


DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM | SATURDAY | 31 OCTOBER 2020




WEATHER

 **Max:** 33.0°C
Min: 23.0°C
RH: 79%
Rainfall: Nil
Forecast: Mostly Cloudy.
Max/Min temp.
33/23 °C

COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+50,525)	(+579)
81,32,442	1,21,628
covid19india.org	
STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS	
(+1,531)	(+6)
TS: 2,37,187	1,330
(+2,886)	(+17)
AP: 8,20,565	6,676

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

 **4,57,03,127**
 **DEATHS**
11,90,720
 **COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES**
215
worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari; Dakshinayana
Tithi: Nija Ashwauja Suddha Pournami till 8.18 pm
Star: Ashwani till 5.57 pm
Varjyam: 1.27 pm to 3.15 pm;
4.44 am to 6.32 am (Sunday)
Durmuhurtam: 6.17 am to 7.48 am
Rahukalam: 9 am to 10.30 am
HILJRI CALENDAR
Rabbi-ul Awwal 13, 1442 AH
PRAYERS (ROYAL MOSQUE)
Fajar: 5:00 am
Zohar: 1:30 pm
Asar: 5:00 pm
Maghrib: 6:35 pm
Isha: 8:30 pm
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.01 AM
SUNSET TODAY 5.32 PM
MOONRISE TODAY 5.33 PM
MOONSET TOMORROW 6.24 AM

COUNTER POINT



SHORT TAKES

FinMin notifies revised ITR date

New Delhi: The finance ministry has notified the extended due date for filing income tax returns (ITR) for the 2019-20 fiscal. While the deadline for filing ITR by individual taxpayers has been extended by a month till December 31, the due date for those taxpayers whose accounts need to be audited has been extended to January 31, 2021. Nangia Andersen LLP Partner Sandeep Jhunjunwala said although the government had announced the extension of ITR and audit report filing due dates last week, but there was an ambiguity if such extension is available for corporates.

Navy missile fired during drill

New Delhi: The Indian Navy on Friday successfully test fired an anti-ship missile from its guided missile corvette INS Kora in the Bay of Bengal as part of a drill that reflected its combat readiness in the strategic sea lanes around India, officials said. The Navy said the missile hit the target at maximum range with precise accuracy. "Anti-ship missile fired by Indian Navy's Guided Missile Corvette INS Kora hits the target at max range with precise accuracy in Bay of Bengal. Target ship severely damaged and in flames," the Navy tweeted.



NATION | 4

Urmila Matondkar likely to join Shiv Sena

7 KILLED AS VAN IN PARKING LOT ROLLS OFF HILL

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 30

Seven persons of a marriage party were killed and 10 injured when their minivan rolled off a parking lot at a hilltop temple in East Godavari just as they were leaving for home, at about 2.30 am on Friday. Police said the victims had come from different parts of the two Godavari districts to the Lord Venkateswara temple at Thantikonda village of Gokavaram mandal for the marriage, which was performed at about 11.30 pm on Thursday.

The newly married couple left in another vehicle and their other family members, numbering about 20, got into the minivan. Police said that it is suspected that the driver began coasting down the slope from the parking lot and did not switch on the engine.

This led to the brakes not activating. The vehicle rolled off the hilltop and fell on the temple steps located nearly 10 feet below.

Five persons were killed on the spot. The injured were shifted to government private hospitals in Rajahmundry and Kakinada, where two died while undergoing treatment. The condition of two critically injured persons is said to be stable.

OBC QUOTA IN SAINIK SCHOOLS FROM 2021-22

PAWAN BALI | DC NEW DELHI, OCT. 30

Sainik Schools across India will introduce 27 per cent reservation in admissions to OBC students from the year 2021-22.

A letter regarding this was issued to all Sainik Schools on October 13, 2020.

Sainik Schools act as feeder institutions for preparing cadets for the armed forces. At present there are 31 Sainik schools under the ministry of defence.

The reservation for OBC-NCL category will be considered as per the central list of Other Backward Classes available in National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC).

GROUND | REPORT

Farmers faced problems while tilling, sowing Bumper farming despite Covid

MD. ILYAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 30

Though Coronavirus has dealt a severe blow to all since seven months, farmers have stood their ground; cultivating 97 per cent (36.43 lakh hectares) of the targeted area of 37.42 lakh hectares during Kharif-2020 season. In fact, cultivation has improved despite Covid-19 since sowings during Kharif-2019 were only 34.94 lakh hectares against the targeted 38.30 lakh hectares.

Farmers worked hard to overcome the crises of labour not being available and poor transport facilities to bring in agriculture inputs.

The Kharif season starts in June and ends with October. All types of crops

Festival procession



Youngsters coming out of a masjid after prayers at One Town on the occasion of Milad Un Nabi in Vijayawada on Friday. — C. NARAYANA RAO

TN woodcutters strike again

AVINASH P. SUBRAMANYAM | DC TIRUPATI, OCT. 30

After a six-month pause, there is a gradual movement of woodcutters from Tamil Nadu into Seshachalam hills, which is spread across parts of Chittoor, Nellore and Kadapa districts.

Despite counter-measures by AP Red Sanders Anti-Smuggling Taskforce (RSASTF), smuggling of precious wood continues unabated in the region. Arrests of smugglers by the taskforce, police and

● **ARRESTS OF** smugglers by the taskforce, police and forest sleuths in the past few weeks indicate the intensity of smuggling activity.

forest sleuths in the past few weeks indicate the intensity of smuggling activity. It may be recalled that the Chittoor district police wing had seized 2.5 tonnes of logs worth over ₹2 crore in the international market and had arrested 11 smugglers in Thavanampalle limits on October 21.

Other major operations include nabbing eight smugglers and seizing ₹3.5 crore worth logs on September 28 at Rollamadugu village in Rajampet of Kadapa district, where 100 logs worth more than ₹2 crore were also seized on October 13. In a fresh case, the task force has recovered 46 logs and arrested four smugglers from Thalakona forests on Friday.

Smuggling activity in Seshachalam ranges had come to a standstill in March following the imposition of Covid-19 lockdown.

However, though on an insignificant scale, TN-based woodcutters resumed their activity in the next three months despite restrictions on inter-state transportation movements. Soon after relaxation, smugglers have been active for a few weeks. Going by the claims of the taskforce, there are still around 46-50 woodcutters present in the Thalakona ranges, apart from those who ventured into the Bhimavaram and Chamala ranges.

■ **Page 3: Task force to intensify combing operation**

BJP changes leaders in WB to curb infighting

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, OCT. 30

Amid the raging factionalism in its West Bengal unit, the BJP central leadership, it is learnt, has asked joint general secretary (organisation) Shivprakash, an RSS man, to get the party's house in order in the state. The BJP top brass has been getting reports that the West Bengal unit was grappling with factionalism and a divided house was sending a negative message to its cadre.

While the top leadership is busy strategising on how to oust the Mamata Banerjee-led TMC government in the Assembly polls in early 2021, the state leaders are busy in factional fights. Sources said the central leadership was not very pleased with general secretary and state in-charge Kailash Vijayvargiya, who has so far failed to contain the factionalism.

There are complaints that he is siding with Mukul Roy, once a close aide of Ms Banerjee, who

had joined the BJP in 2017. BJP state unit chief Dilip Ghosh, sources said, was not happy at the way Mr Roy was trying to project himself a more prominent Bengali politician than the state unit chief himself. Mr Shivprakash has been a key member of the central leadership's core team for West Bengal since 2014, and was one of the key strategists in the last LS polls, when the BJP won 18 LS seats in a state where it was not even a political force till 2014.

BODY | BLOW People feeling weight gain is ok

Ideal weight revised up, people start to eat more

KANIZA GARARI | DC HYDERABAD, OCT. 30

The burden of lifestyle diseases in India is 61.3 per cent, and it is feared that the new Indian Council of Medical Research guidelines that have increased the average weight of adults by five kg could add to it.

The ideal body weight is revised and increased by National Institute of Nutrition from 60 to 65 kg for men and from 50 to 55 kg for women earlier this month. It is an acceptable reference body weight through a lifespan. It was changed after a decade as it was found that body frames and compositions have undergone a change and the ideal weight of 50 kg in women, for example, was not applicable to many.

However, food specialists and nutritionists say that this upward revision in ideal body weight is being taken otherwise by people who have failed to understand the 'reference values of weight'.

This section thinks that it is okay to gain weight, given

the upward revision.

Nutritionists clarify that people must consume more of energy-giving foods, proteins and micro-nutrients and not carbohydrates.

Sujatha Stephen, nutritionist at Yashoda Hospitals, said that the estimate average requirement for those in the age-group of 19 to 39 years was revised as there has been a major change in the diet.

"Because of this, we are finding younger women who weigh more than 50 kg. The earlier bar made many of them starve to stay within the ideal weight and this led to nutritional deficiencies, apart from other problems. The revision is based on assessments of the present population," she said.

However, in weight loss programmes, nutritionists say that they still rely on the body mass index formula.

Nutritionist Sunitha Premalatha, said, "It is the height and the BMI index which is the bar. The waist circumference is also an indication which helps to scientifically take up the weight loss pro-

gramme."

With additional five kg, many now fall in the bracket of 'healthy' as defined by the government. Experts say it is only an ideal recommended weight and must not be misconstrued. With the increasing and early onset of lifestyle diseases, experts say that it is important to control weight as early as possible. There is also a lot of need to have proper physical activity as the time spent in front of screens has increased.

With movement being restricted during Covid-19. Even walking in the neighbourhood has been affected. For this reason, there is bound to be more weight gain in the younger age groups which will lead to the early onset of non-communicable diseases.

The ICMR has received feedback on the revised guidelines from food companies who say that the extra food requirements will lead to a burden on agriculture. Food companies have asked the government to reconsider and revise the weight norms.

— PTI

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AP incurs ₹9,720 cr rain loss

₹5k cr needed to restore infra

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 30

AP has suffered losses to infrastructure and crops to the extent of ₹9,720 crore due to the heavy rains and floods during August, September and October. The State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) has come up with this estimate on the loss based on reports received from 12 departments, including roads, fisheries, agriculture, horticulture, energy and others, and from district revenue authorities.

The authorities have also come up with an estimate of ₹5,000 crore for taking up restoration of damaged infrastructure on a permanent, and temporary, basis and also to provide input subsidy to the farmers who lost their crops due to the rains and floods in several districts in the state.

Moreover, as the central team is expected to visit rain- and flood-affected areas mainly in Guntur, Krishna, West Godavari and East Godavari tentatively scheduled between November 4-10, the state government has come up with an estimate of ₹950 crore to take up temporary restoration work on damaged infrastructure and to provide financial relief to affected farmers.

Accordingly, the state government is expected to submit that report to the Central team asking it to recommend that the

● **THE STATE** disaster management authority came up with this estimate on the loss based on reports received from 12 departments, including roads, fisheries, agriculture, horticulture, energy and others, and from district revenue authorities.

● **THE CENTRE** team will assess the damage from November 4-10

Centre release such an amount as temporary relief immediately.

Sources said that after the Central team expressed its willingness to visit affected parts in four districts in AP between November 4-10, the state government may confirm the dates of the visit as November 9-11, subject to acceptance by the team members.

Agricultural crops alone suffered crop damage/loss of more than 1.38 lakh hectares, affecting 2,39,790 farmers and it is estimated to cost ₹20,552.95 lakh to the state government in order to provide input subsidy to affected farmers to help them grow the crops again.

A senior official from SDMA said "The state government is going to seek central assistance to the tune of ₹950 crore to take up immediate restoration work on a temporary basis and to provide some relief to affected farmers during the visit by the Central team."

OTHER STORIES

POSCO PLANT IN VIZAG MIGHT BE A REALITY

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 30

At a meeting in Tadepalle between AP Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy and top executives of POSCO, the latter expressed their company's interest in making huge investments in Andhra Pradesh.

There were also clear indications that the South Korean company will be getting a green signal for setting up a green field steel plant on the premises of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP), in association with Rashtriya Ispah Nigam Limited (RINL).

A joint working group of state-owned RINL and POSCO has had three virtual meetings involving experts from both companies to set up the steel plant. The plant, with a capacity of seven million tonnes per annum, will manufacture flats and value-added special steel, which is not manufactured by VSP. The Vizag plant produces only longs and other products. After commissioning its various expansion projects, VSP is currently producing 7.5 million tonnes of various steel products per annum.

"POSCO steel company will be a separate entity and will have no connection with RINL," disclosed a senior official, while speaking to Deccan Chronicle on Friday.

Earlier in July this year, Ministry of Steel had asked the Korean steel major to form a joint working group for facilitating implementation of the memorandum of understanding signed between POSCO and RINL regarding the former's investment on the land owned by the state-owned firm in Visakhapatnam. RINL has 22,000 acres under its control.

The current attempt is the second being made by POSCO to set up a steel plant within India. A ₹52,000 crore 12-million tonne steel plant of the South Korean company proposed at Jagatsinghpur in Odisha never took off, as it faced hurdles from the environment ministry and stiff opposition from local people. This was despite POSCO and Odisha government signing an MoU in 2005.

DON'T BUY NON-APPROVED LANDS: CHIEF WHIP

DC CORRESPONDENT KADAPA, OCT. 30

Government chief whip Gadikota Srikanth Reddy has advised people not to purchase plots in DKT, dotted and non-converted lands and layouts without first obtaining government permission.

Addressing a press conference at his office in Rayachoti on Friday, he said Rayachoti town is developing rapidly and there would be further development. To take advantage because of this demand, people were selling DKT and dotted lands that are not legally registered. As per law, people will then have to get approvals from government to convert agricultural lands into residential areas.

The chief whip reminded that these laws are not new and have been in force since times immemorial. These have to be abided when buying lands. He said it was illegal to convert agricultural lands into house plots for residential purposes. That can happen only with the approval of municipality.

Srikanth Reddy asked people not to fall into anyone's trap that they would use influence to convert lands from agriculture to residential purposes. "Strict action will be taken against officials who commit irregularities in this regard," he warned.

₹31.26L HAWALA CASH SEIZED IN HYDERABAD

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, OCT. 30

The North Zone Task Force along with Sultan Bazaar police seized ₹31.26 lakh of unaccounted hawala money from two men while they were transporting the cash on Friday. The officials apprehended Manish Toshniwal, 32, and Vishnu Biradar, 21, and seized their scooter.

"We nabbed them based on credible information received about transport of illegal money. They were caught near Kutbiguda in Sultan Bazaar while they were going to deliver the cash to another party. The duo, along with the seized cash, were handed over to the Sultan Bazaar police for further investigation," said P. Radhakrishnan Rao, DCP, Commissioner's Task Force.

