

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
KARIMNAGAR | THURSDAY | 29 OCTOBER 2020



NATION | 4

No budgetary constraints, says Rajnath



WORLD | 5

Don slams media for Joe graft case 'block'

SPORTS | 8

Barca prez resigns after tiff with Messi



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WEATHER

Max: 31.8°C
Min: 17.5°C
RH: 48%
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Partly cloudy sky. Max/Min temperature 31/18 °C

COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+43,860)	(+473)
80,31,591	1,20,496
covid19india.org	
STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS	
(+1,481)	(+4)
TS: 2,35,152	1,319
(+2,949)	(+18)
AP: 8,14,774	6,643

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

445,92,439

DEATHS

11,76,540

COUNTRIES WITH CASES

215

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Nija Ashwavyuja Suddha Trayodasi till 3.16 pm
Star: Uttarabhadra till 11.59 am
Variyam: 1.28 am to 3.16 am (Friday)
Durmuhurtam: 10.05 am to 10.51 am; 2.39 pm to 3.25 pm
Rahukalam: 1.30 pm to 3 pm
HJRI CALENDAR
Rabbi-ul Awwal 11, 1442 AH
PRAYERS
Fajar: 5:12 am
Zohar: 12:10 pm
Asar: 4:11 pm
Maghrib: 5:53 pm
Isha: 7:01 pm
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6:13 AM
SUNSET TODAY 5:45 PM
MOONSET 4:16 AM
MOONRISE 4:38 PM

COUNTER POINT



New range, tough and costs less... to throw at candidates!

SHORT TAKES

Aarogya Setu app by NIC, volunteers

New Delhi: The government on Wednesday said the National Informatics Centre (NIC) in collaboration with volunteers from industry and academia developed the Aarogya Setu app. The statement from the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) came amid reports referring to a show cause notice issued by the Central Information Commission (CIC) to Chief Public Information Officers (CPIOs) of the MeitY, NIC and National e-Governance Division (NeGD) for their failure to explain who created the app.

India to release onion buffer stock

Indore: Union agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar said in view of the soaring prices of onion, various steps are being taken to release 1 lakh tonnes of the buffer stock of the staple. He told this to reporters after taking part in a rally in Dharampuri town in Indore district ahead of the November 3 bypolls to 28 assembly seats in Madhya Pradesh. "The government has already taken cognisance of the issue of rising prices of onions and its one lakh tonnes of buffer stock is being released through NAFED," Tomar said.

New Revenue Act comes into force

Tahsildars as joint sub-registrars to register land

S.A. ISHAQUI | DC
HYDERABAD, OCT. 28

In a significant move to enforce the new Revenue Act, 2020, enacted as Telangana Rights in Land and Pattadar Passbooks Act (TRLPP), 2020 (Telangana Act No. 9 of 2020), the state government on Wednesday announced that the Act will come into force from October 29.

In view of Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao, launching the Dharani portal which will enable online land transactions on Thursday at 12.30 pm in Mudu Chintalapalli village of Medchal-Malkajgiri district, the government notified the October 29, 2020, as the date on which the Act will come into force.

Besides notifying the date of enforcement of the Act, the state government also notified the appointment of tahsildars as joint sub-registrars, authorising them to carry out non-agricultural land transactions in the state. Accordingly, the state government issued two separate GOs on Wednesday night. The state government said that in order to provide accountable and responsive revenue administration in public interest, among other things, it has enacted the TRLPP, 2020. This enactment paves the way for registration and instantaneous mutation of agricultural lands by a tahsildar. The commissioner and inspector-general of registration and stamps has

Slowdown: KTR blames lockdown

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT. 28

TRS working president and IT and industries minister, K.T. Rama Rao, has accused the BJP at the Centre of successfully bringing down the Indian economy from slowdown to lockdown mode.

Charging the BJP with the economic collapse, Rama Rao claimed that Telangana is emerging as a progressive state under the able leadership of Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao.

Praising his father, he said Telangana has become the only state to have waived crop loans amounting to ₹27,718 crore, the largest waiver in the country since the formation of the state, he added.

Confident of the TRS winning in the Dubbak byelection with a thumping majority and the BJP and Congress losing their deposits, Rama Rao said that the BJP's failure in managing the economy

has resulted in zero per cent projected growth rate.

Much before the Covid-19 pandemic came into picture, the Indian economy saw the slowdown since the last eight quarters. "You have hit the growing economy of India with your inability and also let down the people of India," said Rama Rao.

Replying to a question with regard to the Chief Minister's campaign in Dubbak, KTR said it was up to the CM to decide and he reminded that TRS won several elections including the Huzurnagar bypoll without KCR stepping out.

He said that finance minister T. Harish Rao and his team were doing a good job in the poll campaign at Dubbak. He said the entire TRS cadre was working under the leadership of Chandrashekhara Rao who had complete clarity on the capabilities of his party leaders

■ **Page 2: BJP leaders seen more on social media: KTR**

submitted proposals for the formation of new sub-districts with jurisdiction coterminous with those of the revenue mandals with an office of the joint sub-registrar at their respective headquarters and appointing tahsildars as joint sub-registrars.

The government declared that the tahsildars of the revenue mandals concerned are hereby appointed as joint sub-registrars with an office at the mandal headquarters.

■ **Page 2: Tahsildars to deal with document registration**

SC TELLS STATES TO GIVE DRY RATION TO SEX WORKERS

PARMOD KUMAR | DC
NEW DELHI, OCT. 28

The Supreme Court on Wednesday directed all the States and Union Territories to provide dry ration to sex workers — facing serious difficulties in the pandemic — in a "reasonable and uniform quantity" across the state.

Frowning upon states and Union Territories for not implementing its September 29, 2020, order advancing one pretext or the other, a bench of Justice L. Nageswara Rao, Justice Hemant Gupta and Justice Ajay Rastogi directed the states to carry out its direction within four weeks and file compliance affidavit.

The Supreme Court (SC) ordered that the there should be uniformity in the distribution of dry ration to the sex-workers across the State.

24-yr-old gets death for killing nine

ANUDEEP CEREMILLA | DC
WARANGAL, OCT. 28

A Warangal court Wednesday gave the death sentence to accused, Sanjay Kumar Yadav, 24, a native of Daulatpur in Bihar, for the murder of nine people in Gorrekunta of Warangal Rural district on May 20 earlier this year.

The additional sessions court judge, K. Jaya Kumar, delivered the judgement after the public prosecutor, Satyanarayana, argued strongly before him that Yadav should be hanged as it was the appropriate punishment for a person like him.

The defendant pleaded guilty to murder before the judge. The police registered the accused under several sections, including 449, 328, 364, 380, 404, 302, 210 of the IPC and filed the chargesheet within 25 days. The judge tried about 100 people in the case. During the night of May 20, Yadav sedated and drowned nine persons in



Sanjay Kumar Yadav, being taken into police custody.

an agriculture well on the premises of a warehouse.

He killed the family of Md. Maqsood who migrated to Warangal from West Bengal 20 years ago. He had an extra marital affair with Maqsood's wife's sister's daughter, Rafika, who lives with her two children in Warangal. Sanjay, who promised to

marry Rafika, moved around with her teenage daughter. Rafika questioned his behaviour and forced him to marry her immediately.

On the pretext of going with her to meet her family in West Bengal, he took Rafika on a train and threw her out of it, after strangulating her near

● **SANJAY WAS** held guilty of killing the nine people on May 20 by mixing sleeping pills in their food and then dumped them in a well to cover up the murder of a woman with whom he was having a live-in relationship.

Nidadavolu in Andhra Pradesh on March 11.

When Maqsood's family questioned him about the whereabouts of Rafika, he decided to kill all of them. He mixed sleeping pills in the food during the birthday party of Maqsood's three-year-old grandson. He carried the unconscious persons to the well one by one and threw them in.

Among those dead were Maqsood's wife Nisha Alam, their children, Shadab Alam, Sohail Alam, Bushra Alam, her three-year-old son, an auto driver Shakeel and two Bihar migrant workers Shyam Kumar and Sriram.

were getting benefits. Residents of Red Hills also complained that they were denied just because they were not familiar with the corporator. When they approached him, they were asked to consult the political leaders they supported in the elections. Amjedullah Khan,

spokesperson for Majlis Bachao Tehreek, demanded an inquiry into the rampant corruption and loot of the ₹550 crore relief package for flood victims. Leaders of the ruling party and its allies with the help of corrupt officials had made it a private corporate fund as it is being released from their party's exchequer.

The public fund is being looted openly and most of the amount disbursed on false claims recommended by political leaders or with-

TN's IPS officer is Dubbaka observer

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT. 28

Amid the high drama during the past three days, the election commission of India appointed Saroj Kumar Thakur, of Tamil Nadu cadre, as police observer for the Dubbaka byelection.

The orders came within 48 hours while tension prevailed in Dubbaka constituency between TRS and BJP party leaders. While the verbal spat between the party leaders has been continuing to heat up Dubbaka, the election commission felt the need to monitor the law and order situation in the assembly constituency.

Thakur has graduated from Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, and passed the civil services examination securing the 223rd rank. Within a span of four days, citing allegations the election commission has posted Bharati Hollikeri as Siddipet collector, replac-

● **THE ORDERS** came within 48 hours while tension prevailed in Dubbaka constituency between TRS and BJP party leaders.

● **THE EC** felt the need to monitor the law and order situation in the assembly constituency as the verbal spat between leaders rose

ing P. Venkata Rami Reddy, and on Wednesday appointed Thakur as police observer.

The official orders said 'in exercise of the powers conferred on it by article 324 of the constitution of India and section 20B of the Representation of the People Act, 1961, the election commission of India hereby, appoints Saroj Kumar Thakur, IPS, TN: 2010, as police observer for the byelections to the 41-Dubbaka Assembly constituency, Siddipet district.'

There are a lot of complaints from different areas about not receiving relief amounts, said Hussain. People who lost their belongings in the flood should not be denied aid being distributed by the government just because of their political affiliations or the lack of them.

He suggested establishing a grievance control room to resolve complaints of discrimination in the disbursement of the relief amount.

SHORT TAKES INTACH TO HOLD ONLINE HERITAGE QUIZ FOR STUDENTS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT. 28

The Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (Intach) has announced its annual Heritage Quiz for school students and called for entries from Standard 8 to 10 students from schools across Telangana.

Schools from the undivided districts of Adilabad, Karimnagar, Nizamabad, Medak, Warangal, Ranga Reddy, Hyderabad, Khammam, and Nalgonda are eligible to take part in the quiz, which will be held online, Intach Telangana chapter co-convenor Anuradha Reddy said. Each school can field two teams of two students each. Entries should be sent to the Intach Telangana chapter by November 3. Further details can be had from P. Praveen on Tel No: 88850-98851

HC: WAIVE EAMCET MARKS FOR TOSS STUDENTS: HC

VUJJINI VAMSHIDHARA | DC
HYDERABAD, OCT. 28

Giving relief to Intermediate students from the Telangana State Open School Society (TOSS), the Telangana High Court on Wednesday directed the Convener of Telangana State Eamcet , JNTU , TS Higher Educational Council and the state government to consider for Eamcet Counselling, those students who secured 35 to 40 percentage marks in Intermediate exams.

Eamcet authorities have made it compulsory for all Intermediate students to acquire 40 per cent marks to be able to take Eamcet. But, due to the pandemic, TOSS had not conducted the exams and passed some of students with 35 percentage of marks rendered them ineligible for Eamcet counselling. Some of them approached the court and challenged the clause which prescribing 40 percentage marks in Inter exams for allowing Counselling.

After considering the issue, Justice P Naveen Rao directed the authorities to consider those students for allowing the Counselling.

GRACE CANCER RUN ENTERS GUINNESS BOOK

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT. 28

City-based Grace Cancer Foundation hosted "Grace Cancer Run" — world's largest Cancer Awareness Initiative. Over one lakh participants from 115 plus countries took part in the run virtually on the 10 of this month.

As a result, the Guinness Book of World Records has recognised Grace Cancer Foundation on two counts; for accruing "Most live viewers for a female health awareness lesson on YouTube as part of Cancer Awareness Drive" and for "Most videos of people running / jogging uploaded to Facebook in one hour as part of Cancer Awareness Drive".

Incidentally, more than 5,000 videos had been uploaded in support of awareness. Dr. Chinnababu Sunkavalli, CEO, Grace Cancer Foundation, told *Deccan Chronicle*: "This dream of creating awareness, which was conceived seven years back, has achieved unprecedented success that is well beyond our imagination. What we have accomplished with over one lakh participants in 115 plus countries is huge and overwhelming. We are enormously gratified over the fact that we could reach out and sensitise millions of people across the globe," Dr. Chinnababu Sunkavalli stated.

TS to protest Central agri laws

Harish Rao announces launching of state-wide mass movement soon

S.A. ISHAQUI | DC
HYDERABAD, OCT. 28

Finance minister, T. Harish Rao, on Wednesday announced the launching of a state-wide mass movement soon against the new agriculture laws enacted by the BJP government.

Addressing a massive rally by farmers in Chegunta town of Dubbak assembly segment in support of TRS candidate Solipeta Sujatha, Rao said that the new

agriculture laws will cause more damage to farmers and the farm sector in the country than being beneficial to them and they forced the state governments to protect the farmers and their produce during any crisis.

Besides enacting these harmful laws, the BJP government at the centre also brought the electricity amendment bill to swindle the farmers with electricity charges.

The centre had written to Chief Minister, K.

Chandrashekar Rao stating that it will give ₹2,500 crores to the state government if it would install metres to the agricultural pumps in the state, said Harish Rao, but the state government refused the proposal. On June 2, Harish Rao said that the CM Rao made it clear to the centre that the TRS government will not fix meters to pump sets at any cost and they don't need ₹2,500 crore.

Citing the centre's decision to allow maize imports, Rao asked "If the centre feeds our chicken with imported maize, who will buy the maize produced by the local farmers?"

Asking the BJP government for whose benefit it has been working, Rao said farmers used to get transformers only after paying ₹30,000 during the Congress regime. Farmers suffered during the Congress rule with the burning of pump sets given the voltage problems.

Asking farmers in Dubbak to choose whether they want the BJP which will fix meters to their pump sets or the Congress which has given them burnt motors or the TRS which is giving the 24 hours uninterrupted free power to them, Rao added that they should also decide whether they want Kaleshwaram water or the liquor bottles being supplied by the BJP. Rao conducted road shows in Pedda Gundavelli and Thimmapur villages under the Dubbak segment.

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VIJAYASHANTI LIKELY TO JOIN BJP ON NOV. 5

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT. 28

Congress party Telangana campaign committee chairperson Vijayashanti, former MP and well-known senior actress, may quit the grand old party. Speculations are rife in political circles that in the first week November (Nov. 5 or 6), she is quite likely to join the saffron party at the BJP's headquarters in New Delhi.

