadly knife fight on the streets of east London will not face any murder or manslaughter charges as the incident was deemed to be an act of self-defence. Gurjeet Singh, 29, had been arrested by the Metropolitan Police in connection with the killing of Narinder Singh Lubhaya, 29, Harinder Kumar, 30, and Malkit Singh Dhillon a.k.a. Baljinder Singh, 37, back in January.

The three murdered men, originally from Punjab, were found to have set upon Gurjeet Singh at Seven Kings in Redbridge area of London and were killed in the ensuing street fight. "Gurjeet Singh was arrested on January 20 on suspicion of murder. He was charged with possessing an offensive weapon in a public place and was remanded in custody to appear at Snaresbrook Crown Court, where he pleaded not guilty," the Metropolitan Police said in a statement. "He appeared for trial at Snaresbrook Crown Court on August 19 charged with being in possession of an offensive weapon. Following trial, the jury found him not guilty," the statement said. — *PTI*

UN arms embargo on Iran expires

Tehran, Oct. 18: A decade-long UN arms embargo on Iran that barred it from purchasing foreign weapons like tanks and fighter jets expired Sunday as planned under its nuclear deal with world powers, despite objections from the United States.

While insisting it planned no "buying spree", Iran in theory can purchase weapons to upgrade military armament dating back to before

its 1979 Islamic Revolution and sell its own locally produced gear abroad.

In practice, however, Iran's economy remains crippled by broad-reaching US sanctions, and other nations may avoid arms deals with Tehran for fear of American financial retaliation.

The Islamic Republic heralded the end of the arms embargo as "a momentous day for the international community... in defiance of the US

regime's effort".

The Trump administration, meanwhile, has insisted it has re-invoked all UN sanctions on Iran via a clause in the nuclear deal it withdrew from in 2018, a claim ignored by the rest of the world.

"Today's normalisation of Iran's defence cooperation with the world is a win for the cause of multilateralism and peace and security in our region," Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif

wrote on Twitter. The United Nations banned Iran from buying major foreign weapon systems in 2010 amid tensions over its nuclear programme.

An earlier embargo targeted Iranian arms exports. The US Defence Intelligence Agency predicted in 2019 that if the embargo ended, Iran likely would try to purchase Russian Su-30 fighter jets, Yak-130 trainer aircraft and T-90 tanks. — *AP*

NAMES | OFF

Immigration and passport panel directed to meet biannually

Pak removes 5K from travel blacklist

Islamabad, Oct. 18: Pakistan authorities have removed the names of over 5,000 individuals from the travel blacklist after the government took note of the problems faced by citizens whose names have been blacklisted for a long time, according to a media report on Sunday.

Interior Minister Ijaz Shah, in a meeting held recently, directed the review committee of the Directorate General of Immigration and Passports to meet biannually to review cases of blacklisted individuals. The meeting was held after a gap of almost four years. The previous meeting was held in December 2016. Taking note of problems faced by the blacklisted citizens, the minister directed the

‘Illegal’ hiring: PIA ex-MD held

Islamabad, Oct. 18: Pakistani International Airlines' former managing director Aijaz Haroon has been arrested on charges of illegal appointment of a Pakistani-American to a senior position at the national flag carrier at a huge salary package in violation of human resource department rules, according to a media report on Sunday. The Federal Investigation Agency on Saturday also arrested PIA's former human resource director Mohammad

Haneef Pathan along with Haroon, *The Dawn News* reported, quoting FIA Deputy Director Abdur Rauf Shaikh.

An FIR has been registered against the two former officials on charges of illegal appointment of Salim Sayani as deputy managing director (DMD) in PIA in 2009 in "clear violation of PIA HR rules", the report said.

Sayani has also been booked in the case. He was appointed on a monthly salary of \$20,000 along

with other perks and privileges that caused huge loss to the national exchequer. Sharing details of the perks and privileges, Shaikh said apart from the salary in US dollars, Sayani was allowed to stay at a five-star hotel for three months and his family was also provided accommodation in Dubai on PIA's expense. The "illegal appointment caused a loss between Rs 200 million and Rs 250 million to the exchequer", the report quoted Shaikh. — *PTI*

report in the *Dawn* newspaper. The committee reviewed the names of citizens falling in category B of the blacklist and removed the names of 5,807 individuals out of a list of 42,725 people.

The committee will consider rest of the cases in its forthcoming periodic review, the report said. There are two main blacklist categories- Category 'A' includes names of those involved in serious crimes like terrorism, money laundering and anti-state activities, whereas the 'B' category mainly has names of deportees who had either travelled abroad on forged documents or were found involved in crime in the host country, it said. — *PTI*

Immigration and Passports director general to immediately convene a meeting of the periodical review committee to consider cases on merit and remove names from the blacklist after the due process, according to a



DECCAN
Chronicle

19 OCTOBER 2020

India shown poorly in global hunger index

The recent World Economic Outlook report of the IMF which predicted that Bangladesh's per capita gross domestic product (GDP) this year to \$1,888, a notch higher than India's \$1,877, was a shocker to many who believed in India's growth story. But the apologists of the government countered the report saying it is only one of the indicators of economic prosperity and there are many others for India to take relief from. The Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2020 published this week, instead of offering some relief, has delivered another shocker. It has put India behind most of its south Asian neighbours, including Bangladesh. GHI has ranked India at 94 among 107 nations in the GHI and placed it in the "serious" hunger category. Bangladesh, Myanmar and Pakistan, ranked 75, 78 and 88, respectively, are also in the same category but are above India. Nepal, ranked 73rd and Sri Lanka 64th are better off and are in "moderate" hunger category.

GHI score is calculated on four indicators — undernourishment; child wasting or the share of children under the age of five years who have low weight for their height reflecting acute under-nutrition; child stunting or the share of children under the age of five who have low height for their age reflecting chronic under-nutrition; and child mortality or the mortality rate of children under the age of five. The GHI reports says India recorded a 37.4 per cent stunting rate and 17.3 per cent wasting rate while the under-5 mortality rate stood at 3.7 per cent. It also says 14 per cent of India's population is undernourished.

