


DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
KARIMNAGAR | FRIDAY | 16 OCTOBER 2020

WEATHER



Max: 29.2°C

Min: 22°C

RH: 77%

Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Cloudy sky.

Thundershowers likely.

Max/Min temp. 29/22 °C

COVID-19

COUNT

CASES

(+62,951)

73,64,821

DEATHS

(+863)

1,12,135

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+1,432)

TS: 2,17,670

(+4,038)

AP: 7,71,503

(+8)

1,249

(+38)

6,357

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

3,90,01,521

DEATHS

11,00,215

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES

213

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana

Tithi: Adhika Ashwayuja Bahula Amavasya till 1 am (Saturday)

Star: Hasta till 2.56 pm

Variyam: 9.54 pm to 11.18 pm

Durmuhurtam: 8.32 am to 9.19 am; 12.25 pm to 1.11 pm

Rahukalam: 10.30 am to 12 noon

HIJRI CALENDAR

Safar ul Muzaffar 28, 1442 AH

PRAYERS

Fajar: 5.09 am

Zohar: 12.12 pm

Asar: 4.15 pm

Maghrib: 5.59 pm

Isha: 7.07 pm

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.09 AM

SUNSET TODAY 5.53 PM

MOONRISE TODAY 5.26 AM

MOONSET TOMORROW 5.47 PM

COUNTER POINT

Flashback



We feel these masks will protect us from goons and police!

Subhani, who began CounterPoint on December 11, 1992 and took only one break from work in his entire career, is on personal leave of bereavement. We present some of his best cartoons of rib-tickling wisdom published on Page 1 and on the Edit Page till he returns.

INSIDE

STATE... PAGE 2

350-year-old fort wall collapses

SHOW | TIME Telangana yet to decide on reopening film halls

AP theatres to open on Oct. 22

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC
with bureau and agency inputs
VISAKHAPATNAM, HYDERABAD, NEW DELHI, OCT. 15

Cinemas theatres in several parts of the country opened after seven months on Thursday, with a few film enthusiasts venturing warily into movie watching in a Covid-19 ‘contactless’ era of alternate seating, 50 per cent capacity, packaged snacks, thermal checks and sanitisation protocols. While theatres and multiplexes remain closed in states like Telangana state, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Chhattisgarh, they opened in several places, including Delhi and parts of Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat, with stringent dos and don’ts in keeping with the new normal.

● **THOUGH MOVIE** exhibitors have met a few times, differences persist among them with respect to just how ready they are for reopening.

● **EXHIBITORS SAID** it is not simple to put in place Covid-19 protection measures like mandatory masks, use of sanitisers and social distancing.

The Telangana state government is yet to take a decision on the reopening of cinema halls. Though movie exhibitors — cinema hall and multiplex owners and companies running these theatres — in the state have met a few times, differences persist among them with respect to just how ready they are for reopening. While one section of sin-

gle screen theatre owners have said they are ready to reopen, a larger group of exhibitors said it is not as simple as putting in place Covid-19 protection measures such as mandatory masks, use of sanitisers and social distancing. The general thought is that unless there are big releases that attract viewers, mere opening of cinemas, offering re-runs of past hits may not be enough to bring people into the theatres. Theatres across Andhra Pradesh will start opening in phases from October 22, V i s a k h a p a t n a m Distributors’ Association president K. Vamsi Kishore said. Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle* on Thursday, Kishore said that though the Centre has announced opening of cinema theatres, it issued the guidelines

only on Wednesday. Theatre managements will need to buy equipment to follow Covid protocols, like thermal guns, sanitisation liquids, making adjustments to fill only 50 per cent of seats and marking queue lines outside the booking offices. “In addition to these, we need content to draw crowds. None will spend money to watch old films. But new releases will have to come from Telangana state. They will be released in TS and Andhra Pradesh simultaneously,” Kishore said. Vamsi said unless Maharashtra government gives permission to open theatres, no new Hindi movie can be sourced for exhibition in TS and AP.

■ **Page 2: Quiet reopening for theatres**

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Biden vows 11 million will get citizenship

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Mumbai gear up for Kolkata clash

TABLOID
When Baba Ramdev had a great fall

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GST dues: Centre to borrow ₹1.1 L-cr on behalf of states

It is not clear who will service interest, principal payments

SANGEETHA G. | DC
CHENNAI, OCT. 15

In a move that may end the impasse with the states, the Centre has decided to borrow ₹1.1 lakh crore on behalf of the states under a special window to meet the shortfall of Goods and Services Tax (GST) compensation. Under the special window, the estimated shortfall of ₹1.1 lakh crore (assuming all states join) will be borrowed by the Government of India in appropriate tranches, the Centre said. The amount will be passed on to the states as a back-to-back loan in lieu of GST compensation cess releases.

This will not have any impact on the fiscal deficit of the Centre. The amounts will be reflected as the capital receipts of the state governments and as part of financing of its respective fiscal deficits. This will avoid differential rates of interest that individual states may be charged for their respective SDLs (state development loans) and will be an administratively easier arrangement.

It may also be clarified that the general government (states+centre) borrowings will not increase by this step. The states that get the benefit from the special window are likely to borrow a considerably lesser amount from the additional borrowing facility of 2 per cent of GSDP (from 3 to 5 per cent) under the Atma-nirbhar package.

It was not mentioned who will service the interest and principal payments.

A few states have been opposing the options given by the Centre to borrow money to fill the deficit and had asked the Centre to borrow money on their behalf. They included Punjab, Kerala, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh and Telangana.

“It is a welcome step, though it does not meet our full demand. But the Centre has to come back to the discussion table and negotiate with the states on the issues pending. We have been allowed to increase our FRBM limit under conditions by 2 per cent. By giving up this, we are losing some ₹70,000-₹80,000 crore. That should be negotiated,” said Thomas Isaac, Kerala finance minister.

“Further, there should be a formal decision on the amount to be raised in the GST Council. Increase the additional borrowing limit by 0.5 per cent and that will give us some more space to manage the finances and then negotiate on the amount that should be raised,” he added.

According to him, out of the total shortfall of ₹2.35 lakh crore, an amount of ₹1.25 lakh crore will be remaining after paying ₹1.1 lakh crore. Of this, around ₹50,000 or ₹60,000 crore will be paid from the current year’s cess. The remaining will be paid from the cess collected after 2022.

TS rain damage ₹5,000 crore

CM writes to PM seeking ₹1,350 crore immediate assistance as toll hits 50

S.A. ISHAQUI | DC
HYDERABAD, OCT. 15

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao put the initial estimate of the damage caused by rains and floods in the state at ₹5,000 crore, in a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday.

He urged the Centre to release ₹1,350 crore immediately, ₹600 crore for farmers and ₹750 crore for taking up relief and rehabilitation measures.

The Chief Minister, while reviewing the flood situation, instructed officials to take up relief measures on a war footing in the affected areas.

Officials put the toll at 50, revising the death count in the city to 11. They said that 20,540 houses in 144 colonies at 72 places in the city were under floodwaters and 35,000 families affected.

The CM announced ₹5 lakh as immediate compensation each to the families of the dead. He directed the authorities to distribute rice, pulses, food and three quilts per family in affected areas. ₹5 crore was announced as immediate financial assistance to the GHMC to take up relief works.

The Chief Minister said that new houses would be built for those whose houses were destroyed. Financial assistance will be given to repair houses that were partially damaged. He said houses would be built on government land for those who built houses on nalas and lost them.

Electricity authorities were told to restore power supply to apartments in low-lying areas only after draining out cellars, though it may take time.

■ **Page 2: Crops in 7.35 L acres submerged**

A stationary bus which was parked at Gaganpahad and fell after a road caved in, is being removed with the help of a crane after the floodwaters receded in Hyderabad on Thursday.

— R. PAVAN

Power suffered triple whammy

BALU PULIPAKA | DC
HYDERABAD, OCT. 15

Modern ‘ring main units’ that make electricity distribution in an urban setting a breeze were overwhelmed by the very heavy downpour.

Some very traditional habits of builders ignoring the natural lay of the land led to a few hundred distribution transformers being completely submerged in water. People broke down barriers designed to protect the sub-stations from floods, leading to the

equipment being swapped.

These were among the several reasons that contributed to the widespread power outages in the city and the rest of the state over the past three days.

Officials from the TS Southern Power Distribution Company Limited said that while most power outage complaints were attended to within hours, there were some instances where it took 36 hours or more before power could be restored.

At the individual build-

ing level, one of the primary problems was the location of the switchboards in the basements that are the first to get flooded. It is time for the GHMC to insist that it will not give building permission unless specific provisions are made for installing power supply systems on the first floor of a multi-storeyed building, a senior TSSPD-CL official said. “Once a basement is flooded, every junction, fuse box and meter must be fully dry before power can be restored,” the official said.

One of the problems, it was learnt, was the reluctance of people in some locations where large substations began to get flooded and water levels began to rise dangerously. At one such location, a short retaining wall built to divert any possible flooding away from the sub-station was demolished by basti dwellers, with many houses built illegally, to stop water from accumulating near their homes.

■ **Page 2: Water seeped into power equipment**



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SHORT TAKES

Water Board alert on dirty sumps

Hyderabad: The Water Board on Thursday advised consumers to first clean water storage sumps that have been filled with rainwater and disinfect them before storing drinking water afresh. The Water Board said it is distributing chlorine tablets which should be mixed in the water before using it. Consumers can call 155313 for assistance.

Call Disaster dept for assistance

Hyderabad: The TS Disaster Response and Fire Services department has said that people facing problems of water-logging in their homes or buildings can call 101 or 9949991101 for assistance with pumping out the water. The department said on Thursday that since October 13 when very heavy rains nearly drowned the city, its officials and staff have attended to 76 emergency calls for help and for pumping out of water. It said that between its 26 responses for rescue and other relief activities for the rain and the flood-hit people, it rescued a total of 196 people.

CHILKUR BALAJI PRIESTS HOLD SPECIAL PRAYERS

T.S.S. SIDDHARTH I DC
HYDERABAD, OCT. 15

Priests of the Chilkur Balaji temple on Thursday conducted special rituals on the banks of Gandipet lake, which is full of water. "Prayers were performed to thank the rain gods for blessing the state with copious rainfall. Also, prayers were conducted to stop further rains from affecting the Telugu-speaking states. It is basically 'anavrishti' (rainlessness) and 'athivrishti' (deluge)," said temple head priest C.S. Rangarajan.

STATE RECORDS 1,432 NEW COVID CASES, 8 DEATHS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT. 15

The state added another 1,432 Covid-19 cases and eight deaths on Wednesday, and the tally now stands at 2,17,670 and the toll 1,249. The state health department said on Thursday that 1,949 patients had recovered during the day, taking the total to 1,93,218.

Due to the heavy rains and floods, the testing numbers fell to 38,895. Health officials believe that more people will be coming for testing once the situation normalises.

There are 23,203 active cases of which 19,084 are at home and institutional isolation.

The cases in districts are rising when compared to those in the GHMC area which recorded 244. Medchal-Malkajgiri district recorded 115 on Wednesday, Ranga Reddy 88, Khammam 91 and Bhadrachalam 99.

CROPS IN 7.35 LAKH ACRES SUBMERGED

From Page 1

Restoration of power supply without clearing the water could be dangerous, the CM said.

Noting that most of the colonies affected were built within full tank levels, the Chief Minister instructed the officials to include a condition to prevent water stagnation in the cellars while granting permissions for construction of apartments.

Officials told CM Rao that crops were submerged in 7.35 lakh acres. Even if there is 50 per cent of damage to crops, the loss would be to the tune of ₹2,000 crore.

They said that the GHMC limits had received 31 cm rainfall, the first since 1916, which resulted in inundation of several areas, especially colonies which were constructed within the full tank levels of water bodies.

The officials explained to the Chief Minister that in Hyderabad 14 houses were damaged and 65 houses partially damaged, bitumen roads in 445 places and at six places on national highways were damaged.

Officials opened 72 centres to shelter people and provide them food and water. Daily meals were served to 1.10 lakh people. The officials said that in 30 other towns, 238 colonies were flooded. Roads were damaged at 150 places. A total of 101 tanks were breached and 26 tank bunds damaged, costing the water resources department ₹50 crore.

GHMC officials don't join Kishan's tour

Minister forced to call civic body commissioner before officials were sent to accompany him

BALU PULIPAKA I DC
HYDERABAD, OCT. 15

Union minister of state for home G. Kishan Reddy, the Lok Sabha member from Secunderabad, was on Thursday left hanging on his own by Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation officials who did not join him in the morning as he began a day-long trip of rain and flood-hit areas to see what the GHMC and the government were doing to provide relief to the victims.

It was only after he spoke

with GHMC commissioner Lokesh Kumar and expressed displeasure that some officials were sent to join Kishan Reddy.

The apparent neglect of a Union minister by the civic body, did not go unnoticed by the Bharatiya Janata Party that took the GHMC and the state government to task on the issue. BJP chief spokesperson Krishna Sagar Rao said, "The conduct of KCR's government is so reprehensible that the administration chose to brazenly violate all proto-

cols due to a Central minister of state."

Taking note of the delay in the GHMC officials joining Kishan Reddy, the BJP leader said that "despite Kishan Reddy openly rebuking the utter neglect of GHMC Commissioner not sending the concerned officers to the locations he was visiting, the commissioner did nothing to be duty bound."

Kishan Reddy, addressing a press meet in the evening after Mayor Bonthu Rammohan joined him for

one leg of the visit refused to dwell on the subject. But he did not mince words on the GHMC's and the state government's roles and response to the crisis.

