

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
ANANTAPUR | SATURDAY | 10 OCTOBER 2020



NATION | 4

Lalu gets bail, but will remain in jail



WORLD | 5

Trump to address poll rally today

SPORTS | 6

Sehwag slams slipping CSK batsmen



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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 COUNT

CASES

(+61,223)

69,64,098

DEATHS

(+608)

1,07,142

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+1,891)

(+7)

TS: 2,06,639

1,208

(+5,145)

(+31)

AP: 7,44,864

6,159

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

3,69,88,985

DEATHS

10,69,846

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES

213

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari; Dakshinayana

Titthi: Adhika Ashwiniya Bahula

Ashtami till 6.10 pm

Star: Punarvasu till 1.13 am (Sunday)

Varjyam: 12.48 pm to 2.27 pm

Durmuhurtam: 6.11 am to 7.45 am

Rahukalam: 9 am to 10.30 am

HIJRI CALENDAR

Safar ul Muzaffar 22, 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

No crowd? Don't worry, continue your speech... it's live on our channel!

IN BRIEF

HAL staffer leaking info to ISI arrested

Mumbai: A Hindustan Aeronautics Limited employee was arrested for supplying Indian fighter aircraft details to Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency, Maharashtra police said on Friday. Police said 41-year-old Deepak Shirsat was working as an assistant supervisor and was "honey trapped" by a Pakistani national posing as a woman on social media. The Nashik unit of the state Anti-Terrorism Squad had got reliable intelligence about the man, who was in touch with ISI, a police statement said.

CBI books HDIL promoters for fraud

New Delhi: The CBI has booked HDIL promoters Rakesh Wadhawan and Sarang Wadhawan, along with former PMC Bank chairman Waryam Singh and other directors of the firm, in an alleged ₹200-crore loan fraud in Yes Bank involving Mack Star company, officials said Friday. It is alleged that loans taken for Mack Star were transferred to settle HDIL liabilities to Yes Bank without intimation to its majority stakeholder and investor Ocean Deity Investment Holdings Ltd (ODIL) in a conspiracy orchestrated by the HDIL officials. Sources in the agency said the role of former Yes Bank promoter Rana Kapoor, is likely to come under scanner in the case.

85% qualify in AP Polycet-2020

MD ILYAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 9

84.85 per cent qualified in the AP Polycet-2020, the results of which released on Friday.

A total of 71,631 students across the state appeared for the exam and 60,780 have qualified. Matta Durga Sai Keerthi Teja (West Godavari) stood first with 120 marks out of 120, Sunkara Akshay Praneeth (East Godavari) came second with 119 marks and Sri Dutta Shyam Sunder (East Godavari) secured the third rank with 118 marks.

Andhra Pradesh skill development and training department special chief secretary, G. Anantha Ram, announcing the results said that 88,732 candidates applied for the examination, while 71, 631 candidates attended it. He said that among the qualified candidates, 50,706 boys appeared and 42,313 qualified (84.85 per cent), while 18,467 girls qualified out of 20,025 (88.25 per cent).

9,293 candidates belonging to the SC community and 2972 candidates from the ST community appeared for the examination and secured 100 per-

● **A TOTAL** of 71,631 students across the state appeared for the exam and 60,780 have qualified.

● **9,293 CANDIDATES** belonging to the SC community and 2972 candidates from the ST community appeared for the examination and secured 100 percent pass marks

● **EAST GODAVARI** secured 9 of the top 12 ranks in the state

cent pass marks, said Ram. He said that despite more than one lakh Covid-19 cases being reported in East Godavari district, candidates from this district excelled, securing nine of the top 12 ranks in the exam. Two candidates from West Godavari and one from Visakhapatnam were among the top 12.

The numbers of seats are 66,742 with 10 percent EWS at 271 colleges. The submission of applications is from October 12-16 while certificate verification will begin from October 14. Seat allotment dates will be announced on October 20 and the first year classes will begin in the first week of November, 2020.

AP urged to alter liquor shop time

V.K.L. GAYATRI | DC VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 9

This is a very spirited challenge that bars have to reckon with since the time liquor sale was allowed after Covid lockdown. The problem is of timings and procuring the products. The government-run liquor shops are open from 11 am to 9 pm while the government has permitted bars and restaurants from 10 am to 11 pm, which originally was from 11 am to 7 pm.

Meanwhile, the government has increased liquor prices by over 75 per cent on all brands, except cheap liquor. In the absence of bars and restaurants, boozers began consuming in open places or in auto-rickshaws.

Although bars and restaurants were allowed to reopen two-weeks ago, they are getting enough business.

The consumers unable to bear the prices over and above the MRP are still following the old ways. Bar managements have urged the government to

● **THE PROBLEM** is of timings and procuring the products. The government-run liquor shops are open from 11 am to 9 pm while the government has permitted bars and restaurants from 10 am to 11 pm, which originally was from 11 am to 7 pm.

● **A STRONG** lobby is trying to influence the government to fix the 11 am to 7 pm timings and punishing those consuming drinks in open places.

reduce the liquor shop timings as they were not getting business. Already, a strong lobby is trying to influence the government to fix the 11 am to 7 pm timings and punishing those consuming drinks in open places.

It is true that the bar and restaurant managements have suffered huge losses during the lockdown period.

There has been a demand from bar owners to alter timings of liquor shops, a senior excise official said.

Growth back by March: RBI

Reveals steps to ease rates, boost lending to real estate, small businesses

FALAKNAAZ SYED with agency inputs MUMBAI, OCT. 9

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), taking cognizance of elevated inflation, left key interest rates unchanged on Friday but signalled more easing ahead to support the country's economy that it sees contracting 9.5 per cent in the current fiscal.

The six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), with three newly inducted external members, voted unanimously to retain the benchmark repurchase or repo rate at 4 per cent while keeping its policy stance accommodative, implying it could ease again.

The policy was over-

STATUS QUO ON KEY INTEREST RATES DUE TO ELEVATED INFLATION

4% Benchmark lending rates kept unchanged

9.5% Indian economy to contract this fiscal with downside risks

₹7.5cr: Threshold of retail bank loans to one borrower raised from ₹5 cr

GDP may break out of contraction, enter positive zone by March quarter

We look forward to cooperative solutions for the borrowing programme in the second half of the year.

— SHAKTIKANTA DAS, RBI Governor

Banks can cooperate with NBFCs and HFCs for priority sector loans

Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) system to be available in real time

whelmingly positive with a host of regulatory and development measures to ease sovereign rates, which would percolate down to borrowers and incentivise bank lending to priority sectors, such as real estate and small busi-

nesses, thereby, helping to revive the economy.

It was for the first time during the fiscal that the MPC provided GDP growth projections. In his address, RBI governor Shaktikanta Das said the country's economy is like-

ly to contract 9.5 per cent in the current financial year, "with risks tilted to the downside".

Mr Das said the economic growth, which slumped to a negative 23.9 per cent in the April-June quarter, will turn positive only in

Fishermen in frame



Artises in action during the shooting of a short film on fishermen at Peddajalaripeta beach area in Visakhapatnam on Friday. Permission was given shootings to resume from Friday.

— P. NARASIMHA MURTHY

AP cites Covid in HC for delay in polls

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 9

Government of Andhra Pradesh on Friday submitted an affidavit in the AP High Court stating that it is not possible to conduct elections to gram panchayats, mandal and zilla parishedas, apart from municipalities and corporations given the Coronavirus situation prevailing in the state.

Advocate Thandava Yogesh had filed public interest litigation in the High Court during November last year seek-

ing elections to local bodies.

When the matter was taken up on Friday by the court, counsel for the government maintained that since the Covid-19 pandemic had reached alarming proportions across the country, it might not be the right time to conduct elections now.

The High Court, however, told the government that the decision to conduct elections or not will be decided by the State Election Commission (SEC). It opined that when so many state assembly

elections are going on, why local body elections in AP cannot be held.

As none had appeared on behalf of the SEC, the High Court issued a notice to the commission and posted the matter to November 2, 2020.

According to sources, the state government is not interested in completing the process for holding local body elections under the supervision of Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar, who has resumed charge as SEC in July following a Supreme Court order. The government is

upset with him over deferring local body polls in March citing Coronavirus pandemic as the reason without consulting the state government.

Jagan Mohan Reddy government even removed Ramesh Kumar as SEC through an ordinance by reducing his tenure and replacing him with a retired judge of Tamil Nadu High Court.

However, Ramesh Kumar waged a long legal battle, won the case, and again took over as the state election commissioner.

the final January-March quarter. "By all indications, the deep contractions of Q1 2020-21 (April-June) are behind us; silver linings are visible in the flattening of the active case load curve across the country," he said. Barring the risk of a second wave of infections, the economy appeared poised to begin a recovery, he said, noting foodgrain production was set for record highs and factories and cities were coming back to life.

The policy repo rate, or the rate at which banks borrow short-term funds from the Central bank, stood unchanged at 4 per cent. Most economists expect the RBI to cut rates by 50 basis points in its December policy.

RADAR KILLER 'RUDRAM-1' PASSES IAF TEST

New Delhi, Oct. 9: In a major milestone, India on Friday successfully test fired a new generation anti-radiation missile from a Su-30 MKI fighter aircraft of the Indian Air Force that can destroy a wide variety of enemy radars, air defence systems and communication networks from large stand-off ranges, officials said.

The missile, Rudram-1, is India's first indigenously developed anti-radiation weapon system and it was test-fired by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), at an integrated test range in Balasore in Odisha at around 10.30 am, officials said. They said the missile, having a speed of Mach two or twice the speed of sound, is capable of bringing down a wide-range of enemy radar systems, communication networks and air defence systems within a range of up to 250 km. In a statement, the defence ministry said Rudram hit the radiation target with "pin-point accuracy" and established India's capability to develop long range air launched anti-radiation missiles. — PTI



NOBEL PEACE FOR UN WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

Niamey (Niger), Oct. 9: The World Food Programme won the Nobel Peace Prize on Friday for its efforts to combat hunger in regions facing conflict when Covid pandemic has driven millions more people to the brink of starvation.

The Rome-based UN agency has long specialised in getting assistance to some of the world's most dangerous and precarious places, from air-dropping food in South Sudan and Syria to creating an emergency delivery service that kept aid flowing even as restrictions grounded flights. It provided assistance to almost 100 million people in 88 countries last year. "With this year's award, the (committee) wishes to turn the eyes of the world to the millions of people who suffer from hunger," said Berit ReissAndersen, the chair of the Nobel Committee.

■ **Full report on Page 5**

SHORT TAKES

DALIT STUDENTS FOR REVIVAL OF 'BEST SCHOOL'

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 9

Members of Dalit students Joint Action Committee and their parents staged a dharna at Gandhi Statue near RTC Complex asking the State government not to do away with the scheme "Best Available School", which was exclusively launched for the Dalit students. The two-day dharna programme was launched on Friday.

District ST and SC Cell president of the Telugu Desam Party Pucha Vijay Kumar said the scheme was introduced by former chief minister Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy which enabled the poor Dalit students to study in corporate schools from Class 2 to Class 8.

As per the scheme, at least 10 Dalit students were enrolled in each class in corporate schools which includes hostel facility.

"With the abolition of this scheme, 32,800 Dalit students lost the opportunity to study in corporate schools. We will intensify the agitation all over the state if the government did not change its mind," Mr Vijay Kumar said.

City president of CITU R.K.S.V. Kumar, SFI leader LG Naidu and Bahujan Sena district president Chintada Suryam were present.

QUALITY CATTLE BREED TO BE DEVELOPED

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, OCT. 9

Social welfare minister P. Vishwaroop said that quality cattle breed would be developed to produce quality cattle to increase milk production in the state and also encourage dairy development.

Participating as a chief guest in free veterinary camp in Reddipalli village in Amalapuram Rural mandal of East Godavari on Friday, Mr Vishwaroop said that the farmers need not take their cattle to veterinary hospitals for their treatment so that the veterinary doctors would come to their fields or their dairy farms and give the treatment to their cattle as the government would take steps in this direction soon.

He said that the farmers who with cattle can take ₹1.60 lakh to ₹3 lakh loans for developing their dairy products through Rythu Bharosa centres or Kisan Credit Cards.

YSRC ACTIVIST KILLED IN NANDYAL

DC CORRESPONDENT KURNOOL OCT. 9

A 50-year-old advocate, a YSRC activist, was brutally killed by some unknown persons in Nandyal town on Friday morning while he was going for a morning walk.

The deceased was identified as Subba Rayudu, resident of Ponnapuram in Nandyal town. The police suspect that the cause of the incident was property disputes among his relatives.

Nandyal DSP Chidananda Reddy said that the assailants who were waiting for Subbarayudu near Vijaya Milk Dairy in the town attacked when he reached the spot during his morning walk. They attacked him with iron rods and fled the spot after confirming his death.

A case was registered and an investigation is on, DSP said.

The deceased was a follower of Silpa family in Nandyal town.

It is said that some of his relatives were also attacked Subbarayudu two years back over property disputes.

Meanwhile, Nandyal MLA Silpa Ravichandra Kishor Reddy visited the hospital and offered condolences to the deceased family members.

Definition of government schools changing in state

As many as 15,715 government schools being renovated under Phase-1

MD. ILYAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 9

The conventional outlook among people about government schools being dilapidated, shabby and without facilities is changing following state government's determination to renovate schools under the Mana Badi Nadu-Nedu programme.

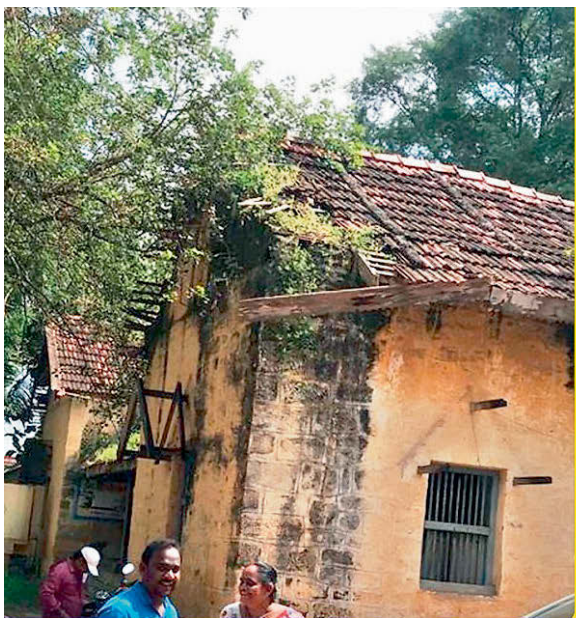
The renovation programme to modernise 46,788 government schools in 13 districts of the state in three phases is already showing results with as many as 15,715 government schools being renovated under Phase-1. A majority of these schools have already been renovated and look attractive, with colourful paints and improved basic amenities.

For instance, the 82-year-old government primary school at Kolavennu in Kankipadu mandal had remained totally neglected. It now looks iconic after renovation. S. Bhaskar Rao and D. Ramu, parents of two students studying in this school say the school is comparable to private and corporate institutions. They feel majority of parents will now be willing to admit their children into government schools due to facilities and amenities available. More so, they will not have to contend with huge fee charged by private and corporate schools.