There are several factors which could have landed India and its people in this situation but population cannot be among them as China, the world's most populous nation, is among the top 17 nations with GHI scores of less than five.

Hunger is not a new phenomenon in India but the GHI signals the dire future that awaits the country. Three of the four indicators in GHI refer to the way how children are taken care of and this shows India in a poor light. The government, especially Prime Minister Narendra Modi, misses no opportunity to tell the world that India is poised to reap the demographic dividend. But the GHI offers solid data for the planners if they want to sustain the advantage to the next generation as well.

It is not that all is lost and the government makes no attempt to address the issue. One glimmer of hope is that the Indian score has been coming down from 32.2 in 2010 to 30.3 in 2019 to 27.2 in 2020. The National Nutrition Mission or Poshan Abhiyan, which aims at bringing down stunting of children to 25 per cent by 2022, should have helped make a difference. And this must be sustained with enhanced budgetary allocations. India has of late made a stunning performance in improving its score in the ease of doing business index thanks to a targeted approach; it should be able to repeat the feat in GHI, too, for we owe it to our future, that's our children.

A win for liberal-left

The "super-Kiwi-socialistic-empire-of-Jacinda" has pulled off the Labour Party's biggest win down under — securing for it its largest vote share since the 1930s and the potential to become the first party to be able to govern alone since 1996, the year New Zealand's mixed member proportional system came about.

The Mary Poppins-esque New Zealand PM was judged and handed a report card by her people in which they gave her the highest marks in two subjects — her handling of a mass shooting last year by a white supremacist in Christchurch, with her inclusive "be strong, be kind" mantra and swift action to ban guns, and her "go hard, go early" coronavirus crack-down. The latter won her a Peace Prize nomination and led to her country becoming a global model in pandemic control, having lost only 25 lives. Ms Ardern had also won global praise for her response to the White Island volcanic eruption last December. The 40-year-old had promised supporters that she would build an economy that works for everyone; create jobs, train people, protect the environment and address climate challenges and social inequalities. The incoming parliament now is set to be the country's most inclusive one ever. There will be an increase in the number of women, people of colour and LGBTQ+ members. Labour's Ibrahim Omer will be the country's first African MP and Terisa Ngobi has become the first Pasifika person to win the Otaki electorate. Labour's Vanushi Walters will become New Zealand's first Sri Lankan MP.

However, as far as her progressive agenda is concerned, though the Labour Party has now been given a much stronger hand, it is unclear whether Ms Ardern's government has the economic chops to push it through. Already, Ms Ardern is under fire from the Left for costly housing and a watered down climate bill. But little would she like to alienate the large number of her new centrist and right-of-centre voters.

All this shows that it is too early to tell whether a shift in the post-pandemic privation-stressed planet's political axis has occurred just yet. But Ms Ardern's second term is definitely a blow struck for liberals amid the march of right wing populism through the world.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

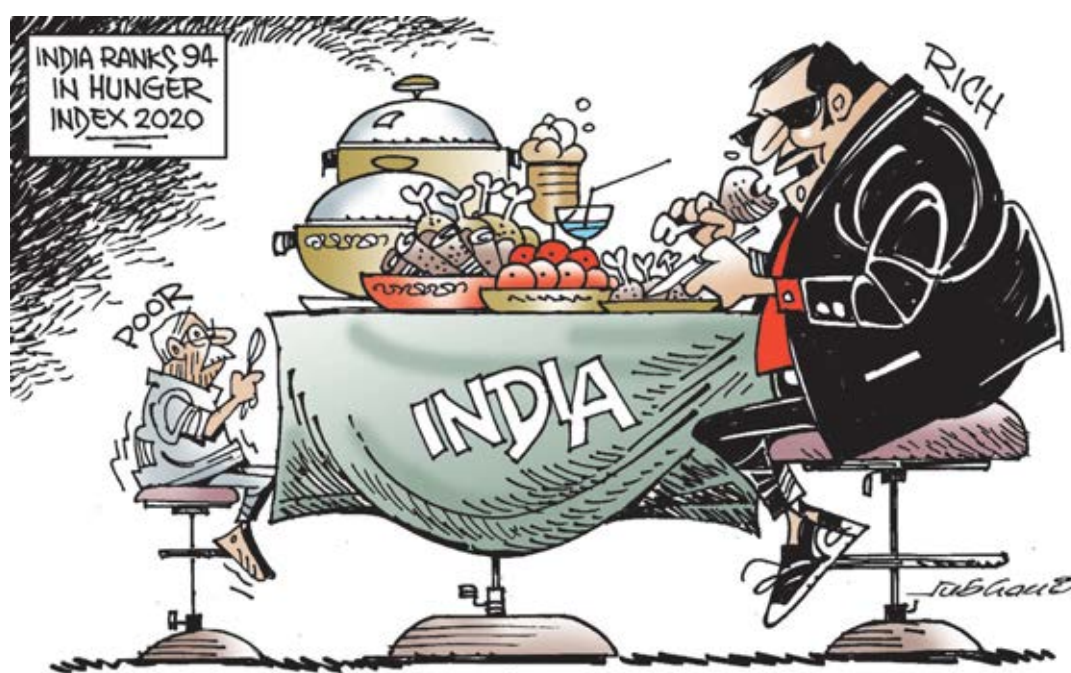
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Subhani



India must learn from others, shed its hubris



Patralekha
Chatterjee

Dev 360

Can a "Vishwa Guru", a global leader offering lessons to the world, afford to get riled at the mere suggestion that another country in its neighbourhood may be catching up? In the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic and an economic crisis, a fracas has broken out over the purely statistical probability that Bangladesh may soon be doing better than us in terms of per capita gross domestic product.

Over the past week, economists, political analysts, lawyers and even cartoonists have waded into the topic triggered by the International Monetary Fund updating its World Economic Outlook.

"I've now checked the data. The IMF's estimate shows Bangladesh will cross India in real GDP per capita in 2021. Any emerging economy doing well is good news," tweeted Kaushik Basu, professor of economics at Cornell University and a former chief economist of the World Bank.

