





## IN BRIEF

**IPL betting ring busted, 1 held**

**Hyderabad:** The West Zone Task Force busted an IPL cricket betting operation, apprehended one person on Tuesday and recovered Rs 48,000 from him. The accused Shivashankar Singh is an autorickshaw driver from Upper Dhoolpet, Mangalhat. He came in contact with one Suresh, an organiser of cricket betting, who was in need of a person to collect betting amounts from punters on commission basis, and began working him.

**NGO helps out seven persons**

**Hyderabad:** An NGO came to the rescue of six mentally challenged persons who were moving about on roads which in the Rachakonda police commissionerate area. The NGO provided medication and hand over the persons to their families in coordination with the police. The families will be counselled in case they are reluctant to accept them. Rachakonda police commissioner Mahesh Bhagwat, on Tuesday felicitated the members of the NGO and police officer who took part in the process.

**Dacoit jailed under PD Act**

**Hyderabad:** Police commissioner on Tuesday invoked the Preventive Detention Act on one Mohd. Waseem, a realtor, for dacoity. Waseem, 25, is a resident of Alibagh, Kalapathar, Hyderabad under the Afzalgunj police limits. Police said he had committed a dacoity in the city with his associates. He was arrested on July 8 and remanded to judicial custody. The PD order was executed on him on September 23 and is lodged in the Central Prison, Chanchalguda.

**2 ARRESTED FOR DATING APP SCAM**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, OCT. 13

City police arrested two persons at Kolkata and brought them to Hyderabad on a transit warrant for cheating via a dating app. The accused were identified as Anand Kar and Budhadev Paul by the cyber-crime police of the Hyderabad police detective department which investigated the case.

The police had received a complaint on January 22 from a city resident who stated that on January 7, he was contacted by the accused through dating apps, who promised to provide women for dating and collected ₹48,000 for a membership card and other benefits. He paid the money but didn't get the 'promised benefits. Police said the duo had similarly cheated other.

**TS OPPOSED REGISTRATION OF FIRM'S JDA**

**From Page 1**

When the plot owners approached the Telangana High Court against registering the JDA, the state government too opposed it. It told the court that signatories of JDA never figured in the revenue records which reflected of those who sold land to the Bhagyanagar plot owners.

Taking the state government's contention and an existing status quo issued by the Supreme Court as some of the grounds, Justice Sanjay Kumar ruled against registering the JDA stating that creating third party interest will complicate matters further.

However, a High Court division bench headed by Chief Justice Raghavendra Singh Chouhan directed the registration authorities to decide on the JDA following due procedure. Mere presentation of JDA to sub-registrar can't be assumed as registration. If the party, after registration, violated the status quo it is for them to face consequences, the bench said adding that the aggrieved parties may invoke contempt in such case.

"The officials wasted no time after the High Court order and registered the JDA without following due process. There is no surprise if the company launches the project and sells it off, creating some more interested parties and we have to run around courts," said the plot owners.

# Civic body corporators will have it tough

**They will face the axe for not meeting targets, under the latest amendments to the GHMC Act**

**MADDY DEEKSHITH | DC**  
HYDERABAD, OCT. 13

The amendment made to the Hyderabad Municipal Corporation Act 1955 (GHMC Act) has made corporators and all other elected representatives residing in Hyderabad more accountable on par with the new Municipal Act 2019.

The amendment means if public representatives want to save their jobs, they will have to ensure 85 percent survival of plants in the Haritha Haaram programme.

As per the amendment,

the government will be able to sack elected representatives if a complaint is raised against him or her for not ensuring 85 per cent survival of plants. The government has also increased the green budget from 2.5 per cent to 10 per cent to enhance the green cover.

It will be the responsibility of ward member and special officer (deputy or zonal commissioner) to ensure that 85 per cent of plants sown during Haritha Haaram survive. Likewise, it would be the responsibility of the mayor and GHMC com-

missioner to ensure proper upkeep and growth of nurseries.

The GHMC commissioner will have the power to form flying squads and take up regular inspections of plantations and nurseries ward wise. In all such cases, where the survival is less than 85 per cent or involvement of the ward member or special officer is lackadaisical, resulting in poor survival of plants, the ward member will be disqualified and removed.

Likewise, the special officer will be removed from service by the GHMC com-

missioner for his or her failure in ensuring 85 per cent survival of plantations. Importantly, cabinet ministers cannot stay the orders issued by the civic body commissioner. Elected ward members and lower-rung officials should also ensure sanitation, hygiene, effective garbage disposal, greenery, and maintenance of roads and drainage in their respective areas.

This apart, amendment to the GHMC Act makes it mandatory for State Election Commission to take concurrence of the government while con-

ducting elections. Municipal administration and urban development minister K.T. Rama Rao said government's concurrence is necessary for conducting the polls in view of any contingency like Covid-19 pandemic or heavy rains.

The amendment has also given legal status to 50 per cent reservation for women in GHMC. The amended GHMC Act provides for creation of four committees in each division - youth committee, women committee, senior citizens' committee and eminent citizens' commit-

tee. Each panel will have 20 members. Ward-wise reservations for the current tenure will remain the same in all 150 divisions of GHMC.

The amendment makes mandatory adopting of TS-BPASS, the online building permission system with self-certification, which was passed by the legislature last month. According to it, the builder has to upload progress reports of construction on the prescribed website, so that investors can know detailed information of the project. If builders fail

to furnish correct information, they will have to pay high amount of penalty.

Persons under supervision of district collectors will check the authenticity of claims made by landlords about constructions taken up by them. Individuals with plots less than 500 square metres can get self-certification for paying property tax online. The government will undertake random audits and any individual found deviating from the plan submitted to the government will have to pay heavy fines.



Braving heavy rains, city police discharge their duties in front of the Telangana Legislative Assembly when the session was on, in Hyderabad on Tuesday. — P. SURENDRA

## Law changed, RDOs lose power to decide on conversion of land use

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, OCT. 13

The Assembly on Tuesday passed the Telangana Agricultural Land Conversion for Non-Agricultural Purposes (Amendment) Bill, 2020, to end the discretionary powers of revenue divisional officers (RDOs) for converting land use.

Legislative affairs minister Vemula Prashanth Reddy, introducing the Bill in the House, said that there were complaints that some officials were indulging in irregularities and corruption and causing abnormal delay in granting approval for the conversion of land use. Therefore, the government had decided to simplify the process and bring transparency.

The minister said the government had found undervaluation of land by some revenue divisional officers had resulted in ₹826 crore loss to the exchequer. Since 2016, the government had received only ₹623 crore.

With the amendment, owners can apply for conversion of land use from agriculture to non-agricultural purposes

through the Dharani portal, and obtain the related passbook immediately after the land use conversion.

The minister said the state government had decided not to impose penal charges against agricultural lands being used for non-agricultural purposes without permission, if the owners submit an application within three months. He reminded that the land owners had to pay 50 per cent of the conversion charges as penalty earlier.

CLP leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka pointed out that without resolving the existing disputes and without completing the land survey, taking up online conversion of land use will further complicate land disputes. He demanded that the government introduce the online conversion process after completion of the land survey.

Stating that the Dharani website also prevents conversion of land use by encroachers without the knowledge of the land owner, the minister said as per available records, data of 1.48 crore acres have been entered into the Dharani portal.

## Officials out, committee to now fix stamp duty

**S.A. ISHAQUI | DC**  
HYDERABAD, OCT. 13

The Assembly on Tuesday approved the Indian Stamp (Telangana Amendment) Bill, 2020, which was aimed at scrapping the discretionary powers of registration authorities including the inspector general of stamps and registrations in fixing the value of the stamp duty.

Minister for legislative affairs Vemula Prashanth Reddy, introducing the Bill, explained to the House that the amendment proposed to Section 47-A of the Indian Stamps Act, 1899, would scrap the discretionary powers of registration authorities and that right will be given to a committee headed by the district collector concerned, with the district registrar as convener and the municipal commissioner, zilla parishad CEO and DIG stamps as members in

urban areas.

While explaining the power under Section 47-A, Reddy said "Earlier, if any citizen felt that the stamp duty was exorbitant, s/he would go ahead pay 50 per cent of the stamp duty and get the property registered. While the registration process will be kept in abeyance, the registrar or the IG can take a decision based on the appeal made by the consumer. They can either increase or decrease the stamp duty."

Maintaining that this has given scope for corruption in some places, Reddy said that after this amendment, the committee will deal such cases and once the committee decides on the final stamp duty, the consumer must then pay the entire stamp, book a slot and complete the registration.

While answering queries raised by MIM MLA, Zafar Hussain Meraj, Reddy clarified

that the registrar will not object if both the parties agree on registering a property by quoting lesser value than the value mentioned in the government book. He also told the Meraj that registration of properties will resume sometime after the launch of the Dharani portal scheduled for October 25.

Informing Reddy that several people are facing hardships because of the suspension of registration for a long time, first due to lockdown and then because of the proposed launch of Dharani portal, Congress Legislature Party leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka mentioned the Layout Registration Scheme (LRS), demanding that the government to scrap the scheme.

The minister said that the government will ensure that the poor are not burdened by the LRS and asked Vikramarka to confine his comments to the issue at hand.

## Centre puts out co-infections alert amid Covid

**KANIZA GARARI | DC**  
HYDERABAD, OCT. 13

The Centre has called on all states to be on the lookout for co-infections of seasonal diseases with Covid-19. This will require a "concerted effort in prevention, surveillance, behaviour change communication and management of such cases," the Centre said.

The Union health ministry in its latest Covid-19 related advisory stated that "alert vigil, a high index of suspicion and constant awareness of the possibility of co-infections can help physicians avert the adverse outcome of cases with co-infection and improve clinical outcomes."

It said dengue, malaria, chikungunya, seasonal influenza, leptospirosis prevalent in particular geographic regions during monsoon and post-monsoon seasons must be evaluated properly.

Those patients who do not respond to Covid-19 treatments must be also evaluated for bacterial co-infections. The Centre has stated that fever for malaria and dengue post rainy season in endemic areas must be evaluated.

There is worry that co-infections with seasonal influenza and SARS-CoV-2 virus causing Covid-19 will be noted in winter. Hence, testing for both these diseases must be carried out.

Scrub typhus is also noted in regions and these areas in different states where there have been regular cases must test patients for this disease.

Due to Covid-19, there is a possibility that diseases will represent with features of Covid-19 but there will be other co-infections which cannot be ruled out. Post-monsoon weather conditions and approaching winter is making it important to

## TS RECORDS 1,708 NEW COVID CASES, 5 DEATHS

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, OCT. 13

A total of 1,708 new cases of Covid-19 were recorded in the state along with five deaths due to the disease on Monday, according to data released by the state health department on Tuesday. The total number of new cases stands at 2,14,792 and toll at 1,233.

There are 24,208 active cases of which 19,748 are in home isolation. The testing increased on Monday to 46,835, after a dip over the weekend. A total of 36,24,096 samples have been tested so far.

In the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation area, there were 277 new cases. Medchal Malkajgiri district recorded 124 cases, Ranga Reddy 137 and Bhadrachalam Kothagudem 97 cases.

With the unseasonal rains and a dip in the temperatures there is fear that there will be a resurgence of cases and people are advised to wear masks, follow physical distancing norms and report early to hospitals in case of symptoms.

Meanwhile, Jagtial MLA Dr Sanjay Kumar has been tested positive for the Coronavirus. He had taken part in several programmes for the past few days. He also held a press meet on Monday after former MP K. Kavitha won the MLC elections.

be alert and also ensure that the medical community is geared up to diagnose, tackle and fight the disease.

People are also requested to report to hospitals early so that the medical management is easy.

## Surety has to ensure accused attends court

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, OCT. 13

The Assembly on Tuesday made the person giving surety for bail responsible for bringing back the accused to court on the given date for trial. This was done by amending Section 441 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) of 1973 and Form No. 45.

While moving the Code of Criminal Procedure (Telangana Amendment) Bill, 2020, in the house, law minister, A. Indrakaran Reddy, said that the judicial officers conference had recommended mandating the surety in bringing the accused on the date of trial in view of the fact of the disappearance of the accused in many cases after getting bail.

Section 441 of the CrPC deals with the 'bond of accused and sureties.' As such there was no penal provision in the code to

punish the surety in case of disappearance of the accused from the trial.

Pointing out that the judicial officers conference has recommended imposing a fine on the surety in the event of the accused abstaining from the trial, Reddy said that accordingly the state government has proposed an amendment to Section 441 of the CrPC.

CLP leader, Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, participating in the discussion on the bill, suggested that the state government draft tough laws that would take stern action on perpetrators of violence against Dalits and Adivasis.

When he tried to raise the incident of the rape of a minor girl in Khammam district, Reddy said that the government will take action against such criminals and asked Vikramarka to confine his remarks to the current Bill.





## IN BRIEF

**5 HELD FROM JHARKHAND FOR FRAUD****SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL | DC HYDERABAD, OCT. 13**

The Cyberabad cybercrime police arrested a five-member gang from Jharkhand for cheating people under the pretext of updating KYC (know your customer) data of PayTM accounts. The arrests were made on the complaint of a woman resident of Madhapur on October 2, who gave the data to the gang and found ₹4,29,360 withdrawn from her accounts.

