

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
ANANTAPUR | SATURDAY | 24 OCTOBER 2020

WEATHER



Max: 34.0°C
Min: 19°C
RH: 79%
Rainfall: Nil
Forecast: Cloudy sky. Misty morning. Max/Min temp. 31/16 °C

COVID-19 CUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+54,280)	(+632)
78,10,486	1,17,909
<i>covid19india.org</i>	
STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS	
(+1,421)	(+6)
TS: 2,29,001	1,298
(+3,765)	(+20)
AP: 8,00,684	6,544

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

4,22,73,813
DEATHS
11,46,224
COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES
213
<i>worldometers.info/coronavirus</i>

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Nija Ashwayuja Shuddha Saptami till 6.58 am
Star: Uttarashada till 1.30 am (Saturday)
Varjyam: 9.10 am to 10.48 am; 5.41 am to 7.22 am (Saturday)
Durmuhurtam: 8.33 am to 9.19 am; 12.23 pm to 1.09 pm
Rahukalam: 10.30 am to 12 noon
HJRI CALENDAR
Rabbi-ul Awwal 5, 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 10.38 PM
MOONRISE 11.40 AM

COUNTER POINT



Hope it's not a promise like achhe din!

SHORT TAKES

New Parliament building in 2022

New Delhi: Construction of a new Parliament building will begin in December this year and is likely to be completed by October 2022, while necessary measures have been put in place to ensure that Parliament sessions can be held uninterrupted during this period in the existing buildings, Lok Sabha Secretariat said on Friday. In the new building, the Lok Sabha chamber will have a seating capacity for 888 members, while Rajya Sabha will have 384 seats for the upper house members, sources said after a review meeting. This has been done keeping in mind the future increase in the number of members for the two houses. Officials also said that steps were taken to control air and noise pollution during the construction work for the new Parliament building, which will have separate offices for all MPs and those will be equipped with the latest digital interfaces to create 'paperless offices'.

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State crosses 8L mark in Covid-19 positive cases

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Chennai suffer another defeat



Bharat Bio's Covaxin gets P3 nod, vaccine by June '21

KANIZA GARARI | DC HYDERABAD, OCT. 23

Phase 3 clinical trials on humans for Covaxin, the ingeniously developed Covid-19 vaccine, have been approved by the Drugs Controller General of India on 26,000 participants in 25 centres. The tests will be carried out in hospitals in major cities. Symptomatic patients of Covid-19 with confirmed CT scan and chest X-ray and who are under treatment will be given the vaccine dose.

The dose is 0.5 ml on day zero and day 28, according to sources. An expert committee of the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) evaluated the safety and efficacy data of Phase 1 and Phase 2 trials of Covid-19 before giving the final approval.

Bharat Biotech, which has developed Covaxin in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research-National Institute of Virology, said on Friday that it has got approval for Phase 3 trials from Drugs Controller

● **THE DOSE** is 0.5 ml on day zero and day 28, according to sources.

● **AN EXPERT** committee of the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) evaluated the safety and efficacy data of Phase 1 and Phase 2 trials of Covid-19 before giving the final approval.

General of India (DCGI). Sai Prasad, executive director of Bharat Biotech, has stated that if everything goes well there is a possibility of Covaxin being available by June 2021.

The expert committee meeting of CDSCO was held on October 5 where the data of Phase 1 and 2 was evaluated. It discussed the efficacy of the inactivated Coronavirus vaccine BBV152 along with the proposal to conduct event-driven Phase 3 trials to assess the efficacy of the vaccine.

The committee instructed that symptomatic cases who will be given the dose must have symptoms of

breathlessness, oxygen saturation levels less than 94, vomiting, nausea, diarrhoea and severe cases and must be in intensive care treatment.

Bharat Biotech had on October 2 sought the DCGI's permission to conduct Phase 3 randomised double-blind placebo-controlled multicentre trial of its Covid-19 vaccine. It was asked to submit the complete safety and immunogenicity data of the Phase 2 trial besides providing some clarifications before proceeding to the next stage.

Trials of about 100 vaccine candidates are being conducted worldwide. In India, Zydus Cadila Ltd is in Phase 2 of human clinical trials. The Serum Institute of India is holding Phase 2 and 3 human clinical trials of AstraZeneca's Oxford vaccine. One of the volunteers of this trial died in Brazil but the trials are going ahead.

Russia is testing its Sputnik vaccine and China also as several candidate vaccines under testing.

CM seeks help from bankers to fund schemes

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 23

Appreciating bankers for ensuring no shortage of funds during Covid-19 times, Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy advised them to be generous while sanctioning loans under several schemes for the benefit of beneficiaries.

Chairing the 212th state level bankers' committee meeting held at his camp office here on Friday, the Chief Minister said that the government was according top priority for promotion of the farm sector as it is the backbone of the state's economy.

He said that they were providing financial assistance of ₹13,500 each to farmers under YSR Rythu Bharosa and PM-Kisan scheme per annum. Besides, ₹7,500 was given at the beginning of the Kharif season in June, ₹4,000 at the beginning of the Rabi season in October and ₹2,000 during Sankranti.

Such financial support would be sufficient for farmers having 1.15 acres or less, said the CM, adding that nearly 50 per cent of the total farmers in

the state fall under such a category. The state's 10,641 Rythu Bharosa Kendras (RBKs) were of immense benefit to the farmers to get quality seeds, fertiliser and pesticides within 48 hours after placing orders. Bankers should verify whether the farmers had an e-crop certificate before sanctioning farm loans to them and not practice graft in the sanctioning of loans.

On loans sanctioned during the Kharif season, CM Reddy said that out of targeted sanction of ₹75,237 crore in 2020-21, an amount of ₹62,650 crore was sanctioned, fulfilling 83.27 per cent of targeted sanction and appreciated the bankers for sanctioning loans even during the Covid-19 crisis.

Seeking support from bankers for Nadu-Nedu programme in government schools and hospitals, the Chief Minister said that the government was going to spend ₹4,000 crore in phase-I, ₹4,500 crore in phase-II and ₹3,500 crore in phase-III in 15,715 schools in two phases to provide 10 facilities.

■ **Page 2: ₹13,000 cr for teaching hospitals in AP**

UPA wasted 10 years of Nitish rule, says PM

Era of lantern is over, says Modi taking dig at RJD

NAYEAR AZAD | DC PATNA, OCT. 23

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday launched his campaign for Bihar Assembly elections with three back-to-back rallies in Sasaram, Gaya and Bhagalpur where he castigated the Opposition over its stand on repeal of Article 370 and reminded people of the 15-year reign of "crime" and "loot" under the RJD.

In Sasaram, Mr Modi began his speech by paying tribute to veteran Dalit leader and LJP founder Ram Vilas Paswan and socialist leader Raghuvansh Prasad Singh who passed away recently due to prolonged illness. Blaming the Opposition parties for "creating hurdles" in the progress of Bihar, Mr Modi said that "people have decided to stop all those who have a history of making Bihar a BIMARU state".

"They were so angry over being defeated by the NDA that they tried every possible way to sabotage the development of Bihar. I as Gujarat CM and Nitish Kumar from Bihar used to attend Central meetings regularly and I used to see him requesting them not to stop the development of Bihar. They wasted 10 years of Nitish Kumar as CM," Mr Modi said. The RJD-led grand alliance has emerged as the main challenger to the JD(U)-BJP alliance in the state where polling is scheduled to begin in three phases from



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses a gathering during an election rally, at Gandhi Maidan in Gaya on Friday. — PTI

October 28. Mr Modi, who is to address 12 public meetings across the state ahead of Bihar polls, sought votes for another term of the NDA government in Bihar, saying that he has been working with Mr Nitish Kumar only for the last three-four years and the state has progressed during this period. He also spoke of the poor law and order scenario during 15 years of RJD rule.

"The era of the lantern is over... people are now using electricity everywhere in the state. I don't have to remind you about the condition of Bihar before NDA, led by Nitish Kumar, came to power in

Bihar. Earlier life would come to a standstill after sunset, but today roads and electricity are there. People live without fear in the present time," he said. "The people who were once in power have greed in their eyes for Bihar which is now developing. People of the state must not forget the condition of Bihar when they were in power and how they pushed the state towards backwardness," the Prime Minister added.