Dr Basu, who is a former chief economic adviser to the Indian government (2009-12), added that it was shocking that India, which had a lead of 25 per cent five years ago, was now trailing and that this calls for bolder fiscal and monetary policies.

The topic is tailor-made for a verbal slugfest of the kind that economists alone are equipped for. Not being an economist, I hesitate to get sucked into it. But going through what various economists have been saying over the past few days, it is clear that many factors which catapulted Bangladesh, a country of over 165 million people with a turbulent history, to where it is today, are beyond conventional economics.

As analyst N. Chandra Mohan pointed out in a recent commentary piece for South Asia Monitor: "The kerfuffle over a

numbers game should not, however, deflect attention from Bangladesh's superior growth performance in recent years and it's model of development."

That is the backstory. Bangladesh's export-led model of development, its outward orientation and remittances are indeed key factors behind its growth and altered status from a basket case to an Asian tiger in-the-making, as many experts have pointed out.

But to look at Bangladesh only through the GDP lens is to miss the deeper storyline. Bangladesh has invested in strengthening its human capital, especially women, and this is paying off also in economic terms.

It has outpaced India in many social indicators, including female labour force participation.

As Bloomberg columnist Andy Mukherjee points out, Bangladesh has two out of five women of working age in the labour force, which is double of India's 21 per cent participation rate.

Women in Bangladesh not only have a huge presence in the country's textile and readymade garment sector, they are also employed in the agro-processing, jute mills, poultry and dairy industries.

Having a female political leadership at the top helps. But all these changes did not happen overnight. Since 2006, the Global Gender Gap Index (GGI) has been tracking the extent of gender-based gaps in individual countries through health, education, economy and political parameters. The 2020 GGI report, which shows the progress of 153 countries and provides country rankings that allow for effective comparisons across and within regions, noted that Bangladesh has been the best-performing country in South Asia, having closed 72.6 per cent of its gender gap by 2020. India

is fourth in the region, having closed 66.8 per cent of its gender gap.

There are other markers. The Levels & Trends in Child Mortality: Report 2020 by the United Nations indicates that the under-five mortality rate (U5MR) or the number of deaths per 1,000 live births is 31 for Bangladesh and 34 for India. The infant mortality rate (number of infant deaths for every 1,000 live births) is 26 for Bangladesh and 28 for India.

According to the Global Hunger Index 2020, India now ranks 94th among 107 countries in terms of hunger. The corresponding ranks for our neighbours are as follows — Pakistan (88), Nepal (73), Bangladesh (75), Sri Lanka (64) and Myanmar (78). Only Afghanistan fares worse, at 99th place.

It is nobody's case that Bangladesh is an utopia or that its economy and society have no problems. Nor can anyone seriously argue that India has no advantages. India's economy and trade mix are a lot more diversified, as experts point out.

But we must not shy away from acknowledging that Bangladesh has indeed made a lot of effort to improve social indicators like female work-force participation, life expectancy, health, nutrition and succeeded significantly. And this has contributed towards Bangladesh's progressively faster growth rate especially over the past two decades.

This is not to take away from the successes in social indicators in parts of India. But the point is that other countries are not sitting idle either and we must not luxuriate in the comfort of having been the world's fastest-

To look at Bangladesh only through the GDP lens is to miss the deeper storyline. Bangladesh has invested in strengthening its human capital, especially women, and this is paying off also in economic terms

growing large economy in the pre-Covid-19 period.

The pandemic has hit every economy and society; and it will deepen the challenges, including a decline in exports, lower private investment and job losses.

The countries which have invested more in their people are likely to cope better, be more resilient and bounce back sooner. Another Asian country which has leveraged its demographic dividend through effective investment in its people is Vietnam.

Vietnam's efforts to promote access to primary education and to ensure its quality through minimum quality standards have paid off. In the 2015 OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) — which tests high school students in maths, science, and other disciplines — Vietnam ranked eighth out of 72 participating countries, ahead of OECD countries like Germany and Netherlands, says a recent report by Brookings titled "Vietnam's manufacturing miracle: Lessons for developing countries".

India has lifted millions of people from abject poverty in recent decades. The World Health Organisation declared this country and the region free of polio in March 2014. The Narendra Modi government's Swachh Bharat Abhiyan campaign, despite the flawed implementation in many places and the hoopla, has accelerated access to basic sanitation in this country.

India is probably in no immediate danger of being overtaken by its eastern neighbour. Optimists believe that there will be a mild growth recovery in the coming months and India will eventually bounce back.

But we have to shed our hubris. This is a good moment to take a look at not just Bangladesh but the rest of the Asian region to see what we can learn from whom.

The writer focuses on development issues in India and emerging economies. She can be reached at patralekha.chatterjee@gmail.com.

LETTERS

DASARA BUSES

It is most unfortunate that Telugu people have to suffer a lot to travel between AP and Telangana state just because of difference of the state governments (*No RTC buses between APTs for Dasara, DC, Oct. 18*). Not running RTC buses will damage the reputation of both the states nationwide for sure. Being a most senior politician, the Chief Minister of Telangana state should extend his full support to run the RTC buses.

Naik Banavath

Sitaramapuram, Vijayawada

A simple dispute between the RTCs is causing undue discomfort to people of both the states this Dasara. The unreasonable demand of TSRTC to run buses on par with it should not be heeded. The population of AP is one crore more and hence the ratio of movement of buses also should be comparable. This has been the practice since 2014 to 2019. It is surprising to note that the issue remained unresolved following the pandemic. Perhaps it has got something to do with AP taking over the RTC.

Govardhana Myneedu

Vijayawada

TRAIN SERVICES

Due to Covid, train services that were cancelled are being restored in a phased manner for a limited time. Only long-distance AC trains are being restored. One feels that the gap in services created by Covid is being used to privatise trains. It is also gathered that trains connecting villages will be withdrawn. By March 2021 passengers may have to travel only by private trains.