The police on Tuesday recovered ₹1.47 lakh from the gang along with mobile phones and debit cards. The accused were identified as Nanku Mandal alias Rahul, 27, Rajesh Mandal, 26, Shiva Shakti Kumar, 25, Gaurav Arun, 46, and Dilkush Kumar Singh, 18, all residents of Jharkhand.

According to the police, the victim received an SMS from a phone number, 7478092505, belonging to Vinay Sharma, asking her to renew KYC and call phone number 8345989385 for the same.

When she called that number, Sharma took the call and directed her instal an application like Team Viewer. After she complied, she was asked to log into her PayTM account and add ₹1 through her debit and credit cards. This allowed him get her data, and the gang withdrew the money.

**MBT: REGISTER ASSETS BOOKED TILL SEPT. 7****ATHER MOIN | DC HYDERABAD, OCT. 13**

Majlis Bachao Tahreek (MBT) demanded that Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao allow registering of properties to those who had paid the fee until September 7 but could not complete the process due to faulty online system of the registration department. The government banned the registration of properties from October 8.

MBT spokesperson Amjedullah Khan Khalid in a letter to the Chief Minister said many property buyers had executed deeds, paid the sale consideration to the vendor and income-tax but could not complete their registration as the online system did not work properly.

**MARRI: EVMS SENT WITHOUT CONG CHECK****DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, OCT. 13**

Marri Shashidhar Reddy, Congress election coordination committee chairman, has alleged that the first level checking (FLC) of EVMs was conducted at Kondapaka in the absence of a representative of the Congress. Kondapaka is part of the Dubbaka Assembly constituency, where a bypoll will be held.

In a letter to Shashank Goel, Chief Electoral Officer, Shashidhar Reddy stated that FLC was completed before 1 October and EVMs were shifted to Dubbaka and handed over to returning officer for storage even for which there was no intimation.

Congress office-bearers who were locally available were called at the last minute and asked to sign on the seal at the godown.

**WAKF BOARD TO RENOVATE SHAHI MASJID****DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, OCT. 13**

The Wakf Board resolved to renovate the Shahi Masjid, Public Garden, which is under the direct management of the minorities welfare department. The Wakf Board is the custodian of every masjid as per the Wakf Act.

Wakf Board Chairman Mohammed Saleem work at an estimated cost of ₹73 lakh has been prepared for the Shahi Masjid.

With regard to the Garden View commercial complex situated on the southern side of the Haj House, he said the delay in completing the work was because of certain differences. While the government wanted to house all organisations working under the minorities welfare department in the building, the Wakf Board had planned to let it out to commercial establishments.

**Protest heroes**

TPCC chief Uttam Kumar Reddy and AICC incharge of TS affairs Manickam Tagore at a function where the party felicitated those activists who had been arrested for staging protests against the TRS government, in Hyderabad on Tuesday.

— P. ANIL KUMAR

**Adivasis up in arms against GO No. 112****Tribals say the govt was adding insult to injury****PILLALAMARRI SRINIVAS | DC ADILABAD, OCT. 13**

The issuing of GO No. 112 freshly for a second time has irked the Adivasis living in Agency areas, who said it was adding insult to their injury.

The Telangana state government had issued the GO saying that it was the last chance for regularisation of Sadabaimana cases/Form-X claims.

The same GO was issued in the past too allowing regularisation of the Sadabaimana cases, which relates to title deeds of lands written on white papers, not the usual stamp papers.

However, the drive was shelved after some time.

Now, the state government says that this is the last chance for getting such lands regularised.

However, the Adivasis feel that the governments are trying to snatch away their rights on lands by issuing such GOs which would allow non-tribals to get their lands in Agency areas regularised. They

■ The GO would enable non-tribals to apply for regularisation of land they possess in Agency areas, also called Sadabaimana cases, which the tribals say is in violation of the 1/70 Act and PESA

■ The govt issued the same GO earlier too but the drive was stalled due to some reasons

alleged that it is in violation of the 1/70 Act and PESA.

Already, the Adivasis have been fighting against the governments assessing lands possessed by non-tribals under the Land Layout Regularisation Scheme) in Agency areas and uploading the same on the Dharani portal.

The tribals have also been opposing the Telangana New Revenue Act in the state alleging that it was detrimental to their interests.

Adivasis, in a large number led by their organisations, have been staging dharnas, rasta rokos and rallies opposing the implementation of LRS and new Revenue Act in the erstwhile Adilabad, Karimnagar, Warangal, and Khammam.

The Adivasis allege that the state government is giving an opportunity for the non-tribals to regularise their illegal lands under Sadabainama, by issuing the GO No. 112.

In the fresh GO released, the state government has given permission to all the collectors to receive Form-X claims up to October 31, 2020 and for regularisation of the same under Rule-22 (2) of Telangana Rights in Land and Pattadar Pass Books Rules, 1989, read with Section 5 (A) of Telangana Rights in Land and Pattadar Passbooks Act, 1971 as the last opportunity.

GO No 112 has also mentioned that the cut-off date for the transaction of the land is June 2, 2014 and the applications will be received online through Mee Seva centres. The tribals alleged that non-tribals and also other

tribal groups, which had encroached their agricultural lands, can get rights on the same under Sadabainama land registrations.

Transactions of land up to 5 acres, which had been done on white papers, will be regularised under the scheme.

The Adivasi leaders said that as they are illiterate many non-tribals and other tribal groups, which are more progressive than them, got rights on Adivasi lands by offering a meagre amount of money or took their land as part of mortgage while giving loans and then took possession of the same, even when the tribals repaid the loans.

Thudumdebba Adilabad district president Godam Ganesh said that the state government was trying to deprive them of their lands in Agency areas by allowing non-tribals get their lands regularised.

He said many illiterate Adivasi have lost their lands to non-tribals under Sadabainama scheme in the past too.

**Kavitha is 10th MLC from Nizamabad****NARENDER PULLLOOR | DC NIZAMABAD, OCT. 13**

Undivided Nizamabad district set a new record in the Telangana Legislative Council as 10 MLCs were elected from the district so far.

Kalvakuntla Kavitha is the 10th MLC from the district as she won the local authorities constituency of Nizamabad with a thumping majority on Monday.

Interestingly, MLCs from TRS, Congress, Telugu Desam parties represented the district in various quotas.

D. Rajeshwar Rao is the first MLC from Nizamabad district in united Andhra Pradesh under Governor quota. He was first elected as MLC from Congress party and later, he joined the TRS after the formation of Telangana state.



The Congress party gave chance to its senior leaders D. Srinivas, Mohammad Ali Shabbir and Akula Lalitha as MLCs.

Mr Srinivas and Shabbir also served as leaders of Opposition in Telangana Legislative Council. Akula Lalitha switched her loyalties from the Congress to TRS.

Telugu Desam MLC V. Gangadhar Goud has also joined TRS. All these leaders were elected under MLA quota.

R. Venkatram Reddy of the Congress, Arikela

Narsa Reddy (TD), R. Bhupathi Reddy (TRS) were elected MLCs from Nizamabad local authorities constituency.

Meanwhile, Narsa Reddy joined the TRS and Bhupathi Reddy turned as TRS rebel in last Assembly elections.

PRTU leader B. Mohan Reddy was elected as MLC from Teachers constituency.

In the MLC bypolls, Kavitha won as the TRS MLC against her nearest rival, BJP candidate Pothankar Laxminarayana with a majority of 672 votes.

It is being said that Kavitha may be inducted in the state Cabinet from the undivided Nizamabad district. The TRS party functionaries are also eagerly waiting for her elevation as Cabinet minister, as expansion is likely after the GHMC elections.

**Chalo Assembly: BJP men taken into preventive custody****DC CORRESPONDENT KARIMNAGAR, OCT. 13**

Leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in erstwhile Karimnagar district were taken into preventive custody on Tuesday to thwart their attempts to travel to Hyderabad and take part in laying siege to the Assembly, following a call by the party state chief and Karimnagar MP Bandi Sanjay Kumar.

The BJP state chief gave the call in protest against the amendments made to the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) rule book and relaxing the rule of not permitting persons having more than two children to contest in the GHMC polls.

BJP district unit president Gangidi Krishna Reddy, along with other leaders, were arrested in Huzurabad and sent to police station.

In protest against the preventive custody, the BJP leaders burnt an effigy of Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao at

Telangana Chowk in Karimnagar.

Mr. Krishna Reddy condemned the arrests of BJP workers across the district and said that by adopting anti-democratic policies in the state, the TRS government was trying to muzzle the voice of the opposition leaders.

"However, we will not be afraid of the arrests and continue to fight against the anti-people policies of the TRS," he said.

He said that the BJP is the only alternative to the TRS party in the state. "Knowing about this fact, the TRS is fearing the BJP leaders and hence, not allowing them to enter into the GHMC limits," he said.

He said that the BJP would explain to the people about the anti-people policies adopted by the TRS.

When the poor and middle class families are facing a lot of hardships due to the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic, the state government, instead of helping them, is introducing a new Land

Regularisation Scheme (LRS) and trying to loot money from them.

By relaxing the rule regarding persons eligible for contesting the GHMC polls, it is trying to appease another section of the society, he said.

The TRS party came to power by securing the votes of the poor and middle class by promising them that it would sanction 2BHK houses after coming to power.

"Even after six years of being voted to power, it did not fulfil the promise," he pointed out.

Mr. Krishna Reddy demanded the state government to complete the construction of 2BHK houses at the earliest and sanction them to the eligible shelterless people and also to suspend the newly introduced LRS which has become a huge burden for the middle-class families.

BJP leaders T. Srinivas Goud, Choppari Jaya Sri, Nagasamudram Praveen, Shivaraj, Mohammad Sami Parvez, J. Swamy, G. Ramesh, K. Pavan and others were present.



BJP leaders burn an effigy of Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao at Telangana Chowk in Karimnagar on Tuesday.

— DC

**KTR: Cong. has no right to talk on Pharma City****DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, OCT. 13**

IT and industries minister K.T. Rama Rao ridiculed the Congress stating that its leaders have no moral right to speak on pollution caused by pharmaceutical industries in Telangana state.

He was reacting in the Assembly on Tuesday to remarks of Congress MLA D. Anasuya alias Seethakka on Hyderabad Pharma City and CLP leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka over the inundation of Osmania General Hospital in the city and Government Hospital in Madhira of Khammam district due to heavy rains.

Seethakka said that the Congress welcomed the 50 per cent reservation for women in the GHMC Council but was demanding the constitution of the Woman Commission, which has been defunct

■ Cong. MLA Seethakka alleged that the govt flouted norms in establishing Hyd Pharma City and acquiring land for it

for years.

Referring to the 10 per cent green Budget in the GHMC Amendment Bill, Seethakka pointed out that the state government may not give any concession to corporate companies while establishing their units. She alleged that the state government flouted norms in establishing the Hyderabad Pharma city and acquiring the land for it.

CLP leader Mallu Bhatti suggested drafting a comprehensive drainage policy for urban areas.

Rama Rao said that people are well aware that it was the Congress which had allowed pharma units around Greater Hyderabad in violation of environmental protection norms.

**MALLU BHATTI: ONE-DAY SESSION FOR TRS BENEFIT****DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, OCT. 13**

Congress Legislative Party leader Bhatti Vikramarka on Tuesday alleged that the TRS-led government has conducted Tuesday's Assembly session in a hurry for their political benefit but did not care about people's interests.

Speaking at the Assembly media point, he said though the Congress wanted to discuss the proposal of non-agriculture land conversion, the government did not show any interest. He said that there were several issues related to the Dharani portal which the government has to clear for the public. He alleged the introduction of Dharani portal appears like a scam. There are several loopholes due to which even if anybody wants to convert land use from agriculture to non-agriculture, it may not happen immediately.

Instead of addressing existing issues, the government decision is leading to another huge mistake.

**KCR requests farmers not to cultivate maize****DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, OCT. 13**

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao on Tuesday requested farmers not to cultivate maize during the ensuing Yasangi (Rabi) season. He said only those prepared to sell their crop at less than the Minimum Support Price (MSP) can sow the crop.

Speaking at a high-level meeting with state and district-level agriculture officers at Pragathi Bhavan, the CM urged agriculture officers to transform themselves into friends of farmers. They must make farmers understand the need to

stay away from maize, considering that its prices may fall very low.

Pointing out that the centre has decided to allow imports of maize, KCR asked officials to inform farmers that maize will not fetch more than ₹800 to ₹900 per quintal. This could stop farmers from cultivating maize.

The CM said time has come for agriculture officers to work hand in hand with farmers, as the government too is working with the sole aim of ensuring welfare of farmers. It is due to their relentless efforts that Telangana has developed into an agro-rich state.

**YIELD FALLS The pest damaged crop and led to bad smell from tubers****‘Mouth disease’ increases onion prices****DC CORRESPONDENT ADILABAD, OCT. 13**

The sudden rise in the price of onions is adding to the woes of the common man who is already reeling under financial crisis following the outbreak of the pandemic.