A. Hasini, teacher of a government model school, pointed out that damaged buildings, absence of basic amenities and shortage of teachers are the main hurdles for students getting good education in government schools. She said private schools provide basic amenities, which help students concentrate on their studies. With government schools now seeing modernisation, students of state schools will start doing well in their exams, Hasini remarked.

Another teacher S. Madhavi said earlier, girl students avoided drinking water in absence of toilets in government schools. She said some of these schools are now having modern toilets with running water facilities, well-equipped virtual classrooms with smart TVs and English labs. This will change the picture of government schools, Ms Madhavi felt.

With the first phase of modernising government schools nearing completion, all eyes are now on 14,584 schools that will be



The 82-years-old primary government school started in the year 1938 modernised and got an attractive iconic look at Kolavennu of Kankipadu in Krishna district under the Mana Badi Nadu-Nedu Programme.



● **WITH THE** first phase of modernising government schools nearing completion, all eyes are now on 14,584 schools that will be renovated in the second phase and 16,489 schools that will be modernised in the third phase.

● **Part of school modernisation** are basic amenities in schools, toilet facilities with running water facility, fans and lights, drinking water, furniture for teachers and students, painted walls, green boards, English labs, compound walls and kitchen sheds.

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Part of school modernisation are basic amenities in schools, toilet facilities with running water facility, fans and lights, drinking water, furniture for teachers and students, painted walls, green boards, English labs, compound walls and kitchen sheds.

Education minister Audimulapu Suresh asserted that the government is determined to provide all amenities and modern education in state schools, and make them on par with private schools. Students should proudly call their schools Mana Badi (our school).

He maintained that all government schools will turn into modern centres of education after the second and third phases are completed.

TD MLC challenges YSRC to debate on Vidya Kanuka

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 9

Telugu Desam MLC B Chengal Rayudu on Friday accused the Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy government of denying long-standing benefits like scholarships to students from weaker sections. He demanded continuation of all welfare schemes and scholarships to students so that they could pursue their academic dreams.

He challenged the ruling party leaders for an open debate on 'Vidya Kanuka' which was nothing but another diversionary tactic of the Chief Minister.

Addressing a press conference here, the TD leader deplored that benefits to residential school students have been cut short and the absence of midday meal scheme has led to denial of nutritious food to lakhs of students.

Rayudu said that the government had reduced budgetary allocation on the education sector. He said that the government has defaulted on payments to suppliers of clothes last year and were still to pay suppliers of essential commodities and those who constructed toilets and compound walls in schools.

OLD SCHEMES WITH NEW NAMES, SAYS LINGA REDDY

NAGESWARA RAO BALLED | DC KADAPA, OCT. 9

Kadapa Parliament Telugu Desam Party president Mallela Lingareddy criticised the present government for misleading the people by changing the names of schemes which were implemented by the Telugu Desam government like Jagananna Vidyakanuka.

He said the Best Available Schools scheme was introduced during the TD regime to provide corporate education to poor students and this government had scrapped it. He also said that the money owed to schools by corporate colleges under the scheme has not been paid so far. He demanded the government to re-implement pro-students schemes launched by Telugu Desam.

The TD leader objected to the discontinuation of foreign education schemes for weaker sections.

32K STUDENTS JOIN GOVT SCHOOLS IN EG

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, OCT. 9

State agriculture and cooperative minister Kurasala Kannababu said that 32,000 students were newly enrolled in Government schools from private schools in this academic year as the parents believe the government, led by the Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, is running the government schools competing with corporate schools.

Participating in Vidya Kanuka programme, held at SRPLCM Municipal Primary School at Gaigolupadu and Municipal Primary and High Schools at Ramanaiahpet here on Friday along with Kakinada Municipal Commissioner Swapnil Dinkar Pundkar, Mr Kannababu said that Mr Jagan introduced Naadu-Nedu programme to create infrastructure facilities at in all government schools competing with Corporate Schools and also changed the entire menu with nutritious food to the students in the schools to provide better and quality education to the students of government schools.

He said that ₹550 crore have been released under Amma Vodi scheme in East Godavari District and Rs.360 crores released for Naadu-Nedu works.

Pro-Amaravati protesters say will step up stir

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 9

Pro-Amaravati leaders, farmers and activists have decided to intensify protests in various forms to pressurise the government for the cancellation of the capital trifurcation decision.

The Amaravati Parirakshana Samithi's (APS) JAC lamented that the Amaravati agitation is entering the 300th day but there is no response from the government; hence protests would be intensified. The leaders announced that rallies would be held on 11 October and protests and deekshas scheduled on 12 October in front of revenue offices all over AP in support of Amaravati.

Addressing a press meet here on Friday, APSJAC convener, A. Siva Reddy, said that Amaravati protest would enter its 299th day on Sunday; hence big pro-Amaravati rallies are planned seeking the protection of Amaravati as solo capital of AP in the 175 assembly segments of the state.

Similarly, on the 300th day, on Monday, Amaravati Deeksha protests would be held in front of revenue offices from 9 am to 1 pm in 13

● **Meanwhile,** pro-Amaravati activists conducted a devotional Kanaka Durga pongallu padayatra from Lingayapalem, Uddandarayunipalem and other villages of Amaravati capital region wearing green scarves and tried to go to the Durga temple to present pongallu.

districts of the state. APSJAC co-convenor, Gadde Tirupathi Rao, said that new committees of APSJAC are proposed at parliamentary constituency and mandal levels in 13 districts to intensify the pro-Amaravati agitation.

Objecting to the comments of YSRC leaders, including ministers, against pro-Amaravati protesters terming them as paid artistes, Rao lamented that CM Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, turned mute to the objectionable comments against pro-Amaravati women activists.

Amaravati Rythu Karyacharana Samithi convener, P. Sudhakar, and leaders affirmed continuation of the pro-Amaravati agitation till the cancellation of three capitals decision.

Multi-cr gutka sales going unchecked

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 9

Despite Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's directive to crack down on non-smoking tobacco products like gutka and khaini, as these could contribute to spread of Covid-19 in the state, sales of these products are going on unabated throughout AP.

Gutka or betel quid and khaini are household names throughout the country. Their sales have been going on in Telugu states since last two decades.

Following a health advisory by World Health Organisation, Indian Parliament enacted the Gutka and Pan Masala (Prohibition) Act, 2015. Health experts too pointed out that gutka is one of the major causes for oral cancer. Soon after this Act was promulgated, 17 states, including Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, banned gutka and pan masala.

Food, Safety and Standards Department had been entrusted the responsibility of checking their sales by filing cases against their manufacturers and sellers. Though the Act stipulates 10 years' imprisonment and ₹5 lakh fine or both, trade in gutka and pan masala is going unchecked in Andhra Pradesh.

Food Safety Department and police have filed counters but the trader is continuing his business unscathed. Retail prices of gutka have also come down after raids have stopped, sources said.

Food Safety Department alone cannot control the illegal trade of gutka and allied products. "We need 640 food safety inspectors for Andhra Pradesh, but we are operating with only 30 of them," said an officer of the department.

VICTIM SHIFTED TO GGH KAKINADA

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, OCT. 9

The nine-year-old girl, raped by a 67-year-old man at Anaparthi was shifted to the government general hospital, Kakinada (GGHK) for further medical treatment.

Anaparthi police said that medical tests were conducted on her and she was given treatment at the community health centre at Anaparthi but she was shifted to GGHK for further treatment. Her

condition is stable.

The accused, T. Satyanarayana Reddy, would be produced before the court on Saturday. The Ramachandrapuram DSP, Balachandra Reddy is investigating the case.

State women and child welfare minister, T. Vanitha, visited the hospital and consoled the victim's family. She said that as a woman, she expressed sadness about the incident but the government would take stringent action against the accused.

YSR SAVED FAMILY MEMBER OF NTR INVOLVED IN A CRIME: PARVATI

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, OCT. 9

Without mentioning the name of the beneficiary, YSR Congress leader Lakshmi Parvati said Dr Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy had saved a family member of NTR when he got involved in criminal cases.

Addressing a gathering after unveiling the statue of NTR in Kavali town in SPSR Nellore district on Friday, she rebuked the Telugu Desam leaders for installing the NTR statue close to a temple in Kavali in the past.

She claimed that Jagan Mohan Reddy also recommended to his father to save the NTR family member, who was in serious trouble then because he was his fan.

Ms Lakshmi Parvati heaped praises for YSRC Kavali legislator

Ramireddy Pratapkumar Reddy and his followers for arranging the NTR statue while stressing that Telugu Desam men lack this kind of culture. She said that Minister Kodali Nani also makes it a point to garland the portraits of Dr YSR and NTR before launching any programme.

It may be recalled that removal of a statue of former Chief Minister and Telugu Desam founder N.T. Rama Rao in Musunuru village near Kavali sometime back at the instance of YSRC leaders sparked controversy in Nellore district.

The YSR Congress leaders themselves arranged another NTR statue close to the statue of former CM Dr Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy and invited Ms Lakshmi Parvati to unveil the same on Friday.

TD to mail 10k letters to V-P, minister on NREGS payments

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, OCT. 9

Former minister and TD senior leader Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy said that they are going to mail 10,000 letters to the Vice-President of India and the Union Minister of Rural Development on the delay in payment of bills for NREGS (National Rural Employment Generation Scheme) works.

He was addressing a large number of party men who turned up for the swearing in ceremony of the former Mayor of Nellore S.K. Abdul Aziz as in-charge of the Nellore Parliamentary Constituency at TD office on Friday.

Mr Reddy has alleged the government of not paying bills of NREGS

● **Mr Reddy has alleged** that there is no freedom of speech currently in the state as the police personnel are booking cases against the people for demonstrations and also for the comments on social media.

works even though they had completed the works while lamenting over the plight of the victims.

Mr Reddy emphasised that the Centre had released ₹1,850 crore for NREGS works about 18 months back but the payment is not released yet due to the failure of the state government to offer its share of 25 per cent.

He said the situation of farmers of Nellore dis-

trict is pathetic as they are receiving only ₹7,000 for one putty (850 kg) of paddy which is a pittance compared to the investment on the crop.

"Cost of a tractor load of sand is also ₹7,000 but the ruling party leaders lack concern for the issues of farmers," Mr Reddy alleged. He rebuked the government for its silence on their demand for a compensation of ₹15,000 to the paddy growers.

He said they had given a GO during TD regime to collect only 40 kg of paddy additionally from farmers for shortcomings in moisture and quality, but the millers and middlemen are now enjoying 200-300 kg of additional paddy by taking advantage of the plight of the farmers.

Dalit women demand justice

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 9

Dalit Stree Shakti (DSS) conducted a legal clinic on 'Violence Against Dalit and Adivasi Women and Girl Children' in Guntur on Friday in which officials asserted on the need for strict implementation of laws meant for protection of SCs and STs in the state.

DSS national convener, Geddam Jhansi, complained about the delay in cases related to 22 victims of atrocities through video conference to

officials. She lamented that despite having strong laws for the suppressed classes, the victims failed to get justice swiftly and sought justice for the 22 victims.

The state's social welfare department's principal secretary, Muddada Ravichandra, praised the 22 victims for their continuous efforts in seeking justice. He said there were some loopholes in the laws which are used against victims; hence the social welfare department decided to issue new GOs amending the

rules. Officials who show negligence towards resolving issues of SC and ST victims would have to face stern punishment, said Ravichandra, adding that more than 900 cases were pending since 2010 which is why the government taking measures to provide rehabilitation and compensations to these victims as early as possible. Deputy director of prosecutions, Rajendra Prasad, said that the SC/ST Atrocity (prevention) Act is very powerful to punish culprits in the courts.

Pig menace in Kurnool throws challenge to officials

D. SIVA RAMI REDDI | DC KURNOOL OCT. 9

As the entire district administration is now concentrating on making arrangements for Tungabhadra Pushkarams, cleanliness in Kurnool city takes a back seat. Pig rearers throw a challenge to efforts of civic authorities in maintaining the city clean and green. The police and civic authorities launched joint operations last year to free the

city from the pig menace but to no avail. Municipal corporation officials say that in 15 days, they will make the city free of pigs.

Kurnool MLA Hafeez Khan said with increased influx of visitors to Kurnool during Tungabhadra Pushkarams between November 20 and December 1, the omnipresence of pigs is an unwelcome sight.

He said that he had prevailed upon District Collector G. Veerapandian to free the city from the

scourge of pig rearers.

Pigs in Kurnool city are on the prowl. The lanes and bylanes of Kurnool city are populated with pigs causing a lot of problems to the residents. The passersby are scared to walk through lanes during the evening and early morning hours. Open spaces, under construction building sites and near food eateries, pigs are present in huge numbers.

The civic authorities appear to have turned a

blind eye to the problem created by pigs. Except for a few main roads, pigs are sighted on almost all the residential localities. Children are afraid to play in front of their houses in residential colonies. As per rough calculations, there are at least 50,000 pigs in the city. More than 90 families depend on the rearing of pigs in the city.

There are 54 wards in Kurnool Municipal Corporation limits and nearly 200 residential colonies in

the city. Bhudavarpet, Swamireddynagar, Krishna Nagar, Devanagar, Vitalanagar, Aroranagar, Mahalakshmi Nagar, Kallur, Abbas Nagar Ayyappanagar, Mujaffar Nagar and other localities have faced troubles with pigs.

When contacted KMC officials, they said that they had allocated five acres of land to pig rearers near Pandipadu in Kallur mandal. But the swine rearers were not interested in going there, he added.

SHORT TAKES

**3 FARMERS
KILLED AS LORRY
HITS THEIR BIKE****DC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, OCT. 9**

Three farmers died in a road accident at National Highway near Jonnada village of Alamuru mandal of East Godavari in the early hours of Friday as a speeding lorry hit the bike on which the farmers were travelling. While two farmers died on the spot and another farmer died at the government hospital undergoing treatment. According to the Alamuru police, the farmers - Vishnu, 28, Inapakolla Srinu, 45, and Thorarati Ramprasad of Mulasthanam village of Alamuru mandal were going towards Ravulapalem for field works by bike, a speeding lorry coming towards Ravulapalem from Rajahmundry hit their bike from the back. Alamuru Sub-Inspector Mr Siva Prasad said that Vishnu and Srinu died on the spot and Ramprasad was shifted to the government hospital in Rajahmundry through ambulance and he died while undergoing treatment. Mandapet Rural Circle Inspector K. Mangadevi visited the place.

**IIT TIRUPATI'S
VIRTUAL SESSION
FOR STUDENTS****DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, OCT. 9**

The Indian Institute of Technology Tirupati (IITTP) has been gearing up to host a live JEE Open House session with Prof KN Satyanarayana, Director, IITTP, on October 10, at 5 pm.

With JEE Advanced results announced and registration has already started and considering the precautionary measures against Covid-19, the virtual interactive session is aimed to guide the JEE-Advanced qualified students and their parents about different engineering branches available at IIT Tirupati, campus development and to help them better understand the IIT system.