Recently, Union minister of state for home affairs G. Kishan Reddy met Vijayashanti at her residence for more than an hour. Post that meeting, BJP leaders have been mentioning that the senior actress has decided to quit Congress and will be joining their party.

Very close associates of Vijayashanti have said that senior Congress leaders in Telangana have not been taking her into confidence when taking crucial decisions. As a result, she has been very unhappy and has stayed away from Congress party.

The veteran actress has taken many wrong decisions during her political career and never enjoyed power. She is now planning joining the BJP, which is eyeing to form the government in Telangana. The saffron party is also wooing leaders from other political parties ahead of GHMC elections.

Vijayashanti had been the general secretary of BJP's women wing in 1997. She quit BJP in 2005 and started her own party "Talli Telangana". Later, she merged her party with Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS).

TAHSILDARS TO DEAL WITH REGISTRATION

FROM PAGE 1

Tahsildars will deal with registration of documents relating to the lands to which the new Act applies and allied matters under the registration act, 1908, and the rules made thereunder.

After careful examination of the matter, the government accepted proposals for the formation of new sub-districts under section 5 of the Registration Act, 1908 (Central Act No.16 of 1908) and the establishment of offices of joint sub-registrars under section 7(1) of the registration Act, 1908, also appointing tahsildars (across the 570 mandals in the state) as joint sub-registrars in respect of agricultural lands.

The government made it clear that in the absence of a tahsildar, the naib (deputy) tahsildar of the revenue mandal or such person designated by the district collector shall discharge the functions of the joint sub-registrar.

The government also declared that the sub-registrars appointed under the registrations and stamps department are hereby stopped from registering documents relating to the lands to which the TRILPP, 2020 applies.

They are hereby designated to register non-agriculture land transactions.

Uttam goes on a door to door campaign in Dubbak mandal

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT. 28

The Telangana Pradesh Congress committee president and MP, N. Uttam Kumar Reddy, on Wednesday organised a door-to-door campaign at Dubbak mandal and rural villages. He interacted with youth people along with candidate, Ch. Srinivas Reddy, and other senior leaders and also played volleyball with village youth. He sought their support for the Congress candidate and asked them to vote for development in Dubbak.

Reminding them that the Congress government gave several employment notifications especially Group-1 notifications when they were in power, Reddy alleged that the TRS government did not issue a single Group-1 notification from 2014 till now. He appealed to the people to support the Congress and vote for a better future for unemployed youth and farmers.

Congress working president and MP, A.Revanth Reddy, participated in a road show along with former MPs, Suresh Shetkar, Siricilla Rajaiah and party general secretary, Vinod Reddy, in Mirdoddi mandal. He appealed to people to vote for the Congress for youth to get employment and farmers to get minimum support price. Reddy alleged that the poor did not get a double bed room house from past six and half years of TRS government. He urged that people give a chance to Congress and teach a lesson to Chief Minister, K. Chandrashekar Rao and his bull-headed rule.

Former deputy chief minister, Damodara Rajanarasimha, also participated in the campaign in Togutamandal's rural villages. He sought



TPCC Cheif N. Uttam Kumar Reddy plays volleyball with the village youth during the Congress campaign in Dubbak on Wednesday. — P. ANIL KUMAR

● **PARTY TREASURER,** Gudur Narayan Reddy, said that the people of Dubbaka are ready to teach a lesson to the ruling party for their corruption practices.

support from people for the Congress candidate. He recalled the Congress party schemes implemented when they were in power.

Party treasurer, Gudur Narayan Reddy, said that the people of Dubbak are ready to teach a lesson to the ruling party. Alleging that BJP and TRS are helping each other, he said the by-election would be won by the Congress under the leadership of AICC in-charge, Manickam Tagore.

Senior leaders MLC, T. Jeevan Reddy, and MLA, D. Sridhar Babu, participated in a door-to-door campaign at villages of Raipole mandal. Both recalled the development work done during the Congress regime. They also requested the people to vote for the Congress and vote for Ch. Srinivas Reddy.

Cong MP to join BJP soon: KTR

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT. 28

TRS working president K.T. Rama Rao on Wednesday predicted mass migration of senior Congress leaders into other parties after the result of Dubbak byelection.

In an informal chat with reporters here in Telangana Bhavan, he said, "I am wondering about an MP of Congress (without naming A. Revanth Reddy) in the recent times analysing the future of other parties as a political analyst leaving his own party's future. We have information that he is also looking at the BJP."

He said that the people of Dubbak people will give a mind-blowing judgment to the Opposition parties in the byelection.

Rama Rao said that the Congress is nowhere in the country and it will also get a zero in the Dubbak byelection.

He questioned the Union minister of state for home affairs G. Kishan Reddy that on what basis was he accusing the state government of failing in containing the spread of Covid-19 in the state.

Reminding the claim of BJP state president Bandi Sanjay Kumar that the Centre has given ₹7,000 crores to Telangana state for tackling the Covid-19, he asked Kishan Reddy why was he maintaining silence when their state president is making such blatant lies.

He questioned the BJP MPs if they got a single penny of additional funds to the state from the Centre.

Expedite relief, restoration works in rain-hit areas: KTR

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT. 28

Municipal administration and urban development minister K. T. Rama Rao on Wednesday held a review meeting with senior officials of Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC), Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWSSB), and TS State Electricity Board (TSSEB) with regard to ongoing relief and restoration works in the rain-affected areas of twin cities.

He instructed officials to speed up relief and restoration works in

● **Officials said they have launched a special drive to collect 3,500 metric tonnes of waste. With this, about 18,000 metric tonnes of waste has so far been removed.**

GHMC and surrounding areas, so that normalcy could be restored immediately.

Municipal officials informed the minister that ₹10,000 financial assistance is being handed over to the rain and flood-affected families at a fast pace. Additional municipal workers have been deployed to take up sanitation works, remove

sludge accumulated due to rains, dispose of garbage and spray disinfectants. Officials said they have launched a special drive to collect 3,500 metric tonnes of waste. With this, about 18,000 metric tonnes of waste has so far been removed.

KTR asked officials to provide helpline numbers to citizens through which they can ask the municipal corporation to clear debris and flood-related trash from their areas. He wanted officials to rope in resident welfare associations and NGOs for assistance in extending relief measures to the needy. He

instructed officials to immediately start road repair works along all major roads to avoid inconvenience to citizens.

The minister ordered officials to set up retro fittings along all flyovers for ensuring that rainwater flows down easily. In this context, officials informed him that they have sought suggestions and inputs given by the irrigation department for repairing damaged lakes.

KTR also asked officials to ensure that garbage, which had accumulated in nalas during recent rains, is removed.

Government fixes uniform mutation fee

MADDY DEEKSHITH | DC
HYDERABAD, OCT. 28

Municipal Administration and Urban Development department has fixed uniform mutation fee for all urban local bodies, including Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC). It has fixed 0.1 % of the registration value of the property transferred or ₹1,000 in municipalities and ₹3,000 in municipal corporations, whichever

is higher.

As per GO NO184 dated 28.10.2020, the government vide Act No.8 of 2020, made certain amendments to the Telangana Municipalities Act, 2019 and Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation Act, 1955, introducing the concept of "Auto Mutation", whereby whenever there is a transaction in respect of any immovable property, the mutation of such property in municipal records will

● **AS SUCH, the rates of mutation are fixed differently in different ULBs ranging from ₹100 per transaction to 1.5% on registration value and are without any uniformity.**

take place automatically and through online mode on Dharani portal coinciding with the process of registration done by the sub-registrar concerned. The Director of Mu-

nicipal Administration, Hyderabad has reported that there is no prescribed procedure in fixation of mutations rates in Urban Local Bodies. In the current practice, the ULBs fix the mutation rates as per the council resolution.

As such, the rates of mutation are fixed differently in different ULBs ranging from ₹100 per transaction to 1.5% on registration value and are without any uniformity.

Government after careful examination of the matter hereby order that the following mutation fee will be collected in all urban local bodies including GHMC, at the time of registration of immovable properties by way of sale and gift etc: "0.1 % of the registration value of the property transferred or ₹1000 in municipalities and ₹3000 in municipal corporations, whichever is higher," the GO stated.

Prove comment on farm meters or quit, Arvind tells Harish

IREDDY SRINIVAS
REDDY | DC
HYDERABAD, OCT. 28

Nizamabad MP Dharmapuri Arvind of BJP challenged finance minister T. Harish Rao to provide proof that a Central Act makes current meters for farming sector mandatory. "If he proves the point, I will quit as MP. Otherwise, Harish Rao should resign from his cabinet and MLA post," the BJP Lok Sabha member said.

The MP was campaigning in Toguta of Chegunta mandal in favour of BJP candidate M. Raghunandhan Rao who is contesting the Dubbak by-elections.

Addressing a road show, Arvind slammed Harish Rao for launching a false propa-

● **HE WARNED** Chandrashekar Rao and his family members that they will go to jail for their corruption practices.

ganda against BJP out of fear that TRS will otherwise lose the by-poll. He asserted that BJP will win Dubbak, thereby teaching a strong lesson to K. Chandrashekar Rao's Nizam rule.

He called Harish Rao as 'Gumasta' of the Chief Minister in collecting commissions while implementing Kaleshwaram and other irrigation projects. He warned Chandrashekar Rao and his family members that they will go to jail for their corruption practices.

The MP asked Dubbak voters to vote for BJP, so that the constituency could develop.

TS records 1,481 new Covid-19 cases

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT. 28

In a setback of sorts, new Covid-19 cases in Telangana clambered back with the health department reporting 1,481 fresh cases on Tuesday.

The rise in cases, from 837 on Monday, also reflects an increase in the number of tests that rose from 21,099 on Monday to 40,081 on Tuesday. There were four deaths in the last 24 hours. While the total Covid-19 cases in

Telangana stand at 2,34,152, the cumulative fatalities reached 1,319. As many as 2,14,917 people have so far recovered from the disease.

The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation area recorded 279 new cases, followed by 138 in Medchal-Malkajigiri, and 111 in Ranga Reddy districts. Khammam and Nalgonda districts each had 82 fresh cases, while Karimnagar and Bhadrachalam recorded 79 cases each.

CSAT test for minority students on Nov. 2

ATHER MOIN | DC
HYDERABAD, OCT. 28

Screening test CSAT-2021 (UPSC) will be held on November 2. The test is being conducted by Minority Study Circle and Career Counselling Centre of the Minorities Welfare Department for sponsoring minority community students to avail Civil Services coaching.

It was originally scheduled

for October 23 but was postponed due to heavy rains. Director Minorities Welfare Shahnawaz Qasim said it has decided to conduct the test at all the centres from 10 am to 12 pm on November 2.

The Minority Welfare department sponsors 100 students belonging to minority communities every year and helps them get coaching in reputed institutions. Around 33.3 per cent of seats are reserved for female students.

KTR: BJP leaders seen more on social media

FROM PAGE 1

Ridiculing finance minister, Nirmala Sitharaman's, statement on Coronavirus as an 'act of God', K.T. Rama Rao said the BJP makes promises, mismanages and then shifts the blame onto others through their 'WhatsApp' university.

Asking where the two crore jobs promised by the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, and the ₹15 lakhs to be deposited in each account and the assurance of houses to all by 2020, he took a side swipe the claims of Telangana BJP leaders of a huge contribution by the Centre in various schemes implemented by the TRS government in the state. Rama Rao said, "If Goebbels would have been alive, he would certainly learn from state BJP leaders how to mislead the people."

Stating that the BJP leaders are seen more in social media than in society, Rama Rao challenged the BJP to release a white paper on the Central government's contribution to Telangana.

Taking serious exception to the BJP leaders' allegation that police were caught while

placing the cash in the Dubbak BJP candidate's relative's residence, Rama Rao pointed said that the "BJP believes in creating confusion when it cannot convince."

Maintaining that despite the economic crisis with Covid-19 pandemic, the state government has ensured implementation of development and welfare programmes in the state, Rama Rao said the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in its report clearly stated that the Telangana government had waived off the highest number of crop loans in the country. He said besides the crop loan waiver, the state government spent another ₹28,000 crore under Rythu Bandhu benefiting farmers directly in the last six years. "The RBI report also stated that about 95 per cent of the beneficiaries of the crop loan waiver scheme were marginal and small farmers. Despite being the youngest state, Telangana has been progressive and has emerged as a frontrunner among top performing states in the country," waxed Rama Rao.

Jagan urges court to hear CBI cases

Hyderabad: AP Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Wednesday urged the CBI special court in Hyderabad to first hear cases filed by CBI against him for charges of disproportionate assets case and alleged quid pro quo investments in Jagathi Group of Companies. The CM's counsel S. Niranjan Reddy, referring to disposal of cases filed by ED in 2G scam after cases filed by CBI had failed to prove the scam, reminded the court that the ED filed cases only based on CBI charges against his client.

Leaders stage dharna

Adilabad: Leaders of all parties staged a dharna in front of the collectorate on Wednesday demanding the start of cotton purchases immediately. Leaders of the Left parties and Congress leaders participated in the dharna. They demanded beginning of cotton purchases from farmers of all the mandals and compensation of ₹50,000 for damaged cotton per acre and ₹30,000 for soybean.

OTHER STORIES

SABARI SMRITHI
YATRA TO BE HELD
ON OCTOBER 31DC CORRESPONDENT
BHADRACHALAM, OCT. 28

The Sabari Smrithi yatra to be held on October 31 will be a simple affair this year due to Covid-19 situation.

Temple officials are allowing devotees to take darshan and are organising puja programmes for the last seven months on a low-key. However, the number of devotees is limited.

Bhadrachalam temple assistant executive officer V. Sravan Kumar said that the Sabari Smrithi yatra will take place on the lines of the Dammakka Seva yatra-2020 that is over. All the Covid-19, unlock norms will be followed as per the directions of the Endowments commissioner office in Hyderabad. In the past, the two programmes used to be held with tribal devotees. Both the Sabari and the Dammakka are the real devotees of Lord Rama, and Hindus respect the tribal women. The temple Vaidika committee is also involved in the organising of some rituals in the temple.

NAGARKURNOOL
TO SHINE BRIGHT
WITH LED LIGHTSD SIVA RAMI REDDI | DC
MAHBUBNAGAR, OCT. 28

While a majority of village panchayats in the old Mahabubnagar district are sapped of funds, the government's push to fix LED bulbs on the streets of villages is taxing the panchayats.

This is the reason why Wanaparthi district was unable to get the resolutions passed by the panchayats to switch to LED bulbs maintained by the ELSS company.

Out of 250 village panchayats, only 205 panchayats are said to have given their concurrence as it fixes a liability on them to pay for the implementing agency, said an official. This has taken away the discretion used to be exercised by village panchayats in respect of street lights and snap of them of their right to spend money on street lighting keeping the exigencies of villages.