P. Ramakrishna

Rajahmundry

50 YEARS AGO IN

DECCAN Chronicle

Indian made MIG to be handed over to IAF today

POONA, Oct. 18

The first MIG-21 aircraft manufactures from raw materials in India by the MIG complex of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited will be handed over to the Indian Air Force at a function to be held at the HAL's Ojhar division near Nasik tomorrow.

Minister of Defence Production P. C. Sethi, Maharashtra Finance Minister S.K. Wankhede and Air Chief Marshal P.C. Lal will attend the function.

Palash Deb



Evolve the right parameters to judge varsities

Recent media reports have highlighted that with the Technology opting out of the Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2021, only two Indian universities feature among the world's best 400 universities. At a time the National Education Policy 2020 seeks to transform India into a global knowledge superpower by establishing world-class universities, the reluctance of established IITs to be associated with these rankings has drawn its fair share of criticism.

In a society still conscious of hierarchy, and where a growing sense of national pride demands global recognition in every sphere, conversations about rankings evoke opinionated arguments. University rankings have not just captured the imagination of higher education, but in many ways hold hostage higher education itself. Yet, some of the criticism against Indian universities seems misplaced if we consider the complexities of global university rank-

ings, and the imperfect correlation rankings have with a university's real performance.

University rankings are often a source of national pride and soft power. It appears that as more and more countries enter the global race to build so-called 'world-class universities', no self-respecting nation can afford to fall behind. There are about 20 global university league tables, of which the most popular are The Times Higher Education World University Rankings, The Academic Ranking of World Universities compiled by the Shanghai Jiao Tong University, and The Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings. Other notable rankings include the US News and World Report, the U-Multirank (which allows users to generate their own rankings based on their preferences), the Ranking Web or Webometrics Ranking developed by the Cybermetrics Lab, and the Universitas 21 (which ranks countries, rather than universities, on the

strength of their higher education systems). These rankings differ widely in the parameters they use (such as research output or reputation among academics and employers) and the weights they assign to the various parameters.

Some ranking parameters, such as university reputation, are based on perception, in addition to being opaque (a main allegation against the Times rankings) and procedurally faulty (the QS ranking allows universities to nominate who ranks them). Even supposedly objective metrics that capture the quality of research and teaching, such as publications in select journals, citation count, student-faculty ratio, and graduation rates, can be misleading. For one thing, these metrics cannot capture such intangible aspects of university education such as campus culture or student experience. The measures chosen are often based on ease of availability, and metrics such as student-faculty ratio or graduation rates are susceptible to manipulation by

university officials.

Rankings tend to favour research over teaching, creating perverse incentives for faculty members in research-intensive universities, many of whom treat teaching as a chore. Publishing in the best journals in a field is not always a transparent process, and one cannot easily brush aside the role of such external factors as courting editors or choosing esoteric research topics that are well-received by academic journals but have no real relevance to society. Rankings also favour the citation-heavy hard sciences, and prefer peer-reviewed articles over books or conference presentations. All institutions, irrespective of mission, are judged by the same parameters, which reduces institutional diversity by forcing all of them to prioritise certain common metrics. Rankings also do not come cheap, as universities need to provide substantial research support, develop infrastructure, and spend large sums on marketing and brand promotion. Finally,

rankings can foster social inequalities as the lion's share of government grants goes to a select few universities that are often attended by students from well-to-do families.

Given these limitations, one could possibly argue that institutional excellence is better gauged using socio-economic metrics such as the impact of faculty research on government policy, court rulings, or the development of critical indigenous technologies. One must recognise though that these may not necessarily improve a university's global rank. But if we are forced to choose between the two, our social and economic priorities must always take precedence. The main goals of Indian higher education policy should be human capital development, innovation, social equity, and economic growth. Rank will eventually follow, but until it does, we should not lose sleep over them.

The writer is a professor of management at IIM Calcutta

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	39,982.98	0.64
Nifty 50	11,762.45	0.70
S&P 500*	3,483.81	0.01
Dollar (₹)	73.34	0.06
Pound Sterling (₹)	94.87	0.36
Euro (₹)	85.90	0.06
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	51,704.324	0.62
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	0.742	0.008
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.935	0.037
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	42.92	-0.24

* As of Friday/Saturday

Retail cheque payments down to a trickle

The share of paper clearing in retail payments has come to trickle in FY20, RBI data shows. In FY20, the share of paper clearing in total retail payments plunged to just 2.96 per cent in terms of volume and to 20.08 per cent in terms of value, the data showed. In FY16, when the RBI began to push digital payments post-note ban, paper/cheque clearings accounted for 15.81 per cent in volume and 46.08 per cent in value of total.

SECL plans 8 coal evacuation units worth ₹3,100 cr



Coal India-arm SECL is executing eight 'first mile connectivity' projects with an outlay of Rs 3,100 crore to evacuate the dry fuel, especially incremental production under the proposed plan to scale up the maharatna firm's output to 1 billion tonnes. The move will also help power plants at farther most locations in northern and western regions to avail of recently notified rail concessions for distance beyond 1400 km.

Dollar Inds. eyes acquisition to enter lingerie biz

Hosiery major Dollar Industries is looking at acquisition opportunities as it plans to enter the lingerie business by the first half of FY22. The firm is also eyeing up to 10 per cent growth in revenue at about Rs 1,050 crore in the current fiscal. "We are looking at inorganic opportunities to enter into the lingerie business. We have looked at some companies, but didn't get good value," Dollar Industries CEO Ankit Gupta said.

Parle Agro aims for ₹10,000-cr turnover by 2022

Beverages major Parle Agro, the maker of popular brands such as Frooti and Appy Fizz, plans to set up a new plant and introduce one more new major product in the next two years, as it gears up to touch a turnover of Rs 10,000 crore by 2022, its joint MD and chief marketing officer Nadia Chauhana said. Parle, which had a turnover of Rs 6,500 crore in 2019, recently introduced its new offering B-Fizz.



■ Listing premium declines for latest IPOs Primary market losing appeal

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, OCT. 18

The phase of high retail and high net worth investor (HNI) interest in the primary market seems to have lapsed, considering the tepid response to the IPOs of UTI Asset Management Company and Angel Broking and the decline in their listing premium.