During the live session, IIT aspirant students and their parents would be able to interact live with Prof KN Satyanarayana, Director and the Deans of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs at IITTP.

The participants will be guided for their queries and doubts related to undergraduate education at IITs and IITTP in particular. They will also get more insights about educational innovations by IITTP since inception. The session mainly emphasises on the Institute's undergraduate curriculum, including dual degrees.

**POLICE RECOVER
GOLD FROM
OFFENDER****DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, OCT. 9**

The measures being implemented to prevent offences in religious places came in handy for Komarolu police in Prakasam district to apprehend an accused involved in various crimes and recover 86.5 gm of gold and some silver jewellery on Friday.

According to Deputy Superintendent of Police, Markapuram Division, G. Nageswar Reddy, the police department in Prakasam district had installed 632 CC Cameras and posted watchman/guards/volunteers to keep a tab on 161 most important religious structures in the district at the instance of the SP Siddharth Kaushal.

Further, a special team headed by Inspector of police Giddalur was formed to monitor the movements of old criminals.

In the process, SI Komarole V. Samba Sivaiah and their staff caught hold of the accused identified as Rajupalem Masthan Vali, 28, of Vadlamani village in Kadapa district near Essar petrol bunk in Komarolu following a tip-off on Friday morning.

Markapuram DSP said that the movements of the old criminals are closely monitored and strict action would be taken against such offenders.

He said that the accused was involved in theft cases in various police stations limits in the state and has been lodged in jail in the past.

The accused had been wandering around several villages and towns at night, stealing motorcycles and valuables from locked houses. There are five cases against Masthan in different police stations across the state, the DSP said.

Covid-19 cases on decline

Godavari districts remain on top in Coronavirus positive cases**DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 9**

Corona positive cases continued their decreasing trend on Friday in AP with 5,145 instances of virus reported as against the earlier average of 10,000 cases per day.

East and West Godavari districts remained on top in recording Covid-19 positive cases. East Godavari registered the maximum 1,04,636 cases and remained top among all districts of the state. West Godavari stood second with 73,391 positive cases on Sunday. 6,110 patients have been discharged after recovery, increasing the recovery rate in the past 24 hours, giving a ray of hope that spread of Corona is being contained.

Total positive cases recorded in AP reached 7,44,864 on Friday, with 6,91,040 recoveries, 47,665

active cases and 6,159 Coronavirus deaths. The overall recovery rate continues to increase and has reached 92.77 per cent.

The state reported 31 new Covid-19 deaths in the past 24 hours. Highest number of five deaths have been registered in Prakasam district, followed by four deaths each in Chittoor and Visakhapatnam districts, three each in East Godavari, Krishna and Nellore districts, and one death each in Guntur, Kadapa, Kurnool, Srikakulam, Vizianagaram and West Godavari districts.

As many as 70,521 Corona tests have been conducted in the past 24 hours, with 5,145 persons diagnosed as Covid-19 positive. AP has tested a total 64,20,474 persons for Coronavirus till date and tops the country in con-

ducting Covid-19 tests. The single day highest number of 862 Corona positive cases has been registered in West Godavari district in the past 24 hours, increasing the total to 73,391 in which 5,578 are active cases. The second single day highest number of 757 cases has been registered in Chittoor district, increasing the total to 68,903 in which 6,331 are active cases. East Godavari district is in third place with 738 new positive cases, increasing total positive cases to 1,04,636 in which 8,353 are active cases.

Prakasam district recorded 486 new Corona positive cases in the past 24 hours, increasing total positive cases to 53,488 in which 4,447 are active cases. 352 new Corona positive cases have been registered in Kadapa district, increasing total positive cases to 47,097 in which 3,200 are active cases. 342 new Corona positive cases have been registered in Guntur district, increasing total positive cases to 58,941 in which 5,014 are active cases.

In Krishna district, 310 new Corona positive cases have been registered in the past 24 hours, increasing total positive cases to 31,020 in which 2,777 are active cases. 310 new cases have been registered in Nellore district, taking the total positive cases to 56,068 in which 1,977 are active cases. 285 new Corona positive cases have been registered in Anantapur

district, increasing the total positive cases to 60,285 in which 1,562 are active cases. 211 new Corona positive cases have been registered in Kurnool district, increasing the total positive cases to 57,811 in which 1,647 are active cases.

In Vizianagaram district, 194 new cases have been registered during the past 24 hours, taking the total positive cases to 36,969 in which 2,002 are active cases. 159 new Corona positive cases have been registered in Visakhapatnam district, increasing total positive cases to 52,037 in which 2,760 are active cases.

The least number of 139 new Corona positive cases have been registered in Srikakulam district during the last 24 hours, increasing the total positive cases to 41,323 in which 2,017 are active cases.

Festive season



An artist gives finishing touches to goddess Durga idols which were prepared for the upcoming Dasara Navratri celebrations at a make-shift workshop at Dondaparthi in Visakhapatnam on Friday. — K. MURALIKRISHNA

The magical bottle gourd

**D. SIVA RAMI REDDI | DC
KURNOOL, OCT. 9**

Naga Sorakaya, or bottle gourd, a symbol of luck, fortune and prosperity, has now become the most sought-after object of desire.

This greed has opened up an enterprise for the common man to cash in on quickly. Marketing the mysterious, wild bottle gourd of Nallamala, a Srisaillam-based Sanari Sri Vishweswara Annapurna Devi ashram, promoted by Aravinda Reddy, was selling it to gullible buyers.

Atmakur police arrested 21 people for fraudulently selling the vegetable as a talisman with magical powers.

Each gourd was sold for

₹10 lakh and upwards. The arrested persons are from Nalgonda, Gadwal, Mahabubnagar district. They were arrested at Panchamukhi Anjaneya Swamy temple at Sripathi Raopet crossroads on the outskirts of Atmakur and sent to judicial remand.

The police seized two cars, 23 cellphones and one gourd.

Atmakur DSP, Venkat Rao, told *Deccan Chronicle* that Reddy, the ashram owner, a rowdy sheeter, formed four gangs to market the vegetable.

They had successfully sold some units of bottle gourd to people from Karnataka people who came in contact with Reddy at Srisaillam.

Rao said that the king-

pin, who is yet to be arrested, has been running the ashram in Srisaillam and propagating himself as a saviour of dharma and started attracting people. He floated five trusts, including the Shivoham Trust, and launched a website, soliciting donations.

He is alleged to have got a two and half acre property from a lady on the promise of providing magical cures.

He recently floated a health human rights committee and was using it as a diversionary proxy to hoodwink law enforcement officials. Aravinda Foundation Trust, Kalwakurthy is another outfit he has floated, said the DSP.

His other avatar is as

organiser of the VHP Prantiya Pramukh.

Nallamala forest is infested with charlatans and fly-by-night operators who devise several schemes to cheat the public, like the rice pulling magic, Rao said.

A feng shui practitioner in Kurnool, Reshma, said the bottle gourd also acts like a lucky wind chime. It makes a sonorous sound when it strikes against the wind, with a high and low pitch. It is believed that this sound will provide power to eliminate all wicked or evil things, which come to our lives.

The vegetable is good as an auspicious gift for every occasion such as New Year, birthdays and other important events.

Sirimanotsavam folk festival sans crowds

**K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC
VIZIANAGARAM, OCT. 9**

Sirimanotsavam, the annual folk festival and Jatara of north Andhra dedicated to presiding deity of Vizianagaram Town, Sri Pydithalli Ammavaru, will be held on October 27 without crowds for the first time due to Covid-19 pandemic.

The festival, celebrated on the first Tuesday after Dasara festival every year, draws three to four lakh people from different parts of Andhra Pradesh and also from neighbouring Odisha and Chhattisgarh.

Devotees witness the spectacle of the priest sitting in regal robes on top of 55-foot pole (Sirimanu) and taken around the fort. Traditionally, devotees throw bananas at the priest believing that the priest is possessed.

Owing to pandemic, the district administration held a meeting on Friday with leaders of various political parties and representatives of different associations on how to celebrate the festival due to ongoing Coronavirus. Weighing the

options suggested at the meeting, the district administration led by collector M. Hari Jawaharlal and minister Botsa Satyanarayana decided that the festival be organised this year on a low key.

Officials said only a limited number of devotees, who manage the affair of taking Sirimanu in regal robes around the fort, will be allowed at the festival. There will be no cultural or other events as part of the festival. The festivities will be telecast live, so that people can witness it from the confines of their homes. The district administration also decided to shut down shops and commercial establishments on October 27 to prevent crowds from gathering on the day.

The folk festival began with Mandala Deeksha on October 2, which will be followed by the Artha Mandala Deeksha on October 22. Sirimanotsavam, the main event of the fest, will be on October 27. Theppotsavam on November 3 and Uyyala Utsavam on November 10, followed by the Chandi Homam on November 11.

Cooking gas cylinder explodes, six injured

**DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 9**

Six persons including a minor girl sustained injuries when a cooking gas cylinder exploded in a house in Sabbavaram in the district, about 60 km from Visakhapatnam city on Friday.

The condition of the housewife, who tried to connect the refill, is stated to be critical, according to the fire officer.

Reports said the incident took place in the house of one Appa Rao who lived with his family in near RTC Complex Sabbavaram town. Eyewitnesses and fire officer K. Dilip Kumar said the incident took place in the morning when Appa Rao's wife Maheswari, 45, tried to connect the refilled cylinder replacing the empty cylinder.

When she found gas leaking from the refilled cylinder, she sought the help of one Appa Rao and Ganga Raju, who are running a home needs shop close to

their house. Both of them, along with Maheswari, tried to plug the leak but they failed.

When they found flames were coming out from the valve of the cylinder, both the youth, Maheswari and her daughters Soumya, 17, Amulya, 15, and neighbour Neha, 22, tried to run away from the kitchen. The cylinder exploded moments later with a loud sound causing injuries to all the six persons.

A witness said they were thrown away to a distance of 50 feet from the kitchen.

Mother and her two daughters, local youths Appa Rao and Ganga Raju were admitted in a local private hospital in Visakhapatnam after they were given first aid in Sabbavaram private hospital.

The blast ransacked the house destroying furniture, windows and walls. The compound wall of the house also collapsed due to the impact of the blast, the fire officer said.

PRADIKSHANAS CANCELLED AT VADAPALLI

**DC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, OCT. 9**

Performing Pradishanas (circumambulation) to Lord Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple in Vadapalli, known as “Konaseema Tirumala” have been cancelled on Saturday.

The temple officials said that every Saturday, a large number of devotees perform Pradikshanas at the temple before taking darshan of the God.

But, due to Covid-19 pandemic in the district, the officials decided to cancel the Pradikshanas.

Papaya cultivation on the rise in E. Godavari

**VADREVV SRINIVAS | DC
KAKINADA, OCT. 9**

The cultivation of papaya has increased ten-fold in East Godavari district from 50 hectares to 500 hectares in the past two years.

Many farmers are favouring the crop because of the comparatively low cost of cultivation at ₹1 lakh per hectare. Further, the duration of the crop is only seven months and the farmer gets returns from the eighth month onwards and it continues for two or three years. The crop is also sturdy and it can withstand adverse climatic conditions in the coastal belt.

For these reasons, the cultivation of papaya is increasing. The consumption of papaya is also increasing, in urban areas particularly.

According to sources, the people believe that papaya is healthy food and even diabetics can safely consume the fruit. It also filters out harmful blue light rays and

play a protective role in eye health and helps ward off macular degeneration, asthma, prostate cancer, increases bone health, digestion and other benefits. Finally, it is not expensive and even the poor can afford it.

According to sources, traditional farmers who cultivate general crops like groundnut, paddy (upland area), cotton, mango and cashew are selling their lands, unable to bear the financial crisis and natural disasters and get good prices for their land.

The new farmers who buy it prefer papaya crop initially instead of coconut, oil-palm and others. “When land was purchased, generally farmers used to plant oil-palm, mango, cashew or coconut with better varieties. But all these take three to five years to give yields. Now, farmers like me prefer papaya cultivation as it gives a yield within eight months,” said K. Satyanarayana Murthy.

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SHORT TAKES

STEADY DIP IN ACTIVE COVID-19 CASES

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 9

Union health ministry on Friday said that India continues to report a trend of steadily dipping active cases and after a month, for the first time, active cases have come down below the 9-lakh mark. India registered 8.93 lakh active cases on Friday after registering 8.97 lakh on September 9. Health ministry officials said the active cases at present comprise 12.94% of the total positive cases of the country “demonstrating a steady falling percentage of the total cases.

India on Friday had 69.06 lakh cases out of which 70,496 were detected in the last 24 hours. The total number of deaths is 1.06 lakh out of which 964 fatalities were recorded in just one day. According to health ministry data, 78% of the new cases are from 10 states and UTs out of which Maharashtra continues to report very high number of new cases with more than 13,000 cases followed by Karnataka with more than 10,000 cases.

BIEGUN TO VISIT INDIA AND BANGLADESH

Hyderabad: Deputy Secretary of State Stephen E. Biegun will travel to India and Bangladesh from October 12-16. From October 12-14, he will visit New Delhi, where he will meet with senior government officials and deliver keynote remarks at the India-U.S. Forum.

Building on Secretary Mike Pompeo's October 6 meeting with Minister of External Affairs Dr. S. Jaishankar and ahead of the U.S.-India 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue later this year, Biegun's engagements in India will focus on advancing the United States-India Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership and how the United States and India can work together to advance peace, prosperity, and security in the Indo-Pacific and around the globe.

From October 14-16, Deputy Secretary Biegun will visit Dhaka, to meet with senior government officials and reaffirm the United States-Bangladesh partnership.

BHIMA-KOREGAON: STAN SWAMY ARRESTED

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC
MUMBAI, OCT. 9

The NIA on Friday filed a charge-sheet against eight people, including activists Gautam Navlakha and 82-year-old Father Stan Swamy, for their alleged involvement in inciting a mob to violence at Bhima-Koregaon.

The NIA arrested Swamy on Thursday from his home in Ranchi, brought him to Mumbai and produced him before a court which remanded him to judicial custody till October 23. The agency filed the second supplementary charge sheet when Swamy was produced before the court. Since the beginning Swamy has claimed that he has never been to Bhima-Koregaon. Those who have been chargesheeted include Fr Swamy (83), Prof Anand Telumbde (70), Gautam Navlakha (67), Prof Hany Babu (54), members of cultural group Kabir Kala Manch — Sagar Gorkhe (32), Ramesh Gaichor (38) and Jyoti Jagtap.

RAJ PRIEST SET ON FIRE BY LAND GRABBERS, DIES

Jaipur, Oct. 9: A priest died after being set on fire allegedly by five people who wanted to encroach on temple land in Rajasthan's Karauli district, police said on Friday.

The five accused allegedly poured petrol on Babu Lal Vaishnav and set him on fire in Bukna village on Wednesday. He was referred to the SMS hospital in Jaipur in a critical condition. Vaishnav succumbed to injuries on Thursday night.

Two accused have been rounded up and are being interrogated, SP, Karauli, Mrudul Kachhawa, said.