However, Nagarkurnool district villages all set to bask under LED lights as 98 per cent of villages opted to install them.

Remote areas in the interior of Nallamala would also be covered, said district panchayat officer Suresh Mohan. The exercise would be completed in a month's time, he said.

He said that 461 village panchayats in the district would have seamless street lights as they are being monitored by automatic sensors. If any malfunction is reported, the implementing agency would rectify the snag within two working days, he said.

With regard to resolutions by the gram panchayats, he said except a few panchayats, we have received compliance resolutions from all of them. These LED lights will be geotagged and tracked on real-time monitoring bases, he said.

When asked about the harmful nature of the blue light emitted by LED bulbs, the officer said that these are street lights and therefore the exposure is negligible.

● **98 PER CENT** of villages opted to install them. Remote areas in the interior of Nallamala would also be covered, said district panchayat officer Suresh Mohan. The exercise would be completed in a month's time. 461 VPs in the district will have seamless street lights. They will be monitored by automatic sensors. If any malfunction is reported, it would be rectified within two working days.



Earthmover and excavators pull the jeep out of the well during the night operations. — DECCAN CHRONICLE

1 dead, 11 hurt as jeep falls into old agri well

The driver had a seizure and veered off the road

ANUDEEP
CEREMILLA | DC
WARANGAL, OCT. 28

One person died, and 11 others were injured when the jeep in which they were travelling veered off the road and fell into an old agriculture well, on the outskirts of Gavicherla in Warangal Rural district on Tuesday evening.

The accident took place at 5 pm, and rescue operations went on late into the night. The police used excavators and earthmovers to draw the jeep out and any dead. The body of the driver Doni Satish, 25, was retrieved.

According to Mamnoor ACP G. Shyam Sunder and Parvathagiri inspector P. Kishan, the accident occurred when the deceased Satish was travelling from Warangal to Nekonda with 11 passengers.

20-YR-OLD DIES
BY SUICIDE IN
NAGARKURNOOLDC CORRESPONDENT
MAHBUBNAGAR, OCT. 28

A twenty-one-year-old youth died by suicide at Achampet in Nagarkurnool district on Wednesday.

The police said that the body was found in the forest office compound and was sent for post-mortem.

Achampet sub-inspector Pradeep said that the deceased was identified as Siva Prasad. He said the youth died by suicide as he was unable to get a government job. He was also dejected with his love life.

A case has been registered on the complaint made by the victim's father and investigation is on, the SI said.

● **ACHAMPET** sub-inspector Pradeep said that the deceased was identified as Siva Prasad. He said the youth died by suicide as he was unable to get a government job.



The agriculture well after water was completely drained on Wednesday. — DECCAN CHRONICLE

He had a seizure on the outskirts of Gavicherla village and veered resulting in the vehicle falling into the roadside agriculture well.

Initially, police thought that 15 to 16 people were in the jeep, at the time of the mishap, and locals managed to rescue 11 persons; a search for the

missing began. After draining all the water from the well, police confirmed, 12 persons including the driver was travelling in the jeep.

The agriculture well is in the wilderness. Due to the recent heavy rains, the well was brimming with water making it difficult to carry out rescue

● **INITIALLY**, police thought that 15 to 16 people were in the jeep, at the time of the mishap, and locals managed to rescue 11 persons; a search for the missing began. After draining the well, police confirmed, 12 persons including the driver was travelling in the jeep.

operations. Fire tenders were called in the night to drain the well and clear the area. Bright lights were installed, to aid the big machines carrying out the rescue operations.

After struggling the entire night, police retrieved the jeep and the body of the driver. The police searched the well's bed for any bodies stuck, but there were none.



People participate in the blood donation camp held at the Warangal Commissionerate on Wednesday. — DECCAN CHRONICLE

Blood donation camp held in memory of police martyrs

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, OCT. 28

A blood donation camp was organised at the Warangal Police Commissionerate office on Wednesday under the

auspices of the Armed Reserve and traffic departments during the Police Martyrs' Remembrance week celebrations.

About 200 people, including officers and staff from the Armed Reserve and traffic

departments, as well as auto drivers from the tricities, participated in the camp held in collaboration with the Warangal Red Cross.

Central zone DCP Pushpa said, "The sacrifices of the police personnel, must not be forgotten. We must stand by the families of the police martyrs." The DCP handed over fruits and certificates to the blood donors.

East Zone in-charge

DCP Venkatalakshmi, Additional DCPs Giriraju, Bhimrao, ACP Srinivasu, Sadanandam, Balaswamy and Gangadhar, Balaswamy, RI Bhaskar, Srinivas Rao, Nagesh, traffic inspectors Vijay Kumar, Satyanarayana, Naresh, Police Officers Association president Ashok Kumar along with Dr S. Vijay, Red Cross and MGM Blood Bank representatives Srinivas and Kalyani were present.

Kavitha takes oath as MLC today

NARENDER
PULLOOR | DC
NIZAMABAD, OCT. 28

Kalkavuntla Kavitha will take oath as MLC in Hyderabad at 12:45 pm on Thursday.

Kavitha swept the MLC bypoll of the Nizamabad local body constituency with a thumping majority on October 12, ending her long wait to get back into politics. Of the 823 votes Kavitha got 728 votes.

She would have taken oath immediately, but she had to quarantine herself, as she was the primary contact of Jagitil MLA Sanjay, who tested positive for Covid-19.

The Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) cadres are eagerly waiting for her elevation into the state cabinet.

News is that Kavitha is likely to be inducted into the state cabinet, after the Dubbak bypoll or the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) elections. Kavitha's entry into active politics now



Kalkavuntla Kavitha

● **THE TELANGANA RASHTRA SAMITHI (TRS)** cadres are eagerly waiting for her elevation into the state cabinet. News is that Kavitha is likely to be inducted into the state cabinet, after the Dubbak bypoll or the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation elections.

changes the political equation in the state, especially in undivided Nizamabad district.

Party scores opined, "In united Andhra Pradesh, Nizamabad district was always represented by two ministers. Continuing this trend, Kavitha is also likely to represent the district."

Speaking to the Deccan Chronicle, a senior TRS leader from Kamareddy district said, "Kavitha will play a key role in state politics soon. She will not con-

tinue as MLC, but may be inducted in the state cabinet too."

Based on the social equation, loyalty and performance, a cabinet reshuffle is likely, he added.

Meanwhile, TRS MLAs, MLCs of composite Nizamabad district queued up to greet Kavitha on Thursday. They are jubilant and say that Kavitha's presence in Nizamabad district will impact developmental activities and welfare programmes.

51,804 GRADUATES
SUBMIT FORM-18
TO ENROL NAMESDC CORRESPONDENT
KHAMMAM, OCT. 28

The graduates of erstwhile Khammam district have shown immense interest in getting their names enrolled in the Warangal-Nalgonda-Khammam graduate constituency. So far, 51,804 graduates have submitted Form-18 applications, to enrol their names in the voters' list.

District election officer and collector R.V. Karnan said, "The applications are under scrutiny, and the graduates can submit the Form-18 before November 6."

"Voters who had their names in the previous list should register their names as per the directions of Election Commission of India. Those persons who try to get votes by submitting false documents will be liable for punishment."

CP: CREATE MORE
AWARENESS ABOUT
BLOOD DONATIONDC CORRESPONDENT
NIZAMABAD, OCT. 28

As part of the Police Commemoration Day celebrations, Nizamabad commissionerate police conducted a blood donation camp at Prashanthi Nilayam in the Armed Reserve Police headquarters on Wednesday.

After inaugurating the camp, Commissioner of Police, Kartikeya donated blood and said that awareness about blood donation needs to be stepped up.

People should donate blood during the Covid-19 pandemic without any worry.

Blood is crucial in health emergencies, and people should come forward to donate blood voluntarily, he said appreciating the 40 police personnel who donated blood.

Additional DCP T.Usha Vishwanth, AR DCP N. Bhaskar, police welfare hospital in-charge Dr Sarala, Government General Hospital blood bank in-charge Dr Fareeda Begum and others were present.

RAVINDRA SESHU
KOTHAGUDEM, OCT. 28

Congress has demanded the release of the Detailed Project Report (DPR) of the Sitarama Lift Irrigation Project (SRLIP).

Congress leaders from Aswapuram mandal led by Gade Kesava Reddy submitted a memorandum to minister for transport Puvvada Ajay Kumar to release the DPR of SRLIP during his tour of Ammanagaripalli village. Mr Kesava Reddy said, "There is news about the misappropriation of funds in the SRLIP. This is the right time for the government to release the DPR on the project."

The SRLIP project will extend water to 6.75 lakh acres across three districts and will stabilise the NSP left canal ayacut. The project commences in Aswapuram mandal, which is a rem-

ote and backward agency area. The Godavari waters will be lifted, from the Godavari at Aswapuram mandal.

Mr Kesava Reddy said, "It is the responsibility of the government to do justice to the farmers of the mandal. Though the Godavari flows adjacent to the mandal, the farmlands in the area do not receive enough water."

Mr Kesava Reddy demanded that the government irrigate 25,000 acres of land in Aswapuram through various irrigation sources and fill the tanks like Tummalachervu, Sanagakuntacheruvu, Chintalacheruvu, Voorkuntacheruvu, Errabokkalacheruvu, Theegalacheruvu and other with the Godavari waters.

He said, "It is the demand of the people of Aswapuram, that their lands be irrigated, before extending water to the other areas."

2-HR PROTEST HELD FOR NO COVID-19 PAY

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT. 28

A two-hour protest was held by permanent nurses of the Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences as the incentive for Covid-19 for two months was not been paid by the hospital.

The Telangana state government had stated that

three-month incentives would be paid to healthcare workers and doctors. However, nurses received only a month's incentive. M. Krishna, a senior nurse says, "When health minister Etala Rajendar came to Nims the issue was raised and he directed the hospital authorities to pay but no payments have been made."

Career Chronicle

Walk-in Interviews
ON 1-11-2020
(SUNDAY) 9:00AM

Thermal Systems (Hyd) Pvt Ltd. is a fast growing, Hyderabad based Engineering Company engaged in the Design, Manufacture and installation of Heat Recovery and Steam Generation Systems for Metallurgical, Chemical and Power Generation Plants, with a current turnover of Rs.150 Crores. We require competent and experienced personnel for the following positions to be placed at works located at Hyderabad in Telangana. REMUNERATION: NO BAR FOR THE RIGHT CANDIDATES AND WILL MATCH THE BEST IN THE INDUSTRY.

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Piping Analysis : 1 Nr.
C & I : 2 Nrs

1.3. Drafting Engineer: Exp: 3 to 5 yrs
Equipment : 12 Nrs, Structural : 2 Nrs
Exp: 3 to 10 yrs
Projects : 2 Nrs
Purchase : 2 Nrs

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Mgr / Dy Mgr / Sr. Engr / Engr.
Exp: 3 to 10 yrs
Projects : 2 Nrs
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Venue : Minerva Grand - Kondapur
Address: Survey No. 13, Door No. 2/91/4, Adjacent to Silicon Towers, Hitech City Road, Kondapur, Hyderabad, Telangana 500084.
Contact : Ch. Satyanarayana , AGM- HR, 9391423302 / 9000020348

THE HYDERABAD CRICKET ASSOCIATION
(Affiliated to the Board of Control for Cricket in India)
Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium
Uppal, Hyderabad - 500039. Ph: 040 - 27177846

Ref. No. 25/HCA/Emp, Notice

Date: 27.10.2020

EMPLOYMENT NOTICE

1. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Eligibility:

- Must be a Post Graduate in Management / Administrative / Policy Sciences with sufficient years of experience in different layers of the Organization's.
- Good Knowledge on Budget Planning and Prudent Financial Management.
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(Please respond with a detailed CV within 15 working days from the date of advertisement)

BRAVE WARRIOR

Smaller celebrations will be held to avoid people getting infected with Covid

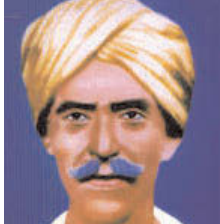
Adivasis ready for Bheem's 80th death anniversary fete

DC CORRESPONDENT
ADILABAD, OCT. 28

The 80th death anniversary of Kumaram Bheem will be celebrated at different places due to the Covid-19 restrictions. These celebrations will be in addition to the official celebrations that will be held by the Tribal development department at Jodeghat in Kerameri mandal in

Kumarambheem Asifabad district on October 31. Asifabad MLA Atram Sakku will be the chief guest at the official function.

The event organising committee will take care of the event at Jodeghat. All the Adivasi elected public representatives, including the concerned ministers, have been given invitations.



Meanwhile, Adilabad Thudumdebba committee president Godam Ganesh has appealed to the

Adivasis to attend the event at Kumaram Bheem guda near Housing Board colony on the outskirts of the

Adilabad town. Adivasis are holding smaller celebrations to avoid the virus from

spreading among the people if they attend one big event.

Police are keeping a close watch on the Kumaram Bheem's death anniversary event and are likely to intensify security for the event to avoid any untoward incidents.

Police are likely to also keep a close watch on 'unidentified persons' participating in the event.

● **THESE CELEBRATIONS** will be in addition to the official celebrations that will be held by the Tribal development department at Jodeghat in Kerameri mandal in Kumarambheem Asifabad district on October 31.

● **ASIFABAD MLA Atram Sakku** will be the chief guest at the official function.

IN BRIEF

2 JEM MILITANTS
KILLED IN
ENCOUNTERDC CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR, OCT. 28

Two Jaish-e-Muhammad militants were killed in a gunfight with security forces in Mochu area on the outskirts of Srinagar overnight, the officials said on Wednesday.

The slain militants have been identified as Javid Ahmad Ganaie, a resident of southern Pulwama district and his Pakistani associate Khalid alias Ilyas. The J&K police in a statement said that the duo was given the opportunity to surrender. "However, they fired indiscriminately upon the joint search party which was retaliated leading to an encounter," it said.

IGP (Kashmir) Vijay Kumar told reporters here that, so far, this year eight militants have surrendered during "live encounters" across the Valley of which five surrenders took place in the October alone.

Meanwhile, one soldier each from the Army and the BSF were injured in a mine blast at a forward area along Line of Control in Balakote sector in J&K's Poonch district on Wednesday afternoon.

The officials said that two jawans — Inayat Hussain of BSF's 59th Battalion attached with Army's 14 Punjab and Sahil Kumar of Army's 14 Punjab - were injured in a mine blast in Manjakote area of the Balakote sector.

KERALA CM'S
EX-AIDE TAKEN
INTO ED CUSTODYGILVESTER ASSARY | DC
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, OCT. 28

The Enforcement Directorate on Tuesday took Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan's former principal secretary M. Sivasankar into custody.