UTI AMC's IPO saw under-subscription of non-institutional investors' portion, comprising corporates and HNIs, at 93 per cent subscription while Angel Broking got even less demand from non-institutional investors at 69 per cent of shares on offer.

UTI AMC's shares listed below the issue price of Rs 554 and on Friday it closed 8.84 per cent below the issue price at Rs 505 against the all-time high it touched on the listing day at Rs 529.95.

Angel Broking shares also listed below the issue price of Rs 306 and never moved beyond Rs 296.70. It closed 20.09 per cent down from issue price at Rs 244.50 on Friday.

In most of the prior initial public offerings, the non-institutional category had received high subscriptions, as with Computer Age Management Services or Cams (111.85 times) which is of similar size to the UTI AMC (Rs 2,160 crore versus Rs 2,242 crore of Cams) and having mutual fund industry as the main



Performance of IPOs during the pandemic

Name of the company	Issue price (₹)	Current market price (₹)	All-time high price	Demand/Issue subscribed
UTI AMC	554	505.05	529.95	2.31
Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders	145	168.30	216.95	157.41
Likhitha Infra	120	139.80	143.30	9.51
Angel Broking	306	244.50	296.70	3.94
Cams	1240	1343	1489	46.99
Chemcon Speciality Chemicals	340	406.20	731.25	149.33
Route Mobile	350	707	988	73.30
Happiest Minds	166	325.90	394.95	150.98
Rossari Biotech	425	774	859	79.37

Source: NSE

driving force-Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders (678.88 times), Happiest Minds (351.46 times), Route Mobile (192.81 times) and Chemcon Speciality Chemicals (449.14 times).

The premium over the public issue price of other recently listed companies like Route Mobile (current market price Rs 707/all time high on listing Rs 988), Happiest Minds (Rs 325.90/Rs 394.95), Chemcon Speciality Chemicals (Rs 402.20/ Rs 731.25) Cams (Rs 1,343/ Rs 1,489) are also coming down gradually.

Nirali Shah, senior research analyst, Samco Securities, said, "The IPO party seems to have been punctured with the comparatively muted listings of UTI AMC and Mazagon Dock. This response seems to be in tandem with the recent swing in market sentiments from bullish to neutral."

IndiGo thinking of launching dedicated freighter services

SHAH IMRAN AHMED MUMBAI, OCT. 18

The country's largest carrier by domestic market share, IndiGo, is mulling launching dedicated freighter services amid an expected surge in cargo transportation, particularly to transport Covid-19 vaccine once it is available.

The airline has already held preliminary discussions with European aviation major Airbus on the type of freighters that could be possibly put into service for dedicated freighter flights, according to an industry source.

IndiGo, which has more than 250 planes in its fleet, is one of the largest customers of Airbus, especially A320 neo aircraft.

To a query on whether the carrier is planning to launch dedicated freighter services, IndiGo chief executive officer Ronjoy Dutta said it was being studied as a proposal.

"(This is) being studied as a proposal. (But) No final decision yet," he said.

The source said that IndiGo is looking to launch dedicated freighter services as it sees good demand for air cargo.

A mid-level IndiGo executive, who is into handling



the airline's partnerships and aeropolitical affairs, recently held initial level discussions with Airbus executives on the type of air freighter that could be used for such operations, the source added.

"The dedicated air freighter service, however, is expected to be a division within the airline," the source said.

Cargo transportation raked in revenues for airlines when air passenger services were suspended during the lockdown.

IndiGo clocked higher revenue by operating around 1,700 cargo flights between April 18 and September 7 as compared to the earnings over the last financial year.

Scheduled domestic air passenger services were suspended for two months from March 25 as part of

efforts to curb spreading of coronavirus infections. The services recommenced on May 25.

While scheduled international passenger flights have been suspended from March 23, overseas flights are allowed under various air bubble pacts.

As per estimates from the International Air Transport Association (IATA), cargo revenue worldwide is expected to reach a near-record and more than double to 26 per cent of the industry's total revenue this year.

"The potential size of the delivery is enormous. Just providing a single dose to 7.8 billion people would fill 8,000 (B) 747 cargo aircraft. Land transport will help, especially in developed economies with local manufacturing capacity," IATA said recently.

₹3 L-cr MSME credit line may end soon

New Delhi, Oct. 18:

The government is unlikely to extend the ₹3 lakh crore-Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) for MSME sector beyond October even though the sanctioned amount so far is only nearly 65 per cent of the target, sources said.

The scheme is meant to provide financial support to businesses, primarily micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), impacted by the slowdown, triggered by the coronavirus pandemic.

The sources said the objective is to provide support to all those affected and if there are no takers for the scheme, there is no need to extend the scheme even though there is some room left.

On August 1, the government widened the scope of the Rs 3-lakh crore scheme by doubling the upper ceiling of loans outstanding and including certain loans given to professionals like doctors, lawyers and chartered accountants for business purposes under its ambit. To ensure more companies can benefit from the scheme, it was decided to increase the upper ceiling of loans outstanding as on February 29 for being eligible under the scheme from Rs 25 crore to ₹50 crore.

The maximum Guaranteed Emergency Credit Line funding under the scheme was increased from ₹5 crore to ₹10 crore.

—PTI

Apparel exports turn positive in September

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, OCT. 18

Apparel exports have posted positive growth in the month of September. The export market has seen better recovery compared to the domestic market and is expected to close the year with lesser losses.

For the first time in the fiscal, apparel exports saw a positive growth of 10.22 per cent in September to \$1,190 million against \$1,079 million in September 2019. From a 90 per cent decline in April, exports have been recovering as the industry has been increasingly exporting medical textiles, said Apparel Export Promotion Council chairman A. Sakthivel.

According to him, apart from medical textiles, exporters have also started receiving orders for apparels for the festive season. "We expect exports to further grow in the coming months and make up for a large part of losses suffered in the first half of the year," he said.

Rating agency Icrs proj-



ects Indian apparel exporters to report a turnover decline of 20-25 per cent in FY21. However, the domestic market might see a steeper 30-40 per cent decline in revenues by the end of the year.