Police said the accused wanted to encroach upon the land of the temple. A case of attempt to murder was registered on Thursday and now it will be converted into a murder case after the death of the priest, the SP said.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi pays tribute to Union minister and Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) leader Ram Vilas Paswan after his demise on Thursday evening, at his Janpath residence in New Delhi on Friday.

— PTI

JD(U) list bears stamp of Nitish's social engineering

Nitish has made a sagacious attempt to consolidate his EBC support base

Patna, Oct. 9: The list of JD(U) candidates for the Bihar Assembly elections bears the unmistakable stamp of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, who has made a sagacious attempt to consolidate his extremely backward castes (EBC) support base while trying to make a dent into RJD's Muslim-Yadav combine.

In accordance with the seat-sharing formula for the 243-member Assembly, the JD(U) has got 122 seats but is contesting only 115, leaving the remaining seven for the Hindustani Awam Morcha of former chief minister Jitan Ram Manjhi, who is back in the NDA.

The EBCs, numerically large but disorganised, have found a pride of place in the list, with 19 candidates drawn from this social segment, nurtured over the years by Kumar as a bulwark against the RJD.

Kumar, as part of his social engineering, zealously courted them through welfare measures like sub-quotas for them in government jobs in an attempt to make inroads into RJD supreme Lalu Prasad's once solid OBC support base. For years the OBCs had almost voted for the RJD en bloc before Kumar parted ways with the

Lalu gets bail in Chaibasa case; in jail in another case

NAYEAR AZAD | DC
PATNA, OCT. 9

The Jharkhand High Court on Friday granted bail to RJD chief Lalu Yadav in a fodder scam case involving the illegal withdrawal of funds from the Chaibasa treasury. The case pertains to fraudulent withdrawal of ₹33.67 crore from Chaibasa treasury in Jharkhand during 1992-93 when he was the chief minister of undivided Bihar.

While granting bail, the court asked him to submit two personal bonds of ₹50,000 each and deposit ₹2 lakh. According to

Yadav chieftain.

Even more conspicuous is the candidature of 19 Yadavs, numerically the largest caste group in Bihar who have, by and large, stood rock solid behind the RJD.

Yadav candidates like sitting MLAs Bijendra Prasad Yadav and Poonam Yadav are old JD(U) hands.

However, new entrants

Lalu Yadav's counsel “the bail was granted after he completed half of the punishment of five years in the particular case”.

They, however, added that “Lalu Yadav will remain in prison as he has been convicted in other fodder scam cases”. Sources said that the court on Friday heard only the petition related to Chaibasa treasury while another case related to Dumka treasury is to come up for hearing on November 9.

Lalu Yadav has been languishing in jail since December 2017. He was shifted to Rajendra Institute of Medical

Sciences (RIMS) Ranchi in March 2018 after his health condition deteriorated. However, recently he was shifted to Kelly bungalow on the hospital premises due to Covid-19.

The court's verdict has come as a huge relief for the RJD ahead of

Assembly elections scheduled to begin from October 28. Talking to reporters in Patna RJD spokesperson Shakti Yadav said that, “the party has welcomed the court's verdict and hopes to see him out of jail soon. Lalu Yadav is a mass leader and always raised his voice for poor and deprived”.

returning to the NDA.

Roy, who has been fielded from his pocket borough Parsa, is the father of Aishwarya Roy, who got married to the RJD supreme's elder son Tej Pratap Yadav in 2018 but was abandoned by her husband barely six months after tying the knot.

Jaivardhan, who won Paliganj for the RJD in

2015, walked into the JD(U) camp a couple of months ago. His exit seems to have made things too hot to handle for the RJD which has handed over Paliganj to the CPI(ML) as part of a hurriedly cobbled alliance.

Jaivardhan Yadav is the grandson of Congress veteran late Ram Lakhman Singh Yadav, a former union minister and the most formidable Yadav leader in Bihar of the pre-Mandal era.

With 18 Yadav and 11 Muslim nominees, the JD(U) also seems to have sought to make a dent into the RJDs famed MY combination, the bedrock of the party's support base.

The candidature of 12 Kurnmis, who are numerically small, is hardly surprising. The community takes pride in the fact that the chief minister is from amongst them. Of strategic importance, though, is party tickets to 15 Kushwahas, numerically the largest among OBCs after the Yadavs.

Kurnmis and Koeris, the caste name by which Kushwahas are more popularly known, have been seen as political comrades in arms. Their camaraderie have earned them the sobriquet Luv-Kush in the political parlance of Bihar. — PTI

1.04 lakh firearms deposited with police in MP

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC
BHOPAL, OCT. 9

Bandits no longer rule Madhya Pradesh's badlands of Chambal. But, the legacy of gun culture left behind by them continues to thrive in the region.

The growing firearm enthusiasts in the region are a testimony to it.

Come elections, the 'proud owners' of firearms, in varying sizes and designs, stand in long queues before the local police stations to deposit their licensed weapons.

This is a common sight in the seven districts of the Gwalior-Chambal region during the poll time.

Of the 28 Assembly constituencies going to by-elections in MP on November 3, 16 fall in Gwalior-Chambal region.

A staggering number of 1.04 lakh firearms, including 12 bore guns, 315 bore rifles, revolvers and pistols, have so far been deposited in Gwalior-Chambal region in the state ahead of November 3 by-elections in 28 assembly constituencies in MP.

“Another one lakh weapons are to be deposited in the police stations in the area in coming days”, a senior police officer posted in the region told this newspaper on Friday.

“Guns have become social

status in the region. The culture traces back to Mughal era. But, the yester-years bandits of Chambal have romanticised the gun culture in the region”, the police officer said.

“The gun culture runs in the veins of the region”, Gwalior district superintendent of police Amit Sanghi said.

Of the 1.04 lakh weapons deposited in Gwalior-Chambal region, maximum number of 29,000 guns has been deposited in Gwalior district.

Similarly, 27,000 firearms have been deposited in Morena district, 22,000 in Bhind district, 10,000 in Shivpuri, a little over 8,000 in Datia district, around 4,500 in Guna district and 3,800 weapons have been deposited in Ashok Nagar district.

The weapons are deposited in the local police stations till the completion of the whole election process.

“People become emotional while depositing their weapons, their most loved possession, with the local police stations”, Giriraj Rajoria, a social activist of Morena district told this newspaper.

“The guns have become an inseparable part of the culture of people in the region. Hardly, a festival in the region is celebrated without celebratory firing”, he added.

Rahul hits out at Modi over wind turbines suggestion

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 9

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday took a jibe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his suggestion that wind turbines can be used to generate clean drinking water, oxygen and energy, evoking sharp reactions from BJP leaders who said he needs to read scientific papers.

Gandhi tweeted, “The real danger to India isn't that our PM doesn't understand. It's the fact that nobody around him has the guts to tell him,” he also posted a video of the Prime Minister's views on wind turbines expressed a few days ago during an interaction with Henrik Andersen, head of Danish wind turbine-maker Vestas.

In the video, the Prime Minister is heard saying that if wind turbines could collect moisture from air, besides producing power, it could help tackle drinking water shortage.

Modi said, “The other suggestion I have is that we can separate oxygen from the air using this same tur-

bine...If this can be done, one wind turbine can then provide drinking water, oxygen, and energy...Can your scientists do something to innovate in that direction?”

Hitting back at Gandhi, Union minister Piyush Goyal said, “Nobody around Rahul Gandhi has the guts to tell him that he doesn't understand. He mocks Narendra Modi's ideas when the CEO of the world's leading company endorses them.”

He also tagged a news report with his tweet that says wind turbines create water from thin air.

Textile minister Smriti Irani also took on Gandhi on Twitter, referring to him as ‘Yuvraj’, and saying that he was ignorant and doesn't understand.

She tweeted, “They say ignorance is bliss, but rarely in Indian politics has an individual made a conscious effort to sustain his ignorance. It seems the real danger to the Congress flourishes unabashedly and no one seems to have the guts to tell the Yuvraj otherwise”.

25 civilians killed in kangaroo court, say Maoists

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC
BHOPAL, OCT. 9

Maoists have owned up the responsibility of killing 25 people, executed in their kangaroo court, in Chhattisgarh's south Bastar district of Bijapur in the last one month.

A press release issued by Dandakaranya special zonal committee of outlawed CPI (Maoist) said the 25 people were executed after being convicted in the ‘jan adalat’ or kangaroo court of Maoists, for spying for police and sabotaging the Naxal movement.

The press release was signed by the spokesman of the Dandakaranya special zonal committee under his Maoist name, Vikalpa.

Of those executed in the kangaroo court, 12 were ‘gopaniya sainiks’ or secret soldiers, appointed unofficially by Chhattisgarh police, five

● OF THOSE executed in the kangaroo court, 12 were ‘gopaniya sainiks’ or secret soldiers, appointed unofficially by Chhattisgarh police, five were saboteurs of the Maoist movement, and eight were police informers.

were saboteurs of the Maoist movement, and eight were police informers, the release said.

The press release said the divisional committee member and in-charge of Gangaloor area committee of Maoists Vijja Modium alias Badru was killed after being convicted by ‘jan adalat’ for spying for police.

Chhattisgarh police had earlier claimed that Badru, carrying a bounty of ₹8 lakh on his head was killed in fratricidal killing among Naxal cadres on October one over killing of civilians in Bijapur district by Maoists.



IN BRIEF

Japan gears up for typhoon

Tokyo: A slow-moving typhoon off Japan's southern coast has triggered gusts and rain across a large part of the country and could bring heavy rains to the Tokyo region early next week, though it was not expected to make landfall, officials said on Friday. Disaster officials, nevertheless, urged residents to take precautions early. Typhoon Chan-hom was south of Japan's Shikoku island on Friday afternoon with maximum winds of 126 kilometres (78 miles) per hour, the Meteorological Agency said. The agency said Chan-hom took a route farther from the Japanese coast than expected and was not expected to make a landfall.

Another hurricane to hit Louisiana

Abbeville: Boarded windows and empty sidewalks made parts of Louisiana's Acadiana region look like empty movie sets as major Hurricane Delta roared ever closer to the US Gulf coast, apparently on track to smash into the same southwestern part of the state where Hurricane Laura blasted ashore six weeks ago. Forecasters said Delta — the 25th named storm of an unprecedented Atlantic hurricane season — would likely crash ashore on Friday evening somewhere on southwest Louisiana's coast. The question was whether it would remain at devastating Category 3 strength or drop just before landfall to a still extremely dangerous Category 2 storm — with winds falling below 110 miles per hour (177 kph).

Venezuelans flee on foot as troubles rise

Pamplona: Eleazar Hernández slept on a sidewalk amid a light drizzle, temperatures that dipped close to freezing and the roar of passing trucks. The 23-year-old Venezuelan migrant was trying to make it to the Colombian city of Medellín with his wife, who is seven months pregnant. But the couple had run out of money for transportation by the time they reached Pamplona, a small mountain town over 300 miles (482 km) away from their final destination. Unable to buy a bus ticket, Hernández pinned his hopes on catching a ride on the back of a truck. It was the safest way to cross the Paramo de Berlin, a freezing plateau located at 13,000 feet (4,000 meters). "My wife can barely walk," said Hernández, who had spent four days sleeping on Pamplona's sidewalks. "We need transport to get us out of here." After months of Covid-19 lockdowns that halted one of the world's biggest migration movements in recent years, Venezuelans are once again fleeing their nation's economic and humanitarian crisis.

ANTIBODIES FOUND IN BLOOD, SALIVA OF COVID PATIENTS

Boston, Oct. 9: Scientists, including one of Indian-origin, have documented the persistence of antibodies that target the Coronavirus in the blood and saliva of patients with Covid-19 at least three months after symptom onset, a finding that may lead to alternative methods of testing for the viral infection.

The study, published in the journal Science, points to the IgG class of antibodies as the longest-lasting antibodies detectable in the patients during this time frame, and may serve as promising targets to detect and evaluate immune responses against the SARS-CoV-2 virus. According to the researchers, including those from the Harvard Medical School in the US, these antibodies could be detected at similar levels in both blood and saliva, suggesting that saliva could be used as an alternative biofluid for antibody testing. In the research, Anita Iyer and her team measured antibody responses in the blood of 343 patients with Covid-19 for up to 122 days after symptom onset, and compared these responses to those of 1,548 control individuals sampled before the pandemic.

The scientists focused only on antibodies specific to the receptor binding domain of the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein which it uses to enter host cells. They estimated sensitivities of the antibody types IgG, IgA, and IgM at 95 per cent, 90 per cent and 81 per cent, respectively, for detecting infected individuals between 15 to 28 weeks after symptom onset.

RIVALS RALLY IN KYRGYZSTAN AS PRESIDENT AGREES TO QUIT

Bishkek: Thousands were out in the streets of Kyrgyzstan's capital Bishkek on Friday as rival factions made grabs for power and embattled pro-Russian President Sooronbay Jeenbekov said he was ready to resign to end days of post-election chaos.

There has been little evidence of central government in Bishkek since a parliamentary vote in the ex-Soviet republic on Sunday sparked protests that morphed into violent unrest.

One person has been killed and more than a thousand injured in the violence. On Friday Jeenbekov signed off on the resignation of the government in place before the election, which opposition parties say was rigged by massive vote-buying in favour of parties close to the president. — *AFP*

PAK BANS TIKTOK CITING 'IMMORAL' CONTENT ON APP

Islamabad, Oct. 9: Pakistan's telecom watchdog on Friday banned the popular Chinese video-sharing app TikTok after getting numerous complaints against its "immoral" content.

The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) said in a statement that a "number of complaints from different segments of the society" were made "against immoral/indecent content" on TikTok.

The regulator took the step after a "final notice" was given to TikTok to comply with the instructions for development of an effective mechanism for a proactive moderation of its unlawful online contents, it said. — *PTI*

CHINA JOINS COVAX PACT FOR GLOBAL SUPPLY OF VIRUS VACCINES

Beijing, Oct. 9: China has officially joined the World Health Organisation's (WHO) COVAX alliance to equitably distribute Covid-19 vaccines around the globe, ending speculation that it plans to supply them on its own to developing countries to improve its image dented by the pandemic since it emerged in Wuhan in December last year.

According to the WHO, countries should join the Covid-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility (COVAX Facility) by September 18 but not later than October 9 with upfront payments. "On October 8, China and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, signed an agreement, officially joining COVAX," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said in a statement on Friday.

"This is an important step China has taken to uphold the concept of a shared community of health for all and to honour its commitment to turn Covid-19 vaccines into a global public good," she said, apparently refuting reports that China plans to distribute the vaccines to developing countries on its own ahead of developed countries. — *PTI*

Germany empties squatters



A policeman stands inside the squatted building at Liebig Street 34 after the eviction of squatters in the east Berlin neighbourhood of Friedrichshain on Friday. — *AFP*

UN World Food Programme wins Nobel Prize for Peace

Rome, Oct. 9: The United Nations' World Food Programme won the Nobel Peace Prize on Friday for its efforts to fight hunger in regions of conflict and hardship around the globe. From air-dropping food in South Sudan to creating an emergency delivery service to keep aid flowing despite Coronavirus travel restrictions, the Rome-based organisation has long specialised in getting assistance to some of the world's most dangerous and precarious places.