It is learnt that the sudden rise in the price is due to increasing demand even while the supply has fallen after the crop got damaged due to some pest which is infecting the onions.

The shop owners are calling it 'moothi rogam' (mouth disease) and saying that the damaged portion was emitting a bad

smell. Even the inner layers of the onion are also getting spoilt due to this disease.

The shops owners are picking the damaged onions from heaps to avoid its spread to others. People are able to witness a large number of damaged onions dumped in the garbage at Rythu Bazar in Adilabad.

On Tuesday, onions were sold for ₹70 a kg in Adilabad due to short supply of quality onions.

Two months ago, onions were sold for ₹80 per kg.

The onion traders are saying that they were getting at least 10 kg onions damaged due to the mouth



disease for every quintal.

In the wake of such a situation, it is being said that the price of onions may rise to ₹100 soon due to the damage to the crop by the new disease and

stagnation of floodwaters in the fields due to incessant rain.

Algutwar Vinod, owner of a onion shop at Adilabad Rythu Bazar, said they were importing



## SHORT TAKES

## ODISHA: WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING RACKET BUSTED

AKSHAYA KUMAR  
SAHOO | DC  
BHUBANESWAR, OCT. 13

The Special Task Force (STF) of Odisha crime branch on Tuesday busted a wildlife trafficking racket and seized one leopard skin. The STF arrested one person in this connection near the government ITI in Subarnapur district.

Acting on reliable information about the deal for sale of the leopard skin, a STF team conducted a raid and arrested one Ashok Chhatra, a resident of Babunektima under Mahupalli police station in Sambalpur district.

The police also seized one leopard skin from his possession. The STF said the seized skin would be sent to the Wildlife Institute of India, Derhadun for chemical examination.

A case has been registered under Sections 379 and 411 of the Indian Penal Code and Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 against the accused. Further investigation is underway, said the police.

## CONG ANNOUNCES CANDIDATES FOR ODISHA BY-POLLS

AKSHAYA KUMAR  
SAHOO | DC  
BHUBANESWAR, OCT. 13

The Congress on Tuesday announced the names of its candidates for by-polls to Odisha's Balasore and Tirtol Assembly constituencies which are scheduled to be held on November 3, 2020.

Congress president Sonia Gandhi gave her approval to a proposal for the candidature of Mamata Kundu and Himanshu Bhusan Mallick as party candidates to contest the ensuing by-polls to Balasore and Tirtol Assembly constituencies, respectively.

Earlier in the day, BJD named Swarup Kumar Das and Bijaya Shankar Das as its candidates.

The BJD had announced its candidates - Manas Kumar Dutta and Raj Kishore Behera for the by-polls.

The BJP is pulling out all stops in Balasore to retain the seat. Its candidate Manas Kumar Dutta is the son of Madan Mohan Dutta, the sitting MLA who died in July this year. The party strategists believe sympathy factor would work wonders for the party and its nominee would post a spectacular victory.

The BJD is also trying to defend the seat in Tirtol playing the sympathy card. Its nominee Bijaya Shankar Das is the son of Bishnu Charan Das, the sitting MLA who died in July.

## PRIYANKA HITS OUT AT U.P. GOVT FOR RISING CRIMES

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 13

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi on Tuesday hit out at the Uttar Pradesh government over the rising 'lawlessness' in the state. The latest attack comes over the alleged pouring of a chemical on three sisters in Gonda in Uttar Pradesh.

The three sisters suffered burn injuries when someone allegedly poured a chemical on them while they were sleeping on the roof of their house in Paksa village of Gonda, police said on Tuesday.

Tagging a video in which the father of the girls is narrating the incident to media persons, Priyanka Gandhi tweeted, "This man's three daughters aged 17, 10 & 8 were asleep in their home when someone entered and threw acid on them." She further added, "The UP government's politically motivated narrative of justifying and protecting perpetrators of crimes against women has only emboldened criminals across the state."

Superintendent of police Shailesh Kumar Pandey said the incident took place on Monday night when the girls were sleeping on the roof of their house. An unidentified person poured a chemical on the eldest girl and some of it fell on her younger sisters as well who were sleeping with her. Asked if it was an acid attack, the SP said, "The chemical used in the attack is yet to be ascertained. It will be clear after a probe by experts."

The Congress has been attacking the UP government over the Hathras incident in which a 19-year-old Dalit woman from the district was allegedly raped and attacked by four men.

## It's showtime again



A worker wearing PPE kit sanitises a cinema hall in New Delhi on Tuesday, as multiplexes prepare to reopen from October 15 after seven months of closure due to the Coronavirus lockdown.

— PTI

## BJP expels 9 rebels leaders for 6yrs

## Party expels leaders after they decide to contest upcoming Bihar elections on LJP ticket

NAYEAR AZADI | DC  
PATNA, OCT. 13

In a major move, the BJP has initiated tough action against its rebel leaders for abandoning the party and joining hands with Chirag Paswan's Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) ahead of Bihar Assembly elections.

The BJP insiders said that the party has expelled nine senior leaders for six years after they decided to contest polls on LJP ticket. The suspension letter was issued by BJP state president Sanjay Jaiswal on Monday evening.

Among those who have been expelled is Ravindra Yadav, sitting MLA from Jhajha. He has been fielded by the LJP after the seat went to the JD(U). Another big name to be fielded by the LJP against the JD(U) nominee is a four-time BJP MLA from Nokha constituency. He was upset after the seat went to the JD(U).

Rajendra Singh is another prominent face who has been suspended from the BJP for accepting a ticket from Dinara constituency.

● **AMONG THOSE** who have been expelled is Ravindra Yadav, sitting MLA from Jhajha. He has been fielded by LJP after the seat went to JD(U).

He has been fielded by the LJP against the JD(U) nominee and a minister in Nitish Kumar's cabinet Jai Kumar Singh.

In 2015, he had contested against Jai Kumar Singh from the seat but lost. Rajendra Singh's switching sides has raised eyebrows in Bihar political circles as he was seen as an active RSS member.

BJP state president Sanjay Jaiswal in his letter clearly states that the party's and NDA's image has been maligned by nine leaders who are contesting polls against the NDA on LJP ticket.

"You are being suspended for six years for indulging in anti-party activities", the BJP notice said.

The development is being seen as a major setback for the BJP which is contesting Assembly elections in alliance with

Nitish Kumar's JD(U), Hindustani Awam Morcha and Vikasheel Insaan Party.

Before the announcement of seat-sharing last week, the LJP had pulled off the NDA defying the leadership of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar.

The LJP had, however, announced that the party's ties with BJP will remain intact and it will not field candidates against the safe party during Bihar elections.

The LJP has fielded 42 candidates against the JD(U) and two other smaller parties HAM and VIP for the first phase of polls. However, no candidate has been fielded against the BJP.

The JD(U) is contesting 122 seats out of which seven has been allotted to Jitan Ram Manjhi's HAM. While the BJP has been allotted 121 seats and it has given 11 seats from its quota to Mukesh Sahani's VIP.

The Assembly elections in Bihar for 243 seats are to be held in three phases beginning October 28 and results will be declared on November 10.

## Cong seeks dismissal of 14 non-MLA mantris in MP

RABINDRA NATH  
CHOUDHURY | DC  
BHOPAL, OCT. 13

Congress has moved the Election Commission (EC) seeking dismissal of 14 non-MLA ministers in the Shivraj government for allegedly misusing their offices to influence voters ahead of November 3 by-elections in 28 Assembly constituencies in Madhya Pradesh.

The Opposition party said their continuance in the offices may deny free and fair by-polls particularly in the Assembly constituencies they were seeking re-elections in the upcoming by-polls.

"The 14 non-Congress MLAs have been making various promises and laying foundation stones for various schemes to influence voters in their

respective constituencies. This is gross misuse of their positions and violation of model code of conduct", Congress spokesman here Narendra Saluja said on Tuesday.

The party took up the matter with the EC for action late on Monday.

Saluja alleged that the non-MLA ministers were also misusing the government machinery in the by-elections.

Ruling BJP however denied the allegations. "The allegations are politically motivated. None of these ministers violated the model code of conduct during electioneering. The Congress is leveling wild charges against them out of sheer frustration", BJP spokesman here Rajneesh Agrawal said.

The 14 ministers were among the 22 former Congress MLAs who resigned from the Assembly and subsequently from their party in March this year leading to the fall of 15-month-old Kamal Nath government.

All the 22 former MLAs, staunch followers of senior BJP leader Jyotiraditya Scindia, later joined the BJP.

The BJP has re-nominated all the 22 former Congress MLAs in their respective Assembly constituencies in the November 3 by-elections. Three more Congress legislators quit their party and joined Congress in July this year.

All the three former MLAs have also been given tickets by BJP to contest from their respective Assembly seats in the upcoming by-elections.

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## ‘Don’t need your certificate to prove my Hindutva’

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC  
MUMBAI, OCT. 13

War of words broke out between Maharashtra governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari and Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Tuesday over reopening of temples in the state. Both the leaders sent hard-hitting letters to each other. While Koshiyari questioned Thackeray's commitment to Hindutva, the CM retorted saying he doesn't need the governor's cer-

tificate. NCP chief Sharad Pawar also backed the CM and wrote a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to protest the "intemperate language" used by the Governor.

The Maharashtra Governor had written a letter to Thackeray on Monday urging him to reopen the places of worship in the state. He said that it was ironic that while the state government has allowed the opening of bars, restaurants and beaches, "gods

and goddesses have been condemned to stay in the lockdown".

"You have been a strong votary of Hindutva. You had publicly espoused your devotion for Lord Rama by visiting Ayodhya after taking charge as the Chief Minister. You had visited the Vitthal Rukmini Mandir in Pandharpur and performed the Puja on Ashadhi Ekadashi. I wonder if you are receiving promotion to keep postponing the reopening of

the places of worship time and again or have you suddenly turned 'secular' yourself, the term you hated?" Koshiyari wrote to Thackeray, who also sent a strongly worded response to the Governor.

Informing the Governor that his government will consider his request to reopen temples, Thackeray wondered if Hindutva meant merely reopening places of religious worship to Koshiyari. Responding to the Governor's secularism

jibe, Thackeray wrote, "Isn't secularism a key component of the Constitution, by which you swore while taking oath as the state Governor?"

"I don't need your certificate for my Hindutva. While considering the sentiments and beliefs of the people, it is also important to take care of their lives and it is wrong to impose and lift lockdown suddenly," Thackeray wrote.

Interestingly, the Governor's letter to the CM came in the wake of two-days

protests carried out by the Bharatiya Janata Party demanding reopening of temples. The BJP on Tuesday held protests outside temples in various cities in Maharashtra.

Mumbai, BJP workers led by MLC Prasad Lad and Leader of Opposition in Legislative Council Praveen Darekar tried to enter the famous Siddhivinayak temple as part of an agitation. In Pune, BJP activists staged a demonstration outside the Tambadi Jogeshwari temple.

## FARM | BILLS Policy experts, industry leaders &amp; academicians with agri sector praise the recently passed Bills

## Centre reaches out to stakeholders to clear confusion

New Delhi, Oct. 13: Reaching out to stakeholders to allay apprehensions about the recently passed farm Bills, Union minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday met policy experts, industry leaders and academicians associated with the agriculture sector, who were all praise for the new legislation.

Singh along with agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar has so far held a series of meetings with farmers and many others associated with the farm sector to deliberate upon the three agriculture-related Bills recently passed by the Parliament.

part of the delegation that met both Union ministers, said it was a good interaction and praised the government for bringing these three Bills.

"In a way these three farm Bills will usher a new era of reforms in the agriculture sector and will give farmers' independence from the clutches of the middle men and help in getting them better prices for their produce," Gambhir told reporters after the meeting.

Echoing similar sentiments, Chairman of Punj-

● **RAJNATH SINGH** along with agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar has so far held a series of meetings with farmers and many others associated with the farm sector to deliberate upon the three agriculture-related Bills recently passed by the Parliament.

ab-based Green Valley Farms, R.P.S. Gandhi said there are enormous benefits of the new farm-related legislation but the farmers need to be made aware and educated about it.

He said talking to the farmers in their own language is important so that there is no confusion about these three Bills.

Last week, Singh had a long meeting with a delegation of award winning farmers including a Padma Shri awardee to deliberate on the government's farm legislations.

Earlier in a statement, Singh had assured that the MSP mechanism will stay and the support price will continue to rise under the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government.

The meetings with a number of stakeholders in the agriculture sector are being held at Singh's residence here.

Chairman of Indian Chamber of Food and Agriculture M.J. Khan who was present in all the meetings held so far said in a way it is a dialogue process between farmers, key stakeholders in the agriculture sector and the centre to clear any apprehensions and misgivings about the farm bills.

— PTI

## Kangana booked by K'taka police over tweet on farmers

**Bengaluru, Oct. 13:** A case has been registered against Bollywood actor Kangana Ranaut in Karnataka over her tweet allegedly targeting farmers protesting against contentious central farm laws, police said on Tuesday.

The case was registered by police in Tumakuru district on Monday based on the recent order of a local court.