Farmers fear NGT stay will badly hit Seema interests

Officials feel implementation of the project could be delayed

D. SIVA RAMI REDDI | DC KURNOOL OCT. 30

With the National Green Tribunal (NGT) making environment clearance mandatory for the Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Scheme (RLIS), irrigation officials feel implementation of the project could be delayed.

There is, however, a chance that the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB), after examining the NGT order in detail, may conform to earlier assurances of Ministry of Jal Shakti, which said there is no need for environment clearance, as RLIS is not a new project, the officials maintained.

Siddeshwaram Sadhana Samithi president Kamanur Venugopal Reddy said the NGT judgment has undermined hopes of farmers not only in Kurnool, but also Kadapa and Nellore districts. He claimed that Krishna waters to Rayalaseema for drinking and irrigation needs is mandated under the Bachawat Award and several other agreements.

However, as RLIS is getting into controversies, Venugopal Reddy referred to the Central government's nod for Somasila-Siddeshwaram bridge across Krishna River. He suggested that instead of just a bridge, a bridge-cum-barrage could be constructed to help Rayalaseema farmers to get Krishna water and also reduce the burden on Srisailem Reservoir.

Rayalaseema Saguneeti Sadhana Samiti president Bojja Dasarath Reddy meanwhile felt that environmental clearance is not a big issue, as RLIS could pass the test easily.

The detailed project report (DPR) sought for



AVINASH P. SUBRAMANYAM | DC TIRUPATI, OCT. 30

Irrigation minister P. Anil Kumar Yadav on Friday made it clear that there is no question of compromise on the Polavaram project. He said that the state government is committed to getting it ready by December 2021.

Speaking to mediapersons at Nellore, Mr Yadav flayed Opposition leaders for neglecting the project during the TD regime in the state by making secret pacts with contractors for the sake of commissions. He accused the previous government of welcoming the package announced by the Union government and bringing the Polavaram project under the package without considering the cost escalation involved in the project.

Recalling that TD was part of the BJP-led NDA at the Centre when the irrigation component of the

the scheme is nothing but a deliberate tactic to delay the project.

Dasarath Reddy took the position that if RLIS in Andhra Pradesh is delayed, the Palamuru-Rangareddy project in Telangana must accordingly be stopped from

● **ALTHOUGH THE** Centre promised to complete the Polavaram project at their own expense, at the request of Naidu's government, it handed over the responsibility of construction to the state and it was ruined by the previous government.

No question of compromise on Polavaram, says minister

● Mr Yadav wondered how Mr Naidu agreed to cap the cost of the project at ₹20,399 cr when the total project cost was put at ₹55,450 cr at 2017-18 price level.

project cost was capped by the Union Cabinet in March 2017. Mr Yadav wondered how Mr Naidu agreed to cap the cost of the project at ₹20,399 crore when the total project cost, after being considered by the stakeholders, was put at ₹55,450 crore at the 2017-18 price level.

This situation would not have arisen but for TD's greed for commissions which has put the project in this spot, said Mr Yadav. "Although the Centre promised to complete the project at their own expense, at the request of Naidu's government, it handed over the responsibility of construction to

the state and it was ruined by the previous government," Mr Yadav said, while during the TD chief to reveal the Cabinet note of 2017, attended by former TD ministers.

TD leaders are stating that 70 per cent of the work was completed in their rule and that they spent only ₹17,000 crore, while the entire cost of the project is ₹55,000 crore, said Mr Yadav. "They have left R&R works from the project profile and claim that 70 per cent of the work was completed. They have to explain how they completed 70 per cent of the work with only one fourth of the budget," he said.

Criticising Nara Lokesh for making allegations against CM Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, Mr Yadav said that Lokesh was no match for Mr Jagan and doesn't have any moral right to speak about him. He stated that the public are ready to reject TD in the coming elections.

● **Rayalaseema Saguneeti Sadhana Samiti president Bojja Dasarath Reddy felt that environmental clearance is not a big issue, as RLIS could pass the test easily.**



Former MLA P. Vishnukumar Raju addresses during a protest staged by the BJP activists against the cancellation of Pradhan Mantri Aavas Yojana Housing Schemes by the state government, near GVMC Office in Visakhapatnam on Friday.

TD stir against handcuffing of farmers

DC CORRESPONDENT KADAPA/ANANTAPUR, OCT. 30

Leaders and workers of Telugu Desam party staged a dharna in front of Ambedkar statue near the new bus stand in Kadapa City against handcuffing farmers in Amaravati.

TD Kadapa Parliamentary president Lingareddy demanded action against top police officials who had ordered that farmers

● **TD politburo member Kalava Srinivasulu lashed out at CM Jagan Mohan Reddy for targeting farmers of Amaravati area who gave up lands for development of the capital city.**

be handcuffed.

TD district general secretary Balishetti Hariprasad demanded that the illegal cases filed against farmers of Amaravati be withdrawn. TD state executive secretaries Reddyam Venkata Subbareddy, Singareddy Govardhan

Reddy and other party activists also participated in the dharna.

Telugu Desam party also staged protest at Ambedkar statue in Anantapur on Friday over handcuffing of Amaravati farmers, who had no criminal history. Former minister and

PUBLIC CONCERN

NAGABHUSHANAM HOSKOTE | DC ANANTAPUR, OCT. 30

Public hearings for environmental clearance of various development projects have been made mandatory under environmental impact assessment.

Public hearings allow for people's participation in the decision-making on 'developmental' projects and is the only opportunity for people to raise their concerns about projects that may not mean development for them at all.

Praja Science Vedika noticed denial of right to information to people

APPCB conducts public hearings during pandemic

NAGABHUSHANAM HOSKOTE | DC ANANTAPUR, OCT. 30

The Praja Science Vedika noticed the denial of rights to information and participation in various projects. The Andhra Pradesh pollution control board (APPCB) has conducted three public hearings in Anantapur district during the Covid-19 pandemic period.

Public hearings are the only opportunity for people to raise their concerns about a proposed project. It is the responsibility of the APPCB to call for a public hearing when a project is proposed in an area.

More public hearings are scheduled in Anantapur, Kurnool, Kadapa and Vizianagaram districts during the pandemic period.

"APPCB does not care to give the public information through its website and other means. EIA reports that form the basis for participation in the public hearing are not made available to people. It is a clear violation of the right to information and participation. Unfortunately, environmental rights are not getting any attention," Dr



Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy makes his presence at the wedding ceremony of Chodavaram MLA Karanam Darmasri's daughter, Dr Suma and Dr Chinnam Naidu in the presence of Rajya Sabha member Vijay Sai Reddy and AP Cabinet ministers at The Park Hotel in Visakhapatnam on Friday. The Chief Minister arrived in a special flight from Vijayawada at 5.30 pm and after blessing the newly wedded couple he returned to the airport and flew back at 6.45 pm.

—DC

HM: Cops given full functional freedom

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 30

The police department has been given full freedom to discharge their duties after the government headed by Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy came to power last year, said home minister and deputy Chief Minister Mekathoti Sucharita after inaugurating the newly-built model police station in Anakapalle on Friday.

Talking to reporters later, she said that police personnel were asked to spare none, including the party leaders and workers, if they violated the law. She said the department won accolades from all quarters and had won 48 out of the 84 awards given at the national level.

"Unlike in the past, the police are not filing false cases and harassing people. They are going by the facts and discharging their duties with integrity and impartiality," she said.

Showering praises on the police personnel, she said the uniformed men

● **67 TYPES OF** services could be availed under the AP Police Seva App

and women did commendable service during the lockdown period resulting in reduction of the mortality rate.

Many of them also laid down their lives while working in the frontline, she added.

On services to women, she said the Chief Minister gave utmost importance to the security of women. She said the government launched 18 Disha police stations and a women police station for every district. Using technology, the department also launched Disha and AP Police Seva App to render immediate help to the victims. She said 67 types of services could be availed under the AP Police Seva App.

Making it more innovative, zero FIR was also introduced in the state and for the first time week-offs were given to police personnel, she added.

CM SERVING DALIT INTERESTS, SAYS SUCHARITA

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 30

Praising the CM, home minister Mekathoti Sucharita said Jagan Mohan Reddy gave utmost importance to the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes by offering them the head positions of decision-making bodies.

Inaugurating Dr B.R. Ambedkar statue in the Old Town of Visakhapatnam on Friday, she said the CM made one Dalit as the home minister and another as the deputy CM. She said the CM reserved 50 per cent of the nominated posts for the SC, ST, BCs and minorities creating a history in the country.

"The CM also deposited ₹65,000 crore directly into the accounts of women of oppressed classes under various social welfare schemes. This is not done in any part of the country," she said. To encourage Dalit entrepreneurs, the CM brought out a new industrial policy recently, she added.

Akhila challenges Silpa over murder of an advocate

D. SIVA RAMI REDDI | DC KURNOOL, OCT. 30

The accusations and counter-accusations between former Telugu Desam minister Bhumu Akhila Priya and Nandyal MLA Silpa Ravichandra Kishore Reddy are flying thick and fast as Silpa challenged Akhila Priya to first win an election by herself.

Ms Akhila on Friday said her father Bhumu Nagi Reddy, a former MLA of Nandyal, has developed the town on all fronts and was a peace-loving man. Mr Silpa accused the Bhumu family of spreading faction culture in the Nandyal town where an advocate was brutally murdered by a henchman of the Bhumu family last month.

Faction culture in an otherwise peaceful Nandyal town was the handiwork of the Bhumu family as before 2014 there were no instances of faction killings here, said Nandyal MLA Silpa Ravichandra Kishore Reddy.

Speaking to the media on Friday, he said that the police had arrested

● **A POLICE OFFICER** said that several phone calls were made from the phone of Manohar Naidu, (who was arrested in the murder case), to the Bhumu family members

Manohar Naidu, a right-hand man of former minister and TD leader Bhumu Akhila Priya, who was involved in the murder of advocate Naga Subbarayudu last month. The police arrested Manohar Naidu and three others for their involvement in the murder.

It is said that Manohar Naidu was engaged in the illicit business of red earth on behalf of his masters and had grown financially during the TD regime. He allegedly picked up a rivalry with the deceased Naga Subbarayudu who was said to be in the camp of Silpa Ravichandra Kishore Reddy. A police officer said that several phone calls were made from the phone of Manohar Naidu to the Bhumu family members.

Alloys Pvt Ltd of Hindupur industrial area called for a public hearing on March 25 at APIIC office premises.

M/s. Vijay Micron has proposed the mining of dolomite - 30,000 TPA, steatite - 23,400 TPA and calcite - 6,000 TPA over an extent of 7.9 ha in P. Pedda Ekkalur of Pedda Pappuru mandal in July at the proposed project site.

Similarly, three public hearings were called on October 30 in Muppulaguthi of Peddavdurgu mandal over the proposed mining of quartz.

SHORT TAKES

RASH DRIVING
CASE BOOKED
AGAINST DRIVER

FROM PAGE 1

Police booked a case under Section 304 (A) and 338 of IPC dealing with driving the vehicle in a rash and negligent manner.

J.V. Santhosh, DSP, Rajahmundry Urban central zone, who is the inquiry officer, said, "Though the driver was killed in the mishap, we found his negligence based on preliminary inquiry."

The deceased were identified as Yallapragada Naga Sreelakshmi, 33, Diwan Cherukuri; Kambala Bhanu, 33, Gokavaram; Simhadri Durga Prasad, 19, Thakurpalem; Chaganti Hema Sreelalitha, 13, Gadarada; Yallapragada Divya Siva Gayatri, 13, Diwan Cheruvu; Somarouthu Gopalakrishna, 72, Thallapuram and Pachikuri Narasimha Murthy Dora, 25 Gangampalem.

Alla Kali Krishna Srinivas, Deputy CM and minister for health, and Ch. Srinivasa Gopala Krishna, minister for BC welfare, inquired about the mishap with the East Godavari district administration and issued directions.

TTD REWARDS
SECURITY,
VIGILANCE STAFFDC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, OCT. 30

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) has distributed cash rewards to the vigilance and security personnel for their meritorious services in safeguarding the temple assets and visiting devotees.

The vigilance and security wing of TTD led by CVSO Gopinath Jatti and in the presence of TTD additional EO A.V. Dharma Reddy has organised Ayudha puja in Tirumala on Friday. After performing puja to the portraits of Lord Venkateswara and Goddess Durga, they observed the Ayudha puja to weapons and other security equipment.

The additional EO and CVSO distributed cash rewards to 38 security and vigilance staff for their services in line of duty. The TTD CVSO said that the TTD possessed state of the art bomb detection, fire-fighting and communication equipment.

He added that nearly 2,800 personnel were providing dedicated services, even during the Covid-19 situation by risking their lives to safeguard the invaluable assets of Srivari temple and safety of devotees.

TASK FORCE TO
INTENSIFY
COMBING

FROM PAGE 1

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, RSASTF SP. G. Anjaneyulu, said that the taskforce has initiated a host of counter-measures to enable it to carry out the full spectrum of its combing operations covering the entire forest region.

"Concerned over the spurt in red sanders smuggling in Seshachalam region, we have pressed teams into the woods to carry out combing operations. Though we are facing tough times because of incessant rains, our teams are advancing deep into the woods and cracking the whip on red sanders smugglers", he maintained.

Meanwhile, the most-worrying factor is that the unemployed rural youth from the vulnerable districts of Chittoor, Kadapa, Nellore, Prakasam and Kurnool are being decisively transformed into a workforce by the mafia. Many are falling prey to the ₹10,000-20,000 within a week or 10 days payment, and working as woodcutters, pilots or helpers.

MOCK DRILL ON
RADIOACTIVE
LEAKAGEDC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 30

RINL conducted the first ever mock drill on radioactive leakage, the corporate entity of the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant in the factory premises on Friday.

J. Siva Sankar Reddy, the joint chief inspector of factories, witnessed the mock drill conducted on the preparedness of arresting the radioactive leakage. As part of the drill, one worker inadvertently opened the cap of Cobalt 60 Isotope.

Covid awareness



Medical staff take part in the Covid-19 awareness rally in Kakinada on Friday.

— A. MANIKANTA KUMAR

State records 2,886 new
Covid cases, 17 deaths

West Godavari district records the highest 493 patients in 24 hours

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 30

Andhra Pradesh has registered 2,886 new Coronavirus cases, raising the overall tally to 8,20,565; apart from 17 deaths in the last 24 hours, taking the death toll to 6,676.

State health authorities released their Covid-19 bulletin here on Friday reporting that from among the 84,401 samples tested, 2,886 individuals have been found infected with the virus. Out of a total 79,46,860 samples tested so far in the state, 7,88,375 patients have been discharged after recovery, while 25,514 patients are active with the virus.