The ED officials took the officer into custody from Ayurveda hospital in Thiruvananthapuram where he was undergoing treatment. The ED team which was camping in the capital, swung into action soon after the Kerala High Court rejected Sivasankar's anticipatory bail plea. The ED officials then took the official to Kochi by road to Kochi.

Sivasankar's alleged links with the accused in the gold smuggling case are under the scanner.

The officer's WhatsApp chats with his chartered accountant Venugopal which came out in the public domain recently, had given some hints that he was overseeing the financial transaction of Swapna, a key accused in the gold smuggling case. However, there is no concrete evidence yet to connect Sivasankar with the gold smuggling case.

The National Investigation Agency, Customs, Enforcement Directorate are conducting separate probes into the seizure of 30 kg of gold worth ₹15 crore which was smuggled in using "diplomatic baggage" at the Thiruvananthapuram international airport on July 5.

SMRITI IRANI
TESTS POSITIVE
FOR COVID-19

New Delhi, Oct. 28: Union minister Smriti Irani on Wednesday said she has tested positive for Covid-19.

The women and child development and textiles minister asked the people who came in contact with her to get themselves tested for the disease at the earliest.

"It is rare for me to search for words while making an announcement; hence here's me keeping it simple — I've tested positive for #COVID and would request those who came in contact with me to get themselves tested at the earliest," she said in a tweet.

Irani campaigned for the BJP on Tuesday for the Bihar Assembly polls. Soon after the minister made the announcement, wishes poured in for her on Twitter. Union minister Hardeep Singh Puri said she will emerge stronger from this fight against Covid.

"You have always displayed resolute determination in fighting for the people of the nation, @Smritiirani ji. I am sure you will use the same determination to fight against Covid-19 and recover soon. My best wishes," Railway Minister Piyush Goyal tweeted. Ministers Prahlad Joshi and Jitendra Singh, BJP leaders Tejasi Surya and Poonam Mahajan were among those who wished her a speedy recovery.



RJD leader Tejashwi Prasad Yadav during an election campaign rally ahead of the second phase of Bihar assembly polls at Hajipur in Vaishali district on Wednesday. — PTI

Over 53% vote in 1st
phase of Bihar polls

Highest turnout recorded in Jamui district at 57.41%

NAYEER AZAD | DC
PATNA, OCT. 28

Around 53.53 per cent of voting was recorded during the first phase of Bihar Assembly elections on Wednesday.

According to reports, the highest turnout was recorded in Jamui district at 57.41 per cent followed by Kaimur at 55.95 per cent and Lakhisarai at 55.44 per cent.

The NDA was locked in a tough fight with RJD led grand alliance on at least 41 of 71 seats that went to polls in the first phase.

The elections were held in 71 constituencies spread across 16 districts of Bihar amid tight security and Covid-19 guidelines. A total of 1,066 candidates were in the fray in the first phase of the elections.

As many as 33 constituencies were declared as "sensitive or hypersensitive" by the state administration.

istration.

Among the prominent political leaders who were in the fray during the first phase of polls were HAM chief Jitan Ram Manjhi and eight ministers of Nitish Kumar cabinet.

Another key candidate whose fate is at stake in the first phase is ace shooter Shreyasi Singh from Jamui seat. She is making her debut at the age of 27. She is contesting on BJP ticket and pitted against RJD sitting MLA Vijay Prakash, who is the brother of former Union Minister Jai Prakash Yadav, a close aide of Lalu Yadav.

Reports suggest that Chirag Paswan's party LJP has extended support to Miss Singh on Jamui seat.

Among the political parties, the ruling JD(U) had fielded 35 and its partner BJP 29 candidates. The opposition RJD and Congress had fielded 42

and 20 candidates during the first phase of polls.

Chirag Paswan's LJP which broke away from the NDA citing ideological differences with Nitish Kumar had fielded 41 candidates in the first phase.

In a statement after the first phase of polls, HAM spokesperson Danish Rizwan said, "Seeing the turnout of people our party is confident that Nitish Kumar led NDA is going to form a government in Bihar".

Most of the seats were declared as sensitive by the administrative officials and special security arrangements were made for the Naxal affected areas. Officials said that most of the state's Naxal-hit areas went to polls in the first phase.

Voting for the second and third phase is to be held on November 3 and 7. Results for 243 seats will be declared on November 10.

CONG COMPARES
NITISH WITH
GENERAL DYER

New Delhi, Oct. 28: Hitting out at the Bihar government over the Munger firing incident in which a devotee was killed, the Congress compared Chief minister Nitish Kumar with General Dyer on Wednesday and demanded that he should apologise.

Congress spokesperson Abhishek Singhvi said human beings were treated as animals and worms by the police in Munger, when they beat up devotees taking out Durga idols "cruelly and mercilessly".

One person was killed in firing and stone-pelting during the immersion of Durga idols in Munger, on Tuesday. — PTI

There are no budgetary
constraints, says RajnathPAWAN BALI | DC
NEW DELHI, OCT. 28

Defence minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday said that while troops are standing firm at the Northern borders with China, the ongoing talks for peaceful resolution of crisis will continue.

He was addressing the Army Commanders' Conference, an apex level biannual event, which is being held here from October 26 to 29.

The eight round of Corps Commanders level talks between India and China to resolve the six month military stand off in

Eastern Ladakh is expected soon. The minister said that there are no budgetary constraints for capability development and meeting other requirements of the Army.

With initial snowfall reported in Ladakh sector, he said best weapons and winter clothing will be provided to troops standing guard at the borders. "It is our responsibility to ensure availability of best weapons, equipment and clothing to our troops braving extreme weather and hostile forces to defend our territorial integrity," he said

Referring to the situation along the Western borders, he complimented the Indian Army's response to cross border terrorism and ceasefire violations. "I compliment the excellent synergy between the Central Armed Police Forces, police forces and the Army in tackling the menace of terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir. It is due to the synergy operations in the Valley that the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir is moving to a stable and peaceful environment conducive for overall growth and development," said Mr Singh.

Delhi may be reeling
under 2nd Covid waveVINEETA PANDEY | DC
NEW DELHI, OCT. 28

The national capital Delhi seems to be reeling under a major second wave of coronavirus as substantially high number of cases were reported on Wednesday.

Delhi saw 5,673 fresh cases due to which Delhi government has decided to keep schools closed for some more time.

Delhi had on Tuesday recorded its all-time high cases when it detected 4,853 fresh cases. Last time the city had crossed 4,000-mark was on September 9 when 4,473 cases were detected in a single day.

Concerned over the sudden spurt in cases, Union Health Ministry

is expected to hold a meeting with top Delhi government officials on Thursday to re-strategise containment measures.

Among other states which are reporting a spurt in cases are Kerala, West Bengal, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

In fact, Kerala has overtaken Maharashtra with the highest number of fresh cases even though both states, however, are still contributing more than 5,000 new cases.

Union health ministry officials said 79 per cent of the new infections are still coming from 10 states and UTs.

Union Health Ministry officials said the festive

season, opening up of public places and the onset of winter has possibly led to the spurt in these states.

However, laxity on part of the people who are now shunning distancing and mask rules due to pandemic fatigue too is a contributing factor.

At the national level, the coronavirus cases on Wednesday were close to 80 lakh even though the detection of new cases have slowed down a bit. The new cases reported in India in a span of 24 hours were 43,893 even as the total number of cases were 79,90,322 as per early morning data of the Union Health Ministry. The death toll has climbed to 1,20,010 with 508 new fatalities.

Par panel raps Twitter for
showing Ladakh in China

New Delhi, Oct. 28: A parliamentary committee on Wednesday came down heavily on Twitter for showing Ladakh as part of China, saying it amounted to treason and an explanation must be tendered by the US-based parent of the social media platform in form of an affidavit, sources in the panel said.

Appearing before the joint committee of parliament on Data Protection Bill, chaired by BJP MP Meenakshi Lekhi, representatives of Twitter India "begged apology", but they were told by the members that it was a criminal offence that questioned the sovereignty of the country and an affidavit must be submitted by Twitter Inc, not by its 'marketing arm' Twitter India, sources added.

They were questioned for more than two hours by the panel members, mainly on Ladakh being shown as part of China on the Twitter app.

"The committee was of the unanimous opinion that Twitter's explanation on showing Ladakh as part of China was inadequate," Lekhi said after the meeting.

The Twitter representatives told the panel that the social media company respects the sensitivities of India, she said.

"But, it is not only a question of the sensitivity of India or Indians. It is a question about national integrity and sovereignty of the country, and not respecting that is a criminal offence. And displaying Indian map improperly and incorrectly is an offence of treason and attracts imprisonment of seven years, she said.

Lekhi said Twitter was also asked about its banning policy.

"Shadow banning, banning policy there is no clarity about it. Such actions are very subjective... Twitter is becoming a law unto themselves and under these circumstances, they are violating Article 19 of the Constitution about the freedom of expression," she said.

Sources said some members also raised questions about Twitter's transparency policy and its actions during elections,

CHINA MAY USE
MILITANTS TO
FOMENT
TROUBLE IN N-EMANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, OCT. 28

Even after significant improvement in law and order scenario, the unified command of security forces has decided not to scale down counter-insurgency operations in Assam and adjoining states as there is apprehension of China trying to extend direct or indirect help to armed rebel groups of India to create unrest in the north-eastern states.

The apprehension about China instigating insurgent groups of northeast was based on a report of China's *Global Times* where it was stated that if India plays Taiwan card, China should also help militant groups of India to retaliate.

Admitting that Chinese agencies have been directly or indirectly helping the militant groups of north-east and under the present circumstances, the Chinese agencies would definitely like to provide help to revive insurgency in the region, security sources present in the unified command meeting, however, told this newspaper that GOC 4 Corps of Indian Army Lt. Gen. Shantanu Dayal who chaired the unified command, assured that there was no need to worry on China front. He asserted that Indian army in the north-east was fully prepared and capable of responding to any kind of threat emanating from across the border.

Asked for their comments, a Twitter spokesperson said in an emailed statement, "The recent geotagging issue was swiftly resolved by our teams. We are committed to openness, transparency around our work and will remain in regular touch with the

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C'garh brings Bill
to shield farmers
from exploitationRABINDRA NATH
CHOUDHURY | DC
BHOPAL, OCT 28

Amid opposition to Centre's new farm laws, Bhupesh Baghel government has brought a agriculture amendment Bill providing to regulate market prices of farm produce to protect farmers from exploitation.

The Bill called Krishi Upaj Mandi (amendment) Bill, 2020 was passed in the Chhattisgarh assembly on Tuesday after a two-day-marathon debate on it in the House.

The Bill aims to protect the farmers from fluctuating market prices and payment risks, Chhattisgarh agriculture minister Ravindra Choubey said while tabling the Bill in the assembly.

The Bill did not violate any Central law, thereby avoiding confrontation with the Union government, he added. He said 80 percent of farmers in Chhattisgarh are small and marginal farmers who lacked capacity to store grains or bargain for fair prices.

"Hence, it was necessary to establish deemed mandis and electronic trading platforms for them", he added.

The Bill allows the government to establish deemed mandis (agriculture markets) or declare private markets as deemed mandis for regulation of marketing notified agriculture produce, he added.

Chhattisgarh Swabhimani Manch president Raj Kumar Gupta, however, criticized the government for not ensuring guarantee of minimum support price of farm produce in the Bill as was done by Punjab in its recently legislated agriculture Bill.

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Hurriyat calls
for shutdownYUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR, OCT. 28

As vast sections of Jammu and Kashmir's populations are seething with anger over the Centre's amending its land laws to make all Indian citizens eligible to own immovable properties in the erstwhile state, separatist Hurriyat Conference has called for a one-day shutdown against it and other alleged anti J&K moves.

This is for the first time since August 5 last year when J&K was stripped of its special status and split up into two Union Territories that the amalgam faction led by Kashmir's chief Muslim cleric Mirwaiz Umar Farooq has openly issued such a call.

Meanwhile, more political parties and leaders have in their statements resented the Union Home Ministry (MHA)'s making several changes to land laws paving the way for people from outside J&K to buy land in the Union Territory and even allowing use of agricultural land for setting up facilities of public purpose.

Hurriyat Conference leaders Prof. Abdul Ghani Bhat, Bilal Ghani Lone and Masroor Abbas Ansari in a joint statement strongly denounced the "incessant anti people orders being issued by the government of India at frequent intervals to intimidate and psychologically torture the people of J&K". They said that this "imperial approach" is bound to fail and reiterated the amalgam's call for engagement and dialogue among stakeholders for resolution of the Kashmir dispute.

The statement said, "The people of J&K are not some dumb driven cattle who will yield to these imperial laws. People have proved by the strength of their unflinching will and their immense sacrifices, that they are not a dead but alive and determined nation which will not withstand such assaults upon them and their motherland".

It asked people to observe a peaceful strike on Saturday to register their strong resentment against these anti people laws and to demand their immediate withdrawal.

Earlier, JKPC chief Ghulam Ahmad Mir said the Congress party rejects the new land laws and vows to fight for protection of rights. He alleged, "Betrayal and politics of deceit are the hallmark of BJP, which is hell-bent upon snatching everything from the people of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh by amending and bringing in different laws".

He termed the new land laws as an assault on the rights of people saying Congress party would not accept such "anti-J&K decisions". National Conference MPs Hasnain Masoodi and Muhammad Akbar Lone in a joint statement said that the MHA's order was "another step to alienate people of J&K and curb their constitutional rights".

They said, "The incumbent ruling dispensation has defaulted on the assurance of (Atal Bihari Vajpayee's) Kashmiriyat, Jamhooriyat and Insaniyat and the new notification is a case in point." They claimed that "abates the rights of the people of J&K and places them at lowest pedestal than other countrymen."

National Panthers Party leader, Bhim Singh, said he will knock at the doors of the International Court of Justice, if the Supreme Court turns down his plea against the new land laws.

IN BRIEF

Examination at airport: Probe on

Dubai: Qatar apologised Wednesday after authorities forcibly examined female passengers from a Qatar Airways flight to Australia to try to identify who might have given birth to a newborn baby found abandoned at the airport earlier this month. Under pressure after Australia condemned the searches, Qatar's government said it had begun an investigation into the treatment of the women who were taking Qatar Airways Flight 908 to Sydney on Oct. 2. Qatar offered no immediate explanation of how officials decided to perform invasive vaginal examinations on the women. HR activists describe such examinations as equivalent to sexual assault.