It has been registered

under Indian Penal Code (IPC) sections, including 108 (abetment), wanton vilification upon a community (153A) and intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of peace (504), police said.

The Tumakuru Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC) court had on October 9 directed police to register an FIR on a complaint by lawyer L. Ramesh Naik who contended that the September

## 4 VACCINES IN ADVANCED STAGE OF PRE-CLINICAL TRIALS IN INDIA

DC CORRESPONDENT  
with agency inputs  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 13

A steady decline in fresh positive cases of Coronavirus is being noted in India now as 55,342 new cases were detected in the last 24 hours taking the country's overall figures to 71.76 lakh.

According to Union health ministry, the average daily Covid-19 positivity rate has declined from 8.50 per cent between September 9-15 to 6.24 per cent between October 7-13.

"Decline in cumulative, weekly and daily Covid-19 positivity rates stand at 8.07%, 6.24% and 5.16%, respectively. There is a significant increase in testing for Covid-19 and there is also a continuous decline in positivity rate," said Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan. He added that there are 8.39 lakh active cases in the country as on date and they have been below the 9 lakh mark for the fifth consecutive day.

Niti Aayog member Dr V.K. Paul said though the country has managed to stabilise the spread of virus, coming winters and the festival season pose a serious challenge as sharp increase in fresh cases are expected during this time. He gave example of other countries where the virus has re-emerged in winters.

The fatalities due to the virus too seems to be coming down as in the last 24 hours 706 deaths were recorded across India taking total fatality figures to 1, 09, 856. Bhushan said about 70% of Covid-19 deaths are of males and 30% fatalities from the infection have been reported in females. About 35% deaths are of patients in 45-60 yrs age group, 10% in 26-44 yrs age group and about 53% in patients aged 60 and above.

Union health minister Dr Harsh Vardhan said vaccine against Coronavirus is expected to be available in India by early next year and there could be vaccines from more than one source.

"We are expecting that early next year, we should have vaccine in the country from maybe more than one source. Our expert groups are already formulating and devising strategies to plan on how to roll out the distribution of the vaccines in the country, who do we give the vaccine first and then of course we are strengthening the cold chain facilities," he said during a meeting of the group of ministers. He added at present, four vaccines are in advanced stages of pre-clinical trial in India.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that Covid-19 situation in Maharashtra is worrisome.

"The danger of Coronavirus still persists. In Maharashtra, the situation is a little more worrying. I appeal to everyone, don't be careless when it comes to wearing masks and social distancing," he said.

21 tweet on the actor's Twitter handle @KanganaTeam had hurt him. "People who spread misinformation and rumours about CAA that caused riots are the same people who are now spreading misinformation about farmers bill and causing terror in the nation, they are terrorists. You very well know what I said but simply like to spread misinformation," Ranaut had tweeted.

— PTI



## IN BRIEF

## Muslims protest in Indonesia

**Jakarta:** Thousands of conservative Muslims marched in Indonesia's capital on Tuesday demanding that the government revoke a new law that say will cripple labour rights. Authorities blocked streets leading to the Presidential Palace in Jakarta, where clashes between riot police and rock-throwing demonstrators, including workers and students, broke out last Thursday. The protests spread and turned violent in some cities across the world's most populous Muslim nation, but calm had largely returned to Jakarta over the past four days.

## US hits Taliban with airstrikes

**Lashkar Gah (Afghanistan):** American forces carried out several airstrikes in support of Afghan security forces under attack by the Taliban in southern Helmand province, a spokesperson for the US military in Afghanistan said on Monday. Colonel Sonny Leggett said the recent Taliban attacks in Helmand are "not consistent" with a US-Taliban deal signed in February and undermine ongoing intra-Afghan peace talks. He said the airstrikes do not violate the February deal. The Taliban "need to immediately stop their offensive actions in Helmand Province and reduce their violence across the country," Leggett said in a statement on Twitter, quoting Gen. Scott Miller, the commander of the US Forces in Afghanistan.

## Indian-origin patron wins award in US

**Washington:** Indian-origin philanthropist Harish Kotecha has been awarded the prestigious Sandra Neese Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of his work in the US for meeting the needs of children and youth experiencing homelessness. The lifetime achievement award from the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHYC) was presented to Kotecha, who is founder and president of Hindu Charities for America (HC4A), at its 32nd annual conference on October 9, a statement said.

## 49 stranded Indians return home

**Dubai:** A total of 49 Indians, who were stranded for several months in the UAE after being abandoned by their employers, have been repatriated after the Indian mission here helped them secure their passports and security deposits from two companies, a media report said on Tuesday. The expats were abandoned and unpaid for the last six months after two Dubai-based carpentry firms owned by Indians shut during the Coronavirus pandemic without informing their staff, the Gulf News reported. Left to fend for themselves, the expats reached out to the Indian Consulate in Dubai in July and sought help to return home.

## VIRUS REINFECTION MIGHT SEVERE SYMPTOMS

**Houston, Oct. 13:** Covid-19 patients infected with the Coronavirus for a second time might experience more severe symptoms, according to a study which is the first to confirm a case of reinfection with the virus in the US.

The study, published in the journal *Lancet Infectious Diseases*, found evidence that an individual with no known immune disorders or underlying conditions was infected with the SARS-CoV-2 virus in two separate occurrences. According to the scientists, including those from the University of Nevada in the US, the patient, a 25-year old male, was infected with two distinct SARS-CoV-2 variants within a 48-day time frame, while testing negative in between infections.

The study noted that the patient's second infection was more severe, resulting in hospitalisation with oxygen support, indicating previous exposure to Covid-19 may not translate to guaranteed total immunity. The patient tested negative for the virus after testing positive for SARS-CoV-2 in April 2020, the researchers said. Then in June 2020, after experiencing severe Covid-19 symptoms, including fever, headache, dizziness, cough, nausea, and diarrhea, the patient was hospitalised and tested positive for a second time.

## Trump holds 1st rally since Covid

Busy schedule of the Prez comes amid unanswered question of travel impact on his health

**Sanford (US), Oct. 13:** Just a week after his release from the hospital, President Donald Trump returned to the campaign trail on Monday for the first time since contracting the Coronavirus as he tries to stage a late comeback in the election's final stretch. "It's great to be back in my home state, Florida, to make my official return to the campaign trail," Trump declared in front of a crowd of thousands of supporters, standing shoulder-to-shoulder, mostly without masks, despite the ongoing pandemic.

"I am so energised by your prayers and humbled by your support" he said. Trump, whose doctor said on Monday for the first time that he had received a negative test for Covid-19, is pushing to correct a stubborn deficit in national and battleground state polling. His Sanford rally on Monday night was his first stop in a busy week that will include events in Pennsylvania, Iowa, North Carolina and Wisconsin. The robust schedule underscores the work Trump needs to do as he tries to win over voters just three weeks before Election Day. And it comes amid still-unanswered questions about the impact so much travel so soon could have on the 74-year-old president's health.

The progression of Covid-19 is often unpredictable, and there can be long-term complications. After Air Force One lifted off from Joint Base An-

draws, the president's doctor released an update on his health that said Trump had tested negative for the virus — and had done so on consecutive days.

His doctor, Navy Cmdr. Scott Conley, said that the tests, taking in conjunction with other data, including viral load, have led him to conclude that Trump was not contagious.

For days, the White House had sidestepped questions as to whether Trump had tested negative. Conley over the weekend said that the president met Centers for Disease Control and Prevention criteria for safely discontinuing isolation and that by "currently recognised standards," Trump was no longer considered a transmission risk.

Trump, eager to return to campaigning, says he is now "immune" to the virus — a claim that is impossible to prove given limitations in what scientists know about the Coronavirus. Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious-disease expert, said on Monday that those who recover from Covid-19 are likely to be immune for a limited period of time, but there are cases emerging of people getting reinfected weeks or months later. Fauci, speaking as Trump was prepared to depart the White House for Florida, questioned the wisdom of holding such an event. He noted that test positivity rates are climbing in parts of the Sun Belt. "We know that that is

## Amid poll fears, Microsoft targets malware network

**Washington, Oct. 13:** Microsoft announced legal action on Monday seeking to disrupt a major cybercrime digital network that uses more than 1 million zombie computers to loot bank accounts and spread ransomware, which experts consider a major threat to the US presidential election.

The operation to knock offline command-and-control servers for a global botnet that uses an infrastructure known as Trickbot to infect computers with malware was initiated with an order that Microsoft obtained in Virginia federal court on Oct. 6.

Microsoft argued that the crime network is abusing its trademark. "It is very hard to tell how effective it will be but we are confident it will have a very long-lasting effect," said Jean-lan Boutin, head of threat research at ESET, one of

several cybersecurity firms that partnered with Microsoft to map the command-and-control servers. "We're sure that they are going to notice and it will be hard for them to get back to the state that the botnet was in." Cybersecurity experts said that Microsoft's use of a U.S. court order to persuade internet providers to take down the botnet servers is laudable.

— AP

● **TRUMP'S DOCTOR** said that the tests, taking in conjunction with other data, including viral load, have led him to conclude that Trump was not contagious.

asking for trouble when you do that," Fauci said.

Some medical experts have also voiced skepticism that Trump could be declared contagion-free so soon. And it was unclear what — if any — added precautions and safety measures the campaign planned to take to prevent the trip from further spreading a virus that has already infected so many of the president's closest aides and allies, including his campaign manager and the head of the Republican Party.

## Bipartisan Christian group opposes Don

**Washington, Oct. 13:** A group of prominent Christians from both sides of the aisle, including a past faith adviser to former President Barack Obama, is forming a political action committee designed to chip away at Christian support for President Donald Trump in the final weeks of the 2020 campaign.

Dubbed Not Our Faith, the new super PAC plans to roll out six-figure TV and digital ads focused on Christian voters — particularly the evangelical and Catholic voters who helped power Trump to victory in

2016. Its first digital ad, set to run in Michigan and Pennsylvania, takes sharp aim at Trump's claim to a foothold with Christians.

The ad says Trump "has used Christianity for his own purposes," invoking imagery of the Republican president's photo on outside a historic Washington church amid this summer's racial justice demonstrations. Urging Christians to break from Trump, the ad states that they "don't need Trump to save them. The truth is that Trump needs Christians to save his failing campaign."

## NIKKI HALEY SLAMS BIDEN, HARRIS FOR THEIR POLICIES

**Washington, Oct. 13:** Popular Republican politician Nikki Haley has hit out at Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden for being a "status quo" on China and wanting to revive the Iran nuclear deal while accusing his running mate and Senator Kamala Harris for advancing the leftist agenda.

Indian-American Haley, 48, had so far refrained from publicly criticising 55-year old Harris, has now come out in open against the California Senator's policies, which the former US Ambassador to the UN said was reflective of Harris' leftist agenda.

"Harris pledged to repeal the 2017 tax cut and invest in the American people, revealing the left's fundamental philosophy that government is better equipped to spend people's money than the people themselves," she said in a tweet. Haley is one of the most popular Republican politicians in the US after Trump and is seen as party's potential presidential candidate in 2024. The two-term Governor of South Carolina, Haley was the first Cabinet-ranking Indian-American in any presidential administration.



Donald Trump

## I'LL GIVE YOU'LL A BIG FAT KISS, SAYS TRUMP

**Sanford (US), Oct. 13:** Deprived of his beloved campaign trail for 10 days by Covid-19, President Donald Trump took center stage again on Monday in Florida, vowing that he is in "great shape" with 22 days to go until he faces Joe Biden in the election.

"I went through it and now they say I'm immune," Trump told a cheering crowd in Sanford, near Orlando, few of whom wore masks.

"I feel so powerful. I'll walk in there, I'll kiss everyone in that audience. I'll kiss the guys and the beautiful women, just give you a big fat kiss."

Trump's medical team announced he had tested negative and was no longer contagious as he jetted to Florida — the first of four battleground states he plans to visit over the next four days. His claim of immunity is unproven.

— AFP

## SECOND J&amp;J VACCINE TRIAL HALTED OVER ILLNESS

**New Brunswick (US), Oct. 13:** A late-stage study of Johnson & Johnson's Covid-19 vaccine candidate has been paused while the company investigates whether a study participant's "unexplained illness" is related to the shot.

The company said in a statement on Monday evening that illnesses, accidents and other so-called adverse events "are an expected part of any clinical study, especially large studies," but that its physicians and a safety monitoring panel would try to determine what might have caused the illness.

The pause is at least the second such hold to occur among several vaccines that have reached large-scale final tests in the US. The company declined to reveal any more details about the illness, citing the participant's privacy. Temporary stoppages of large medical studies are relatively common. Few are made public in typical drug trials, but the work to make a Coronavirus vaccine has raised the stakes on these kinds of complications.

Companies are required to investigate any serious or unexpected reaction that occurs during drug testing. Given that such tests are done on tens of thousands of people, some medical problems are a coincidence. In fact, one of the first steps the company said it will take is to determine if the person received the vaccine or a placebo. The halt was first reported by the health news site STAT.