He also raised the Galwan valley clash, Article 370 and Pulwama terrorist attack in his speeches. "I bow my head at the feet of brave soldiers who were martyred in

Galwan to save the honour of our motherland and the tricolour. In Pulwama also Bihar jawans were martyred," he said.

Mr Modi slammed the Opposition parties for demanding restoration of Article 370 in Jammu & Kashmir and asserted that the country will not go back on its decision. He also lashed out at the opposition for protesting farm laws and accused them of standing in support of "brokers and middlemen".

Exuding confidence that the NDA will return to power, he said, "Even before the polls are overall survey reports are saying that NDA will win and form the government".

Ambiguity continues on when Vijayadasami falls

VADREVI SRIINIVAS | DC KAKINADA, OCT. 23

Ambiguity prevails over when Vijayadasami, the last and most important day of Dasara festival, should be celebrated. This is because almanac writers and astrologers are expressing different opinions. The view of some is that the festival is on Sunday, as Dasami prevails after sunset. Others argue that Dasami will start with sunrise on Monday. So, the festival will be on that day.

Astrological researcher and Philosophical Truth founder Neelam Purna Mohan says the Dasami tithi and Sranavam star should be there when the festival is celebrated. The Dasami tithi should also be there after sunset time,

according to the shashtras like the Prasna Tantra, Dharma Sindhu and Nirnaya Sindhu. According to this calculation, Vijayadasami should be celebrated on Sunday.

Kurnool district Archhaka Purohit Samyojak Devalla Vasantharaya Sainath Sarma says calculations should take into account that Dasami tithi exists during afternoon. According to this also, Vijayadasami should be celebrated on Sunday.

Almanac writer Godavarti Sampatkumar Appalacharyulu maintains that festival dates should differentiate between general view and temple view. He said though some are arguing that the festival is on Sunday, according to temples' Agama shashtras and Samhithas, Vijayadasami

must be celebrated on Monday. However, Appalacharyulu clarified that devotees, who were performing special pujas since Padyami tithi, the first day of Telugu month of Ashwayuja masa, can celebrate the festival on Sunday. But temples should celebrate it on Monday. He said that in Hindu tradition, there are different schools of thought. Each set follows its own traditions and shashtras. It is not necessary that all should celebrate the festival on the same day. There is room for different opinions.

However, Telangana Vidwat Sabha has decided to celebrate the festival on Sunday. Almanac writer Ponnaluri Srinivasa Gargeya said Dasara should be celebrated on Sunday.

ABORIGINAL PAINTINGS SEEN IN KADAPA

NAGESWARA RAO BALLEDA | DC KADAPA, OCT. 23

In yet another rare finding, paintings by aborigines were found in Kadapa district.

The most recent one was in Ramireddypalle village of Vempalle mandal and was discovered by a student Nagendra Babu, along with Raghuyadav, a researcher in the department of history and archaeology at the Yogi Vemana University.

"They came across stone paintings (petroglyphs) of aboriginal black shells.

In an earlier finding in Muddanur village, aborigine paintings were found in a cave.

■ **Page 2: Locals call it Sinnagundla Katuwa**

ALL | IS WELL **World Cup winning cricket captain on road to recovery, may be discharged in next couple of days**

Kapil Dev suffers heart attack, undergoes angioplasty

New Delhi, Oct. 23: India's first World Cup-winning cricket captain Kapil Dev underwent an angioplasty after suffering a heart attack here on Friday but is "well on the road to recovery" and likely to be discharged in the next couple of days.

The 61-year-old, who is based in Delhi's Sundar Nagar area, complained of chest pain on Thursday following which he was taken to Fortis Escorts Heart Institute emergency department in Okhla. "Kapil Dev suffered a heart attack. He was evaluated and an emergency coronary angioplasty was performed in

the middle of night," the hospital said in an updated health bulletin after only mentioning chest pain in its initial statement. "Currently, he is admitted in ICU and under close supervision of Dr Atul Mathur and his team. Kapil Dev is stable now and he is expected to get discharged in a couple of days."

Angioplasty is a procedure to open blocked arteries and restore normal blood flow to the heart. Later in the day, a short statement on his instagram account expressed gratitude for the concern and support extended to his



family. "Thank you everyone for all the love and concern. I am overwhelmed with the good wishes and well on the road to recovery," the statement read.

The 1983 World Cup-winning legendary all-rounder

was wished a speedy recovery by many on social media, including India's current captain Virat Kohli and Sachin Tendulkar among others.

"Praying for your speedy recovery. Get well soon paaji," Kohli said. "Take care @therealkapildev! Praying for your quick recovery. Get well soon Paaji," wished Tendulkar.

Also wishing him good health were India batsman Shikhar Dhawan and badminton player Saina Nehwal. "Wishing the @therealkapildev a swift recovery. The nation is well aware of his grit and spirit and we are very sure

he will be out of the hospital soon," said the BCCI. Kapil's former teammate Madan Lal said he has conveyed some of the concern of his well-wishers to the Chandigarh-born legend's family. "To those who have called to inquire your prayers and wishes are conveyed to the family and received with gratitude. Good health and strength kaps," read a tweet from Kapil's former teammate Madan Lal. "Kapil was taken to the hospital in time as he complained of uneasiness. As per the doctors the procedure has been successful and he will be home soon," he added.

One of India's greatest cricketers, Kapil played 131 Tests and 225 ODIs.

The imposing former player, who also tried his hand at golf after retiring from cricket, is the only player to claim over 400 wickets (434) and accumulate more than 5000 runs in Tests. He also served as India's national coach between 1999 and 2000. Kapil was inducted into the International Cricket Council's Hall of Fame in 2010.

"The big hearted #Kapildev our captain, with a never say die attitude, has recovered. For this mighty giant of Indian

cricket nothing is impossible," tweeted Kirti Azad, also a former teammate of Kapil. "Kapil The invincible @therealkapildev is a great friend and super human being. Captain. Looking forward for a meal together soon," he added.

Another World Cup-winning former India cricketer Yuvraj Singh said, "Dear paaji. Praying for your speedy recovery! Get well soon please ...after cricket I still need some golfing lessons."

Nicknamed the 'Haryana Hurricane', Kapil is also a Lieutenant Colonel in the Indian Territorial Army.

— PTI

OTHER STORIES

MINING CO. FINED FOR DIGGING NEAR BSNL CELL TOWER

DC CORRESPONDENT
ANANTAPUR, OCT. 22

The mines and geology officials imposed a penalty on a mining company over the digging of ore closer to a BSNL mobile tower at Jajarakallu in D. Hirehal mandal at Karnataka borders in the district on Friday.

The mining officials raided at Jajarakallu village in D. Hirehal mandal in the district following a complaint by the BSNL authorities. Anantapur mining assistant director said the Dilip Bulcon company was encroaching BSNL Tower at Jajarakallu for excavation of gravel. Notices were issued and mining activities were stopped.

MINISTER RULES OUT CONDUCT OF LOCAL BODY POLLS

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 23

Minister for industries Mekapati Goutham Reddy stated that the state government was not contemplating to conduct local body polls in the state.

The minister told media persons on Friday that as the health experts warned of a second wave of COVID-19 after the Dasara festival and also during the ensuing November and December, they were not going to hold polls as a precautionary measure.

Referring to the ensuing Assembly polls in Bihar, the minister said that as such elections were supposed to be held as per norms of the Indian Constitution, they were scheduled to be held and opined that Assembly elections could not be compared with local body polls.

Meanwhile, the State Election Commission called for meeting with all political parties on Oct. 28 to discuss on conduct of local body polls in the state.



LOKESH ALLEGES CM FAILED TO UPLIFT FARMERS

DC CORRESPONDENT
ANANTAPUR, OCT. 23

TD general secretary Nara Lokesh lashed out at Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, saying that he failed to uplift farmers of Rayalaseema, who suffered major losses due to the recent heavy rains and floods.

“Jagan Reddy who claimed that he was Rayalaseema Muddu Bidda’ during electioneering is now ignoring his own region even as farmers incurred heavy losses during floods,” he said.

Following the massive damage to crops, Lokesh visited fields in various parts of the district on Friday. He interacted with farmers in Tadipathri and Gooty.

