


DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
ANANTAPUR | MONDAY | 5 OCTOBER 2020




WEATHER

 **Max:** 31.0°C
Min: 14°C
RH: 83%
Rainfall: Nil
Forecast: Cloudy sky. Misty morning. Max/Min temp. 31/14 °C

COVID-19 CUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+74,722)	(+902)
66,22,135	1,02,714
covid19india.org	
STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS	
(+1,949)	(+10)
TS: 1,99,276	1,163
(+6,242)	(+40)
AP: 7,19,256	5,981

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

 **3,52,49,401**
DEATHS
 **10,39,543**
COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES
 **213**
worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Adhika Ashwayuja Bahula Tadiya 10.01 am
Star: Bharani till 2.54 pm
Variyam: 4.23 am to 6.11 am (Tuesday)
Durmuhurtam: 12.28 pm to 1.15 pm; 2.49 pm to 3.36 pm
Rahukalam: 7.30 am to 9 am
HUIJI CALENDAR
Safar ul Muzaffar 17, 1442 AH
PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.31 am
Zohar: 12.26 pm
Asar: 4.28 pm
Maghrib: 6.05 pm
Isha: 7.21 pm
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.08 AM
SUNSET TODAY 6.25 PM
MOONSET 12.42 PM
MOONRISE 12.56 AM

COUNTER POINT



Seat-sharing between the parties is complete... now, it's among factions of our own party!

BRIEF

Minister Paswan undergoes surgery

New Delhi: Union minister and Lok Janshakti Party patron Ram Vilas Paswan has undergone a heart surgery, his son Chirag Paswan said on Sunday. Ram Vilas Paswan, 74, who has been in active politics for more than five decades, was hospitalised for the last few weeks. He was operated upon at a private hospital in Delhi. He has long suffered from a heart condition, and family sources expressed confidence that he will soon recover. In a tweet, Chirag Paswan said his father will undergo another operation in a few weeks if needed.

Virtual sim cards new J&K threat

Srinagar: Virtual SIM cards pose a new headache for security agencies fighting terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir as their use in the valley has seen an increase among terror groups to connect with their handlers in Pakistan, officials said here. The penetration of this new technology was found in 2019 when a request was sent to the US to seek details from a service provider of “virtual SIMs” used by suicide bomber of JeM terror group involved in the Pulwama attack that left 40 CRPF personnel dead. A detailed probe by the NIA indicated that over 40 virtual SIM cards were used in the Pulwama attack alone.

NATION | 4

Congress calls for Rhea's release



WORLD | 5

Capitalism failed in pandemic, says Pope



SPORTS | 8

Mumbai ride high on Quinton knock



deccanchronicle.com, facebook.com/deccannews, twitter.com/deccanchronicle, google.com/+deccanchronicle

Vol. 22 No. 27 Established 1938 | 16 PAGES | ₹6.00

War games in peace time



Indian and Bangladesh Naval Warships take part in the 3rd edition of Coordinated Patrol during the Bongosagar-2020, the bilateral exercise between the Indian Navy and Bangladesh Navy off the sea from Visakhapatnam on Sunday.

LJP to fight Bihar polls alone

Unhappy with Nitish Kumar being projected as NDA's CM face

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 4

Bihar's upcoming electoral battle kept getting interesting as another “front” joined the battlefield. NDA constituent Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) of Union minister Ram Vilas Paswan, announced it would go solo over “ideological differences” with Janata Dal(United) president and Chief Minister Nitish Kumar.

The BJP, which held its central election committee (CEC) meeting to discuss its candidates after the LJP made its announcement, has already made it clear that Nitish Kumar is NDA's CM face.

The CEC was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, party president J.P. Nadda, Union ministers Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh, Nityanand Rai, election in-charge and former Maharashtra chief minister Devendra Fadnavis, among others.

The LJP, which had won two Assembly seats out of 43 that it contested in the last elections, made it clear that it has a strong alliance with the BJP at the Centre. Post the polls, LJP MLAs will form government with the BJP in the state, the party said, giving an indication that the LJP chief is hoping to be a “kingmaker” in case JD(U)-BJP is short of the

halfway mark of 122. Paswans are one of the 22 Dalit castes in the state, which account for nearly 16 per cent of the total population. It would be seen whether the LJP will be able to woo the non-Paswan Dalit vote bank, a significant number of whom have been supporting Nitish Kumar.

The LJP has claimed it will contest 143 seats of the total 243. It remains to be seen how many candidates it actually fields, as it may get into “friendly fights” with the BJP in some seats if it sticks to the number. Also, it remains to be seen how the BJP's campaign will face the LJP's candidates where the JD(U) is

also contesting: The BJP leadership has asked its cadre to seek votes for the NDA candidates and not just the BJP's. The first phase of polling will take place on October 28 and the JD(U) and the BJP are yet to announce their seat sharing formula. Both had contested the polls in 2015 separately; the JD(U) was out of the NDA and had contested with the RJD and the Congress. Speculation is rife that JD(U) could contest a couple of seats more than the BJP as it will have to accommodate the Hindustan Avam Morcha (HAM) of former chief minister Jiten Ram Manjhi from its quota.

EC MAKES POSTAL VOTE EASIER FOR ELDERS, DISABLED

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 4

The Election Commission of India has issued new instructions that make securing postal ballots more convenient for people with disabilities and those above 80 years of age.

As per new instructions, a booth level officer (BLO) will visit the houses of the electors and deliver the 12-D form. In case the elector goes for postal ballot, the BLO will collect the filled-in form within five days of the notification and deposit it with the returning officer (RO). Thereafter, the RO will deploy a polling team who will deliver and collect the postal ballots on a pre-informed date and deposit it with the returning officer. The process of voting will be videographed to ensure transparency.

These instructions have been issued based on the feedback the poll panel received from civil society and media during the visit of the EC team to poll-bound Bihar last week. The EC said these fresh instructions would be applicable to all elections and byelections, including the bypolls announced last week to 56 Assembly and one Lok Sabha seat.

● **A BOOTH level officer (BLO)** will visit the houses of electors and deliver the 12-D form. If the elector picks postal ballot, the BLO will collect the filled-in form within five days of the notification

15 gold coins unearthed in excavations at Srisailem

D. SIVA RAMI REDDI | DC
KURNOOL, OCT. 4

Excavation works underway at Ghanta Matam in Srisailem for the past few months on Sunday resulted in unearthing gold coins and a ring.

Earlier, silver coins, copper plates and a Dhyan Mandiram were among the findings.

Srisailem Brhamaramba Mallikarjuna Swamy temple Executive Officer, KS Rama Rao said that the gold coins were found “intact” in a copper container at a water spring. The container has been exposed to the flowing

waters and withstood the ravages of time, he said.

The gold coins, numbering fifteen, were found inside the container besides some silver coins. The gold coins seem to have been minted between 1860 and 1910. One coin has insignia of Edward VII of Great Britain.

Ashok Reddy, a coins historian, said that the 1902-1910 Edward VII gold full sovereign weighs 7.98g of .917 purity gold, is 22.05 mm in diameter, and 1.56 mm thick. “On the obverse side we see a portrait of King Edward VII facing right (Queen Victoria was facing left), and around

him the inscriptions “EDWARDVS VII D: G: BRITT: OMN: REX F: D: IND: IMP”, he said.

“On the reverse we found Pistrucci's all-time classic design of St. George killing the dragon, suggested by the artist himself as a suitable motif to celebrate Britain's victory over Napoleon's army in the battle of Waterloo. The date of issue is also inscribed on the reverse side,” he added.

Rama Rao said “it was a blessing of Lord Shiva to have his mysteries revealed in the historic Srisailem Kshetram.

CRIME | RECORD

Telangana sees decline in cases as per NCRB data

AP 2nd to Maha in trafficking

MD ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 4

Human trafficking has seen a surge in the two Telugu states with Andhra Pradesh being the second most affected while Telangana state stands seventh. The highest number of human trafficking cases has been reported from Maharashtra.

According to data provided by the National Crime Records Bureau, 245 cases of human trafficking were reported in 2019 in Andhra Pradesh against 240 in 2018 and 218 the year before. There has been a gradual decline in Telangana state which reported 137 cases in 2019 and 242 in 2018 and 329 in 2017.

According to the report, a

majority of the victims were forced into the flesh trade, followed by domestic maids forced to work as bonded labourers.

Research by various organisations on human trafficking revealed that there is a huge demand for minor girls in brothels. Abject poverty is forcing parents to send their minor daughters to work as housemaids. Recently, the Guntur police freed eight minor girls from bonded labour. They were brought from north Andhra by agents.

The International Day of No Prostitution is observed on October 5. The day aims at increasing awareness about prostitution. Several NGOs working against human traf-

ficking have been urging the government to initiate measures to restrain human trafficking by strict implementation of laws. Prof K.K. Mukherjee, former head of department of social work, Delhi University, said that besides trafficking-related prostitution, several social classes and tribal communities take up prostitution as their primary source of income.

HELP and Vimukthi organizations, which campaign for the rights of children and for the prevention of second generation prostitution, have called for the need to have measures to end human trafficking and prostitution.

HELP secretary N. Ram Mohan said 10.8 per cent of

secretary of the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration to attend the meeting to be convened by Union minister of state for home affairs G. Kishan Reddy at 11 am on October 7.

Besides, a similar invitation has been sent to the president of GJM, the Darjeeling-based political party which spearheaded fierce Gorkhaland movement both before and after the Trinamul came to power in the state in 2011. Bimal Gurung, who founded the GJM, was its president for many years. He, however, went underground with cases against him after violence rocked Darjeeling leading to a prolonged shutdown in 2017. In November of that year, Mr Gurung was suspended by his rival camp in the party led by Binoy Tamang, while taking control of the outfit.

■ **Page 4:** Gurung camp builds rapport with BJP

● **SOURCES SAID** in the 42nd meeting of the Council on October 5, Opposition-ruled states would object to the Centre's borrowing options and demand alternative mechanism for funding GST compensation deficit.

● **THEY FEEL** that the constitutional liability of compensating states lies with the Union government.

● **THE CENTRE** in August gave states two options to the states to borrow money from RBI

₹97,000 crore is on account of GST implementation and rest ₹1.38 lakh crore is the impact of Covid-19 on states' revenues.

The Centre in August gave two options to the states to borrow either ₹97,000 crore from a special window facilitated by the RBI or ₹2.35 lakh crore from market and has also proposed extending the compensation cess levied on luxury, demerit and sin goods beyond 2022 to repay the borrowing. Chief Ministers of six

non-BJP ruled states — West Bengal, Kerala, Delhi, Telangana, Chhattisgarh and Tamil Nadu — have written to the Centre opposing the options which require states to borrow to meet shortfall. While these states want the Centre to borrow to meet the shortfall, the Centre has argued that the revenue accruing from GST compensation cess goes to the states and the Centre cannot borrow on the security of the tax it does not own. Under the GST structure, taxes are levied under 5, 12, 18 and 28 per cent slabs. On top of the highest tax slab, a cess is levied on luxury, sin and demerit goods and the proceeds from the same are used to compensate states for any revenue loss. Attorney General of India K.K. Venugopal had given his legal view on the compensation cess issue where he has opined that there is no obligation on the Centre under the GST laws to compensate for the loss of revenue. He had opined that the GST Council has to find ways to meet any revenue shortfall arising out of GST implementation. — PTI

DRONAMRAJU SRINIVAS DIES OF CORONAVIRUS

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 4

Veteran political leader and former chairman of Visakhapatnam Metropolitan Regional Development Authority, Dronamraju Srinivas, succumbed to Covid-19 at a corporate hospital on Sunday. He was 59 and is survived by his wife, a son and daughter.

Family members said Srinivas contracted the virus 20 days ago and was quarantined at home. He was hospitalised after his lungs were infected. His condition started worsening and he was put on a ventilator. Rajya Sabha member V Vijaysai Reddy and local minister Muttamsetti Srinivasa Rao were monitoring his health daily. Treatment bills were paid by the CMO, on the advice of Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, who was also enquiring about his health.

■ **Page 3:** Leaders hail gentleman politician

FARM BILLS OUT ON CONGRESS RETURN: RAHUL

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI OCT. 4

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi lashed out at the Central government over the passage of Farm Bills in the recently concluded Monsoon Session of Parliament. He said that his party will scrap the three farm laws and throw them in the waste paper basket when it comes to power at the Centre. Mr Gandhi's statement comes in the backdrop of the launch of the “Kheti Bachao Yatra” in Punjab with CM Captain Amarinder Singh on Sunday. Flagger off a three day tractor rally against the farm bills, Mr Gandhi said, “Their (the BJP's) only aim is to destroy MSP and food procurement.”

SHORT TAKES

LESS THAN 50% CANDIDATES TURN UP FOR PRELIMS

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, OCT. 4

The turnout for the preliminary exams for the Civil Services conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) at 14 centres across Tirupati was less than 50 per cent. The exam was held in two sessions — from 9.30 am to 11.30 am and from 2.30 pm to 4.30 p.m.

According to officials, of 6,790 candidates, only 3,234 turned up for the first paper in the morning and the attendance percentage was only 47.63 per cent. The number of candidates taking the examination dropped further to 3,207 for the afternoon exam and the attendance percentage recorded was 47.23 per cent.

DHARMA REDDY TAKES FULL ADDL CHARGE OF EO

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, OCT. 4

The additional EO of TTD A.V. Dharma Reddy on Sunday took charge as TTD executive officer (full additional charge) in place of Anil Kumar Singhal who has been transferred and posted as principal secretary of Medical, health and family welfare.

The transfer of charge took place at the Ranganayakula mandapam in Tirumala temple and later both Dharma Reddy and Singhal had Srivari darshan together. Later TTD JEO P. Basanth Kumar, administered the oath of office on Dharma Reddy as EO FAC inside the temple.

Vedic pandits offered Vedasirvachanam to the departing EO and the new EO FAC and Dharma Reddy offered theertha prasadam to the outgoing EO Singhal. CVSO Gopinath Jatti, Srivari temple DyEO P. Harindranath and other officials were also present.

CONG SIGNATURE CAMPAIGN ON FARM LAWS

DC CORRESPONDENT
KADAPA, OCT. 4

The AP Congress Committee working president, Dr N.S. Tulsiyreddy, started a signature campaign against central Farm laws and meters to electric pump sets in Andhra Pradesh. He started collecting signatures on Sunday in Vempalle, Kadapa district. He said the BJP-led Central government and the state government were adopting anti-farmer policies.

He said the Contract Farming Act, Agricultural Market Act and Emergency Commodities Act by the Central Government would be detrimental to farmers and consumers. He said they were favourable to big business organisations like Reliance. He said that the signatures will be collected against to these Acts, till the end of October and will be presented to the President on November 14, Nehru's birthday.