He said the government had completely neglected desilting of nalas and flood drains which led to inundation of residential colonies across the city. The only thing that is happening is that money is going into the pockets of contractors with the silt remaining in the drains and nalas, Kishan Reddy said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has already spoken with the Telangana state and AP Chief Ministers on the flood situation while Union home minister Amit Shah is regularly monitoring the situation in Hyderabad, he said.

People are already suffering from the Coronavirus and now the floods and inundation. The state government must open health camps in all bastis while private hospitals should open free clinics in their neighbourhoods, he said.



Minister of state for home affairs, G. Kishan Reddy, tours rain affected areas in Chikkadpally on Thursday.

Battered Hyd yet to recover



HELPING HAND

As a result of heavy rains, GHMC workers move residents of Ramanthapur colony with the help of boats, in Hyderabad on Thursday.

— DEEPAK DESHPANDE



IN RUINS

With rains battering the Azampura railway bridge at Malakpet, traffic jams compounded the word of the citizens on Thursday.

— DC



MAROONED

Heavy vehicles get stranded on the Bandlaguda-Aramghar stretch of road which connects Hyderabad to Bengaluru Highway due to the rains in the last few days which led to many roads caving in.

— P. SURENDRA

Quiet reopening for theatres in Unlock 6.0

From Page 1

Elsewhere, pointing out that they were the first to close and among the last sectors to open as India 'unlocks', theatre establishments were optimistic about the first step towards normalcy. But it was a quiet reopening with just a scattered few overcoming their fears

to trickle in to watch a mix of regional and Hindi reruns such as Chhichhore, Thappad and Tanhaji besides the new English release The Spy.

PVR, India's largest film exhibitor with 845 screens in 176 properties across 71 cities, said 10 states and four union territories had given their go-ahead. Accordingly, PVR

started operations in 487 screens.

While they will resume commercial screenings on Friday, Cinopolis and INOX, the other big players in the business, started showing films from Thursday with an emphasis on safety measures, including stringent sanitising and social distancing.

● IT WAS a quiet reopening with just a scattered few overcoming their fears to trickle in to watch a mix of regional and Hindi reruns such as Chhichhore, Thappad and Tanhaji besides the new English release The Spy.

Water seeped into power equipment underground

From Page 1

This resulted in immediate flooding of the substation which was shut down in a hurry, plunging large parts of the city into darkness. It took three days before it could be brought back on line.

The biggest problem, according to officials, is the penchant for governments to regularise illegal layouts and residential complexes or colonies built in low-lying areas including illegally occupied lake and tank beds.

"When an event like the one over the past three days occurs, these areas go underwater very quickly. Along with people, the electricity distribution trans-

● YET ANOTHER issue within the city, where underground power cables have been laid, pertain to junction boxes known as 'ring main units (RMU)'.

formers too become victims. The transformers need to dry up before being charged again," the official explained.

Yet another issue within the city, where underground power cables have been laid, pertain to junction boxes known as 'ring main units (RMU)'. These make switching power from one substation meant for a particular location to be rerouted to another area very easily.

The RMUs are well protected against the elements but the heavy rains resulted in seepage into some RMUs while in other cases, flood levels were high enough to force water seep into the equipment.

"At each one of them, we had to ensure they were opened up, checked and every last bit of moisture removed. In many places it took many, many hours of using air blowers to dry these units out. Otherwise, there could have been short circuits which would have plunged the areas into longer periods of darkness," a TSSPDCL official who was out on the streets for the better part of Tuesday and Wednesday as well as Thursday, said.

Sarvai Papanna's 350-year-old fort wall collapses after heavy rains

ANUDEEP CEREMILLA I DC
WARANGAL, OCT. 15

The wall of a 350-year-old wall of the fort collapsed partially due to heavy rains at Quilashapur in Raghunathpally mandal of Jangaon district on Thursday.

Three houses adjacent to the wall were damaged. No one was injured as after noticing cracks developing on the wall, police evacuated the residents of these houses.

The fort was built by Sardar Sarvai Papanna Goud during the rule of Nizams over 350 years ago. Sardar Papanna had fought against atrocities being perpetrated over suppressed

● THREE HOUSES adjacent to the wall were damaged. No one was injured as after noticing cracks developing on the wall, police evacuated the residents of these houses.

sections of the society during the Nizams' rule.

The Telangana state government had declared the fort as a tourist place and sanctioned ₹4.5 crore for its upkeep. No development works have, however, been taken up so far.

Locals complain that authorities have not bothered about undertaking repairs on the fort and its environs despite the damages being brought to the notice of authorities.



Quilashapur fort wall partially collapses due to the rainfall on Thursday.

45 ANIMALS, BIRDS RESCUED FROM FLOODS

KANIZIA GARARI I DC
HYDERABAD, OCT. 15

Forty-five animals and birds were rescued from floodwaters by Good Samaritans. To save the bigger animals, they called in the GHMC's Disaster Response Force and NGOs. Cows and buffaloes were washed away from open areas near the lakes at Nagole, Uppal, Kapra and RK Puram and got stuck in vegetation.

Thirty-one puppies were rescued from stormwater drains. About 10 puppies were found near the stormwater drain at Narayan-guda and seven at Nagole.

Dattatraya Joshi, executive officer, People for Animals, said, "We had volunteers in different areas who rescued the puppies. They were keeping an eye on the outlets of different drains. The puppies were provided first aid and we will take care of them before letting them out."

In other places, especially near lake beds, puppies and dogs were provided shelters in apartments where there are no objections raised by residents.

Birds were injured when the rain and winds brought down trees. Animal rights activist Rehana Baig says, "I had two baby parrots sitting on my window sill and we opened it to let them in. They could not fly. They came from the tree that fell on the road. The animal rescue volunteers came and took them away."

Crowds throng to Himayatsagar to see rare sight

SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL I DC

Himayatsagar, always a popular tourist spot, saw huge crowds of people to witness floodwater being released from the project. Water was being released from the lake for the first time in 10 years.

Thirteen out of 16 gates were opened when its storage capacity reached its limit. On Thursday evening, officials of the Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board allowed the people to witness the water release.

The kilometre-long pathway to reach the dam was crowded with people. "Since yesterday, the crowd was coming and we did not allow them near the dam. Today, we have started allowing them from 4 pm," said K. Mahipal, a constable from the Rajendranagar police who was deployed to control the visitors.

"There are around 40 of us to control the crowd and to see no untoward incidents take place. Selfies, family and group pictures galore have been clicked. The people seemed to be having a good time. As soon as they are out, they were feasting on fish fry at the carts," Mahipal added.

Sajjad Mirza Baig and

● SOCIAL DISTANCING norms went for a toss; most were not wearing masks. The scene made it look like there was no Coronavirus in the city.

Teja, from Vidyanagar, who took a joy ride to the lake, said, "Since March there have been no trips or events. This was so pleasant and re-energised us."

Social distancing norms went for a toss; most were not wearing masks. The scene made it look like there was no Coronavirus in the city. Parents carried their infants too without the precautions.

A few visitors went below the dam, near the sluice gates, to see the water. K. Kamalsagar from Langer Houz, who was there with his friends, said, "after hearing about the news, we wanted to see it for ourselves."

Police was making sure they were not too close to the water from the flood gates. K. Chandranth, Special Police constable from the Cyberabad commissionerate, said, "Now only two gates are open, yesterday when 13 gates were open, the water level and force was more. Visitors are still coming, we are making sure they do not move too close."

SHORT TAKES

Adilabad SP's son has Adivasi name

Adilabad: Adilabad SP Vishnu S. Warriar said that his four-month-old son Parameshwaran, is fondly called 'Jangu' by his family members. 'Jangu' is a common Adivasi name. The SP revealed this while interacting with a few media persons, on the sidelines of press meet on Thursday. The SP said, "My family members call my son 'Jangu' as he was born in Adilabad and is considered to be 'Adilabad Bidda' (son of Adilabad).

SURGICAL SCISSORS REMOVED FROM MAN'S STOMACH

ANUDEEP CEREMILLA | DC WARANGAL, OCT. 15

A 64-year-old man suffering from stomach ache was shocked to know that the pain was due to a surgical scissors left behind in his stomach by doctors who operated on him six months ago.

The patient Rajam, a resident of Shanthikhani area of Bellampally in Mancherial district, had undergone surgery at Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Hospital (MGM), Warangal, following ulcers in the stomach. After six months, he complained to MGM doctors that he was still experiencing pain in his abdomen.

A duty doctor suggested X-ray, which revealed that a surgical scissors was present in his stomach.

Rajam's patient's relatives alleged that MGM authorities tried to cover up their negligence by not giving them the X-ray film.

"After the X-ray on Wednesday, they immediately shifted him to the surgical ward of the hospital saying another surgery is required immediately. When we questioned, they did not give us a proper explanation. The truth came out after we protested," a relative of the patient said.

The scissors was removed from the patient's stomach after surgery late on Wednesday.

MGM Hospital superintendent Dr. K. Nagarajuna Reddy said they are probing the issue. "Action will be taken against the doctor responsible for the first procedure," he maintained.



X-ray of the patient shows the surgical scissors inside his stomach. —DC

PD ACT REGISTERED AGAINST BURGLAR

DC CORRESPONDENT PEDDAPALLI, OCT. 15

The Sultanabad police of Ramagundam Police Commissionerate registered the Preventive Detention (PD) Act against a notorious burglar on Thursday.

The accused had indulged in several burglaries, vehicle thefts and had created fear and panic among the people and farmer community.

The police have identified the accused as Sambari Venkatesh, 28, resident of Jawaharnagar, Sultanabad mandal of Peddapalli district.

The Sultanabad Circle Inspector, Mahendar Reddy served detention notices to the accused Venkatesh for a series of offences he had committed and for disturbing the peace and harmony in the society.

The accused is involved in four cases of burglary and tractor lifting. Out of the four offences, three were committed in the recent past under the Ramagundam police commissionerate limits —vide Cr.Nos.1)188/2020 U/Sec.379 IPC and 2)218/2020 U/Sec.379 IPC of PS Sultanabad along with 3) 112/2020 U/Sec.457,380 IPS of the PS Julapalli has been considered as the ground for his detention.

● **THE POLICE** have identified the accused as **Sambari Venkatesh, 28, resident of Jawaharnagar, Sultanabad mandal of Peddapalli district.**



Health minister Etala Rajendar inspects the damaged crops in Lakshmajipally village of Yellanthakunta mandal in Karimnagar district on Thursday. — DECCAN CHRONICLE

20,302 acres of paddy crop damaged in Karimnagar

PULI SHARATH KUMAR | DC KARIMNAGAR, OCT. 15

Heavy rains and gusty winds which continued from Tuesday morning to Wednesday night have caused huge damage to standing and harvested paddy crop in erstwhile Karimnagar district.

Adding to the woes is the Meteorological Department's forecast of more rains and gusty winds at isolated places in the days to come.

Adopting the new agricultural policy along with assured quantities of water for irrigation purposes through the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Scheme (KLIS) project, farmers in the district cultivated crops in the maximum acres of land compared to the previous season. They were expecting good yield from the crops, but frequent and unseasonal rains in the last two months dashed their hopes.

The farmers are left hapless following the latest devastation.

Karimnagar district bore the brunt as paddy crop spread 20,302 acres in about 168 villages was damaged while in Peddapalli district, the damage was in 3,932 acres in 77 villages. In Rajanna Sircilla district, paddy crop was damaged on 2,559 acres in 103 villages while in Jagtial district it was over 8,766 acres in about 150 villages.

Meanwhile, health minister Etala Rajendar visited various villages in Huzurabad constituency and inspected the crops and houses that were damaged.

Rajendar said that not only was the state government supplying free power but also provided water for irrigation purposes along with investment amounts under the Rythu Bandhu scheme.

In Sriramulapally village, a massive wind damaged several households and caused property damage. As people were inside their homes, there was no loss of life.

The minister ordered the officials to submit a report after estimating the damages.

Rajendar assured the farmers that the government would purchase every grain produced by them and urged them to bring the foodgrains after drying them.

Meanwhile, the BJP



Revenue and agriculture officials assess the damage caused to the standing cotton crop at Devpatar village in Narnoor mandal in Adilabad district on Thursday.

Hopes of cotton, soya farmers shattered

PILLALAMARRI SRINIVAS | DC ADILABAD, OCT. 15

The hopes of cotton and soya farmers of a good yield and better returns have been shattered by the untimely rains with heavy winds. Many farmers have suffered huge losses in the erstwhile Adilabad district.

Although there were no heavy rains in the district, the standing crop was damaged by normal rains. Cotton crops were blackened in some places because they were inundated in some areas.

Farmers are worried that they will suffer losses since traders will not offer a good price to the blackened produce.

Ritte Kashinath of Devpatar in Narnoor mandal said his cotton plants and cotton crop spread in 300 acres were badly damaged in the surrounding of Devapatar village.

D. Sudhakar of Mannur village in Gudihathnoor mandal said he had sown cotton crops in 15 acres

Karimnagar district unit president, Gangidi Krishna Reddy accompanied by the state general secretary of the Dalit Morcha Gaddam Naga Raju inspected the damaged crops in Ambalapuri village of Keshavapatnam mandal.

They alleged that with the restriction imposed by the state government in the name of the new agricultural policy, farmers cultivated fine rice variety due to which there was a less yield this season and as they are about to

● **ACCORDING TO** official sources, 4,21,343 farmers cultivated cotton in 1,33,838 acres in the d district and agriculture officials had estimated that Kharif will have 47,93,390 quintals of cotton yield.

and many of those plants fell on the ground. He said the damaged cotton plants will die or stop yielding if they are in water for some more days.

Revenue and agriculture extension officers are visiting the villages to assess the cotton and soya crop losses. They interacted with farmers who lost their standing crops in Devpatar village.