Speaking to the media at Tadipathri, Lokesh alleged that the YSRC government was only keen on creating troubles for opposition parties and not improving the lot of the people.

Referring that at least 10 lakh acres of groundnut crop was damaged at the peak stage, he said more than ₹2,000 crore worth of groundnut crop was damaged in Anantapur district. “But, the state government announced ₹39 crore as compensation for crop loss which is an eye-wash. Jagan Mohan Reddy had no time to visit fields in Anantapur district,” he said and added that even the agriculture minister failed to interact with farmers of Rayalaseema. He also pointed out that officials had failed to assess actual crop loss at the ground-level.

TD politburo member Kalava Srinivasulu, district president B.K. Parthasarathi, JC Prabhakar Reddy and several others accompanied Lokesh during his visit to the groundnut fields.

● Referring that at least 10 lakh acres of groundnut crop was damaged at the peak stage, he said more than ₹2,000 crore worth of groundnut crop was damaged in Anantapur district.

Spiralling onion prices making big hole in consumers’ pocket

Price may touch ₹100 per kilo in the next few days due to the festival

D. SIVA RAMI REDDI | DC
KURNOOL OCT. 23

Though Kurnool districts grows onions abundantly, the recent rains washed away the crop. The price has spiralled to ₹7,150 per quintal at the market yards here. They are retailing between ₹65 and ₹80 a kg. It may touch even ₹100 in the next few days due to the festival, said Ghouse Peer, a wholesale trader.

This time it seems like Kurnool may not be able to supply onions to other areas due to low arrivals. If they get 15,000 quintals of onions, they will be in a position to other markets, market yard officials said.

The Kurnool variety onions has a special pungent taste and is largely consumed domestically while consignments also go to markets like Chennai, Hyderabad and Kolkata.

Many upmarket colonies like Venkata Ramana colony, Sankalbagh, and NR Peta residents said pushcarts coming near home are selling onions at ₹80 per kg.

Kadapa grows KP onion, a different species that is largely exported. The district normally raises an onion crop in an extent of 28,000 hectares during the Kharif season. But due to rains, the standing crops was washed away, said a trader in Kurnool agriculture market yard.

He said that just 20-30 lorry loads of onions were arriving at the yard where actually at least 70 lorries would reach every day in a regular season’s normal circumstances.

Kurnool agriculture market yard secretary R Vijaya Lakshmi said that an average of 1600 to 2000 tonnes of onion was arriving. With the low-supply and high demand, the onion prices have doubled over the past few days, she added.

KISHAN REDDY TO VISIT DURGA TEMPLE TOMORROW

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 23

Union minister of state for home G. Kishan Reddy to take darshan of Goddess Durga at the Kanaka Durga temple at Indrakeeladri in the city on Oct. 25 at 6.00 am.

The Union minister will arrive to Vijayawada on Oct. 24 at 7.20 pm and stay put at a private hotel for the night.

The police are making elaborate security arrangements for the visit of VIP at the temple.

₹13,000 CRORE FOR TEACHING HOSPITALS IN AP

From page 1

With regard to hospitals, Reddy said that they were going to spend ₹13,000 crore in the coming three years to set up 16 teaching hospitals in the state.

Announcing the launch of a welfare scheme called Jagananna Thodu for the benefit of petty traders in November, he asked bankers to extend support to implement YSR Cheyutha programme to benefit 25 lakh women on set-up units to help them gain financial self-sustenance.

On micro, small and medium enterprises, Reddy said that the government had cleared pending dues worth of ₹1,100 crore in the form of concessions to several units and opined that this helped the MSMEs to invest money to revive them during Covid-19 times.

On the YSR Asara scheme, Reddy asked the bankers to extend their support by sanctioning loans to self-help group women. In response to Reddy’s pleas, the bankers assured support for the implementation of the several schemes in the state.



People buy onion at Swaraj Maidan Rythu Bazaar at subsidy rate in Vijayawada on Friday. — C. NARAYANA RAO

Govt taking steps to control hoarding of essentials: Min

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 23

Minister for agriculture K. Kannababu stated that the state government was taking all necessary measures to avoid hoarding of essential commodities and jacking up their prices by a section of traders on the pretext of rains and floods in the state.

The minister told media persons here on Friday that the Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan reviewed the prices of essential commodities and issued directions to act tough on those traders who were creating their artificial scarcity and selling them at a high price.

The minister said that the Chief Minister also directed the district col-

● TURNING HIS attention on politics, the agriculture minister K. Kannababu slammed the Telugu Desam Party supremo and former CM N. Chandrababu Naidu and his son and MLC N. Lokesh for trying to dominate state politics while staying in Hyderabad.

lectors and SPs to monitor whether the traders were displaying prices of essential commodities at their shops.

He added that they were selling onions at ₹40 a kg

in rythu bazaars after procuring them through NAFED following a steep rise in their price to avoid any trouble to the consumers.

Later, turning his attention on politics, the agriculture minister slammed the Telugu Desam Party supremo and former CM N. Chandrababu Naidu and his son and MLC N. Lokesh for trying to dominate state politics while staying in Hyderabad.

Referring to Lokesh visiting flood-hit areas for the first time, the minister advised him to talk on issues after updating his knowledge on some issues.

The minister said that Amaravati was not a notified area and added that every citizen had the right on it.



Women perform Kumkuma puja during the ongoing Dasara Navaratri Celebrations at Shivalayam in the One Town area in Visakhapatnam on Friday. — K. MURALIKRISHNA

Parshottam assures all help to flood hit farmers

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 23

Union minister of state for agriculture Parshottam Rupala has assured all help to rain and flood affected farmers in the state.

The AP BJP organised a virtual meeting with the Union minister on Friday. Its president Somu Veerajulu informed Rupala that the state witnessed heavy rainfall in the last 10 days causing damage to

several varieties of crops across the state. He said that four teams of party leaders visited the affected areas and he would send their findings to the Centre for seeking financial support to farmers.

Rupala asserted that it was their prime responsibility to come to the rescue of the aggrieved farmers as they were the backbone of the country’s economy. He assured to extend all necessary help to the farmers in their hour of crisis.

Senior party leaders Daggubati Purandeswari and GVL Narasimha Rao explained about the quantum of loss to the farmers. They said that the crop damage and loss report was sent to the Union agriculture ministry and asked the Union minister to take a suitable decision to extend help to the state.

MPs CM Ramesh and Sujana Choudhary flayed the state government for failing to come to the rescue of the rain-affected farmers.

20 TONNES OF ONIONS SOLD IN RYTHU BAZAARS

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 23

People in Visakhapatnam city sighed with relief after district administration began selling onions at the Rythu Bazaars, on the eve of Dasara festival. The sale was launched at all the 13 Rythu Bazaars, and each person was given a kg of onions at the rate of ₹40 a kg.

Marketing Department sources said the first batch of onions was sourced from Tadepallegudem and 20 tonnes was disbursed through all the Rythu Bazaars in the city. The second batch of onions would be coming from Maharashtra, where farmers were agitating for the low prices being given by the marketing agencies.

Sources said the supply from Kurnool was doubtful since the rains damaged the crop extensively.

Onions were sold at ₹60 a kg in Rythu Bazaars and ₹100 in the open markets.

“Chicken and onion prices are shooting up parallel. Time has come to give up both and wait for the prices to come down,” said Vineetha, a housewife at MVP Rythu Bazaar.

Many consumers suspected that vegetable vendors were lifting much of the stock from the Rythu Bazaars and selling for a premium in their shops.

● THE FIRST batch of onions was sourced from Tadepallegudem and 20 tonnes was disbursed through all the Rythu Bazaars

Land survey messed up by revenue records

NAGESWARA RAO
BALLEDA | DC
KADAPA, OCT. 23

It would be beneficial to conduct a comprehensive land survey only after revenue records in the state were purged.

The land survey, being carried out after almost 110 years, is said to be a good programme but problems will arise if carried out without a specific approach. In many villages, the actual land is very different from the land in the farmers’ passbooks. In the past, some staff have tampered with records at will.

For example in a mandal in Kadapa district, the revenue officials say that 25000 more acres of land in the web land records against the actual land availability. Until recently, DKT (Darkhastu patta) lands and dotted lands were traded. Some are registered sale deeds and some are under agreement. It is not clear how these will be done. There are problems of lands belonging to Simhachalam temple in Visakhapatnam area, problems of Chotriyam lands and problems of Matham lands in places like Tirupati.