COPS REGISTER CASE FOR SELLING DARSHAN TICKETS

AVINASH P. SUBRAMANYAM
| DC
TIRUPATI, OCT. 4

Tirumala police registered a case against three persons for allegedly selling darshan tickets of Tirumala temple in the black market and extorting huge amounts from devotees. Acting on the complaint registered by the TTD vigilance and security wing, the police had launched a man hunt to nab the three middle-men involved in the sale of darshan tickets.

Confirming the development with *Deccan Chronicle*, Tirumala II town CI Chandrasekhar Reddy said that they had received a complaint from the TTD vigilance wing on Saturday against three persons who misused recommendation letters of political and official fraternity and obtained darshan tickets, which they sold to the devotees for huge amounts.

"As per the complaint, the middle-men had misused the recommendation letters of an MLA and a senior official from TTD. In the first case, the middle-men has obtained three darshan tickets by misusing the letter of an MLA. He sold the tickets to devotees for ₹12,000," the CI said.

In the second case, another middle-men had misused the recommendation letter of an MLC and obtained six tickets.



Huge numbers of job aspirants come out of examination centre after writing UPSC preliminary test at Dr L. Bullayya College in Visakhapatnam on Sunday. — K. MURALIKRISHNA

Move to reopen schools runs into opposition in AP

One child may expose all others to the risk of contracting virus

VADREVVU SRINIVAS | DC
KAKINADA, OCT. 4

The state government's proposal to reopen schools in November has met with stiff opposition from parents who fear that it will not only cause huge financial loss to them, but also expose their children to a serious health hazard.

The experience in the United States of America and other countries clearly shows that reopening of schools is not advisable, argue several parents. It is not realistic to expect that children, especially in primary schools, will maintain distance, and one child may expose all others to the risk of contracting the virus. Further, the parents will have to shell down fees and they will also have to bear hospital expenses, if the child is infected with the virus.

In one school at Vizianagaram district, more than 20 schoolchildren were infected and thousands of students tested positive in the US, after schools were reopened.

Noted pulmonologist Dr D. Seshagiri Rao said that unless an effective vaccine is developed, it is not advisable to reopen schools. If the government wants to go ahead, masks should be provided to stu-

● In one school at Vizianagaram district, more than 20 schoolchildren were infected and thousands of students tested positive in the US, after schools were reopened.

dents and only a limited number of students should be allowed in each class, although the risk factor would be quite high. Some parents formed the 'Kakinada School Parents' group to oppose moves for reopening schools.

"The government says the consent of parents before sending their children to school is compulsory. Who will take responsibility if a student contracts the virus," said founder of the group, A.P.J. Vinu.

He urged Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy not to give permission for reopening of schools in the given circumstances.

Another parent K. Ramachandra Rao said that contrary to claims being made by the government, the number of cases is increasing. He said that despite large cases being reported, the government was not declaring such vulnerable areas as containment zones.

demanding that Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy break his silence on the benami transactions in the SEZ land acquisition.

Mr Ramakrishnudu asked as to why the CM was not taking steps to help the farmers if he did not have any links to the benami transactions.

He claimed that there was severe opposition among the locals to the setting up of bulk drug industry in Kakinada. He expressed fear that many fishermen would lose their livelihood because of the pollution from the drug industry.

Amaravati land scam and AP Fibernet scam.

During his earlier visit, he was asked for concrete proofs and evidence to order a CBI probe, which the State government submitted subsequently. He is expected to reiterate his demand for a CBI probe.

The CM will reach Pulivendula by 11.30 am on Monday to attend a religious memorial programme for his father-in-law E.C. Gangi Reddy.

RTE activist urges CM not to reopen schools

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 4

Well-known right to education activist Narava Prakasa Rao has urged Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to reconsider his government's decision to reopen schools from November 2.

In a letter to the chief minister and the education minister, Prakasa Rao said the decision appeared to be hasty and could expose children and teachers to the deadly Coronavirus.

To highlight alarming Covid-17 situation, he mentioned two incidents

● "The government says the consent of parents before sending their children to school is compulsory. Who will take responsibility if a student contracts the virus,"

A.P.J. VINU,
FOUNDER OF THE
GROUP.

wherein 15 students under the age of seven in Batladu village of Stenapalli mandal in Guntur district were infected while attending tuition classes and 27 tested positive in Gantayada mandal in Vizianagaram district.

He said as far as Covid-19 control measures were concerned, the government could somehow manage in state-run schools, but hundreds of private and corporate institutions would be beyond its reach.

He said sanitation and cleanliness of bathrooms in schools would also be a big task for the govern-

ment to protect children from the virus.

He also sought action against private schools for conducting classes and private tuitions.

The rider that students can attend schools with written consent of parents indicated the lack of seriousness on part of the government about the safety of children, Rao said in his letter.

Stating that the safety and protection of children's health should be the prime concern and priority of the government, he cautioned that a small mistake could result in disaster.

MAJOR CONCERNS

- It will cause huge financial loss to the parents
- Expose their children to a serious health hazard
- Reopening is not advisable, argue several parents
- It is not realistic to expect social distancing
- Thousands of students tested positive in the US
- Sanitation and cleanliness of bathrooms in schools would also be a big task for the government to protect children from the virus

Chilling out



Members of a family enjoy in Pushkar ghat and take selfie in the banks of river Krishna in Vijayawada on Sunday. — C. NARAYANA RAO

Prakasam district SWAT completes one year

AVINASH P. SUBRAMANYAM | DC
TIRUPATI, OCT. 4

Prakasam district's SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics) team, first-of-its-kind in the country modeled on National Security Guard (NSG) and Organisation for Counter-Terrorist Operations (OCTOPUS), formed to counter terrorism, completed one year of its existence.

Speaking on the last day of two-day SWAT raising day celebrations on Sunday, superintendent of police (SP) Siddharth Kaushal, the brain behind the team, said that the team was formed in the district after consultations with Army experts and NSG commandos. "Swat has been trained and deployed within the predominantly rural district for urban warfare and high-risk operations," the

SP said.

Referring to the arrests of suspected ISIS members in neighbouring Tamil Nadu and Kerala, and alleged masterminds of the serial bomb blasts in Hyderabad, by the NIA, the SP said "Earlier, we had SWAT teams only in metro cities like Mumbai and Delhi. As AP is witnessing communal tensions and due to the threat perception, we need to be fully vigilant to meet any

'Naidu is belittling village volunteers'

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 4

YSR Congress MLA Jogi Ramesh alleged that opposition leader N. Chandrababu Naidu ran away to Hyderabad and was making false statements against the government and belittling village volunteers to prove his existence.

He said that the volunteer system was a big hit and got accolades from Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself. "The people are happy over getting all services at their doorstep and expressed their gratitude by clapping in response to the call given by Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy. But the leader of

TD is unable to digest the success and launched a vicious campaign," the MLA claimed.

Addressing a press meet here on Sunday, Mr Ramesh said Mr Jagan had spent ₹70,000 crore on welfare schemes. Mr Naidu lost his relevance and was trying to be in the limelight by resorting to untruths through Zoom and Twitter, he remarked.

The MLA faulted former MP Sabbam Hari for 'abusing' GVMC officials in Visakhapatnam who had gone to demolish the 'unauthorised' structures built by him. He stated that it was ridiculous that Hari should threaten leaders like Vijay Sai Reddy.

British-era bridge collapses into canal

DC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, OCT. 4

A bridge built during the British times to link two villages - Kandrakota and Turpupakalu in Peddapuram mandal of East Godavari District, collapsed in the early hours of Sunday.

Because of the recent floods in Yeleru Reservoir, the bridge had suffered huge damage. As a result, officials stopped traffic over the bridge but

allowed only cycles to ply. The bridge, however, collapsed early on Sunday morning and fell into the canal.

According to locals, the bridge was built in 1932 with the initiative of Ganta Ramaswamy and Joka Venkataraju for connecting the two villages.

Panchayat Raj deputy executive engineer Bhas-kara Ramesh said that using NABARD funds, there is a proposal to construct a new bridge.



The bridge linking Kandrakota and Turpupakalu collapsed on Sunday. — DC

Traders in Agency sell low-quality items

VADREVVU SRINIVAS | DC
KAKINADA, OCT. 4

The food poisoning incident in East Godavari revealed the availability of cheap and low-quality food items, including groceries and others in agency areas.

People in the agency areas are forced to buy these items because of their low income and non-availability of quality foodstuffs at affordable prices. The main villages and shandy markets have small kiosks selling low-quality food items.

"The Guthi Koya community are mostly illiterate and financially backward and they can't afford to buy branded food items," said VR Puram sub-inspector B. Venkatesh.

Social activists suggested that the government open special stores in

agencies for provision of quality food at reasonable prices. "There are some Girijan Cooperative stores in some of the areas. The government should extend those stores or set up special stores to sell essential commodities, including food items, to the tribal people at subsidised rates," said Rights Watch (Andhra Pradesh) president Balu Akkisa.

The people of Chinturu suffering from swollen legs due to adulterated food items. Cheap edible oil leads to health problems among the tribal people.

Akkisa said that there were more products, available in the agency area, which are procured by the tribal people and the government should take steps to provide reasonably priced food items to them.

KADAPA DISTRICT DESAM GENERAL SECRETARY ARRESTED IN LAND CASE

DC CORRESPONDENT
KADAPA, OCT. 4

TD Kadapa district general secretary Balisetty Hariprasad was arrested by Rajampet police on Sunday for allegedly involving in a land dispute.

The police asked him to come to police station to discuss land dispute

dated back to 2003. When he reached the DSP office at Rajampet, the police arrested him.

Hariprasad said that the case is pending in High Court. He questioned the police on his arrest. He said police arrested him for questioning the fail- ures of the state government. District TD leaders condemned the arrest.

emergencies. With SWAT, we can effectively counter any terrorist attack in the future without relying on anyone else."

Since the formation of the SWAT, the commandos were given special training in management and use of new weapons, room interventions and counter-ambush, etc. The commandos were also given training in Kravmaga, a type of martial arts, and defence techniques.

As part of the completion of one year of SWAT formation, the SP tested the commandos' prowess. The top cop also conducted revision classes on the handling and use of new weapons.

AR DSP K. Raghavendra, SB-I inspector V. Suryanarayana, CC inspector R. Rambabu, SWAT RI Srikant Nayak, RI J. Hari Babu, IT core SI Nayab Rasool, RSI Mohan Kumar and SWAT staff took part.

OTHER STORIES

Sundarakanda pathanam begins

Tirupati: The fifth phase of Akhanda Sundarakanda pathanam has commenced on a grand note with scores of Veda pandits rendered shlokas from different Sargas at Nada Neerajanam platform in Tirumala on Sunday. On the occasion, 174 Shlokas from 15 to 19 Sargas were recited by 200 Vedic pundits and scholars hailing from different Vedic institutions of TTD and also from National vedic university and Rastriya Sanskrit vidya peetham. The event commenced at 7 am and lasted for over two hours. At the beginning of the programme veteran, Annamacharya Project artist Dr G. Balakrishna Prasad and Bullemma troupe presented Shri Rama bhajana while in the end Dr K. Vandana of SV college of music and dance presented Anjaneya bhajana penned by RSVP VC Muralidhara Sharma. Meanwhile, the Principal of Dharmagiri Veda Vignana Peetham K.S.S. Avadhani, Vedic scholars Pavana Kumara Sharma and K. Ramanujacharyulu recited 174 Shlokas from 15 to 19 chapters of Sundarakanda.

Rao elected AP bar council executive

Tirupati: Tirupati-based senior advocate Galla Sudarshan Rao has been elected as a member of the AP state Bar Council. The chairman of the AP state bar council Ganta Rama Rao said in a statement released on Sunday that Sudarshan Rao was chosen as a member at the online session of the council executive meeting held today at Amaravati. Mr Sudarshan Rao has been practising as an advocate since 1994. He functioned as public prosecutor of the family court from 2007-2010 during which he was in-charge public prosecutor for court no. 4 and 6. Mr Rao also held the post of president of the Tirupati bar association from 2014-15.

1 held in Bommuru harassment case

Rajahmundry: The Bommuru police arrested one person on charges of harassing a woman under Bommuru police station limits on Sunday. The accused is identified, as P.Nani. The arrest comes after a man tried to attempt suicide near the district police office three days ago. According to sources, a person lodged a complaint with the Bommuru police a month back that three persons had taken his 10-year-old daughter and attempted to rape her. Later, he lodged another complaint that while returning home at night, some unknown person attacked him with bricks. He also complained that the accused is harassing his wife. On Thursday night he wrote a suicide note and consumed unknown poison near the District Police Office. In the suicide note, he alleged that though he had lodged complaints with the Bommuru police, they did not take any action. Instead, the police forced him to compromise the criminal cases. He was admitted to a private hospital at Rajahmundry and later shifted to the GGH Kakinada. Meanwhile, Rajahmundry East Zone DSP A. Ravikumar on Sunday evening told reporters that a woman lodged a complaint saying that three persons kidnapped her 10-year-old daughter and attempted to rape her, but she managed to escape. The accused were arrested, under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (PoCSO) Act. We have filed a charge sheet in the court. However, later, two cases have been registered against the accused, and the other is under investigation.

Officials urged to finish road works

Kadapa: Government Chief Whip Srikanth Reddy directed the Panchayati Raj engineering officials to complete the construction of rural roads as soon as possible. On Sunday, he had a meeting with the Panchayati Raj DEs Gopal Reddy and Keshav at his office to review the status of various development structures in Rayachoti constituency. Village secretaries, Rythu Bharosa Kendrams (RBK), village health clinics, road constructions and other development works were inquired. He said that the construction of 39 cement roads under the Externally Aided Projects (EAP) grant of Rs 32 crore was progressing slowly and should be fast-tracked. Srikanth Reddy directed to take steps to complete the construction of BT roads sanctioned with Rs 10 crore from the employment guarantee fund as soon as possible. He also reviewed the house sites layouts with the housing officers.

East Godavari crosses 1L mark in Covid-19 cases

Recovery rate in Andhra Pradesh increases to 91.61 per cent

MD ILYAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 4

The decrease in Corona positive cases continued on Sunday in AP with the total number of cases during the last 24 hours dropping to 6,242 from an earlier average of 10,000 cases per day. Godavari districts are at the top in number of Covid-19 positive cases, with East Godavari crossing the one-lakh mark and West Godavari being at the second place with total 70,133 positive cases on Sunday.

In all, 7,084 patients have been discharged after getting cured, increasing the recovery rate in the past 24 hours, providing a ray of hope that the spread of Coronavirus is being contained.

The total number of positive cases in the state reached 7,19,256 on Sunday. The number of recoveries is 6,58,875, while there are 54,400 active cases and total 5,981 deaths due to Covid-19.

East Godavari district on Sunday registered 826 positive cases and crossed the one-lakh mark, recording total 1,00,785 positive cases. Both East and West Godavari districts account for 24 percent of state's infection tally. East Godavari itself accounts for 14 percent of cases.

The recovery rate continues to increase with percentage of recovery reaching 91.61, the statewide total recoveries being 6,58,875.