It provided assistance to almost 100 million people in 88 countries last year.

● **IT PROVIDED assistance to almost 100 million people in 88 countries last year.**

"With this year's award, the (committee) wishes to turn the eyes of the world to the millions of people who suffer from or face the threat of hunger," said Berit Reiss-Andersen, the chair of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, announcing the award in Oslo. "The World Food Programme plays a key role in multilateral cooperation on making food security an instrument of peace."

The head of the organi-

sation said his entire team deserved the award. "I know I'm not deserving of an award like this, but all the men and women around the world in the World Food Programme and our partners who put their lives on the line every day," David Beasley said.

Beasley said he found out about the award from a WFP media officer. The organisation has long been headed by an American, and US President Donald Trump nominated the former Republican governor of South Carolina for the post in 2017. — *AP*

FB deletes fake profiles backing Trump

Menlo Park (US), Oct. 9: Facebook has removed 276 accounts that used fake profiles to pose as right-leaning Americans and comment on news articles, often in favour of President Donald Trump, the company announced on Thursday. The platform also permanently banned an Arizona-based digital communications firm that it said was behind the fake accounts.

The move was prompted by reporting last month in The Washington Post that a

pro-Trump group known as Turning Point Action was paying teenagers to post coordinated, supportive messages, a violation of Facebook's rules.

Facebook and Twitter have been regularly removing fake accounts — both domestic and foreign — that try to insert themselves in the US political discourse and influence the election. But social media companies face broader threats around misinformation and voter suppression that at times come

from President Donald Trump himself. The latest network Facebook removed became active before the 2018 midterm elections and went dormant until June, when the accounts began posting on topics including the

Coronavirus pandemic, criticism of the Democratic Party and its nominee, former Vice President Joe Biden, as well as praise for Trump and other Republicans.

"So sick of democrats continuing to make repub-

licans look bad! It makes me tired of politics and I just believe Republicans are much more humble when it comes to money because Democrats will do anything to screw over Americans," read one post Facebook cited as an example.

Individuals behind the accounts used stock photos to create fake profiles, many of which were removed by Facebook's automated detection software. Facebook determined that the accounts were being coordinated by

Bid to kidnap Michigan Gov.

13 charged in plotting abduction, says police

Detroit, Oct. 9: Agents foiled a stunning plot to kidnap Michigan Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, authorities said on Thursday in announcing charges in an alleged scheme that involved months of planning and even rehearsals to snatch Whitmer from her vacation home.

Six men were charged in federal court with conspiring to kidnap the governor in reaction to what they viewed as her "uncontrolled power," according to a federal complaint. Separately, seven others were charged under the state's anti-terrorism laws for allegedly targeting police and the state Capitol.

"All of us in Michigan can disagree about politics, but those disagreements should never, ever amount to violence. Violence has been prevented today," Detroit U.S. Attorney Matthew Schneider said.

The six men charged in federal court plotted for months, consulting and training with members of a group that federal authorities described as a militia, and undertaking rehearsals in August and September, according to an FBI affidavit. They were arrested on Wednesday night and face up to life in prison if convicted. Four planned to meet on Wednesday to "make a payment on explosives and exchange tactical gear," the FBI said in the court filing.

The FBI quoted one of the accused as saying Whitmer "has no checks and balances at all. She has uncontrolled power right now. All good things must come to an end." Andrew Birge, the U.S. attorney in western Michigan, called them "violent extremists." — *AP*

Amid Covid, Trump plans rally in Florida

Washington, Oct. 9: Donald Trump, who is still recovering from Covid-19, has suggested he might organise a rally in Florida on Saturday, while continuing to ignore questions on whether he has yet tested negative for the disease.

On Thursday night, Trump said: "I think I'm going to try doing a rally on Saturday night if we can, if we have enough time to put it together."

"But we want to do a rally in Florida, probably in Florida on Saturday night, might come back and do one in Pennsylvania, on the following night."

At least one Trump rally in Tulsa, Oklahoma, has been linked by a local health official to a spike in Coronavirus cases. Most supporters at recent Trump events have eschewed masks and social distancing measures to slow the spread of disease. On asking whether he had yet to test negative for Coronavirus — or whether he had been tested at all since his positive test last week — the president did not directly respond, instead touting the experimental drugs he had been treated with. He said he would be likely be tested on Friday. — *Agencies*

Pelosi doubts Trump's fitness to serve nation

Washington, Oct. 9: House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is questioning President Donald Trump's fitness to serve, announcing legislation on Thursday that would create a commission to allow Congress to intervene under the 25th Amendment and remove the president from executive duties.

Just weeks before the November 3 election, Pelosi said Trump needs to disclose more about his health after his Covid-19 diagnosis. She noted Trump's "strange tweet" halting talks on a new Coronavirus aid package — he subsequently tried to reverse course — and said Americans need to know

when, exactly, he first contracted Covid as others in the White House became infected.

On Friday, she plans to roll out the legislation that would launch the commission for review. "The public needs to know the health condition of the president," Pelosi said, later invoking the 25th Amendment, which allows a president's cabinet or Congress to intervene when a president is unable to conduct the duties of the office. Trump responded swiftly via Twitter.

"Crazy Nancy is the one who should be under observation. They don't call her Crazy for nothing!" the president said. — *AP*

US military not informed about leaving Afghan

Washington, Oct. 9: The US military was blindsided on Thursday by President Donald Trump's assertion that all US troops will be out of Afghanistan by the end of the year, with US officials saying they are not aware of such a plan and have gotten no actual order to accelerate the more gradual pullout they've been executing.

Trump's comments, laid out in a confusing progression of comments and a tweet, alarmed Pentagon and State officials who fear that putting a definitive date on troop withdrawal could undercut negotiations to finalise a peace deal between the Taliban and the Afghan government.

They also fear a hasty withdrawal could force the US to leave behind sensitive military equipment. And they continue to stress that the Taliban has still not met requirements to reduce

violence against the Afghans, a key element of the US withdrawal plan. The Taliban welcomed Trump's announcements, which started with a tweet on Wednesday saying "we should have the small remaining number of our BRAVE Men and Women serving in Afghanistan home by Christmas". He reinforced early withdrawal plans on Thursday morning, in an interview that understated the number of troops currently in Afghanistan.

"We're down to 4,000 troops in Afghanistan. I'll have them home by the end of the year. They're coming home, you know, as we speak. Nineteen years is enough. They're acting as policemen, OK? They're not acting as troops," Trump said.

Multiple US officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said they know of no plan for either new deadline. — *AP*

Biden slams Don over remarks on Harris

Washington, Oct. 9: Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden has described President Donald Trump's remarks about Kamala Harris after a debate between her and Vice President Mike Pence as "despicable" and "beneath the office of the presidency".

Pence and Biden's running mate Harris came face to face in the vice presidential debate on Wednesday, which saw sparring over Trump's handling of the Covid-19 pandemic, jobs,

China, racial tensions and climate change. Trump and Biden have separately lauded their deputies. In an interview on Thursday, Trump hit out at Harris saying, if Biden wins the November 3 US Elections, Harris will take over as president in a month's time. "She is a communist. She's not a socialist. She's well beyond a socialist. Take a look at her views. She wants to open up the borders to allow killers and murderers and rapists to pour into our country," he said.

Hours later, Biden hit out Trump for his remarks, saying the American people are sick and tired of it. "It's despicable, so beneath the office of the presidency and the American people are sick and tired of it. They know who this man is, it's got to stop," Biden said in the battle ground of State of Arizona with Harris by his side.

"This (Harris) is a person who is ready on day one to be president of the United States of America. This is a person who has more

integrity in her little finger than most people have in their whole body... He (Trump) has great difficulty dealing with strong women," the Democratic presidential candidate said. "You did a great job," he told Harris.

Responding to a query, Biden said there is no place for hate in America. "Both of us have been talking about this for some time, about how white supremacists and these militias are a genuine threat," he said. — *PTI*

PANDEMIC | DEFYING Government data says more than 45% of population took inter-country trips

637mn Chinese travel on Golden Week holiday

Hong Kong, Oct. 9: Some 637 million Chinese tourists took domestic trips during the eight-day Golden Week holiday, spending the equivalent of tens of billions of dollars at a time when China is seeking to boost consumer spending to stimulate the economy.

The holiday, which began on October 1, saw more than 45% of China's population take trips within the country and spend 466.6 billion yuan (\$69.5 billion), according to data from China's Ministry of Culture and Tourism. That marked a decline of 21% for domestic tourists from last year's Golden Week and a 30% decline for spending. Still the numbers show consumption is beginning to bounce back following the

● **THE GOLDEN Week tourism and spending figures indicated domestic consumption was recovering well, especially as consumers engaged in "revenge buying".**

battering it took earlier in the year from the Coronavirus pandemic.

Travel within the country, and sometimes even within cities, was restricted beginning with the Lunar New Year in January as China fought the spread of the Coronavirus that emerged in the central city of Wuhan. During the five-day Labour Day holiday in May, domestic tourism revenue was down nearly 60% from the previous year. "Chinese consumer confi-

dence has been significantly recovered due to the proper control of pandemic, government pro-consumption policies and stimulus and faster than expected resumption of business activities," said Jennifer Ye, PwC's China consumer markets leader. The Golden Week tourism and spending figures indicated domestic consumption was recovering well, especially as consumers engaged in "revenge buying" to make up for the previous months when they were unable to travel, she said.

With many Chinese tourists unable to travel abroad due to global travel restrictions, those who previously travelled to Hong Kong and South Korea for duty-free shopping turned

to the southern Chinese island of Hainan instead, spending 530 million yuan (\$78 million) at duty free shops during the first five days of the holiday, according to a report by Chinese state broadcaster CCTV. The Chinese province raised duty-free shopping limits on July 1, hoping to attract domestic tourists and compete with shopping hubs in Europe and other parts of Asia. China has reported no locally transmitted Coronavirus infections since August 16, and restrictions have been eased. To boost domestic tourism, local governments and online travel platforms like Ctrip and Fliggy are offering tourists discounts on attraction tickets, hotels and tour packages. — *AP*

China denies Covid originated in Wuhan

Beijing, Oct. 9: China on Friday claimed that the coronavirus broke out in the various parts of the world last year but it was the only one to have reported and acted first, refuting the widely-held view that the deadly contagion originated in Wuhan before turning out to be a pandemic.

China, besides denying the US allegations that Covid-19 has emerged from a bio-lab in Wuhan, also rejected that it emanated from a wet market in the central Chinese city

from bats or pangolins before infecting humans.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said that "the Coronavirus is a new kind of virus as more and more facts emerge as reports reveal, we all know that the epidemic broke out in various places in the world at the end of last year, while China was the first to report the outbreak, identified the pathogen and shared the genome sequence with the world." — *PTI*

DECCAN Chronicle

10 OCTOBER 2020

Second wave ahead; go easy on festivals

The government's decision to roll out a massive awareness campaign on containing the spread of Covid-19 ahead of the festival season, which will also see an election to the Bihar Assembly, is a welcome move. The focus of the campaign is not a new formula, rather the old one that all agencies including the World Health Organisation, have been advocating: wearing masks in public places, social distancing and hand hygiene. The government will use all media avenues, including social media, to spread the message.

India is second only to the United States in the total Covid-19 caseload and the daily spike in numbers these days vary anywhere between 70,000 and 90,000. The southern states, which in the initial days of the pandemic showed signs of resistance, have given in: Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu have reported daily caseloads of 10,000 and above this week. There are experts who predict the numbers will see a further surge in the next two months, which is also the festival season in many states. There has been criticism that the government planned poorly during the national lockdown and no effective steps were taken nor massive awareness campaigns launched to contain the spread of the virus. Little effort was made to augment the healthcare infrastructure in the country, especially in the villages that have of late been bearing the brunt of the pandemic.

After four editions of the lockdown the government has been relaxing the controls that had been imposed on human and economic activity. Inter-state movement of people and vehicles, which was strictly banned during lockdown, has already been restored to the pre-lockdown days. Schools and educational institutions are on their way to return to normal functioning, albeit with precautionary measures. Recreational centres, including cinema halls are also being opened.

With the government allowing places of worship to function, the next weeks will see devotees flocking to their favourite pilgrim centres for celebrating their annual festivals. There have been indications that Kerala saw a sudden spurt in infection after Onam, the universal festival of the people of the state. If that is an indication, then the festivals across India could turn out to be super spreader events and only a massive campaign can help the country escape another disastrous bout of virus spread. Elections to the Bihar Assembly are scheduled to be held in November. The Election Commission of India has announced restrictions on the campaigning but an effective implementation of the same must be ensured in the state, which is one of the states hit hard by the pandemic. Experts say that the national lockdown has only postponed the peaking of the pandemic and predict that there will be a shortage of isolation beds, ventilators and intensive care units by the second week of November. The state governments and the health workers, the front-line warriors against the pandemic, are a fatigued lot, and the Union government should also design ways to strengthen them. It will only add to the impact of the awareness campaign.

Paswan's supple politics

Ram Vilas Paswan, who passed away following serious health complications on Thursday at the age of 74, is likely to be remembered for his long innings as a Union minister in governments of many hues. His identity as a Lohia socialist, with which he embarked on his political journey as a young man, as well as his identity as one born in a dalit sub-caste of Bihar, were submerged along the way.

But he fell back on the dalit factor to negotiate his way through the thicket of Bihar and national politics and to retain a place in the council of ministers of many Prime Ministers, cutting across party and ideological lines.

Unlike in some other states, the emergence of dalit political consciousness remained relatively weak in Bihar. It did not yield a vibrant political platform woven around that fundamental idea, as exemplified by Kanshi Ram and Mayawati in the case of Uttar Pradesh. Mr Paswan was not one to put his shoulder to the wheel.

The late leader of Bihar's Passi community had resigned his Cabinet position in the Atal Behari Vajpayee government to protest the communal carnage of 2002 in Gujarat, where the government was of the BJP, the PM's own party. The then state chief minister, Narendra Modi, came close to be sacked at the PM's instance. Subsequently, the senior Bihar politician showed enough suppleness to join the Cabinet of PM Modi.