The villages have manyam lands (lands given to those who do various kinds of professional work by the zamindaris and kings). Those lands were sold in many places. Revenue officials gave them passbooks. Banks also provided loans. Now the government does not permit them to buy and sell. The government has done registrations and mutations in the past. Now the farmers are in a difficult situation. Everyone wants clarification on this.

Many lands were put on the list of previously prohibited lands due to lack of knowledge among mandal revenue staff. The

● Dkt – Darakhastu patta: Land issued to the poor. This is only for cultivation and the person does not have any right to sale

● Section 22(A)– Government lands, assigned lands, endowment and wakf lands, disproportionate of properties.

● Dotted lands: These are also included in the 22(A) list. The state government conducted a land survey from 1907-1914 all over the state. Some land owners did not claim the property they owned fearing land cess. All these lands enjoyed by families but they do not have any revenue records.

list also includes lands that have been officially traded for over a hundred years.

Authorities ignored fixing these problems ordered several times by the government. There are still hundreds of petitions in the high court.

In 2019, the government says to revise new regulations to remove the lands from the list of 22(A) (government list of lands). Many districts will not care about them; in some districts, there are new lists; in others, lists were not prepared at all. It is very difficult to purge records without addressing these. Issues in the courts and lands issued to the ex-army people have to be settled. There is a need to hold conferences at the village, mandal and district level to resolve these issues. With suggestions coming in, many want state-level authorities to discuss group-wise and finally codify everything roughly and come up with a solution to each problem.

Autorickshaw drivers oppose amended MV Act

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 23

Angered over the amended Motor Vehicle Act, 1988 which imposed heavy fines for violating traffic rules, the autorickshaw unions in Vizag held a protest on Friday. The working drivers, representing various unions in large numbers, were seen raising slogans against the government.

The AP government recently amended the Motor Vehicle Act, 1988 to increase the penal amounts for various traffic offences which ranged from ₹1,000 to ₹10,000. The government authorised motor vehicle inspectors and made officials of the transport department and sub-inspector and above rank police officials entitled to penalise violators and collect compounding fees.

R. K. S. V. Kumar, city president of CITU, and all-India trade union congress (AITUC) leader, Manmadha Rao, said that in the name of road discipline, the AP government has unreasonably increased the fines for traffic violations. Covid-19 has hit the transport sector hard and, added to this, the new hefty fines for the traffic violations

TRANSPORT ASSOCIATIONS PROTEST INCREASE IN PENALTIES

DC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, OCT. 23

The centre of Indian trade unions (CITU) and other transport association activists protested in front of the collector’s office here on Friday, against hiking challan fees and fines and they demanded that the government immediately cancel the fees and penalties on transport vehicles.

Citu district general secretary, Ch. Rajkumar, said that without reviewing the implementation of the motor vehicle act, 1988, the union government enacted an amendment act last year.

According to the amendment act, there was no extension and widening of roads and their maintenance but the government wants to make the

would further lead them to misery. The situation is the same for the workers who have been depending on the road transport sector.

“We are demanding that the government cancel the GOMS 21 (amended motor

transport vehicle owners and drivers pay for accidents and other unfortunate incidents.

The agitators said that the transport workers and owners are facing difficulties surviving for the past seven months during the pandemic as there was no business. Now all the roads are in very bad shape and they are unable to drive on the roads. They demanded the government should set up a ‘drivers welfare board’ for the survival of transport vehicle drivers and also not give licenses or allow new vehicles beyond the limits.

Angered over the amended Motor Vehicle Act, 1988 which imposed heavy fines for violating traffic rules, the autorickshaw unions in Vizag held a protest on Friday.

vehicle act, 1988) to save autorickshaw drivers and others in the transport sector. An auto driver who earns around ₹500-1000 per day cannot afford to pay a challan of ₹1,000-5,000 for traffic violations,” they added.

ernment control and the total number of seats available is about 1,440. Candidates who performed well in the NEET UG are eagerly waiting for the announcement of state merit list and commencement of counselling for admission.

The state government is yet to come up with the two orders on conduct of counselling process for admission and also on fixation of fee.

MEDICAL | COURSES NTRUHS yet to receive the official result from Union ministry of health

AP merit list for NEET UG admissions delayed

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 23

The announcement of the AP merit list for NEET UG for admission into first year medical and dental courses in government and private medical colleges may be delayed as the Union ministry of health is yet to communicate the official result to the NTR University of Health Sciences (NTRUHS) so far.

The National Testing Agency (NTA) announced the NEET Undergraduate results on October 16. The NTA communicates the official result to the Union ministry of health which forwards it to nodal agencies to enable them to prepare the state merit lists with 85 per cent of total seats available for state ranks and the remaining 15 per cent of seats to be filled up with those based on all India ranks.

NTRUHS authorities maintain that they used to get official communication on such results within a week but this year they have not received any communication so far.

It is suspected that as the pandemic has been affecting the functioning of both government and private offices, official communication of NEET UG results to the States/UTs might be delayed.

University registrar Dr K.

Sankar said, “We are awaiting receipt of official communication from the union ministry of health on NEET UG results. Once we get them, we will prepare the state list and announce it in a week’s time. We also do not know when we will get the NEET UG results.”

Meanwhile, NTRUHS authorities are preparing the seat matrix to provide reservation for various categories including BC, SC, ST, women, NCC, sports and

children of armed personnel for admission to qualified candidates in both medical and dental colleges in the state.

University authorities maintain that AP has 28 medical colleges, including 12 under the control of government, while the rest are being run by the private managements. The total number of seats available for admission is about 5,010. Similarly, there are 16 dental colleges with two under gov-

IN BRIEF

MOTHER, SON
WASHED AWAY
TAKING SELFIEDC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, OCT. 23

Craze for selfies took a tragic turn when a mother and son got washed away in a check dam near Jallipeta in Palamaner constituency of Chittoor district on Friday. The duo was reportedly trying to capture a self-portrait against the backdrop of waters gushing in the check dam.

Police have identified the deceased as Parveen, 35, and her son Hameed, 8, of Gudduru colony in Palamaner constituency. Parveen, along with her husband Moulali and son, had gone to the Jallipeta check dam in the morning to see water overflowing due to incessant rains since the past two days.

Soon after reaching the check dam, the family tried to take selfies while standing on the sloped edge of the check dam. Hameed suddenly lost balance, fell into the gushing waters and got swept away. The mother immediately jumped in to save her son. However, both of them got washed away. The husband, with help of locals, tried to save them, but their attempts did not succeed.

Local police roped in swimmers to trace the bodies of the mother and son, which could not be traced till the night.

TEENAGER DIES
AFTER CAR
WASHED AWAYDC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, OCT. 23

A 16-year-old girl, Sai Vineeta, was found dead while her father was still missing after the car in which they were travelling was swept away in the gushing waters of Kondayavaripalle vagu (stream) in Penumuru mandal of Chittoor district in the late hours on Thursday.

According to police, G. Pratap, a businessman from Vadderapalli, Puthalapattu mandal, along with his wife Shyamala, daughter Vineeta and a relative, Chengappa, were returning home after attending a marriage reception in Kaligiri Konda in the same mandal when the tragedy occurred.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, Penumuru sub-inspector B. Praveen Kumar said that the Kondayavaripalle vagu was overflowing due to incessant rains for the past two days. "The driver of the car in which Pratap's family was travelling encountered the overflowing stream while driving back home. When the driver attempted to move forward, the vehicle got stuck on the road for a while and was eventually swept away by the strong current of the water."

"While the driver of the car managed to break open the windows of the car and all the inmates tried to move to safety, 16-year-old Sai Vineeta who was on the top of the car accidentally slipped into the stream. Pratap, who saw his daughter being swept away, jumped into the waters to rescue her. Unfortunately, both father and daughter were swept away in the gushing waters," the SI added.

Villagers, who had rushed to the spot after hearing the cries for help, rescued Shyamala, Chengappa, and driver Kiran. Penumuru police and rescue teams reached the stream on Friday early morning and launched a rescue operation. The rescue teams also tried to spot the victims using drone cameras but were not successful. However, they managed to retrieve Vineeta's body.