Domestic-focussed branded apparel retail companies had reported a steep fall of 84 per cent in revenues in the June quarter while garment-exporting companies reported a lower contraction of 50 per cent. From a near standstill in April 2020 amid lockdowns, apparel exports recovered in July and August to 78 per cent and 86 per cent of the year-ago levels. However, domestic retail sales are estimated to be at 40-50 per cent of

last year's levels. The impact on domestic retailers has varied, depending on factors such as strength of online presence, segments being catered to and presence in tier-II and III cities and rural markets, which have performed better than metros and tier-I cities.

"Demand in H2 FY2021 is expected to gather support from extended online festive sales and further relaxations under Unlock 5.0 guidelines, effective from October 15, 2020 onwards. Developments such as a rollback of pay cuts by some corporate entities, government's festive advance scheme etc are also expected to result in improved cash flows in the hands of consumers, thereby supporting discretionary spending," said Jayanta Roy, senior VP and group head, Icrs Ratings.

As per a survey by the Retailers Association of India, 53 per cent of consumers are looking forward to shop apparels and fashion during the festive season.

Shippers close to global deal to cut pollution

JESSICA SHANKLEMAN & EWA KRUKOWSKA OCT. 18

Nearly 200 countries are nearing a legally binding agreement to reduce pollution from the world's cargo ships, a step forward after two years of talks on how the industry should clean

up its emissions.

A series of virtual meetings will start on Monday hosted by the United Nations shipping agency over a new rating system that will measure the carbon intensity of 60,000 large ships that haul everything from containers to crude oil. After an historic

agreement in 2018 by the International Maritime Organization, its members are negotiating ways to get to their goal of cutting the industry's emissions in half by the middle of the century. All of them agree a ratings system is needed for the carbon intensity of ships.

—Bloomberg

India likely to lose gas field Farzad-B in Iran

New Delhi, Oct. 18: India has all but lost the ONGC Videsh Ltd-discovered Farzad-B gas field in the Persian Gulf after Iran decided to prefer domestic companies over foreign firms for development of the field, sources said.

ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL), the overseas investment arm of Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC), had in 2008 discovered a giant gas field in the Farsi offshore exploration block.

OVL and its partners had offered to invest up to \$11 billion for development of the discovery, which was later named Farzad-B.

After sitting over OVL's proposal for years, the National Iranian Oil Co (NIOC) informed the firm in February this year about its intention to conclude the contract for Farzad-B development with an Iranian company, sources with direct knowledge of the development said.

OVL, however, continued its engagements with NIOC over the development of the field and sought terms and conditions of the proposed contract for its evaluation, they said, adding that Iran has so far not responded to the Indian firm's request.



Farzad-B holds total reserves of around 21.7 trillion cubic feet of which around 60 per cent is recoverable, and production is slated to be around 1.1 billion cubic feet per day.

Sources said unconfirmed information suggests that Iran has identified a local firm for the development of the field, but OVL has not yet given up hopes and continues to chase Iranian authorities for the contract.

The 3,500 square kilometre Farsi block sits in water depth of 20-90 metres on the Iranian side of the Persian Gulf.

OVL, with 40 per cent operatorship interest, signed the Exploration Service Contract (ESC) for the block on December 25, 2002. Other partners included Indian Oil Corp

(IOC) with 40 per cent stake and Oil India Ltd (OIL) holding the remaining 20 per cent stake.

OVL discovered gas in the block, which was declared commercially viable by NIOC, on August 18, 2008. The exploration phase of the ESC expired on June 24, 2009.

The firm submitted a Master Development Plan (MDP) of Farzad-B gas field in April 2011 to Iranian Offshore Oil Company (IOOC), the then designated authority by NIOC for development of Farzad-B gas field.

A Development Service Contract (DSC) of Farzad-B gas field was negotiated till November 2012, but could not be finalised due to difficult terms and international sanctions on Iran.

In April 2015, negotiations restarted with Iranian authorities to develop Farzad-B gas field under a new Iran Petroleum Contract (IPC). This time, NIOC introduced Pars Oil and Gas Company as its representative for negotiations.

From April 2016, both sides negotiated to develop Farzad-B gas field under an integrated contract covering upstream and downstream.

—PTI

Over 1.1 lakh sellers received orders in 48 hours: Amazon



New Delhi, Oct. 18: E-commerce major Amazon India on Sunday said over 1.1 lakh sellers on its platform received orders during the first 48 hours of its 'Great Indian Festival' sale, with a bulk of orders coming from smaller parts of the country.

Amazon's 'Great Indian Festival' started on October 17 and will go on for about a month to coincide with the festive season. Amazon Prime members were provided early access to the sale from October 16.

"These 48 hours were the biggest ever for Amazon in its seven-year history. We had created a buildup for the sale for our Amazon sellers...Over 1.1 lakh sellers received orders, and 66 per cent of them came from small towns," Amazon India vice president Manish Tiwary said.

Amazon India, which has over 6.5 lakh sellers on its platform, registered its biggest spike in new customers, with 91 per cent of them coming from small towns (beyond the metros and top 40 cities).

About 66 per cent of new Prime sign-ups were also from small towns like Tawang and Changlang (Arunachal Pradesh), Mokochung (Nagaland), Baran (Rajasthan), Pudukottai (Tamil Nadu), Una (Himachal Pradesh) and Jaunpur (Uttar Pradesh), Tiwary said.

The trends seen by Amazon India are similar to those witnessed by Flipkart, which opened its 'Big Billion Days' sale on October 16, had said 50 per cent of new customers on its platform were from tier-3 cities and beyond.