— AP

## Day of the Race



A demonstrator paints the helmet of a riot police officer near a statue of Christopher Columbus which was surrounded by a metal fence for protection, during Columbus Day in Mexico City, on Tuesday, October 12 commemorates the arrival of Columbus to America in 1492, which in Mexico is called the 'Day of the Race'. — AFP

## Chinese FM terms US Indo-Pacific strategy a "huge security risk"

**Kuala Lumpur, Oct. 13:** The United States poses a "huge security risk" to Asia by pushing to boost engagement with the region, China's foreign minister said on Tuesday during a tour of Southeast Asia, where Beijing and Washington are locked in a battle for influence.

Speaking in Malaysia, Wang Yi said the US's real aim is "to build an Indo-Pacific NATO," in a strategy he said harkened back to the Cold War. Washington is trying to "stir up confrontation among different groups and blocs, and stir up geopolitical competition

● **WANG'S TONE** is typical of China's increasingly hard-line approach to disputes with Washington.

while maintaining the pre-dominance and hegemony system of the US," Wang said at a joint news conference with his Malaysian counterpart, Hishammuddin Hussein. "In this sense, this strategy itself is a huge security risk," Wang said.

Wang also urged Southeast Asian nations, which are aiming to draw up a code of conduct with China in the South China

Sea, to remove "external disruption" in the disputed waters, but did not elaborate. Wang's tone is typical of China's increasingly hard-line approach to disputes with Washington as it seeks to capitalise on political divisions within the US and a perceived decline in America's global influence to advance its own foreign policy aims.

China's aggressive moves to assert its territorial claims in the South China Sea, through which a third of global shipping passes, have drawn rebuke from the United States and become a flashpoint for a region in which Southeast

Asian nations Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei all have rival claims. Hishammuddin said the disputes over the South China Sea must be resolved peacefully through regional dialogue.

The US says its Indo-Pacific engagement framework supports sovereignty, transparency, good governance and a rules-based order, among other things. By using the term "Indo-Pacific," the US also wants to propagate the idea that the region stretches far beyond China's backyard and the tiger economies of East Asia to include the Indian Ocean.

— AP

## COVID | IMPACT

## Pandemic to leave deep scars on world economy, says Gita

## IMF puts total economic loss at \$28tn

**Washington, Oct. 13:** The International Monetary Fund has scaled back its estimate of the hit to the global economy from Covid-19 this year but warned that the final bill for the pandemic would total \$28tn (£21.5tn) in lost output.

In its flagship world economic outlook, the IMF said a stronger than expected performance in the second and third quarters meant it believed glob-

al output would fall by 4.4 per cent in 2020 compared with the 5.2 per cent drop forecast during the summer.

But the Washington-based organisation said rising infection rates in some emerging market economies had forced it to pare back its estimate of the rebound in 2021 from 5.4 per cent to 5.2 per cent. The gap between rich and poor countries was growing, it added.

Gita Gopinath, the IMF's economic counsellor, described Covid-19 as the worst crisis since the Great Depression, and said the pandemic would leave deep and enduring scars caused by job losses, weaker investment and children being deprived of education.

"The cumulative loss in output relative to the pre-pandemic projected path is projected to grow from \$11tn over 2020-21 to \$28tn

over 2020-25," Gopinath said in a blog. "This represents a severe setback to the improvement in average living standards across all country groups."

The IMF said swift action by central banks had softened the impact of the damage to economic activity caused by lockdowns, and warned against the premature removal of support measures.

Gopinath said: "The considerable global fiscal sup-

port of close to \$12tn and the extensive rate cuts, liquidity injections, and asset purchases by central banks helped save lives and livelihoods and prevented a financial catastrophe."

With the UK announcing a tiered system of local lockdowns this week, Gopinath said that "to the extent possible, policies must aggressively focus on limiting persistent economic damage from this crisis".

— Agencies



## DECCAN Chronicle

14 OCTOBER 2020

# Demand stimulus on offer is too little

Spending to resuscitate the pandemic-hit economy will face longer delays because of the stalemate over making up for the revenue shortfall by way of GST. In the absence of an agreement on how to cover the Rs 2.35 lakh crore shortfall expected by March 2021, state governments will be left largely to their own devices to work out how to pick themselves up after heavy expenditure on tackling the coronavirus and looking after the sick over the last several months, in which time their SGDP would have also slackened considerably. The data flow on Monday from the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) are indicators of the extent of the bind the Indian economy is in even as rising headline inflation flashes warning signs over the future of the accommodative stance of RBI's monetary policy, because rising inflation may not be transitory as the MPC may have perceived it to be.

In the face of dispiriting data, which however is common enough in a phase when a second wave of the coronavirus is threatening the world economy, came the somewhat good news over a spending stimulus estimated at around ₹73,000 crores declared by the finance minister. If states also follow suit and gladden their employees with sops and festival cash advances, the stimulus could touch ₹1 lakh crore. Even that would appear to be a drop in the ocean in a country with a GDP close to three trillion dollars. All the fiscal stimulus put together would amount to just about 1.2 per cent of GDP, including the grandstanding announcements. The much trumpeted ₹20 lakh crore stimulus had more to do with lines of credit to industry and MSMEs rather than cash payments that several countries like the US, UK, Japan and South Korea made to come to the aid of those worst hit by the pandemic — people, companies and trade.

In the final analysis, the Centre has shown a distinct lack of imagination in opening up the purse strings at a time when governments had to contribute the most to get the economies going again. Handing out lollipops to babus and the rich by way of tax write-offs through the purchase of consumer durables in lieu of leave travel concession is indicative of a conservative mindset just when a lot more was called for. Cash doles to the poorest — which some state governments did attempt but with too little in their kitty to make a real difference to lives and livelihoods of the most stricken — and tax breaks to the middle class to stimulate festive demand would have been ideal ways to show that governments at the Centre and the states were willing to cover the interests of all. The enormity of the growth hit will become known as we transit from the strict lockdowns to the final “unlock”, which is when the relatively small size of the demand stimulus will show up how niggardly the Centre has been and that very quality is reflected in its reluctance to fulfil sovereign guarantees on the GST growth shortfall.

## Keep Bollywood unfettered

Bollywood, cricket, politics. There is hardly an Indian citizen not occupied by any of the above. If there is a single activity that has a hold on the minds of the general public, and is arguably the lever to mould them, it is that of storytelling as performed by Indian cinema. A story has more power than it is usually given credit for. It is, at its core, the purveyor of an idea. More than television news, newspapers or literature in the various languages, the Hindi film industry is the single largest vehicle of ideas, and for long it has enacted its roles of both thought pioneer as well as force multiplier against Indian conservatism, caste tyrannies and non-egalitarian power structures. That role is now being challenged.

Quite aside from propaganda assisted by sections of the media that this industry is a den of drugs, nepotism, corruption and other venal vices, all of which are nonetheless pervasive in almost every field and walk of life, and the hounding of personalities like Deepika Padukone and Anurag Kashyap whose political opinions differ from the official line, both have, at different times, registered their protest against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, there is the very noteworthy departure from the trend of realist and experimental, creative, filmmaking that had begun in the early Oughties and continued to entertain us through the Twenty-tens. Starting from *Uri: The Surgical Strike* through *Kesari* to *Manikarnika*, many prominent and officially publicised films released in the last two years, including super-duper hits like *War*, *Pad Man* and *Padmaavat*, had a militaristic or moralistic theme. Wearing its patriotism on its sleeve, the National Film Development Corporation organised an online patriotic film festival as part of the Independence Day celebrations this year. It must be remembered that the Joseph McCarthy era witch-hunts and Hollywood blacklists effectively ended the careers of hundreds of directors, actors and writers.

Very recently, auteur Karan Johar has tweeted that the “film fraternity” will come together to celebrate the hoary “valour, values and the culture of India”. It is, however, less unexpected than the tweet of his industry colleague, Vivek Agnihotri, who has publicly opined that Bollywood has “destroyed Indian culture”. The crony capitalist nexus is well-known. Now with government forces infiltrating erstwhile independent institutions like banks, universities and the judiciary and the nationalist versus anti-national rhetoric drowning all reason, alarm bells have rung. It is time to issue a caveat. What we are witnessing today is the rise of “Godi Bollywood” following a similar rise of the “Godi media”.

### DECCAN CHRONICLE

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Subhani



# Can CMs help India set up political alternative?



Sanjiwan Sahni

How will a credible challenger to the incumbent Prime Minister emerge?

The current wisdom, and most opinion polls, indicate that the PM's popularity is overwhelming, leading to the TINA (there is no alternative) factor.

The largest Opposition party's leadership, even as it asks the government the right questions, fails to make any impact. There is a lack of credibility in its present leadership and little hope that it will improve in a hurry.

The divided Opposition also hasn't been able to throw up a candidate who will hold appeal on a pan-India basis. Many chief ministers and other regional leaders have local spheres of influence, but don't have a presence in most areas outside their direct domain. As a result, the nation doesn't have a credible leader in sight who could effectively take on the PM, let alone be considered as a replacement.

The question is — how will one emerge?

Over time, India has thrown up regional leaders, particularly CMs, who had the ability and in fact have shouldered the responsibility of leading the country. Even the present PM falls into that category. Experience as a CM is an important ingredient in the grooming of a Prime Minister. It's not necessarily a sufficient one, but certainly an indicator of where potential challengers could emerge.

Recent developments, including but not limited to a steep decline in economic performance, most recently reflected by the 23.9 per cent negative GDP growth; using majoritarianism to impose divisive steps like the CAA, NRC, and the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A of the Constitution, are illustrative. The domination of multimedia communications to reinforce this divisive agenda, dilution

of protective democratic institutions are all well known, but have not been catalysts of bringing about changed electoral attitudes. This is not new. But it seems that recent developments which have aggravated friction in Centre-state ties could become a powerful trigger, which if properly institutionalised and propagated, might provide the route to change.

What is suggested is the creation of an institutionalised forum that could become one of the supportive pillars of democracy. The compulsion to create such an institution will come from the growing Centre-state rifts. The reneging on GST commitments, intruding on the states' domain in agriculture to pass legislation without due consultation, amending laws to take control of the cooperative finance sector and authoritarian use of the Disaster Management Act for centralised pandemic management are some examples.

These should become the trigger for states (in practice, non-BJP states) to join hands in a formal forum. This could comprise the CMs and leaders of the Opposition as members. This would obviously be across party lines, but the membership wouldn't be decided by political parties. It would comprise the elected representatives in states, including CMs and LOPs, and it could in turn create a body of experienced bureaucrats, legal experts and eminent citizens both to advise the forum headed by CMs as well as act as spokespersons.

The CMs will have credible reach in their states and perhaps beyond. The spokespersons and experts would send appropriately approved messages on behalf of the forum, not themselves. Therefore, it would not rest on their individual credibility, but messaging from a mass based politically credible entity.

Think of such a body that could include people

like Raghuram Rajan, Arvind Subramanian, Ravish Kumar, P. Chidambaram, Kapil Sibal, Derek O'Brien, Shashi Tharoor and others that the CMs/LOPs and other leaders with their ear to the ground would choose. In essence, good communication skills would be backed by experience to send collective messages on matters of importance to the people.

The focus of coordination would be Centre-state relations, but clearly it would also include matters of importance to the nation as a whole.

The process of creating such an institution is far less complex and more administratively feasible than trying to create alliances between parties and multiple states. The forum also has the advantage of creating a competitive environment where state CMs and LOPs could compete for visibility to get their points of view across to their constituents and also become examples for a wider audience. This process would throw up potential leaders who would get wider acceptability from their states as well as the national audience.

There are several important issues that remain on the backburner, but which need to be debated and brought to the forefront. For the present, we will use one example as an illustration of what if collectively rather than individually brought into the public domain would help bring a new important discourse of material relevance to change the course of events in India.

Today, the nationalism card is equated with propagating India's strength. Combined with majoritarianism, aggressive stances have been taken both internally and now increasingly externally.

**What is suggested is the creation of an institutionalised forum that could become one of the supportive pillars of democracy. The compulsion to create such an institution will come from the growing Centre-state rifts.**

Electoral benefits have followed.

However, there is no mention, leave alone widespread understanding, of the costs of such a policy. The costs of controlling Kashmir after Article 370's abrogation, internal insurgencies, and in some ways the minorities, must be researched, assessed and broadcast. The aggressive stances with Pakistan and China have now been supplemented by differences with Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. All these entail huge costs, which the country can ill afford to bear, keeping in mind the fragile economic situation, the high level of poverty and the government's inability to provide the required stimulus.

There is no way India can achieve the growth levels it aspires to with the continuation of policies that in fact are fighting internal-external battles at the expense of funding and alleviating poverty.

What is the alternative?

Modern defence systems can offer maximum deterrence through nuclear capability and technological edge, including digital and IT innovations. This combined with diplomacy should be our key negotiating stance externally. Even Pakistan uses nuclear deterrence to keep us from taking any major military initiatives.

Internally, the divisive agenda should be replaced by policies that help the State carry along all its citizens. Most important, and relevant to the suggested changes, is cooperation rather than friction between New Delhi and the states. No other initiative will be more conducive to rapid progress all around and achieving the growth targets needed to alleviate poverty. Only a collective forum can initiate a meaningful dialogue on issues like nationalism. With properly researched facts, political will and diplomatic endeavours, this is eminently achievable. A transformation could follow peace could replace aggression all around.