"After five hours, the rescue teams retrieved Vineeta's body but her father is still missing. The rescue operation is continuing and additional forces and expert divers were roped in to trace Pratap," Kumar said.

Meanwhile, Chittoor MLA Arani Srinivasulu and senior officials of the district administration reached the spot on Friday morning. They got down into the stream in boats and supervised the rescue operation.

● The driver of the car in which Pratap's family was travelling encountered the overflowing stream while driving back home. When the driver attempted to move forward, the vehicle got stuck on the road for a while and was eventually swept away by the strong current of the water.

● After five hours, the rescue teams retrieved Vineeta's body but her father is still missing.

State crosses 8-lakh mark
in Covid-19 positive cases

20 persons have succumbed to the disease, taking the death toll to 6,544

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN |
DC
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 23

Andhra Pradesh has crossed the eight-lakh mark in total number of Covid-19 cases by registering 8,00,684 instances of the disease, with 3,765 new cases having been added during the last 24 hours.

State health authorities have released their Coronavirus bulletin here on Friday reporting that out of 80,238 samples tested, 3,765 individuals have tested positive. 20 persons have succumbed to the disease during the last 24 hours, taking the death toll to 6,544.

Out of the total of 74,28,014 samples tested so far in the state, 7,62,419 patients have been discharged after recovery from various hospitals in the state, while 31,721 patients are still active with the virus and undergoing treatment.

Among the daily new Covid-19 instances, West Godavari has topped with 532 cases, followed by 523 in Guntur, 475 in East Godavari, 460 in Krishna, 347 in Chittoor, 317 in Prakasam, 225 in Kadapa, 218 in Visakhapatnam, 199 in Srikakulam, 152 in Anantapur, 126 in Vizianagaram, 122 in Nellore and 69 in Kurnool.

Two PHCs free from Covid-19,
a massive campaign beginsK.M.P. PATNAIK | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 23

Around 80 tribal hamlets having a population of 15,000 under two primary health centres are free from the virus while the number of actives cases have come down to less than 200 in Visakhapatnam agency. Only nine persons succumbed to the virus so far since the virus broke out in the agency.

The public health centre at Rajendrapalem has around 50 hamlets with a population of about 10,000 and U. Cheedipalem has 30 hamlets having a population of 5,000. The agency has

36 PHCs and a district hospital in Paderu.

The dwindling positive cases and increased awareness among the illiterate Adivasis came as a surprise to the health officials.

"People are using masks, there is less attendance at the weekly shandies (markets) and public gatherings," said district medical and health officer Dr P.S. Suryanarayana.

He said a massive campaign had been launched and Covid awareness hoardings have been put all over the agency removing the commercial boards. He said instructions were also

given to the government offices, banks and insurance companies to insist on using masks, sanitisers and maintain social distance.

Additional district medical and health officer Dr P. Leela Prasad said there had been an increase in the tests. He said all the 36 PHCs, the only district hospital, community hospitals are conducting on an average of 1,500 tests per day. On Friday, 900 tests were conducted, and 17 of them tested positive. In all 2,000 people tested positive since the outbreak and except 200 patients, all of them have recovered and have no health issues.

East Godavari continues to top the state with highest number of 1,12,661 cumulative confirmed Coronavirus cases, followed by 81,784 in West Godavari, 75,690 in Chittoor, 64,372 in Guntur, 63,459 in Anantapur, 59,096 in Kurnool, 58,790 in Nellore, 57,953 in Prakasam, 54,693 in

Visakhapatnam, 50,811 in Kadapa, 43,335 in Srikakulam, 38,669 in Vizianagaram, 36,446 in Krishna, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

Rate of recovery among Covid-19 infected patients has been high, with 1,06,361 recoveries in East Godavari district, followed by 77,582 in West

Godavari, 71,464 in Chittoor, 61,191 in Anantapur, 60,067 in Guntur, 57,928 in Kurnool, 57,812 in Nellore, 54,657 in Prakasam, 51,990 in Visakhapatnam, 48,461 in Kadapa, 41,699 in Srikakulam, 37,756 in Vizianagaram, 32,556 in Krishna, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other



Lord Malayappa Swamy took a pride ride on Sarvabhoopala Vahanam on Friday.

Lord Malayappa taken on
Sarvabhoopala VahanamDC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, OCT. 23

On the eighth day morning of Srivari Navaratri Brahmotsavams, Lord Malayappa Swamy along with his consorts Sridevi and Bhudevi blessed devotees on Sarvabhoopala Vahanam at Tirumala temple on Friday.

As part of the state and central government Covid-19 guidelines, the vahanam sevala was observed in ekantham and the utsava idols were seated atop the richly

decorated Sarvabhoopala vahanam at the Kalyana Mandapam inside the temple.

Sarvabhoopala vahanam signifies that Lord Venkateswara is the supreme commander of the entire cosmos. The message spelt out of this vahanam indicates that Lord Venkateswara controlled the entire universe as the controller of all. On his instructions, Indra (East), Agni (south-east), Yama (god of death on the South), Niruti (North - East), and Varuna on (West), Vayu

(south-west) and Kubera (god of wealth on North) and Parameswara on (North-west) execute their job chart. In the evening Lord Malayappa was taken on the Aswa vahanam, the last of all the eventful vahanam sevas of Brahmotsavams. The nine-day mega event will be concluded on Saturday Chakrasnamam.

Tirumala Pontiffs Pedda Jeeyar Swamy and Chinna Jeeyar Swamy, TTD EO Dr K.S. Jawahar Reddy among others were present.

POLICE BUSTS
FAKE GOLD
GANGDC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, OCT. 23

The Ongole II Town police on Friday claimed to have busted a fake gold racket operated by a Karnataka-based gang by arresting three persons and recovering most of the money that an Ongole resident lost to the gang.

According to the police, a week ago, one Bojja Adam of Nagambotlapalem village of Thalluru mandal in Prakasam district approached the Ongole II Town police.

He said that he was duped of ₹7 lakh by a gang of three, who had sold him two kg ornaments, that turned out to be fake gold.

One of the gang members had befriended the victim and sold him quail birds last month. After a few days, he approached the victim again and told him that his brother Ravi, who works as JCB operator had found ancient gold while he was digging at a place in Madurai. He promised the victims that pure and ancient gold items that are excavated by his brother will be sold to him for less money.

The gang had given him some gold items to make him trust them. The complainant got it checked with a goldsmith and after confirmation he struck a deal with the gang to buy the gold and also paid ₹1 lakh as an advance. Accordingly, in the second week of October, he collected the said gold items in Palamaner of Chittoor district and gave the gang ₹6 lakh. His joy of possessing two kg gold for a cheap price, however, did not last long.

Cops: Youth into
chain-snatchingAVINASH P.
SUBRAMANYAM | DC
TIRUPATI, OCT. 23

An elderly woman was returning home after work in her farmland on the Srikalahasti-Pichatur road under the K.V.B. Puram mandal on October 5. She did not notice two motor-bike-borne youngsters following her and within seconds, her 16-gram gold chain was snatched away by the two miscreants, who sped away in a flash.

This is not just an isolated case reported in Chittoor district.

Mandals like Nagari, Nindra, Puttur, Pichatur, Varadaiahpalem and Satyavedu, bordering Tamil Nadu, as well as Tirupati and other parts in the district have recorded a spate of chain-snatching incidents in recent times. The spurt in such crimes shows that some deceitful elements are hell-bent on getting hold of gold and making a killing, in the process.

According to police data, since 2019 over 42 chain-snatching cases were reported in Chittoor district (excluding Tirupati urban limits) till September 30 this year, out of which only 27 cases have been detected. Of the recent 12 such offences, only six have been detected.

What is appalling is the involvement of youngsters and students in chain-snatching incidents. This has reportedly become an easy way for earning a fast

buck. Even more baffling is that some of the offenders are from well-to-do families and they are indulging in this crime to meet their lavish lifestyle requirements.

The offenders usually target women walking alone in colonies and empty roads in rural areas. They arrive in high-end bikes from nowhere and snatch gold chains and disappear in a jiffy. To strike on their prey, they use bikes without number plates or irregular plates and venture into areas where there are no CC cameras. Senior police officials also admit that many youngsters are resorting to unlawful activities for earning easy money.