—PTI



SHORT TAKES

Narine action gets IPL's clearance

Abu Dhabi: Kolkata Knight Riders' West Indian spinner Sunil Narine was on Sunday cleared by the IPL's suspect bowling action committee after being reported last week. Narine was reported for a suspect action during his team's clash against KXIP last Saturday and another such instance could have led him to being barred from bowling in the league. But, in a relief for the player as well as for his franchise, the IPL committee found his bowling action to be clean. "Sunil Narine, the Kolkata Knight Riders player, has been cleared by the IPL's suspect bowling action committee," the IPL said in a statement. After being reported, Narine was placed on the IPL warning list. KKR requested for an official assessment of Narine's action from the specific committee, submitting action footage in slow motion with back and side angles. — *PTI*

Gold for Elavenil, Shahu gets silver

New Delhi: World number one Indian Elavenil Valarivan won a gold medal and Shahu Tushar Mane bagged a silver in the Sheikh Russel International Air Rifle Championship, held virtually on Sunday. The championship was organised by Bangladesh Shooting Sport Federation (BSSF). Thanks to her gold, Elavenil got richer by \$1000 while Shahu Mane pocketed \$700 for his effort. In the 60-shot competition in which shooters from six nations participated, including hosts Bangladesh and India, Elavenil shot a modest 627.5 to come out on top. Shiori Hirata won the silver with 622.6, while Indonesian Vidyha Toyviba took the bronze with 621.1. Japan, however, won the gold in the men's event as Naoya Okada shot a solid 630.9 to leave India's Shahu behind. Shahu shot 623.8 to settle for second place. — *PTI*

Blues held to a draw by Saints

London: Southampton scored a stoppage-time equaliser to rescue a 3-3 draw at Chelsea in the Premier League on Saturday, highlighting how the home team's defensive vulnerability remains despite its off-season spending spree. Jannik Vestergaard glanced in a speculative shot from deadline-day signing Theo Walcott in the second minute of added-on time as Southampton rallied for a second time, having fallen 2-0 behind to Timo Werner's first goals in the league. Then adding to that Kai Havertz scored the third goal for Chelsea. Danny Ings pulled a goal back for Southampton just before halftime, and Che Adams took advantage of dreadful defending by Chelsea to equalize in the 57th minute. Chelsea, which has already drawn two matches 3-3, missed the experience of one of its new recruits center back Thiago Silva. — *AP*

Barca, Real lose ahead of Clasico

Madrid: Real Madrid and Barcelona will each head into the Clasico next weekend on the back of a defeat after La Liga's two title favourites were punished for slack performances on Saturday. Zinedine Zidane made four substitutions at half-time but could not spark a lethargic Madrid into life as his team fell 1-0 at home to newly-promoted Cadiz. Madrid's was perhaps the more concerning display, the reigning champions managing just two shots on target against Cadiz, who could have scored more after Anthony Lozano's early strike. Then two hours later on the opposite side of the city, Ronald Koeman tasted his first competitive loss as coach of Barcelona as they followed Madrid's example by being beaten 1-0 by Getafe at the Coliseum Alfonso Perez. — *AFP*

Live on TV

CRICKET

IPL: Chennai Super Kings vs Rajasthan Royals from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

FOOTBALL

English Premier League: West Brom & Albion vs Burnley from 10 pm; Leeds United vs Wolverhampton from 12.30 am (Tuesday) on Star Sports Select 2

Italian League: Verona vs Genoa from 12.15 am (Tuesday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

WWE RAW

Bouts from 5.30 am on Sony Ten 1

Lockie locks it for KKR

Ferguson floors SRH in Super Over with brilliant bowling

Abu Dhabi, Oct. 18: A fast and furious Lockie Ferguson produced one of the most incredible bowling performances of this IPL edition to lead KKR to a thrilling Super Over win over SRH, here on Sunday. Ferguson proved to be the "Knight in Shining Armour" with his storehouse of variation as he dismissed David Warner and Abdul Samad in the Super Over, leaving KKR with only a three run-target to chase.

This was after David Warner's unbeaten 47 and 18 runs off the final Andre Russell over saw Sunrisers level the scores at 163 with KKR in the stipulated 20 overs.

Ferguson was magnificent during the regulation 20 overs also as his 3/15 in 4 overs had SRH in all sorts of trouble.

Earlier, Dinesh Kartik's carefree approach was well complemented by skipper Eoin Morgan's grace as Kolkata Knight Riders managed a par 163 for five after being put into bat. — *PTI*



Lockie Ferguson of Kolkata Knight Riders celebrates the wicket of Sunrisers Hyderabad captain David Warner during the super over of an Indian Premier League match in Abu Dhabi on Sunday. — *BCCI*

SCORECARD

Kolkata Knight Riders: S. Gill c Garg b Rashid Khan 36, Rahul Tripathi b Natarajan 23, N. Rana c Garg b V. Shankar 29, Andre Russell c Shankar b Natarajan 9, E. Morgan c Pandey b Thampi 34, D. Karthik (not out) 29. **Extras:** (lb-2, nb-1) 3. **Total:** (for 5 wickets in 20 overs) 163. **FoW:** 1-48, 2-87, 3-88, 4-105, 5-163. **Bowling:** S. Sharma 4-0-27-0, B. Thampi 4-0-46-1, T. Natarajan 4-0-40-2, V. Shankar 4-0-20-1, Rashid Khan 4-0-28-1.

Sunrisers Hyderabad: Jonny Bairstow c Russell b Chakravarthi 36, Kane Williamson c Rana b Lockie Ferguson 29, Priyam Garg b Ferguson 4, David Warner (not out) 47, Manish Pandey b Ferguson 6, Vijay Shankar c Gill b Cummins 7, Abdul Samad c Gill b Mavi 23, R. Khan not out 1. **Extras:** (lb-7, w-2, nb-1) 10. **Total:** (for 6 wickets in 20 overs) 163. **FoW:** 1-57, 2-70, 3-70, 4-82, 5-109, 6-146. **Bowling:** P. Cummins 4-0-28-1, S. Mavi 3-0-34-1, Varun Chakravarthi 4-0-32-1, A. Russell 2-0-29-0, Lockie Ferguson 4-0-15-3, Kuldeep Yadav 3-0-18-0.

Super Over: SRH 2/2 (w,2,w) lost to KKR 3/0 (c,1,r,2lb).

Gayle, Mayank stun mighty Mumbai in Super Over-2

Dubai, Oct. 18: Kings XI Punjab beat Mumbai Indians via Super Overs in their IPL match here on Sunday.