Guru gets 120 years in jail

New York: Disgraced self-improvement guru Keith Raniere, whose NXIVM followers included millionaires and Hollywood actors, was sentenced to 120 years for turning some adherents into sex slaves branded with his initials and sexually abusing a 15-year-old, US District Judge Nicholas Garaufis on Tuesday called Raniere "ruthless and unyielding" in crimes that were "particularly egregious" because he targeted girls and young women in the sex-trafficking conspiracy that resulted in Raniere's conviction last year. He handed down the unusually stiff sentence in Brooklyn federal court after hearing 15 victims call for a long prison term to reflect the nightmares and anguish they'll confront the rest of their lives. As he announced the sentence, Garaufis noted that Raniere labelled some of the victims' claims lies. The judge told a woman who Raniere ordered to be kept in a room for two years when she was 18: "What happened to you is not your fault." He said that went for the other victims too. Raniere, who looked at victims, maintained his defiant tone.

Local address of expats in passport

Dubai: Indian expats in the UAE and elsewhere can now provide their local address abroad in their passports, an official at the Indian Consulate in Dubai has said. The Indian government has decided to allow its overseas citizens to add their local address in their country of residence mainly to aid those who do not have permanent or valid addresses in India, Siddhartha Kumar Barailly, consul, Passport and Attestation, at the Indian Consulate in Dubai told the *Gulf News*. "We understand that many people who have been staying for a long time in the UAE don't have a valid address in India. They may add their local UAE address in their passports," he said. Change in address cannot be made in existing passports, the official clarified. Indian passport holders have to apply for a new passport in which the change in address can be made. The facility can be availed by Indian expats living in both rented or self-owned accommodations, the report said. Those wishing to give their UAE address should provide certain documents as proof of residence.

HEATHROW NOT BUSIEST IN EUROPE

London, Oct. 28: London's Heathrow Airport says it has lost its place as Europe's busiest air hub to Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris after the Covid-19 pandemic grounded flights and Britain failed to approve passenger testing that could scale back quarantine requirements. Heathrow said Wednesday that it expects passenger numbers to fall more than previously forecast this year and rebound more slowly in 2021.

The airport now expects to serve 22.6 million passengers this year and 37.1 million in 2021, down from a June forecast of 29.2 million and 62.8 million. The forecast for this year represents at 72% drop from 2019. Commercial aviation plunged this year as governments implemented travel restrictions and passengers cancelled flights amid efforts to control the spread of Covid-19. "The UK's hub airport is no longer the busiest airport in Europe, competitors such as Charles de Gaulle have exceeded us in terms of passenger numbers," Heathrow said in a statement.



President Donald Trump pumps his fist as he walks off stage after speaking during a campaign rally at MotorSports Management Company, in West Salem, Wisconsin on Tuesday. — AP

Don slams media for Joe graft case censor

Trump alleges that Biden got \$3.5 million from Russia

Milwaukee (US), Oct. 28: US President Donald Trump has slammed the mainstream American media and big tech companies for blocking the alleged corruption charges against his opponent Democratic challenger Joe Biden. They have accused each other of serious corruption charges during the election campaigning, with the president alleging that Biden got \$3.5 million from Russia and it came through Russian President Vladimir Putin because he was very friendly with the former mayor of Moscow. Biden has denied the allegations.

Trump, before leaving for a campaign trail on Tuesday, told reporters at the White House that the mainstream media was not showing corruption against Biden. "Nobody has ever seen anything like we're witnessing right now. I think it's a very sad time and it'll go down as a very sad era for the media and certainly for big tech (companies)." "I think what is going on with all of those companies — I think they've hurt themselves

Choice of super recovery or Biden depression: Prez

Milwaukee (US), Oct. 28: US President Donald Trump has said that the 2020 presidential election is a choice between a "super" economic recovery led by his administration or a "Biden depression" as he targeted his Democratic challenger Joe Biden. With just seven days left for the most crucial American presidential election in recent memory, Trump intensified his campaign by having as many as three rallies on Tuesday, with one of them being in rain

and freezing cold.

"Seven days from now, we are going to win this state and we are going for more incredible years in the White House," Trump said in identical speeches in three battleground states of Michigan, Wisconsin and Nebraska. "This election is a choice between a Trump super recovery or a Biden depression. That's what you are going to have with the raise of taxes, the biggest tax increase in our history. It's ridiculous. It's a choice between

a Trump boom or a Biden lockdown. Let's lock it all down and by the way speaking of lockdowns, let's get your governor to open it up. Let's get them to open it up," Trump said.

Seeking his second four-year term, Trump is currently trailing in latest polls against Biden. However, Trump looked confident of his electoral victory on November 3, asserting that he is experiencing a wave-like situation across the country. — PTI

very badly because they've been so restrictive... when they don't want to show corruption, like you have with Biden — that's totally corruption and everybody knows it — and they're trying to protect, because he can make them wealthier, whereas they

understand me," Trump said. "They understand where I'm coming from. It's very unfair. Nobody has ever seen anything like it. It's not freedom of the press... it's the opposite. And, of course, the media is in the same bag," said the president.

At a separate election rally in the battleground State of Wisconsin, his eldest son Donald Trump Jr alleged that the media and the big tech companies are now campaigning on behalf of Biden and the Democratic Party. — PTI

Tech giant CEOs grilled over bias

Washington, Oct. 28: The CEOs of Twitter, Facebook and Google are facing a grilling by Republican senators making unfounded allegations that the tech giants show anti-conservative bias. The Senate Commerce Committee has summoned Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey, Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg and Google's Sundar Pichai to testify for a hearing Wednesday.

The executives agreed to appear remotely after being threatened with subpoenas. With the presidential election looming, Republicans led by President Donald Trump have thrown a barrage of grievances at Big Tech's social media platforms, which they accuse without evidence of deliberately suppressing conservative, religious and anti-abortion views. The chorus of protest rose this month after Facebook and Twitter acted to limit dissemination of an unverified political story from the conservative-leaning *New York Post* about Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden, an unprecedented action against a major media outlet.

The story, which was not confirmed by other publications, cited unverified emails from Biden's son Hunter that were reportedly disclosed by Trump allies. Beyond questioning the CEOs, senators are expected to examine proposals to revise long-held legal protections for online speech, an immunity that critics in both parties say enables the companies to abdicate

FOR TOO long, social media platforms have hidden behind Section 230 protections to censor content that deviates from their beliefs.

ROGER WICKER, Senate Commerce Committee chairman

their responsibility to impartially moderate content. The Justice Department has asked Congress to strip some of the bedrock protections that have generally shielded the tech companies from legal responsibility for what people post on their platforms. Trump signed an executive order challenging the protections from lawsuits under the 1996 telecommunications law.

"For too long, social media platforms have hidden behind Section 230 protections to censor content that deviates from their beliefs," Sen. Roger Wicker, R-Miss., the Commerce Committee chairman, said. In their opening statements, Dorsey, Zuckerberg and Pichai addressed the proposals for changes to so-called Section 230, a provision of a 1996 law that has served as the foundation for unfettered speech on the internet.

Zuckerberg said Congress "should update the law to make sure it's working as intended." "We don't think tech companies should be making so many decisions about these important issues alone," he said. — AP

CONFRONT ISLAMOPHOBIA, SAYS IMRAN

Islamabad, Oct. 28: Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Wednesday wrote a letter to the leaders of the Muslim states, asking them to make collective efforts to confront growing trend of Islamophobia.

"The recent statements at the leadership level and incidents of desecration of the Holy Quran are a reflection of this increasing Islamophobia that is spreading in European countries where sizeable Muslim populations reside," according to the letter posted on Khan's official Twitter account.

The letter came in the wake of publication of caricatures on the Prophet in France and comments made by French President Emmanuel Macron, who defended such depictions as protected under the right to free speech. "We won't renounce the caricatures," Macron said last week. Khan urged the leaders of the Muslim countries to "collectively take the lead in breaking this cycle of hate and extremism, which nurtures violence and even death". The prime minister said that blasphemy against any prophet, including those of Christianity and Judaism, was not acceptable to the Muslims. On Monday, Pakistan summoned French Ambassador Marc Barety to lodge a "strong protest" against the publication of caricatures and President Macron's comments. — PTI

Border stand-off bilateral issue with India: China

Beijing, Oct. 28: China on Wednesday said its border standoff with India in eastern Ladakh is a bilateral issue, and asked the US to "stop" its Indo-Pacific strategy, terming it as an attempt to impose American hegemony in the region. The remarks by the Chinese Foreign Ministry came a day after Secretary of State Mike Pompeo assured India that the US stands firmly with it to confront threats to its sovereignty.

Pompeo's remarks came after the third edition of the Indo-US dialogue in New Delhi during which the two sides deliberated prominently upon the Sino-India border row and situation in the Indo-Pacific region. Reacting to the US push for closer defence ties with India, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told a media briefing here on Wednesday that "the border affairs between China and India are matters between the two countries". "Now the situation across the border is generally stable and the two sides are in resolving relevant issues through consultations and negotiations," he said, in apparent reference to the military and diplomatic level talks between India and China to resolve the standoff. In a blunt criticism of China, Pompeo cited the killing of 20 Indian Army personnel in the Galwan Valley in eastern

CHINESE FOREIGN Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin sharply criticised the US' Indo-Pacific concept, saying "the Indo-Pacific strategy proposed by the US is preaching outdated Cold War mentality and preaching confrontation and geopolitical game."

Ladakh in a clash with the Chinese military and said the US stands firmly with India in confronting threats to its sovereignty. "Our leaders and our citizens see with increasing clarity that the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) is no friend to democracy, the rule of law transparency...I am glad to say that the US and India are taking steps to strengthen our cooperation against all manner of threats and not just those posed by the Chinese communist party," Pompeo said.

Wang sharply criticised the US' Indo-Pacific concept, saying "the Indo-Pacific strategy proposed by the US is preaching outdated Cold War mentality and preaching confrontation and geopolitical game. It is aimed to uphold the hegemony of the US. This runs counter to the common interest for the region and we urge the US to stop this". — PTI

US' Lanka vision different: Pompeo

Colombo, Oct. 28: America's vision on Sri Lanka is "very different" from that of "predator" China, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said here on Tuesday as he met the leadership here and reaffirmed US commitment to the island nation's sovereignty and security. Addressing a joint press conference with his Sri Lankan counterpart Dinesh Gunawardena after bilateral talks, the top US diplomat said that the US and Sri Lanka shared a democratic vision.

"Indeed, a strong sovereign Sri Lanka is a positive partner on the world

THE US will open an embassy in Maldives, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced on Wednesday as he held extensive talks with leadership of the strategically located island nation in the Indian Ocean.

stage. It can be a beacon for a free Indo-Pacific. "The Chinese Communist Party is a predator. The US comes in a different way, we come as a friend," Pompeo said in response to a question. — PTI

TURKEY FLAYS CHARLIE HEBDO ERDOGAN TOON

Ankara, Oct. 28: Turkish officials on Wednesday railed against French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo over its coverage cartoon mocking Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and accused it of sowing "the seeds of hatred and animosity".

The cartoon could further heighten tensions between Turkey and France, which erupted over French President Emmanuel Macron's firm stance against Islamism following the beheading of a teacher who showed his class caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad for a free speech class. The Prophet cartoons upset many in the Muslim world. But it was Erdogan who led the charge against France and questioned Macron's mental state.

France then recalled its ambassador to Turkey for consultations, a first in French-Turkish diplomatic relations. "We strongly condemn the publication concerning our president of the French magazine, which has no respect to faith, the sacred and values," Erdogan's spokesman, Ibrahim Kalin, wrote on Twitter. Kalin said: "The aim of these publications, that are devoid of morality and decency, is to sow seeds of hatred and animosity. To turn freedom of expression into hostility towards religion and belief can only be the product of a sick mentality."

"I condemn this incorrigible French rag's immoral publication concerning our president," Turkish VP Fuat Oktay wrote on Twitter. — AP

Expert: 1st vaccines imperfect

GERMANY, FRANCE GEAR UP FOR NEW LOCKDOWNS AS VIRUS SURGES

Berlin, Oct. 28: Germany and France were bracing for new lockdowns Wednesday, as governments sought to stop the fast-rising tide of Coronavirus cases that are beginning to fill European hospitals.

French markets opened lower on expectations that President Emmanuel Macron will announce tough measures during a televi-

sed evening address to the nation.

Doctors in France are calling on the government to impose a new nationwide lockdown, noting that more than half of the country's intensive care units are now occupied by Covid-19 patients and medical staff are under increasing strains. — AP

long," Bingham writes in an article for the medical journal *The Lancet* this week.

Highlighting that the United Kingdom is at the "forefront" of a huge international effort to develop clinically safe and effective vaccines, she also struck a note of caution

that there are no guarantees that a successful vaccine will be found at all.

"No vaccine in the history of medicine has been as eagerly anticipated as that to protect against severe acute respiratory syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2 or Covid-19). — PTI

GIANT | SIZE 20-foot wingspan birds evolved after extinction of dinosaurs

Fossil of 50-mn-year-old bird identified

Los Angeles, Oct. 28: Scientists have identified the fossil of a giant bird that lived about 50 million years ago, with wingspans of up to 21 feet that would dwarf today's largest bird, the wandering albatross.

The fossils recovered from Antarctica in the 1980s represent the oldest giant members of an extinct group of birds that patrolled the southern oceans. By comparison, today's largest bird, the wandering albatross has a wingspan of 11 and-a-half-foot. Called pelagornithids,

the birds filled a niche much like that of today's albatrosses and travelled widely over Earth's oceans for at least 60 million years. Though a much smaller pelagornithid fossil dates from 62 million years ago, one of the newly described fossils — a 50 million-year-old portion of a bird's foot — shows that the larger pelagornithids arose just after life rebounded from the mass extinction 65 million years ago, when the relatives of birds, the dinosaurs, went extinct. A second pelagornithid

fossil, part of a jaw bone, dates from about 40 million years ago, according to the study published in the journal *Scientific Reports*. "Our fossil discovery, with its estimate of a 5-to-6-metre wingspan — nearly 20 feet — shows that birds evolved to a truly gigantic size relatively quickly after the extinction of the dinosaurs and ruled over the oceans for millions of years," said Peter Kloess, a graduate student at the University of California, Berkeley in the US.

The last known pelagornithid is from 2.5 million years ago, a time of changing climate as Earth cooled, and the ice ages began, they said. Pelagornithids are known as 'bony-toothed' birds because of the bony projections, or struts, on their jaws that resemble sharp-pointed teeth, though they are not true teeth, like those of humans and other mammals. The bony protrusions were covered by a horny material, keratin, which is like our fingernails, the researchers said.

Called pseudoteeth, the struts helped the birds snag squid and fish from the sea as they soared for perhaps weeks at a time over much of Earth's oceans, they said. Large flying animals have periodically appeared on Earth, starting with the pterosaurs that flapped their leathery wings during the dinosaur era and reached wingspans of 33 feet, according to the researchers. The pelagornithids came along to claim the wingspan record in the Cenozoic, after the mass extinction. — PTI

DECCAN Chronicle

29 OCTOBER 2020

Why India must not put all eggs in the US basket

The third edition of the India-US dialogue in the “2+2” format — the annual event at which the foreign ministers and defence of the two countries take stock of the international security affairs — which was held in New Delhi last Tuesday had the obvious context of the Chinese aggression in Ladakh, and this enabled both sides to orchestrate extreme camaraderie.