When he first came to Parliament in 1977 on the Janata Party ticket, the young Lohiaite made an impression right away with his fine debating skills and careful preparation on the subjects he spoke on. That is an attitude legislators can emulate with profit.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

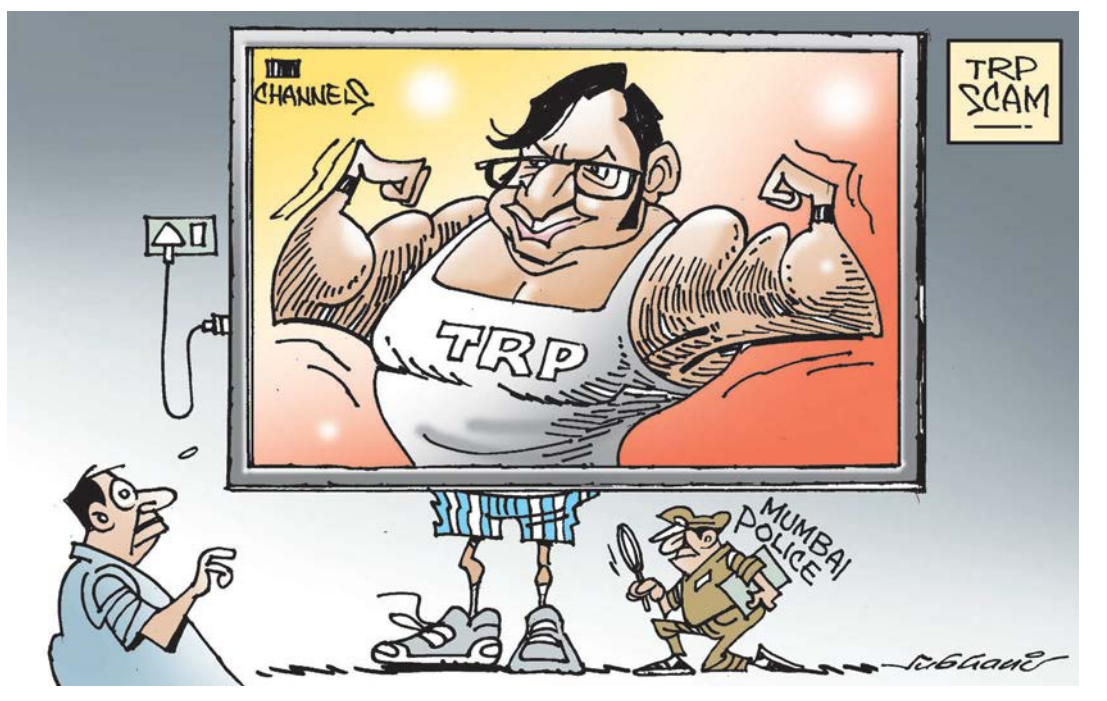
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Subhani



India's new optics for post-US Afghanistan

Anand K. Sahay

Far & Near



Using the just-ended visit of Dr Abdullah Abdullah, the senior Afghan politician who is now the chairman of the High Council for National Reconciliation, India appears to have done its own signalling to the Afghan government, the various Afghan factions including the Taliban, and to the region at large.

Evidently, arranging the optics was deemed important since this was Dr Abdullah's first visit to New Delhi in his present capacity in which he guides Afghanistan's conversation with the Taliban (and its backer Pakistan) in all its multi-hued complexity in the Qatari capital of Doha.

As for timing, the visit took place within days of the inauguration of the negotiation process between the Afghan government and the Taliban last Saturday, 19 years after the start of the present war in Afghanistan. On this count too, the furtherance of the optics to convey intent, and long-term perspective, has been found useful since the situation and the atmospherics at the talking table, and the Afghan theatre more broadly, are likely to be fluid and carry a clear potential for regression.

The senior Afghan leader was on a briefing visit. New Delhi's well-known stance — and Kabul's just as well-known aspiration in the post-Taliban phase — were therefore reiterated for the record. Prime Minister Narendra Modi also assured the senior Afghan leader that the peace talks in Doha had India's backing. The reiteration was perhaps required in the light of certain elements in Pakistan attempting to establish the impression that India does not want the Doha talks to succeed.

India has for many years underlined the need for any reconciliation talks with the Taliban to be Afghan-owned, Afghan-led and Afghan-controlled. On the ground these conditions are not being fulfilled. It is well known that after many hiccups the talks have eventually reached the starting point, thanks to Washington's pushing, coaxing, and forcing Pakistan to let the Taliban (whom Islamabad has controlled) join meaningful negotiations, and Russia too lending its weight to the incipient process in the expectation of the possibility of peace. For the sake of the record, though, the talks are Afghan-owned in the sense that Kabul won't now disavow the present phase.

India has also sought to emphasise that any outcome acceptable to the Afghans themselves will be acceptable to it. The proviso — naturally — is that Afghanistan should remain independent, sovereign and free from foreign tutelage. Flowing from this is the sub-formulation, more recently explicated, that Afghan soil must not be permitted to be used for any anti-India terrorist activity.

Kabul accepts this readily and Dr Abdullah said so in New Delhi. To be realistic, however, the fulfilment of all, some, or none of the above objectives will depend on the shape the talks take and the texture of the final outcome whose horizon, at this stage, appears indeterminate and unattractive.

Although the grandiloquently billed peace talks have been inaugurated, the Taliban (in reality Pakistan) have not agreed to a ceasefire or cessation of violence, believing that they will lose leverage if ordinary Afghans were not pushed to the brink and to a stage of total war-exhaustion.

Since the end of February this year, when the United States and the Taliban reached an agreement which adumbrated the peace talks, around 12,000 civilians have been killed in the Afghan violence and 15,000 injured. This week alone, attacks have taken place in 20 out of Afghanistan's 34 provinces. There have been targeted assassinations and high-profile attempts, such as the one on vice-president Amrullah Saleh.

At the political level, some in the country are trying to pre-position themselves to reach a future accommodation with the Taliban (should this be necessary), while some factions are said to be keeping the powder dry for a renewed military flareup. On the broader, more popular plane, the emerging "New Afghanistan", although not armed, is eager to hold on to the gains of democracy secured in the past two decades. This includes women, large sections of the youth and the ethnic minorities. The channelisation of the political conduct of this constituency is yet to be ascertained.

It is in this background that New Delhi has done its signalling, which is of a kind it has not done before, although India and Afghanistan are "strategic" partners (to which Dr Abdullah alluded during his visit). When the senior Afghan figure sat in discussion with national security adviser Ajit Doval on Wednesday, there were also present on the Indian side the Chief of Defence Staff and the Army Chief, besides the diplomacy complement.

The new kind of well-advertised lineup at the discussion on the Indian

The new kind of well-advertised lineup at the discussion on the Indian side appears to semaphoring that India is likely to keep the military dimension of things in full view

side appears to semaphoring that India is likely to keep the military dimension of things in full view as it unrolls its diplomacy, continued development and capacity-building aid, and political goodwill, in the unfolding scenario as dictated by the state of the Doha talks. When a month ago external affairs minister S. Jaishankar virtually addressed the opening ceremony at Doha, it became clear India had gone past its earlier catechism of keeping the Taliban at arm's length and navigating a new path.

This does signify the possible start of a full-spectrum approach in light of the inability of the Taliban or the Afghan security forces to prevail, leading to the current military stalemate. However, Indian diplomacy is typically long on promise. There was no further talk of Balochistan in policy circles after Prime Minister Narendra Modi referred to it in his Independence Day speech in 2016, but the Baloch factions, energised by it, found their cadres killed. In order to carry credibility with interlocutors — seen and unseen — the signalling seen this week is apt to need refurbishment.

Dr Abdullah came to New Delhi via Pakistan, where he urged reduction of violence to be taken seriously by the Taliban, and for flexibility to be shown in the Doha negotiations (the Taliban continue to harp on an Islamic "emirate" rather than a "republic").

Last Sunday, President Ashraf Ghani visited Doha, where he met his government's negotiators and the US diplomats (but not the Taliban) and underscored the need for a ceasefire as a continuing war will cost the Afghan people "trillions of dollars" in lost development.

How we approach the Doha talks will be an indicator of how we approach the post-US Afghanistan. While we are legitimate stakeholders, our enlightened self-interest is best served in standing with resolve alongside a genuinely sovereign and democracy-seeking Afghanistan.

LETTERS

TRP RATINGS

It is appalling to read that in order to get more TRP ratings, barometers have been installed across the country by news channels and their agencies (DC, Oct. 9). Instead of creating innovative programmes, these TV channels are resorting to unsavoury gimmicks that are highly deplorable.

Dr C. Ghanshyam
Visakhapatnam

PROTECT WOMEN

The whole nation should be determined to end atrocities against women. UP government is trying to sidetrack the issue by saying international agencies are trying to tarnish the image of UP government. The politician saying that daughters should be groomed properly by parents must change his attitude. Addressing the crime against poor girls from villages in a proper way is the need of the hour. Trying to hush up the incident is not fair.

K.L. Rao
Visakhapatnam

MARATHAS IN BIHAR

During 2015 Assembly elections, the Shiv Sena and NCP did not open their account and now both parties are once again planning to contest some seats and send star campaigners to caste-riddled Bihar (DC, Oct. 9). It is unclear what purpose will be served in that election when it is a battle between local parties and outsiders have no prospects. Even AAP, BSP and MIM have previously forayed into elections outside their states and saw the writing on the all.

Parthasarathy Mandadi
Tirupati

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

Cambodia becomes republic

PHNOM PEHN, Oct. 9 At 7.04 am local time, the new Khmer Republic was proclaimed in Cambodia's National Assembly. The republic, ending the rule of Kings lasting more than a thousand years was brought into being by Im Tam, President of the National Assembly. "We solemnly proclaim on October 9 that from this hour Cambodia is a republic, one and indivisible, to be known as the Khmer republic," Im Tam said.

Recalling the old Cambodian saying, "Crazy like the King," he said the republic would end what was "often cruel, capricious rule by the monarchy."

Farrukh Dhondy
Cabbages & Kings



"I never believed that caterpillars Would fly on sprouted wings Or why poets hearing chirpings Could say the nightingale sings

Or that all the people born Within minutes on the same day Were destined to a certain path Along this Milky way

Or that scattered haphazard stars Make shapes in the night sky So, tell me fellow traveller, Has beauty passed me by?"

— From **The Ruins of Bachchoo** by Bachchoo

Will India too leave 'divided histories', like US & Britain?

The mass protests occasioned by the killing of black citizens by the American police gave a universal and spectacular boost to the Black Lives Matter movement founded several years ago. The current phase of support has had some expected and some unexpected corollaries.

The demonstrations in the US resulted in a battlefield of verbal swordplay — and in this world of Twitters, Instagrammatic jitters and Facebook litters, that's not surprising. Everyone in the world thinks they have some

thing to say which amounts to news or wisdom.

One predictable consequence was that the BBC and national theatrical organisations announced that they would set aside funds and make space to include people of "diverse" origins and proclivities.

An unpredictable consequence was the statement from the supermarket chain Sainsbury who announced its intolerance of racism: "We proudly represent and serve our diverse society, and anyone who does not want to shop with an inclusive retailer is welcome to shop elsewhere." Now Sainsbury is 22 per cent owned by Qatar and a recent UN report said that country practices "structural racial discrimination through a de facto caste system based on national origin". Under this system, European, North American, Australian and Arab nationals "systematically enjoy greater human rights protections than South Asian and sub-Saharan nationalities".

I am the proud holder, gentle reader, of both a British passport and enjoy the status of an Overseas Citizen of my native India. The word "nationality" then is an ambivalent one. Will I enjoy full human rights in Qatar? And would

Barack and Michelle Obama? I shall keep going to Sainsbury, but Qatar? Maybe not.

One of the consequences of the public explosion that was BLM is that people in Britain who were deemed to have had a background of political activity in the cause of justice and progress for the immigrant population are in demand to speak and comment on the media.

For most of my short and happy life, from the late 1960s, gentle reader, I have been, I hope, an energetic (if nothing else) member, first of the Indian Workers' Association of Leicester, then of the British Black Panther Movement and then of the collective Race Today.

I am aware that at the time one subscribed to the ideology and vigorous activity of these organisations, which entailed demonstrating in favour of demands, propaganda and relentless agitation, pamphleteering and making a nuisance of oneself by battling the police and taking the long march through the institutions of Britain to ensure equality and progress, one didn't think of "history". Whew! (*Kamaal hein!* Did you really do all that? — Ed. *Hanh jaar*, read my autobiographical

fiction — fd. *Bathaya na toojhey*, no advertising! — Ed.)

So, the BBC and filmmakers, documentary producers and newspapers and blogwallahs have been turning up by phone or Zoom, or physically with cameras, to ask all the colleagues from those days about the determinations, events and campaigns that we undertook. They now want to call it history, but those who were in it never think it is. Or perhaps people like the Mahatma, or Napoleon or Churchill do.

In this flurry of enquiry and interviews, apart from recounting the "history" of campaigns and exploits, I've been repeatedly asked what one should make of the Black Lives Matter movement. Despite meetings with their organisers and asking them very specific questions, I still don't know that they are an organisation with a structure, a membership, clear aims and staying power. What one can see is that the upheaval they have caused, perhaps with the resources of the social media at their disposal, brings to the fore a singular fact.

America is a nation with roughly two parallel "histories", or more accurately two distinct experiences of that single history. The Africans were brought to

America as slaves and have that cruel past, however hard they had fought against it. The white nation, consisting of the descendants of refugees from European persecution and the "wretched of the earth" in search of liberty, have the inheritance, however problematic, of the master race. If the BLM movement did a single thing, it pointed to this history and made the world see that a very substantial section of the contemporary American population, black and white, want to leave this divided history as just that. A new dawn?

So too in Britain, where the new communities carry with them the histories of colonialism. Immigrants from South Asia, the Caribbean and Africa were not brought or allowed into Britain to regale it with Carnival or to feed it tandoori chicken. They came as cheap labour for the sectors of the economy abandoned by the white working class. As such, they brought with them the history of oppression and fought in several ways over the past six decades for social and political equality. The mass support, "diverse" and white for BLM, indicates that Britain too wants to leave divided histories behind.

And India?

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	40,509.49	0.81
Nifty 50	11,914.20	0.67
S&P 500*	3,474.08	0.79
Dollar (₹)	73.14	0.13
Pound Sterling (₹)	94.67	0.30
Euro (₹)	86.31	0.20
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	51,558*236	0.00
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	42.82	-0.52
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.937	-0.002
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.769	0.002

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Report only FY19 transactions in GST return: MoF

Taxpayers are required to report in the annual GST return of 2018-19 only the values of transactions pertaining to that financial year. The finance ministry said it is noticed certain tables in the auto populated GSTR-9 for 2018-19 also include the data for 2017-18, which has already been filed. "It is clarified that the taxpayers are required to report only the values pertaining to the financial year 2018-19."

Bulk transfer of EPFO funds now possible



EPFO has launched a facility for bulk transfer of funds from exempted establishments through a single payment. On change of employment of a member from exempted to unexempted establishment, his past accumulations are transferred to EPFO. Till now, exempted establishments had to approve and transfer the funds one-by-one for each member. The new facility will increase the speed of funds transfer.

Firms asked to disclose forensic audit info to SEs

Sebi has asked listed companies to make disclosures about initiation of forensic audit to stock exchanges. The listed entities will make disclosures about the fact of initiation of forensic audit along with the name of the entity initiating such audit and reasons for the same, if available, to stock exchanges, Sebi said. Firms will also be required to disclose about final forensic audit report on its receipt.

Hyundai gets over 1.15 lakh Creta bookings

Hyundai Motor India said it has received over 1.15 lakh bookings for its all-new Creta. "The overwhelming response reiterates trust and love of the Indian customers in the Creta brand name," Hyundai Motor India Ltd (HMIL) director sales and marketing Tarun Garg said. The company has already sold 58,000 units of the new version while the overall sales of the model since 2015 stands at over 5.2 lakh units.