For instance, Alipiri police arrested two chain-snatchers, including a teenager, in Tirupati on October 18. Tirupati east division DSP T. Murali Krishna said that the two were addicted to various vices and this was an easy way out to indulge in unlawful excesses.

"Gold can be converted into money easily. Many gold finance companies and even local pawn-brokers are now offering money against gold within minutes. The chain snatchers sell the stolen jewellery to gullible brokers and make a few thousands in a short time. This is what drives many youngsters into these crimes and also a reason for the spurt in such cases", a senior police officer observed.

CCS police nab
old offenderDC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, OCT. 23

The Central Crime Station (CCS) police arrested an old offender, who was involved in housebreak-in offences and recovered 222 grams of gold worth ₹6.5 lakh, one mobile phone and cash from his possession here on Friday.

According to CCS DSP G. Muralidhar, the accused Pasupuleti Sai Kumar, 23, a native of Nandiganipalle of Anantapur district was involved in a housebreak-in

offence reported in Chittoor with Cr.No.507/2020 u/s 454, 380 IPC.

The CCS police led by C.I.B. Mohan on Friday encountered a person moving around suspiciously near Padmavati Kalyana mandapams along the Tirupati-Tiruchanoor road on Friday. On being questioned, the accused confessed his involvement in a series of housebreak-in offences reported in Chittoor and Anantapur districts. He was produced in the court on Friday.

₹90.72cr input
subsidy for EGDC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, OCT. 23

East Godavari district collector D. Muralidhar Reddy has said as per preliminary estimates, ₹90.72 crore input subsidy is required for paddy crop being grown in the district. This is consequent in 60,486 hectares of crop getting damaged so far because of rains and floods. Muralidhar Reddy told reporters here on Friday evening that crops like cotton and maize, apart from horticulture crops over an extent of about 4,935 hectares have been damaged. However, enumeration of crop losses is still on and will be completed by October 30.

He announced that particulars of crop damage will be displayed at Rythu Bharosa centres for receiving objections, if any, from the farmers.

The collector requested people to follow all Covid-19 protocols and precautions, like wearing masks, maintaining social distance and wash their hands with soap. He said all traders and com-

mercial establishments should follow each Coronavirus protocol without fail, including the No Mask-No Entry norm. If any establishment is found violating these restrictions, they will be sealed and their licences revoked, if necessary. Some of the shops in Amalapuram have already been sealed.

Mr Muralidhar Reddy said the number of Covid cases has decreased, so much so that the bed occupancy rate in district hospitals is below 45 per cent. He announced that steps will soon be taken to treat non-Coronavirus cases too at all hospitals.

The collector said in view of educational institutions reopening on November 2, Covid-19 tests are being conducted on teaching and non-teaching staff, 10,000 of total 14,000 staff have already been tested.

Joint collector G. Lakshminisha said free rations like 25 kilos of rice, 1 kilo oil, one kilo onions, one kilo red-gram dal, and one kilo potatoes have been supplied free of cost to flood victims in the district.

Locals call it Sinnagundla Katuwa

FROM PAGE 1

Raghu Yadav said they were found in an area of about three acres on the banks of Mogabiri rivulet in Vempalle mandal. He said there are about 30 to 40 similar pictures here. The locals call this place Sinnagundla Katuwa, Sinnagundla Bayalu, Toravalla Katuwa.

According to Raghu Yadav, there are two types of stone paintings



by aborigines. Pictographs and Petro Glips. Archaeologists say Petro Glips dates back to the New Stone Age, between

2900 BC and 1000 BC. The discoveries included human-shaped figures, armed man, ox and horse, toys of man riding

on ox and other animals. Two of these bulls were said to have been nicely written. He pointed out that in primitive days, the height and lengths of bullocks were nearly equal in size. Based on the stone paintings on the shells, it is safe to say that the site was a Neolithic abode, he asserted.

Archaeologists have also confirmed that Petro Glips were painted by primitives.

SHORT TAKES

CENTRAL AGENCIES
DENY LEAKING SSR
CASE INFORMATIONDC CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, OCT. 23

Union government told the Bombay High court on Friday that none of their three agencies — Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Enforcement Directorate (ED) and Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) — which are investigating cases related to Sushant Singh Rajput's (SSR) death, have leaked probe information to the media. Last week, the court had pulled up the Union government for sharing probe information to the media.

A bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice G.S. Kulkarni was hearing a public interest litigations filed by former IPS officers alleging that some news channels are maligning image of Mumbai police in SSR death case and asked the court to restrain the media coverage. The HC is hearing arguments on whether a statutory mechanism is required to control the TV news content.

On Friday, Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Anil Singh filed affidavits before the court on behalf of the CBI, ED and NCB stating they had not leaked any probe related details to the media.

The court was irked when lawyers of news channels, which are party in the PIL, put forth Supreme Court judgments and opposed the idea of statutory regulatory mechanism on news channels. The HC remarked that the media has changed now.

ANTI-BENGALI
RANT: MEGHALAYA
CALLS FOR PEACEMANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, OCT. 23

After a racial campaign by an influential students' body targeting Bengalis ahead of Durga Puja, the Meghalaya government on Friday appealed to all to maintain peace and harmony in Meghalaya. The Khasi Students Union (KSU) had put up posters in Shillong accusing all Bengalis in the state of being "Bangladeshis". The state police has removed the posters and warned of action against those trying to "incite communal disharmony". Police specifically warned the KSU to refrain from such activities or face legal action.

Former Meghalaya governor Tathagata Roy, also a BJP leader in Kolkata, tweeted, "I say this taking full responsibility as ex-governor of Meghalaya: KSU needs to be banned just like HNLC. It is an anti-national terrorist organisation, threatening Indian citizens, some of whom are residents of Meghalaya since British times. Like my family on both sides." The Hynniewtrep National Liberation Council is a banned militant outfit in Meghalaya.

Meghalaya home minister Lahkmen Rymbui said, "Anything we do, we should not vitiate the atmosphere... I request everybody not to give communal colour to any incident."

Sources in the student body indicated that the poster campaign has its roots in the Ichamati incident earlier this year when a KSU member was killed in clashes with non-tribals who were largely Bengalis.

US confirms 'close' watch
on India-China border row

Might discuss situation during the forthcoming Indo-US 2+2 dialogue

SRIDHAR
KUMARASWAMI | DC
NEW DELHI, OCT. 23

The United States confirmed on Friday that it was 'watching the situation' on the Sino-Indian line of actual control (LAC) 'closely' and that it would probably be discussed during the forthcoming Indo-US 2+2 talks at the foreign and defence ministerial level on October 27 in New Delhi, adding that the (defence pact) 'Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) and other agreements are in the works.'

In response to a question on the forthcoming 2+2 dialogue with India, a

US state department official told reporters via tele-conference. "Certainly, I think the situation on the LAC will be, will probably be, discussed at some point, and we're watching the situation closely. I think both sides have expressed a desire to de-escalate violence." In response to another question, he added, "We're in the process of finalising a lot of the discussions right now, and so I know that BECA and other agreements are in the works."

The US official also said "The 2+2 format is reserved for our closest friends and partners and reflects our belief that the United States and

India are stronger, more secure, and more prosperous when we work together. The 2+2 discussions will focus on global cooperation, on pandemic response, and challenges in the Indo-Pacific: economic space and energy collaboration, people-to-people ties, and defense and security cooperation."

As already reported, United States secretary of state, Michael R. Pompeo, and secretary of defense, Mark T. Esper, will be visiting New Delhi on October 26 and 27 and will hold talks with their Indian counterparts, S. Jaishankar and Rajnath Singh, on October 27 as part of the

Indo-US 2+2 talks. As also reported already, India and the United States could ink the BECA defence pact for 'greater geospatial information-sharing' during the forthcoming Indo-US 2+2 talks.

According to reports, BECA will enable India to use US geospatial intelligence and satellite imagery to improve the accuracy of missiles and drones, a development that might prove crucial in the situation in the Ladakh sector where there is heavy deployment of both Indian and Chinese troops backed by tanks and heavy artillery on both sides. BECA is the third proposed defence pact between the

two countries after the signing of the logistics exchange memorandum of agreement (LEMOA) in 2016 and the communications compatibility and security agreement (COMCASA) in 2018.