As many as 40 new Corona deaths have been registered in the past 24 hours. The highest number of six deaths have been registered in Krishna district, followed by five each in Anantapur and Chittoor, four each in East Godavari, Guntur and Nellore, three each in Prakasam and Visakhapatnam, two each in Srikakulam and West Godavari, and one each in Vizianagaram and Kurnool districts.

As many as 72,811 Corona tests have been conducted in the past 24 hours, with 6,242 of them turning out to be positive.

AP has tested a total of 60,94,206 samples for Covid-19 till date and is in top place in the country in number of Coronavirus tests conducted.

As many as 7,084 patients have recovered from Corona in the past 24 hours and have been discharged from various hospitals in the state.

The single day highest number of 863 Corona positive cases has been registered in Chittoor district in the past 24 hours, increasing the total to 65,361 in which 6,310 are



A health worker is conducting swab test physically-challenged girl in Covid-19 pandemic at IGM Stadium in Vijayawada on Sunday.

—DC

Covid expert cautions people to be ever vigilant

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 4

The gradual decline in Covid-19 positive cases in the last few days is giving relief to the state administration and medical fraternity. Around, 60,000-65,000 tests are being conducted on an average in a day.

Covid Command Control Special Officer Dr C Prabhakara Reddy said that though the numbers are reducing, one should continue to take precautionary measures to contain the spread of virus.

Dr Prabhakara Reddy said that if this trend continues for some more days, there is optimism that the situation will be under control by the end

active cases.

The second highest number of 853 Corona positive cases have been registered in West Godavari district, increasing the total to 70,133 in which 6,706 are active cases. East Godavari district is in the third place, registering 826 new positive cases, increasing the total positive cases to 1,00,785 in which 9,165 are active cases.

Prakasam district registered 582 new Corona positive cases in the past 24 hours, increasing the total positive cases to 50,901 in which 5,631 are active cases. 562 new cases have been registered in Guntur district, increasing the total positive cases to

● **DR PRABHAKAR Reddy further said that Hyderabad-headquartered Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) had identified that the virus is recurrent and even those who have recovered have to be on alert.**

of this month.

He stated that deaths have reduced by almost 50 per cent.

He called upon youngsters to be particularly cautious in this regard and feel the responsibility to contain corona by following Covid-19 protocol.

He said that positive cases are coming down while there is an increase in tests and contact tracing.

Dr Prabhakara Reddy further said that Hyderabad-headquartered Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) had identified that the virus is recurrent and even those who have recovered have to be on alert.

He said that earlier districts like Krishna Kurnool and Guntur were reporting more number of positive cases.

However, in recent times, except East and West Godavari districts, the other districts are reporting less than 500 positive cases on an average every day.

Visakhapatnam district, increasing the total positive cases to 51,049 in which 3,237 are active cases.

In Vizianagaram district, 221 new cases have been registered in the past 24 hours, taking the total positive cases to 36,123 in which 2,435 are active cases. 220 new cases have been registered in Kurnool district, increasing the total positive cases to 57,072 in which 1,815 are active cases.

The least number of 192 new Corona positive cases in the past 24 hours have been registered in Srikakulam district, increasing the total positive cases to 40,509 in which 3,120 are active cases.

Girl claims she stabbed man who tried to rape her

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, OCT. 4

A minor girl from a remote village under Peddakurappalli panchayat in Ramasamudram mandal of Chittoor district has told police that she survived a rape attempt, thanks to a sickle she had with her.

Circle inspector Madhusudhan Reddy said the girl informed police that she and her sister were grazing sheep in the nearby forest area when a person they identified as Shankar, 45, grabbed her from behind, dragged her into bushes and tried to rape her.

● **THE GIRL informed police that she and her sister were grazing sheep in the nearby forest area when a person they identified as Shankar, 45, grabbed her from behind, dragged her into bushes and tried to rape her.**

“The girl claimed that she then hit the man with the sickle that she was carrying to cut grass, after which he let her go. She then went and complained to her parents in the village. Parents there-

after lodged a complaint with Ramasamudram police, who have registered a case,” the inspector said.

However, the accused rapist has also registered a case against the minor girl and her family members for attacking and inflicting severe injuries on him.

“Accused Shankar claims that the minor girl's family and he have a long-pending dispute over farmlands in their village. We are thoroughly investigating the matter to verify the facts,” CI Madhusudhan Reddy said, adding that they are awaiting medical reports to proceed further into the case.

Some localities in Kurnool city getting contaminated water

DC CORRESPONDENT KURNOOL, OCT. 4

With drinking water pipelines getting mixed up damaged drain pipes, some colonies of Kurnool city are getting contaminated water since the past few days.

The problem is acute in Lakshmi Nagar and Bilal Masjid areas. Officials of the municipality's engineering department say they are trying to fix the issue.

Adding to the problem is sewage water overflowing onto the roads in the city, mostly due to monsoon rains. This problem is an annual feature.

V. Venkateswarlu, a resident of Lakshmi Nagar, said in Ward 24 opposite the Bilal Masjid, municipal water being supplied is contaminated. It is emitting a foul smell. “We are unable to use the water for cooking. If we use bore water, the fluoride content in it is very high. Despite several reminders, municipal authorities have not yet fixed the problem,” Venkateswarlu com-



● **DESPITE SEVERAL reminders, municipal authorities have not yet fixed the problem**

plained. He said the civic body should at least deploy water tankers to supply drinking water in the area.

When contacted, Kurnool MLA Hafeez Khan said he has got in touch with officials concerned to fix the issue on a priority basis.

Kurnool Municipal Corporation commissioner D. K. Balaji could not be contacted as he is down with Coronavirus.

MENTALLY ILL WOMAN KILLS HER NEPHEW

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 4

A mentally challenged woman killed an eight-year-old boy at Lingamguntla village in Chilakaluripet mandal of Guntur district on Sunday.

Chilakaluripeta sub-inspector G. Bhaskar identified the woman as Sk Asia. The victim was Karimulla, her elder sister Fatima's son.

Fatima, residing at Narasaraopet, was going to Chiralla in Prakasam district with relatives and left Karimulla at Asia's house.

There were screams from the house when Asia started attacking Karimulla on Sunday. Locals rushed and tried to rescue the boy. But the woman also attacked the locals with knives. They informed police who rushed to the spot. By then the boy was already dead.

Police have taken Asia into custody and shifted her to the Government General Hospital in Guntur. The boy's body has been taken to Chilakaluripeta hospital for autopsy. A case is registered and investigation is on.

Fake VPT website cheats many unemployed youth

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 4

Cyber crooks have posted a recruitment notification on a fake website of Visakhapatnam Port Trust (VPT) and cheated numerous unemployed youth. It is not yet known how many aspirants applied for the posts, though the application fee for trainee engineers was ₹1,200.

The official website of VPT is www.vizagport.com, whereas cyber criminals put out the employment notification on the website www.visakhapatnamport.com.

The notification announced that recruitment is being conducted for posts of trainee engineers and diploma trainee posts.

The fake website mentioned that educational qualifications for trainee engineers must B.Tech (Fresher) in mechanical, electrical, mechatronics,

● **Officials of the VPT got to know of the fake website on Saturday night when they received phone calls from some people inquiring about the recruitment.**

● **VPT joint director K. Rajendra Kumar clarified the port trust has not issued any recruitment notification.**

metallurgy, instrumentation, civil or chemical engineering. The basic salary was advertised as ₹80,000. The education qualification for diploma trainee posts was a diploma in polytechnic.

Fraudsters asked candidates to fill the application online and pay an application fee of ₹1,200

for trainee engineer posts and ₹1,000 for diploma trainee posts through the UPI payment mode.

Officials of the VPT got to know of the fake website on Saturday night when they received phone calls from some people inquiring about the recruitment.

VPT joint director K. Rajendra Kumar clarified the port trust has not issued any recruitment notification. Unknown persons have created the fake website only to cheat the gullible in the form of application fee.

VPT has lodged a formal complaint with police seeking investigation into the incident.

An official of Cybercrimes police station in Vizag said they will examine the complaint and ascertain the number of victims before taking action against the accused.

Leaders hail gentleman politician

From page 1

On Sunday, moments after minister Srinivasa Rao instructed the medical officers at the corporate hospital, Srinivas died at 3.30 pm.

Dronamraju Srinivas was born on February 1, 1961. He served as the district youth Congress secretary from 1987-89 and later became the vice-president of the District

Congress Committee and served in that position till 2000.

He served as the president of DCC from 2001 till he was elected as MLA in the by-elections held in 2006 after the death of his father Dronamraju Satyanarayana. He was re-elected in 2009.

He joined YSR Congress on the eve of general elections last year but lost to sitting Telugu Desam

MLA Vasupalle Ganesh Kumar.

However, Jagan Mohan Reddy, who has immense respect for the family, made him chairman of VMRDA for a period of one year which ended last month.

Leaders, irrespective of political affiliations, condoned his death. Many called him a ‘gentleman politician’ of Andhra Pradesh.



Dronamraju Srinivas

HIGHWAY ROBBERY CCTV footages showed gang breaking the door locks of the container

2 of Kanjarbhat gang held, 913 phones recovered

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 4

Guntur urban police on Sunday arrested two persons belonging to the notorious Kanjarbhat gang in a Madhya Pradesh village and seized 913 cell phones, ₹4.5 lakh cash, cutters and a vehicle.

The arrested are Ravi Janjhan and Sharukh Khan.

Seven more members of the gang are still at large. The gang had stolen 960 mobile phones from a container lorry.

Guntur urban SP R.N. Ammi Reddy, addressing a press meet at Guntur, said that the gang had robbed mobile phones

from a moving container near Kaza toll gate on Vijayawada-Chennai National Highway-16 on September 16. The police found the involvement of notorious Kanjarbhat gang in the robbery during their investigation and sent a team to Madhya Pradesh for further inquiry. The team arrested the duo and seized the booty from Dewas village.

The container carrying 13,760 mobile phones from Raising Star Mobile India Private Limited in Sri City of Vedayapalem in Nellore district was on its way to deliver the cargo to Gionee Technologies India Private Limited in Kolkata.

The nine-member Kanjarbhat gang trailed the vehicle and entered into the container by opening the back door with cutters while it was speeding down the NH-16 towards Kolkata.

Another vehicle driver who saw the gang at work alerted the driver of mobile phones-laden container. The driver immediately stopped by the road-side near Kaza, tried to resist the gang's robbery attempt. But they threatened him at knife point and left the spot with 960 mobile phones.

The SP said that two special teams headed by Guntur South DSP M. Kamalakar Rao and Nallapadu circle inspec-



tor K Veeraswami were formed to crack the case. The police first checked the CCTV footages on the NH-16 and found the gang following the container and breaking the back

door locks with huge cutters while on the move.

The SP said that after stealing the mobiles the members of the gang, experts in driving at top speed, swiftly returned to

their village.

He said that the police team camped for 15 days in Madhya Pradesh and came to know about the gang's involvement in similar robberies.

Guntur urban SP RN Ammi Reddy addressing media on busting the mobile carrying container robbery case at Guntur district police office Guntur city on Sunday.

TD LEADER REQUESTS FOR CROP LOSS ESTIMATES

DC CORRESPONDENT KADAPA, OCT. 4

TD senior leader Bhumireddy Rangopal Reddy said that it was unfortunate that crop damage estimates for last month's rains in several mandals of Pulivendula constituency had not yet started.

Hundreds of acres of crops were damaged in Simhadripuram, Tondur, Vemula and Vempalli mandals under Pulivendula assembly constituency due to heavy rains on September 18 and 19 last month. He also said that the current rabi work was hampered by the clearing of fields and mounds of soil. He asked CM to direct the authorities to calculate the crop loss in their respective constituencies.

SHORT TAKES

BJD MLA PRADEEP MAHARATHY DIES OF CORONAVIRUS

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, OCT. 4

Former minister and Biju Janata Dal (BJD) MLA from Pipili Pradeep Maharathy passed away on Saturday night. He was 65 and is survived by his wife, son and daughter. On September 14, the BJD leader had tested positive for Covid-19 and was undergoing treatment ever since.

Born on July 4, 1955, Maharathy was one of the towering non-Congress leaders in Odisha. Considered a close confidante of former chief minister Biju Patnaik, Maharathy began his career from student politics. He was elected as secretary, Morning College, Puri, and latter as president of SCS College, Puri. In the 1975 Emergency, he was arrested under Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA).

Known for his good sense of humour, the leader always projected him as a farmer. He always chose to raise the voice of common people both in and outside the state Assembly.

BJP MP WARNS OF ‘GUERRILLA’ STYLE RALLY IN WB

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, OCT. 4

In what may trigger controversy, BJP MP of Barrackpore Arjun Singh has threatened the Mamata Banerjee government of a “guerrilla” style rally by the saffron party which will “shake” the state secretariat Nabanna in Howrah on October 8. He also warned the Trinamul Congress that “no obstacles” would be accepted by the BJP workers in its mission.

To corner the TMC ahead of the Assembly elections in the state, the BJP Yuva Morcha has called the ‘*Nabanna Chalo Abhijan*’ on seven issues — corruption in the SSC/TET recruitments, fair recruitment process, jobs to the unemployed, increase in age limit to appear for the examination, making the Public Service Commission free of corruption, bribery for jobs and jobs instead of allowance to the unemployed. The state secretariat houses the Chief Minister’s office alongwith those of several Cabinet ministers and top bureaucrats.

RHEA SHOULD BE RELEASED, SAYS ADHIR

Kolkata, Oct. 4: A day after a panel of doctors at AIIMS in Delhi ruled out murder as the cause of Sushant Singh Rajput’s death, leader of the Congress in Lok Sabha, Adhir Choudhury, on Sunday demanded that the actor’s girlfriend Rhea Chakraborty be released forthwith without further harassment.

Choudhury, who had said in the past that Chakraborty was being “falsely implicated” following her arrest in connection with a drug probe linked to Rajput’s death, claimed on Twitter that she was a victim of a “political conspiracy”.

“Now the BJP propaganda machinery may accuse the forensic team of AIIMS who has nullified the allegation that Rhea Chakraborty conspired to kill Sushant Singh Rajput,” the state Congress chief tweeted.

“We are all pained by the expiry of Sushant ji but he cannot be honoured by falsely implicating a lady as an accused, I have earlier said that Rhea Chakraborty was an innocent lady, she should be released without further harassment to her, she has been the victim of Political conspiracy (sic),” he added.

Farmers burn paddy stubble



A farmer burns paddy stubble at a farm on the outskirts of Amritsar on Sunday. The pollution and smokey haze around the adjoining states of Punjab and Haryana, especially New Delhi has been linked with stubble burning and is said to be a contributing factor for increasing air pollution.

— PTI

ISI may take advantage of Punjab farmer strike: Intel

Reports suggest that Pak agency is trying to take advantage of farmers stir

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, OCT. 4

Central intelligence and security agencies are closely monitoring the situation in Punjab as they feel Pakistan’s intelligence agency, Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) is desperate to take advantage of the ongoing farmers’ agitation in the state and wants to open a new front in Punjab after Kashmir.