Capital cost to come down for big-ticket lenders Home loans above ₹75L to become attractive

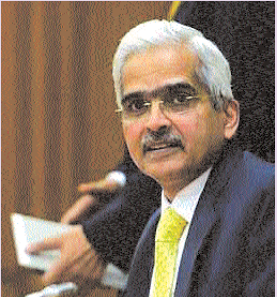
FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, OCT. 9

In a bid to boost demand for high value home purchases and the housing sector, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday allowed banks to consider only the loan to value (LTV) ratio while setting the risk weights—capital that banks have to set aside—for new home loans. Till now, the risk weight of home loans was determined on the basis of loan amounts and LTV ratios. Higher loan amounts led to higher risk weights, requiring banks to set aside higher capital while sanctioning the loan. The latest announcement regarding the home loan risk weights has done away with the requirement of factoring in loan amount while setting risk weights for fresh home loans sanctioned till March 31, 2022. The move would benefit incremental housing loans in higher ticket size of over Rs 75 lakh (below 80 per cent LTV) which currently attracts 50 per cent risk weight. Experts said that the move should reduce capital cost for banks and help in transmission and improve credit offtake. All fresh home loans with LTV ratios of 80 per cent or less will attract risk weight of 35 per cent whereas those with LTV ratios of above 80 per cent to 90 per cent will attract risk weight of 50 per cent, the RBI said. "Recognising the criticality of real estate sector in the economic recovery,

RTGS to go 24x7, PSOs to get perpetual validity

SANGEETHA G. CHENNAI, OCT. 9

The central bank has made the real time gross settlement system (RTGS) available round-the-clock. It also has given perpetual validity for the authorisation granted to new and existing Payment System Operators. Similar to the national electronic funds transfer (NEFT) system, large-value RTGS transactions will be made available round-the-clock on all days. Currently, it is available for customers from 7.00 am to 6.00 pm on all working days except 2nd and 4th Saturdays. This facility will be made effective from December. This, according to the RBI, will support the ongoing efforts aimed at global integration of Indian



financial markets, facilitate India's efforts to develop international financial centres and provide wider payment flexibility to domestic corporates and institutions. With this, India will be one of the very few countries globally with a 24x7x365 large value real time payment system. Further, the payment system operators will be

issued authorisation with a perpetual validity. Currently, the RBI issues 'on-tap' authorisation to non-banks issuing prepaid payment instruments (PPIs), operating white label ATMs (WLAs) or the trade receivables discounting systems (TReDS), or participating as Bharat Bill Payment Operating Units (BBPOUs). Authorisation, including renewal of authorisation of such PSOs has been largely for specified periods up to five years. According to the apex bank, such limited period licences were necessitated in the initial period of evolution of the payment system. However, it can lead to business uncertainty for the PSOs and involves avoidable use of regulatory resources in the process of renewal.

given its role in employment generation and the interlinkages with other industries, it has been decided, as a countercyclical measure, to rationalise the risk weights by linking them only with LTV ratios for all new housing loans sanctioned up to March 31, 2022...This measure is expected to give a fillip to bank lending to the real estate sector," said the RBI. Raj Kiran Rai, managing director and chief executive officer of Union Bank of India, said, "From the

regulatory announcements, linking the risk weight only to Loan to Value Ratio for individual housing loans is a positive measure. Due to Covid-19 lock down, construction is a beaten down sector. Since things are getting revived, this enabling policy support will help in augmenting the credit flow to the sector. Krishnan Sitaraman, senior director, Crisil Ratings said, "Liberalisation in risk weights for individual housing loans

by removal of ticket size criteria and linking it only to Loan to Value will provide some tailwinds to housing loan disbursals from a supply side perspective. This is because it will bring about greater capital efficiency for lenders in housing loan disbursals of more than Rs 75 lakh ticket size. At the same time, the potential for any material uptick appears subdued as that will depend upon pick up in real estate sales and demand increase for home loans from home buyers."

Exporters happy as caution-listing goes

SANGEETHA G. CHENNAI, OCT. 9

Providing a relief to the exporter community during the pandemic, RBI has decided to discontinue the system of automatic caution-listing. Caution-listing will now be based on case-specific recommendations of banks. Automatic caution-listing of exporters, introduced as part of Export Data Processing and Monitoring System (EDPMS) in 2016, happens if any shipping bill against them remained outstanding for more than two years in EDPMS and no extension was granted for realisation of export proceeds against the outstanding shipping bill. Caution-listed exporters are denied packing credit and this affects their exports. It will also be difficult for them to claim incentives when they are caution-listed. "In certain cases, some old transactions are shown as outstanding when the exporters are not able to reconcile them

and banks also are unable to help them," said K. Unnikrishnan, deputy director general, Federation of Indian Export Organisations. Further, some of the accounts continue to remain as outstanding even after settlement. Banks, especially during times of merger, fail to update all such accounts. These also get caution-listed, he said. In order to make the system more exporter friendly and equitable, it has been decided to discontinue the automatic caution-listing, the RBI said. "The decision of the RBI to discontinue the 'automatic caution listing' of exporters whose shipping bills were pending for more than two years is a great relief to the exporting community, battling the pandemic-hit global meltdown, EEPIC India said. "The automatic caution-listing of exporters whose shipping bills were pending for over two years had caused an avoidable distrust in the exporting community," said EEPIC India chairman Mahesh Desai.

Bankers, experts hail RBI's discretion-based response

New Delhi, Oct. 9: Bankers and financial experts on Friday hailed the RBI policy, saying the decision to keep the key repo rate unchanged is an accommodative approach to manage inflation while keeping growth as target. Friday's policy statement by RBI is a perfect exposition of doing 'whatever it takes' to revive growth, SBI chairman Dinesh Kumar Khara said in a statement. Given the expectation of inflation to stay elevated and a GDP contraction of 9.5 per cent in 2020-21, RBI has done the right thing by announcing discretion-based policy responses rather than being rule based, he added. Bank of India's chief executive A. K. Das said the retail and small business segments will also have better prospects by measures, such as, rationalisation of risk weight for housing loans, enhancement of regulatory retail cap and co-lending with NBFCs/HFCs. Punjab National Bank's MD & CEO S. S. Mallikarjuna Rao welcomed the Rs 1 lakh crore

Given the stance, there is a significant probability of a rate cut in February, if not in December itself as inflation moderates — Abheek Barua, chief economist, HDFC Bank

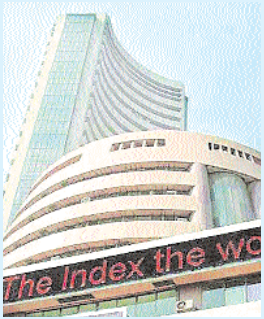
targeted long term repo operations and said it will support the economic growth. The monetary policy was as aggressively accommodative as possible without cutting the policy rate, said Abheek Barua, chief economist, HDFC Bank. "Given the stance, there is a significant probability of a rate cut in February, if not in December itself as inflation, as we expect, moderates. Has the RBI gone overboard in its effort to support growth? We think not. "These are unprecedented times and the Indian economy's revival efforts are hobbled by the lack of ade-

quate fiscal support. If monetary policy does have to do the heavy lifting, it cannot do it within the confines of a conventional take-no-risks framework," Barua said. Siddhartha Sanyal, chief economist and head-research, Bandhan Bank, said: "Steps such as larger quantum of OMOs and OMOs in state government securities should offer cheer for the bond market, while on-tap TLTRO and rationalisation of risk weightages of housing loans are meaningful steps in the right direction. We continue to expect discussion on rate cuts to be back on the table later during the year as inflation prints start softening." The Reserve Bank in its policy statement said it is ready to conduct market operations to assuage pressures arising out of it and dispel any illiquidity in financial markets. "The monetary policy announcement is overall positive and growth oriented," said Padmaja Chunduru, MD & CEO, Indian Bank. —PTI

Bank, NBFC stocks join IT in bull rally

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, OCT. 9

Stocks of banks and NBFCs, including housing finance companies, made big gains on RBI's dovish policy stance and measures announced to spur lending by the banks and NBFCs. The market surged higher to a fresh seven-month high as financials joined the IT stocks in providing more strength to the bulls as the rally stretched to the seventh session. The Sensex gained 326.82 points to close at 40,509.49 and the Nifty-50 gained 79.60 points, closing at 11,914. The Nifty Bank Index gained 2.83 per cent, led by PSU banks, and the top gainers included State Bank of India (3.64 per cent), Punjab National Bank (4.14 per cent), Bank of Baroda (4.11 per cent), HDFC Bank (3.64 per cent), ICICI Bank (4.06 per cent) and Axis Bank (3.74 per cent). Stocks that gained in the non-banking finance (NBFC) and housing finance (HFC) space included M&M Finance (2.73 per cent), LIC Housing Finance (7.03 per cent), HDFC (0.86 per cent), Indiabulls Housing Finance (4.43 per cent), PNB Housing Finance (5.81 per cent) and Can Fin Homes (5.81 per cent). "RBI policy has been very dovish without any rate cut. It strengthens focus on the yield curve and provides a helping



hand to increase credit offtake. The policy stance is very accommodative and would remain as long as necessary, even going into FY22. There are other measures that will help banks and NBFCs to accelerate lending, especially in the housing finance segment and priority sector lending," said Rusmik Oza, head-fundamental research, Kotak Securities. "Banks, HFCs and NBFCs have grossly underperformed the Nifty-50 in the last four months with valuations for most of the leading stocks going closer to the lower end of their historic valuation band. Feel the BFSI pack can play catch-up and try to cover some of the underperformance in the next few quarters," Oza said. After Friday's friendly policy, the market would await the final Supreme Court verdict in the moratorium matter. There are enough green shoots emerging in the economy as many high frequency indicators show improvement, Oza added.

Govt lifts ban on export variety onions



SANGEETHA G. CHENNAI, OCT. 9

Having banned onion exports last month, the government has permitted shipping of Bangalore rose onions and Krishnapuram onions. The export variety onions can be shipped up to 10,000 tonnes each till the end of the fiscal. The export of both the varieties will be allowed only through the Chennai port. For Bangalore rose onions, exporters have to get a certificate from the Horticulture Commissioner of Karnataka and for Krishnapuram onions the licence has to be secured from assistant director, horticulture, Kadappa. The quantities for export have to be monitored by DGFT Bangalore and Chennai. On September 14, the government had banned export of all onions as the retail prices moved up to Rs 40 a kg. It had suspected that increased exports would lead to further rise in prices. Between April and July this year, the country had exported onions worth Rs 1,539 crore, registering a growth of 39 per cent in export revenue against the same period last year. In 2019-20, the country had exported around 10,11,378 mt onions, valued Rs 2,044 crore. "At an average 60,000 tonnes of Bangalore Rose and 40,000 tonnes of Krishnapuram onions are exported per annum. The two varieties of onions are largely exported and are not consumed in the domestic market in large quantities," said the Federation of Indian Exporters Organisations.

VIEW | AND BUY

Goal is to convert videos into a catalogue of items that users can buy

YouTube to become a shopping platform

MARK BERGEN & LUCAS SHAW OCT. 9

Every toy, gadget and good you see on YouTube could soon be for sale online – not on Amazon, but right on YouTube itself. The world's largest video site recently started asking creators to use YouTube software to tag and track products featured in their clips. The data will then be linked to analytics and shopping tools from parent Google. The goal is to convert YouTube's bounty of videos into a vast catalogue of items that viewers can peruse, click on and buy directly, according to people familiar with

the situation. The company is also testing a new integration with Shopify Inc for selling items through YouTube. A YouTube spokesperson confirmed the company is testing these features with a limited number of video channels. Creators will have control over the products that are displayed, the spokesperson said. The company described this as an experiment and declined to share more details. The moves have the potential to transform YouTube from an advertising giant into a new contender for e-commerce leaders such as Amazon. com Inc. and Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. "YouTube is one of the



least utilised assets," said Andy Ellwood, president of e-commerce startup Basket. "If they decided they want to invest in it, it's a huge opportunity for them." It's unclear how YouTube will generate revenue from these sales. However, the service has begun offering subscriptions for creators and takes a cut of 30 per cent from those payments.

Alphabet Inc's Google has taken multiple stabs at online commerce, with limited success. The company has mostly preferred to sell ads that send people to other digital stores, rather than selling products itself. However, the pandemic has hammered marketing budgets, particularly in the travel and physical retail sectors that are major Google advertisers. Meanwhile, e-commerce has boomed as people stay home. That's left Google watching from the sidelines as rivals such as Facebook Inc and its Instagram app become hotbeds of online shopping. Amazon has seen sales soar, while Google

suffered its first ever revenue decline in the second quarter. For months now, Google executives have signalled that YouTube will be central to their e-commerce strategy. On a recent earnings call, CEO Sundar Pichai suggested YouTube's sea of popular product "unboxing" videos could be turned into a shopping opportunity. The video site is full of other popular categories, such as makeup and cooking tutorials, where creators tout commercial products. Google has also revamped its e-commerce and payments division. In July, it announced a plan to lure merchants to Google Shopping. —Bloomberg

SHORT TAKES

Nadal makes 13th French Open final

Paris: Twelve-time champion Rafael Nadal reached his 13th French Open final on Friday with a 6-3, 6-3, 7-6 (7/0) win over Argentina's Diego Schwartzman, setting up a potential blockbuster title clash against Novak Djokovic. For 34-year-old Nadal, it was a 99th win at Roland Garros since his 2005 debut and put him just one victory away from equalling Roger Federer's all-time record of 20 Grand Slam titles. He is also into his 28th final at the majors. Djokovic, the 2016 champion in Paris and chasing an 18th Grand Slam title, takes on Stefanos Tsitsipas in the second semi-final. The world number one has his own date with destiny should he make Sunday's final as he bids to become the first man in half a century to win all four Slams twice. — *AFP*

Russian lifters banned for doping

Geneva: Six Russian weightlifters were on Thursday handed doping bans of up to eight years, the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) announced. The group includes Dmitry Lapikov, bronze medalist at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, 2009 world silver medalist and 2011 European champion. The 38-year-old received the heaviest sanction, a competition ban until August, 2026. Maksim Sheiko, European silver medalist in 2012 and 2013, was banned for six years, with Ruslan Albegov (bronze medalist at London 2012 and a two-time world champion), Egor Klimonov, Yuliya Konovalova, and Tima Turieva all receiving four year bans. — *AFP*

Formula 1 practice session called off

Nurburg, Germany: The first practice session for the Eifel Grand Prix was cancelled Friday because of bad weather, keeping Michael Schumacher's son Mick from his first official drive as part of a Formula One race weekend. Low cloud and mist made for poor visibility around the Nrburgring track and it was declared unsafe for the medical helicopter to take off before time ran out for the 90-minute session. The helicopter is required under F1 safety rules and must be able to fly any casualties to the hospital at high speed. Lewis Hamilton is aiming to win his 91st career F1 race on Sunday. That would put him equal with Michael Schumacher's record. — *AP*

Messi leads Argies from the front

Sao Paulo: In their first matches in almost a year, Argentina and Uruguay won their South American World Cup qualifying openers without doing much to impress their fans watching from home. Lionel Messi and Luis Suarez each scored from the spot, but did little else to enliven the empty stadiums of a region still hard hit by the Covid-19. Messi netted the only goal of Argentina's victory over Ecuador at the La Bombonera stadium, while Suarez opened the scoring in Uruguay's 2-1 last-minute win over Chile in Montevideo, thanx to Gomez Gonzalez. — *Agencies*

Live on TV

CRICKET

IPL: Kings XI Punjab vs Kolkata Knight Riders from 3.30 pm; Chennai Super Kings vs Royal Challengers Bangalore from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

FORMULA ONE

German Grand Prix: Practice 3 from 3.25 pm on Star Sports Select 2, HD; Qualifying from 6.25 pm on Star Sports 3

TENNIS

French Open: Women's singles final from 6.30 pm on Star Sports Select 2

FOOTBALL

UEFA Nations League: Luxembourg vs Cyprus from 6.30 pm; Faroe Islands vs Latvia from 9.30 pm; Spain vs Switzerland from 12.15 am (Sunday) on Sony Ten 2, HD; Ukraine vs Germany from 12.15 am (Sunday) on Sony Ten 1

UFC FIGHT NIGHT

Marlon Moraes vs Cory Sandhagen and other bouts from 4.30 am (Sunday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

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Hetmyer shimmers

Dominant Delhi extend winning streak with Royal drub

Sharjah, Oct. 9: Delhi Capitals defeated Rajasthan Royals by 46 runs in an IPL match here on Friday.