Among daily cases of confirmed Coronavirus,

West Godavari district recorded the highest 493 patients, followed by 448 cases in Krishna, 405 in East Godavari, 385 in Guntur, 296 in Chittoor, 152 in Visakhapatnam, 151 in Anantapur, 148 in Kadapa, 146 in Prakasam, 80 in Nellore, 77 in Srikakulam, 69 in Vizianagaram and 36 in Kurnool. East Godavari district continues to lead the state with the highest cumulative 1,15,373 Covid-19 cases, followed by 85,258 in West Godavari, 77,991 in Chittoor, 66,896 in Guntur, 64,436 in Anantapur, 59,434 in Kurnool, 59,410 in Nellore, 59,267 in Prakasam, 55,700 in Visakhapatnam, 51,911 in Kadapa, 43,865 in Srikakulam, 39,230 in

● Krishna district registered three deaths, followed by two each in Anantapur, Chittoor, Guntur, Kadapa and Visakhapatnam; and one each in E. Godavari, Prakasam, Vizianagaram and W. Godavari districts

Vizianagaram, 38,899 in Krishna, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

Rate of recovery among Coronavirus-infected patients is highest in East Godavari district with 1,10,011 recoveries, followed by 81,138 in West Godavari, 74,763 in Chittoor, 62,782 in Guntur, 62,679 in Anantapur, 58,669 in Nellore, 58,514 in Kurnool, 57,301 in

Prakasam, 53,207 in Visakhapatnam, 50,095 in Kadapa, 42,609 in Srikakulam, 38,624 in Vizianagaram, 35,088 in Krishna, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

With regard to daily cases of deaths among virus-infected patients, Krishna district registered three deaths, followed by two each in Anantapur, Chittoor, Guntur, Kadapa and Visakhapatnam; and one each in East Godavari, Prakasam, Vizianagaram and West Godavari districts.

Chittoor topped the state in registering the highest number of 778 cumulative deaths among Covid-19 patients, followed by 616 in Guntur district, 610 in East

Godavari, 571 in Prakasam, 563 in Krishna, 559 in Anantapur, 507 in Visakhapatnam, 496 in West Godavari, 486 in Nellore, 482 in Kurnool, 439 in Kadapa, 339 in Srikakulam and 230 in Vizianagaram.

State health authorities have discharged 3,623 Coronavirus-infected patients after recovery from various hospitals in the state during the last 24 hours.

AP has carried out Covid-19 tests on 1,48,818 samples per one million population, registering a Covid-19 positive rate of 10.33, while Maharashtra tested 70,754 samples with a positive rate of 18.86 and Telangana tested 1,06,793 samples with a positive rate of 5.61.

10th century sun god idol found

HOSKOTE
NAGABHUSHANAM | DC
ANANTAPUR, OCT. 30

A 10th century idol of the sun god, of historical significance, was excavated in Kalugodu village, Gummagatta mandal on Friday. The idol was unearthed while farmer, H. Nagendra, of Kalugodu village, was ploughing in his fields is part of a sun god idol two feet in height with two 'padmas' in his hands.

The farmer informed nearby people who offered pujas to the sun god idol. Priests of Bommakka Palli Rajarajeshwari temple worshiped the idol where it was found. Historians believe that other idols may be found nearby.

Agricultural land is located close to Vedavathi river bed. Villagers informed the Gummagatta tahsildar, Venkata Chalapati, who informed the archaeological department.

Rayadurg heritage asso-



The idol unearthed in fields by a farmer.

— DC

ciation secretary, Gudekota Sivakumar, brought it to the notice of the historian and CEO of the cultural centre of and

● The sculptural style of the sun god mirrors the style of Nolamba Pallavas of the 10th century.

Amaravati, Eemani Shivanagi Reddy.

After formal examination, Reddy said the sculptural style of the sun god mirrors the style of the Nolamba Pallavas of the 10th century. There might be a sun god temple on the banks of the Vedvathi riverbed and chances are that more idols and structures are to be found in surrounding parts. On behalf of the Rayadurg heritage association, Sivakumar hoped the archaeological department will excavate the surroundings.

Nolamba Pallavas ruled many parts of present Anantapur district and the surrounding areas in present day Karnataka. Hemavathi, in Amarapuram mandal, was the capital of the Nolamba Pallava dynasty and structures appear in many parts.

Private tuition fee
reduced by 30%DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 30

The AP government has reduced the tuition fee by 30 per cent in all private unaided schools and junior colleges for the academic year 2020-21.

The state government issued a GO on Friday stating that based on recommendations of the chairperson, AP School Education Regulatory Monitoring Commission and also in

consultation with other stakeholders, it had decided to impose a reduction. The fee to be collected in the current academic year should be equivalent to the fee collected in the last academic year 2019-20.

The state government has decided to reduce the tuition fee keeping in mind the prevalence of the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on the economy, affecting sources of income to the parents.

Man set on fire by
wife over a disputeDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 30

A man was doused with petrol and set on fire by his wife following a family dispute in Machilipatnam in Krishna district at about 1 am on Friday.

According to the Inaguduru police, Machilipatnam agriculture market committee chairman Sheik Mustafa alias Achheba's son Quadir Basha, 37, was married to Sheik Nazia nearly 14 years ago. However, Basha allegedly married Nazia's younger sister some time ago. The couple were having a dispute on the issue.

When Basha was sleeping on the bed at his home, his wife doused him with petrol and set him on fire, causing

● Machilipatnam agriculture market committee chairman Sheik Mustafa alias Achheba's son Quadir Basha, 37, was married to Sheik Nazia nearly 14 years ago. However, Basha allegedly married Nazia's younger sister some time ago.

nearly 40 per cent burns on his body. He was rushed to a local government hospital and later shifted to a private hospital in Vijayawada for better medical treatment. His condition is said to be stable.

The police booked a case of attempt to murder on Nazia under Section 307 of IPC and investigation is underway.

Five arrested for
smuggling ganjaDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD OCT. 30

Five teenage students, including a juvenile, who smuggled marijuana from Araku Valley for their own consumption as well as to sell it, were arrested from a lodge in Lakdikapul by the Saifabad police on Friday. Police seized 2.7 kilos of contraband from their possession.

The accused were identified as Tandra Karthik, P. Vamshi Vardhan, M. Manikanth, Dharamdas, all 19, and their 17-year-old colleague.

The boys had allegedly planned the trip to Araku 2-3 months ago and gathered ₹5,000 each from their homes citing different reasons. Police said this was

their first attempt at smuggling, they used to earlier purchase the contraband within the city. "Earlier this week, they went to Araku in a car and returned to the city on Thursday, after which they checked into the hotel. They smoked ganja and spent the night there. Upon receiving a tip-off, a police team from Saifabad went to hotel and nabbed them on Friday," sources said. A hotel staffer said that the police showed up within a few hours after the boys checked in. "They told us that contraband is being consumed in one of the rooms and took the boys away," he said.

Sources in the police said that efforts are on to nab the Araku contacts of the students.

Low passenger
traffic dampens
SCR festivalNAVEEN KUMAR | DC
HYDERABAD, OCT. 30

This year's festive season has been disappointing for South Central Railway (SCR), which fears lesser footfalls for Deepavali, Christmas and New Year festivities, going by its experience of witnessing minimal traffic during the Dasara Navaratri. "There had been a very steep decline in people boarding trains during Dasara. Public is either opting to travel by road in their personal vehicles or avoiding travel entirely," an SCR official said.

He indicated that most railway passengers in recent months have been heading to Bihar and West Bengal.

Railway officials maintain that are continuing to take all measures to safeguard trains and railway premises from Coronavirus pandemic. "Every toilet on board is being sanitised once an hour by our on-board housekeeping staff. Coaches too are being sanitised regularly. Posters on Covid-19 safety measures have been put up, while regular announcements are being made about using masks and sanitisers, apart from maintaining social distancing," the senior official said.

Though railway authorities have made reserving of seats in general compartments mandatory, they have not cut down on the seating capacity inside these coach-

es. This is posing challenges when it comes to physical distancing norms for passengers.

Reservations have been made mandatory to avoid overcrowding in general compartments, officials said. They, however, explained that they are not in a position to decrease seating capacity, as far fewer trains are being plied due to Covid-19. The number of passenger trains has dropped to 25 per day from 200 earlier.

Explaining the reservation process for seats in general compartments, another official said a reserved ticket costs ₹15 more. Passengers are allowed onto the platform only if they have a reserved ticket. "Government railway police ensure that social distancing is maintained on platform premises. This is to ensure safe travelling and avoid crowding during pandemic," the official said.

Welcoming the reserved ticket rule, Ramesh Rao, a private sector employee from Secunderabad, said, "This is a small price to pay for checking the spread of virus. I request authorities to continue this system as it solves a bigger mess of Covid spreading in overcrowded general bogies."

A general compartment comprises 72 seats, meaning only 72 passengers will be issued tickets.

This will ensure that general compartments are not crowded like in the past.

TECH | BOOST A pilot project started in Railway Kodur Panchayat

RWS adopts motor operating system

NAGESWARA RAO
BALLEDA | DC
KADAPPA, OCT. 30

Kadapa Rural Water Supply (RWS) Department has successfully adopted a new device to switch their borewell motors on and off using mobile or landline phones. A pilot project started in Railway Kodur Panchayat has already delivered good results.

Operating the electric motors remotely has not only reduced manpower but is saving plenty of water from getting wasted. Many farmers in the district have also started using this GSM-based

mobile motor controller called Kisan Raja. Using their mobile or landline phone, they are operating their motors from any place.

The motor control instrument is manufactured by Vinfinet Technologies and can be attached to starters of motors having any capacity, ranging from 7.5, 10, 12.5 HP to up to 30 HP. This instrument comprises five parts – Samrat, Rakshak, Sujala, start-stop wire, theft wire, and antenna.

Samrat works on Global System for Mobile (GSM) SIM cards that activate an ON/OFF button. Samrat sends and

receives signals through the SIM card inserted in it. It also has an Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS). The mobile operator can receive voice calls and communicate with the server through this system. Rakshak is a power adaptor that safeguards the motor from burning out due to voltage fluctuations. Sujala device connects Kisan Raja to the starter of the motor pump through the start-stop wire. Theft wire is used to protect the instrument from being stolen. It sends voice messages to the operator if the instrument is meddled with. The antenna receives and

sends signals.

The motor control instrument is being successfully used at Railway Kodur, a major gram panchayat in Kadapa district. 30 motor pumps are being operated daily to regulate supply of drinking water to villages. SIM cards of all Kisan Raja devices have been linked to the mobile number of one pump operator in the gram panchayat.

It takes only 30 seconds to switch a motor on or off. This way, a single person operating the mobile can switch on or off all motors within 15 minutes. Panchayat secretary, Railway Kodur GP says power charges have

been reduced considerably as the device prevents unauthorised usage of motor pumps by villagers. Wastage of water has also stopped.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, RWS Department chief engineer Pagidi Sanjeeva Rao and deputy executive engineer Akkili Siva Rudra Goud said previously, nine employees had to be deployed to operate these motors. Now only one employee is operating them. Rest of the employees have been deputed to other departments of the panchayat. The device also has an auto-stop facility as also a repair alert system, they said.

IN BRIEF

ANTRIX TOLD
TO PAY \$1.2BN
TO DEVAS

Washington, Oct. 30: A US court has asked Antrix Corporation, the commercial arm of Indian Space Research Organisation, to pay compensation of USD 1.2 billion to a Bengaluru-based startup, Devas Multimedia, for cancelling a satellite deal in 2005.

As per the agreement in January 2005, Antrix agreed to build, launch and operate two satellites and to make available 70 MHz of S-band spectrum to Devas, which the latter planned to use to offer hybrid satellite and terrestrial communication services throughout India.

The agreement was terminated by Antrix in February 2011. Over the next several years, Devas approached various legal avenues in India. This included the Supreme Court, which directed for a tribunal.

In his order dated October 27, Judge Thomas S Zilly, US District Judge, Western District of Washington, Seattle, ruled that Antrix Corporation pay a compensation of USD 562.5 million to Devas Multimedia Corporation and the related interest rate amounting to a total of USD 1.2 billion.

EC CAUTIONS
KAILASH
VIJAYVARGIYA

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 30

The Election Commission on Friday cautioned BJP's Kailash Vijayvargiya over the *chunnu-munnu* remarks he made against Congress leaders Digvijay Singh and Kamal Nath saying they were in violation of the model code of conduct provisions.

The poll body further advised the senior BJP leader not to use any such word in his public utterances while the model code of conduct was in place.

The Commission had issued a notice to Mr Vijayvargiya on October 26 seeking his reply.

The BJP leader had made the statement in Sanwer, Indore, during an election rally on October 14. He had also dubbed Mr Singh and Mr Nath as *gaddar* or traitors.

The EC order said that the Commission has carefully considered the matter "and is of considered view that Kailash Vijayvargiya has violated Para (2) of Part I of the General Conduct Model Code of Conduct for the Guidance of Political Parties and Candidates".

The Commission advised Mr Vijayvargiya that "while making public utterances he should not use any such word or statement during the period of Model Code of Conduct".

Mr Vijayvargiya responded that the remarks quoted in the notice are in complete misunderstanding of its context.

EC REVOKES STAR
CAMPAIGNER
STATUS OF NATH

RABINDRA NATH
CHOUDHURY | DC
with agency inputs
BHOPAL, OCT. 30

Former Madhya Pradesh chief minister and Congress veteran Kamal Nath, who was snubbed by Rahul Gandhi for calling a female minister in Shivraj Cabinet "item" a couple of weeks ago, was on Friday stripped of the status of his party's star campaigner by the Election Commission for "repeated violation of the model code of conduct".

Taking serious note of breach of "ethical and dignified behaviour", the EC's order said, "Now, therefore, for repeated violation of Model Code of Conduct and for completely disregarding the advisory issued to him, the commission hereby revokes the status of leader of political party (Star Campaigner) of Shri Kamal Nath, ex-chief minister, Madhya Pradesh, with immediate effect for the current by-elections of Legislative Assembly of Madhya Pradesh".

"However, if any campaign is done by Shri Kamal Nath from now onwards, the entire expenditure related to travel, stay, visit, etc... shall be completely borne by the candidate in whose constituency the campaign is done by Shri Kamal Nath," the order added.

The Congress said it will move the Supreme Court against the decision. Congress RS MP and lawyer Vivek Tankha said that a petition will be filed in the apex court as soon as possible.

Munger violence: Report by
CISF says police fired first

Report may create trouble for Munger SP Lipi who was removed by EC

NAYEAR AZAD | DC
PATNA, OCT. 30

The Munger incident got politically heated up on Friday after a report claimed that the state police fired in the air which instigated the crowd during the Durga idol immersion procession on October 26.