The situation in Punjab remains tense as farmers are protesting against the recent farm Bills

cleared by the Centre.

Intelligence sources claimed that they were in constant touch with the state authorities to monitor the situation as reports suggest that ISI would use the agitation to revive militancy in the state. Similar attempts were also made in recent months when weapons were dropped close to the border using drones from Pakistan for subversive elements in Punjab.

Following this, security was increased considerably along the Indo-Pak

● **INTELLIGENCE SOURCES** claim that they were in constant touch with the state authorities to monitor the situation as reports suggest that ISI would use the agitation to revive militancy in the state.

border both by the BSF and the Punjab Police. Killing some religious and political leaders in the last few months was also seen as a desperate attempt to revive militancy in Punjab.

But now the intelligence and security agencies are extremely skeptical that in view of the ongoing agitation, the security situation might be compromised.

“In the past we have seen that ISI always tries to take advantage of such a situation. They made attempts in Kashmir Valley also following the abrogation of Article 370 but our security agencies did not let them succeed. Even in Punjab we will ensure that attempts by ISI to reactivate terror activi-

ties will fail completely,” a senior security official said.

Following close coordination between Central and state security agencies, patrolling and surveillance in some sensitive areas, particularly along the border, have been increased substantially. As a preventive measure, the intelligence units in all districts have been activated in order to ensure that no untoward incidents take place in the wake of the agitation by farmers in Punjab.

GURUNG CAMP BUILDS RAPPORT WITH BJP

From page 1

Mr Tamang was in the good books of the TMC for his pro-government stand.

Meanwhile, Mr Gurung and his camp built rapport with the BJP. His lieutenant, Roshan Giri, informed that their representative would attend the meeting. It is, however, not clear whether anyone from the state government or GTA would attend the meeting.

State tourism minister Goutam Deb alleged, “BJP is conspiring to divide Bengal. We will not allow this. We will foil this.” Rejecting his claim, state BJP general secretary Savantan Basu made it clear that the saffron party is against the division of the state but it wants a “permanent solution” to the issue.

● **STATE TOURISM minister Goutam Deb** alleges that the BJP is conspiring to divide Bengal and says that they will not allow this and will foil the attempt.

Plans to vaccinate 25 crore people by July 2021: Minister

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, OCT. 4

Union health minister Dr Harsh Vardhan on Sunday said the government plans to vaccinate about 25 crore people against the Coronavirus by July next year.

He said priority would be given to health workers engaged in Covid-19 management in getting inoculated and asserted the Centre would ensure fair and equitable distribution of vaccines, once they are ready. The health ministry has asked states to submit a list of priority groups by October end, particularly the health workers, who will receive vaccine shots.

The Centre estimates to receive 40-50 crore doses of the vaccine.

During an interaction on social media platforms, Dr

Vardhan said vaccine procurement would be done centrally with each consignment tracked real-time until delivery to ensure it reaches those who need it the most and there is no black-marketing. The list of frontline health workers will include both government as well as private-sector doctors, nurses, paramedics, sanitary staff, ASHA workers, surveillance officers and many other occupational categories who are involved in tracing, testing and treatment of patients.

“The Centre is also working on plans for building capacities in human resources, training, supervision and others on a massive scale and roughly estimates to receive and utilise 40-50 crore doses covering approximately 20-25 crore people by July 2021. All this is under various stages of finalisation,” he said.

India, China to hold 7th round of talks on Oct. 12

PAWAN BALI | DC NEW DELHI, OCT. 4

India and China will hold the seventh round of Corps Commanders-level talks on October 12 to discuss measures to disengage their armies at the line of actual control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh where both countries are engaged in 150 days of military stand-off.

The talks are being held when some high peaks at Ladakh have already seen some initial snowfall and winter has started to set in. Both sides are prepared to keep their armies at these high altitude mountains during winters when tempera-

tures dip to below zero degrees and bone-chilling wind make survival extremely difficult.

This will be the last meeting under 14 Corps Commander Lt Gen Harinder Singh, who is to take charge as Commandant of the Indian Military Academy (IMA) later this month after completing his one-year tenure.

Lt Gen PGK Menon, who will be the new 14 Corps Commander, will also take part in the Oct. 12 meeting. Representative from the ministry of external affairs, joint secretary (East Asia) Naveen Srivastava is also expected to attend the meeting.

Shooter Shreyasi Singh joins BJP

New Delhi, Oct. 4: Commonwealth Games gold medallist shooter Shreyasi Singh, whose father Digvijay Singh was a seasoned socialist leader from Bihar, joined the Bharatiya Janata Party on Sunday and may fight the state Assembly elections.

She joined the BJP at the party headquarters here in the presence of its general secretaries Bhupender Yadav, who is in charge of its Bihar affairs, and Arun Singh.

She later met party president J.P. Nadda. The 29-year-old Arjuna Awardee, who won a gold medal in the 2018 Commonwealth Games in Gold Coast, is likely to be fielded by the BJP in the Assembly polls.

Her father was elected to

Lok Sabha several times from Banka and had also served as a member of Rajya Sabha. His wife Putul Singh also represented Banka as an independent in Lok Sabha following his death in 2010.

She later joined the BJP but was expelled from the saffron party during the Lok Sabha polls last year after she filed her nomination as an independent from Banka as the seat was allocated to the JD(U).

A Union minister in the Chandra Shekhar and Atal Bihari Vajpayee governments, Digvijay Singh was with Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar for a few years before they fell out and he snapped his political association with him.

— PTI

GET WELL SOON: SHIV SENA TO KANGANA

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC MUMBAI, OCT. 4

Following the AIIMS report confirming Sushant Singh Rajput’s death as a suicide, Shiv Sena has taken potshots at actress Kangana Ranaut asking her to get mentally better for coming up with vile conspiracy and vulture theories. Without naming her, the party said those abused Mumbai police and cast aspersions on their credibility should apologise to them unconditionally.

“After the AIIMS report, shouldn’t all those who were gunning for Mumbai Police, abusing them, casting aspersions on their credibility offer them an unconditional apology? All those who came up with their vile conspiracy & vulture theories should really try to get mentally better soon,” tweeted Sena leader Priyanka Chaturvedi on Sunday.

The AIIMS forensic panel has ruled out a murder claim in the Sushant Singh death case, dismissing the theories of poisoning and strangling.

100% ELECTRIFIED RAIL TRANSPORT SYSTEM BY 2023

Kolkata, Oct. 4: The Railways has embarked on a massive electrification drive and by 2023, the country will have the world’s largest 100 per cent clean energy-driven rail transport system, Union minister Piyush Goyal said on Sunday.

The railway minister also said that work is underway to set up an infrastructure for generating 20,000 megawatt of renewable energy, which will provide power for running the entire network. “By 2023, the Indian Railways will be the world’s largest 100 per cent electrified rail transport system,” Goyal said at the inauguration of an underground station of the citys East-West Metro corridor.

He contended that “no other part of the world, not even the most-developed country”, has launched such an ambitious project. The entire world is watching India’s massive thrust towards environment-friendly modes of transport, he said adding that the project is a crucial part of the Union government’s initiatives to build a green nation. Asserting that the country is marching ahead in the direction of self-reliance, he said that the railways has become almost 98 per cent indigenous equipment procurer.

— PTI

HATHRAS | CASE | Pehalvan’s son blames victim’s family, claims they keep ‘changing their stand’

Meeting at ex-BJP MLA’s house defends accused

Lucknow/Hathras, Oct. 4: Scores of people held a meeting on Sunday outside the house of a former BJP MLA in Hathras where they defended the accused in the alleged gangrape of a Dalit woman who later died, and demanded registration of an FIR against her family members.

Heavy police force was deployed in the vicinity of the residence of former BJP MLA Rajvir Singh Pehalvan, located around 8-9 kilometres from the vic-

tim’s village. One of the organisers of the meeting and Pehalvan’s son Manveer Singh denied that the gathering comprised members from the upper castes and said they were from “different sections of society”. “We welcome the CBI inquiry ordered by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. We have faith in the investigation,” Singh said while claiming that the victim’s family members were “changing their stand”. “The entire

scenario has been created to blame the government. The accused persons are in favour of any type of inquiry. But the victims are changing their stand every now and then. They do not want a narco test or a CBI probe. Now they want other kinds of inquiries,” he claimed.

He said an FIR should be registered by police against the complainants in the case. “Our demand is that a case should be filed against those people who had filed

the case in the first instance,” he said.

The 19-year-old Dalit woman was allegedly raped by four upper caste men in Hathras on September 14. She died on September 29 at Delhi’s Safdarjung Hospital. Singh also said various legal options were being explored to defend the accused in the case. He asserted that the arrest of some of the accused persons from their homes was proof of their innocence.

— PTI

AZAD CHIEF SEEKS Y-PLUS SECURITY FOR VICTIM’S FAMILY MEMBERS

Hathras, Oct. 4: Bhim Army chief Chandrasekhhar Azad on Sunday visited the family of Hathras gangrape and murder victim and demanded government to allocate Y-plus security cover to them.

He also demanded that the government order an investigation into case

under the supervision of a retired Supreme Court judge.

Speaking to ANI, he said, “I demand Y security for the family or I’ll take them to my house as they aren’t safe here. We want an inquiry to be done under the supervision of a retired Supreme Court judge.”

— Agencies



IN BRIEF

Shooting: Police officer killed

Myrtle Beach (US): A South Carolina police chief announced early Sunday the death of an officer following a shooting in Myrtle Beach. Officer Jacob Hancher was killed while responding to a call for service late Saturday, Myrtle Beach Chief Amy Prock said at a news conference. It's unclear what led up to the shooting, but witnesses told *The Sun News* they heard several shots around 10 p.m. Police had said on social media that an officer involved shooting had occurred around that time. The South Carolina Law Enforcement Division has been called in to investigate, news outlets reported. Hancher was a community service officer for four years and had been a police officer for less than a year, Prock said.

3 blow up ATM in restaurant

Philadelphia: Three men blew up an ATM in a Chinese take-out restaurant in Philadelphia while the establishment was still open but were unable to get any cash, police said. The men entered the Golden Chinese/American takeout restaurant in northwest Philadelphia shortly after 9 pm Friday and ordered food, police said. They then placed some kind of explosive device which damaged the ATM and the window and knocked items off shelves behind the counter, police said. The three went back into the establishment but were unable to remove the cash box that was still inside the damaged ATM, police said. The three then fled, one on a bicycle and the other two on foot. Police were searching for suspects and no arrests were immediately reported.

New Caledonia votes to be free

Noumea (New Caledonia): Voters in New Caledonia turned out in large numbers on Sunday to decide whether the archipelago in the South Pacific should get independence from France and break ties that were first established in the mid-19th century. Sunday's independence referendum is part of a three-decade decolonisation effort aimed at settling tensions on the archipelago between native Kanaks seeking independence and residents willing to remain in France. More than 180,000 voters were invited to answer the question: "Do you want New Caledonia to gain full sovereignty and become independent?" "Today is not a day like any other. Everyone woke up with the will to express oneself (through the vote). This is a historic day," Robert Wayaridri, 60, said. In Noumea, the capital, large lines of people waited to vote under the hot sun, sometimes for hours. Almost 80% of voters had already casted their ballots one hour before poll stations closed, according to the French ministry of the Overseas.

XI FOR CLOSER TIES WITH BANGLADESH

Beijing, Oct. 4: Chinese President Xi Jinping said he stands ready with Bangladesh leaders to better align the two countries' strategies and jointly promote the construction of his multi-billion dollar Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to take the strategic partnership of the two countries to new heights. Xi made the remarks in an exchange of congratulatory messages with his Bangladesh counterpart, Mohammad Abdul Hamid, on the 45th anniversary of the establishment of the bilateral diplomatic ties. Xi hailed the steady and long-term friendship saying he is ready to work with Hamid to better align development strategies with Bangladesh, step up cooperation under the framework of the BRI and push forward the China-Bangladesh strategic, cooperative partnership to a new level, official media reported. With over \$26 billion Chinese investments and \$38 billion funding commitments, Bangladesh is one of the largest recipients of China's infrastructure project. China has also offered zero-tariff treatment to 97 per cent of Bangladesh's exports by adding 5,161 more items to the existing list of 3,095 duty-free products. The BRI seeks to build rail, maritime and road links from Asia to Europe and Africa in a revival of ancient Silk Road trading routes.

Trump's condition was far worse than made public

Starting to feel good, says Don

Washington, Oct. 4: US President Donald Trump's condition on Friday after testing positive for the Coronavirus was far worse than was publicly acknowledged, White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows said late Saturday.

"He's made unbelievable improvements from yesterday morning, when I know a number of us, the doctor and I, were very concerned," Meadows told *Fox News* in an interview. "I can tell you this the biggest thing we see is with no fever now, and with him doing really well with his oxygen saturation levels," he adds. "Yesterday morning we were really concerned by that. He had a fever, and his oxygen level had dropped rapidly. Yet in typical style, this president was up and walking around."

Meadows said there was never a risk Trump would have to hand over power to US Vice President Mike Pence, after a day of conflicting reports and confusion over the American leader's actual fitness.

His comments echoed remarks by White House doctor Sean Conley, who

Washington, Oct. 4: President Donald Trump, who was admitted to a military hospital for treatment of Covid-19, said he has started to "feel much better" and thanked the American people and global leaders for their support. "I came here. Wasn't feeling so well. I feel much better now. We're working hard to get me all the way back. I have to be back because we still have to Make America Great Again," Trump said in a video message from the military hospital in a suburb of Washington on Saturday. However, White House physician Sean

Conley has said the president is "not yet out of the woods". "While not yet out of the woods, the team remains cautiously optimistic," Dr Conley said, adding that the plan for Sunday is to continue observation in between doses of Remdesivir, closely monitoring his clinical status while fully supporting his conduct of presidential duties.

Conley, in a memorandum, said the President had received Regeron's antibody cocktail on October 2. "President Trump continues to do well, having made substantial progress since diagnosis," Conley said. — *PTI*

said Trump had "made substantial progress since diagnosis, and remained 'fever-free and off supplemental oxygen.'" Conley was evasive when asked earlier whether the Presi-

dent had received supplementary oxygen at any point since falling ill, only confirming that he hadn't received any at the hospital or on Thursday — the day of his test. — *AFP*

PREZ DIAGNOSIS: U.S. VULNERABLE TO CORONAVIRUS

St Charles (US), Oct. 4: President Donald Trump's startling Covid-19 diagnosis serves as a cruel reminder of the pervasive spread of the Coronavirus and shows how tenuous of a grip the nation has on the crisis, health experts said. With US infections rising for several weeks, Trump became one of the tens of thousands of Americans who test positive each day. He went through a "very concerning" period Friday and the next 48 hours "will be critical" in his care, White House chief of staff Mark Meadows said Saturday.