Riding on Shimron Hetmyer's 45, they first made 184/8 in 20 overs and then bowled out the Royals for 138 in 19.4 overs. Yashasvi Jaiswal (34) and Rahul Tewatia (38) were the only ones who made decent scores for RR.

Earlier, desperate to snap their three-match losing streak, RR opted to field and the bowling unit delivered with Jofra Archer (3/24) taking three wickets and spinner Rahul Tewatia (1/20) and Kartik Tyagi (1/35) capturing one each.

The two run outs of the dangerous Shreyas Iyer (22 off 18) and Rishabh Pant (5) also proved crucial. Shimron Hetmyer smashed a 24-ball 45, studded with five sixes and a four to emerge as the top-scorer for Delhi. Marcus Stoinis (39 off 30) too chipped in.

Archer was the pick of the bowlers as he dismissed opener Shikhar Dhawan (5) in the second over for his first wicket in the Powerplay this year.

Skipper Iyer then smashed two fours off pacer Varun Aaron (0/25 in 2 overs) and then Prithvi Shaw (19 off 10) deposited him into the stands. — *PTI*



Shimron Hetmyer of Delhi Capitals plays a shot against Rajasthan Royals during their Indian Premier League match held at Sharjah Cricket Stadium in the United Arab Emirates on Friday.

— *BCCI*

SCORECARD

Delhi Capitals: Prithvi Shaw c and b Jofra Archer 19, Shikhar Dhawan c Jaiswal b Jofra Archer 5, Shreyas Iyer run out 22, Rishabh Pant run out 5, Marcus Stoinis c Steven Smith b Rahul Tewatia 39, Shimron Hetmyer c Rahul Tewatia b Kartik Tyagi 45, Harshal Patel c Rahul Tewatia b Jofra Archer 16, Axar Patel c Jos Buttler b Andrew Tye 17, Kagiso Rabada not out 2, Ravichandran Ashwin not out 0. **Extras:** (B-4, LB-3, W-5, NB-2) 14. **Total:** (for 8 wkts in 20 Overs) 184. **FOW:** 12-1, 42-2, 50-3, 79-4, 109-5, 149-6, 181-7, 183-8. **Bowler:** V. Aaron 2-0-25-0, J. Archer 4-0-24-3, K. Tyagi 4-0-35-1, A. Tye 4-0-50-1, S. Gopal 2-0-23-0, R. Tewatia 4-0-20-1.

Rajasthan Royals: Y. Jaiswal b Stoinis 34, Jos Buttler c Dhawan b Ashwin 13, Steve Smith c Hetmyer b Nortje 24, Sanju Samson c Hetmyer b Stoinis 5, M. Lomror c A. Patel b Ashwin 1, R. Tewatia b Rabada 38, A. Tye c Rabada b A. Patel 6, J. Archer c Iyer b Rabada 2, S. Gopal c Hetmyer b H. Patel 2, K. Tyagi not out 2, V. Aaron c Pant b Rabada 1. **Extras:** (LB-2, NB-1, W-7) 10. **Total:** (all out in 20 Overs) 138. **FOW:** 1-15, 2-56, 3-72, 4-76, 5-82, 6-90, 7-100, 8-121, 9-136, 10-138. **Bowler:** Kagiso Rabada 3.4-0-35-3, Anrich Nortje 4-0-25-1, Ravichandran Ashwin 4-0-22-2, H. Patel 4-0-29-1, A. Patel 2-0-8-1, Marcus Stoinis 2-0-17-2.

IPL POINTS TABLE

Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
Delhi Capitals	6	5	1	0	10	+1.267
Mumbai Indians	6	4	2	0	8	+1.488
Sunrisers Hyderabad	6	3	3	0	6	+0.232
Kolkata Knight Riders	5	3	2	0	6	+0.002
Royal Challengers Bangalore	5	3	2	0	6	-1.355
Chennai Super Kings	6	2	4	0	4	-0.371
Rajasthan Royals	6	2	4	0	4	-1.073
Kings XI Punjab	6	1	5	0	2	-0.431

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

Rahul rates run Some CSK batsmen think it's a government job: Viru

Dubai, Oct. 9: Strike rates are over-rated, said Kings XI Punjab captain K. L. Rahul, brushing aside criticism of his bottom-placed team which lost its fourth match on the trot here, failing miserably in a chase of 202 against Sunrisers Hyderabad.

KXIP lost by 69 runs and Rahul could manage only 11 off 14 balls at a strike rate of 68.75. His innings featured no boundaries despite the power-play. "I think strike rate is very, very overrated. For me, it is only about how I can win games for my team and on a certain day if 120 can win a game for my team then I will do that. This is how I bat and I like to take responsibility," Rahul replied to a question at the post-match press conference.

The skipper, who has 313 runs in the six games so far including a century

and two fifties and is the leading run-scorer of the tournament, was eventually dismissed by Abhishek Sharma in the seventh over.

Later, Rahul also rued the early run-out of Mayank Agarwal, saying it was a disaster for his side in its pursuit of a stiff 202-run target. "When we lose wickets in the powerplay, it's going to be tough, especially when we're playing only six batters. Getting Mayank run-out wasn't the ideal start, it was a disaster," Rahul said speaking about the match.

Rahul was full of praise for his bowlers, saying: "The last five games we struggled with our death bowling, but that was a positive today. The boys showed courage and pulled things back, you expect them to score 230-plus after that start."

— *PTI*

New Delhi, Oct. 9: Former India opener Virender Sehwag has taken a dig at Chennai Super Kings' faltering IPL campaign, saying that some of their batsmen think of the franchise as a "government job" in which remuneration is assured irrespective of performance.

Chasing 168, veteran opener Shane Watson struck his second successive fifty to give CSK a perfect start on Wednesday, but the team choked at the back end of the innings and was restricted to 157 for 5 to suffer their fourth defeat in five matches, raising eyebrows in cricket circles.

"It should have been chased down. But the dot balls played by Kedar Jadhav and Ravindra Jadeja didn't help," Sehwag told *Cricbuzz*.

"And, in my view, some



It should have been chased down. But the dot balls played by Kedar Jadhav and Jadeja didn't help. In my view, some of the Chennai Super Kings batsmen think of CSK as a government job, whether you perform or not, they know they'll get their salary anyway.

— **VIRENDER SEHWAG**
former India player

of the Chennai Super Kings batsmen think of CSK as a government job, whether you perform or not, they know they'll get their salary anyway," he added.

CSK added just 14 runs from 11-14 overs, a period when they lost both Watson and an in-form Ambati Rayudu. Sent ahead of West Indies all-rounder Dwayne Bravo,

Kedar Jadhav laboured to seven off 12 balls as KKR wrapped up the game by 10 runs.

This is not the first instance of batsmen letting the team down. Last week, the MS Dhoni-led side had lost a closely fought match to SRH by seven runs. Chennai Super Kings are placed sixth in the eight-team standings. — *PTI*

Tired CSK take on hapless RCB

Dubai, Oct. 9: Chennai Super Kings will take on Royal Challengers Bangalore in an intriguing mid-table Indian Premier League clash here on Saturday with both teams battling inconsistency.

CSK all-rounder Kedar Jadhav's selection will be under the scanner after his failure in the defeat to Kolkata Knight Riders.

Despite Shane Watson finding his range in a 10-wicket win over Kings XI Punjab and Faf du Plessis's consistency at the top, the middle-order continues to remain a concern for CSK with skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni himself not being at his best.

While worries remain on the batting front, the CSK bowling has got better and they did well to restrict KKR in the previous game with influential all-rounder Dwayne Bravo returning to his wicket-taking ways.

However, the CSK bowling will be up against a strong RCB batting line-up led by captain Virat Kohli, who returned to form with a fine knock against Rajasthan Royals.

Kohli aside, young Devdutt Padikkal has looked in good touch, while

NUMBERS GAME

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL:

- Matches: 24
- Chennai: 15
- Bangalore: 8
- No Results: 1

MEETING IN 2019

- Chennai Super Kings beat Royal Challengers Bangalore by 7 wickets at Chennai.
- Royal Challengers Bangalore beat Chennai Super Kings by 1 run at Bangalore.

FOR THE RECORD

- Mahendra Singh Dhoni who scored 3960 runs at an average of 44.49 in 148 innings of 166 matches, needs 40 runs to become second Chennai Super Kings batsman to score 4000 runs in IPL.

- Virat Kohli became the first Indian and seventh batsman overall to score over 9000 runs in Twenty-20 cricket during his 43-run knock in the previous match against Delhi Capitals.

— *S. PERVEZ KAISER*

AB de Villiers has been a key player for RCB over the years. It is the bowling which would worry Kohli except Yuzvendra Chahal. The pacers have not lived up to their reputation, with the likes of Umesh Yadav, Mohammed Siraj and Navdeep Saini leaking runs. — *PTI*

Knights look to bruise Kings XI

Abu Dhabi, Oct. 9: Kings XI Punjab will have to play out of their skins to get their stuttering campaign back on track when they face fancied Kolkata Knight Riders in the Indian Premier League here on Saturday.

Smarting from a 69-run drubbing at the hands of Sunrisers Hyderabad, it will not be an easy task for a struggling KXIP side to stand up to the challenge thrown by an all-round KKR team.

Shubman Gill has already created an impression as an opener and now KKR have found another option at the top in Rahul Tripathi, who will enter the game with some confidence after his swashbuckling innings of 81 against CSK two days ago.

The experienced Eoin Morgan is a huge presence in the middle-order which also has Nitish Rana, always on the lookout to impress the team management with his performances with the bat.

On the other hand, Kings XI Punjab will again rely on their trusted opening pair of captain K. L. Rahul

NUMBERS GAME

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL:

- Matches: 25
- Kolkata: 17
- Punjab: 8

MEETING IN 2019

- Kolkata Knight Riders defeated Kings XI Punjab by 28 runs at Kolkata.
- Kolkata Knight Riders defeated Kings XI Punjab by 7 wickets at Mohali.

FOR THE RECORD

- Mandeep Singh who scored 961 runs at an average of 22.88 in 52 innings of 56 matches, needs 39 runs to become seventh batsman to score over 1000 runs for Kings XI Punjab in IPL.
- Sunil Narine took only three wickets at an average of 50.00 off 18 overs in five innings of as many matches in this edition so far.

— *S. PERVEZ KAISER*

and Mayank Agarwal, who have been in fine nick.

The mis-firing Glenn Maxwell is likely to make way for Gayle.

Nicholas Pooran's exploits with the bat is a positive for Kings XI Punjab and he will again look to play his shots freely. — *PTI*

Hyd girl finishes golf second best

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT. 9

Hyderabad's Shrihita Mandava emerged runner-up at the World Amateur Ranking junior golf tournament that concluded at the Classic Golf Resort in New Delhi on Friday.

Shrihita managed scores of 10 over in the first round but improved to 6 over in the second for a total of 16 to finish three strokes behind Zara Anand, who carded 13, over 36 holes at the par 72 course.

Rajini Navet, Palakshi Singh and Alysha Dutt were third, fourth and fifth respectively in the Girls 12 to 14 years category.

Twelve-year-old Shrihita came up with a birdie on the par 5 third hole in Round One and doubled the effort in Round Two with birdies on the par 4 fourth and 16th holes.

The Hyderabad girl also managed pars on 16 holes to stay in top contention.

Zara pulled out her top game to card 7 over in the first round which included a birdie on the par 3 fifth hole. She then went one better with a six in the second round, courtesy a birdie on the par 4 eighth hole to maintain lead.

Ragini too started well, scoring 9 in the first round with a birdie on the par 5 third hole. She again birdied the par 5 14th hole for a 7 in the second round.



Shrihita Mandava

Riders on the storm at TS regatta

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT. 9

The weather gods were in total confusion and after a long spell of dead calm threw in a huge storm that decimated the Telangana State Fleet and the race officer Gowtham Kankatla had to abandon the last race.

The Juniors managed to sail four races in very light weather till the storm that came in from the north slammed them back to the Yacht Club Jetty but the young sailors were enjoying the fresh weather and the heavy winds back home.

"We were worried since yesterday about the winds letting us down but we got a bit lucky and hope for great weather tomorrow onwards," said Suheim Sheikh The President and Coach at the Yacht Club of Hyderabad.

Preethi Kongari of



The novices fleet of sailors (below 11 years) battle it out under the clouds in unpredictable weather conditions at the Telangana State Sailing Championships at Hussain Sagar in Hyderabad on Friday.

Hyderabad and Jaikiran Bolli of Wanaparthy dominated Group 'A' and Majji Lalitha and Lakshmi Chandram dominated Group 'B' almost assuring them a spot in the Gold Fleet that will be sailed once the qualifiers of two races are completed on Saturday followed by the finals.

Majji Lalitha emerged

from the rear and topped the Group 'B' and she is not new to winning out of the blue after having won the Sub Junior State Championship in these very waters in 2018.

The Sub Junior Novices fleet started one race but sailed right into the storm and all the little sailors, most of them below 11 years, were rescued from

the wind and waves and brought safely but drenched to shore. They will need to commence racing on Saturday. That said Bushra Minaj of Udbhav School, Rasoolpura, was well in the lead and had to sacrifice her win to the sudden storm.

Earlier in the day, Rajat Kumar, IAS, carried out

an inspection of the Fleet as chief guest and met each sailor personally with words of encouragement.

THE STANDINGS

- Preethi Kongari (3 points), 2. Majji Lalitha (4 points), 3. Lakshmi Chandram (4 points), 4. Jaikiran Bolli (6 points), 5. Jhansi Priya (6 points).