*The writer is a management and economic adviser*

## LETTERS

### JUDICIARY

The opinion of AP Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy is very important (*Judiciary must keep itself above suspicion, DC, Oct. 13*). At the same time it should be mentioned that he had politicised the complaint given to CJI of SC (on one SC Judge and some AP HC judges), by releasing it to media. Releasing it to the media amounts to expression of lack of faith in CJI office.

**B. Raghunadha Rao**  
Hyderabad

### SPENDING SOPS

The move of the finance ministry to extend LTC sops, festival loans to Central government staff aims to increase spending. It would be worthwhile to increase demand by the government spending through MGNREGA programme. This will benefit the needy.

**P.R. Ravinder**  
Hyderabad

### TTD DARSHANS

The TTD must recall and reveal the ancient *Oppondam* (truce) between Varaha Swamy and Venkateswara Swamy that the devotees who takes darshan of Varaha Swamy first and Venkateswara Swamy next will surely get their wishes fulfilled. The TTD must start dharma darshan queue likewise

**Padmavathi Vikram Raj**  
Hyderabad

## 50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

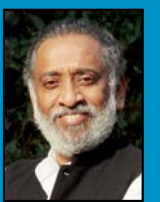
### Nagarjunasagar to be international tourist centre

By a staff reporter  
HYDERABAD, Oct. 13  
The Tourist Department of the Government of India and the India Tourism Development Corporation have committed to develop the Nagarjunasagar Project in the State as an international tourist centre.

The proposals for making the Nagarjunasagar as a major tourist attraction included building up of a house guest with 40 rooms, provision of 3 hydro-foil boats, 2 launches and a swimming pool.

Disclosing this to reporters State Minister for Women's Welfare and Tourism, Mrs Roda Mistry said here today that the Director-General of Tourism, Mr. S. K. Roy, who is also the Chairman of the India Tourism Development Corporation and Mr. B. N. Raman, Additional Director General of Tourism had already visited the projects in this connection.

Dilip Cherian  
Dilli Ka Babu



## RAW & IB set to teach tax officers about 'tradecraft'

Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officers trying to nab economic offenders will now get an edge after undergoing training from spooks. Officers from the nation's premier intelligence agencies, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and Intelligence Bureau (IB), have been roped in to train them in intelligence “tradecraft”.

Sources say that revenue officers from the Enforcement Directorate, income tax, Serious Fraud Investigation Office, CBI and Directorate of Revenue Intelligence will be training in gathering intelligence and handling digital and forensic evidence. The training programme is being conducted by the Central Economic Intelligence Bureau (CEIB) of the finance ministry.

Apparently, nine course modules have been developed. While RAW and IB sleuths will conduct training

of Group A officers of the Indian Revenue Service, some other modules are open to officers starting from superintendent level up to principal commissioners. Other courses include investigating economic crimes in the securities market, trade-based money laundering and also legal aspects. Hopefully, after training these “specialists” will make economic offenders think twice before violating the law.

### TRANSFER TRAVAILS OF A SENIOR COP

Frequent transfer is a fait accompli in government. But Pimpri-Chinchwad police commissioner Sandeep Bishnoi who was recently transferred has approached the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) challenging his transfer order.

He was moved out from his post in less than a year. He has been suc-

ceeded by Krishna Prakash, a 1998-batch IPS officer.

Mr Bishnoi has stated that “such abrupt transfers without justification or valid reason is contrary to law and ought to be set aside”. Mr Bishnoi and Mr Prakash are part of a major reshuffle carried out by the state government in which around 50 officials were transferred.

Mr Prakash is the third police commissioner of Pimpri-Chinchwad in two years after the state government established the commissionerate in the industrial town, as law and order became a challenge following a rise in the number of street crimes and cases of vandalism. Mr Bishnoi's predecessor, senior IPS officer R.K. Padmanabhan, too was transferred before completing two years in office.

**ADHOCISM MAY UNDERMINE RAILWAY REFORMS**

After the heady announcement heralding long-awaited reforms, Indian Railways is moving cautiously on the implementation. Some observers are surprised at the slow pace. From the time when Covid-19 struck and passenger rail traffic almost stopped, the Railways have had plenty of time on its hands to consider its internal rearrangement.

While all posts of members of the Railway Board are ex-cadre now and should be filled with suitable officers, based on seniority and residual service, the railway ministry is edging ahead with great caution. Sources say that the post of director general of HR (DGGHR) was filled with an Indian Railway Personnel Service (IRPS) officer, even though more senior officers from other cadres are eligible and available. It is also being reported that the post of member, traffic and

rolling stock, is likely to be given to an officer from the Indian Railways Service of Electrical Engineers (IRSEE). Similarly, there seems to be a proposal to appoint the member (finance) from the Indian Railways Accounts Service (IRAS).

So far so good. But there is some grumbling among the Indian Railways Service of Engineers (IRSE) and Indian Railways Service of Mechanical Engineers (IRSM), which seem to have lost out on apex grade posts to the other services in the new plan.

According to sources, the railway ministry is still not drafted the recruitment rules, which may explain the sense of ad-hocism prevailing in the ministry's actions.

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quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	40,625.51	0.08
Nifty 50	11,934.50	0.03
S&P 500*	3,520.22	-0.40
Dollar (₹)	73.35	-0.09
Pound Sterling (₹)	95.61	-0.14
Euro (₹)	86.45	0.09
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	51,989*133	0.25
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	42.55	0.83
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.904	0.005
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.737	-0.038

SIP inflows drop for 6th month in September

Investment in mutual funds through SIPs remained lacklustre with inflow dropping for the sixth-consecutive month to Rs 7,788 crore in September amid a challenging economic environment. The trend is expected to reverse only slowly as investors feel more confident to save more once their own income stream stabilises, said Vidya Bala, co-founder of Prime-investor.in. The industry added 7.37 lakh folios last month.

Deepak Kochhar sent back to ED custody



A special court in Mumbai remanded Deepak Kochhar, husband of former ICICI Bank CEO Chanda Kochhar, in the custody of the Enforcement Directorate till Oct. 17. Deepak Kochhar was arrested by the ED in Sept. under the PMLA in the ICICI Bank-Videocon money laundering case. He was remanded to the ED custody till Sept. 19, but it was suspended after he tested positive for coronavirus and was sent to judicial custody.

EPFO launches WhatsApp helpline service

Retirement fund body EPFO has launched a WhatsApp helpline service for speedy redressal of grievances of its subscribers, the labour ministry said. This facility is in addition to other means of grievance redressal forums which include EPFIGMS portal, CPGRAMS, social media platforms (Facebook & Twitter) and a 24x7 call centre. With WhatsApp, PF subscribers can interact directly with EPFO's regional offices.

Piaggio offers up to ₹10K benefits on Vespa, Aprilia

Italian automaker Piaggio announced benefits worth up to Rs 10,000 on the purchase of Vespa and Aprilia scooters as part of festive sales offer. The offer entails insurance benefit of up to Rs 7,000, complementary accessories worth upto Rs 4,000 and e-commerce booking benefit of Rs 2,000. The release stated, could be availed by Nov. 16, Piaggio India said. The firm is also offering free service.



India's GDP may contract by 10.3% in 2020

IMF projects 8.8% growth next year

LALIT K JHA WASHINGTON, OCT. 13

The Indian economy is projected to contract by a massive 10.3 per cent this year, the International Monetary Fund said on Tuesday. However, India is likely to bounce back with an impressive 8.8 per cent growth rate in 2021, thus regaining the position of the fastest growing emerging economy, surpassing China's projected growth rate of 8.2 per cent, the IMF said in its latest World Economic Outlook report.

Released ahead of the annual meetings of the IMF and the World Bank, the report said global growth would contract by 4.4 per cent this year and bounce back to 5.2 per cent in 2021.

America's economy is projected to contract by 5.8 per cent in 2020 and grow by 3.9 per cent the next year. China is the only country, among the major economies, to show a positive growth rate of 1.9 per cent in 2020, it said.

The IMF in its report said that revisions to the forecast are particularly large for India, where GDP contracted much more severely than expected in the second quarter. "As a result, the economy is projected to contract by 10.3 per cent in 2020, before rebounding by 8.8 per cent in 2021," it said. In 2019, India's growth rate was 4.2 per cent. —PTI



\$6 trillion wiped off global economy: Unctad

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, OCT. 13

The lockdown measures in India could lead to a sharp recession in 2020. Despite a projected rebound in 2021, the contraction registered in 2020 could translate into a permanent income loss for the country, finds the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). In the wake of the pandemic shocks, the global economy will contract by an estimated 4.3 per cent this year, leaving global output short by over \$6 trillion by the year end of what economists had expected it to be before the Covid-19 pathogen began to spread, says the UNCTAD Trade and

Development Report 2020.

The UN agency expects South Asia and South-East Asia to contract 4.8 per cent and 2.2 per cent, respectively, in 2020 and recover 3.9 per cent and 4.3 per cent, respectively, in 2021.

"In the case of India, the baseline scenario is a sharp recession in 2020 as strict lockdown measures to stem the virus' spread brought many productive activities to a halt across the country. Although we expect a rebound in 2021 in line with the growth rates of the Indian economy in recent years, the contraction registered in 2020 is likely to translate into a permanent income loss," finds the report. —Bloomberg

China's stock market tops \$10 trillion

Oct. 13: Chinese domestic equities are worth more than \$10 trillion for the first time since 2015, when a record crash erased half the market's value in months and saddled millions of investors with losses.

The world's second-largest stock market has added \$3.3 trillion since a low in March, helped by Beijing's policies to encourage equity trading, a flurry of new listings and the strengthening yuan. Stocks have been close to the \$10 trillion milestone since July, when China's government acted to tame a speculative rally that had suddenly pushed a gauge of large caps near a 12-year high. The country's total market capitalisation is now \$10.04 trillion and just shy of the all-time high, according to data compiled by Bloomberg as of October 12. The US has the world's most valuable stock market at \$38.3 trillion.

Chinese shares have rallied since a long holiday break on optimism the government will introduce reforms to turn the region around Shenzhen into a global technology hub and that the ruling Communist Party will introduce policies to stimulate demand when it holds a major meeting later this month. Equities surged over the summer as margin debt climbed at the fastest pace since 2015 and turnover soared.

Covid cover can be renewed or merged into other policy

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, OCT. 13

The insurance regulator on Tuesday allowed insurance companies to offer policyholders who have bought Covid-specific insurance covers to either renew, migrate or port their policies.

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai) on Tuesday issued revised guidelines in this regard. By the guidelines, 'Corona Kavach' and 'Corona Rakshak' policies of any tenure can be renewed for further terms of three-and-a-half months, six-and-a-half months or nine-and-a-half months, as per the option exercised by the policyholder, subject to the underwriting policy of the insurer.

Both the policies can be renewed till March 31, 2021. Similarly such policyholders can also port to a comprehensive



health plan.

Where the policy is renewed, an additional waiting period of 15 days should not be imposed and the coverage has to be continued seamlessly.

During renewal, policyholders can enhance the sum insured. For any increase in the sum insured, the waiting period shall start afresh only for the enhanced portion of the sum insured, said the regulator.

Renewals may be done before the expiry of the existing policy contract

said the Irdai in a circular issued to non-life and pure health insurance companies.

Inaugurated in July, Corona Kavach is an indemnity plan that will cover hospitalisation expenses. The cost of treatment for any comorbid condition, including pre-existing comorbid conditions along with the treatment for Covid-19, will be covered under this policy.

The sum insured in Corona Kavach policy ranges from Rs 50,000 to Rs 5 lakh. On the other hand, Corona Rakshak is a fixed benefit plan in which if a policyholder is diagnosed with Covid-19 and hospitalised for three days, a fixed amount (sum insured) will be paid by the insurance companies. For Corona Rakshak Policy, the minimum sum insured would be Rs 50,000 and the maximum limit is set at Rs 2.5 lakh.

Wipro net falls 3.4%; buyback at ₹9,500 cr

New Delhi, Oct. 13: IT services major Wipro on Tuesday posted a 3.4 per cent decline in consolidated net profit to Rs 2,465.7 crore in the three months ended September and projected revenue growth in the December quarter even as it announced a plan to buyback shares worth up to Rs 9,500 crore.

The Bengaluru-based company, which had a net profit (attributable to equity holders of the company) at Rs 2,552.7 crore in the year-ago period, recorded

almost flat year-on-year revenue growth at Rs 15,114.5 crore in the latest September quarter.

On a quarter-on-quarter basis, the company's net profit climbed over 3 per cent while revenue was up by little over 1 per cent.

Wipro CEO and MD Thierry Delaporte said the demand environment has improved from the first quarter even though the pace of decision making remains a bit slower on the larger deals.