That differed dramatically from the rosy assessment by Trump's staff and doctors, who took pains not to reveal the president had received supplemental oxygen at the White House before he went to a military hospital. Some of Trump's advisers and allies also have tested positive. — *AP*



Azeri protesters tear and burn an Armenia national flag as they take part in a demonstration in Istanbul on Sunday in support of Azerbaijan in the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh. — *AFP*

COURT TO HEAR NAWAZ SPEECH BAN APPEAL

Islamabad, Oct. 4: A Pakistani court will on Monday hear a petition seeking a ban on airing speeches of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif on television channels, days after the top PML-N leader made blistering remarks from London targeting the country's powerful Army.

A citizen, Amir Aziz, filed the petition in the Islamabad High Court (IHC) and made 70-year-old Sharif, his brother Shehbaz Sharif, the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Pemra) chairman and others as respondents, the *Express Tribune* reported.

IHC Chief Justice Athar Minallah fixed October 5 as the date for hearing the petition, the paper said. — *PTI*

Azerbaijan's No. 2 city hit in fighting with Armenia

Baku (Azerbaijan), Oct. 4: The fighting between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces continued on Sunday over the separatist territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, with Azerbaijan's second-largest city coming under attack.

Azerbaijani officials said Sunday that Armenian forces attacked Ganja, the country's second largest city. Hikmet Hajiyev, an aide to the Azerbaijani president, tweeted a video depicting damaged buildings, and called it the result of "Armenia's massive missile attacks against dense residential areas" in Ganja. It wasn't immediately possible to verify the authenticity of the video. Hajiyev said in another tweet that attacks on Ganja and other areas in Azerbaijan were launched "from territory of

Armenia." Armenia's Defence Ministry said that "no fire of any kind is being opened from the territory of Armenia in Azerbaijan's direction."

But Nagorno-Karabakh's leader, Arayik Harutyunyan, confirmed on Facebook he ordered "rocket attacks to neutralize military objects" in Ganja. His spokesman, Vahram Poghosyan, said the territory's army destroyed a military airport in Ganja, a claim Azerbaijani officials denied. The attack on the city killed one civilian and left four others wounded, the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry tweeted. Harutyunyan said he ordered his forces to stop the attacks on Ganja to avoid civilian casualties. Nagorno-Karabakh's leader added that "proportionate and crushing" strikes targeting the

opponent's forces would continue, if Azerbaijan fails "to draw appropriate lessons." The fighting, which broke out on September 27 and has continued for eight straight days, is the biggest escalation in years in the decades-long dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh. The region lies within Azerbaijan, but is controlled by local ethnic Armenian forces backed by Armenia. Both sides said the hostilities have spread beyond the break-away territory and accused each other of attacking areas outside Nagorno-Karabakh.

Ganja, with a population of more than 330,000, is located roughly 100 kilometres (about 60 miles) north of Stepanakert, Nagorno-Karabakh's capital. — *AP*

Bumpy situation till X-mas: Boris

UK records over 10K Covid cases in a day for the first time since mass testing began

London, Oct. 4: Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Sunday warned of a "bumpy" ride at least through to Christmas in December, as the UK recorded more than 10,000 Coronavirus cases in a day for the first time since mass testing for the deadly virus was put in place.

According to official figures, there were 12,872 new cases on Saturday, while a further 49 people have died within 28 days of testing positive for Covid-19. However, the government said a technical issue meant some cases from earlier in the week were not recorded at the time so these were included in Saturday's data. In his interview, the UK PM tried to strike a note of optimism over progress in beating the virus and said he believed over the "next few weeks and months" the "scientific equation will change, whether that is vaccines or testing". "I've got to tell you in all candour it's going to continue to be bumpy through to Christmas, it may even be bumpy beyond," Johnson told the BBC.

"This could be a very tough winter for all of us — we've got to face that fact," he said. While insisting his government was working "flat out" to fight the pandemic, Johnson said he took "full responsibility for everything that has happened since the pandemic began", admitting the National Health Service (NHS) led Test and Trace system was "not perfect". But he said scientific advisers had told him that by spring in March/April 2021 "things will be radically different and we will be in a different world".

Johnson said he understood people's "frustration" at differing rules and restrictions for different parts of the country but stressed that localised lockdowns was the right way to go and wait to see if the R number — of the rate at which the infection is transmitted — comes down as a result. "I'm a freedom-loving Tory. I don't want to have to impose measures like this, are you crazy? This is the last thing we want to do. But I also have to save life. And that's our priority," he said. "And as Prime Minister I couldn't take a course that could expose us to tens of thousands more deaths in very short order...we've got to continue to bear down on this virus, whilst protecting the economy. That's the balance we've got to strike," he added.

The interview this week-end coincides with his Conservative Party's annual conference, being conducted virtually for the first time due to coronavirus restrictions on mass gatherings. The Tories have created a 3D virtual conference with a computer-generated auditorium, foyer and fringe meeting rooms. However, the system has not been smooth-sailing as the virtual platform crashed during a session with UK Cabinet Office minister Michael Gove. — *PTI*

Market capitalism has failed: Pope

Rome, Oct. 4: Pope Francis says the Coronavirus pandemic has proven that the "magic theories" of market capitalism have failed and that the world needs a new type of politics that promotes dialogue and solidarity and rejects war at all costs. Francis on Sunday laid out his vision for a post-Covid world by uniting the core elements of his social teachings into a new encyclical, "Fratelli Tutti" (Brothers All), which was released on the feast day of his namesake, the peace-loving St. Francis of Assisi.

The document draws its inspiration from the teachings of St. Francis and the Pope's previous preaching on the injustices of the global economy and its destruction of the planet and pairs them with his call for greater



Pope Francis

human solidarity to address today's problems. In the encyclical, Francis rejected even the Catholic Church's own doctrine justifying war as a means of legitimate defense, saying it had been too broadly applied over the centuries and was no longer viable. "It is very difficult nowadays to invoke the rational criteria elaborated in earlier centuries to speak of the possibility of a 'just war,'" Francis wrote. — *AP*

Israel environment minister tests +ve

Jerusalem, Oct. 4: A member of Israel's Cabinet has tested positive for the Coronavirus as the country remains under lockdown while battling a second wave of infection.

Gila Gamliel, Israel's environmental protection minister and a member of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party, announced on Twitter Sunday that she had tested positive. She was the fourth minister in Israel's government to test positive for Covid-19 since March. "I feel good and

hope to recover quickly with God's help," she wrote on social media.

The Israeli government imposed a nationwide lockdown on September 18 ahead of the Jewish High Holidays in an effort to rein in a runaway outbreak of the Coronavirus. The country has one of the highest daily infection rates per capita in the world. According to Health Ministry figures, Israel has recorded over 264,000 cases and almost 1,700 deaths since the beginning of the pandemic. — *AP*

annual conference, being conducted virtually for the first time due to coronavirus restrictions on mass gatherings. The Tories have created a 3D virtual conference with a computer-generated auditorium, foyer and fringe meeting rooms. However, the system has not been smooth-sailing as the virtual platform crashed during a session with UK Cabinet Office minister Michael Gove. — *PTI*

Russia reports 10,400 new daily cases

Moscow, Oct. 4: Coronavirus infections in Russia hit a new record on Sunday, with the government reporting over 10,000 new confirmed cases for the first time since mid-May. The 10,499 new cases

reported on Sunday bring the country's total to over 1.2 million. Russia currently has the fourth largest caseload in the world and has so far reported over 21,000 deaths. The Russian authorities insist there are no plans to impose a second lockdown in the country that has lifted most of the virus-related restrictions imposed in the spring.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Friday another lockdown is currently not being discussed in the government. At the same time in Moscow, which reported over 3,000 new cases on Sunday in the biggest surge in months, officials have recommended the elderly to self-isolate at home. — *AP*

Rahman PDM head in Pak

Islamabad, Oct. 4: Firbrand cleric-cum-politician Maulana Fazlur Rahman has been unanimously appointed as the chief of the newly-formed Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), an anti-government alliance launched by 11 Opposition parties to oust Prime Minister Imran Khan. The decision was taken on Saturday during a virtual meeting of the Opposition parties attended by Pakistan Muslim League-

Nawaz (PML-N) supremo and three-time former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Balochistan National Party chief Sardar Akhtar Mengal among other senior politicians.

According to PDM's steering committee convener Ahsan Iqbal, Sharif proposed 67-year-old Rahman's name as the alliance president and it was endorsed by PPP chair-

man Bilawal and others, the *Dawn* newspaper reported. Sharif had initially proposed that Rahman should be appointed as the president on a permanent basis, but the idea was opposed by Bilawal and Awami National Party (ANP) leader Amir Haider Hoti, who suggested that the office should be given on a rotational basis to leaders of the constituent parties, the paper reported, citing sources. — *PTI*

CURBS | LIFTED

Muslims from outside the Kingdom could be allowed to perform pilgrimage from Nov. 1

Pilgrims return to Mecca as Saudi eases virus restrictions

Riyadh, Oct. 4: A very small, limited number of people donning the white terrycloth garment symbolic of the Muslim pilgrimage circled Islam's holiest site in Mecca on Sunday after Saudi Arabia lifted Coronavirus restrictions that had been in place for months.

The kingdom had taken the rare step of suspending the smaller "umrah" pilgrimage that draws millions year-round from across the world in early March as the Coronavirus morphed into a global pandemic and prompted countries to impose lockdowns and curfews to slow down transmission. But as nations begin to ease those restrictions, the Saudi government on Sunday started allowing a maximum of 6,000 pilgrims a day to enter the sprawling Grand Mosque in Mecca.

Only Saudi citizens and residents will be permitted to enter the mosque during this first phase of reopening, and each person has up to three hours to complete the pilgrimage. The Grand Mosque,

which is being sterilised and cleaned multiple times a day, houses the cube-shaped Kaaba that observant Muslims pray toward five times a day. Before visitors can enter the mosque to pray or perform the umrah, they have to apply and reserve a specific time and date through an online application to avoid crowding and maintain social distancing. Visitors can also select via the app their means of transportation and meeting points.

State TV showed on Sunday what appeared to be

fewer than 50 people circling the Kaaba at the same time and walking several metres (feet) apart. Typically, the mosque would be packed with worshippers from around the world crowded shoulder-to-shoulder at all times of the day and night. The second phase for loosening restrictions at the Grand Mosque comes into effect on October 18, allowing a maximum of 15,000 pilgrims and 40,000 for prayer from among residents and citizens based on allocated times via the app.

Muslim travellers from outside Saudi Arabia could be allowed to perform the umrah pilgrimage as early as November 1, the Interior Ministry has said. Saudi Arabia recently began easing some restrictions on international flights for the first time since March. The kingdom held a dramatically downsized, symbolic hajj pilgrimage in July due to concerns that it could easily have become a global super-spreader event for the virus.



Muslims pray around the Kaaba on Sunday. — *AP*

DECCAN Chronicle

5 OCTOBER 2020

Trump Covid +ve: The danger is still very real

America's President Donald Trump testing positive for Covid-19 was a surprise many may have anticipated. There is **rum irony** in dramatic events culminating in his coming down with the Coronavirus just hours after having said that "the end of the pandemic is in sight." At 110 kg, his obesity would itself have placed him among the vulnerable and at the age of 74 he did himself no favours by playing down the threat for months on end while trying to open up the economy so that his prospects as a President seeking re-election would not be affected. Science may admit to no karmic influence handing down penalties like sicknesses but Trump did set himself up as a prime candidate for the omnipresent virus by ignoring most protective protocols like wearing a mask, which he did only on occasion while denigrating those like his opponent Joseph R. Biden for sporting a big mask at their infamous first debate. More significantly, Trump scorned the advice of scientists while imperilling millions of Americans.

A source of comfort even as doctors say he is not yet "out of the woods" is humanity has had considerable experience with this virus for having studied it clinically in over nine months. Treatment protocols are far more advanced than when his friend from across the Atlantic, British PM Boris Johnson, suffered a near-death experience while in ICU last April. Campaigning fiercely while egging his nation on towards normalcy even as millions fell sick and more than 2,09,000 Americans died, Trump was flaunting his bravery while downplaying the threat to the world, dabbling in prophylactic doses of HCQ and even floating the wild idea of injecting patients with bleach. With his opponent also having to quarantine since he was at the debate with Trump, the American election scene has been thrown into total disarray and the presidential race fundamentally altered. And Trump personally does not have the cushion of secretiveness of times past when US Presidents were seriously ill, including Woodrow Wilson in the 1918 pandemic.

The Trump saga serves a dire warning that no one is immune to this insidious threat of a Coronavirus and he is not necessarily more fortunate because he is the leader of a country very advanced in science and possessing most modern healthcare facilities. While Trump is getting the finest treatment possible, including Remdesivir and experimental cocktail of antibodies, most of 35 million patients around the world have had to do with much less while more than a million have died. The number of new cases is growing faster than ever before, not least in India where 80,000 plus cases on Sunday took the people infected past the 65 lakh mark. Good public health practices would still be masks, social distancing and hygiene, long after an effective vaccine is certified and manufactured on a scale proportionate to global population. No greater lesson on the need for humility may have been served to the world, especially in the face of an illness science does not yet fully understand. "Stay safe" is a message worth shouting from rooftops.

No one killed Sushant Rajput

There were no injuries on the body of deceased actor Sushant Singh Rajput other than those of hanging. No marks of a scuffle were present on his person, the AIIMS Forensic Medical Board, in its report submitted to the CBI, stated. This gives the lie to the entire charade enacted by TV channels as well as state governments and police administrations investigating a purported murder and connection to a drug cartel following the death. Rajput's family had earlier accused his former live-in partner, Rhea Chakraborty, of abetting his suicide. This was used by some channels as well as the social media to run a vilification campaign against her. It was notwithstanding the fact that circumstances and evidence are crucial to prove that a person actually instigated another to take their own life. Mens rea cannot be assumed to be ostensibly present but has to be visible and conspicuous, the Supreme Court recently said. For the wrong decision taken by a... man of frail mentality another person cannot be blamed, the Punjab and Haryana High Court in 2018 had said while quashing another case.

Ms Chakraborty and her brother now face a bail hearing in the Bombay high court in an NDPS Act case involving criminal conspiracy and "financing illicit traffic". Last month, the BJP had launched a "Justice for Sushant" campaign for the Bihar Assembly election, now less than a month away. Many believe that the entire show of investigation, and prosecution, accompanied by shrill and nonstop media broadcasts, have been aimed at both entertainment as well as a play at a competitive son-of-the-soil politics, to be rendered irrelevant as soon as the polls end.

Incidentally, the actor's autopsy report from Cooper Hospital mentioned that the ligature knot was present on the back of the neck that ruled out forcible hanging. Why then did some media outlets peddle hearsay, publicise conspiracy theories of a random hospital staffer about fractures and needles? Shouldn't these outlets be named and shamed?