According to official sources, 4,21,343 farmers cultivated cotton in 1,33,838 acres in the d district and agriculture officials had estimated that Kharif will have 47,93,390 quintals of cotton yield. However, all these expectations have suffered a massive blow.

harvest their produce and sell, the sudden rains caused huge loss to the farmers.

When the Union government is trying to help farmers under 'Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana', the state government by not spreading awareness about the scheme is playing with the lives of farmers, he criticised.

Krishna Reddy demanded that the government pay ₹40,000 for one acre of paddy and bail the farmers out of the crisis.

TS rains: 14 gates of Nizamsagar opened

Water level in the reservoir reaches 1,404 ft

NARENDER PULLOOR | DC NIZAMABAD, OCT. 15

After a gap of four years, the eight-decade old Nizamsagar project received copious inflows on Thursday. Around one lakh cusecs of inflows were received from upstream areas of river Manjeera that filled up the project in Kamareddy district. At present, the project has 1404.00 feet water level as against its full reservoir level of 1405.00 ft.

As a result, officials opened 14 gates and released around 84,000 cusecs outflow downstream of the river.

Of 17.803 tmc of gross storage capacity, presently 16.3 tmc water is stored.

Heavy downpour in upstream areas of river Manjeera in undivided Medak district and Karnataka improved the water level.

Inflows started at 41,164 cusecs on Thursday morning and reached around one lakh cusecs by night. Officials had last lifted gates and



Water released from the Nizamsagar project in Kamareddy district on Thursday. — DECCAN CHRONICLE

released water in 2016 following full reservoir level of Nizamsagar project. To supplement the project command area in Nizamabad and Kamareddy districts, alternative arrangements are being taken up, including reverse pumping from

Alisagar reservoir. Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, Nizamsagar project deputy executive engineer Datthatri said that floodwater is being monitored at the dam site. "By maintaining full reservoir level, excess

water will be released into river", he said.

Meanwhile, people thronged the Nizamsagar project to see the gushing waters from project gates. They came from undivided Nizamabad, Medak and Nanded districts.

MAOIST MEMBER SURRENDERS BEFORE COPS

DC CORRESPONDENT ADILABAD, OCT. 15

Kodapa Lingu, 28, who joined the Maoist dalam two-and-half-months ago voluntarily surrendered before the Adilabad SP Vishnu S. Warriar on Thursday. Lingu is a native of Chinnadampur village in Tiryan mandal in Kumarambheem Asifabad district.

SP Vishnu S. Warriar said, "Lingu was tired with the hardships he faced in the dalam. During police combing, he lost contact with the dalam near Devuguda. He moved alone in the forests for sometime, and then decided to surrender before the police. He approached his relative, who in turn approached the police. He was working under state committee member Mylarapu Adellu alias Bhaskar."

The SP said that the police have information that some government teachers and employees are motivating the Adivasi youth to join the Maoists. We will take action against such people with evidence in the future.

Lingu will receive all the benefits under the state governments' policy for surrendered Maoists. Trainee IPS officer Akshay Yadav and Utnoor DSP N. Udaykumar Reddy and AR DSP Syed Sujadiddin and II-Town CI Potharam Srinivas were present.

● **DURING POLICE COMBING**, he lost contact with the dalam near Devuguda.



Minister Satyavathi Rathod inspects a drainage canal in Hanamkonda on Thursday. — DECCAN CHRONICLE

Min: Measure taken to ensure Warangal does not flood again

DC CORRESPONDENT WARANGAL, OCT. 15

Tribal Women and Child Welfare minister Satyavathi Rathod on Thursday visited the flood-hit low-lying areas under the Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation (GWMC).

She inspected the situation in the areas inundated due to the heavy rains in the last two days.

Ms Rathod visited the Amravati Colony and NTR Nagar that were inundated and took stock of the situation. She also visited the rehabilitation centre set up for the people evacuated from the colonies.

Ms Satyavathi said, "After the flooding in

● **MS RATHOD** visited the Amravati Colony and NTR Nagar that were inundated and took stock of the situation. She also visited the rehabilitation centre set up for the people evacuated from the colonies.

August, Minister Rama Rao visited Warangal along with a team of ministers. They chalked out a plan to ensure that floodwater does not inundate areas again. However, the city experienced heavy rain once again within a short span."

But the flood situation is better compared to two

months ago. The areas inundated in August, were safe this time, she noted.

She added, "Several illegal structures have been removed, clearing the nalas, and the rest would also be removed. Many people were obstructing the demolition works by bringing stay orders from the courts, but we will fight them and re-occupy the government land."

The minister was accompanied by the Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation mayor Gunda Prakash Rao, Warangal Urban collector Rajiv Gandhi Hanumanth, Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation commissioner Pamela Satpathy and other local leaders and officials.

LOW-KEY CELEBRATION

Sandalwood was taken in a procession to the tomb inside the dargah

Urs of Sayed Shah Afzal Biyabani begin in Kazipet

DC CORRESPONDENT WARANGAL, OCT. 15

The 169th Urs (annual celebrations) of Hazrat Syed Shah Afzal Biyabani, began on a modest note at the Kazipet Dargah on Wednesday night, due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Sandal, a ritual wherein sandalwood is taken in a procession to the tomb inside the dargah from the dargah Jagir was conducted.

The women of the Biyabani family put the sandalwood in a silver bowl with utmost devotion while performing special rituals from morning till night.

Khursu Pasha, the pontiff of the dargah, offered prayers at Badeghar.

At 11 pm, the pontiff placed the silver bowl containing sandalwood on his head and carried it to the



The Hazrat Syed Shah Afzal Biyabani Dargah at Kazipet spruced up. Pontiff Khursu Pasha carries sandalwood as part of the procession.

dargah in a procession with a few devotees.

The tomb in the dargah was anointed and covered with a *chadar* of flowers,

after which the Urs celebrations were declared to have officially begun.

There was a *qawwali* performance in the night

at the dargah which was spruced up, for the occasion. The Urs was celebrated on Thursday. Special prayers were offered, by

Bhaktiar Baba, corporator Abu Bakar, religious leaders and Muslim elders. To prevent any untoward incidents, Kazipet ACP

Ravinder Kumar, inspector Ravula Narendar, Sis Ashok Kumar and Ravinder oversaw the security arrangements.



LASER SHOW TO BE HELD ON OCT. 18 AT LMD

DC CORRESPONDENT KARIMNAGAR, OCT. 15

A laser and fireworks show under the name of 'Happy Sunday' will be showcased on October 18 at 6 pm on the premises of the Lower Manair Dam at the Gangamma Talli temple.

The event is the first of its kind in South India, and the duration of the show is 20 to 25 minutes.

The event will be conducted by Laser Tech to showcase the importance of the Bathukamma festival and development undertaken in Karimnagar.

The special entertainment show will be held using advanced and modern technology.

A huge 100 x 50ft aqua screen will be set for the performance.

SHORT TAKES

BJP-BPF ALLIANCE HEADS FOR A SPLIT

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, OCT. 15

In what has indicated a split in the ruling BJP-led alliance in Assam, the BJP has decided to contest the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) elections alone, breaking a four years old partnership with Bodoland Peoples Front (BPF) in Western Assam. The council has been in the hands of BPF for the last 17 years at a stretch.

Assam minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said, "The BTC elections will be held in December and BJP will fight the elections on its own. We are not going to have any alliance with any party. To take forward the Bodoland Territorial Region on the road to an inclusive development, we need to set up BJP's administration in the council and our objective is to reach this goal."

Indicating that Assam BJP is preparing to sever its ties with the BPF, Sarma said, "As on today the position is that our alliance with BPF is for five years only (till 2021). How the political equation will shape up depends on the situation in the next five years."

SHIV SENA URGES CENTRE TO RECALL MAHA GOVERNOR

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC MUMBAI, OCT. 15

Continuing its attack on governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari, Maharashtra's ruling party Shiv Sena has asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union home minister Amit Shah to recall him to preserve the prestige of Raj Bhavan.

"For last few months, the prestige of Raj Bhavan has been daily belittled by Koshiyari, who has shown how a person on the post of Governor should not act. His letter to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray should be called as an act of abrasiveness," said Shiv Sena in an editorial in party mouthpiece 'Saamana' on Thursday.

In a letter written to Thackeray, the Governor has questioned the state government's decision of not allowing the reopening of places of worship and asked if the Shiv Sena chief had "suddenly turned secular." His letter had evoked a sharp response from the CM, who hit back saying he does not need the Governor's certificate for his Hinduva credentials.

The 'Saamana' editorial said that the Governor had no business to support the 'political agitation' of BJP, who held protests demanding reopening of places of worship.

INDIA'S 1ST OSCAR WINNER BHANU ATHAIYA DIES

Mumbai, Oct. 15: Costume designer Bhanu Athaiya, India's first Oscar winner, died at her home on Thursday after prolonged illness, her daughter said. She was 91.

Athaiya, who won an Oscar for her work in the 1983 epic film 'Gandhi', passed away peacefully in her sleep, her daughter Radhika Gupta said.

The last rites took place at the Chandanwadi crematorium in south Mumbai. "She passed away early morning. Eight years ago, she was diagnosed with a tumour in her brain. For the last three years, she was bedridden because one side (of her body) was paralysed," her daughter said. The Kolhapur-born Athaiya, who worked till just five years ago, began her career as a costume designer in Hindi cinema with Guru Dutt's 1956 superhit 'C.I.D.' She went on to work in over 100 films.

She won the Academy Award for Best Costume Design in Richard Attenborough's 'Gandhi', with Ben Kingsley as the Mahatma, along with John Mollo. It's too good to believe. Thank you Academy and thank you Sir Richard Attenborough for focusing world attention on India, Athaiya had said in her acceptance speech at the Academy Awards.

The veteran who defined the aesthetics of Hindi cinema through her prolific work, created some of Bollywood's best remembered looks, including Vajrantihimala in 'Aamrapali', Waheeda Rehman in 'Guide' and Zeenat Aman in 'Satyam Shivam Sundaram'.

In a career of more than five decades won two National Awards - for Gulzar's mystery drama 'Lekin' (1990) and the period film 'Lagaan'.



PM LIKELY TO ADDRESS RALLY NEXT WEEK

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, OCT. 15

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to address his first election rally in poll bound Bihar on October 23 or 24.

Modi may address his first rally in Arrah, which is currently represented by the RJD in the state Assembly and BJP in the Lok Sabha.

The Prime Minister, sources said, could also address around a dozen joint rallies with Chief Minister and JD(U) chief Nitish Kumar for NDA's candidates.

The first phase of three phased polling in the state will take place on October 28. The ruling NDA's poll plank is development while the Opposition camp has been highlighting "anti-incumbency" against the ruling coalition.

In 2015, Modi had announced ₹1.25 lakh crore special package for the state while addressing an official function. JD(U) was with the Opposition 'mahagathabandhan' in 2015 which won the polls but the Nitish Kumar led outfit later rejoined the NDA camp.

Other than the Prime Minister, BJP president J.P. Nadda is likely to address more than 20 rallies, Union minister Amit Shah could address more than a dozen rallies, UP CM Yogi Adityanath and Union minister Smriti Irani could also address more than a dozen rallies.

Nitish behaved with my father haughtily: Chirag

LJP chief denies suggestions that he parted ways with JD(U) over seat-sharing



Chirag Paswan

Patna, Oct. 15: LJP president Chirag Paswan on Thursday trashed suggestions that he parted ways with Nitish Kumar's JD(U) because of differences over seat-sharing for the Bihar Assembly polls, and accused the Chief Minister of harming the Dalit community by creating a sub-group of Mahadalits.

Paswan said his party had fought the Lok Sabha polls last year in alliance with the JD(U) because of the "compulsions" brought on by the return to the NDA of Kumar, whose party he accused of working against LJP candidates in the general elections in violation of the coalition dharma.

The 37-year-old, who recently lost his father Ram Vilas Paswan, the charismatic LJP founder, also alleged that Kumar had behaved "haughtily" when the late Union minister had called on him last year with the request to accompany him for filing nomination papers for the Rajya Sabha.

Paswan Sr. was a Rajya Sabha member and Union minister at the time of his death.

"I met Union home minister Amit Shah and BJP chief J.P. Nadda so many times in the recent past. Not once did the issue of seat-sharing crop up," Chirag Paswan said in an interview, rubbishing suggestions that he raised a banner of revolt against the JD(U) after the latter tried to deny his party a fair share of seats.

"It must be kept in mind that the LJP has never been a fan of Nitish Kumar's style of politics. He has harmed the Dalits by creating a sub-group of Mahadalits for his own

political gains," he said.

Chirag, who has to carry forward the impressive political legacy of his father, the tallest Dalit leader in Bihar since the redoubtable Jagjivan Ram, was bitter about how Kumar treated the LJP founder.

"Nitish Kumar remarked mockingly that my father could not have got elected to the Rajya Sabha without the JD(U)'s support since we had only two MLAs. He should remember that my father was promised a Rajya Sabha berth by the then BJP chief Amit Shah himself," he said.

"And I felt so belittled when Nitish behaved in a haughty manner when my father called on him with the request that he accompany us for filing of nomination papers. He came only after the mahurat (auspicious timing) decided for the occasion had passed. No son could have taken such a treatment lying down," he said.

The LJP chief also rubbished the Chief Minister's 'saat nischay' (seven resolves) for public welfare, saying while the rest of the country was making so much progress, he was still talking about piped water and construc-

LJP using PM's photos during campaign: HAM

NAYEAR AZAD | DC PATNA, OCT. 15

The NDA ally Hindustani Awam Morcha (HAM) on Thursday said that the party would write to the Election Commission to prevent Chirag Paswan's LJP from using Prime Minister Narendra Modi's photographs during poll campaigns.