The internal report filed by the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), a copy of which is also available with this newspaper, clearly states that the local police fired in the air to control the crowd.

The report says that "on the request of Bihar police at 11.20 PM on October 26, a group of 20 CISF personnel of Election coy departed from their camp for procession control duty. Further state police divided 20 personnel into two groups of 10 each. Out of this one group was deployed at Deen Dayal Upadhyay chowk along with SSB and state police personnel at 11.45 pm".

The report further adds that "due to dispute between the local police and devotees present in the procession, the crowd started pelting stones at the state police and other CAPF personnel. To control the situation the local police first fired in the air which led to heavy stone pelting from the crowd. As the situation was getting out of hand the CISF personnel fired in the air, as a result, the violent procession got dispersed".

The report is likely to create trouble for the Munger SP Lipi Singh as well as the district administration which had earlier blamed anti-social elements for the incident in which a person was killed and many others injured.

Both Munger SP Lipi Singh and the DM were removed by the Election Commission on Thursday after a group of protesters went on a rampage in the town, setting police stations and outposts on fire and ransacked the SP and SDO offices.

The poll panel has also ordered an inquiry into the firing and stone-pelting during the immersion procession late Monday night in which a 20-year-old youth was killed and several others injured.

Magadh divisional Commissioner Asangba



Police personnel conduct a flag march to enforce law and order in the area following clashes between police and public during Durga Puja festival in Munger district on Friday.

— PTI

● The poll panel has ordered an inquiry into the firing and stone-pelting during the immersion procession late Monday night in which a 20-year-old youth was killed. Magadh divisional Commissioner has been asked to carry out a probe.

Chuba Ao has been asked to carry out a probe and submit a report within a week.

On Friday, a Congress delegation led by senior party leader Randeep Singh Surjewala met Bihar governor Phagu Chauhan over the incident and demanded immediate action against Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and his deputy Sushil Kumar Modi.

"We have demanded immediate suspension of Bihar CM Nitish Kumar and Deputy CM Sushil Kumar Modi. A compensation of ₹50 lakh must also be given to the family member of the person who

was killed in the incident," Congress leader Randeep Singh Surjewala said.

The grand alliance has also criticized the incident, likening the district police and the SP with General Dyer of infamous Jallianwala Bagh incident in Punjab during the British rule.

Munger SP Lipi Singh is the daughter of senior JD(U) leader and Rajya Sabha MP RCP Singh.

Political analysts believe that the incident which occurred on the eve of the first phase of voting may have impacted the polling in the area as it witnessed lower voter turnout as compared to 2015 Assembly elections.

Meanwhile, the state administration on Friday deployed additional forces in Munger to control the situation. Speaking to reporters, DIG Munger Manu Maharaj said, "Situation has been brought under control and forces have been deployed in the area to monitor the law and order in the area".

Sena, Cong attack
BJP for its 'silence'

Mumbai, Oct. 30: The Shiv Sena on Friday hit out at the BJP for its "silence" on the firing on people during Durga idol immersion in Munger in Bihar, where the latter is in power along with the Nitish Kumar-led JD(U).

The Sena, in an editorial in its mouthpiece *Saamana*, said the BJP was, however, quick to pounce on and "communalise" the killing of two sadhus by a mob in Palghar district of Maharashtra in April.

One person was killed and over two dozen people, including security personnel, injured in firing and stone-pelting during goddess Durga idol immersion in Munger.

"If this incident had happened in Maharashtra or West Bengal (opposition ruled states), the BJP

would have raised a hue and cry. Why are those who tried to communalise the Palghar lynching quiet over Munger?" the editorial asked.

"Didn't the fake Hindutvawadis feel the insult of Goddess Durga and wasn't the subsequent firing symbol of jungle raj?" "Has the BJP put on the glasses of secularism?" the daily asked.

The BJP also came under fire from the state Congress with its spokesperson Sachin Sawant claiming the NDA lead constituent indulged in opportunistic Hindutva politics. "When the Palghar incident took place, the BJP demanded the resignation of the Maharashtra home minister. However, the party has not uttered a word on Munger," Sawant said.

Farooq stopped
from leaving for
Friday prayers

DC CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR, OCT. 30

The J&K authorities placed former chief minister and opposition National Conference president under house arrest for the day on Friday to prevent him from relocating to famed shrine of Hazratbal here to offer prayers on the day of Milad or the birth anniversary of Islam's Prophet Muhammad.

A police 'bunker vehicle' stayed parked at the main entrance to Mr. Abdullah's residence along Srinagar's Gupkar Road, blocking the access to the premises.

Earlier 83-year-leader and sitting Lok Sabha MP was reportedly informed by the authorities that he cannot move out.

The NC condemned the authorities barring it's leader from joining the

congregational Friday prayers at Hazratbal.

A party spokesman said on the official Twitter handle, "J&K administration has blocked the residence of party president Dr. Farooq Abdullah and stopped him from offering prayers at Dargah Hazratbal. JKNC condemns this infringement of fundamental right to pray, especially on the auspicious occasion of Milad Un Nabi (SAW)."

The recently formed 'People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration' of which Mr. Abdullah is the president also condemned the move. Its spokesperson Sajad Gani Lone, said it "tantamount to interference in the religious rights of Dr. Farooq Abdullah." He added, "This marks a new low in the curtailment of fundamental rights of the people of J&K."

LeT involved in
killing of BJP
workers: Police

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR, OCT. 30

Jammu and Kashmir police on Friday claimed that the militants involved in the murder of a local BJP youth leader and his two associates in southern Kulgam district have been identified and that Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT) and The Resistance Front (TRF) carried out the attack on Thursday.

A group of gunmen had at around 8 pm on Thursday shot and critically wounded Fida Hussain Itoo, general secretary of the J&K unit of BJP Yuva Morcha, and two other party workers Umar Ramzan Hajam and Umer Rashid Beigh in Kulgam's Yaripora village. They were evacuated to an emergency trauma hospital along the Srinagar-Jammu highway in Qazigund area but doctors at the hospital pronounced them dead on arrival.

Inspector General of Police (Kashmir range),

Vijay Kumar, during a visit of the area told reporters that the assailants came in a car and opened fire at the trio. "Then the militants fled in the same vehicle. We seized the vehicle near Achabal area of Anantnag," he said adding "With the help of our technical and human intelligence, three militants who carried out the act include a local Nisar Ahmed Khanday, another one namely Abbas Sheikh who was earlier with the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen and later joined LeT, and the third one may be a foreigner".

The IGP said that the police had provided 'protection' to Mr. Hussain and that he was lodged at Hotel Dolphin at the Valley's premier resort of Pahalgam. "But he recently gave undertaking that he can move around without security. Now we are investigating what the trio was doing in the Kulgam area," he said.

Over 48,000 new Covid cases;
Kerala, Delhi remain a concern

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 30

Rising daily cases in Kerala and Delhi (5,891) remain a big concern as overall fresh cases of coronavirus continue to decline in India.

On Friday, 48,648 new cases were detected as the total number of Covid-19 cases in the country moved closer to 90 lakh.

Out of this 73.73 lakh persons have already recovered while 5.94 lakh still remain infected and under treatment.

The total number of deaths so far due to Covid-19 has been 1.21 lakh with 563 fatalities reported in the last 24 hours.

The union government is now gearing up for the

● THE UNION government is now gearing up for the nationwide vaccine drive, once the vaccine candidates gets DCGA approval following successful trial results.

nationwide vaccine drive, once the vaccine candidates gets DCGA approval following successful trial results.

The Centre has asked states to constitute committees for coordination and overseeing Covid-19 vaccination drive while ensuring minimal disruptions in other routine healthcare services.

Stating that Covid-19 vaccine introduction will span over a year with multiple groups being included

"sequentially starting from health care workers", the Health Ministry has sought constitution of committees at state and district levels which will review preparatory activities in terms of cold chain preparedness, operational planning, strategies for state-specific challenges in terms of geographical terrain and hard-to-reach areas, etc.

"The Covid-19 vaccine introduction will span over a year with multiple groups being included sequentially starting from HCWs. Therefore, it is important to create a strong advisory and coordination mechanism at state and district level to guide the process of Covid-19 vaccine introduction while ensuring minimal disruption of other routine health care services including immunisation," the letter by union health secretary Rajesh Bhushan issued on October 26 stated.

As many as 57,386 patients have recovered in the last 24 hours compared to 48,648 new cases. The national Recovery Rate has now progressed to 91.15 per cent and 80 per cent of the new recovered cases are observed to be concentrated in 10 States/UTs. Kerala has contributed the maximum with more than 8,000 to the single day recoveries followed by Maharashtra and Karnataka with more than 7,000 recoveries each.

BORDER | ROW

Locals on Assam side stop the movement of vehicles to Mizoram

Assam-Mizoram highway blockaded again

MANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, OCT. 30

In what is the fallout of long negligence in resolving the inter-state border dispute, the blockade on Assam-Mizoram border has re-surfaced with local residents on Assam side stopping the movement of vehicles to Mizoram demanding withdrawal of forces allegedly four kilometre inside Assam territory.

Hundreds of trucks carrying essential supplies to Mizoram were once again stranded on National Highway 306, the lifeline

of the state. Pointing out that the problem re-started as Mizoram failed to honour its commitment, sources said that Mizoram had promised that it would pull back its armed police from the border area at Lailapur in Assam.

The border tension between the two states was resolved on Thursday last after Union Home Secretary held a video conference with the chief secretaries of both Assam and Mizoram to defuse the situation.

Asserting that tension was prevailing between the two neighbouring

states following a bomb blast in a school and video clips flashed on local news channel claiming that non-Mizo residents are being harassed in Mizoram, security sources said that it has created anger among the people living in bordering areas.

Meanwhile, additional director general of police (law and order) Assam Mr G.P. Singh told reporters that a recent bomb blast in a school in Lailapur along the Assam-Mizoram border may have been an attempt to terrorise the locals. Assam Police will request its counterpart to

hand over the probe of the incident to a central agency.

"An explosion had taken place in a school. I discussed with the Superintendent of Police of Kolashib districts. We have seen the additional police post set up by Mizoram. There is a feeling that a bomb explosion might be an attempt to terrorise the locals. I have asked the Superintendent of Police of Cachar to file a case under section of Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act in the court," he said.

"In the investigation, it

has emerged that those triggering the explosion might be from Mizoram. We have discussed with police headquarters as it involves a case under unlawful activities, we will request to transfer the case to a central agency," Mr Singh told reporters.

The deadlock at the Assam-Mizoram border has been on since October 9 and took an ugly turn with around 20 shops and houses burnt and several people injured in attacks and counter-attacks by the people living along the border on October 17.

FIRST PHASE OF NAVAL EXERCISE
MALABAR TO BEGIN FROM NOV. 3

PAWAN BALI | DC
NEW DELHI, OCT. 30

The first phase of Naval exercise Malabar involving 'Quad' countries — India, US, Japan and Australia — is set to commence off Visakhapatnam in Bay of Bengal from November 3 to 6.

India has invited Royal Australian Navy this year to participate in the Malabar exercise in a message to China.

India, US, Japan and Australia are part of the 'Quad' alliance, which Beijing considers as an anti-China grouping.

The phase 2 of the exercise is scheduled to be

conducted in the Arabian Sea in mid-November.

The phase-1 of Malabar will witness participation of Indian Navy units with US Navy Ship USS John S McCain (guided-missile destroyer), Royal Australian Navy ship HMAS Ballarat (long range frigate) with integral MH-60 helicopter, and Japan Maritime Self Defence Force ship JS Onami (destroyer) with integral SH-60 helicopter.

The Indian Navy participation in Phase 1 will be led by Rear Admiral Sanjay Vatsayan, Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet.

IN BRIEF

Man pays to see leopard close, hurt

Davie: A man was mauled by a captive black leopard in a backyard zoo in South Florida, wildlife officials said. The man paid \$150 for a "full contact experience" with the black leopard, which allowed him to play with it and take pictures, WPLG reported. A report by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission says the incident happened Aug. 31 in Davie, which is near Fort Lauderdale. The agency charged the owner with allowing full contact with an extremely dangerous animal and was cited for maintaining captive wildlife in an unsafe condition. The owner runs a licensed animal sanctuary for rare and endangered animals at the home, WPLG reported.

Oz wildfires adds to climate risk

Canberra: An investigation into Australia's catastrophic wildfire season on Friday recommended greater efforts to forecast the impacts of climate change on specific parts of the country, warning fire behaviour was becoming more extreme. The Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements began in February while wildfires were ravaging vast swathes of the nation's southeast in a fire season that is now known as Black Summer. The fires killed at least 33 people including 10 firefighters, destroyed more than 3,000 homes, razed 19 million hectares (47 million acres) and displaced thousands of residents. One firefighter was killed when an extraordinary weather event described by authorities as a "fire tornado" flipped a 10-ton fire truck upside down.

Warsaw braces for mass protest

Warsaw: The Polish capital prepared for a mass demonstration on Friday against a court ruling that would ban almost all abortions. Crowds of protesters are expected to defy coronavirus restrictions and risk contagion to join the demonstration in Warsaw. "We're prepared to fight till the end," Marta Lempart, co-founder of the Women's Strike movement, told reporters on Friday. Security is expected to be tight following some clashes between protesters and far-right activists in nine consecutive days of protests. The protest is set to start at 1600 GMT. More than 4,00,000 people took part in mostly peaceful nationwide demonstrations on Wednesday and organisers are hoping many people will travel to Warsaw for Friday's protest. Women's rights groups organising the protest face possible prosecution since any gatherings of more than five people are currently banned. Smaller rallies are also planned in dozens of other Polish cities including Krakow and Wroclaw, as well as abroad in Barcelona, Vienna and elsewhere.

QUAKE IN TURKEY SEA TOPPLES BUILDINGS IN IZMIR

Istanbul, Oct. 30: A strong earthquake in the Aegean Sea has shaken Turkey and Greece. Turkey's interior minister reports that six buildings in western Izmir province were destroyed.

Turkey's Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency said on Friday's earthquake was centered in the Aegean at a depth of 16.5 kilometres and registered at a 6.6 magnitude. The European-Mediterranean Seismological Centre said the quake had a preliminary magnitude of 6.9, with an epicenter 13 kilometres north northeast of the Greek island of Samos. The United States Geological Survey put the magnitude at 7.0. Turkish media showed wreckage of a multiple-story building in central Izmir, with people climbing it to reach rescuers.