Defence minister Rajnath Singh, in his opening remarks, spoke of China’s “reckless aggression”, perhaps implying that our northern neighbour’s military venture in eastern Ladakh was foredoomed. This is good for national morale, and apparently rests in no small measure on assurances of US support. As if to confirm this, US secretary of state Mike Pompeo, who likes to sound hawkish on China, noted in the joint press conference after the meeting that the US would do everything in support of India’s “sovereignty”.

This sounds a shade condescending, and may suggest to some that in the US reckoning India may not be altogether prepared to defend its borders entirely on its own. However, the current Indian leadership will just have to pocket the superciliousness. It has just finished signing — also on Tuesday — the Basic Cooperation and Exchange Agreement (Beca), the last of the four “foundational agreements” on which the US insists when it enters into a deep partnership with a country involving close defence relationship. The external affairs minister, S. Jaishankar, pithily summed up the discussions when he informed the media that the conversations had a strong “political military” content.

An assertion of such a nature is unlikely to be tested in the severest of conditions any time soon in the event that the China’s “People’s Liberation Army” (threatening currently to ‘liberate’ Ladakh without solicitation) changes its mind in view of the growing international hostility it may sense to its militaristic designs over a large swathe of continental and maritime territory. But India will do well not to overlook history, although contexts may change from era to era. In 1962, Prime Minister Nehru had specifically sought “air support” from the Kennedy administration to ward off Chinese aggression in our northeast, but this was denied although Washington did extend support in other ways.

When President Donald Trump paid an official visit in February this year, India and the US had escalated their relationship to that of Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership, the closest India can think of getting to “strategic ally” (of the Nato variety) in the age of multi-polarity, and in the just ended “2+2” conversation, it was decided, according to the joint statement that was issued, to expand this framework in order “to realise the full potential” of the Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership. Perhaps it is a foregone conclusion that greater purchase of American military platforms and equipments will ensue and greater clarity lent to the “shared vision” of India and the US for the Indo-Pacific which was first introduced into the India-US relationship during the visit of President Barack Obama in PM Narendra Modi’s first term.

World must follow Macron

It has been a watershed moment in the over two-decade-old clash of civilisations of which the intelligentsia world over has now sat up and taken note. When a teenager beheaded a teacher about two weeks back for showing the provocative *Charlie Hebdo* cartoons to his students only as the best example of freedom of expression, all of France rallied for the country’s famous principle of *laïcité* (secularism) and celebrated culture of discourse wherein any opinion whatsoever is open to scrutiny and vigorous, non-violent debate. But what made the show of support different was the fact that during its course for the first time a head of state openly called upon immigrants rather than the existing population to integrate with French multiculturalism.

This newspaper unequivocally stands behind President Emmanuel Macron to uphold the democratic values of freedom of expression, an activity at the heart of knowledge, freedom of conscience, human dignity and equality between men and women. It also applauds Mr Macron’s plan weeks before to draft a law to fight “Islamist separatism” which will counter the favouring of personal laws over France’s republican values that adversely affect women’s rights. So far, these have been compromised by putative liberals and in the very name of multiculturalism. And that is ironical, as human rights are a universal declaration (Paris, 1948).

Mr Macron’s drawing of distinction between “French Islam” and other forms is also significant in the light of his country’s intensifying brushes with Islamism culminating in the Nice attack of 2016 killing 87. Close on the heels of that attack, families were beaten up in Toulon by Muslim youth purportedly offended at the sight of women cycling on a holiday wearing shorts. It was the inevitable fallout of the rise of Islamic fundamentalism as a reaction to insecurities caused by globalisation, a phenomenon first identified by Dutch sociologist-politician Pim Fortuyn in 1997. Fortuyn was assassinated in 2002.

As a politician himself, Mr Macron should know best how to keep his distance from far right forces. These forces have been trying to hijack this essentially humanitarian cause right since after the agnostic left first brought it to public domain. Nevertheless, it is imperative upon other nations in the world to confront this ever-growing global malaise and see through the power play of leaders like Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan whose aim it is to challenge Saudi Arabia’s leadership of the Sunni world and his supporters, Imran Khan among them. Few indeed spare a thought for the worst sufferers — women in regressive societies who risk torture and opprobrium for routine freedoms but lack a political voice.

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Subhani



As US embrace deepens, watch for pitfalls ahead



K.C. Singh

The foreign and defence ministers of India and the United States met, in the “2+2” format, in New Delhi on October 26-27. They first engaged their counterparts and then met in the 2+2 format, progressively favoured by many countries as national security, defence and diplomacy are in today’s complex and interconnected world quite seamless.

Significantly, they were meeting just a week before Americans go to the polls to elect the President, one-third of the Senate and a new Congress on November 3, and against the backdrop of the six-month old India-China military standoff in Ladakh. In a choreographed press interaction, with only two journalists on either side allowed one question each, external affairs minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar unconvincingly explained the event as normally due. Perhaps both sides had unrelated compulsions for the scheduling. Unlike recent US presidential elections, many traditionally pro-Republican states are now swing states, including Texas and Georgia. The former was last won by a Democratic candidate (Jimmy Carter) in 1976. In both states, non-white immigrants are tilting the demographic balance towards Democrats. Joe Biden is, in the last week of electioneering, swinging through them sensing change. Thus, was the meeting really sought to allow the projection of Mr Trump as pro-India and resurrect the “Howdy Modi” Houston rally’s euphoria for the diaspora vote?

India, on the other hand, would have weighed the advantage of signing the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (Beca) now. If Mr Biden were to win, he would only assume office in January. A new secretary of state may not have India on his to-do list till

well into 2021. With the India-China confrontation now likely to linger, India needs to optimise the use of American equipment like Apache helicopters, or new armed drones, if acquired, or other US transport and reconnaissance platforms already deployed. India’s access to the US geo-spatial network will have a multiplier effect on the targeting accuracy and lethality of these weapons, thus influencing the Chinese tactical calculus.

The joint statement expectedly details myriad themes such as the India-US relationship being raised to a Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership during the February 2020 visit of President Donald Trump. But the scope has been limited by the context. Covid-19 and its handling gets prominence as the Democrats are using it in the presidential election. Also related is the new Indo-Pacific alliance sought to be built around resilient supply chains. Trade, on the other hand, finds cursory mention in the statement despite it being Mr Trump’s principal preoccupation before the pandemic. The impending election has focused minds on the immediately relevant ideas. US secretary of state Mike Pompeo, in his remarks, recalled the New Age Vision finalised during his earlier visit. With a flourish, he announced that India and US stood against “all manner of threats”, not just from China. It is the language normally used among treaty allies. The US, he added, would stand with India to “protect its sovereignty and integrity”. His hyperbole hardly reflects the views of his government, as Mr Trump is by instinct an isolationist. Was he auditioning for a presidential run in 2024?

Two other important themes, although mentioned in the joint statement, are left undressed. One, Mr Trump’s tightened immi-

gration controls, in the mistaken belief that it would help ameliorate job losses due to Covid-19 lockdowns. Two, the traditional flow of Indian students to US universities. Again, there is a misguided move to cancel student visas if university courses have gone online. This has left many students stranded, both unable to repay borrowed money or complete their education and seek employment. The joint statement simply skips over these problems while restating past formulations on students as a people-to-people bridge.

The focus is basically on defence cooperation and sales as that plays well back home, particularly during an election. There is an interesting decision to exchange liaison officers, with an Indian officer to be embedded at Navent, Bahrain, which is the naval element of the US Central Command. Similarly, a US officer will be received by India’s Information Fusion Centre for the Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR). The Quad is lauded, as too India’s invitation to the Australian Navy to join Japan, the US and India in the Malabar naval exercises.

Some of the benefits of the growing strategic clinch with the United States have been recounted above. What can be the pitfalls? Firstly, while the overall trajectory of India-US relations would not materially alter under a Joe Biden administration, some elements may. Mr Biden’s priority will be to rebuild US alliances, particularly with Nato, shore up the US economy and try reducing Trumpian unpredictability. He may cautiously attempt to reengage China. Mr Pompeo’s belligerence

may be replaced by a more nuanced containment strategy for China. A Biden administration may also bring greater focus on human rights, civil society protection and freedom of speech and media. All that may require a fresh rebalancing among the major powers, including in Asia.

Second, the *Wall Street Journal* correspondent’s query is important as he sought to know the status of India’s defence relationship with Russia after the signing of Beca now and the other three foundational agreements that were signed earlier. The defence minister parried it in Hindi, but the message was that India was unlikely to change its policy of buying weapons from multiple sources. But is this sustainable, with the closer integration of US communications, logistics and geo-spatial systems with Indian weapons systems?

India may acquire more US weapons systems to narrow the strategic gap with China during the coming months. M.K. Rasgotra, a former foreign secretary and doyen of Indian diplomacy, now in his late 90s like Henry Kissinger, recently wrote that the US needs to devise a concessional buy-lease programme for India to boost quickly its defence capability to deter China. Mr Trump has been too erratic and transactional to think that big. The next US President would inherit a destabilised West Asia, a fractious South Asia and a China-intimidated East Asia. He would require vision and leadership to peacefully contain China, curb the worst instincts of the Narendra Modi government and the BJP while helping India to rise and heal the fractures of the Islamic world? He can regain global leadership by reimagining a post-Covid world with new and flexible global alliances and reformed institutions of global governance. Covid-19 has created a historic inflexion point for change, which the brave and the wise must shape. Otherwise, rising revisionist powers like China will fill the vacuum.

If Mr Biden were to win, he would only assume office in January. A new secretary of state may not have India on his to-do list till well into 2021. India needs to optimise the use of American equipment like Apache helicopters...

The writer is a former secretary in the external affairs ministry. He tweets at @ambkcsingh.

LETTERS

LAKE LAND-GRAB

Successive governments in Hyderabad have allowed land-grab on Musi River bed since decades for Inter-State Bus Depot and now a massive garbage dump at Shivaji Bridge Afzalgunj again on Musi River (GSI had pointed to lake land-grab in 2000, DC, Oct. 28). Why grab land on rivers and lakes?

Inayat Husain
Hyderabad

BARBER IN DUBBAK

Amid the hustle and bustle of high voltage campaign, a person eking out of his living through haircuts under a tree, promising only an uncompromising fight against corruption and irregularities and ensuring socio-economic justice to all. It is a welcome move and a good number of prominent people have expressed their solidarity with him. With such simple and committed people in the fray, we must be able to purify politics.

M.G. Sai Baba
Hyderabad

HOMEGUARDS 2BHK

Homeguards should be given double bedrooms and health cards. Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao had announced this in the Assembly in 2018. However, two years have passed. From among 85,000 2BHK houses to be provided to poor people, the CM must provide 10 per cent quota for homeguards. At present, half of their salary goes for rent. If they fall ill, they become financially distressed. Therefore, they should also be provided health cards. Hopefully this will definitely get attention.

Malik Muhammad Ali Khan
Hyderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN

DECCAN Chronicle

More funds to States with less birth rate mooted

NEW DELHI, Oct. 28. The Union Cabinet today discussed the question of modification of the criteria of Plan assistance to the States in such a way that those States which did well in family planning and reduced the birth-rate could get more.

Union Health Minister K.K. Shah, who had raised the discussion, had proposed that the population in 1966 should be the basis for allotment of funds to States and any additional births should not be reckoned. At the Cabinet, Mr. Shah had argued that since the bulk of Plan assistance was being determined on the strength of population, under the present dispensation, States that lagged behind in family planning and had a higher birth-rate could get more funds.

Dilip Cherian
Dilli Ka Babu



Dhesi, Khattar’s favourite, gets a second innings

Politicians are sometimes loath to let a favourite babu go off into retirement. They find ways to bring them back into the administration. In 2017, Punjab chief minister Amarinder Singh had appointed retired chief secretary Suresh Kumar as his chief principal secretary, even though the state had a regular principal secretary, another IAS officer, because Mr Kumar enjoyed his full trust.

Now taking a cue from the neighbouring state, Haryana chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar has sprung a similar surprise on his administration, and one which is likely to alter power equations in the Chief Minister’s Office (CMO). He has appointed retired IAS officer D.S. Dhesi as the chief principal secretary in the CMO.

According to sources, Mr Dhesi

was Haryana’s chief secretary for four years and retired last year. He was then appointed chairman of the Haryana Electricity Regulatory Commission (HERC), which he has now left to join his new assignment. Though his duties have not been spelt out, it is quite likely that Mr Dhesi will become another power centre in the CMO, with all important files meant for Mr Khattar being routed through him.

THE ‘SPECTRUM SECRETARY’ Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba will head a panel of secretaries to streamline the spectrum allocation process. The other members of the panel are home secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla, defence secretary Ajay Kumar, telecom secretary Anshu Prakash, I&B secretary Amit Khare and secretary,

department of space, K. Sivan. Those in the know say that the committee’s ambit may eventually be widened to also include spectrum pricing issues, always contentious, as we have seen in the past.

According to sources, the high-powered panel will examine the possibility of drawing up an annual calendar for auction of the spectrum that will give telecom companies a clear road map of the quantum as well as the frequency of spectrum being offered for commercial use. It will also sort out the various spectrum-related issues between ministries — as seen in the composition of the panel.

This may meet a long-standing demand of telecom companies who have been asking the government to clear the air for auctioning spec-

trum, which will help them plan and allocate resources efficiently, optimise their networks and roll out new technologies.

TOO BUSY TO CLEAN AIR

It is that time of the year, Covid or not, when the air quality in north India deteriorates rapidly. Stubble burning by farmers in Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi is a major contributor to this. Every year several steps are announced, media raises a big stink, but nothing much has happened.

This year, stubble burning has begun already and urgent steps would be required to prevent Delhi from turning into a gas chamber. The Supreme Court has now taken a serious note of the failure of these states to stop stubble burning which poses a serious threat to pub-

lic health in the region. It directed the respective chief ministers of these states to remain present when the court takes up the matter of combating air pollution at the next hearing. Hopefully, some meaningful action will emerge from the apex court’s intervention.

Meanwhile, the state administration in Punjab and Haryana especially are busy dealing with angry farmers agitating against the Centre’s controversial farm bills, the chief secretaries have their hands full already. This year could see a repeat of our previous trysts with polluted air at the onset of winter with babus issuing the usual warnings and threats to fine farmers who are burning stubble.

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@Twitter.com. Let’s multiply the effect.