"We are getting complaints from several constituencies that LJP is using the photograph of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to influence voters. LJP is not part of the NDA in Bihar and if this continues then we will write to Election Commission and also lodge complaints against LJP candidates who have been doing this. Those who did not do anything for Bihar are trying to mislead the voters by using Prime Minister's photograph during their poll campaigns", HAM Spokesperson Danish Rizwan said.

Before the announcement of seat sharing a week earlier, the LJP had pulled out of the NDA

● LJP has clarified that the party's ties with BJP remain intact and it will not field candidates against the saffron party during Bihar elections.

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 saffron party during Bihar polls.

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

"Those who are saying that my party is using the Prime Minister's photograph to influence voters must understand that I have been connected and influenced by his ideas. Our party is in alliance with the BJP nationally and I have always clarified my stand on issues like CAA and Ayodhya while

those who claim to be with him remained tightlipped over the issue", LJP Chief Chirag Paswan said while talking to a TV channel in Patna on Thursday.

The 37-year-old leader also said that he was instigated by his father to fight Bihar polls alone to expand the party's base.

Talking to reporters, Chirag Paswan further said that "Bihar first Bihari first" is the key for the development of the state and he wants the idea to be included into the agenda of the government after the elections.

"After Chief Minister Nitish Kumar announced his party's vision *saat nischay* (seven resolves) part two, I was left with no option. I had to take a tough stand as I feel that the idea of *saat nischay* cannot take the state towards the development", Chirag Paswan said. He further said that his party is in alliance with the BJP nationally and hopes that the next government will be formed by the BJP-LJP in Bihar.

tion of concrete roads and alleys.

"The Chief Minister never tires of proclaiming zero tolerance for corruption, crime and communalism. This flies in the face of the fact that graft has hit the implementation of every government scheme in the state. Horrific incidents like the

recent burning alive of a woman after rape took place in Buxar district.

"And communalism? What does he have to say about the comments of Nityanand Rai? He owes an answer. Unlike us, he is still a part of the NDA in Bihar," Paswan said.

Rai, the Union minister of state for home and a

senior BJP leader, was recently panned by the Opposition for his remark at a recent poll rally that the RJD's victory will turn Bihar into a safe haven for Kashmiri terrorists.

His comment was seen by the NDA's rivals as an attempt at communal polarisation ahead of the elections.

— PTI

CONG GIVES TICKET TO SHATRUGHAN SINHA'S SON

NAYEAR AZAD | DC PATNA, OCT. 15

The Congress is all set to launch Shatrughan Sinha's son Luv Sinha in politics by giving him a ticket from Patna's Bankipore seat which is considered a BJP's stronghold.

He has been pitted against BJP's three-time MLA Nitin Navin. Bankipore assembly seat comes under the Patna Sahib constituency that elected Shatrughan Sinha twice in 2009 and 2014 when he was in the BJP.

Sources said that the Congress, which is an ally of the RJD in Bihar, is trying to use the popularity and political influence of Shatrughan Sinha by giving the ticket to his son Luv Sinha from the seat.

As per the seat-sharing formula in the opposition coalition, the RJD which is the largest party in the grand alliance is contesting on 144 seats, the Congress 70 and Left parties 29 seats.

The Congress on Thursday released the second list of 49 candidates for the Bihar elections. Congress insiders said that "the party is distributing symbols to candidates after analysing their political influence in their constituencies. People of Bihar are fed up with the current government and want a viable alternative".

Sources, however, said that a large section in the Congress is reportedly unhappy and resentment is brewing over the selection of candidates. Many senior political leaders feel that their suggestions were ignored by the state leadership while selecting candidates for polls.

Finishing touches



An artisan gives final touches on an idol of Goddess Durga in Chennai on Thursday, ahead of the Durga Puja festival. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said cancelling Durga puja celebrations was not an option, and urged people to maintain all Covid-19 safety protocols during the five-day revelry.

— PTI

INDIA HITS OUT AT CHINA ON LADAKH ISSUE

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, OCT. 15

New Delhi slammed Beijing on Thursday, saying it "has no locus standi to comment on India's internal matters", after China reportedly said it does not recognise the Union Territory of Ladakh.

China also does not recognise Arunachal Pradesh as part of India. In what is being seen as a veiled reference to China's insistence that other countries follow the "One China Policy", New Delhi "hoped that countries will not comment on India's internal matters, as much as they expect the same of others".

Meanwhile, following the latest round of talks with China for military disengagement in the Ladakh sector, India on Thursday reiterated that the "two sides have a better understanding of each other's positions", adding that the two countries will "maintain the current momentum of communications."

and abet cross-border terrorism against India and has also been resorting to unprovoked ceasefire violations to support terrorist infiltration. The Pakistani leadership continues to indulge in inappropriate, provocative and hate speech against India. Such support to terrorism against India and use of derogatory and abusive language are not conducive to normal neighbourly relations."

At his weekly briefing on Thursday evening, MEA spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said, "We have seen reports on the interview by a senior Pakistani official to an Indian media outlet. He has commented on India's internal matters. As always, this is Pakistan's effort to divert attention from domestic failures of the present government and mislead its domestic constituents by pulling India into headlines on a daily basis. The (Pakistani) official is well advised to restrict his advice to his establishment and not to comment on India's domestic policy. The statements made by him are contrary to facts on the ground, misleading and fictitious. As regards the purported message, let me make it clear that no such message was sent from our side."

He added, "Pakistan continues to support, aid

11 DEAD AFTER CONSUMING SPURIOUS LIQUOR IN MP

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, OCT. 15

At least 11 people died after consuming spurious liquor in the temple town of Ujjain, police said on Thursday. All the deaths occurred in a gap of 10 hours on the intervening night of October 14 and October 15.

According to the police, the deceased comprised beggars, small-time vendors and daily-wage earners. Some of them were homeless and lived on pavements. Preliminary post-mortem reports have suggested that the deaths may have occurred due to consumption of denatured spirit.

According to Ujjain district collector Ashish Singh, the victims visited government hospitals in Ujjain from Wednesday evening onwards.

J&K parties form alliance to fight for special status

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, OCT. 15

The signatories of 'Gupkar Declaration' for defending Article 370 and 35A of Kashmir's mainstream parties which they took at a meeting held at Mr. Abdullah's residence on August 4, 2019, a day before the state was stripped of its special status and split up into two Union Territories.

The leaders of NC, PDP, Peoples Conference, Awami National Conference, CPIM and Congress had after the second meeting of the signatories issued a joint statement here saying that they are "wholly bound" by the "Gupkar Declaration" and "will unwaveringly adhere to it."

On Thursday, all the signatories barring J&K PCC chief Ghulam Ahmad Mir attended the meeting and renamed the grouping as 'Peoples' Alliance for Gupkar Declaration'. Mr. Abdullah told reporters,

"We've decided to name the resolution as 'People's Alliance' for the Gupkar Declaration. Our motive is to fight for the restoration of the pre-August 4, 2019 position. We will also fight for the rights that were snatched last year from J&K. Further, we want that the steps be taken for the resolution of Kashmir issue and all the stakeholders should be taken on board in this regard."

He also said that the next meeting of the signatories will be held soon at which the future course of action will be devised and made public thereafter.

The others who attended the meeting are PC chairman and former minister Sajad Gani Lone, CPIM's Mohammad Yousof Tarigami, J&K People's Peoples' Movement leader Javed Mustafa Mir, ANC's Muzaffar Shah besides NC vice president Omar Abdullah and party MP Hasnain Masoodi.

OFFICIALS TOLD TO SCALE UP COVID TESTING

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, OCT. 15

India's overall cases of Coronavirus crossed 73-lakh mark on Thursday after 67,708 fresh cases were detected in the last 24 hours. The total number of deaths due to the virus has now crossed 1.11 lakh out of which 680 fatalities were recorded in last one day.

Union health ministry said that India is reporting a progressively high increase in the recoveries and a persistent decline in the percentage of active cases.

As a result, the doubling time of the infection has sharply improved and it is now almost 73 days. Health ministry officials said this indicates a substantial fall in the daily new cases and the consequent increase in time taken to double the total cases.

Calling for continued vigilance and a high state of preparedness against the Coronavirus pandemic, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday directed health authorities to scale up Covid-19 testing and sero-surveys and said the facility to get tested regularly and speedily at a low cost must be available to all at the earliest.

Chairing a review meeting of the research and vaccine deployment ecosystem against the Covid-19 pandemic, the Prime Minister also underscored the need for continuous and rigorous scientific testing and validation of traditional medicine treatments.

He appreciated the efforts of Ministry of AYUSH for conducting evidence-based research and providing reliable solutions in this difficult time, an official statement said.

● INDIA IS reporting a progressively high increase in the recoveries and a persistent decline in the percentage of active Coronavirus cases.

IN BRIEF

Kyrgyzstan Prez steps down

Moscow: Kyrgyzstan President Sooronbai Jeenbekov announced his resignation Thursday in a bid to end the turmoil that has engulfed the Central Asian nation after a disputed parliamentary election. Jeenbekov, who has faced calls to step down from protesters and political opponents, said in a statement released by his office that holding onto power wasn't "worth the integrity of our country and harmony in society". "For me, peace in Kyrgyzstan, the country's integrity, the unity of our people and the calm in the society are above all else," Jeenbekov said. Kyrgyzstan, a country of 6.5 million people located on the border with China, was plunged into chaos following an Oct. 4 vote that election officials say was swept by pro-government parties.

Raid on HK media tycoon's house

Hong Kong: Hong Kong police raided the private offices of media tycoon and pro-democracy activist Jimmy Lai on Thursday, according to his aide Mark Simon who wrote in a post on Twitter that 14 police officers visited Lai's office and confiscated documents. Lai, 71, is an outspoken pro-democracy figure who regularly criticizes China's authoritarian rule and Hong Kong's government. He is also the founder of media company Next Digital, which operates pro-democracy newspaper *Apple Daily*. "I spoke with police they said they would remain until our lawyer arrived," Simon wrote. "They did not, they took documents and departed before our lawyer arrived." Police confirmed that they had conducted a search operation inside an office in Kwun Tong district on Thursday.

Plea for equality law in Japan

Tokyo: Sexual minority groups and human rights activists launched a petition on Thursday calling for an LGBT equality law in Japan in hopes that it can be enacted next year, when the country is to host the Olympics and will be the focus of international attention. "In this country, equal rights for LGBT people are not guaranteed by law or in their social lives," said Yuri Igarashi, co-representative of the Japan Alliance for LGBT Legislation, one of several organisers of the petition. "We call for the passage of an LGBT equality law in time for the Tokyo games, and as an Olympic legacy." Japan has slowly shown an increased awareness of sexual diversity but it is often superficial. Pressure to conform still forces many lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people to hide their sexual identities, even from their families.

SPACE PROBE MAKES 1ST VENUS FLY-BY

Berlin, Oct. 15: A spacecraft bound for Mercury swung by Venus on Thursday, using Earth's neighbourhood to adjust its course on the way to the solar system's smallest and innermost planet.

Launched almost two years ago, the European-Japanese probe BepiColombo took a black-and-white snapshot of Venus from a distance of 17,000 kilometres (10,560 miles), with some of its own instruments in the frame. The fly-by is the second of nine so-called planetary gravity assists that the spacecraft needs for its seven-year trip to Mercury.

The first, around Earth, took place in April. The European Space Agency has described the 1.3 billion-euro (\$1.5 billion) mission as one of its most challenging yet. Mercury's extreme temperatures, the intense gravity pull of the sun and blistering solar radiation make for hellish conditions.

BepiColombo will make one more fly-by of Venus and six of Mercury itself to slow down before its arrival in 2025. Once there, the spacecraft will split in two, releasing a European orbiter nicknamed Bepi that will swoop into Mercury's inner orbit while Mio, built by the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, gathers data from a greater distance.

Both probes are designed to cope with temperatures varying from 430 degrees Celsius (806 degrees Fahrenheit) on the side facing the sun, and -180 degrees Celsius (-292 F) in Mercury's shadow.

Europe reels as it sets records

France slaps 9 p.m. curfew on many of its cities, Londoners face travel restrictions

Berlin, Oct. 15: Fears rose Thursday that Europe is running out of chances to control its fall Coronavirus outbreak, as infections hit record daily highs in Germany, the Czech Republic, Italy and Poland. France slapped a 9 p.m. curfew on many of its biggest cities and Londoners faced new travel restrictions as governments imposed increasingly tough measures.

New infections have surged across Europe over recent weeks as the fall kicks in, prompting authorities to start re-imposing restrictions relaxed over the summer. The Czech Republic, Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain, France and Britain are among the countries causing particular concern. The head of the World Health Organisation's Europe office urged governments to be "uncompromising" in controlling the virus. "These measures are meant to keep us all ahead of the curve and to flatten its course," Dr. Hans Kluge said, while wearing a mask.

"It is therefore up to us to accept them while they are still relatively easy to follow instead of following the path of severity," Kluge cited epidemiological models that suggested if 95% of people wear masks and follow other social distancing measures, Europe could avoid about 281,000 deaths by February. But he warned that relaxing measures could lead to a five-fold increase in deaths by January. European nations as a whole have seen nearly 230,000 confirmed deaths from the virus — more than the nearly 217,000 reported virus deaths so far in the United States.

— AP

EU CHIEF LEAVES SUMMIT TO GO INTO QUARANTINE AFTER STAFFER IS +VE

Brussels, Oct. 15: European Union chief Ursula von der Leyen was forced to leave an EU summit Thursday shortly after it opened because one of her close staffers tested positive for Covid-19.

She said that she herself tested negative but "as a precaution I am immediately leaving the Europe-

an Council to go into self-isolation." Von der Leyen had already been mingling with other EU leaders ahead of the formal opening of the two-day summit. Organisers had taken special precaution to keep leaders apart and make sure they respect all health regulations.