Strangling and poisoning, the two allegations made by the actor's family, finally stand ruled out after the report's publication. The CBI, which has distinguished itself by being assigned, for the first time, to probe what had actually been a suicide, now has little option but to close the case.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

KAUSHIK MITTER
Editor

K. SUDHAKAR
Printer & Publisher

DECCAN CHRONICLE offices are located at:

Hyderabad: 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad - 500 003, Ph: 040-27803930-4; Fax : 040-27805256
Vijayawada: No.C-3 & 4 Patnam, Industrial Estate, Auto Nagar, Vijayawada (A.P.), Ph: 0866-255284/255287; Telefax: 0866-255234
Visakhapatnam: Survey No.1/3A Beach Road, Near Kailasagiri Ropeway, Sector-9 MVP Colony, Visakhapatnam - 530 017 (A.P.), Ph: (0891)-2552333/2552334; Fax: (0891)-2755285
Rajahmundry: Vemagiri, Dhawaleswaram Rd, Rajahmundry, Ph: 0883-2417618/2417208; Telefax: 0883-2417208
Anantapur: Thapovan colony, Bangalore By-Pass Road, Anantapur - 515004, Ph: 08554-276903; Fax: 08554-276904
Karimnagar: Survey No.1341, Vavilalapally Colony, Jagityala Road, Karimnagar - 505 001, Ph: 0878-2228908; Telefax: 0878-2220433
Nellore: Survey No.527/2, Burrampur Village, Venkatchalam (M), Chermudugunta Panchayat, Nellore, Ph: 0861-2348581/82; Telefax: 0861-2348580
Chennai: SP-3 Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, Ph: 044-22254747/ 48/50/51; Advt Fax: 22254765/22254766/42305325
Bengaluru: 5th Floor, BMTC Commercial Complex, 80 Feet Road, Koramangala, Bengaluru-560 095 Ph: 080-43460500; Fax: 080-22960552
Coimbatore: 77, Vivekananda Road, Ramnagar, Coimbatore - 641 009, Ph : 0422 231255
Kochi: No.3-B, 3rd Floor of DD TRADE TOWER, Kalloor-Kadavanthara Road, Ernakulam, Ph: 0484-4039408
Thiruvananthapuram: St Joseph's Press, TC 15/1040, Cotton Hill, Thycoud (PO), Thiruvananthapuram 695 014
Kozhikode: Door No 6/1002 E, First Floor of City Mall, Opp. YMCA, Kannur Road, Kozhikode - 673 001, Fax : 0495 4019 018
 Gram: CHRONICLE Postal registration no: No. H/SD-348/2006-08

Subhani



Democracy's discontent: Is India for the people?

Shikha Mukerjee

I deliberately ignoring the message delivered by spreading discontent reflected in hundreds of small to large, but certainly not mammoth protest meetings, rallies, highway blocks, railway blocks, stone pelting, mostly organised by mass organisations of farmers, workers, dalits and women, the Narendra Modi government on the one hand and the ruling BJP's other poster boy, Yogi Adityanath as Uttar Pradesh chief minister, are taking a calculated risk.

The leadership reflects the BJP's unshakeable confidence in its simple and direct appeal to right-thinking Hindus, who comprise the vast majority of voters in India. The rest don't really count. Other identities, of the farmer, worker, women wanting to be safe, dalits expecting respect and dignity, are apparently so insignificant that they can be dismissed as politically irrelevant, because at the intersection between the BJP on the one hand and the Opposition, distributed across a multitude of political parties including the Congress, the appeal of Hindutva and Narendra Modi's popularity appears to be invincible. As of now, there is no data, no election results, nothing to suggest that the BJP is wrong in its assumption.

The growing international concern that human rights are being trampled in India, that labour rights are being trashed, that the rights of Muslims and other minorities, the marginalised, specifically dalits and women, are being dishonoured clearly means nothing to a sanguine BJP and its government at the Centre and the governments it controls in the states. Even the exit of its oldest ally, the Shiromani Akali Dal, from the BJP-led National Demo-

cratic Alliance over the three farm bills seems not to have disturbed the BJP.

This level of confidence manifesting itself as a supreme disregard or supercilious contempt of people's voices implies that the BJP is absolutely complacent and it believes it represents enough numbers of voters to win intensely competitive elections, including Bihar, in the foreseeable future. What would have been dangerously risky for other political parties seems to be easily disregarded by the BJP. The fact that farmers, which includes the rich landlords and the rest, that is about 80 per cent who are small cultivators, tenant farmers or share croppers, are equally angry and are collectively opposing the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, and the Essential Commodities Amendment Bill, because it strips both the rich and the poor of all protection as sellers and gives buyers infinite freedom to fix the market has cut no ice with the BJP. That farmers in Punjab, in Haryana, in Maharashtra, in some pockets of Uttar Pradesh, in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Kerala and in the rest of India are against the changes in the laws has made no difference to Prime Minister Modi, who tweeted that history had been created.

The BJP has not reacted to the farmer-worker joint call for an all-India shutdown, or bandh, against the farm bills and the three labour codes passed by Parliament — the Industrial Relations Code Bill 2020, the Code on Social Security 2020 and the Occupational Health and Safety Bill 2020. These changes

effectively strip workers in about 80 per cent of units where they are employed from the right to strike, make them work longer hours and deny them overtime. The changes alarmed the International Labour Organisation sufficiently for it to issue a statement saying that the law was in violation of workers' rights which India is promised to uphold.

That there is an intersection between the rural and the urban and there is growing unrest that is impossible to ignore in rural and urban areas would have warned any other ruling party that there is political risk in persisting in dismissing protests by accusing the representative organisations of misleading the masses from which they draw their members and get support. There is mobility between rural and urban labour. The shock to the economy after demonetisation in 2016 sent urban labour back to the villages. The shock of the unplanned, abrupt lockdown of March 24 this year and the distress it triggered sent urban labour back to the villages.

There is no sign that the buildup of unrest, despite the convergence of urban and rural discontent, has reached a critical mass, which is why the BJP and the Narendra Modi government at the Centre are unperturbed. Even though the urban working class is accessing free kitchens run by trade unions, political parties, civil society organisations, and thousands have shifted into street vending as an alternative means of survival, the discontent has oddly and intriguingly bypassed and instead channelised its frustrations and anger against governments at the

state level. This transference of blame indicates that the credibility of the governments run by regional parties in the states, like Trinamul Congress, has sunk to an absolute low. Or that the BJP has succeeded in selling the idea to the masses that it is still their best bet in a very bad situation.

What makes the BJP the best bet for the economically and socially marginalised or vulnerable is that it is the big party, the party with the most power and popular projection via television and social media that is accessible on smartphones in even the most isolated communities in India. There must be something mesmerising about the big party that can reject the articulation of discontent by farmers and labour, magisterially push aside issues like the number of migrants who died en route to their villages, the mismanaged movement of migrants and the government's indifference to the human disaster.

It will take time for dalits and women in rural and urban areas, who are unsafe because powerful predators are being shielded to internalise the meaning and message of Hathras, which is that UP is run by a government that operates outside the limitations set by the principle of the rule of law. Each movement — farmers, labour, dalits, women — represent a set of discontents. By ignoring these representations, the BJP may assert itself as the big party, but it equally clearly signals itself to be an outsider to democratic politics, where the Opposition is not the party that lost in the elections but equally the institutions that represent segments of citizens with identities like peasant, labour, women and dalit. It brings the BJP irrevocably close to ticking all of the boxes that classify a political organisation as fascist — anti-labour, sexist, contemptuous of human rights and all the rest, militant nationalism, obsession with national security and majoritarian politics.

The writer is a senior journalist in Kolkata

LETTERS

CHANGE MINDSETS

The rise in heinous crimes against women, Dalits and minorities is very alarming. Even the PM has expressed his concern. I believe we need a cultural shift, a radical change in mindsets towards humanism, social harmony and the true spirit of universal brotherhood to be promoted in society.

Sri Harsha Gajjarapu
Mandapeta, East Godavari

TEMPLE SALARIES

The AP government must solve the problem of non-payment of salaries and pensions to temple staff immediately on humanitarian grounds (*Temple staff suffers due non-payment of salary, pension, DC, Oct. 4*). It spoils the image of state government. Temple employees not getting salary gives an impression that we are not respecting God in the right manner.

Panchakarla Govardhana Rao
Kankipadu, Krishna district

DAWN OF DARKNESS

Under the leadership of Adityanath there prevails in UP a total darkness. Trying to bring the facts of the brutal murder of the Dalit girl to light is akin to a blind man groping in darkness for a black cat which is not there. Unfortunately, our politicians lose no time in making political capital out of a ghastly incident.

D.S.P. Rao
Kakinada

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

Flood relief on a war-footing in City

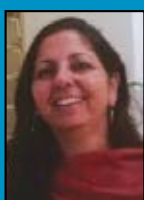
HYDERABAD, October 4
The unprecedented rains and the consequent floods that hit the twin cities last month left a toll of 55 dead and over 4,000 houses damaged says a Government press note.

Rs. 6.4 lakhs was also sanctioned for disbursement among the victims, it was stated.

The torrential rains and consequent floods caused great havoc both in terms of loss of life and damage to property. The Governmental machinery was quick to mitigate the hardship of the flood stricken people by providing food and shelter immediately, followed by clothing and cash etc. The Municipal Corporation, the Collectorate of Hyderabad acting in concert conducted the relief operations with the assistance of the Army, the PWD and CRP.

Anita Katyal

Political Gup-Shup



Tejashwi, Chirag play long game; Hathras wakes up sleepy Mayawati

Lok Janshakti Party's national president Chirag Paswan and Rashtriya Janata Party leader Tejashwi Yadav have been in the news in recent weeks for the same reason: both young leaders were seen driving a hard bargain with their respective alliance partners in the seat-sharing negotiations for the forthcoming Bihar Assembly polls. But the two also have something else in common. According to reports from Patna, young Paswan and Yadav have been in touch with poll strategist Prashant Kishor who has told them that they should not be impatient as their electoral prospects in the coming poll are not very bright. He has instead advised them to bide their time and focus on the 2025 Assembly election by which time they would have added to their experience and attained a degree of gravitas. Realising that there's merit in Kishor's argument, Paswan and Yadav have decided on using this election to build their profile as both see themselves as future chief ministers. This exp-

lains their recent tough posturing.

After losing two allies, the Shiv Sena and the Shiromani Akali Dal, the Bharatiya Janata Party has stepped up efforts to persuade the AIADMK to formalise its entry into the National Democratic Alliance. The AIADMK has one foot in the door already as it has been extending full support to the Narendra Modi government on all major issues. The Southern party has apparently been offered a Cabinet berth to sweeten the deal. Given its brute majority in the Lok Sabha, the BJP actually does not need the crutch of alliance partners. But if the AIADMK comes on board, it will help the BJP correct the public perception that it is arrogant and is driving away its allies. At the same time, the BJP hopes such a development will strengthen its presence in Tamil Nadu as it one of the Southern states where it wants to expand its footprint.

Ever since it stormed to power in 2014 and emerged as the dominant political force in

the country, the Bharatiya Janata Party has adopted a pragmatic approach when it comes to inducting leaders from other political parties. The saffron party has been happy to give them tickets if they have the potential to win an election. Similarly, the party has no problem in inducting these "outsiders" as ministers. There was a time when the BJP drew the line at accommodating them in key party positions but not any more. This was once again evident from the composition of party president J.P. Nadda's new team members. A number of leaders once dubbed "outsiders" like D. Purandeswari, D.K. Aruna, Mukul Roy and Tom Vadakkan were given prominent positions in the party, once the preserve of those who had risen from the ranks and were steeped in the party ideology. Though this has led to a lot of resentment among the loyalists, the party is unconcerned as these appointments have been made with a firm eye on spreading its wings in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and West Bengal, the states

these "newcomers" come from.

With speculation rife that Uttarakhand chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat is on his way out, his rivals in the Bharatiya Janata Party are busy positioning themselves for the top post. State tourism minister Satpal Maharaj is the latest to join the long list of chief ministerial contenders. Satpal Maharaj's ministry has recently hired a private public relations firm ostensibly to promote tourism in the hill state but the fact is that it has been promoting the minister. As a result, Satpal Maharaj's visibility in the press has increased. The minister has also visited Delhi several times in recent weeks despite the coronavirus pandemic as he believes his status as a religious guru gives him an edge over the others. But Satpal Maharaj faces tough in-house competition. Union minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank and BJP media chief Anil Baluni are also in the race and both have a hotline to the leadership.

The outrage over the Hathras tragedy finally pushed the otherwise somnolent Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati to put out a statement demanding the dismissal of the Yogi government in Uttar Pradesh. This is a change from the recent past when Mayawati was virtually invisible and refrained from attacking the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Yogi government. Her periodic outbursts were instead directed at the Congress, especially its general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra who has made a conscious effort to woo the Dalits in Uttar Pradesh, the BSP's support base. On her part, Priyanka makes it a point to visit victims of violence, particularly dalits, while tweeting regularly on the law and order situation in Uttar Pradesh. Realising that she could end up losing the perception war and the loyalty of her core voter, Mayawati finally roused herself to take on Yogi Adityanath.

Anita Katyal is a Delhi-based journalist

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
aSensex	38,697.05	1.65
Nifty 50	11,416.95	1.51
S&P 500*	3,348.44	-0.96
Dollar (₹)	73.15	0.83
Pound Sterling (₹)	94.15	0.50
Euro (₹)	85.81	0.79
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	51,389▼37	0.07
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	39.27	0.00
IN 10-Yr bond yield	0.704	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.692	0.015

* As of 9:30 PM IST

FPIs pull out ₹7,780 cr from stocks in Sept.

Snapping their three-month buying spree, overseas investors turned net sellers in Indian markets in September, withdrawing Rs 3,419 crore on net basis, due to uncertainty ahead of the US presidential polls and surging coronavirus cases. Foreign portfolio investors withdrew a net Rs 7,783 crore from equities while the debt segment saw inflows of Rs 4,364 crore. FPIs had been net buyers in India in the three months to August. .

China's Jingye shows interest in Tata Steel UK



Chinese steelmaker Jingye Group Co is exploring a takeover of the UK's biggest steel producer, Tata Steel Ltd, Sky News reported, citing unidentified banking sources. The firm, which took over British Steel earlier this year, has expressed a "tentative" interest to Tata Group as well as the UK government, but has failed to make substantial progress so far. There is no formal sale process at this stage, Sky said.

Tagoor Labs to produce favipiravir

Hyderabad-based Tagoor Laboratories said it has received licence from the drugs controller to manufacture favipiravir. The company said it is planning to enhance its production capabilities. Dr. P. Kasi Viswanadha Raju, managing director, said his company is aiming to manufacture favipiravir in quantities sufficient to meet the growing domestic demand. Favipiravir is a broad spectrum anti-viral agent.