Smoke was filmed in several spots in central Izmir. The governor said there was no immediate information on casualties. Turkish media said the earthquake was felt across the regions of Aegean and Marmara, where Istanbul is located. Istanbul's governor said there were no reports of damage. The quake was felt across the eastern Greek islands and even in the Greek capital, Athens. Greek media said the residents of Samos and other islands fled their homes, while some rockfalls were reported. There were no immediate reports of injuries. Both countries reported aftershocks

France on high alert as fears of more attacks anticipated

Soldiers at key sites, places of worship; 47-yr-old in touch with attacker held

Paris/Nice, Oct. 30: France's interior minister said on Friday more militant attacks on its soil were likely and the country was engaged in a war against Islamist ideology following the second deadly knife attack in its cities in two weeks.

Minister Gerald Darnaud was speaking a day after an assailant shouting "Allahu Akbar" (God is Greatest) beheaded a woman and killed two other people in a church in Nice. The man was shot by police and is now in critical condition in a hospital. "We are in a war against an enemy that is both inside and outside," Darnaud told RTL radio. "We need to understand that there have been and there will be other events such as these terrible attacks."

President Emmanuel Macron has deployed thousands of soldiers to protect important sites such as places of worship and schools, and France's security alert is at its highest level.

Thursday's attack, on the birthday of the Prophet Mohammad, took place at a time of swelling Muslim anger across the globe at France's defence of the right to publish cartoons depicting the prophet. Protesters who deem the cartoons an insult to the Prophet Mohammad have denounced France in street rallies in several Muslim-majority countries.

Tens of thousands of Muslims protested in Bangladesh on Friday, chanting slogans such as "Boycott French products" and carrying banners calling Macron "the world's biggest terrorist" as they marched in the streets of the capital Dhaka.

France's chief anti-terrorism prosecutor said the man suspected of carrying out the Nice attack was a Tunisian born in 1999 who had arrived in Europe on Sept. 20 in Lampedusa, the Italian island off Tunisia that is a main landing point for migrants from Africa.

A Tunisian security source and a French police source named the suspect as Ibrahim Aouissouli.

A judicial source said on Friday that a 47-year-old man had been taken into custody on Thursday evening on suspicion of having been in contact with the perpetrator of the attack.

The Nice attack occurred



A woman lights a candle in front of the Notre-Dame de l'Assomption Basilica in Nice on Friday during a tribute to the victims killed by a knife attacker the day before. — AFP

Macron remains defiant after Islamist knife attack

Nice, France, Oct. 30: French president Emmanuel Macron vowed his country would stand firm against religious extremists after a knife-wielding man killed three people at a church, in the country's second attack blamed on Islamist terrorism this month.

France will not "give up on our values," Macron said in Nice, after a Tunisian migrant went on a near half-hour rampage with a 30-centimetre (12-inch) knife, targeting people praying in the southern city's Notre-Dame basilica.

A 60-year-old woman died inside the church and the body of a man, a 55-year-old church employee, was found nearby, his throat also slit.

just under two weeks after Samuel Paty, a school teacher in a Paris suburb, was beheaded by an 18-year-old Chechen who was apparently incensed by the teacher showing a cartoon of the Prophet Mohammad in class.

It was also the second militant attack in Nice in recent years. In July 2016,

Another woman, a 44-year-old Brazilian who had fled the church to a nearby restaurant, died shortly afterwards from multiple knife wounds. "Tell my children I love them," she managed to say before her death, according to French cable channel BFM TV.

The assailant, who was shot and wounded by police, was identified as 21-year-old Ibrahim Aouissouli, who arrived in Italy last month, then travelled to France, judicial sources said.

Aouissouli who had a copy of the Koran and three knives with him, shouted "Allahu Akbar" (God is Greatest) when approached by police who shot and seriously wounded him, France's anti-terror prosecutor Jean-

Francois Ricard told a press conference.

Nice Mayor Christian Estrosi told journalists at the scene the attacker "kept repeating 'Allahu Akbar' even while under medication" as he was taken to hospital.

The church killings come after the October 16 beheading in a Paris suburb of history teacher Samuel Paty by an extremist after Paty showed pupils cartoons of the Prophet Mohammad in a free speech lesson.

Macron defended the cartoons and the right to mock religion, sparking widespread anger against France in the Islamic world and several campaigns in Muslim-majority countries to boycott French products. — AFP

WORLD LEADERS CONDEMN FRANCE STABBINGS

Paris, Oct. 30: World leaders condemned fatal stabbings in the French city of Nice on Thursday that France called an Islamist terrorist attack.

Condemnation came from US President Donald Trump, UN chief Antonio Guterres, as well as European, Arab and Israeli leaders.

"Our hearts are with the people of France. America stands with our oldest Ally in this fight," Trump tweeted. "These Radical Islamic terrorist attacks must stop immediately. No country, France or otherwise can long put up with it!" One of the first to condemn was Turkey, embroiled in a row with France over the publication of cartoons of the Prophet Mohammad that have triggered a wave of attacks against French people.

"We strongly condemn the attack committed today inside the Notre-Dame church in Nice," a Turkish foreign ministry statement said.

It expressed solidarity with France, and offered condolences to relatives of the three people killed in the attack. — AFP

HK hits out at US over 'Made in China' label rule

Hong Kong, Oct. 30: Hong Kong authorities on Friday said they will launch proceedings at the World Trade Organisation to challenge a demand by the United States to label imports from the financial hub as "Made in China". Donald Trump issued an executive order in June declaring the city no longer sufficiently autonomous from the authoritarian mainland after Beijing launched a crackdown against democracy supporters.

The decision, which came as China imposed a sweeping new security law on the business centre, reflected Washington's belief that Hong Kong is now "just another Chinese city" and does not deserve special trade privileges.

The new rules state that products from the city — which used to be allowed to carry a "Made in Hong Kong" label — now needed to say "Made in China". On Friday, Hong Kong officials confirmed they would bring the dispute to the WTO's settlement mechanism.

"The US unilateral and irresponsible attempt to weaken Hong Kong's status as a separate customs territory is highly inappropriate," secretary for commerce Edward Yau

CHINA VOWS FOR SELF-RELIANT TECH POWER

Beijing, Oct. 30: China's leaders are vowing to make their country a self-reliant "technology power" as a feud with Washington cuts access to US computer chips and other high-tech components, hampering Beijing's industrial ambitions.

Leaders of the ruling Communist Party made the announcement on Thursday after a meeting to draft a development blueprint for the state-dominated economy over the next five years.

President Xi Jinping's government is trying to limit damage from the Trump administration's curbs on technology sales to China in a fight over security and spying. — AP

told reporters.

"Such a move also confuses the market and undermines the rules-based multilateral trading system," he added.

Hong Kong, one of the world's great trading ports, is a member of the WTO, even though it is part of China. — AFP

Several nations reimpose lockdown to curb Covid

Paris, Oct. 30: France was under a new virus lockdown on Friday, as the resurgent pandemic hit new heights in the United States with a daily record of more than 90,000 cases, just days before the presidential election.

From midnight, France's 65 million people were largely confined to their homes, needing written statements to leave, in the latest drastic measure to curb a disease that has infected more than 44.5 million people worldwide and killed nearly 1.2

million. As lockdowns return, oil prices dropped on fears of a slowdown in demand but tech giants Facebook, Amazon and Google parent Alphabet reported strong quarterly earnings, reflecting the economic shifts caused by the global outbreak.

And in the latest bleak warning, the UN's biodiversity panel said future pandemics could be more frequent, deadly and economically damaging.

The United States, where the coronavirus has over-

shadowed President Donald Trump's November 3 re-election bid, announced 91,295 new cases in 24 hours, surging past the 90,000-mark for the first time to a total of almost nine million.

In Germany, Chancellor Angela Merkel has ordered a lighter round of shutdowns from Monday, November 2, until the end of the month. Germans will not be confined to their homes but bars, cafes and restaurants must close, as well as theatres, operas and cinemas. — AFP

Trump, Biden head to face-off in midwest US

Tampa, Oct. 30: Donald Trump and Joe Biden square off with rallies in key Midwestern states on Friday as a resurgent Coronavirus further highlights their sharp differences just four days before the US presidential election.

Even with the United States reaching another daily record in new Covid-19 infections on Thursday, President Trump stuck to his strategy of downplaying its dangerousness and calling for businesses to reopen.

He has also ramped up fear-mongering, warning of rampaging "socialists" and seeking to portray his Democratic challenger as intent on shutting the country down.

Biden has sought to persuade the few remaining undecided voters that he would provide a steady hand on the wheel and heal America's "soul," calling Trump irresponsible. The former vice president has held drive-in, socially distanced rallies, while Trump's gatherings have often seen attendees ignore such guidelines and eschew masks.

The two candidates plan to be in three Midwestern states on Friday, with both campaigning in Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Trump will also travel to Michigan and Biden also plans to be in Iowa.

Trump's wins in Michigan, Wisconsin and Iowa helped propel him to victory in 2016.

But polling averages from the RealClearPolitics.com site show Biden up in all four of those states, ranging from 6.5 percentage points in Michigan to just one point in Iowa.

Still, Democrats and Republicans alike have repeatedly warned of the unreliability of polls, pointing to Trump's shock defeat of Hillary Clinton in 2016 despite surveys showing her to be the clear favorite.

Trump and Biden are concentrating their efforts on battleground states that will decide the election in the days before the November 3 polls, and on Thursday both were in the crucial state of Florida. Trump, 74, held another raucous rally in Tampa, telling the cheering crowd that Coronavirus lockdowns under Biden would banish normal life.

"They will allow you nothing," the Republican said. "We're never going to lock down again.... We're open for business," he said, telling supporters that his own recent bout with Covid-19 proved that it can be beaten. — AFP

JUDGE: FORMER CIA OFFICER SPY CASE TOO COMPLEX FOR SPEEDY TRIAL

Honolulu, Oct. 30: A case against a former CIA officer accused of spying for China is too complex for a trial to happen until at least September 2021, a judge has ruled.

Prosecutors asked the judge to declare the case complex against Alexander Yuk Ching Ma, a former CIA officer and contract linguist for the FBI. He was arrested in August after an undercover operation in which prosecutors say he accepted thousands of dollars in cash in exchange for his

past espionage activities. He told a law enforcement officer who was posing as a Chinese intelligence officer that he wanted to see the "motherland" succeed and that he was eager to resume helping China after the Coronavirus pandemic subsided, prosecutors said.

The case is "so unusual and so complex that it is unreasonable to expect adequate preparation" for a trial to happen anytime soon, said U.S. Magistrate Judge Kenneth Mansfield Thursday. — AP

NEW | STUDY Journal sequences ancient DNA of 27 dogs from 11,000 years ago

Modern dogs map to Ice Age canines

London, Oct. 30: A global study by an international team of archaeologists has found that there were five different types of dogs more than 11,000 years ago in the period immediately following the Ice Age, a discovery which sheds light on the origin of the many different lineages of humanity's best friend.

The research, published in the journal *Science*, sequenced ancient DNA from 27 dogs, some of which lived up to nearly 11,000 years ago, across Europe and Siberia. The scientists, including those from Francis Crick



DNA from modern European dogs has contributed to breeds around the world, traces of other ice age groups remain, including in chihuahuas. — AFP

Institute in the UK, found that that by this point in history, just after the Ice

Age and before any other animal had been domesticated, there were already

at least five different types of dogs with distinct genetic ancestries.

The findings suggest that the diversity observed between dogs in different parts of the world today originated when humans were still hunters and gatherers. "Some of the variation you see between dogs walking down the street today originated in the Ice Age. By the end of this period, dogs were already widespread across the northern hemisphere," said Pontus Skoglund, study co-author from Francis Crick Institute. In the study, the scien-

tists extracted and analysed the genetic material DNA from skeletal material of the dogs. The team showed that over the last 10,000 years, these early dog lineages mixed and moved to give rise to the dogs we know today. Citing an example, they said early European dogs were initially diverse, appearing to originate from two highly distinct populations, one related to Near Eastern dogs and another to Siberian dogs. However, they said this diversity was lost at some point as it is not present in European dogs today. — PTI

DECCAN Chronicle

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Don't relax yet, ward off India's 2nd wave

Notwithstanding the steady stream of good news with occasional reverses on the vaccine front, there is little on the ground for the world to breathe easy in the fight against the pandemic Covid-19. At present, 4.54 crore people have been infected the world over with 11.87 lakh deaths as on October 30. The US is leading the tally with 92.1 lakh cases and 2.34 lakh deaths, while India is in the second place with 80.9 lakh infections and 1.21 lakh deaths. The increase in daily caseload, which showed a decline in the beginning of September, has reversed the trend. The number was around three lakhs in the beginning of August and showed a softening effect throughout the month but slowly increased the next month. October 30 recorded the highest-ever daily increase of 5.45 lakh new patients worldwide. The same is the case with the number of daily deaths: it was around 7,000 in the end of July but it halved towards the end of September but the numbers have again crossed 7,000 by the end of October. Many are now suspecting a second wave of the pandemic. The number of new cases in the US is going up in a steady way, and the case is same in many European nations. Britain has imposed its toughest lockdown in many parts. France has imposed a lockdown while German chancellor Angela Merkel, who has ordered tougher measures, has warned of a "long, hard winter" this year. India has seen its ups and downs: the daily increase in the number of infections peaked in the second half of September and then showed a downward trend. They are hardening again.

Indian authorities and experts have been warning of another spike in infections once the festival season ends. The cue came from Kerala, which saw a sharp increase in the numbers after Onam and the state, which contained the virus exceptionally well when others faltered, is at present second only to Maharashtra in reporting new cases. Credit must be given to the Union government that launched Jan Andolan, a mass campaign to make people aware of the need to take precautionary measures such as wearing masks, observing social distancing and hand hygiene. However, it has not gained the traction it should have. Few people bothered about them while celebrating a festival last week and while voting in the first phase of Bihar Assembly elections.

The government may re-launch the campaign in mission mode with increased thrust on the rural areas so that the people take the easy and cheap option of keeping the virus away than the tougher, costlier and often fatal option of fighting it in their bodies. Lockdowns have been proved to have a debilitating impact on the economy and the government may keep that as the last option should the need arise. As Prime Minister Narendra Modi cautioned, the virus has not gone away. The government must keep reminding the people about that hard fact.

Pak lies on terror exposed

Pakistan stands self-condemned through the shocking boast of its federal minister Fawad Chaudhry — said to be close to Prime Minister Imran Khan — that the Pulwama terrorist attack on February 14 last year, in which 40 CRPF men were killed, was a "major achievement" of the government and the Opposition parties — meaning the people of Pakistan.

Mr Chaudhry was addressing his country's National Assembly or Parliament, and his remarks were direct and emphatic, removing any scope for backtracking as he appeared to do somewhat in a subsequent tweet. So shocking and dramatic was the statement that the Pakistan PM may wonder what his minister was up to, really.