Pompeo will also be separately visiting Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Indonesia, after New Delhi. Commenting on that forthcoming visit to Indonesia, another US official said, "You've seen Indonesia has pushed back on Chinese ships fishing in its exclusive economic zone (EEZ) illegally. And so there are things that we have done, again, that empower these countries to push back."

Top BJP leaders
advised me to
join NCP: KhadseSONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC
MUMBAI, OCT. 23

Claiming that several senior leaders are unhappy in the BJP and want to quit the party, former Maharashtra minister Eknath Khadse on Friday said that he joined the Sharad Pawar-led party as advised by some senior BJP leaders from Delhi.

Khadse, who has been sulking in the BJP ever since he had stepped down from the Maharashtra cabinet in 2016 after corruption charges, joined the NCP along with his daughter and number of supporters in presence of NCP president Sharad Pawar.

The 68-year-old leader, who was BJP's OBC face in the state along with late Gopinath Munde, said that his supporters as well as his seniors from Delhi wanted him to join the NCP.

While joining the NCP, he said that injustice was meted to him in the BJP and that he was fleeced, insulted and defamed and a false charge like molestation, too, was levelled against him.

"When I discussed the situation with seniors in Delhi, they said Natha Bhau (Khadse) you don't have a future here (in the BJP). I asked what I should do? They asked me to change the party. I asked which one should I join? Then they suggested the NCP," Khadse said.

He also claimed that several leaders in the BJP are fed up and think they should jump the ship but cannot do so as they are apprehensive the ED will be after them. "I am not afraid of anyone. If they send ED after me, I will play a CD," he said.

In his induction ceremony at NCP's office, Khadse showed his influence in the Jalgaon unit of the BJP as his supporters including Jalgaon district general secretary and members of Zila Parishad and Panchayat Samiti turned out in large numbers.

Targeting the BJP state leadership, Khadse said that after serving 40 years in the BJP, he did not want to leave the party but he was forced to do so as he had been defamed and harassed in the last four years.

Mumbai mall fire mishap



Smoke rises from City Central Mall after a fire broke out in it in Mumbai on Friday. The fire brigade evacuated around 3,500 people residing in a building adjacent to the Mall which caught a huge Level-5 fire on Thursday evening.

— PTI

RAHUL SAYS MODI
LIED ON INTRUSION
AS SOLDIERS DIEDNAYEAR AZAD | DC
PATNA, OCT. 23

Former Congress president and the party's star campaigner Rahul Gandhi on Friday started his campaign for Bihar Assembly elections by addressing rallies in Hisua and Kahalgao. Addressing the masses in Hisua, Gandhi attacked the NDA government at the centre in general and Prime Minister Narendra Modi in particular over the Galawan valley issue and said, "The Chinese army martyred 20 of our soldiers and took over 1,200 kilometres of our land. When China came inside our territory, why did our Prime Minister, insulting the heroes, say that no one came into our land? He is trying to mislead the people of Bihar by his statements which he should not do and speak instead about his plans to throw the Chinese out of our territory."

Gandhi's statement came in reaction to Modi's speech during his political rally in Sasaram, where he said that "brave soldiers from Bihar were martyred in Galawan to save the honour of our motherland and the tricolour." While addressing his political rally, Gandhi also raised the issue of migrant crisis and blamed the centre for not extending any support to people who were pushed out of other states during lockdown.

Addressing his first rally in poll-bound Bihar, Gandhi said that "people of Bihar were promised two crore jobs during the previous Assembly polls but no one got them."

He also lashed out at the centre for passing the three farm laws. "The three farm laws are not good for farmers. First, they put an end to mandis and MSP in Bihar and now they are trying to do it in other parts of the country," he said.

Stock limits imposed
on onion traders

New Delhi, Oct. 23: To boost domestic supply and provide relief to consumers from rising onion prices, the Centre on Friday imposed stock limits on both retailers and wholesales with immediate effect till December 31.

Now, retailers can stock onion only up to 2 tonne, whereas wholesale traders are allowed to keep up to 25 tonne. This will check hoarding and blackmarketing, it said. Onion prices have shot up sharply to over ₹75 per kg in the past few weeks in the wake of damage to the standing kharif crop in producing areas due to heavy rainfall as well as hoarding.

Addressing media, consumer affairs secretary Leena Nandan said, "This is a decisive step. We have imposed stock limits on onion traders with an immediate effect till December 31 after concerns that traders were releasing their stored stocks slowly, creating artificial price rise situation."

She said the government had to invoke the recently passed Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020, which provides regulation of agri-commodities "only" in the times of extraordinary price rise situation.

"Under this law, normally, we would not be regulating agri-food stuff like cereals and onion. But, in times of extraordinary price rise, we can regulate if the retail price breaches the trigger levels specified in the law," she said.

In case of onion, the average all-India retail price of

onion of ₹55.60 per kg that prevailed on October 21 breached the trigger level as per the formula specified under the EC Amendment Act, she said.

The all-India average retail price of ₹55.60 per kg was higher by 22.12 per cent compared with last year's rates of ₹45.33 per kg and by 114.96 per cent as against average rate that prevailed in past five years. So, the retail price had actually more than doubled and, therefore, decided to impose the stock limits on the commodity, she added.

Later, consumer affairs minister Piyush Goyal tweeted that the Modi government has taken third step to curb hoarding and check prices. Stock limits have been imposed on retailers and wholesale traders of onion.

The government said action under the Prevention of Blackmarketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980, would be taken to prevent any hoarding, black marketing of onions by unscrupulous elements.

Highlighting other measures taken to cool down the spiralling trend in onion prices, the secretary said the government has decided to augment domestic supplies through imports for which state-owned MMTC would soon float a tender for red onions to meet the demand supply gap.

Recently, the government relaxed fumigation and phytosanitary norms for import of onion and activated Indian consulates to facilitate trade, she said.

— PTI

ACTIVE COVID
CASES BELOW
7-LAKH MARKDC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 23

With 54,366 fresh cases, India on Friday registered a total of 77.61 lakh cases of Coronavirus. In the last 24 hours 690 new deaths were recorded taking the country's total death tally to 1.17 lakh.

According to the Union health ministry, India has leaped across a significant milestone in its fight against Covid-19 as active caseload of the country has fallen below 7 lakh for the first time after two months.

The active caseload was below the 7 lakh mark last on August 22.

The total positive cases of the country are 6.95 lakh and they comprise 8.96 per cent of the total cases.

TN MP triggers row
by citing Manusmriti

Chennai, Oct. 23: A row erupted here on Friday over the alleged derogatory remarks of Lok Sabha MP and Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK) founder Thol. Thirumavalavan about women, with the BJP lashing out at him and demanding an apology.

The allegation against the Chidambaram MP was that he spoke ill of women while citing Manusmriti, a perceived anti-feminist ancient code of conduct. But the VCK leader denied denigrating women and insisted he was working for their emancipation.

A video clip on social media purportedly showed him making some remarks but the leader alleged "communal" forces were creat-

ing a wrong impression that he belittled women. Users on micro-blogging site Twitter debated the issue, with some supporting him and others criticising the MP.

BJP leader Khushbu Sundar hit out at Thirumavalavan and asked him to be careful of what he speaks since he was a political leader.

Addressing reporters at the state BJP headquarters, Kamalalayam, Khushbu said women cannot be objectified and accused the MP of "using religion" against them. Without naming anyone, she said many women family members of political leaders claiming to be followers of rational leader, the late EVR Periyar, "go from temple to temple

and click pictures."

Responding to the charges, Thirumavalavan said he had made no disparaging remarks against women while participating in an online conference recently.

"I said that demeans women. But those with an eye on political mileage, a casteist-communal group is spreading falsehood against me and creating an impression as if I spoke against women," he said in a video uploaded on his Twitter page. "This is completely wrong. We are struggling for women's emancipation and those unable to tolerate this are doing such things to create a flutter in the DMK alliance during (ahead of) elections," he said. — PTI

KASHMIR | ISSUE PDP chief says she regrets allying with the BJP

Mufti wants restoration of Art. 370

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR, OCT. 23

Renewing her pledge to fight for the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's special status till her last breath, former chief minister and People's Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti said on Friday that the Centre had no right or power to abrogate Article 370. She regretted reposing faith in Prime Minister Narendra Modi and allying with the BJP.