Dassault, Shiv Nadar varsity set up research unit

Software industry major Dassault Systemes has established a research centre in collaboration with Shiv Nadar University in Uttar Pradesh's Greater Noida. The Shiv Nadar University-Dassault Systemes Centre of Excellence (SDC) is for research, innovation, design and entrepreneurship, and is also aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of multidisciplinary education, the varsity said in a statement.



■ Saudi Arabia's pre-budget estimates Oil seen hovering around \$50 till '23

ABEER ABU OMAR & MATTHEW MARTIN OCT. 4

Saudi Arabia's finance ministry seems to think that oil prices will stay around \$50 a barrel for at least the next three years. That's according to Goldman Sachs Group Inc's analysis of the kingdom's pre-budget statement released on September 30.

"Using our own estimates for the breakdown of government revenues, we calculate that the numbers presented in the budget statement are based on an average oil price of around \$50 a barrel between 2020 and 2023," said Farouk Soussa, a London-based analyst at Goldman.

Brent crude fell 6.3 per cent to \$39.27 a barrel last week as more countries tightened restrictions to counter the coronavirus pandemic and US president Donald Trump got infected, causing traders to fret about the outlook for energy demand.

While oil at \$50 would represent a 25 per cent rise from current prices, it would still be far below the pre-pandemic level of around \$65 and less than Saudi Arabia needs to balance its budget.

Goldman's calculations are roughly in line with those of Cairo-based investment bank EFG Hermes, which said Saudi Arabia is basing next year's budget on an oil price of \$50 to \$55. Goldman is itself more



CHEVRON NIGERIA TO CUT 25% WORKFORCE RUTH OLUROUNBI & CHUKWUDI EJIMOFOR OCT. 4

Nigeria's Chevron unit said it plans to cut 25 per cent of its workforce to become more efficient and reduce operating costs, the latest sign demand for global oil is wobbling under coronavirus and new restrictions to contain it. "The aim is to have a business that is competitive and an appropriate-

ly-sized organisation," a company statement said. "We must make the necessary adjustments in light of the prevailing business climate."

The International Energy Agency last month trimmed its forecasts for fuel consumption for the rest of the year, warning th't the global oil market was increasingly "fragile" as new outbreaks of coronavirus derail the recovery.

projections. The finance ministry didn't immediately respond to a request for comment on Sunday. Saudi Arabia would need oil to trade at \$66 to balance its budget in 2021, according to estimates from the International Monetary Fund.

Saudi Arabia's caution on prices comes as oil giants including BP Plc and Total SE predict the era of growing global demand for energy is over or coming to an end barely a decade from now.

RRBs incur net ₹2,200-cr loss

Mumbai, Oct. 4: Regional rural banks (RRBs) as a group reported net loss of Rs 2,206 crore in the fiscal year ended March 31, 2020, as against Rs 652-crore net loss in FY19, according to data published by Nabard. During FY2019-20, 26 RRBs earned profit of Rs 2,203 crore, while 19 incurred losses of Rs 4,409 crore, the data showed.

The data on RRBs, recently published by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Nabard), is based on the data uploaded by the RRBs in the Ensure portal. As on March 31, 2020, there were 45 RRBs working in 685 districts of 26 states and three union territories. These RRBs were sponsored by 15 commercial banks and operating through a network of 21,850 branches.

Gross non-performing assets (GNPAs) as a percentage of gross loans outstanding of RRBs marginally declined to 10.4 per cent as on March 31, 2020, from 10.8 per cent a year ago. The share of

standard, sub-standard, doubtful and loss assets stood at 89.6 per cent, 3.6 per cent, 6.5 per cent and 0.3 per cent, respectively. Eighteen of the 45 RRBs (as against 20 out of 53 RRBs as on March 31, 2019) had GNPA above 10 per cent as on March 31, 2020.

RRBs, at aggregated level, achieved a growth of 8.6 per cent in business in FY20 compared to a growth of 9.5 per cent in the previous year. Their total business stood at Rs 7.77 lakh crore.

Deposits and advances of RRBs increased by 10.2 per cent and 9.5 per cent, respectively.

Gross outstanding loans stood at Rs 2.98 lakh crore as against Rs 2.80 lakh crore in FY19.

Priority sector loans constituted 90.6 per cent or Rs 2.70 lakh crore of the gross loans outstanding of RRBs as on March 31, 2020. Share of agriculture and MSME sectors in total loan outstanding stood at 70 per cent and 12 per cent, respectively, the data showed.

—PTI

KUWAIT CENTRAL BANK DENIES PLAN TO DEVALUE DINAR

ABBAS AL LAWATI & FIONA MACDONALD OCT. 4

The Central Bank of Kuwait, which pegs the dinar to a basket of currencies dominated by the US dollar, affirmed its commitment to the country's exchange-rate policy, responding to reports of an impending devaluation.

"In light of recent online reports falsely speculating on the intent to devalue the national currency, the Central Bank of Kuwait reiterates its commitment to maintaining the Kuwaiti dinar exchange rate at a level that protects its purchasing power," it said in a statement on Sunday. "CBK will continue its adherence to policies that aim to bolster the local currency."

The speculation started swirling after the passing last week of Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who has been succeeded by his half brother Kuwait is facing the highest budget deficit in its history, brought on by the drop in oil prices and the coronavirus pandemic. A potential solution to its liquidity crisis has been blocked by parliamentary opposition to a law that would allow the government to borrow.

Twelve-month forward contracts on the Kuwaiti dinar rose almost 60 points to 270 in the offshore market last month, signalling traders' concerns over the risk of a devaluation in the currency peg.

—Bloomberg

Micro units to gain from interest waiver

SANGEETHA G. CHENNAI, OCT. 4



The government's suggestion of waiving compound interest on delayed payments during the moratorium period would predominantly benefit micro enterprises. While some small enterprises would also benefit from the waiver, medium-sized firms are feeling discriminated against. Industry is also keen to know whether banks will refund those who have already paid the compound interest.

The government on Saturday filed an affidavit in the Supreme Court that it was ready to bear the burden of an interest waiver for small borrowers.

Any individual or entity whose loan amount is less than Rs 2 crore, irrespective of whether they have availed of loan repayment moratorium or not, will be eligible for waiver of the compounding of interest. This includes micro small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), education, housing, consumer durable, credit card, automobile, personal, and consumption loans.

Among the MSMEs in

India, only 15 per cent have access to the formal banking system. Reports suggest that 45 to 50 per cent of the MSMEs with loan outstanding have availed of moratorium.

According to Rajive Chawla, chairman of IamSMEofIndia, all the micro enterprises which have availed of the moratorium would benefit from the government decision and some of the small enterprises, too. Medium enterprises are not likely to benefit from the waiver.

"It is good that micro enterprises will get relief. But I wish they would have given it to all MSMEs, as it is not a waiver of interest but a waiver of interest of interest," he said.

"Even within MSMEs, medium enterprises are

being discriminated against in very many ways. Most of the policy support goes to micro and small enterprises. The policy biases force them to remain dwarfs without growing large," said Anil Bharadwaj, secretary general, Federation of Indian MSMEs (Fisime).

Faiz Askari, founder of SMEStreet, fears the waiver may disincentivise banks from providing loans to MSMEs in the future. "The number of MSMEs which are into the formal banking system itself is miniscule. Government should fully compensate the banks for the waiver so that they won't be reluctant to lend to MSMEs in future," he said.

However, Chawla believes banks will continue to lend MSMEs to meet priority sector lending targets. "Further, they lend to us for a higher interest rate compared to large corporates and there are a lot of other charges. The NPAs are also lower among MSMEs," he said.

MSMEs also want to have clarity on whether those who have already paid the compound interest to the banks will receive a refund.

Australia to pay half wages of trainee workers

TRACY WITHERS OCT. 4

Australia will provide a wage subsidy to encourage businesses to hire as many as 100,000 new apprentices or trainee workers as part of its budget strategy to

create jobs and boost incomes.

The A\$1.2 billion (\$860 million) program, which will pay for half of the apprentice's wage in the first year, will be available from Oct. 5. Prime Minister Scott Morrison

said Sunday in an emailed statement. "Apprenticeships are an important pathway to get young people into jobs and to ensure there is a skills pipeline to meet the future needs of employers," Morrison said.

Changi Airport warns of 'daunting' future

REINIE BOOYSEN & KRISTAL CHIA OCT. 4

Changi Airport Group said the impact from the Covid-19 pandemic isn't abating as officials behind the world's best airport warned of a "daunting" period ahead.

Passenger traffic for Changi for the fiscal year ended March declined for the first time in more than a decade, as a slump in the last two months of the peri-

od wiped out earlier gains, serving as a harbinger of a deeper slump. To brace for "a prolonged crisis", Changi suspended operations from two terminals to save on operating costs as flights dropped to the lowest levels in its history.

"The battle with Covid-19 has only just begun," the company said in its annual report. "The future does appear daunting with the situation showing no signs of abatement."

According to the

International Air Transport Association, 25 million jobs are at risk in airlines and associated businesses such as travel and tourism. A third of the world's 26,000 passenger jets remain grounded, aviation data provider Cirium says.

Amid all the gloom in May, Changi was voted the world's best airport for an eighth consecutive year, according to a ranking by Skytrax.

—Bloomberg

RECORD RESERVES SIGNAL SHIFT IN RBI'S FOREX POLICY

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, OCT. 4

RBI's pro-foreign portfolio investors (FPI) forex reserve policy is likely to continue but with lesser dollar buying, going forward. The central bank may allow the rupee to depreciate after amassing enough fire power to tackle the currency's volatility, analysts said.

The Reserve Bank of India has built all-time-high foreign exchange reserves (\$542 billion as on Sept. 25), which is positive for higher FPI inflow as sufficient reserves cut

exchange rate risks.

In September the rupee's stability against the US dollar improved as it hovered in the range of 72.75 to 74.05 compared to 76-77 in April-June.

Last month, the RBI bought \$8.7 bn of forex reserves up to Sept. 25 (vs. \$12.9 bn each in June and July) and India's forex reserves touched a record \$545 bn on Sept. 18 before declining by \$3 bn in the following week.

The RBI has returned to forex reserve adequacy after nearly 10 years and the rupee is now past the risks of large deprecia-

tion seen in 2011, 2013 and 2018, said a report by Bank of America Securities.

"India's ability to manage a scenario of capital flight is supported by its ample forex reserves (at \$542 bn: up \$72 bn year to date) which cover around nine times import, five times short-term debt and are around three times the IMF reserve adequacy measure," said Nomura.

With adequacy of reserves, RBI will be more relaxed about buying foreign currency than before, Bank of America Securities said.

FLUSHING MICROFIBRE Garments dislodge woven fibre particles into laundry wastewater

Washing machine is a heavy polluter

MARGARET RHODES OCT. 4

Mojca Zupan was a corporate lawyer doing just fine in 2016, when a museum exhibit changed her life.

The Plastic Garbage Project depicts the "the origins, life cycle, sense, and senselessness of plastic products." "I saw these big microscopic pictures of microfibres," Zupan says of the tiny grains of plastic that slough off synthetic textiles and seep into bodies of water. "It's ridiculous. Washing machines pollute so heavily."

She did some research. Technically, a solution for catching microfibers existed. But awareness of the issue was low. "I didn't

get the feeling that something would be done about it in the near future," Zupan says. "I became determined to change the washing machine industry." Within a year, Zupan had started PlanetCare and begun selling the company's first product, a filter that attaches to household washing machines and catches those tiny, polluting microfibres before they reach the world's oceans.

A washing machine generates microfibre waste in the course of doing its job. By soaking, churning, and scrubbing a garment, it inevitably dislodges woven fibre particles into the laundry wastewater.



Roughly the size of a water bottle, the PlanetCare filter sticks onto the side of the machine and has nozzles on either side connecting to the water hose and to the drain. The filter itself is a three-dimensional mesh sieve designed to catch fibers as small as 0.1 millimetre, or 90 per cent of the microparticles that

would typically flow back into the water supply. A starter pack with seven filter cartridges costs \$112. PlanetCare is based in Ljubljana, Slovenia, Zupan's home. While most of its customers are in Europe, it does ship to the US.

These devices will hardly fix the world's microfibre problem, which is made more complicated by a lack of consensus around how to measure it. Some reports have found that a single garment sheds around 2,000 fibres in one wash cycle; others say a single load of laundry releases 700,000 fibres, flushing trillions of microfibres into waterways. In August, the journal Nature

published a study documenting high levels of ocean microplastics, with a possible 12 to 21 million tonnes near the surface of the Atlantic. Prior to that, a 2015 Science report put that number at 12 million tonnes, max.

"This is of great societal concern," says Richard Lampitt, a scientist at the National Oceanography Centre in the UK and one of the authors of the report. Underfunded research, he adds, is part of the problem. "We still need more evidence on [how lethal this is]. But if it is, we need to make strenuous efforts to prevent this material from getting into the ocean."

—Bloomberg

SHORT TAKES

Kitata runs away with London title

London: Eliud Kipchoge's four-year winning run at the London Marathon ended on Sunday as Shura Kitata emerged from the rain and the gloom to become the new champion.

There was no upset in the women's race with world record holder Brigid Kosgei winning her duel with fellow Kenyan Ruth Chepngetich, the world champion, who was eventually pipped for second by Sara Hall of the United States.

The race, originally scheduled to be run in April, was adapted to 19.7 laps of St James's Park rather than the traditional street route, and was restricted to elite runners only, due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Kitata of Ethiopia claimed victory in two hours, five minutes and 41 seconds, pipping Vincent Kipchumba of Kenya on the line after a thrilling sprint finish. — *AP*

Barca beat Real in women's tie

Madrid: Barcelona crushed Real Madrid 4-0 in the first ever women's Clasico on Sunday, with Madrid president Florentino Perez deciding against attending the club's inaugural women's match.

Goals from Patri Guijarro, Lieke Martens and Alexia Putellas, as well as an own-goal by Madrid goalkeeper Maria Rodriguez, gave Barca an expected victory.

This was the first ever official fixture played by Madrid's women's team and the first ever against Barca, the club's most prestigious rival and the reigning Primera Division champions.

Luis Rubiales, the president of the Spanish football federation, and Spain women's coach Jorge Vilda were both at Valdebebas to watch the game. But Perez was absent, choosing instead to travel to see Madrid's men's team play against Levante in La Liga later on Sunday. — *AFP*

Chennaiyin rope in Brazil's Memo

Chennai: Two-time champions Chennaiyin FC have roped in Brazil's Emerson Gomes de Moura, better known as Memo, on a free transfer for the 2020-21 season of the Indian Super League starting next month.

The 32-year-old joins CFC on the expiry of his contract at Jamshedpur FC, having spent the previous three campaigns there, the club said in a statement on Sunday.

Known for his versatility as a defensive midfielder and central defender, Memo is set to add experience and stability to Chennaiyin's ranks.

"I am delighted to be a part of the Chennaiyin family. The upcoming season will be fantastic, I am certain. It is a pity we won't be able to feel the warmth of the fans in the stands, as they are truly incredible and loyal," Memo said.