Had he given himself the mission to undermine the PM who has lately found himself in the line of fire of an effective combine of 11 Opposition parties? Was Mr Chaudhry playing the Army's game if the latter is in the process of washing its hands of Mr Khan whom it had propped up in office two years ago? Such questions are apt to arise in Pakistan's domestic debate, but in India we ought to bear in mind that the evilness of that country's policy toward us derives from the stranglehold the Pakistani military has gained in determining policy since the Ayub coup six decades ago. The civilians make up a huge constituency of incompetents and innocents, who are manipulated at will by the Army.

It is not the Pakistani "Muslim" who is the enemy but the Army. In recent years this premise has sometimes been somewhat obscured in our thinking, and, as a by-product, the Kashmir policy too lacks clarity. The Centre misidentifies the inimical forces, targeting even those who have stood by our Constitution and flag. The broader implications of Mr Chaudhry's self-shaming admission ought to be brought before the world. In this context, raising China's all-season support to Pakistan, which has emerged as its buddy pal, is also to be questioned.

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Subhani



Battle for Bihar: Super flop or a blockbuster?

Shobhaa De

It's not the time for *hawa hawai*," declared our beloved Prime Minister as he savaged the Opposition RJD in Bihar and mocked the "yuvraj" (Tejashwi Yadav). Pandemic or no pandemic, voters in Bihar showed up in decent numbers (54 per cent) during Phase 1 of the Assembly polls — the first major election of the pandemic. I am not holding my breath for Phase 2 (November 3). I don't think too many other people are either. Diwali will soon be upon us, and it's time for some cheer! Without my favourite weekend distraction (movies at the nearest multiplex), I have been getting my giggles via OTT platforms. We are all so spoilt for choice, the head spins!

I was never a gym rat... So I happily imagined I would never turn into a "pandemic binger" — *matlab*, for the first few months of the Covid curse, I stayed away from compulsively watching any and every new show dropping on this platform and that platform. My children kept recommending all sorts of amazing series — Turkish, Korean, Spanish — but I chose books and writing over those. More fool me! Now it is a bit too late to convert, jump in and spend five straight hours feeding on tight, taut, well-scripted international/national series everybody is raving over, but I do what hoarders of precious things frequently attempt — I save up my free hours for the weekend and catch one or two of the latest releases that have caught my fancy. Even though *Serious Men* is nearly a month old, I only managed to watch it earlier this week — and I was hooked from the opening scene itself. Since I hadn't read Manu

Joseph's brilliant and multi-layered book, on which the series is based, my mind was unprejudiced and receptive. In any case, I watch just about anything featuring Nawazuddin Siddiqui, and the dialogue delivered in the trailer had me begging for more. Once I started, I got into it fully, more because the city of Mumbai itself was Ayyan Mani's (Nawazuddin's character) co-star! There is something very specific and particular about life in Mumbai's chawls. And director Sudhir Mishra captures the tiny and untidy moments through camera work that is intimate but never intrusive. The script is economical and revelatory without being over-reaching or obvious. Apart from Nawazuddin with his controlled rage, disillusionment, anguish and impatience with his lot, the series is enriched by the presence of a marvelous little chap, Aakshath Das, playing Adi Mani, Ayyan's hearing-challenged son, with total transparency. It is a very tough role for a kid to pull off convincingly, since the dialogues are "constructed" (watch... and find out), but the line this kid hurls arrogantly at pompous adults — "Primitive minds: I can't deal you!" — was just brilliant! His clever and ambitious father has tutored Adi to spit out that scathing sentence at those asking him tough questions to establish his "boy genius" credentials. When he is stumped for an answer, Adi throws this well-rehearsed insult at them and stomps off angrily! It is also the line that ends the series on a very poignant note, on a deserted beach. *Serious Men* is a scathing commentary on caste politics, dishonesty and corruption.

As Mumbai struggles to get back on its feet, with more and more "relaxations", especially when it comes to leisure and entertainment activities (restaurants, gyms, bars, movie theatres gradually opening), I am wondering whether the pandemic has completely changed the way in which we seek a bit of fun and camaraderie. Movies have always been up there as the number one stress busters. We used to spend crazy amounts on weekend movie outings at plush multiplexes. We took the trouble to dress up and make a real occasion out of it. The entire "experience" was enjoyable, including watching a film on a big screen, particularly with other people. It didn't matter that the cinema hall was filled with strangers. The theatre experience itself was a collective one — shared emotions bound strangers together for a few short hours. That comfortable habit has been convincingly broken. Watching movies or a favourite series in the privacy of your home has become a highly personalised and transformative act. We watch at our convenience, often relaxing on a comfy bed and munching micro-oven popcorn. There is no interval to break the spell, plus, it is we who possess the power to walk away, do something else, and come back nonchalantly, after an hour or so. Just the convenience of being able to pick up where one had left off has made a lot of diehard movie fans rejig their entertainment preferences — and from the look of it, web series are winning this round.

Acting opportunities across OTT platforms are creating their own star system, which is far more organic and genuine than the manipulations of mainstream Bollywood

Personally speaking, I doubt I will be foolish enough to book tickets at a multiplex to watch a big-ticket film — regardless of the star cast. I am a little bratty now and have grown accustomed to calibrating and curating my entertainment hours as per my convenience. I enjoyed *Emily in Paris* over three nights of carefully measured watching... savouring every tiny glimpse of the most gorgeous, most glamorous city on earth. That holds true for another French import *Call my Agent*, shot in Gay Paree (ummmm — pun intended). It features throw-away lines like "Fragility is an actor's strength". Rebecca was a huge let down, as was *A Suitable Boy*. But the Korean *Crashlanding* made up for those wasted hours. I am looking forward to *Scam 1992*, the Harshad Mehta story that has received great reviews and made an overnight star out of Pratik Gandhi.

These acting opportunities across OTT platforms are creating their own star system, which is far more organic and genuine than the manipulations of mainstream Bollywood. I wonder how many cine-goers will want to pay a packet to watch those tired, overexposed veterans still clinging on to their ancient superstar images. There are any number of competent, credible "non-star" actors delivering big time in one hit show after another. They have created their own fan following and niche. The best thing about watching your favourite shows from home? No masks! It feels great to just breathe minus discomfort and watch a frisky fashionista — Lily Collins as Emily — taking on the snooty French and winning the war!

It's time for "Battle cry Bihar"! And this stellar star cast can take the pants off just about any actor from Bollywood.

Readers can send feedback to www.shobhaade.blogspot.com

LETTERS

MISGUIDED JIHAD

Contrary to what Islam actually teaches, some misguided men are waging a violent 'Jihad' and tarnishing the image of the entire Muslim community. The recent happenings in France, Sweden and elsewhere point to the rise of one of the worst phases of Islamic Jihad. Watching the beligerence of a section of Muslims is shocking non-Muslims. Muslim countries must respond positively and create a communally harmonious atmosphere so that peace is restored for all human beings to live amicably.

Govardhana Myneedu
Vijayawada

SCHOOL REOPENING

Finally, the government has decided to reopen all educational institutions (*DC, Oct. 30*). However, fearing infection, it may take longer to put the system in place. Apart from adhering to protocols, authorities need to devise confidence building measures.

Dr C. Ghanshyam
Visakhapatnam

REGRET

We deeply regret if the comments in our recent editorial on the actions of the President of France, in the context of certain acts of violence in that country, have inadvertently hurt the sentiments of any of our readers. It was never our intention to offend our readers or anyone else.

Editor

50 YEARS AGO IN

DECCAN

Chronicle

Modified Soviet maps satisfy India

NEW DELHI, October 30

Recent Soviet maps, which showed modification of the earlier maps, were satisfactory for India, a spokesman of the External Affairs Ministry said.

Commenting on foreign secretary T.N. Kaul's talks in Moscow during the last two days the spokesman said that the new maps shown to Mr Kaul during his discussions with Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Nikolai Firubin had Jammu and Kashmir, except for Aksai Chin, being shown as being fully inside India.

Farrukh Dhondy
Cabbages & Kings



"The older proverbs are the best, Repeat them Bachchoo and leave the rest: 'The Higher the monkey climb The more him parts expose.' And 'Odours change with time Don't sniff the festering rose' And 'Beware the actor who can't tell The pitiful human from the pose'" — From **One Day Martyr Rum** by Bachchoo

Communist MP in Britain was Tata's cousin, Gandhi's friend

Idle thoughts in a supposedly idle season. I access my mobile phone more times a day than I used to before the plague of Covid restricted my visits to people and places, including the mother country in which the Ganga flows. But, gentle reader, even so, I have not succumbed to the temptations of Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, TikTok or other "time-pass" forums and platforms and don't want anyone to know what I ate for breakfast and neither do I wish to pass on to the rest of humanity some video I may have chanced on, or some witticism which has gone "viral". (By the way, isn't this description of popularity a bit

ironic since Covid-19 has invaded all humanity?)

No, no, I am not humourless, but get that way when 20 different people send me a video in which a Chinese-looking youth working at a table hears the standard ring-tone of a mobile telephone and looks around to answer it when he sees that it's his cat seated next to him playing the tune with sticks on a xylophone. Funny the first time and raised a tolerant smile the second, but then...

So, what do I do instead? I cook dishes I find in the cookbooks that have laid on the shelves for years and even download recipes for honey-and-tamarind-marinated pork ribs (apologies to my Muslim, Jewish, vegetarian, vegan and squeamish readers!). And I scribble, as writers must — except I have taken to wondering whether fingering a computer should retain the same metaphor for modest writing as in the era of the fountain pen.

And as everyone does, I read. The latest literary phase has been books and essays on Indians who brought back to India something they had picked up from their sojourns in

the West. The list of such characters includes Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Vivekananda, Dadabhai Naoroji, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr Ambedkar and so, so many more. The latest book, which I am still reading, is a biography of Shapur Saklatvala, who doesn't quite fit the category because he never returned to India after serving twice in the UK parliament as a communist MP from North Battersea in the early 1920s and then again in the late years of that decade.

The book is called *Comrade Sak* and is written by Mark Wadsworth, a black British writer with Caribbean roots. Before I say that this is an essential book which traces the life, convictions and career of this communist Parsi, a cousin of the Tata family, I ought to declare an interest. Or even a couple. Mark, the writer, is a friend and Comrade Sak, Shapur, was a "cousin-brother", as we joint-family-Parsis used to say, of my great grandfather Jamshed Saklatvala. Not that either fact affects my reading or evaluation of the biography which traces not only his life and career but appends his speeches

and his copious correspondence with Mahatma Gandhi about the organisation and representation of Indian workers. Sak was in favour of their unionisation and his ideological insistence led him to support anti-capitalist communism. Gandhi, in very interesting letters in reply, asserted at length that workers and capital could and should live together. He quotes with approval the stance of the Tata capitalists and their supportive benevolence towards their workforce.

I have said above that the factors which may bias my reading don't, but perhaps a few pages of the book do resonate in a personal way. Jamshed Saklatvala, my great grandfather, went to work on the setting up of the steel plant in Jamshedpur, helping the Tata cousins with the survey of the land etc. At the time the Saklatvalas and Tatas were partners in this pioneering capitalist venture.

The Saklatvalas didn't get their name, as I discovered, from some village called 'Saklat' in Gujarat. The surname of my ancestors comes from the fact that they owned mills which turned Bengali

jute into sack cloth which was used for making ships' sails and storage sacks — hence 'sack cloth *wala*'! And where then did those mills go? Or did the discovery of plastic sacks and the end of sails for ships ruin the trade my ancestors lived off, leaving at least one of us selling words to worthy newspapers and discerning publishers?

Mark's book tells me that Jamshed Saklatvala's private papers emphatically allege that the Saklatvalas were in some sense, through devious means, short-changed or done out of their fortune and partnership by one of the heirs and descendants of the founding capitalist J.R. Tata.

If that is true, just as after the Black Lives Matter explosion, sections of the population of the USA and even of Britain are claiming reparations, perhaps I should, on behalf of the Dhondys and the Saklatvalas claim reparations from the Tata industrial empire. I suppose I would settle for the more profitable branches of the Jaguar and Landrover manufacturing plants and perhaps throw in a small claim on Tata-Tetley tea. Watch this space!

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	40522.10	0.94
Nifty 50	11889.40	1.03
S&P 500*	00	0.00
Dollar (₹)	73.71	0.20
Pound Sterling (₹)	95.88	0.26
Euro (₹)	87.00	0.31
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	50,853▼77	0.15
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	00	0.00
IN 10-Yr bond yield	00	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	00	0.00

Tencent Games ends access for Indian Pubg users

Tencent Games on Friday said it is terminating all services and access for Pubg Mobile users in India to comply with the government order last month. On September 2, India had banned 118 mobile apps with Chinese links, including popular game Pubg Mobile, citing data privacy concerns and a threat to national security. This took the total count of Chinese-linked mobile apps banned by India to 224.

BPCL puts Bina refinery expansion proposal on hold



BPCL has put on hold its plans to expand its Bina refinery and install a secondary unit at its Mumbai refinery to boost efficiency pending privatisation of the company, N. Vijayagopal said. The Central government wants to sell its 53.29% stake in BPCL to raise funds to rein in a ballooning fiscal deficit. "It is for the new owner to decide whether they want and have the flexibility to add refining capacity," Vijayagopal said.

Vodafone Idea shares jump 5% after Q2 earnings

Shares of Vodafone Idea on Friday gained nearly 5 per cent after the company reported significant narrowing of losses to about ₹7,218 crore for the September quarter. The stock rose 4.42 per cent to close at Rs 8.75 on the BSE. During the day, it gained 6.44 per cent to ₹8.92. On the NSE, it jumped 4.79 per cent to close at ₹8.75. In traded volume terms, 939.19 lakh shares were traded at the BSE and 41.75 crore units on the NSE during the day.

IndusInd Bank profit dips over 53% to ₹647cr

IndusInd Bank on Friday reported over 53 per cent decline in its standalone net profit at ₹647.04 crore in the Q2FY2021. The bank had posted a net profit of ₹1,383.37 crore in the year-ago period. On the standalone basis, total income fell to ₹8,731.05 crore in the second quarter of the current financial year. In the same period a year ago, it stood at ₹8,877.02 crore, IndusInd Bank said.



Jio's user base hits 406 m, largest ever outside China

Jio's robust growth offset's Reliance's poor refinery business

New Delhi, Oct. 30: Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd on Friday reported a 15 per cent drop in second quarter net profit after the pandemic-hit oil demand dragged down continued good showing in consumer-facing businesses such as telecom. Consolidated net profit attributable to owners at ₹9,567 crore in July-September compared with ₹11,262 crore a year back, Reliance said in a stock exchange filing.

A plunge in fuel demand after the raging pandemic forced people to stay home and stifled the economy dealt a body blow to the firm's traditional cash cow oil refining and petrochemicals, even as consumer-facing businesses, which account for 35 per cent of the oil-to-telecom-to-retail conglomerate's revenues, continued to do well.