— AP

SINGAPORE AND HONG KONG AGREE ON BILATERAL AIR TRAVEL BUBBLE

Singapore, Oct. 15: Singapore and Hong Kong have agreed on a bilateral air travel bubble, which will exempt travellers from the mandatory quarantine upon arrival, as the rate of Coronavirus infection declines in both regional aviation hubs.

To avail the flights, travellers will have to test negative in the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test for Covid-19, Singapore's Ministry of Transport

(MOT) on Thursday.

Travellers under the bubble will not be subject to mandatory quarantining, the release said, adding that there will be no restrictions on travel purposes and no need for a controlled itinerary. The MOT said the bubble can be "scaled by adjusting the number of dedicated flights upwards or downwards, or even suspended, in line with the latest developments".

— PTI

CHINA FIRES TWO HEALTH OFFICIALS

Beijing, Oct. 15: A hospital president and the director of the health commission in the northern Chinese city of Qingdao have been fired after China's latest Coronavirus outbreak, authorities said Thursday.

A brief notice on the official microblog said Health Commission Director Sui Zhenhua and Deng Kai, president of Qingdao's thoracic hospital, were placed under further probe.

— AP

DON SON BARRON TESTED POSITIVE

Washington, Oct. 15: Barron Trump, the teenage son of US President Donald Trump, contracted Coronavirus after his parents tested positive for Covid-19 but has since tested negative, First Lady Melania Trump has said. In a blog posted on the White House website, she said that Barron, 14, exhibited no symptoms, a departure from herself and the president, who have both said they experienced mild symptoms.

— PTI

Thailand declares emergency after unprecedented protest

Bangkok, Oct. 15: Thailand's government declared a strict new state of emergency for the capital on Thursday, a day after a student-led protest against the country's traditional establishment saw an extraordinary moment in which demonstrators heckled a royal motorcade.

After the pre-dawn declaration, riot police moved in to clear out demonstrators who after a day of rallies and confrontation had gathered outside Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha's office to push their demands, which include the former general's stepping down, constitutional changes and reform of the monarchy.

Several top leaders of the protest movement were taken into custody, with one later declaring on his Facebook page that he had been denied access to a lawyer and was being forced onto a helicopter and taken to a city in the country's north.

Police made 22 arrests. Despite a new ban against large public gatherings, several thousand people answered calls to rally in another area of the city later Thursday. The text of the emergency declaration



A pro-democracy protester reacts as police try to detain him during a rally in Bangkok on Thursday.

— AFP

said it was needed because "certain groups of perpetrators intended to instigate an untoward incident and movement in the Bangkok area by way of various methods and via different channels, including causing obstruction to the royal motorcade." The protest in

Bangkok's historic district was the third major gathering by student-led activists who have been pushing the boundaries of what is considered acceptable — and legal — language by publicly questioning the role of Thailand's monarchy.

The royal family has

long been considered sacrosanct and a pillar of Thai identity. King Maha Vajiralongkorn and family members are protected by a lese majeste law that has been used to silence critics who risk up to 15 years in prison if deemed to have insulted the institution.

— AP

Citizenship: Joe woos immigrants

Washington, Oct. 15: Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden has vowed to provide citizenship to 11 million illegal immigrants if voted to power in the November 3 presidential election.

Biden identified this as one of his priorities in addition to beating the Coronavirus pandemic, rebuilding the economy and figuring out how to restore American leadership around the world. Responding to a question at a virtual fundraiser on Wednesday, Biden said there is a need to deal

with what's going on at the border.

"We're going to have to deal with the immigration crisis we have. I'm going to send the House and Senate an immigration bill that's going to provide access to citizenship to 11 million people," he said. President Donald Trump has been repeatedly calling for the quick deportation of illegal immigrants who "invade" the US and lamented that the current immigration system is "unfair" to those who came legally to America.

— PTI

DUELLING TOWN HALLS FOR TRUMP, BIDEN AFTER DEBATE PLAN NIXED

Washington, Oct. 15: President Donald Trump and challenger Joe Biden will compete for TV audiences in duelling town halls instead of meeting face-to-face for their second debate as originally planned. They will take questions in different cities on different networks Thursday night: Trump on NBC from Miami, Biden on ABC from Philadelphia. Trump backed out of

plans for the presidential faceoff after debate organisers shifted the format to a virtual event following his Covid-19 diagnosis.

As the pace of the campaign speeds up, the two candidates first are taking care of other electoral necessities Thursday: Trump has a midday rally in battleground North Carolina, and Biden is raising campaign cash at a virtual event.

— AP

Navalny poisoning: Curbs on Russians

Brussels, Oct. 15: The European Union on Thursday imposed sanctions on six Russian officials and one organisation over the poisoning of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny with a Soviet-era nerve agent.

The move came a day after Russia's foreign minister warned that Moscow might respond with similar measures. The decision was agreed upon among the 27 EU envoys to Brussels. "The adopted restrictive measures consist of a travel ban to the EU and an asset freeze for individuals, and an asset freeze for the entity," the EU said in a statement.

The list includes two high level officials in the Presidential Executive Office, a director of the federal security service and two deputy ministers in the Russian defence ministry. The EU is also targeting the State Scientific Research Institute for Organic Chemistry and Technology.

EU foreign ministers agreed Monday to impose the sanctions, following a push by France and Germany to freeze the assets of those suspected of involvement and ban them from travelling in Europe under sanctions to combat the use and



Alexei Navalny

spread of chemical weapons. Navalny, an anti-corruption investigator and major political opponent of Russian President Vladimir Putin, fell ill on Aug. 20 during a domestic flight in Russia. He was flown to Germany for treatment two days later and is still recovering there.

Last week, tests conducted at labs designated by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons confirmed that Navalny was poisoned by a Novichok nerve agent. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said in an interview on Wednesday that "the Germans are not planning to provide any facts, despite all international and legal obligations. We respond in kind. This is diplomatic practice."

— AP

China slams US over Tibet

Beijing, Oct. 15: China on Thursday slammed the US for appointing a Special Coordinator for Tibetan issues, describing Washington's move as political manipulation aimed at destabilising Tibet. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Wednesday named Robert Destro, Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labour, as the Special Coordinator for Tibetan issues.

Destro will focus on advancing dialogue between the Communist-run government in Beijing and the Dalai Lama, protecting the distinct religious cultural and linguistic identity of Tibetans, improving respect for their human rights and

much, much more, Pompeo said. Reacting to Destro's appointment, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said that the US move amounted to interference in China's internal affairs.

He said, "the setting up of the so-called special coordinator for Tibetan issues is entirely out of political manipulation to interfere in China's internal affairs and destabilise Xizang", the Chinese name for Tibet. Chinese officials in recent times have been referring to Tibet only as Xizang. "China firmly opposes that and never recognise that. People of ethnic groups in Xizang are part of the big family of Chinese nation," Zhao said.

— PTI

BEIJING TRACKS U.S. NAVY SHIP'S PASSAGE THROUGH TAIWAN STRAIT

Beijing, Oct. 15: China says it tracked a US Navy warship as it passed through the Taiwan Strait and has its forces in the area on high alert, as tensions between the world's two largest economies and rivals for regional influence continue to simmer. The spokesperson for its Eastern Theater Command, Maj. Zhang Chunxuan, said air and sea forces were mobilized to keep tabs Wednesday on the USS Barry, an Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer.

Zhang said the US has recently been sending

"the wrong signal" to proponents of independence for Taiwan, a pro-US self-governing democracy that China claims as its own territory, to be annexed by force if necessary.

Although the Taiwan Strait is a public waterway, China is extremely sensitive to all US military moves in its periphery amid heightened tensions over Taiwan, the South China Sea, trade disputes and other issues. The US has been "seriously undermining peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait region".

— AP

Provocations: France warns Turkey

Ankara, Oct. 15: France warned Turkey on Thursday that it could face European Union sanctions for its "provocations," after Ankara redeployed its search vessel on a new energy exploration mission in the eastern Mediterranean. Speaking in Paris after a meeting of the French-German-Polish 'Weimar Triangle', French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian reiterated the EU stance that unless Tu-

rkey shows "respect for the integrity of Greece and Cyprus" then the European Council will consider initiating sanctions.

"We are forced to note that there are permanent acts of provocation on the part of Turkey which are not bearable, and therefore we really wish that Turkey clarifies its positions and returns to a spirit of dialogue," he said.

Turkey redeployed its search vessel, Oruc Reis,

near the Greek island of Kastellorizo, reigniting tensions between Greece and Turkey over sea boundaries and energy drilling rights, and putting the future of the planned resumption of talks between Athens and Ankara to resolve disputes into doubt. Those talks were last held in 2016.

Those tensions had flared up over the summer, triggering fears of a confrontation between the two

historic rivals and NATO allies. German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said he understood Greece's unwillingness to engage in dialogue due to Turkey's decision to again dispatch its ship. Given Berlin's efforts to mediate between the parties "the behaviour by Turkey to conduct another provocation, resulting in the agreed process of dialogue not taking place, is annoying," Maas said.

— AP

450 Pak Oppn workers booked on rally eve

Lahore, Oct. 15: Over 450 workers from Pakistan's Opposition parties have been booked in Lahore and other areas of Punjab province ahead of the first grand anti-government rally on Friday by an alliance formed to oust Prime Minister Imran Khan.

On September 20, the leaders of 11 major Opposition parties announced formation of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) and launch of a three-phased anti-government movement under an "action plan" starting with countrywide public meetings, protest demon-

strations and rallies before a "decisive long march" towards Islamabad in January 2021. The first anti-government rally is scheduled on Friday in Gujranwala city, some 80 kms from Lahore, followed by another rally on October 18 in Karachi, in Quetta on October 25, Peshawar on November 22, Multan on November 30 and then a rally in Lahore on December 13.

The Opposition leaders announced that they would use all political and democratic options, including no-confidence motions and mass resignations

from Parliament to seek "the selected" prime minister's resignation. The Opposition parties have accused the powerful army of rigging the 2018 elections that brought Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party to power. The Opposition parties are openly opposing the military's interference in politics and elections for the first time in the recent history of the country.

The PDM comprises mainly three mainstream Opposition parties — PML-N of Nawaz Sharif, PPP of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Jamiat Ule-

ma-i-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) of Maulana Fazlur Rehman.

Launching a crackdown ahead of PDM's first major anti-government show, Punjab police got into action and booked over 450 workers, mostly of PML-N, in different parts of Punjab province under Covid-19 violations and also arrested scores of PDM workers. Police stations in Gujranwala, Mandi Bahauddin and Lahore registered cases against over 450 Opposition workers under sections 269 and 188 of Pakistan Penal Code for holding a public gathering without

observing Covid-19 SOPs.

Former prime minister and PML-N supreme leader Nawaz Sharif, who is London since November last year, in a tweet, said that police should refrain from arresting the PDM leaders. "Police must NOT comply with Imran Niazi's workers, raid their homes or hinder their travel to Gujranwala," he said.

Former premier and PDM leader Shahid Khaqan Abbasi said the government's panic over the first public meeting of Opposition has exposed its reality.

— PTI

11 parties formed the Pakistan Democratic Movement and launch of a three-phased anti-govt movement

06 rallies: In Gujranwala (Oct. 16), Karachi (Oct. 18), Quetta (Oct. 25), Peshawar (Nov. 22), Multan (Nov. 30) & Lahore (Dec. 13).



DECCAN Chronicle

16 OCTOBER 2020

Rainy spotlight on bad urban planning

The overnight heavy rains that pounded Telangana state, Andhra Pradesh and parts of Karnataka and Maharashtra have claimed scores of lives and caused destruction of property worth crores of rupees on Wednesday and if the weatherman gets it right, the region will continue to face the threat in the coming days, too. Apart from the loss of lives, the rains left several busy residential areas and commercial streets in Hyderabad flooded and houses and shops inundated. Power supply was disrupted for hours together. Even the road to the airport was washed away in the rains, marooning the city for all practical purposes.

The way the rain fury threw life out of gear in the Telangana state capital leaves some disquieting questions about our urban planning. It is unacceptable that one night's rain can bring the civic life of a growing city to halt. The threat is not specific to Hyderabad — Chennai and Mumbai had similar experiences in the recent past while the others are waiting for their turn. True, the impact of global warming and sudden changes in the weather patterns are tough to handle at the local level but the citizen's and official culpability should not go unnoticed. It's a shame that the cities which were built with proper drains decades or even centuries ago now drown in flood waters. Hyderabad had a proper way out for water in the form of River Musi but it has now become a waste dump and a victim of mindless encroachment despite several recovery plans. The smaller ones have been lost forever. It is not that the planners cannot foresee this happening and ensure that life is not completely disrupted overnight. Adequate warning and advance planning can ameliorate the hardship of the people and reduce the loss of property. The disastrous cyclones that regularly visited the eastern coast, especially Odisha, and claimed thousands of lives no more repeat their dance of death now, thanks to the improved advance warning systems and an efficient governmental machinery that ensures that the cyclone passes its way as is its wont but no lives are lost. Thiruvananthapuram, the capital city of Kerala, was saved from the devastating floods in 2018 and 2019 after a project named Operation Anantha was implemented with focus on clearing the drains five years ago. It was made possible by the determination of a team of officials, led by the chief secretary, and helped by the stringent provisions of the National Disaster Management Act, 2005.

An action plan on a similar pattern which uses technology and concepts of advance planning must be introduced in our cities to save them from such calamities. The bodies responsible for disaster management at the national, state and district levels must be made operational full-time. Laws on urban planning must be implemented strictly, violators punished ruthlessly and bureaucrats responsible for the lapses made accountable. No society which swears by rule of law can allow the situation where law-breakers thrive at the cost of the lives and livelihoods of the rest. This is the least the government can do for the city dwellers.