After the first Super Over failed to separate the two teams, the match stretched to second Super Over where Chris Gayle and Mayank Agarwal made sure Kings XI Punjab prevail. Mumbai scored 11/1 in the second Super Over and in reply Kings reached the target with two balls to spare.

Earlier, Quinton de Kock continued his rich vein of form, scoring a 43-ball 53 before Kieron Pollard and Nathan Coulter-Nile provided the late flourish as Mumbai Indians posted 176 for 6 against Kings XI Punjab.

De Kock hit three fours and as many sixes for his fourth fifty of the tournament to anchor the innings before Pollard (34 not out off 12) and Coulter-Nile (24 not out off 12) added 57 runs off

SCORECARD

Mumbai Indians Innings: Rohit Sharma b Arshdeep Singh 9, Quinton de Kock c Mayank Agarwal b Chris Jordan 53, Suryakumar Yadav c M. Ashwin b Shami 0, Ishan Kishan c M. Ashwin b Arshdeep Singh 7, Krunal Pandya c Deepak Hooda b Ravi Bishnoi 34, Hardik Pandya c Pooran b Shami 8, Kieron Pollard (not out) 34, Nathan Coulter-Nile (not out) 24. **Extras:** (b-4, lb-2, w-1) 7. **Total:** (for 6 wks, in 20 overs) 176. **FoW:** 23-1, 24-2, 38-3, 96-4, 116-5, 119-6.

Bowler: Glenn Maxwell 4-0-24-0, Mohammed Shami 4-0-30-2, Arshdeep Singh 3-0-35-2, Chris Jordan 3-0-32-1, Murugan Ashwin 3-0-28-0, Deepak Hooda 1-0-9-0, Ravi Bishnoi 2-0-12-1. **Kings XI Punjab:** K.L. Rahul b Bumrah 77, M. Agarwal b Bumrah 11, C. Gayle c Boult b Chahar 24, N. Pooran c Coulter-Nile b Bumrah 24, G. Maxwell c Sharma b Chahar 0, D. Hooda (not out) 23, C. Jordan run out 13. **Extras:** (w-4) 4. **Total:** (for 6 wks, in 20 overs) 176. **FoW:** 1-33, 2-75, 3-108, 4-115, 5-153, 6-176.

Bowling: T. Boult 4-0-48-0, K. Pandya 2-0-12-0, J. Bumrah 4-0-24-3, N. Coulter-Nile 4-0-33-0, K. Pollard 2-0-26-0, R. Chahar 4-0-33-2. **Super Over scores:** KXIP 5/2 vs MI 5/1. **Super Over 2 scores:** MI 11/1 (1,1w-4,1w-1, 0, 2) lost to KXIP 15/0 (6,1,4,4).

21 balls in the death overs to lift MI past the 170-run mark.

Opting to bat, MI were at a spot of bother when they were reduced to 43 for 3 but De Kock and Krunal Pandya (34 off 30) shared a 58-run stand to steady the ship.

It was the pace duo of Arshdeep Singh (2/35) and Mohammed Shami (2/30) who provided the

early breakthroughs, dismissing Rohit Sharma (9) and Suryakumar Yadav (0) respectively to reduce MI to 24 for two in 3.3 overs.

New man Ishan Kishan then became Arshdeep's second victim when he was caught at deep third man while trying to go for a upper cut as MI ended the powerplay at 43 for 3. — *PTI*

Dhoni clarifies Bravo was unfit

Sharjah, Oct. 18: The proven Dwayne Bravo was not available to bowl the final over against Delhi Capitals due to fitness issues, Chennai Super Kings skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni said after their heartbreaking loss here.

Instead, spinner Ravindra Jadeja was entrusted with the task and Delhi Capitals knocked off the 17 runs required to win the game on Saturday night.

Bravo, who was off the field, is normally very effective with his slower balls in crunch situations. Axar Patel smashed three sixes off Jadeja to take his side past the finish line.

"Bravo was not fit. He went out and didn't come back. The options were Jaddu and Karn. I went with Jaddu," Dhoni said.

Dhoni admitted that fielders let the side down.

"Shikhar's wicket was important but we dropped him quite a number of times. If he keeps batting, he will keep the strike rate high. Also the wicket played better in the second half, but we can't take the credit away from Shikhar," he added. — *PTI*

BRAVO COULD BE OUT FOR A FEW WEEKS

Sharjah, Oct. 18: Chennai Super Kings' death bowling expert Dwayne Bravo could be "out for a few days or a couple of weeks" due to a groin injury, according to head coach Stephen Fleming.

Bravo's inability to bowl the final over cost CSK their IPL game on Saturday as Delhi Capitals knocked off the required 17 runs.

"He (Bravo) seems to have a right groin injury, obviously it was serious enough to keep him from coming back to the field, he is just really disappointed that he was not able to bowl the final over, that's pretty much for what he is in the team for," Chennai Super Kings coach Fleming said.

The seasoned all-rounder's injury would have to be reassessed going forward. — *PTI*

Jamaican sprinter Blake slams MSD

Sharjah, Oct. 18: Star sprinter Yohan Blake said Mahendra Singh Dhoni had "made the worst decision in a long while", fuming in front of his TV set in faraway Jamaica as DC closed in on a remarkable win in IPL.

Blake, an ardent admirer of the sport, questioned Dhoni's move to give Jadeja the final over on Saturday night. He was oblivious to the fact that everyone's preferred choice, death bowling specialist Dwayne Bravo, was not fit to bowl the last over after walking off the field.

"I think Dhoni made the worst decision in a long while. Dhoni, that's a poor

decision to bowl Jadeja at the last part. What happened to Bravo. Really?" he asked in a video posted on *Twitter*.

"Poor poor poor poor choice Mahendra Singh Dhoni. You just can't bowl Jadeja to the left hand batsman," Blake, the youngest 100m world championship winner, tweeted.

Engaging in a conversation on the social networking site, Blake later realised that Bravo was injured. But he was still not convinced with Jadeja bowling the final over with Delhi Capitals requiring 17 runs to win the game, which they did with a ball to spare. — *PTI*

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