Its digital services, which includes the telecom arm Jio, saw stand-



alone net profit swell to ₹2,844 crore in the second quarter of current fiscal (April 2020 to March 2021) from ₹990 crore a year back.

In an investor presentation, the company said the total customer base stood at 405.6 million of September 2020, making it the first operator outside China to surpass 400 million subscribers in a single country market.

Net addition of 7.3 million subscribers and per-user revenue rising to ₹145 helped the telecom business soar.

The gradually 'unlock' that has seen markets and

malls reopen helped the company's retail business recover with almost flat revenue and a 14 per cent lower EBITDA of ₹2,009 crore. Reliance said 85 per cent of its retail stores were open as of second quarter. It added 232 stores to take the total to 11,931 stores. Ambani raised an unprecedented ₹2.5 lakh crore since April from sale of stake in the digital and retail units and a rights issue. Of this, over ₹1.76 lakh crore has already flowed into the company, helping it achieve net zero debt status.

Petrochemicals revenue fell 23 per cent to ₹29,665

crore and pre-tax profit dropped 33 per cent at ₹5,964 crore. Refining EBITA almost halved to ₹3,002 crore as revenue slumped 36 per cent.

The firm's twin refineries earned \$5.7 per barrel on turning every barrel of crude oil into fuel, as compared to a gross refining margin (GRM) of \$9.4 per barrel last year. The profit in Q2 was lower sequentially as well as the April-June earning of ₹13,248 crore included one-time gain of ₹7,629 crore from sale of 49 per cent stake in petro retailing business to BP. Investors such as Facebook, Google and global private equity funds have picked up a cumulative 32.96 per cent stake in Jio Platforms for ₹1.52 lakh crore.

All the deals, except Google, have been completed, bringing ₹1.18 lakh crore into the company.

Another ₹37,710 crore was raised from the sale of an 8.48 per cent stake in its retail unit.

Indian Oil posts 11-fold rise in profit

New Delhi, Oct. 30: India's top oil firm IOC on Friday reported an 11-fold jump in its standalone net profit to ₹6,227.31 crore for the September 2020 quarter, on the back of a boost in refining margins and inventory gain on using low-priced crude oil for making fuels. The net profit stands at ₹6.78 per share.

The company had reported a net profit of ₹563.42 crore in the corresponding period a year ago, Indian Oil Chairman Shrikant Vaidya said.

"The profit was up due to higher inventory and foreign exchange gains and better refinery margins," he said.

The company earned \$8.62 on turning every bar-

rel of crude oil into fuel in the second quarter of the current financial year 2020-21, compared with a gross refining margin of \$1.28 in July-September 2019. IOC gained ₹7,400 crore on using low-priced crude oil it procured during May and June to convert into petroleum products in Q2. This inventory gain compared to an

inventory loss of ₹1,807 crore in Q2 of the 2019-20 fiscal.

Inventory gain is booked when a company buys raw material at a particular price but by the time it is turned into fuel, the rates have gone up. Since retail pump prices are benchmarked at prevailing global rates, an inventory gain is booked.

Vasavi's biggest luxury project



Business NOTE

Ashok Kumar Vir, chairman of Kaalamanns Group, unveils the logo of the prestigious project "Vistara Luxury Living" along with Yerram Vijay Kumar, the chairman and MD of Vasavi Group. Vistara Luxury Living is one of the biggest premium residential project in Hyderabad, which includes five Premium Towers of 32 floors each at Hitec City.

BSE to seek Sebi views on Future deal with RIL

Mumbai, Oct. 30: India's Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) will consult the market regulator, Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) and seek clarifications from Future Retail and Reliance Industries about their \$3.4 billion transaction, following Amazon's objection to the deal, a source said.

Amazon on October 25 won an injunction from a Singapore arbitrator to halt Future's deal to sell retail assets to Reliance, arguing the Indian retailer group breached certain contract provisions it entered into last year in a separate deal with the US firm. Both Indian firms reacted to the decision by saying they want to complete the deal "without any delay". Amazon has now written to capital markets regulator Sebi, as well as the BSE and the National Stock Exchange (NSE), to put the deal on hold in light of the arbitration order, two separate sources said.

A BSE source said it will consult Sebi about its

stance on the deal and the exchange later on Friday also plans to seek clarification from Future and Reliance Retail.

The Indian regulator and the stock exchanges did not respond to requests for comment.

Amazon declined comment, while Future and Reliance did not immediately respond. The dispute centres around Future Group's decision in August to sell its retail, wholesale and some other businesses to Reliance for \$3.38 billion, including debt.

Amazon argues that a 2019 deal it had with a Future unit had clauses saying the Indian group couldn't sell its retail assets to anyone on a "restricted persons" list including any firms from Reliance chairman Mukesh Ambani's group.

Amazon has shared a copy of the Singapore arbitrator's interim order with Sebi and the two stock exchanges, hoping they would step in to stall the approval, the second source said. — Reuters

Triumph Trident 660's India launch next year

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, OCT. 30

British premium motorcycle maker Triumph on Friday unveiled globally its upcoming entry-level, sport naked, the Triumph Trident Roadster.

The new adventure tourer bike will be the most inexpensive Triumph on sale and will bring the brand to a wider spectrum of prospective buyers in India.

The Triumph Trident Roadster equipped with a 660cc triple-cylinder motor will produce 81HP and 64Nm of torque.

The new bike, which would be launched in India next year, is expected to be priced around Rs 7.50 lakh.

The new bike comes with a 6-speed gearbox and can also be optioned with an up and down quickshifter.

The Trident 660 bike gets an impressive service interval of 16,000 km.

"What we wanted with the new Trident 660 was to give the riders in this really exciting middleweight roadster world all of the things they want from



their bike, with a genuine set of real advantages that set a new benchmark for choice," Steve Sargent, Chief Product Officer at Triumph Motorcycles.

"From the competitive price, to the triple power and performance, plus the benefits of class-leading handling and technology, we believe the Trident 660 is a real milestone in the category, and introduces the Triumph brand and the advantages of a triple engine to a whole new generation of riders across the world," He boasted.

The Trident will get a class-leading electronics package, including Road and Rain riding modes, switchable traction control (integrated into the riding modes), ride by wire throttle and an all-new multi-functional instruments with colour TFT display, with Accessory fit "My Triumph" Connectivity System and all-LED lighting and ABS.

Once launched in India later this year the Triumph Trident will be the most inexpensive bike competing against Kawasaki Z650 bike.

India's forex kitty touches all-time high of ₹560 b

Mumbai, Oct. 30: The country's foreign exchange reserves swelled by \$5.412 billion to touch an all-time high of \$560.532 billion in the week ended October 23, RBI data showed on Friday.

In the previous week ended October 16, the reserves stood at \$555.12 billion after increasing by \$3.615 billion.

During the reporting week, the surge in the forex kitty was mainly on account of an increase in foreign currency assets (FCA), a major component of the overall reserves.

FCA rose by \$5.202 billion to \$517.524 billion, the RBI's weekly data showed.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect

● IN THE previous week ended October 16, the reserves stood at \$555.12 billion after increasing by \$3.615 billion.

of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

The gold reserves were up by \$175 million in the reporting week to \$36.860 billion, as per the central bank data. The special drawing rights with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) rose by \$8 million to \$1.487 billion.

The country's reserve position with the IMF also climbed by \$27 million to \$4.661 billion during the reporting week, the data showed. — PTI

Gold ETFs log ₹2.4K cr inflow in Sept. quarter

New Delhi, Oct. 30: Gold exchange-traded funds (ETFs) saw staggering net inflows of over ₹2,400 crore in the three months ended September 30, as investors continued to hedge their exposure to riskier assets due to higher economic uncertainty resulting from Covid-19.

In comparison, investors had infused ₹172 crore in this asset class in July-September 2019, according to the data available with the Association of Mutual Funds in India. The category has been among the better-perform-

ing ones so far this year and received a net inflow of ₹5,957 crore.

As per the data, a net sum of ₹2,426 crore was pumped into gold-linked ETFs till September 30.

Divam Sharma, co-founder, Green Portfolio, said returns generated by gold ETFs over the last one year have increased number of investors buying the asset.

"Gold investment picked up due to higher economic uncertainty resulting from COVID-19 pandemic," said Harsh Jain of Groww. — PTI

Laurus plans to boost capacity

Mumbai, Oct. 30: Indian pharmaceutical company Laurus Labs Ltd. plans to spend as much as 15 billion rupees (\$202 million) over the next 24 months to expand its production capacity, according to its chief executive officer. "We have a good visibility of orders going forward and this large capital outlay will help us meet the needs of the customers," Satyanarayana Chava, also the company's founder, said in a phone interview Thursday after it reported second-quarter profit that rose more than fourfold from a year earlier to 2.43 billion rupees.

The pharmaceutical sector is the top performer in India's \$2.1 trillion equity market this year after the coronavirus pandemic turned global investors' spotlight on health-care companies. Laurus, which supplies ingredients used in antiretrovirals to treat HIV, has seen its stock surge 350 per cent so far in 2020, the second-biggest gain on BSE Healthcare Index, which is up 44 per cent. The capital expenditure will help to double capacity for its formula-

COVID PANDEMIC HITS INVESTOR PERCEPTION OF INDIA: SURVEY

SANGEETHA G. CHENNAI, OCT. 30

Among the emerging nations, India seems to be the worst affected by the Covid-19 pandemic as the strength of the economy has deteriorated the most in India in the first half of 2020, finds a study.

The Investors' Macro Ratings Index, which looks at investors' perception of the economy based on parameters like real GDP growth, inflation, fiscal deficit and bank credit, has deteriorated in all the emerging economies, as per a report by Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

However, India was the most affected in the first half and Taiwan was the least affected.

The study examined macro-economic parameters in emerging economies like India, Brazil, China, Indonesia, South Korea, Malaysia, Russia, South Africa, Taiwan and Thailand.

As per International Monetary Funds' projection, India's real GDP growth is expected to contract 10.3 per cent in 2020, which is the highest contraction among the 10 emerging markets. India is also the only economy with a double-digit contraction. On the other hand, China is expected to see 1.9 per cent growth, the highest among all of them. At 4.9 per cent retail inflation in 2020 will be the highest in India.

tion business and also raise the capacity for its active pharma ingredient, or API, business by 50 per cent, Chava said. Funds will also be used to create a research and development facility and a new unit for contract development and manufacturing.

"It's not a flash in the pan but a more structural change for this company," said Sapna Jhavar, an analyst at Dolat Capital Market Ltd.

Laurus Labs is a global supplier of antiretroviral APIs and intermediates. Oncology is one of its core areas in the segment and it plans to expand its portfolio by focusing on molecules in diabetes, ophthalmology, and cardiovascular therapy. The finished dosage segment is involved in developing and manufacturing oral solid formulations for low and middle income countries, North America and European Union markets. "We have to now move from one orbit to the other, get leadership in products and expand into new geographies," he said. — Bloomberg

MEGA LISTING

Ant's dual listing to raise \$34.4b, dwarfing Saudi Aramco's listing

Ant's IPO sees \$3 trillion in retail demand

Hong Kong, Oct. 30: Retail investors placed bids for a record \$3 trillion (2.3 trillion pounds) of shares in Ant Group Co Ltd's initial public offering (IPO), set to be the world's biggest, as mom-and-pop savers bet on demand for its financial services in China.

Ant's dual listing is set to raise about \$34.4 billion, split fairly evenly between Shanghai's STAR Market and Hong Kong, topping Saudi Aramco's \$29.4 billion listing last December.

Investors, both retail and institutional, are rushing to buy into Ant, which operates China's biggest payments platform and other financial services, despite risks of greater scrutiny at home and abroad.

The Shanghai leg of the IPO drew about 19 trillion yuan (2.2 trillion pounds) of bids from retail investors, or 872 times the number of shares earmarked for them, a company filing to the stock exchange showed on Thursday.

The Hong Kong tranche got HK\$1.3 trillion (128.7 billion pounds) in bids, or 389 times the shares on offer, said people with knowledge of the matter on Friday, declining to be identified as the information is not public yet.

The bookbuilding for the Hong Kong leg of the IPO of Ant, backed by e-commerce behemoth Alibaba, ran from Monday to Friday, while books for the Shanghai leg were open for one day on Thursday. The \$3 trillion of retail



investor bids, equivalent to the gross domestic product of the United Kingdom, comes against the backdrop of shaky global markets ahead of next week's U.S. presidential election and a dour global economic outlook.

Investors in the IPO, however, have brushed aside company-specific and broader market con-

cerns on hopes that Ant will continue to benefit from the rapid digitization of financial services in China.

Harrison Chan, a 25-year-old financial professional in Hong Kong, spent 40% of his monthly income on applying for Ant shares, and is now wondering whether he will get any, given the

large number of bids made. "I am confident in the company's future prospect because it is involved in many different businesses ... and they are all online services, which is the direction the world would be heading to, so I think its potential is huge," Chan said.

Starting as a payments processor in 2004, Ant has built an empire in China by offering its users short-term loans that are credited within minutes, and selling insurance and investment products.

The unprecedented retail frenzy for Ant shares is backed by massive amount of margin lending by financial institutions, with brokerages in Hong Kong lending billions. — Reuters

SHORT TAKES

Mike Tyson back in the boxing ring

Los Angeles: Mike Tyson and Roy Jones Jr. insisted Thursday they are preparing for a bruising battle when the two fifty-something fighters face each other in an eight-round exhibition bout in Los Angeles.

Former world heavyweight champion Tyson, 54, will be fighting for the first time in 15 years when he meets four-division world champion Jones, 51, at the Staples Center on November 28. While the California State Athletic Commission-sanctioned event has been dismissed as a "circus act" in some quarters, Tyson and Jones bristled at criticism the pay-per-view fight would not be a legitimate contest.

"Not a real fight? It's Mike Tyson versus Roy Jones. I'm coming to fight and I hope he's coming to fight and that's all you need to know," Tyson told a virtual press conference. Jones, whose last fight came in 2018 with a unanimous decision over cruiserweight Scott Sigmon, also rejected the fight's exhibition tag, while describing himself and Tyson as "freaks". — *AFP*

Boxers Kavinder, Sanjeet in finals

New Delhi: Indian boxers Kavinder Singh Bisht (57kg) and Sanjeet (91kg) advanced to the finals of the Alexis Vastine International Tournament in Nantes, France after clinching contrasting victories.