Hate squad's scary agenda

So frightening has the monster of social media grown that it is causing serious concern in responsible quarters about the cohesiveness of our Armed Forces. This was recently conveyed in an open letter to President Ram Nath Kovind by more than one hundred veterans from the Army, Navy and the Air Force. The retired personnel, including former Chiefs, have urged that action be taken against fake social media posts that spread divisiveness within the forces on the religious basis.

Social media posts have spread the canard that a "Muslim Regiment" of the Army had to be "dismantled" when it refused to take up arms in the 1965 war against Pakistan. The truth is that such a regiment never existed. But social media posts seek to exploit the ignorance of the people, and their gullibility, when they circulate false, malicious, communal propaganda.

Since such posts are not sent out by stray, well-meaning but ignorant individuals, but typically by tens of thousands of organised foot soldiers of hate squads that occupy the Internet highway, it is time the government stepped in with alacrity to punish those who attempt to sow discord and mistrust within the Armed Forces.

At a time when our forces are busy dealing with the twin menace emanating from Pakistan and China, these cyber armies with their disturbing agenda may, sometimes even unwittingly, have become instruments of psy-ops (psychological operations) of forces hostile to India.

In India's Armed Forces, soldiers of all faiths have distinguished themselves, and they are not grouped on a religious basis but fight in multi-class formations in the singular cause of defending this country. The example of Havildar Abdul Hamid, who was posthumously awarded the Param Vir Chakra for his gallantry against the Pakistan Army in the 1965 war, is of course legendary. But there are so many others. The antecedents of those posting about the so-called "Muslim Regiment" must be examined and suitable punishment awarded quickly.

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Subhani

Flashback



The 'beauty of oneness': Has today's India lost it?



Karan Thapar

As I See It

I admit memories can be deceptive and as you grow older they could even become misleading, but the India I recall from my teens seems a very different country to the one I live in today. Of course, we were a poorer country, few people travelled abroad whilst most hankered for foreign goods. Simple telephones were a luxury, trunk calls a nightmare, journeys by plane a treat and there was only black and white television. On the other hand, Coca Cola cost 25 paise and five rupees was considered generous pocket money for a 13-year-old. But these are not the differences I have in mind.

There was something else about the old India that we took for granted in the 1960s which we are in danger of losing today. Long before Sunil Khilnani coined the evocative phrase "the idea of India", we lived it every day at Doon School. We had no idea of our caste or what it implied. Religion, which is tearing us apart, seemed irrelevant. Rich or poor, intelligent or dim, fat or thin, fair or dark, short or tall, these attributes did not create divisions between us. They did not matter. We were one. Strange as it may sound, we were so similar it felt as if we were the same.

It's this sentiment the now withdrawn Tanishq advertisement sought to celebrate. Created to promote its Ekavatam brand of jewellery — and remember that word means oneness — this is what the company itself says of the advertisement: "The idea behind the Ekavatam campaign is to celebrate the com-

ing together of people from different walks of life, local communities and families during these challenging times and celebrate the beauty of oneness." So it wasn't simply selling golden baubles. It was promoting, actually reveling in, "the beauty of oneness". That's an elevated and captivating phrase for what politicians prosaically call "unity in diversity".

This is the silken thread that binds together the many different people of India. We speak in a multitude, even a babel, of languages, prefer contrasting cuisines, dress differently, look dissimilar and pray to a perplexing pantheon of gods. Yet each of us calls himself Indian and is proud of it. This is because "the beauty of oneness" is an instinctive part of us. You could even say it's our raison d'être.

Yet this was the target the trolls were after when they attacked Tanishq's Ekavatam campaign. The advertisement they excoriated celebrated the love of a Muslim mother-in-law for her Hindu daughter-in-law. It's a love that transcends the foolish but often impregnable walls that rigid faith can erect between people. A love that gives meaning and fulfilment to the relationships that really matter in our lives.

The trolls, however, called it "love jihad". Not only is this oxymoronic but it mocks and challenges the belief our different religions do not divide the Indian people. The fact some pray westwards facing Mecca whilst others do so blowing conch shells in temples does not preclude affection for each

other. Some may wear a cross, others a tilak or topi, but these differing symbols of faith do not separate us or, even, define us. There is a lot more that we share in common. This is the idea of India and the trolls were trying to tear it apart.

Tanishq has allowed them to succeed. But I don't blame the company alone. That would be too narrow. The Tata Group cannot escape responsibility. Let me explain why. How could they not have been aware of the deeper, stronger, richer message that the advertisement sought to convey? Indeed, how could they not have intended it? The advertisement was not created in a fit of forgetfulness nor was it accepted without considering the consequences that could follow. After all, it was so obviously doing more than just selling jewellery. It was a haunting picture of something the Tatas know we are in danger of losing — "the beauty of oneness". It was a call to awaken India. A reminder of what makes us one country.

So when the Tatas withdrew this advertisement, they also turned their back on this message. I am pretty certain they know this and I believe they must be embarrassed by it. Consider carefully their explanation for what they have done. It's not just weak and unconvincing, it's actually contradictory. "We are

The Tata Group cannot escape responsibility. Let me explain why. How could they not have been aware of the deeper, stronger, richer message that the advertisement sought to convey? Indeed, how could they not have intended it?

deeply saddened with the inadvertent stirring of emotions", it begins. So what do they do? Stand up and fight back, as their convictions would expect of them? No. They decided to "withdraw this film keeping in mind the hurt sentiments and well-being of our employees, partners and store staff". But whose sentiments did that advertisement hurt? Only that of the trolls. And if there is any threat to the well-being of their employees, partners and store staff — and, sadly, that could be so — it's enhanced security that they need, not a cowardly retreat.

The Tata Group has let down India. There's no denying that fact. However, corporations don't think in these grandiloquent terms except when their chairmen are making speeches to attract public attention. What's more surprising is that the Tatas have also let themselves down. This is a company that's always been credited with a vision that encompasses more than growth and profit. It's created an image of the Tata Group that we have all bought into. Now that picture has developed cracks.

I don't know Ratan Tata well. However, on the few occasions we have met I sensed there was more to him than just an outstandingly successful businessman. My hunch is that he knows this too. I would say he values this extra quality. He's probably silently proud of it. But, today, when he looks at himself in the mirror, will he be happy with the image that is reflected back?

I know he will see the difference. But will it upset him? Or will he comfort himself with the excuse that this is a change which is necessary to succeed in Narendra Modi's India?

The writer is a television commentator and anchor

LETTERS

GHMC AND RAINS

The incessant rains has once again exposed the total failure of the government machinery causing hardships to the public. In spite of knowing the rains would wreak havoc the GHMC had ignored to take necessary steps like maintenance of the drainage system before the monsoon. Minister K.T. Rama Rao must take steps and make GHMC more responsible about their duties before moonsoon.

Lakshmi
Hyderabad

It's heart numbing to see people struggling for their lives. The DRF and other rescue teams must be on their toes to be called out for emergencies any moment in different parts of the state. Even though a few teams are already out trying to do their best, there is need of stable teams in certain areas like Tolichowki wherein a boat turned upside down while carrying people including children who were unable to swim.

Malik Mohammad Faisal
Hyderabad

ON FAKE NEWS

Army Veterans writing a letter to President regarding a fake news on social media is the reality facing the country (*Veterans take up issue of fake posts on Muslim Regiment, DC, Oct. 15*). False news plays havoc with our minds and also brings disrespect to our country.

P.J. David
Hyderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN

DECCAN Chronicle

World probe panel on Netaji's death urged

NEW DELHI, Oct. 15. Jana Sangh Member of Parliament M.L. Sondhi today demanded establishment of an international commission to probe into the circumstances leading to the disappearance of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

Addressing a press conference here, Mr. Sondhi said several foreign countries like USA, UK, Germany, Japan, Soviet Union, China and also Taiwan had valuable information about Netaji.

Skand Tayal



India weighs options as it faces Chinese intransigence

The seventh round of the corps commander-level talks between India and China on Monday has not led to any notable advance on the Indian demand of a comprehensive disengagement by China from all the areas of the ongoing standoff in Ladakh. The prospects are receding for any significant reduction in force mobilisation before the onset of winter.

This round was held in the background of the foreign ministers' meeting of India, the United States, Japan and Australia in Tokyo on October 6 under the "Quadrilateral" security dialogue format. In these days of most high-level meetings being virtual, the Quad ministers met in person, in a sign of both the agenda's urgency and the imperative of confidential confabulations secure from any cyber snooping. US secretary of state Mike Pompeo travelled to Tokyo despite President Donald Trump being stricken by the Wuhan virus.

Mr Pompeo did not mince words and named Chinese Communist Party for its "exploitation, corruption and coercion". He elaborated: "We have seen this in the South, in the East China Sea, the Mekong, the

Himalayas, the Taiwan Straits."

In contrast, India's external affairs minister S. Jaishankar refrained from pointing any finger at China, let alone the CCP, despite the ongoing aggressive actions by the People's Liberation Army in Ladakh.

On the same day, the German delegation at the UN General Assembly delivered a joint statement on behalf of 39 countries conveying their "grave concern on the human rights situation in Xinjiang and the recent developments in Hong Kong". The statement called on China to "respect human rights, particularly the rights of persons belonging to religious minorities, especially in Xinjiang and Tibet".

The statement was signed inter alia by India's three Quad partners — the US, Japan and Australia — and also by several other important strategic partners like Canada, France, Britain and Germany. But India was conspicuous by its absence from the list of signatories.

In an angry response, the Chinese ambassador to the UN termed the well-founded accusations as "groundless" and said that China "opposes interference in internal affairs". This is ironic as China has repeatedly

backed Pakistan in its futile efforts to raise the Kashmir issue at the UN Security Council, which is clearly an internal matter of India.

India has also refrained from making any official statements on possible upgrading of its ties with Taiwan or on the unilateral actions by China in Hong Kong in violation of its treaty obligations with Britain.

This cautious approach by South Block is in contrast with strong public opinion across this country, expressed vociferously in the mass media, that India openly favour Taiwan's independence and Tibet's autonomy. On October 7, many Indian newspapers carried full-page advertorials by the Republic of China (Taiwan) celebrating its October 10 national day. The Chinese embassy was hurt by this pinprick and in an open letter reminded its "media friends" that "there is only one China in the world".

South Block is carefully calibrating its response to China's aggression in Ladakh by going full throttle on military preparations, mobilising our strategic partners and sensitising public opinion for a lengthy standoff, but simultaneously keeping the dia-

logue with China civil and keeping all channels of communication open. South Block is taking care not to take formal positions in multilateral fora from which it may be difficult to walk back if the border standoff is resolved.

The forthcoming American presidential election is of critical importance for a global response to an aggressive and unilateralist China and its "wolf warriors". While President Donald Trump has openly identified China as the US's main future adversary on all fronts — technological, economic and strategic — and has the toughness and resolve to strongly push back, it will take time for a future Joe Biden administration's China policy to evolve. Recent Democratic Presidents like Bill Clinton and Barack Obama made tough statements on China, but practised a non-confrontational policy, allowing China to expand its occupation of the South China Sea and emasculate the manufacturing sector in the US and elsewhere, including India.

In television appearances after returning from the Tokyo Quad meeting, Mr Pompeo criticised China's aggressive behaviour and

noted that "Indians are seeing 60,000 Chinese soldiers on their border". The Trump administration is sending a strong signal to China that it stands by India by scheduling the next 2+2 dialogue of the foreign and defence ministers of the two nations on October 26-27, 2020, a week before the November 3 election.

The two principal options for India are either to declare open adversarial relations with the world's second biggest economic and military power or, in Mr Jaishankar's words, to seek a "new equilibrium with China". The Narendra Modi government is now following the second option of not engaging in verbal duels with China in full view of the world, defend its interests robustly at the borders and negotiate with China both at the military and diplomatic levels. The basic premise is that both China and India would prefer to avoid an all-out confrontation. This is the basis on which the new equilibrium is being sought in India-China ties, while keeping all options on the table.

The writer is a retired diplomat and has served as India's ambassador to South Korea

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	39,728.41	-2.61
Nifty 50	11,680.35	-2.43
S&P 500*	3,461.45	-0.78
Dollar (₹)	73.37	-0.08
Pound Sterling (₹)	95.22	-0.70
Euro (₹)	85.96	0.13
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	51,503*32	0.06
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	42.52	-0.80
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.898	-0.003
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.711	-0.011

* As of 9:30 PM IST

Govt bans import of ACs with refrigerants

The government banned imports of air conditioners with refrigerants with a view to promote domestic manufacturing and cut imports of non essential items. "Import policy of air conditioners with refrigerants ...is amended from free to prohibited," the directorate general of foreign trade said in a notification. The government is taking steps to promote domestic manufacturing and cut import bill of non-essential goods.

Lakshmi Vilas gets board nod for rights issue



Cash-strapped Lakshmi Vilas Bank said its board has approved plans to raise up to Rs 500 crore through a rights issue. Last week, the private sector lender had informed exchanges about receiving a non-binding offer from Aion-backed NBFC Clix Group for a merger. The old-generation Chennai-based private bank, faced a blow in late September when its shareholders voted out seven directors.

Paytm Mall's festive season sale from today

Homegrown e-commerce platform Paytm Mall said it will start its eight-day long 'Maha Shopping Festival' sale from October 16 with participation of over 5,500 brands. The firm's online sale coincides with Flipkart's 'Big Billion Days' sales and Amazon's 'Great Indian Festival' sale, but would run for a longer period. The firm said products from MSMEs, Made in India brands, emporiums will also be part of the sale.

Kia Seltos anniversary edition launched

Kia Motors India said it has launched a special edition of its SUV Seltos, priced between Rs 13.75 lakh and Rs 14.85 lakh, to mark the model's first year in the country. The Seltos anniversary edition is based on HTX trim and comes with petrol and diesel engine options. The 1.5-litre petrol trim with manual transmission is priced at Rs 13.75 lakh, while petrol automatic is tagged at Rs 14.75 lakh.