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	39,922.46	-1.48
Nifty 50	11,729.60	-1.34
S&P 500*	3,283.56	-3.16
Dollar (₹)	73.86	-0.18
Pound Sterling (₹)	96.08	-0.20
Euro (₹)	86.81	0.21
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	50,279.682	1.34
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	38.95	-2.25
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.859	0.012
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.761	-0.017

* As of 9:30 PM IST

15th Finance Commission set to finalise report

The 15th Finance Commission is on course to finalise its report by October 30, an official statement said on Wednesday. The Commission's Chairman N.K. Singh along with its members on Wednesday held a virtual meeting with the Chairmen of two previous Finance Commissions respectively. "The Chairmen of the previous Finance Commissions appreciated the tough challenge faced by the 15th Finance Commission," the statement said.

HPE Covid Test Labs facilitate 1L patient visits



Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE) today announced that its Covid-19 Test Labs and Outpatient Department (OPD) Centers have collectively facilitated over 100 thousand patient visits across India. These facilities provide additional authorised Covid-19 testing facilities and isolation beds, thereby assisting the government of India and state governments in their efforts to contain the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

Micromax ties up with MediaTek for smartphones

Homegrown phone vendor Micromax on Wednesday said it has partnered with Taiwanese chipset maker MediaTek to design and develop smartphones for its new "in" brand. Earlier this month, Micromax announced its new "in" sub-brand and said it was looking at investing ₹500 crore over next 12-18 months towards R&D, marketing and sprucing up manufacturing as it looks to make a comeback in the Indian market.

Bharti Airtel's shares jump by nearly 13 per cent

Shares of Bharti Airtel jumped nearly 13 per cent on Wednesday after the company reported its highest-ever quarterly consolidated revenue on the back of a rise in data usage and higher realisations. The stock gained 12.65 per cent to ₹487.80 on the BSE. On the NSE, it zoomed 12.61 per cent to Rs 488. The telecom operator has reported its highest-ever quarterly consolidated revenue on the back of a rise in data usage and higher realisations.



Gold loans double as Covid-hit people pledge family jewellery

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, OCT. 28

Gold loan disbursements by NBFCs have more than doubled in September quarter over the previous quarter. They are expected to clock 15 to 18 per cent growth this year on increased demand and higher gold price.

Preliminary estimates indicate that gold loan disbursements, including repledge with NBFCs, have more than doubled sequentially in the second quarter of this fiscal, finds Crisil.

Growth was flat in the first quarter of this fiscal because of low disbursements in April and May due to the country-wide lock down. Manappuram Finance saw its gold loan portfolio growing by 2 to 3 per cent in April-May as customers have been availing gold loan using online products. Muthoot Finance too had seen a flatish growth during the



lock down.

With the Covid-19 pandemic-driven lockdowns being lifted slowly and economic activity clawing back, demand for gold loans has risen, especially from individuals meeting urgent personal requirements and from micro enterprises for working to restart businesses. Gold loans would be preferred also because non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) and banks have tightened their underwriting norms for other loans, leading to cautious lending

to micro and small enterprises, traders and the self-employed.

Crisil expects assets under management of NBFCs to grow 15-18 per cent this fiscal. Motilal Oswal too expects gold loan NBFCs to deliver 15 per cent CAGR over FY20-23.

"In the current scenario, we believe gold financiers would benefit as customers would look to raise cash by leveraging their gold holdings and increase in gold prices would give a modest impetus

to growth. Inability of customers to get personal loans due to lack of formal documentation, higher share of rural business and flexi-lending terms will support gold loan business," finds Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

"Unlike other asset classes, gold loan has not faced major issues in collection and disbursement, or re-pledge of loans, barring in the stringent lock down phase in April and May," said Krishnan Sitaraman, Senior Director, CRISIL Ratings.

In order to provide a smooth re-pledging process in times of pandemic, larger NBFCs are offering online renewal since the underlying collateral is already in their possession. Large gold-loan financiers have also consistently raised funds through bonds, under the targeted long-term repo operations and partial credit guarantee schemes at a competitive cost.

Hospitality sector sees signs of revival

SANGEETHA G. CHENNAI, OCT. 28

Hospitality has started seeing early signs of month-on-month recovery in occupancy with gradual revival in domestic leisure travel. However, occupancies are still down 60 per cent compared to last year levels.

Average occupancies in hotels across India moved up 10 to 12 per cent from the August levels to 24 to

26 per cent in September. Average daily rates too have improved 2 to 4 per cent to ₹3400- ₹3600 per night. Revenue per available rooms grew 12 to 14 per cent month-on-month to ₹815 - ₹935, as per HVS and Anarock.

Leisure destinations such as Goa and Jaipur have been witnessing a noticeable improvement in occupancy as people have started travelling for a change of pace, albeit to

destinations closer to their cities. Domestic air passenger traffic also has improved by 39 per cent in September compared to August. However, corporate travel continues to remain subdued.

On a year-on-year basis, hospitality remains one of the worst affected by Covid-19. Occupancies were down 60 per cent last month compared to September 2019. Revenue per available rooms was

down 72 per cent and average daily rates by 30 per cent.

Going ahead, festive season is likely to boost demand for travel and hotel stay. Long vacations and international trips are off the table for the rest of 2020.

Booking.com finds that almost 62 per cent Indian travelers favour a trip they could afford in the short-term rather than saving for a dream trip.

Lockdown changed consumer buying behaviour: Report

New Delhi, Oct 28: Coronavirus-induced lockdowns across the country have transformed consumers' buying behaviour and hyper-local distribution model, and distribution alliances and an omni-channel strategy will be key to business growth, according to a joint report by Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu India and FICCI.

As per the report, called REBOOT, while the pandemic brought massive disruptions across the value chain of the consumer sector, most companies adapted by building agile business models and innovative marketing strategies, along with expanding their presence through the online platforms to reach their consumers.

"The prolonged lockdowns have also dramatically transformed consumer buying behaviour while making them more health and socially conscious," Deloitte India Partner Rajat Wahi said.

He added that this has created new opportunities for businesses to develop hyperlocal delivery models, use conversational AI (artificial intelligence) and build omni-channel retail to acquire and serve customers.

"As brands adapt to the 'new normal', the key to sustenance and growth is likely to be an agile business model that minimises disruptions in the future," Wahi said.

The report said demand for consumer goods in rural markets has increased due to the return of the migrant workers to their states due to the pandemic.

"Covid-19 has led to massive reverse migration, which in turn has driven up rural demand, favouring companies with strong rural distribution," it said.

The report also said health concerns and the need to build immunity have led consumers to buy home sanitation and immunity-boosting products. —PTI

Bankers barred from sharing bidding data sharing: Sebi

New Delhi, Oct. 28: Merchant bankers will not share bidding details of initial share sales and rights issues with investors during the bidding period as it may create information asymmetry, markets regulator Sebi said.

The clarifications have been given as part of an informal guidance sought by Citigroup Global Markets India Pvt Ltd regarding provisions of Issue of Capital and Disclosure Requirements Regulations, et al.

Citigroup had sought informal guidance whether a book running lead manager can share standalone or aggregate bidding data available on the websites of stock exchanges for initial public offer, follow-on public offer and rights issue of specified securities and units with investors during the bidding process.

Responding to this, Sebi said standalone and aggregate bidding data is displayed on the websites of stock exchanges in the standard form specified by the regulator and is publicly available information.

FOOD MINISTRY WORRIED OVER LESS IN-TAKE OF SWEETNER

New Delhi, Oct. 28: The government on Wednesday said there is a need to address "myths and misgivings" about sugar consumption in India, as the per capita consumption of the sweetener has remained stagnant for the last three years at 19 kilogram.

Food Secretary Sudhanshu Pandey, after launching industry body ISMA's portal 'http://meetha.org' said India is one of the world's largest consumers of sugar but per capita consumption has remained stagnant at 19 kg, much lower than the world's average per capita consumption of 23.50 kg.

The country's annual sugar consumption stood at 25-26 million tonnes, while production reached 27.5 million tonnes in the 2019-20 season ending September.

"There are a lot of myths going around about sugar and sugar consumption without scientific basis. This misinformation multiplies much faster than the truth multiplies," the official said.

"Therefore, it is very important to come up with scientific information so that people can make very informed decisions," Pandey said.

Food secretary Sudhanshu Pandey also said that there is also "misunderstanding" about Indian sugar abroad. —PTI

Covid rebound in US, Europe turns markets volatile

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, OCT. 28

Weak global cues led to a fresh round of selling in the Indian market as the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic in Europe and the United States, uncertainty over who would be the next US President worried investors.

Sensex fell 600 points or 1.48 per cent to close at 39,922.46 while Nifty-50 settled at 11,729.60 down 159.80 points or 1.34 per cent.

Rising Covid-19 cases globally specifically in Europe and the United States are worrying investors as strict lockdown could be imposed and the economy's recovery, which is still at a nascent stage could once again get hit, said analysts.

Among the global peers United Kingdom's FTSE 100 index fell to its lowest level in six months on Wednesday on investors' worries of more virus curbs and uncertainty over a coronavirus vaccine.

Volatility in the domestic market arose ahead of equity derivative contracts expiry on Thursday as the Sensex fell 778 points intra-day taking the index to day's low of 39,774.60 before the final close at 39,922.46. Volatility index India VIX rose 4.88 per cent to 23.28.

Keshav Lahoti, equity analyst, Angel Broking said, "We expect volatility to continue in the market on the eve of key events of



the US election, ongoing result season and how coronavirus cases are being reported around the world."

Broader market suffered lesser damages with BSE Mid-cap index down 0.93 per cent and BSE Small-cap index down by 0.76 per cent.

All sectoral indices on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) barring telecom and capital goods closed in the red led by the financials. BSE Bankex index closed 2.28 per down cent and Nifty Bank fell 2.17 per cent.

The top losers in the Sensex basket included IndusInd Bank(-3.45 per cent), HDFC(-3.44), ICICI Bank(-3.34), HDFC Bank(-2.27), Bajaj Finance(-2.41) and Tech Mahindra(-3.00 per cent).

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) turned net sellers by ₹1130.98 crore on Wednesday after aggressive buying on Tuesday of equities worth ₹3,590 crore.

13% homes still have no grid power, says survey

New Delhi, Oct. 28: A majority of households (87 per cent) in India have access to grid-connect electricity, while the remaining 13 per cent are either using non-grid sources for power or "do not use any electricity at all", according to a survey.

The finding is part of the joint survey conducted by government think-tank NITI Aayog and the United States-based philanthropic organisation Rockefeller Foundation on "Electricity Access and Benchmarking of Distribution Utilities".

"Overall 87 per cent respondents said they have access to grid-based electricity. The remaining 13 per cent either use non-grid sources for electricity and lighting or don't use any electricity at all," the survey said.

The study further showed that of all customers using non-grid sources, the majority 62 per cent of them are agricultural customers. Only four per cent of households today do not have access to grid-based electricity.

The survey was released by Smart Power India (SPI), a subsidiary of Rockefeller Foundation, on Wednesday.

It was conducted across 10 states with a sample size of over 25,000 respondents consisting of different consumer categories such as households, agriculture, commercial enterprises and institutions both from rural and urban areas.

It mainly focused on key areas such as grid connectivity, electricity access, customer satisfaction, utilities' capacity to delivery and drivers of sustainability for utilities. —PTI



West Bengal capital city beat Hyderabad city Kolkata is most affordable for house purchase in India

New Delhi, Oct. 28: Kolkata has emerged as the most affordable market this year for home purchase among India's seven major cities, according to property consultant JLL India.

As per JLL's annual Home Purchase Affordability Index (HPAI), the affordability has improved in 2020 across all seven major cities despite a fall in average household income. The consultant attributed this to decline in both housing prices as well as interest rates on home loans.

HPAI — the ratio of the average household income to the eligible household income — of Kolkata is highest at 203,



followed by Hyderabad at 195, Pune 188, Chennai 178, Bengaluru 175, Delhi-NCR 136 and Mumbai 95 during this calendar year.

"HPAI until 2019 indicates that Hyderabad had been the most affordable residential market. In 2020, Kolkata has overtaken Hyderabad to become the best market in terms

of home purchase affordability," the report said.

Eligible household income is defined as the minimum income that a household should earn to qualify for a home loan on a 1,000 sq ft flat at the prevailing market price.

A value of 100 means that a household has exactly enough income to

qualify for the loan. Below 100 implies that an average household does not have enough income to qualify for a home loan, while more than 100 means that an average household has more than enough income to qualify for the home loan.

According to the report, Mumbai is moving towards the affordability threshold.

"In 2020, Mumbai continues to be the only market below the affordability threshold of 100," it said.

However, the consultant said Mumbai is the fastest moving city, showing a significant improvement in HPAI in 2020.

"Our analysis suggests that despite a fall in

household income in 2020, home purchase affordability has increased in 2020 across all the markets under consideration," said Ramesh Nair, CEO, JLL India.

He projected home purchase affordability to either remain at similar levels or improve during 2021. Nair noted that the broader recovery of the housing market would depend largely upon the economic environment and the prevailing consumer sentiments.

JLL said that property values in a majority of India's prime residential markets have been stagnant over the past few years, forcing most of the developers to work on very low margins. —PTI

SHORT TAKES

Djoker closer to Sampras record

Vienna: Novak Djokovic defeated Filip Krajinovic in the first round in Vienna on Tuesday to edge closer to Pete Sampras's all-time record of ending the year as world number one on six occasions.

Djokovic beat compatriot Krajinovic 7-6 (8/6), 6-3 and needs to win his next match in Austria against Borna Coric to ensure he equals the achievement of his childhood idol. The 33-year-old Serb has been the top-ranked player at the end of a season five times: in 2011, 2012, 2014, 2015 and 2018. He shares that mark with career rivals Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal. Sampras achieved the feat six years in succession between 1993 and 1998. "First set, I think he was the better player. He was serving for the first set and I was lucky. He missed a smash at 6/6 in the tie-break," said Djokovic. On Monday, Djokovic began his 292nd week in total as world number one. — *AFP*

Coleman banned for doping breach

Paris: World champion sprinter Christian Coleman is set to miss next year's Tokyo Olympics after being banned from athletics for two years for anti-doping violations, the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) announced on Tuesday.