However, four-time Asian medallist Shiva Thapa (63kg) settled for a bronze after going down in his semifinal clash. He lost to local favourite Lounes Hamraoui in a 2-1 decision on Thursday. Kavinder defeated Frenchman Benik George Melkumian 3-0 to set up a summit clash against another local hope Samuel Kistohurry. Sanjeet, a gold-medallist from the India Open, got the better of American Sherrod Fulghim in a 2-1 verdict. Sanjeet will also be up against a French opponent, Soheib Bouafia in the final. Amit Panghal (52kg) is also through to the finals after beating American Christopher Herrera in a draw that only featured four boxers. — *PTI*

Taylor ton in vain as Zim go down

Rawalpindi, Pakistan: Pakistan overcame Brendan Taylor's century through fast bowler Shaheen Afridi's 5-49 to record a 26-run victory in the first one-day international against Zimbabwe on Friday.

The match also marked the beginning of both nations' 2023 World Cup qualification campaigns. Taylor's 112 off 117 balls ended in a losing cause as Zimbabwe was bowled out for 255 in 49.4 overs. Afridi was supported by Wahab Riaz, who claimed 4-41.

For Pakistan Haris Sohail (71) and Imam-ul-Haq (58) struck half centuries in their team's total of 281-8. — *AP*
Brief scores: Pakistan 281/8 in 50 overs (Imam-ul-Haq 58, Haris Sohail 71; B. Muzarabani 2/39) bt Zimbabwe 255 in 49.4 overs (Brendan Taylor 112, W. Madhevere 55; Shaheen Afridi 5/49, Wahab Riaz 4/41).

Live on TV

CRICKET

IPL: Delhi Capitals vs Mumbai Indians from 3.30 pm; Royal Challengers Bangalore vs Sunrisers Hyderabad from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

Women's Big Bash League: Brisbane Heat vs Hobart Hurricanes from 10.10 am; Sydney Sixers vs Melbourne Stars from 1.35 pm; Sydney Thunder vs Brisbane Heat from 4.50 am (Sunday) on Sony Six

FORMULA ONE

Imola Grand Prix: Practice 1 from 4.25 pm on Star Sports Select 2; Qualifying from 6.25 pm on Star Sports 2 HD, Star Sports 3

FOOTBALL

English Premier League: Sheffield United vs Manchester City from 6 pm; Burney vs Chelsea from 8.30 pm; Liverpool vs West Ham United from 11 pm on Star Sports Select 2

Italian League: Crotone vs Atalanta from 7.30 pm; Inter Milan vs Parma from 10.30 pm on Sony Ten 2; Bologna vs Cagliari from 1.15 am (Sunday) on Sony Six

UFC FIGHT NIGHT

Uriah Hall vs Anderson Silva and other bouts from 4.30 am (Sunday) on Sony Ten 2

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BIG BEN STROKES

Stokes, Sanju help Royals snap Kings' win streak

Abu Dhabi, Oct. 30: Rajasthan Royals beat Kings XI Punjab by seven wickets in a crucial IPL match here on Friday.

Sent in to bat, Chris Gayle smashed a 63-ball 99, while K. L. Rahul hit 46 off 41 as KXIP posted 185 for 4 against RR.

However, Ben Stokes' 26-ball 50 and Sanju Samson's 25-ball 48 helped the Royals chase down the total in 17.3 overs.

Earlier, Gayle and Rahul (46) took the RR bowlers to the cleaners, stitching 120 runs for the second wicket in 13.4 overs to help KXIP post a challenging total after being put in to bat.

Nicholas Pooran played a late cameo of 22 off just 10 deliveries with the help of three sixes.

Gayle, who had four boundaries and eight sixes in his explosive innings, was out just two balls before the end of the innings and he showed his disappointment of missing out on a hundred by throwing down his bat.

During his knock, Gayle took his tally of sixes to 1001 in his glittering T20 career.

KXIP lost their first wicket in the opening over itself when Mandeep Singh got dismissed for a first-ball duck with Ben Stokes taking a brilliant diving catch off an equally superb delivery by Archer.

But Gayle and Rahul maintained a high scoring rate, reaching 53 for 1 at the end of powerplay. The self-styled 'Universe Boss' smacked two fours and six in consecutive deliveries off pacer Kartik Tyagi. Gayle reached his third fifty in six matches in this IPL in style, hitting a six off Rahul Tewatia in the 11th over as KXIP cruised along to reach the 100-run mark in the 13th over.

— *PTI*



Ben Stokes of Rajasthan Royals plays a shot against Kings XI Punjab during their Indian Premier League match at Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi on Friday. — *BCCI*

SCORECARD

Kings XI Punjab: K. L. Rahul c Rahul Tewatia b Ben Stokes 46, Mandeep Singh c Ben Stokes b Jofra Archer 0, Chris Gayle b Jofra Archer 99, Nicholas Pooran c Rahul Tewatia b Ben Stokes 22, Glenn Maxwell not out 6, Deepak Hooda not out 1. Extras (LB-1, W-8, NB-2) 11. **Total (for 4 wickets in 20 overs) 185.** **FOW:** 1-1, 2-121, 3-162, 4-184.

Bowling: Jofra Archer 4-0-26-2, Varun Aaron 4-0-47-0, Kartik Tyagi 4-0-47-0, Shreyas Gopal 1-0-10-0, Ben Stokes 4-0-32-2, Rahul Tewatia 3-0-22-0.

Rajasthan Royals: Robin Uthappa c Nicholas Pooran b Murugan Ashwin 30, Ben Stokes c Deepak Hooda b Chris Jordan 50, Sanju Samson run out 48, Steve Smith not out 31, Jos Buttler not out 22.

Extras (LB-1, W-1) 2. **Total (for 3 wickets in 17.3 overs) 186.** **FOW:** 1-60, 2-111, 3-145.

Bowlers: Arshdeep Singh 3-0-34-0, Mohammed Shami 3-0-36-0, Murugan Ashwin 4-0-43-1, Chris Jordan 3.3-0-44-1, Ravi Bishnoi 4-0-27-0.

IPL POINTS TABLE

Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
Mumbai Indians	12	8	4	0	16	+1.186
Royal Challengers Bangalore	12	7	5	0	14	+0.048
Delhi Capitals	12	7	5	0	14	+0.030
Kings XI Punjab	13	6	7	0	12	-0.133
Rajasthan Royals	13	6	7	0	12	-0.377
Kolkata Knight Riders	13	6	7	0	12	-0.467
Sunrisers Hyderabad	12	5	7	0	10	+0.396
Chennai Super Kings	13	5	8	0	10	-0.532

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

Ruturaj one of the most talented players: Dhoni

Dubai, Oct. 30: A 'reticent' Ruturaj Gaikwad took some time to make a mark in the ongoing IPL but he has managed to impress his CSK skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who believes that the young opener is "one of the most talented players going around".

Gaekwad scored his second straight half-century on Thursday to set up a six-wicket win over Kolkata Knight Riders here. He got his chance after Chennai Super Kings decided to field untested players following a disastrous start to the season. "The changes are a conscious effort. We want to give games to people who haven't played and we need them to grab those opportunities. Ruturaj we'd seen



Ruturaj Gaikwad

him in the nets, but then he got Covid positive and took 20 days. Unfortunately but he'll remember this season," said Dhoni at the post-match presentation.

"He's one of the most talented players going around. What makes it difficult is he's not somebody who speaks a lot, so

sometimes it becomes difficult for the management to gauge a player."

Gaekwad, who had tested Covid-19 positive in the lead up to the tournament, has all the shots and his style of play is pleasing to the eye.

Things did not look bright for the 23-year-old after he failed in his first three innings (0, 5, 0).

"Once he started going in the innings, you could see that he was hitting the ball the way he wants to and he was planning. When we made him play the first game, he got out, stepped out.

"It becomes difficult to tell whether it was the pressure that made him step out or whether that's his natural game. One ball isn't enough," Dhoni further added.

— *PTI*

Good start is the key, says Quinton

Dubai, Oct. 30: Mumbai Indians opener Quinton De Kock says having an experienced and strong middle-order is always a plus for any team but it does not make the job of the openers easy since they are responsible for team's good starts.

MI have a strong middle order with the likes of Suryakumar Yadav, Hardik Pandya, Kieron Pollard and Krunal Pandya in the ranks.

Asked whether an experienced middle-order helps him to be aggressive, De Kock said, "Having an experienced middle order, just in general helps out in any situation. I wouldn't say it changes our mind-set up front. We always try and look to get off to the best start possible, whether they're there or not."

"Obviously knowing that



Quinton de Kock

they are behind you, the likes of SKY (Surya), Polly (Pollard), Hardik (Pandya), when you are out there, you just bat to the situation and if you're still lucky enough to be out there batting with them, it's just important you end up giving them strike because they're the bigger strikers of the ball, so yeah," Kock further added.

— *PTI*

SRH lock horns with Virat & Co

Sharjah, Oct. 30: An IPL Play-offs spot at stake, Royal Challengers Bangalore need to shrug off the disappointment of two back-to-back defeats and put up a strong challenge against strong-willed Sunrisers Hyderabad when the two teams clash, here on Saturday.

But it would be easier said than done since SRH are brimming with confidence after their crushing win over Delhi Capitals.

Going by current standings, RCB are better-placed at number two and they need to win one of their remaining two games — against SRH or DC — to make the cut.

And even if RCB lose both their matches and stay on 14 points, they can still qualify. But for that they need favourable results from other games.

RCB can ill afford to lose both their last two games as it will affect their NRR, resulting in their elimination if other teams on 14 points have higher run rates.

SRH, on the other hand, have nothing to lose. Sitting on the sixth spot with 10 points from 12 games, the Hyderabad outfit need to win their remaining two matches — against RCB and MI — to reach 14 points to stay in the reckoning.

Just winning both the games might not be enough for SRH. They would be hoping that at least one out of RCB, DC (14 points) and Kings XI Punjab (12 points) don't reach the magic fig-

NUMBERS GAME

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL:
● Matches: 15
● Hyderabad: 7
● Bangalore: 7
● Tied: 1 (Sunrisers Hyderabad won in super over after match ended in a tie)

MEETING IN 2019

● Sunrisers Hyderabad defeated Royal Challengers Bangalore by 118 runs at Hyderabad
● Royal Challengers Bangalore beat Sunrisers Hyderabad by 4 wickets at Bangalore

MEETING IN 2020

● Royal Challengers Bangalore beat Sunrisers Hyderabad by 10 runs at Dubai

FOR THE RECORD

● Virat Kohli who smashed 296 sixes in 278 innings of 293 matches, needs four sixes to become fourth Indians and 24th batsman overall to complete a triple century of sixes in Twenty-20 cricket.
● Manish Pandey who scored 982 runs in 36 innings of 59 matches, needs 18 runs to become fourth batsman to score 1000 runs for Sunrisers Hyderabad in IPL.

— *S. PERVEZ QAISER*

ure of 16.

If that happens, SRH will progress to the play-offs because of a superior NRR than all the teams which can finish on 14 points.

RCB need to regroup as their confidence definitely took a beating after crushing defeats at the hands of MI and CSK.

— *PTI*

Mumbai, Delhi to meet in a big bout

Dubai, Oct. 30: Their play-off berth secured, defending champions Mumbai Indians would look to add to the woes of Delhi Capitals, who are on a three-match losing streak, and consolidate their position at the top when the two teams face each other in their penultimate IPL league game here on Saturday.

CSK six-wicket win over Kolkata Knight Riders on Thursday sealed MI's play-off berth. The defending champions are currently on 16 points and with an excellent net run rate (NRR), are almost certain to finish in the top two.

Despite three defeats on the trot against Kings XI Punjab, KKR and Sunrisers Hyderabad, DC are placed third with 14 points from 12 games, courtesy their consistent run in

the first phase of the league. The three defeats should come as an eye opener for DC as they can ill-afford to take things lightly and need at least a win to seal their play-off place.

But it won't be an easy task as their last two games are against the top two teams on the table — MI and RCB.

If DC lose their last two games, it is entirely possible that KXIP will go past them on NRR even if they finish on 14 points and in such a case, the Delhi side could be eliminated if other teams on 14 have a higher NRR.

Going by paper, MI definitely have a clear-cut edge over DC and having confirmed their last four berth, the title holders would be playing without any pressure.

— *PTI*

NUMBERS GAME — MI vs DC

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL:
● Matches: 25 ● Mumbai: 13 ● Delhi: 12

MEETING IN 2019

● Delhi Capitals beat Mumbai Indians 37 runs at Mumbai.
● Mumbai Indians beat Delhi Capitals by 40 runs at Delhi

MEETING IN 2020

● Mumbai Indians beat Delhi Capitals by 5 wickets at Abu Dhabi.

FOR THE RECORD

● Kieron Pollar who scored 2973 runs in 144 innings of 160 matches, needs 27 runs to become second batsman after Rohit Sharma (3988 runs in matches) to score 3000 runs for Mumbai Indians.
● Rishabh Pant who scored 1989 runs in 63 innings of as many matches, needs 11 runs to become third batsman to score 2000 runs for Delhi Capitals in IPL.

— *S. PERVEZ QAISER*



Joe Willock (centre) of Arsenal tries to break through against Dundalk players during their Europa League first round match at the Emirates Stadium in London on Thursday.

— *AFP*

Antwerp silence Tottenham; easy wins for Milan, Arsenal

Paris, Oct. 30: Jose Mourinho said he would have liked to make 11 half-time changes after his Tottenham Hotspur side slumped to a shock 1-0 Europa League defeat at Royal Antwerp on Thursday, while Serie A leaders AC Milan and Mikel Arteta's Arsenal eased to straightforward wins.

Spurs failed to create a single chance of note in a lifeless display, with Gareth Bale, who rejoined the club on loan from Real Madrid in the close-season, lasting less than an hour before being substituted.

Refaelov found the back of the net for Antwerp and took the match away from Tottenham as the surprise win takes them to the top of the early Group 'J' table after their opening 2-1 victory at Ludogorets last week.

Meanwhile, Milan made it two

THE RESULTS

Antwerp (Refaelov 29)	1	Napoli (Politano 56)	1
Tottenham Hotspur	0	Real Sociedad	0
Arsenal (Nketiah 42, Willock 44, Pepe 46)	3	Leicester City (Vardy 18-pen, Choudhury 39)	2
Dundalk	0	AEK Athens	0
AC Milan (Diaz 24, Leao 57, Dalot 67)	3	Villarreal (Pino 80, Alcacer 85, 90+6-pen)	3
Sparta Prague	0	Qarabag (Kwabena 78)	1

wins from two in Group 'H' with a 3-0 success over Sparta, despite Zlatan Ibrahimovic missing a first-half penalty. Goals from Ibrahimovic, Rafael Leao and on-loan Manchester United wing-back

Diogo Dalot saw Milan extend their unbeaten run to 23 matches in all competitions.

Also, Arsenal overcame a plucky Dundalk side with a 3-0 handsome win at the Emirates Stadium.

— *AFP*