■ Sensex loses 1066 pts on profit-booking Rally comes to an abrupt halt

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, OCT. 15

A second wave of Covid infection in Europe, leading to severe restrictions, and fading US stimulus hopes led to a sell-off in global markets, triggering profit-taking in IT and financial stocks in the Indian market after a run-away 10-day rise.

The Sensex fell 1066 points to close below the 40000 level at 39728.41, down by 2.61 per cent. The Nifty-50 closed at 11680.35 down 290.70 points, or 2.43 per cent.

The market erased the last six days' gains in a single session and investors lost more than Rs 3.25 lakh crore of their wealth in a day. Market volatility could rise in the near term—the volatility index, NSE's India VIX, rose 9.14 per cent on Thursday.

Both foreign portfolio investors and domestic institutional investors were net sellers of equities



worth Rs 604.07 crore and Rs 808.29 crore, respectively.

Deepak Jasani, head of retail research, HDFC Securities, said, "Bank Nifty led the fall, erasing 3.36 per cent to close at 23,072. Weakness in the European markets led to a fresh bout of selling in our markets post 1300 hours. European stocks slumped, with investors concerned about the impact of a second wave of coronavirus on the economy without any imminent stimulus to cushion the blow."

The top losers among the financials included ICICI Bank (-4.07 per cent), HDFC Bank (-3.54 per cent) and SBI (-3.62 per cent).

The Nifty IT Index fell 2.87 per cent despite Infosys announcing over 26 per cent rise in July-September quarter profit and raised annual revenue forecast. Infosys shares closed 2.09 per cent down at Rs 1,113.25 on the NSE.

Other major losers included Reliance Industries (-3.68 per cent), TCS (-2.69 per cent) and Bajaj Finance (-4.98 per cent).

Cyient Q2 net profit down 15% to ₹84 crore

New Delhi, Oct. 15: IT firm Cyient on Thursday reported a 14.8 per cent decline in its consolidated net profit at Rs 83.9 crore for September 2020 quarter. The Hyderabad-based firm had posted a net profit of Rs 98.5 crore in the year-ago period, Cyient said in a regulatory filing. Its revenue decreased 13.4 per cent to Rs 1,003.3 crore for

the period under review as against Rs 1,158.9 crore in same period year ago.

On a sequential basis, the net profit was higher by 3 per cent from Rs 81.4 crore, while revenue increased 1.2 per cent from Rs 991.7 crore in the June 2020 quarter. "PAT increased by 3 per cent quarter-on-quarter mainly from higher operating income driven

by higher volume and efficiency," the company said.

Krishna Bodanapu, MD & CEO said the second quarter results are in line with its expectations. "This quarter we focused on setting up the business back on a growth path. We continued our rigour on efficiency improvement and building pipeline for the business," he said. —PTI

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APOLLO READY FOR 1M VACCINES A DAY

FC BUREAU CHENNAI, OCT. 15

Apollo Hospitals is prepared to administer one million Covid-19 vaccines daily. It has trained 10,000 professionals in safe vaccination protocols.

The Apollo Group will leverage its robust pan-India web of 19 medicine supply hubs with cold chain facilities and use its 70 hospitals, over 400 clinics, 500 corporate health centres, 4000 pharmacies alongside their omni-channel digital platform Apollo 24/7 to ensure massive administration capacity of Covid-19 vaccines, Shobana Kamineni, executive vice-chairperson, said. It has already trained 10,000 professionals.

Pent-up demand pushing recovery: BMW chief

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, OCT 15

BMW, India's second biggest luxury carmaker, which is seeing month-on-month sales recovery, said Q4 (October-December) will be better than Q3, which crossed 70 per cent sales recovery. "Now all our dealerships across the country are open and the market is responding and recovery of sales is happening," Vikram Pawah, president at BMW Group India, told Financial Chronicle.

He said he was seeing a lot of traction and the pent-up demand was pushing recovery in sales across all models of BMW cars, including the popular Mini vehicles.

"We have also lined up more product offensive such as the M-performance cars, 330i, 5-Series, X5 SUV and other models to stir up the market," Pawah pointed out.

He said the luxury car market in India would very much depend on the way the pandemic would flatten even as more and

Tata Group chases e-com deals to bolster retail

ANTO ANTONY & P. R. SANJAI OCT. 15

Tata Group is seeking to buy online retailers to beef up its presence in e-commerce, people familiar with the matter said.

The group has reached out to IndiaMart InterMesh Ltd, a business-to-business marketplace, for a potential stake purchase, the people said, asking not to be identified as the plans are confidential. IndiaMart's shares have surged 142 per cent in Mumbai this year, giving it a market value of about \$2 billion. Supermarket Grocery Supplies Pvt Ltd, commonly known as BigBasket, is also among Tata's potential investment targets, one of the people said.

Deliberations are at an early stage and there's no certainty Tata's pursuit of the assets will result in transactions, the people said.

A representative for Tata declined to comment, while V.S. Sudhakar, one of the BigBasket founders, also declined to comment.

"Any talk of IndiaMart being in discussions with Tata Group for investment or acquisition is completely baseless," Dinesh Agarwal, founder and chief executive officer of IndiaMart, said. —Bloomberg

MFIs could return to pre-Covid levels soon

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, OCT. 15

With collections improving to around 80 per cent of year-ago levels, the microfinance industry is expecting the business to return to pre-Covid levels in two to three months.

"Collection efficiencies have improved to 80-85 per cent levels by September. Some states like Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan have seen up to 90 per cent collections and some like Odisha and West Bengal are lagging behind with 75-80 per cent. Overall, by this month-end we would reach 90 per cent levels and probably in a month or two to 99 per cent levels," said Manoj Nambiar, chairperson of MFIN.

PN Vasudevan, MD and CEO of Equitas Small Finance Bank, too finds that collections have been steadily improving and have reached 80-85 per cent levels.

At a webinar by CRIF High Mark, Vasudevan said the industry will get back to pre-Covid levels



in two to three months. "Once the collections return to earlier levels, there will be demand for fresh loans. This is just around the corner and in two to three months, the industry will be back to pre-Covid levels," he said.

While collections have been improving month-on-month, disbursements are still at 50 per cent of pre-pandemic levels.

"The demand is there. People are in need for additional credit. But before we start providing them additional credit, we have to be sure about the resumption of their economic activity. Else, the loans will end up in delinquencies," said Nambiar.

According to him, NBFC-MFIs are extra cautious while lending. The credit checks have become more stringent and lenders are ensuring that the borrower has paying capacity.

"While the economic activity has not returned to normalcy, the level of stress is different in different states. Some states like Rajasthan, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu have seen higher economic activity compared to some others. Migrant labourers are also returning with the resumption of activity," he said.

APOLLO READY TO ADMINISTER 1 MILLION VACCINES PER DAY

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Apollo has already trained 10,000 professionals for this purpose.

"As the entire country awaits a vaccine for the deadly infectious disease, one of the major challenges will be around safe and orderly delivery of doses, for the population of 1.3 billion Indians, especially the vulnerable. We are happy to share that," she said.

NPS, Atal Pension AUM hits ₹5 L cr



MADHUSUDAN SAHOO NEW DELHI, OCT. 15

The Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) is expecting its asset under management (AUM) from the National Pension System (NPS) and Atal Pension Yojana (APY) to near Rs 6 lakh crore by the end of December.

The AUM has crossed the Rs 5-lakh crore mark this month.

The NPS has seen subscription of 70.40 lakh employees from the government sector and 24.24 lakh from the non-government sector over the last 12 years.

"With continuous rise of subscribers, the AUM has already crossed Rs 5 lakh crore as on October 10, 2020. We believe, it will be very close to Rs 6 lakh crore AUM by the year-end... Besides, the PFRDA is also seeing continuous onboarding of new subscribers, even during the current pandemic situation," said Supratim Bandyopadhyay, chairman, PFRDA, in a virtual meeting on Thursday.

The pension fund regulator has also formed a new panel to look into the fund managers' demand for higher commission.

"The PFRDA has also set up a committee to look into the demand raised by the seven pension fund managers to increase their commissions, which was currently hovering at around 1 per cent. The committee will submit its report by November end. We hope that few more players were likely to join the bandwagon in future," Bandyopadhyay said.

"During this pandemic, a growing realisation of both corporates and individuals has emerged that retirement planning is not a mere saving or tax benefit choice," he said.

MINDTREE Q2 NET PROFIT RISES 88%

New Delhi, Oct. 15: IT firm Mindtree on Thursday reported a 87.9 per cent rise in consolidated net profit to Rs 253.7 crore for the September 2020 quarter. It had posted a net profit of Rs 135 crore in the corresponding period last year, Mindtree said in a regulatory filing.

The Bengaluru-based company saw its revenue grow marginally to Rs 1,926 crore in the quarter under review from Rs 1,914.3 crore in the year-ago period, it added.

In dollar terms, its net profit rose 79.2 per cent to \$34.3 million, while revenue declined 3.7 per cent to \$261 million in the September 2020 quarter

over the year-ago period. At the end of the September 2020 quarter, the company's active client base stood at 283, and eight new clients were added during the quarter, the filing said.

Mindtree had 21,827 employees at the end of the September quarter with trailing 12-months attrition at 13.8 per cent.

"Our approach of redefining possibilities in the new normal for businesses enabled us to deliver a balanced H1 (first half of the fiscal) performance," Mindtree CEO and MD Debashis Chatterjee said.

The board has declared an interim dividend of Rs 7.5 per share. —PTI

New Land Rover Defender launched at ₹73.98L

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, OCT 15

Tata Motors-owned British luxury car maker Jaguar Land Rover on Thursday launched the all-new Land Rover Defender SUV priced between Rs 73.98 lakh and Rs 79.94 lakh at pan India showroom.

The new imported SUV is available in two body styles, the 90 (3-door) and the 110 (5-door), and in five trim levels to choose from.

The Land Rover Defender does not have any direct rivals in India but will compete with the



Jeep Wrangler as a niche four-wheel drive offering. Deliveries for the Defender 90 will begin in April-June 2021.

"So far, under Land Rover, we had the Discovery product pillar and Range Rover product pillar available in India.

With this launch, the third product pillar, Defender, is now available," Rohit Suri, president & MD at Jaguar Land Rover India, said.

This, in many ways, completes the Land Rover brand story, he said.

The Land Rover Defender is powered by a 2.0-litre, four-cylinder, turbo-petrol engine from JLR's Ingenium family, putting out 300HP and 400Nm of torque. The SUV accelerates from 0-100kph in a claimed 8 seconds in the 90 and 8.1 seconds in the 110. An 8-speed automatic gearbox is standard.

MAKING | BIG BET Group reportedly in talks with Big Basket and IndiaMart Tata Group chases e-com deals to bolster retail

ANTO ANTONY & P. R. SANJAI OCT. 15

Tata Group is seeking to buy online retailers to beef up its presence in e-commerce, people familiar with the matter said.

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Supermarket Grocery Supplies Pvt Ltd, commonly known as BigBasket, is also among Tata's potential investment targets, one of the people said.

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A representative for Tata declined to comment, while V.S. Sudhakar, one of the BigBasket founders, also declined to comment.

"Any talk of IndiaMart being in discussions with Tata Group for invest-



ment or acquisition is completely baseless," Dinesh Agarwal, founder and chief executive officer of IndiaMart, said.

Tata Group, which owns Jaguar Land Rover and tea maker Tetley, is scouting for local e-commerce assets at a time when the

said last month.

Tata's digital platform will centre around an all-in-one e-commerce app that aims to bring disparate online businesses of its entrenched consumer units under one umbrella. These include Tanishq jewellery stores, Titan watch showrooms, Star Bazaar supermarkets, chain of Taj hotels and a joint venture with Starbucks Corp in India.

The expansion of Ambani's Reliance Industries into technology and retail businesses has added urgency to Tata's plans. —Bloomberg

SHORT TAKES

Commentator
Bhimani no more

Kolkata: Veteran sports journalist and cricket commentator Kishore Bhimani died at the age of 80, family sources said on Thursday. He is survived by his wife Rita and son Gautam who is also a well-known TV personality.

"He had suffered a cerebral attack a few days back and was undergoing treatment," a family source said.

Bhimani was one of the most recognised English voices of the 1980s. Bhimani was commenting when Sunil Gavaskar became the first player to reach 10,000 runs in Test cricket, during the drawn match against Pakistan in Ahmedabad in 1987. One of the most sought-after Indian cricket writers who would be wooed by British publications in the 1980s, Bhimani was also on air during the final moments of the famous 1986 tied Test against Australia at Chepauk. — *PTI*

Medvedev rallies
to beat Gasquet

St. Petersburg: Top-seeded Daniil Medvedev recovered from a shaky start to begin his defense of the St. Petersburg Open title with a

3-6, 6-3, 6-0 win over Richard Gasquet on Wednesday. Medvedev hit 22 aces to secure his first win since losing to Dominic Thiem in the U.S. Open semifinals, having lost in the first round in Hamburg and at the French Open. Medvedev set up a second-round match with Reilly Opelka, who earned a 3-6, 7-6 (5), 6-2 win over qualifier Nino Serdarusic.