The buyback proposal,

which is subject to shareholders' approval, will involve purchase of up to 23.75 crore equity shares, representing 4.16 per cent of the company's total paid-up equity capital, at Rs 400 per share. The buyback size will be up to Rs 9,500 crore and the price of Rs 400 per scrip is more than 6 per cent higher than the company's closing price of Rs 375.5 apiece on the BSE on Tuesday. Wipro's rival TCS unveiled a Rs 16,000 crore share buyback plan last week. —PTI

Upside seen for beaten down Vedanta stock

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, OCT. 13

Vedanta, which failed in its bid to delist from the stock exchanges last week, is back in brokerages' focus, with a positive outlook, as the valuation of the stock, after the sharp slump post-delisting fiasco, is looking attractive.

Vedanta fell more than 15 per cent on Monday from a high of Rs 122 to Rs 94.8 on the BSE, as the company's delisting process got aborted on Friday. But on Tuesday Vedanta gained 2.78 per cent to close at Rs 99.65 on the BSE.

"While the stock will continue to stay listed on the exchanges, and may bear the brunt of failed attempt at de-listing in the near term, the focus will be on how Vedanta will utilise the \$3.15 billion (the debt it raised for delisting) and what could be the operating performance over the next few quarters," said Hemang Jani, head-equity strategy, Motilal Oswal Financial Services. "Discussion around capital allocation will dominate investor concerns, while the operating performance of mining com-

panies is getting better due to firm commodity prices globally. Historically for companies announcing the de-listing, the stock (post failed attempt at delisting) tends to reach the levels before the buy back, which in case of Vedanta was around Rs. 85-90. Book value of Vedanta as of March 31, 2020 was Rs 147," Jani said.

"While a buyback may not be considered in order to make the next attempt at delisting successful, a generous dividend can be expected given the strong cash on the balance sheet and the need of liquidity by promoters. But, any increase in inter company loans will be a negative," Jani added.

Vikas Jain, senior research analyst, Reliance Securities said, "The delisting for Vedanta has failed as the floor price was very low and in the reverse book building it could not get the desired quantity of shares. We believe as the share price has already declined by 40 per cent over the past three days and buyback is being cancelled we could see some bounce back to near-term highs of 120 levels." —PTI

GST: Centre permits 20 states to raise ₹68,825 crore

New Delhi, Oct. 13: The Centre on Tuesday permitted 20 states to raise Rs 68,825 crore through open market borrowings to bridge the GST revenue shortfall.

The decision came a day after the GST Council meeting failed to reach a consensus over the Centre's proposal of states borrowing against future GST collections to make up for the shortfall.

The projected total compensation shortfall in the current fiscal stands at Rs 2.35 lakh crore.

The Centre had in August given two options to the states—to borrow either Rs 97,000 crore from a special window facilitated by the RBI or Rs 2.35 lakh crore from the market. It had also proposed extending the compensation cess levied on luxury, demerit and sin goods beyond 2022.

The Department of Expenditure has granted permission to 20 states to raise an additional Rs 68,825 crore through open market borrowings, an official release said. —PTI

Fiscal impact of festival package to be 0.16-0.2% of GDP: Analysts

SANGEETHA G. CHENNAI, OCT. 13

The government measures announced on Monday to boost consumer demand by Rs 1 lakh crore would have a fiscal impact of Rs 31,600 crore to Rs 40,000 crore on the Centre, depending on how they play out. The expenditure will translate into 1.16 per cent to 0.2 per cent of the GDP.

According to analysts, apart from the Rs 25,000-crore additional capital expenditure provided for various infrastructure/capacity building projects, the fiscal impact of the other components in the package is negligible.

Barclays India estimates that the actual fiscal cost of the measures will be Rs 31,600 crore or 0.16 per cent of the GDP. SBI estimates that Rs 40,000 crore is the maximum additional cash outgo for the Centre during the current fiscal, which is around 0.21 per cent of GDP.

In a bid to boost to manufacturing and consumption in the economy, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday announced payment of

cash in lieu of Leave Travel Concession and Rs 10,000 festival advance to government employees, with certain riders. Besides, she also announced additional capital spending and Rs 12,000 crore interest-free loan to states.

The government estimates the LTC scheme would cost Rs 5,675 crore for the Centre and Rs 1,900 crore for public sector banks and enterprises. As the employee has to buy goods and services worth three times the travel fare and one time the leave encashment received, the GST collected at 12 per cent and above will largely offset the extra cost that may be incurred on the government's balance sheet.

For instance, an employee eligible for business travel will get Rs 36,000 per person. For a family of four this works out to Rs 1,44,000. The total purchases he has to make works out to Rs 4,32,000 and on this he would pay a GST amount of Rs 1,03,680.

"The scheme is unlikely to work unless the government decides to pay the GST component also over

and above the fare entitlement amount as is done by many PSBs. We believe only around 10-15 per cent employees would use the LTC Scheme, says the SBI research report, Ecowrap.

Kruti Shah, economist, Emkay Global Financial Services, feels the demand projections are difficult to achieve. "The estimates could be achieved only if consumers behave in the way they are expected to. While some government employees might opt it, purchases worth Rs 28,000 crore by private sector employees (as assumed by the government) are very unlikely," she said.

As for the interest-free festival advance of Rs 10,000 for employees, up to a total of Rs 4,000 crore, the money will come back to the government in 10 instalments and 6 or 7 per cent interest incurred on this Rs 4,000 crore by the government will have almost nil impact.

"Similarly, the Rs 12,000-crore interest-free 50-year loan to states will have to be repaid and the interest part will not be a major burden on the Centre," said Rahul Bajoria, chief India economist, Barclays.

Maruti Alto hits 40L sales milestone in 20 years

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, OCT. 13

Maruti Suzuki, India's biggest car maker, on Tuesday said its popular Alto hatchback had hit the 40-lakh sales milestone over a span of 20 years in the fiercely competitive car market.

Undoubtedly, the Alto has established itself as a decent entry-level car in the market. The current version of the Alto starts at Rs 2.94 lakh at Delhi showroom.

The Maruti Suzuki Alto underwent various changes in the last 20 years, becoming a bit more feature-rich with every upgrade.

Launched back in 2000, the car has been the preferred choice of many first-time buyers.

The Alto has been ruling the Indian market by being the best selling car for the past 16 years.

The entry level car benefits from its compact design, easy manoeuvrability, high fuel-efficiency, upgraded safety, comfort features and low cost of acquisition. It today also offers features such as touchscreen Smart-Play infotainment system, ABS with EBD, dual tone interiors and dual airbags, among others.

Maruti Alto is India's first BS6 compliant entry-level car with aerodynamic design and latest safety features. It has a certified fuel efficiency of 22.05 km/litre for petrol and 31.56 km/kg for CNG.

Alto reached the milestone of 10 lakh sales in 2008 which doubled to 20 lakh units in 2012. This was followed by 30 lakh units in 2016 before reaching 40 lakhs in August 2020.

"Nearly 76 per cent of Alto customers have selected it as their first car in 2019-20 which has further increased to 84 per cent for the current year," Shashank Srivastava, ED, marketing & sales at Maruti Suzuki India, said.

CHANGING ENERGY-MIX

Renewables will push coal off the grid, taking 80% of demand growth by 2030

Three takeaways from IEA's energy outlook

JAMES HERRON OCT. 13

Once a year, the International Energy Agency attempts to impose some order on the chaotic world of oil, gas, power and carbon by publishing detailed scenarios on how the next few decades might unfold.

Here are the three big takeaways from the 2020 World Energy Outlook, published on Tuesday:

Forecasting is harder than ever

Predicting the future of energy is an even greater challenge than usual this year, coming after what the IEA described as a disruption not seen since "World Wars and the Great Depression." Just about every global trend in fuel and power demand pivots

on questions more suited to an epidemiologist than an energy expert: Will there be an effective and widely available vaccine for Covid-19? Will habits learned during lockdown, such as remote working and an aversion to flying, outlast the pandemic?

The IEA attempted to cut through this knot by offering one main scenario in which the pandemic is brought under control next year, and another that features prolonged virus outbreaks and lockdowns.

The gulf between the two outlooks is vast.

In the former, oil use recovers by 2023, in the latter it takes as long as a decade. Global electricity demand in 2030 in the pessimistic case is 27,000 terawatt hours lower than in the main scenario, equivalent to twice the consumption of Japan.



Coal is dying, long live solar The fuel that was once the staple of utilities will probably never return to pre-pandemic levels of demand. By 2040, coal's share of the energy mix will fall below 20 per cent for the first time since the industrial revolution, the IEA said.

Meanwhile, power produced from solar photovoltaics has become cheaper than electricity from plants fired by fossil fuels in most nations. Renewables will push coal off the grid, taking 80 per cent of demand growth by 2030.

"I see solar becoming the new king of the world's electricity markets," said Fatih Birol, the executive director of the IEA. "Based on today's policy settings, it's on track to set new records for deployment every year after 2022."

No peak on the horizon

Predictions of peak oil demand are very much in fashion, as even oil giants like BP Plc say consumption may never again reach the heights seen in 2019. The IEA, formed in response to

the oil shocks of the 1970s and duty-bound to preserve the security of energy supplies, has long resisted such predictions.

The agency stuck to that position this year. Even its most pessimistic Covid-19 scenario showed petroleum consumption regaining pre-pandemic levels by the latter part of this decade, and plateauing there in the 2030s.

"In the absence of a larger shift in policies, it is still too early to foresee a rapid decline in oil demand," the report said.

Even so, the agency tiptoed closer than ever to an acknowledgment that the petroleum industry is facing an historic change. "The era of global oil demand growth will come to an end in the next decade," Birol said.

—Bloomberg



SHORT TAKES

Ronaldo tests Corona positive

**Lisbon:** Cristiano Ronaldo has tested positive for coronavirus, the Portuguese football federation announced on Tuesday. Ronaldo “is asymptomatic” and “will not play against Sweden” in Wednesday’s Nations League match, the federation said on its website.

The 35-year-old Juventus forward, who has been voted the world’s top player five times, played in Portugal’s goalless Nations League draw against France on Sunday.

Ronaldo has scored 101 goals for Portugal and will be a huge absence for his team against Sweden as they aim to hold on to top spot in their group.

The test result also means Ronaldo is a doubt for Juventus’ Champions League group match with Barcelona on October 28, which was set to pit Ronaldo against his old rival Lionel Messi. — *AFP*

Tokyo to hold gymnastics meet

**Tokyo:** Tokyo is planning to hold an international gymnastics meet next month that will exempt non-Japanese athletes from a 14-day quarantine period, an approach that might foreshadow planning for next year’s postponed Olympics.

The Japanese Gymnastics Association announced the meet will feature athletes from the United States, Russia, China and Japan. The one-day event is set for November 8 at the Yoyogi National Gymnasium.

The Japanese news agency Kyodo reported that 2,000 fans will be allowed to attend, and it said athletes’ travel will be restricted while in the country.

Kyodo said the non-Japanese athletes will take a polymerase chain reaction test before they leave home, and will also be tested daily in Japan. — *AP*

Wawrinka edges Evans in 1st round

**St. Petersburg:** Stan Wawrinka saved three match points to achieve a comeback win over Dan Evans and reach the second round of the St. Petersburg Open, after the tournament was disrupted by an unnamed player’s coronavirus case.

Serving to stay in the match at 5-6 down in the second, Wawrinka gave Evans three chances to seal the match but saved them all and then won the second-set tiebreaker and deciding set to complete a 3-6, 7-6 (3), 7-5 victory.

Wawrinka next plays Evgeny Donskoy after the Russian wild card beat Egor Gerasimov 6-4, 7-6 (4). Cameron Norrie managed a surprise win where his fellow British player Evans couldn’t. Norrie hit 16 aces on his way to a 6-4, 4-6, 6-3 win over the eighth-seeded Taylor Fritz. — *AP*

Alex, Stefan look to extend good run

**Aragon:** Fresh off the best result of the year so far, the Repsol Honda Team land in Spain for the first of two races in Aragon primed for more as Marc Marquez continues his rehabilitation at home.

A pair of unforgettable rides in Le Mans saw Alex Marquez charge from 18th to second, taking a debut podium in just his ninth race and his first-time racing in the wet while Stefan Bradl shot through the field to take eighth after starting 21st. The Repsol Honda team arrives back in Spain for the Aragon Grand Prix with renewed vigour.

Claiming Honda’s 849th premier class podium, Alex Marquez proved to the world why he is a double World Champion and now a factory MotoGP rider.

Live on TV

CRICKET

IPL: Delhi Capitals vs Rajasthan Royals from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

FOOTBALL

UEFA Nations League: England vs Denmark from 12.15 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 3, HD; Croatia vs France from 12.15 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 2, HD; Portugal vs Sweden from 12.15 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 1, HD

WWE NXT

Bouts from 5.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 1, HD

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A KING-SIZE WIN

All-round Chennai beat Sunrisers by 20 runs

**Dubai, Oct. 13:** Chennai Super Kings defeated Sunrisers Hyderabad by 20 runs in their IPL match, here on Tuesday.

Shane Watson top-scored for the CSK with a 42-run knock while Sandeep Sharma was pick of the bowlers for SRH. The pacer took two wickets and conceded only 19 runs in his four overs.