The American, who won the men's 100 metres at last year's World Championships in Doha, was provisionally suspended for three 'whereabouts failures' in June. World Athletics' Disciplinary Tribunal upheld the charge and banned Coleman for two years, backdated to 14 May, 2020. The 24-year-old has 30 days to appeal against the decision at the Court of Arbitration for Sport. He is set to miss next year's Olympic Games in Japan. The AIU charged Coleman for missed tests in January and December 2019, as well as for a "filing failure" last April. — *AFP*

Sen pulls out as dad catches virus

Saarbrücken, Germany: Defending champion Lakshya Sen on Wednesday pulled out of the SaarlörLux Open Super 100 tournament after his father-cum-coach D K Sen tested positive for Covid-19 here. Lakshya was aiming to recover from an early exit in Denmark Open recently before his campaign in Germany came to an abrupt end. "We had gone for the mandatory Covid-19 test on Monday. The result came last evening. I tested positive. It is unfortunate that Lakshya had to withdraw. He had worked hard for the tournament," D. K. Sen said. Lakshya, who claimed five titles in the senior circuit last year including two BWF World Tour Super 100 top honours SaarlörLux Open and Dutch Open, received a bye in the opening round. — *PTI*

Jakhar on Asian volleyball board

Hyderabad: Volleyball Federation of India secretary general Ramavtar Singh Jakhar has been elected Zonal Executive Vice-president and Member, Board of Administration of the Asian Volleyball Confederation at their 23rd General Assembly held virtually on Monday. Mrs Rita Subowo of Indonesia was unanimously elected president. She is the first woman to lead the AVC. Other members from the Asian Central Zone who were elected to the AVC Board of Administration include Md Atiqul Islam from Bangladesh, Yermek Syrylbayev of Kazakhstan and Mohammed Reza Davarzani of Iran. The AVC General Assembly Meeting was attended by Federation Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB) president Dr Ary S. Graca.



Ramavtar Singh Jakhar

Live on TV

CRICKET
IPL: Chennai Super Kings vs Kolkata Knight Riders from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

FOOTBALL
Europe League: AEK vs Leicester from 11.25 pm on Sony Six; AC Milan vs Sparta Praha from 11.25 pm on Sony Ten 1; Antwerp vs Tottenham from 11.25 pm on Sony Ten 2; Roma vs CSKA-Sofia from 1.30 am (Friday) on Sony Ten 1; Arsenal vs Dundalk from 1.30 am (Friday) on Sony Ten 2; Rangers vs Lech from 1.30 am (Friday) on Sony Ten 3; Real Sociedad vs Napoli from 1.30 am (Friday) on Sony Six

Surya burns bright

Yadav turns on heat as Mumbai bust Bangalore

Abu Dhabi, Oct. 28: Mumbai Indians defeated Royal Challengers Bangalore by five wickets in an IPL game here on Wednesday to all but qualify for the playoffs.

Put in to bat, Royal Challengers Bangalore scored 164 for 6 in the allotted 20 overs.

In reply, MI chased down the target of 165 with five balls to spare. Suryakumar Yadav led the charge with an unbeaten 79 off 43 balls that included 10 fours and three sixes.

Earlier, young Devdutt Padikkal pummelled the Mumbai Indians attack into submission with a 45-ball 74 before Jasprit Bumrah stopped Royal Challengers Bangalore.

Put in to bat, Padikkal, who plundered 12 fours and a six, added 71 runs for the opening wicket with Josh Philippe (33).

However, the RCB then suffered a middle-order collapse as Mumbai roared back into the game with lead pacer Bumrah (3/14) doing the bulk of damage.

Padikkal began with a boundary over deep extra cover and then struck successive fours off Krunal Pandya, as RCB fetched 12 runs in the third over.

The two openers continued playing their shots, the highlight being Philippe's six over Trent Boult's head in the fifth over.

Padikkal then went on the offensive against James Pattinson. — *PTI*



Suryakumar Yadav of Mumbai Indians plays a shot against Royal Challengers Bangalore during their IPL match at Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi on Wednesday. — *BCCI*

SCORECARD

Royal Challengers Bangalore: Josh Philippe st de Kock b Chahar 33, Devdutt Padikkal c Boult b Bumrah 74, Virat Kohli c Tiwary b Bumrah 9, AB de Villiers c Chahar b Pollard 15, Shivam Dube c Yadav b Bumrah 2, Chris Morris c Pattinson b Boult 4, Gurkeerat Singh Mann not out 14, Washington Sundar not out 10. Extras (W-3) 3. **Total (for 6 wickets in 20 overs) 164.**
FoW: 1-71, 2-95, 3-131, 4-134, 5-134, 6-138.
Bowling: Trent Boult 4-0-40-1, Jasprit Bumrah 4-1-14-3, Krunal Pandya 4-0-27-0, James Pattinson 3-0-35-0, Rahul Chahar

4-0-43-1, Kieron Pollard 1-0-5-1.
Mumbai Indians: Q de Kock c Gurkeerat b Siraj 18, Ishan Kishan c Morris b Chahal 25, Suryakumar Yadav not out 79, S. Tiwary c Padikkal b Siraj 5, K. Pandya c Morris b Chahal 10, H. Pandya c Siraj b Morris 17, Pollard not out 4. Extras (LB-2, W-6) 8. **Total (for 5 wickets in 19.1 overs) 166.**
FoW: 1-37, 2-52, 3-72, 4-107, 5-158.
Bowling: Chris Morris 4-0-36-1, Dale Steyn 4-0-43-0, Washington Sundar 4-0-20-0, Mohammed Siraj 3-1-0-28-2, Yuzvendra Chahal 4-0-37-2.

IPL POINTS TABLE

Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
Mumbai Indians	12	8	4	0	16	+1.186
Royal Challengers Bangalore	12	7	5	0	14	+0.048
Delhi Capitals	12	7	5	0	14	+0.030
Kings XI Punjab	12	6	6	0	12	-0.049
Kolkata Knight Riders	12	6	6	0	12	-0.479
Sunrisers Hyderabad	12	5	7	0	10	+0.396
Rajasthan Royals	12	5	7	0	10	-0.505
Chennai Super Kings	12	4	8	0	6	-0.602

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

Tendulkar, Shastri heap praises on Wriddhiman

New Delhi, Oct. 28: The legendary Sachin Tendulkar lauded Wriddhiman Saha's "under-rated" shot-making while the national team's head coach Ravi Shastri found his 45-ball-87 simply "outstanding" as they lavished praise on the Test specialist's IPL performance for Sunrisers Hyderabad.

Saha smashed 12 fours and two sixes for SRH in their 88-run victory over DC, showing his hitting skills which have largely gone unnoticed over the years.

"Very smart batting. I also feel that @Wriddhipops quick scoring ability is invariably underrated," Tendulkar tweeted.

He loved the manner in



Wriddhiman Saha

which Saha was able to improvise his shots. "Improvise his shots after picking the line and length of the ball. There was no slogging at all. Played a fantastic innings which I thoroughly enjoyed watching," he added.

Shastri, on his part, once again termed him as the world's best wicketkeeper and praised his Tuesday's batting effort.

"To the best Glove Man in the world. Outstanding performance tonight," Shastri said. Meanwhile, Wriddhiman Saha's groin injury is "not serious" but his IPL franchise SRH is expected to adopt a cautious approach after consultation with the BCCI's medical team as the senior wicketkeeper-batsman is Australia-bound after the T20 event.

Saha had picked up the niggles during his match-winning innings against DC on Tuesday. — *PTI*

Clear mind is my strength: Rashid

Dubai, Oct. 28: Sunrisers Hyderabad leg-spinner Rashid Khan says a clear mind is his biggest strength and he reaped the rewards for focussing on bowling more dot balls against DC in their IPL match here.

Going into Tuesday's do-or-die contest against DC, SRH registered a comfortable 88-run win to stay alive in the race for the play-offs. Rashid returned with incredible figures of 4-0-7-3 to make a significant contribution in Sunrisers' win.

"I just go with a clear mind, that's my biggest strength. I want to bowl a good line and length, no matter the situation. You have to mix up and play with the batsman's mind, and see the weak zone and strong zone...So I keep



Rashid Khan

those things in mind," Rashid said.

The Afghan bowled 17 dot balls in his four-over quota.

"Winning the game was the most important. The wicket was helping a lot. What I'm mainly focusing on is to bowl economical-ly," Rashid added. — *PTI*

Ousted CSK look to halt Knights

Dubai, Oct. 28: Already out of play-offs reckoning, a relaxed CSK are ready to play party-poopers with an aim to foil KKR's desperate bid for a victory in an IPL game on Thursday.

KKR with 12 points from 12 games would like to win the next two encounters to ensure a smooth passage while CSK, currently at the bottom of the eight-team table, are only playing for pride.

A possibility remains that multiple teams will end up on either 16 or 14 points and a comprehensive victory at this stage of the tournament, will bring the superior net run-rate into equation when the play-off spots are decided.

It won't get too easy for KKR against CSK, who handed an eight-wicket thrashing to RCB in their previous outing.

KKR's unsettled batting order is a point of concern for Eoin Morgan, who would hope that Dinesh Karthik produces his A game when it matters most. They need to be at the top of their game against the CSK batting unit that has been frustratingly inconsistent but is more than capable of being destructive on its day.

CSK will be aiming to build on the win over RCB and end the season on a high, apart from hurting the chances of play-off

NUMBERS GAME

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL:

- Matches: 21
- Chennai: 13
- Kolkata: 8

MEETING IN 2019

- Chennai Super Kings beat Kolkata Knight Riders by 7 wickets at Chennai
- Chennai Super Kings defeated Kolkata Knight Riders by 5 wickets at Kolkata

MEETING IN 2020

- Kolkata Knight Riders beat Chennai Super Kings by 10 runs at Abu Dhabi

FOR THE RECORD

- Rahul Tripathi scored 81 off 51 balls with eighth fours and three sixes against Chennai Super Kings in the first meeting at Dubai.
- Faf du Plessis with 401 runs in 12 innings of as many matches, is the fifth highest run-getter in this IPL.

— *S. PERVEZ KAISER*

hopefuls.

The batting showed some spark with the young Ruturaj Gaikwad coming up with an enterprising knock and skipper Dhoni will be hoping he keeps the good form going.

The CSK bowlers choked a strong RCB batting unit with a performance that reminded CSK of yore and that should be a worry for the KKR batsmen short on consistency. — *PTI*

Another warm-up tie for India in Oz

Melbourne, Oct. 28: The Indian cricket team will get an additional Day/Night warm-up game in Sydney as a tune-up to the series-opening Pink Ball Test against Australia in Adelaide from December 17, the host board announced on Wednesday unveiling the full schedule of the 69-day engagement.

The tour will include a 14-day quarantine-cum-training period in Sydney starting November 12 for the Indians who will fly in after the IPL final on November 10.

The Border-Gavaskar Trophy will begin with a day-night encounter at the Adelaide Oval on December 17, followed by Tests at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (December 26), the Sydney Cricket Ground (January 7) and the Gabba (January 15).

As per BCCI's demands, there is a week's gap between the Boxing Day Test at the MCG and the New Year's Test at the SCG.

"India's squad will arrive in Sydney on November 12 subject to Australian Border Force travel authorisation and the appropriate departure-approvals. The team will quarantine in Sydney prior to the first match of the series on November 27," Cricket Australia stated in a media release.

According to the release, the three-match ODI Series will have matches at the Sydney Cricket Ground (November 27, 29) and Manuka Oval, Canberra (December 2).

That will be followed by the three-match T20 Series at Manuka Oval, Canberra (December 4) and the Sydney Cricket Ground (December 6, 8). — *PTI*

SAMUELS CRITICISED FOR APPALLING TRADE AT BEN

New Delhi, Oct. 28: West Indies cricketer Marlon Samuels has been criticised for aiming an expetive-laden tirade at old rival Ben Stokes after a seemingly innocuous comment from the England all-rounder.

Samuels made racial remarks and a derogatory comment about Stokes's wife in an *Instagram* post that former England captain Michael Vaughan called "appalling".

"This is appalling @marlonsamuels... we are trying to stamp out racism," Vaughan wrote on *Instagram*, calling Stokes's original comments "a bit of banter".

After Samuels' post, and others by him targeting Stokes, Stokes responded by adding more than a dozen pictures of Samuels to his *Instagram* story, without making any comment. Their rivalry dates back to 2015, when Samuels mocked Stokes with a send-off salute in a Test match in Grenada. — *AFP*

Barca president Bartomeu resigns

Madrid, Oct. 28: Barcelona president Josep Bartomeu resigned amid the fallout of his feud with Lionel Messi, and on his way out revealed the Spanish club wants to join a potential new super league of European teams. After one of the club's worst seasons, Bartomeu announced that his entire board of directors also resigned, effectively avoiding a motion of censure vote. "We have to act responsibly. For that reason we cannot hold the vote of censure in the current

circumstances. It was necessary to do so in conditions that guaranteed everybody's health. For that reason we have taken the decision to not call the vote and resign forthwith," Bartomeu said. Bartomeu added that the club had given its initial approval to a new competition. "I can announce that we approved the requirements to be part of a European Super League. The decision to play the competition now must be ratified by the next (club) assembly," he added. — *AP*

City trounce Marseille, Reds rock

Paris, Oct. 28: Holders Bayern Munich continued their perfect start to their Champions League title defence on Tuesday as Real Madrid had Casemiro's late goal to thank for scrambling a 2-2 draw away to Borussia Moenchengladbach.

Liverpool and Manchester City also made it six points out of a possible six in Europe this season, after Bayern needed a late Joshua Kimmich pass and volleyed home low from outside the box 11 minutes from time.

Leon Goretzka put the Germans ahead early on in front of a limited crowd in the Russian capital, but Anton Miranchuk tucked in an equaliser for Lokomotiv in the second half — Miranchuk's twin brother Aleksei scored for Atalanta in the Champions League last



Mohamed Salah (right) of Liverpool in action against FC Midtjylland during their Champions League match at Anfield stadium in Liverpool on Tuesday. — *AFP*

week. But Bayern were not to be denied a record 13th straight win in the competition as Kimmich controlled a Javi Martinez pass and volleyed home low from outside the box 11 minutes from time.

Meanwhile, Pep Guardiola's City eased to a second straight win in Group C with Kevin De Bruyne setting up Ferran Torres for the early opener against Marseille after the hosts had carelessly

THE RESULTS			
Manchester City (Torres 18, Gundogan 76, Sterling 81)	3	Atletico Madrid (Marcos Llorente 29, Joao Felix 52, 85)	3
Marseille	0	Salzburg (Dominik Szoboszlai 40, Felipe 47-OG)	2
Liverpool (Jota 55, Salah 90+2-pen)	2	Bayern Munich (Leon Goretzka 13, Joshua Kimmich 79)	2
Midtjylland	0	Lokomotiv Moscow (Anton Miranchuk 70)	1
Real Madrid (Benzema 87, Casemiro 90+3)	2	Inter Milan	0
Borussia Moenchengladbach (Thuram 33, 58)	2	Shakhtar Donetsk	0

ceded possession. Ilkay Gundogan and Raheem Sterling added late goals to make it 3-0, leaving Marseille without a point. In another match Liverpool defeated Danish champions Midtjylland 2-0

at Anfield in Group D. Diogo Jota finished off a fine move to give Jurgen Klopp's team the lead early in the second half, before Mohamed Salah made sure of the points with a late penalty. — *AFP*