Stan Wawrinka booked his spot in the quarterfinals with a 6-1, 3-6, 6-3 win over Evgeny Donskoy, a wild-card entry who has now competed in the St. Petersburg tournament 12 times. — *AP*

Weightlifting's Oly
future in doubt

Dusseldorf: The future of weightlifting at the Olympic Games was put in further doubt on Wednesday after the governing body's interim president was ousted and the International Olympic Committee expressed concern. Interim president Ursula Garza Papandrea said that board members voted to remove her from office

Tuesday during a virtual meeting which she did not attend, after she had called the meeting for Wednesday. She said that first vice-president Intarat Yodbangtoey of Thailand was appointed in her place. Papandrea questioned the board's authority to remove her before a full electoral congress. She said board members repeatedly thwarted her attempts to reshape the IWF after an investigation alleged long-running corruption and doping cover-ups. — *AP*

Raja-Ram out of
Spain Challenger

Alicante: The top-seeded Indian team of Ramkumar Ramanathan and Purav Raja bowed out of the ATP Alicante Ferrero Challenger following a straight set defeat, here on Thursday. Raja and Ramkumar lost 2-6, 2-6 to Gerard Granollers and Pedro Martinez. Ramkumar has already exited from the singles event of the euro 44820 clay court tournament after losing to Carlos Alcaraz. In the doubles, India's challenge is still alive as N Sriram Balaji had reached the quarterfinals with his Swiss partner Luca Margaroli. — *PTI*

Live on TV

CRICKET

IPL: Mumbai Indians vs KKR from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

BADMINTON

Denmark Open: Quarterfinals from 5.30 pm on Star Sports 2 HD, 3

TENNIS

St Petersburg Open: Matches from 3.30 pm on Sony Six, HD

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THE BOSS IS BACK
Gayle returns with a bang as Kings XI pip RCB

Sharjah, Oct. 15: K.L. Rahul played a captain's knock and Chris Gayle fired in his first game since January as Kings XI Punjab finally ended their five-match losing streak with an eight-wicket win over Royal Challengers Bangalore in an IPL game here on Thursday.

Chasing 172 in a must-win game, the in-form opening pair of Rahul (61 not off 49) and Mayank Agarwal (45 off 25) got off to a flying start before Gayle (53 off 45) joined his skipper in the middle to get KXIP close to the finishing line.

Needing seven off the final two overs with nine wickets in hand, KXIP somehow managed to take the game to the last ball with Nicholas Pooran finally hitting the winning six.

Both Rahul and Gayle smashed five sixes each, rendering the opposition attack helpless.

Batting first, skipper Virat Kohli top-scored with 48 off 39 balls in his 200th game for RCB before Chris Morris' 25 off 8 in the death overs took the team to 171 for six.

It was a rare all-round effort from KXIP who had failed to close out games earlier in the competition.

Mohammad Shami (2/45) conceded 24 runs in the final over that spoiled his figures after he got rid of Kohli and AB de Villiers but overall it was a much improved bowling effort by KXIP especially in the death overs.

Leg spinner M. Ashwin struck twice and pacer Chris Jordan took his first wicket of the tournament.

The run chase was supposed to be straightforward after Agarwal took the opposition to the cleaners in the powerplay before Rahul took over. As usual, the 41-year-old Gayle, batting at three, took his time early on before going ballistic.

Earlier, KXIP conceded only 25 runs from over 16-19 before Morris and Isuru Udana hammered Shami for three sixes. — *PTI*



Chris Gayle of Kings XI Punjab plays a shot on way to his half-century against Royal Challengers Bangalore during an IPL game in Sharjah on Thursday. — *BCCI*

IPL POINTS TABLE

Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
Delhi Capitals	8	6	2	0	12	+0.990
Mumbai Indians	7	5	2	0	10	+1.327
Royal Challengers Bangalore	8	5	3	0	10	-0.139
Kolkata Knight Riders	7	4	3	0	8	-0.577
Sunrisers Hyderabad	8	3	5	0	6	+0.009
Chennai Super Kings	8	3	5	0	6	-0.390
Rajasthan Royals	8	3	5	0	6	-0.844
Kings XI Punjab	8	2	6	0	4	-0.295

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

SCORECARD

Royal Challengers Bangalore: A. Finch b Ashwin 20, D. Padikkal c Pooran b Arshdeep Singh 18, V. Kohli c Rahul b Mohammed Shami 48, Washington Sundar c Jordan b Ashwin 13, S. Dube c Rahul b Jordan 23, AB de Villiers c Hooda b Mohammed Shami 2, C. Morris (not out) 25, I. Udana (not out) 10. Extras (b 4, lb 2, w 6) 12. **Total (for six wickets in 20 overs) 171.**

For: 1-38, 2-62, 3-86, 4-127, 5-134, 6-136. **Bowling:** Maxwell 4-0-28-0, M. Shami 4-0-45-2, Arshdeep Singh 2-0-20-1, Ravi Bishnoi 3-0-29-0, M. Ashwin 4-0-23-2, C. Jordan 3-0-20-1.

Kings XI Punjab: KL Rahul (not out) 61, M. Agarwal b Chahal 45, C. Gayle run out (Padikkal/de Villiers) 53, N. Pooran (not out) 6. Extras (lb 3, w 9) 12. **Total (for two wickets in 20 overs) 177.**

For: 1-78, 2-171. **Bowling:** Morris 4-0-22-0, Saini 4-0-21-0, Chahal 3-0-35-1, Udana 2-0-14-0, M. Siraj 3-0-44-0, Washington 4-0-38-0.

NUMBERS GAME

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL:

- Matches: 26
- Mumbai: 20
- Kolkata: 6

MEETING IN 2019

- KKR beat Mumbai by 34 runs at Kolkata.
- Mumbai beat KKR by 9 wickets at Mumbai.

MEETING IN 2020

- Mumbai beat KKR by 49 runs at Abu Dhabi.

FOR THE RECORD

- Andre Russell who has hit 99 fours in 54 innings for KKR needs one more to complete a century of fours.

- Rohit Sharma who has scored 3,944 runs in an average of 31.80 in 146 innings needs 56 runs to become the first batsman from Mumbai Indians to score 4,000 runs in IPL.

— *S. PERVEZ KAISER*

DENMARK OPEN | BADMINTON

Srikanth storms
into last-8 stage

Odense, Oct. 15: Ace Indian shuttler Kidambi Srikanth stormed into the Denmark Open quarterfinals with a straight-game win over Canada's Jason Anthony Ho-Shue here on Thursday.

The fifth seeded Indian took 33 minutes to get the better of his Canadian opponent 21-15 21-14 in the men's singles second round of the USD 750,000 Super 750 tournament, the only world tour event happening this year in a calendar thrown haywire by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The BWF was forced to cancel multiple tournaments and postpone the Asia leg and the World Tour Final to January next year due to the pandemic.

"It was close until 11 in both games. I'm just happy that I could continue that form throughout the match. I had to be alert to get back his shots," Srikanth told BWF.

The 27-year-old is likely to face world no.2 Chou Tien Chen of Chinese Taipei, who meets Ireland's Nhat Nguyen later in the day.

Talking about Chou Tien Chen, Srikanth said: "He's been playing well the last few years. It's definitely a match where I can understand where I'm at. That's the whole idea of playing this tournament."

"He hits hard, he's someone who has an overall

game, he has a hard smash, he knows when to attack and when to defend. He has matured. It's always good when you play a top 4 player."

In the opening game, Srikanth zoomed to a 9-4 lead before grabbing a three-point advantage at the break.

The Indian then reeled off six points to create a huge gap, which Jason couldn't bridge.

Srikanth fell behind 5-8 in the second game but bounced back with six straight points to reach 11-8 at the interval. The Canadian made it 10-11 after resumption.

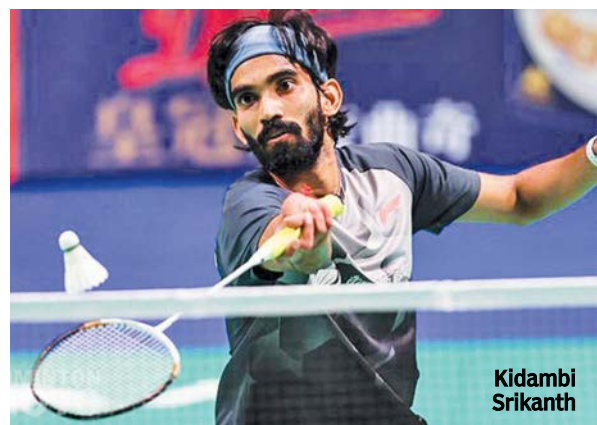
Srikanth then stepped up the pace and was immediately rewarded as he opened up a 15-10 lead.

He constructed the rallies well to quickly jump to 19-11. Srikanth soon garnered 8 match points but sent one to the net and couldn't reach the shuttle next to concede two.

But his opponent went wide next and Srikanth sealed it comfortably.

The other Indian in the competition, Lakshya Sen, will be up against local challenger Hans-Kristian Solberg Vittinghus in his second round match later in the day.

Subhankar Dey and Ajay Jayram were also in the fray but made first round exits on Wednesday. — *PTI*



Kidambi Srikanth

Didn't know I bowled
IPL's fastest ball: Nortje

Dubai, Oct. 15: South African speedster Anrich Nortje, who set the Indian Premier League ablaze by bowling the fastest delivery in the tournament's history, says he was unaware of the feat until after the end of the match.

The 26-year-old pacer clocked a breathtaking 156.2 kmph while bowling to Jos Buttler in the third over of Rajasthan Royals' run-chase against Delhi Capitals on Wednesday. He bettered compatriot Dale Steyn's (154.4 kmph) record in the process.

"I heard about it afterwards. I did not know about it at the time," Anrich told his Capitals teammate Shikhar Dhawan in a video posted by *IPLT20.com*.

Nortje added that he has been working hard on injecting pace in his deliveries. "I have been working really hard to get my pace up, been a couple of seasons. Been working on my

braced leg and my front arm... simple stuff. Happy to get some pace behind it but you obviously need to get it in the right area, that's the most important thing."

Bowling the fastest delivery did not have the desired result for Nortje as Buttler scooped it for a boundary. The Englishman had played the same shot in the previous delivery.

However, the duel didn't last long as the South African claimed Buttler's wicket with a 155 kmph thunderbolt, the second fastest ball in IPL history.

"Yeah, the battle against Buttler was interesting. I know he plays the scoop shots, but when he played the first one, it took me by surprise," Nortje said.

"I did not think he would do it again, but he played the shot once again on the next delivery. He played really well, but I stuck to my strength," Nortje added. — *PTI*

Virat looks up to Mary before fatherhood

New Delhi, Oct. 15: Expectant father Virat Kohli says he need not look beyond six-time world champion boxer MC Mary Kom when it comes to taking inspiration on how to strike a balance between parenthood and excelling in sport.

The India captain declared that he would seek to follow the path laid down by Mary Kom, a champion boxer and a mother of four. Kohli and his actor wife Anushka Sharma are expecting their first child in January next year.

"I can't think of anyone better than you to talk about being a parent and have a busy career like you," Kohli told her during an Instagram live chat on Wednesday evening.

Before they got underway with their interaction, the six-time world champion and Olympic bronze medallist congrat-

ulated the star couple.

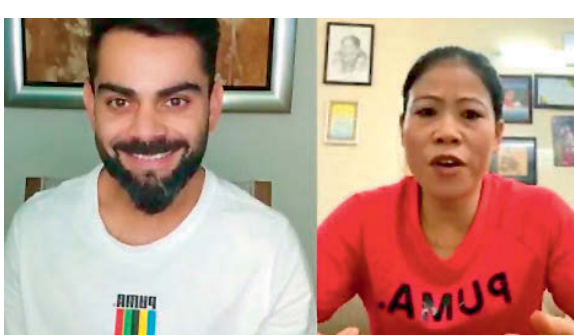
"Being a mother, training, all those championships, how did you do it, how did you find the balance?" the celebrated Indian cricket captain wished to know from the 37-year-old Mary Kom, whose desire to dominate the ring remains as strong as ever.

The pugilist attributed it to the support system within her immediate family.

"After my marriage, my husband has been a pillar of my strength. The support he gives me is immense. He takes care of everything that I could ask for, he is the ideal husband and father," she said.

"Also my children are second to none," she added.

It was appropriate when Kohli said the path laid down by Mary Kom is the ideal one to follow for any parent.



Virat Kohli (left) and Mary Kom during an Instagram live chat on Wednesday.

"You are such an inspiration not only for the women of the country but for everyone. What you have achieved in your sport, against all odds, against the shortcomings be it the facilities and all the other challenges that you must have faced..."

"You keep going through and finding your your path is something that is so inspirational for every-

one. I just wanted to say that you are a great inspiration for all of us. I am really honoured that I am getting to ask you these questions," Kohli said.

"We are in the journey to become parents ourselves, we take a lot of inspiration from what you have done, we are going to follow the same path."

Mary Kom was full of innocence as she told

I can't think of anyone better than you to talk about being a parent and have a busy career like you.

— **VIRAT KOHLI**
captain of Indian cricket team

Kohli that it would take a full two-three days to talk about her journey.

"If I talk about my journey, it won't finish so early," she quipped.

About the message she would like to give to promising athletes, Mary Kom asked them to never give up and keep fighting, irrespective of what others feel.

"You will always have naysayers, so many people are talking negatively, the good things we do only lasts for a few days... These naysayers distract and disturb me a lot sometimes. "Many people are

RAIN DAMAGE
AT GAGAN'S
ACADEMY

Hyderabad, Oct. 15: Seepage of water due to torrential rain has damaged equipment worth ₹1.3 crore, including rifles and pistols, in the city's Gun For Glory shooting academy run by Olympic medallist Gagan Narang.

In a post on *Facebook*, a gutted Narang spoke about the damage the rain has caused, callin it a "torrid 24 hours".

"It's been a torrid 24 hours for us at Gun For Glory Hyderabad. We had water seeping into our ranges, our equipment, machines, all inundated. Equipment worth 1.3 crore which included 80 brand new rifles and pistols for our new range and 9 years of hard work by the GFG team has been adversely affected, washed away by the deluge," Narang wrote.