"Every time I have played in Chennai, I have truly felt their passion. A unique ISL awaits us, which will be a spectacle in itself," he added. — *PTI*

Live on TV

CRICKET

IPL: Royal Challengers Bangalore vs Delhi Capitals from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

TENNIS

French Open: Matches from 2.30 pm on Star Sports, Select 2

WWE RAW

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

Watto comeback!

Watson roars back to form as Chennai floor Punjab

Dubai, Oct. 4: Shane Watson and Faf du Plessis conjured up commanding unbeaten half-centuries as Chennai Super Kings demolished Kings XI Punjab by 10 wickets to snap their string of losses in the IPL here on Sunday.

CSK relished a much-needed victory after three defeats in a row, overhauling a 179-run target with remarkable ease.

Watson (83 not out) and Du Plessis (87 not out) ensured that there was no close finish this time, reducing the match to a 'no-contest' with their authoritative batting.

The seasoned Australian punished the KXIP bowlers with 11 fours and three sixes in his 53-ball unbeaten knock while Du Plessis hit 11 fours and a six from 53 balls to also remain not out.

Except Mohammed Shami, KXIP did not have a bowler who could trouble the opposition batsmen and CSK exploited it to the fullest. CSK moved to sixth spot from bottom with this confidence-boosting win.

Skipper KL Rahul had hit a well-paced 63 to lead Kings XI Punjab to a competitive 178 for four after electing to bat but in the absence of good bowlers it was an onerous task to stop the experienced CSK brigade.

Rahul's risk-free 63 came off 52 balls with the help of seven fours and a six as he shared a 61-run stand with fellow opener Mayank Agarwal (26) and then raised a 58-run partnership with Nicholas Pooran (33 off 17).

KXIP looked set for a bigger total but both Pooran and Rahul were dismissed by pacer Shardul Thakur off successive balls in the 18th over.

CSK, like their rivals, also got to a solid start with openers — Du Plessis and Watson — creaming off 60 runs in the Powerplay overs.

They did not exactly set the field on fire but an effective strokeplay helped them begin the chase in right earnest.

The Australian-Protea duo blended caution with aggression, picking the right deliveries to attack. They raised the team hundred in the 10th over.

Watson got to his fifty with consecutive boundaries off Chris Jordan while Du Plessis raised his own with a single off the same bowler.

With Nothing working for KXIP, Watson and Du Plessis only became more dominant as the



CSK opener Shane Watson en route to his unbeaten 83 against Kings XI Punjab in an IPL game in Dubai on Sunday.

game progressed.

Earlier, Rahul and Agarwal were cautious. No lofted shot was played till the last over of the Powerplay with the two batsmen preferring to drive along the ground. It was also because Deepak Chahar and Sam Curran hardly pitched it short.

Even if Agarwal and Rahul opened their arms it was to slap the balls outside the off stump, when there was enough room to do that. CSK captain MS Dhoni introduced spin in the seventh over with Ravindra Jadeja, who created a chance too but Agarwal's hit fell just short of a diving Du Plessis.

SHANE WATSON			
R	B	6s	4s
83*	53	3	11

SCORECARD

Kings XI Punjab: KL Rahul c Dhoni b Thakur 63, M. Agarwal c Curran b Chawla 26, Mandeep Singh c Rayudu b Jadeja 27, N. Pooran c Jadeja b Thakur 33, G. Maxwell (not out) 11, S. Khan (not out) 14. **Extras (lb 1, w 3) 4. Total (for four wickets in 20 overs) 178.**

FoW: 1-61, 2-94, 3-152, 4-152.

Bowling: D. Chahar 4-0-39-2, Bravo 4-0-38-0, Jadeja 4-0-30-1, Chawla 2-0-22-1.

Chennai Super Kings: S. Watson (not out) 83, F du Plessis (not out) 87. **Extras (w 11) 11. Total (for no loss in 17.4 overs) 181.**

Bowling: S. Cottrell 3-0-30-0, M. Shami 3-4-0-35-0, H. Brar 4-0-41-0, C. Jordan 3-0-42-0, R. Bishnoi 4-0-33-0.

RCB run into charged Delhi

Dubai, Oct. 4: A back-in-form Virat Kohli's tactical acumen will be put to test against Shreyas Iyer's unassuming but dynamic brand of captaincy when the two most impressive teams of the ongoing IPL — Royal Challengers Bangalore and Delhi Capitals — face each other here on Monday.

Both DC and RCB have looked solid so far and are among the top teams with three wins out of four games each.

While Iyer has shown great form in his team's four matches, Kohli finally got his act together in RCB's last game against Rajasthan Royals, striking a fluent half-century.

On Saturday, Iyer (88 not out off 38 balls) again showed his class after Prithvi Shaw's (66) opening act as Delhi beat Kolkata Knight Riders by 18 runs.

It's going to be a good challenge. They (RCB) have got a pretty good line-up, and have some big names. But, I think we have got a good team as well and the guys have been training really well. If we just execute our skills, perform the way we have been, I think it's going to be a very good game, and I'm sure we can out skill them

— ANRICH NORTJE

Delhi Capitals pacer says his team are capable of outperforming their opponents on Monday.

Kohli too finally got his touch back after three ordinary outings with an unbeaten 72 off 53 balls to guide RCB to a comfortable eight-wicket win over Rajasthan Royals.

And come Monday, the two skippers would look to lead from the front and outwit each other in what promises to be a thrilling contest.

While Shaw has so far looked quite in control at the top of the order for DC, Shikhar Dhawan's form would be a cause of concern for Iyer.

But on the brighter side,

Delhi seem to have finally got Rishabh Pant back in form as he dusted off his rustiness with a quick-fire 17-ball 38 against KKR.

To add to it, there is Marcus Stonis and Shimron Hetmyer waiting in the wings.

On the bowling front, Kagiso Rabada is the go-to man for DC even though he leaked runs against KKR the other day.

South African pacer Anrich Nortje has been brilliant for DC in the opening and slog overs

and bowled a brilliant penultimate over against KKR on Saturday.

Harshal Patel, as Ishant Sharma's replacement, did well enough to finish with 2 for 34 in 4 overs but the fit-again Ravichandran Ashwin and Stoinis went for runs.

RCB, on the other hand, have been served well by the young Devdutt Padikkal at the top. The left-hander, considered the next big thing in Indian cricket, is fourth in the run-scorers' tally with 174 from four games, including three fifties.

And if Aaron Finch too gets going, it would be difficult for any side to stop the marauding Bangalore openers.

Kohli's return to form is a relief for RCB's batting unit, which also has the likes of the in-form AB de Villiers, Shivam Dube and Gurkeerat Singh among others. — *PTI*

NUMBERS GAME

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL:

- Matches: 23
- RCB: 14
- Delhi: 8
- No result: 1

MEETING IN 2019

- Delhi Capitals beat RCB by 4 wickets in Bengaluru.
- Delhi Capitals beat RCB by 16 runs in Delhi.

FOR THE RECORD

- Yuzvendra Chahal who has taken 197 wickets at an average of 23.77 in 174 innings needs three more to become the fifth Indian and 39th bowler overall to complete a double century of wickets in T20.
- Shikhar Dhawan who has scored 956 runs at an average of 34.14 needs 44 runs to become the eighth batsman from Delhi to complete 1000 runs in IPL.

— S. PERVEZ QAISAR

IPL POINTS TABLE						
Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
Mumbai Indians	5	3	2	0	6	+1.214
Delhi Capitals	4	3	1	0	6	+0.588
Royal Challengers Bangalore	4	3	1	0	6	-0.954
Kolkata Knight Riders	4	2	2	0	4	-0.121
Rajasthan Royals	4	2	2	0	4	-0.317
Chennai Super Kings	5	2	3	0	4	-0.342
Sunrisers Hyderabad	5	2	3	0	4	-0.417
Kings XI Punjab	5	1	4	0	2	+0.178

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

Quinton takes Mumbai to top

Sharjah, Oct. 4: Quinton de Kock was back amongst the runs with a sizzling 39-ball 67 before the bowlers did a commendable job in batsmen friendly Sharjah to power Mumbai Indians to a clinical 34-run win over Sunrisers Hyderabad in the Indian Premier League here on Sunday.

The swashbuckling duo of Hardika Pandya (28) and Kieron Pollard (25 not out) scored at their usual brisk pace but it was Krunal who propelled MI to 208 for five with 20 runs off a mere four deliveries in the last over.

Then, the MI bowlers did just enough to restrict SRH to 174 for seven.

Chasing 209, a formidable target even on the small Sharjah ground, SRH began with Jonny Bairstow sending Trent Boult's third delivery into the stands. Two fours and a six followed before Boult had the Englishman for a 15-ball 25.

David Warner (60 off 44 balls) got into the act with a couple of boundaries off Jasprit Bumrah. Manish Pandey had raced to 16 when Hardik Pandya dropped a sitter, his view blocked by the evening sun.

Pandey lofted Rahul Chahar over long-on for a massive six and Warner followed suit, hitting the leg-spinner for another maximum in the same over as SRH kept pace with the required run-rate.

The prolific Australian then cut his compatriot James Pattinson through the point region before smashing Krunal for a six and four to help SRH past the 100-run mark in the 11th over.

Attempting an upper cut against Boult, Kane Williamson was out caught by Quinton de Kock, after Bumrah bowled an excel-

SCORECARD

Mumbai Indians: R. Sharma c Bairstow b Sandeep Sharma 6, Q de Kock c & b Rashid Khan 67, S. Yadav c Natarajan b Kaul 27, Ishan Kishan c Pandey b Sandeep Sharma 31, H. Pandya b Kaul 28, K. Pollard (not out) 25, K. Pandya (not out) 20. **Extras (lb 1, nb 1, w 2) 4. Total (for five wickets in 20 overs) 208.**

FoW: 1-6, 2-48, 3-126, 4-147, 5-188.

Bowling: S. Sharma 4-0-41-2, T. Natarajan 4-0-29-0, S. Kaul 4-0-64-2, A. Samad 2-0-27-0, R. Khan 4-0-22-1, K. Williamson 2-0-24-0.

Sunrisers Hyderabad: D. Warner c Ishan Kishan b Pattinson 60, J. Bairstow c H. Pandya b Boult 25, M. Pandey c Pollard b Pattinson 30, K. Williamson c de Kock b Boult 3, P. Garg c Chahar b KH Pandya 8, Abhishek Sharma b Bumrah 10, A. Samad c Sharma b Bumrah 20, R. Khan (not out) 3, Sandeep Sharma (not out) 0. **Extras (lb 5, w 10) 15. Total (for seven wickets in 20 overs) 174.**

FoW: 1-34, 2-94, 3-116, 4-130, 5-142, 6-168, 7-172.

Bowling: T. Boult 4-0-28-2, J. Pattinson 4-0-29-2, K. Pattinson 4-0-35-1, J. Bumrah 4-0-41-2, K. Pollard 3-0-20-0, R. Chahar 1-0-16-0.

lent six-run over.

Last match hero Priyam Garg failed to replicate his performance but it was the big wicket of Warner, in the 16th over bowled by Pattinson, that almost sealed the game in MI's favour even as the required rate soared past 14 runs an over. For MI, there were two wickets apiece for Boult (2/28), Pattinson (2/29) and Bumrah (2/41).

Earlier, Rohit Sharma plonked Sandeep Sharma over mid-wicket for a six to start the proceedings but the MI skipper was out caught behind the very next ball as he chased a wide delivery, only to nick it to Jonny Bairstow. — *PTI*



Mumbai Indians opener Quinton de Kock plays a shot against Sunrisers in Sharjah on Sunday.

QUINTON DE KOCK			
R	B	6s	4s
67	39	4	4

Karthik should bat after Morgan & Russell: Gauti

Sharjah, Oct. 4: Two-time IPL winning Kolkata Knight Riders captain Gautam Gambhir believes current skipper Dinesh Karthik should bat after Eoin Morgan and Andre Russell and also wants Sunil Narine to be dropped from the top of the order.

Apart from a 23-ball 30 coming at no 3 against Mumbai Indians, Karthik has failed to produce any significant score despite batting ahead of Morgan so far in the tournament.

The wicket-keeper batsman scored 6 after coming on to bat at no 5 against Delhi Capitals on Saturday even as Morgan (44 off 18) and Rahul Tripathi (36 off 16) raised hopes of a successful chase after batting



Dinesh Karthik

at no 6 and 8 respectively.

"Rahul Tripathi goes up the order, Dinesh Karthik plays at no 6, not before Morgan and not before Russell as well. Probably Sunil Narine goes to bat at 8 or 9. If Morgan bats no 4 and Russell at 5 and Dinesh Karthik to follow," Gambhir told

ESPNewsinfo.

The former India opener also felt Karthik miscalculated by giving the 19th over to spinner Varun Chakravarthy (1/49) as it yielded 20 runs.

"Your best bowlers need to ball the 18th, 19th and 20th over, unfortunately it didn't happen. Pat Cummins, Sunil Narine -- if a spinner has to bowl. Even Mavi, he did a fabulous job in the previous games and so did Andre Russell. You have to get to give your best bowlers," he said.

"Yes Varun Chakravarthy did bowl well in the first few overs but you cannot expect a young spinner to be bowling the 19th over and that too in Sharjah, probably it was a miscalculation," he added. — *PTI*

It's all about smart work, says Shreyas



Shreyas Iyer is leading Delhi from the front.

Sharjah, Oct. 4: Delhi Capitals skipper Shreyas Iyer doesn't consider himself a "gifted player" and has attributed all those big sixes against Kolkata Knight Riders to the enormous "hard and smart work" that he had put in the gym sessions.

Iyer hit 88 off 38 balls with six sixes and seven fours in Delhi's 18-run win over KKR in an IPL game here on Saturday.

"I know the hard work and the smart work I have put in through my gym sessions, so I wouldn't say I am a very gifted player," Iyer said at the post-match presentation ceremony.

"It was really necessary for me to take time at the start which I did in the ear-

lier games as well. It was the right time for me to take on the bowlers and then rotate strike as well after that.

"Luckily it worked out for me. We keep talking about close victories and this was one of them. Really satisfied with the way everyone stepped up," he added.

Losing captain Dinesh Karthik rued missing out on a couple of sixes in the middle overs which he felt probably cost them the match. "Maybe in between 10-13 overs we didn't get many boundaries, we lost a couple of wickets as well which sets you back in such run chases. To be honest, couple more sixes and we would have crossed the line," Karthik said.

Delhi seamer Anrich Nortje, who captured three wickets for 33, said they tried to exploit the conditions and focussed on mixing up the deliveries.

"We wanted to use the conditions to the best of our ability. There was a little bit of dew. Myself and KG (Kagiso Rabada) tried to get a few to go through. We did it at the start. It got a little bit tough in the end, the ball was coming on nicely," he said.

"It's great bowling with him (Rabada), really enjoying the time we spend together. Trying to feed off each other, trying to find out what he thinks, what he does and it's nice to be in the same team with him," he added. — *PTI*