Kane Williamson scored 57 for SRH while Dwayne Bravo and Karn Sharma took two wickets apiece for CSK.

Earlier, Watson and Ambati Rayudu shared a 81-run stand but Sunrisers Hyderabad did well to restrict Chennai Super Kings to 167 for 6.

Watson’s 42 off 38 balls was studded with one four and three maximums, while Rayudu’s hit three boundaries and two sixes in his 34-ball 41-run knock.

Jadeja (25 not out) and Dhoni (21 off 13 balls) played quick cameos smashing a total of five fours and two sixes between them in a stand of 32 in just 2.4 overs.

SRH bowlers did a commendable job, claiming four wickets for 47 runs in the last six overs. Sandeep Sharma (2/19), Khaleel Ahmed (2/45) and T. Natarajan (2/41) picked two wickets apiece.

Desperate to snap their two-match losing streak, CSK elected to bat. The three-time champions sent young England all-rounder Sam Curran instead of Watson to open the innings with Faf du Plessis.

Sharma drew first blood for the Sunrisers, remov-

SCORECARD

**Chennai Super Kings:** S Curran b S. Sharma 31, F du Plessis c Bairstow b S Sharma 0, S. Watson c Pandey b Natarajan 42, A Rayudu c Warner b K. Ahmed 41, M.S. Dhoni c Williamson b Natarajan 21, R Jadeja (not out) 25, D. Bravo b K. Ahmed 0, D Chahar (not out) 2. **Extras:** (lb-3, wd-2) 5. **Total:** (For 6 wkts, in 20 overs) 167. **FoW:** 1-10, 2-35, 3-116, 4-120, 5-152, 6-152. **Bowling:** S. Sharma 4-0-19-2, K. Ahmed 4-0-45-2, S. Nadeem 4-0-29-0, T. Natarajan 4-0-41-2, Rashid Khan 4-0-30-0. **Sunrisers Hyderabad:** D. Warner (c) c & b Curran 9, J. Bairstow b Jadeja 23, M. Pandey run out 4, K. Williamson c Thakur b Sharma 57, P. Garg c Jadeja b Sharma 16, V. Shankar c Jadeja b Bravo 12, Rashid Khan hit wicket b Thakur 14, S. Nadeem c & b Bravo 5, Sandeep Sharma (not out) 1, T. Natarajan (not out) 0. **Extras:** (w-6) 6. **Total:** (for 8 wkts, in 20 overs) 147. **FoW:** 1-23, 2-27, 3-59, 4-99, 5-117, 6-126, 7-146, 8-146. **Bowling:** D. Chahar 4-0-28-0, S. Curran 3-0-18-1, R. Jadeja 3-0-21-1, S. Thakur 2-0-10-1, K. Sharma 4-0-37-2, D. Bravo 3-0-25-2, P. Chawla 1-0-8-0.

ing du Plessis in the beginning of the third over. The South African sneaked one to Jonny Bairstow off the very first ball he faced for a golden duck. Curran was off to a bright start, smashing Ahmed for the first boundary of the match in the second over. — *PTI*



Shane Watson of Chennai Super Kings en route to his 42 against Sunrisers Hyderabad in an Indian Premier League match at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium on Tuesday. — *BCCI*

Royals eye revenge against Delhi

**Dubai, Oct. 13:** Bolstered by the arrival of Ben Stokes, Rajasthan Royals will hope for a stronger show from their slightly off-colour top order when the side try to settle scores against second-placed Delhi Capitals in their return leg IPL match here on Wednesday.

The Capitals had beaten RR by 46 runs last week and Steve Smith’s men will look to return the compliment when they meet for the second time in the tournament.

The last time the two teams clashed, RR didn’t have Stokes in the ranks and even though the England all-rounder didn’t set the stage on fire in his first game but his presence inspired the former champions to snap a four-match losing streak with a five-wicket win over Sunrisers Hyderabad.

“With Stokesy back, it



brings a nice balance to us. He just bowled one over as he just got out of a lockdown and is just working back into things,” Smith had said.

While Stokes will be an important cog in the RR wheel, the team will also have to fix their top order which has been short of runs in the last five games, leaving too much for the lower-order to get. Skipper Smith and

Sanju Samson have failed to make any significant contribution with the bat since setting the Sharjah ground on fire in their first two matches.

Jos Buttler produced a superb 44-ball 70 against Mumbai Indians but didn’t capitalise on the starts in the last two matches.

Delhi, on the other hand, were brought down by Mumbai in their last game and Shreyas Iyer’s

NUMBERS GAME

- HEAD TO HEAD**
- Matches: 21
  - Rajasthan: 11
  - Delhi: 10
- MEETING IN 2019**
- Delhi Capitals beat Rajasthan Royals by 6 wickets in Jaipur.
  - Delhi beat Rajasthan by 5 wickets at Delhi
- MEETING IN CURRENT EDITION**
- Delhi beat Rajasthan by 46 runs at Sharjah.
- FOR THE RECORD**
- Rishabh Pant, who has smashed 99 sixes in 60 innings, needs just one more to become the 21st batsman to complete a century of sixes in IPL.
  - Steven Smith will become the 107th player to complete a double century of matches in Twenty-20 cricket.
- *S. PERVEZ KAISER*

men will look to shrug off the odd defeat and get back to the top with a professional display. — *PTI*

GAYLE HINTS AT PLAYING AGAINST RCB

**Dubai, Oct. 13:** Senior Kings XI Punjab batsman Chris Gayle has hinted that he may get his first IPL game of the season against Royals Challengers Bangalore on Thursday, having recovered from a bout of food poisoning.

“To all the fans out there, the wait is over. The Universe Boss is back. I know you all have been waiting for such a long time, the wait is over unless something dramatic happens to the Universe Boss again, which I hope not,” Gayle said in the short video.

KXIP had earlier posted photos of Gayle returning to the nets on Monday.

“He is fine now and it is likely that he will be playing the game against RCB (on Thursday),” a team source said. — *PTI*

DENMARK OPEN | BADMINTON

Lakshya off to winning start

**Odense, Oct. 13:** Fast-rising Indian shuttler Lakshya Sen made a successful return to competitive badminton, beating Christo Popov in straight games in the opening round of the \$750,000 Denmark Open, which marked the resumption of the international calendar after a coronavirus-forced break of seven months.

The 19-year-old Indian, who claimed five titles including two Super 100 tournaments last year, produced a clinical performance to outwit Popov 21-9 21-15 to reach the second round.

He will take on the winner of the match between Denmark’s Hans-Kristian Solberg Vittinghus and Belgium’s Maxime Moreels.

“I moved quite well, that was the key. In the second game he had a lead but I had made a few mistakes. I was able to cut down on them and find my rhythm,” Lakshya, who is currently ranked world no.27, was quoted as saying by Badminton World Federation (BWF).

“I’m very happy to be playing again after seven months and it felt very normal on the court.”

Lakshya looked in good touch as he moved well on the court and found his



Lakshya Sen

touch from the word go.

The Indian jumped to a 11-8 lead at the break in the opening game and didn’t allow his opponent to make a comeback, reeling off three points to move to 14-8. The second game was a more competitive affair as both the players fought tooth and nail, moving neck-and-neck till 12-12.

After that, Lakshya once again broke off and moved to 15-12 and 16-14 before closing the match comfortably.

Denmark Open Super 750 event is the only event happening this year as the BWF was forced to cancel multiple tournaments and postpone the Asia leg and the World Tour Final to next year. — *PTI*

GAMES-BOUND SHOOTERS TO TRAIN AT BIO-SECURE CAMP

**New Delhi, Oct. 13:** The Karni Singh Range will be divided into four “risk” zones to ensure that Olympic-bound shooters can safely resume training at a two-month long national camp which will be conducted from Thursday in a bio-bubble to ward off the Covid-19 threat. The Sports Authority of India and the National Rifle Association of India will take joint responsibility of conducting the camp in a secure environment.

“In order to maintain a secure bio-bubble whereby the athletes can train safely and to prevent a coronavirus outbreak, the responsibility of maintaining the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) will be shared by the Sports Authority of India and the NRAI,” read a statement from SAI on Tuesday.

The camp had earlier been postponed twice because of the pandemic and is expected to feature 32 shooters (18 men and 14 women), eight coaches, three foreign coaches and two support staff. All 15 Olympic quota winners will be a part of it. The exercise will take place at a total cost of ₹1.43 crore. — *PTI*

SFI undecided about nat’l swimming meet

**New Delhi, Oct. 13** Swimming Federation of India (SFI) on Tuesday ruled out the possibility of conducting any competition in the country unless the pools are reopened for training in all the states following the coronavirus-induced break.

Last month, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) had announced the reopening of pools used for training of sports persons across the country from October 15.

The restriction on swimming pools were in place since March 24 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

“On October 15, not all swimming pools will open, may be one or two. Pools are maintained by clubs, state governments etc. So it would not be possible to conduct national competitions if all states do not

allow reopening of pools,” Virendra Nanavati, SFI Executive Director, said during a virtual press conference.

“So we have to wait for 4-5 months and see if it is possible to have competitions,” he added.

The governing body also said that strict action will be taken against swimmers, who violate the SOPs laid down by the sports ministry to ensure a safe return for the sport following the coronavirus-induced break.

“The swimming pools will open with strict SOPs in place and we cannot deviate from the SOPs by even 1 %. Already our swimmers have been affected by the six months break due to Covid-19,” said R.N. Jayaprakash, president of the SFI. — *PTI*

It’s time for Rahul to take a leaf out of Kohli’s book



Hemant Kenkre Silly Point

Over the weekend, the Indian Premier League (IPL) highlighted the tale of two captains — Virat Kohli and K.L. Rahul. For Kohli, winning the IPL is his last frontier as the glittering crown is the only one missing in his cupboard. He showed his intent, as a captain, in his last innings against Chennai Super Kings (CSK) at the Dubai International Stadium.

He was face to face with his predecessor (for India), Mahendra Singh Dhoni,

and was well aware of the importance of the success of this match as he navigated his team, Royal Challenger Bangalore (RCB) to a win. Rahul, on the other hand, is in charge of a team that looks like one that’s on a downhill race on the sand dunes of the Arabian desert with just one victory in the seven matches they have played so far, even as he continues to get runs.

RCB and victories are two words that, somehow, don’t fit into the general thinking of the fan. From

2008, when the IPL kicked off, till the last season the team has flattered to deceive its fans with no silverware on their shelves. Kohli, the only member of the original side, has been judged, as a captain, more for his role in the (mis)fortunes of RCB than for India for the past eight seasons since he took on the leadership.

It just maybe that the match against CSK on Saturday could be a turning point in Kohli’s tryst with IPL as the skipper of RCB. Till his unbeaten innings of 72 against Rajasthan Royals (RR) in RCB’s fourth IPL fixture, he had not tasted the joy of scoring a fifty in eight innings — a rarity for someone considered one of the world’s best in all formats of the game.

His 90-run knock against CSK came in trying circumstances, having lost compatriot AB de Villiers for a duck and was left with lesser known partners to build a competitive total.

What we saw was vintage Kohli who shrugged off all the rust accumulated with lack of match practice and emerged as the champion that we know.

Watching his 52-ball innings was like going through a master class of correct batting and the only typical Twenty20 (T20) shot he essayed, a falling sweep extracting maximum runs, came on the first ball of the last over — the 47th he faced. It was almost like Kohli, the captain, had spoken with Kohli, the batsman.

At the half-way stage of

IPL, RCB is sitting pretty with eight points from six games (as one writes this) and are showing all indications of being a contender to qualify for the final stages of the league. The two teams that have a lot of soul searching to do as the matches progress, CSK and Kings XI Punjab (KXIP), are probably looking for some succour in the desert. They are left with wooden spoons, at this point in time, languishing at the bottom of the table with four and two points respectively.

Their current plight may be self-inflicted given the players they selected. While CSK’s problems are obvious, team KXIP’s morale must have delved down further after losing a match they should have cantered home with. Like

in the case of RCB and it’s skipper, KXIP now faces the same in reverse with Rahul under fire for lack of changing gears. It must be hurting Rahul to have the Orange Cap (for the highest aggregate scorer in the tournament) in his kitbag but not much points in the team kitty.

While Rahul is being criticised for his strike rate of 127.58 for his 74-runs off 58 balls, the real problem facing the team lies elsewhere.

The main issue is their dependence of top three batsmen, including an in-form Mayank Agarwal and Nicholas Pooran and no one in the middle to build further on a good start. The lack of power coming from the blade of Glenn Maxwell is hurting KXIP much more than Rahul’s

strike rate.

It is a similar situation with a few other teams in the IPL who are also top heavy and tend to struggle in the middle by not converting the starts into big totals.

While Kohli’s RCB was boosted by stability in their bowling attack, thanks to consistent shows by youngsters Navdeep Saini and Washington Sunder, his personal show of leading from the front has made the team look well-balanced and ready for more challenges. For KXIP, the coming week is crucial with matches slotted against RCB and leaders, Mumbai Indians. Rahul could well take a leaf out of Kohli’s book. Maybe it’s time for Rahul the batsman to have a word with Rahul the captain.