She said that the bigger issue before her, the PDP and the people of J&K, was to seek a resolution on the Kashmir issue.

"Our fight is not confined to restoration of Article 370, but for the resolution on Kashmir issue as well. Kashmir is an issue and nobody can turn a eye blind to it," she said while addressing a press conference here, her first after her release from a 14-month long detention earlier this month.

Mufti, 61, who looked in a defiant mood, said, "Those who think we will forget Article 370 are living in a fool's paradise. People have made a lot of sacrifices and we won't allow those sacrifices to go waste."

She added "We (the leaders of various political parties who are part of the recently formed People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration) are united and people should also fight it in unison. It is not the fight of Dr Farooq, Sajad Lone or any other leader but of one and all."

She vowed that she will be the first person among the political leaders to give her blood "for this cause in case the need arises".

Accusing the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government at the Centre of hurting the sentiments of the people of J&K by snatching from them the special status and taking other "anti-people" decisions, she said, "This is highly regrettable that since the unconstitutional and ille-

gal abrogation of Article 370, the government has left no stone unturned to hurt the sentiments of the people with their anti-people decisions. They don't want people of Jammu and Kashmir, who are expendable for them."

She asserted, "The people of J&K are shell-shocked. They have lost hope. August 5 was loot and theft."

On PDP joining hands with the BJP to cobble up a government in J&K in 2015, she said that she regretted trusting Modi who belonged to a party of which Atal Bihari Vajpayee was also a part.

She, however, claimed that her party did not forge an alliance with the BJP to come to power.

She said, "We didn't ally with the BJP for power. If you remember, my father made a statement on July 28, 2014 wherein he stated that he wants to work for people of Jammu and Kashmir. He knew a Tsunami was coming."

She also asserted that it was not the PDP's alliance with the BJP that led to the abrogation of Article 370. "It was the Parliament that was misused. Parliament had no right to do this," she said.

She said, "These BJP leaders have ruined the Constitution of India. This country will work on the constitution and not as per the BJP manifesto."

She also said that India is economically and at diplomatic level in distress and internally also polarisation is taking its toll due to the wrong policies of the incumbent government.

She said, "Our economy is worse than that of Bangladesh. They have demonised Muslims, Dalits and all downtrodden communities. Kashmir is a problem. You cannot close your eyes to it. PDP always wanted to bring peace to this place. Look at the condition now; China on one side, Pakistan on the other."

COLLEGES TO OPEN
FROM NOV. 17 IN
KARNATAKAVINAY MADHAV | DC
BENGALURU, OCT. 23

After witnessing a downward trend in the number of Covid-19 cases for over a week, the Karnataka government has decided to open the educational institutions starting from November 17.

As the first step, the government would allow opening of degree colleges, along with diploma and engineering colleges. However, decisions on Pre-University and High Schools would be taken after studying the situation for a month.

Karnataka higher education minister Dr Ashwath Narayana said that the idea behind opening of the colleges is to maintain bonding between students and college. It has been seven months since the students have gone to their colleges and they were learning online.

While the government is opening colleges, it would be made optional as the students are free to choose between online coaching and direct teaching in colleges.

DC CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, OCT. 23

A Sessions court in Mumbai on Friday took cognisance of the chargesheet filed by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) against eight persons including Stan Swamy, Anand Teltumbde and Gautam Naulakha in the Elgar Parishad case. The agency claimed that the conspiracy related to the violence against Dalits in Bhima Koregaon on January 1, 2018 was part of a "well chalked-out strategy", and spread across the country and beyond.

The NIA has filed the chargesheet under various sections of IPC, Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA). The agency in its charge sheet has claimed that Teltumbde was one of the convenors of 'Bhima Koregaon Shaurya Din Prerna Abhiyan' and was present for the Elgar

Parishad event on December 31, 2017 and that Navlakha was assigned the task "to unite intellectuals against the government". It also claimed that he was part of some self-proclaimed fact-finding committees and that during the probe his links with ISI also came to the fore.

According to the NIA, Father Stan Swamy, the 83-year-old resident of Ranchi, was a Maoist actively involved in the outfit's activities, and had been receiving its funds. The agency claimed that documents, including propaganda material and literature, were found from his possession. On the other hand a statement by Swamy, two days before his arrest, said that the NIA had allegedly placed several extracts before him implying his connection to Maoist forces, which he claimed were fabrications stealthily put into his computer.

The NIA claimed that the role of various frontal organisations had also emerged. The agency also called Kabir Kala Manch, one such organisation, claiming that its poets and singers, Jagtap, Gorkhe and Gaichor, were trained cadres who attended meetings to organise the Elgar Parishad event.

Another claim made by the NIA is that professor Hany Babu was "instrumental in organising visits" of foreign journalists to Maoist areas, and was instrumental in making efforts for release of convicted accused G.N. Saibaba. He also has links with other banned groups, the agency has claimed.

16 persons have so far been arrested in the case. Two of the accused, in a petition before the Bombay High Court, have said that the transfer of the case from Pune police to NIA this year was "due to malafides and political expediency."

IN BRIEF

Greta urges EU farm bill veto

Brussels: Environmental activists on Friday piled pressure on the European Parliament to vote down the EU's massive farm subsidy bill, saying it fell short of commitments to fight climate change. Leading climate change activist Greta Thunberg told *MEPs* that "this is your chance to turn empty words into action." "The eyes of future generations are upon you," she added. Thunberg has also taken shots at the media for putting under-served attention on a minor aspect of the package — a proposed ban on using the term "veggie burger" for non-meat products. The proposal, pushed by cattle and dairy farmers, was rejected as an amendment by *MEPs* on Friday although a ban on using "yoghurt style" and "cheese substitute" tags on plant-based goods survived.

US drone strike kills 17 jihadists

Beirut: The US army said on Thursday it carried out a drone strike against Al-Qaeda leaders in northwestern Syria near the Turkish border, killing 17 jihadists, according to a war monitor. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said five civilians were also among those killed. "US Forces conducted a strike against a group of Al-Qaeda in Syria (AQ-S) senior leaders meeting near Idlib, Syria," said Major Beth Riordan, the spokeswoman for United States Central Command (CENTCOM). "The removal of these AQ-S leaders will disrupt the terrorist organisation's ability to further plot and carry out global attacks threatening US citizens, our partners and innocent civilians," Riordan said in a statement. She did not specify the number of deaths from the strike.

15 detained after abortion rally ban

Warsaw: Poland's police said Friday they detained 15 people during protests in Warsaw against a court ruling that toughened the nation's strict abortion law and banned abortion of fetuses with congenital defects. Hundreds of people protested on Thursday night in front of the ruling right-wing party offices and the home of its leader, Jaroslaw Kaczynski, in defiance of a pandemic-related ban on public gatherings. Police used tear gas to disperse the crowd. Warsaw police spokesman Sylwester Marczak said on Friday that 14 people remain in detention and 35 have been fined for having broken the ban. They were protesting the ruling by the government-controlled Constitutional Court Thursday that declared abortion of defective fetuses unconstitutional, thus shutting a major loophole in the 1993 abortion law that was a hard-won compromise.

AGEING CHIMPS CHOOSE FRIENDS CAREFULLY

Washington, Oct. 23: When it comes to friendships, people are known to become more selective with age. It turns out the same is true of male chimps, who have fewer yet more genuine pals to ape around with as they get older, according to a study published in the journal *Science* on Thursday.

The research, which was led by animal psychologist Alexandra Rosati at the University of Michigan, was said to provide the first evidence that animals exhibit age-related social selectivity, and could help us understand more about why humans behave as they do.

The authors drew on a huge dataset of 78,000 hours of observations performed at the Kibale National Park in Uganda between 1995 and 2016.

They reported on the social interactions among 21 wild male chimpanzees (Pan troglodytes) ranging in age from 15 to 58 years. Males were chosen because they remain in the communities in which they are born, whereas the majority of females disperse to new groups when they become sexually mature.

Aside from being our closest animal relatives, chimpanzees are an ideal species to compare to humans because they live long lives — sometimes until their 60s — and have a wide-degree of choice in whom they befriend.

Male friends groom one another, hunt and share meat together, collectively patrol the boundaries of their territories, and form alliances to attain and keep high rank in their groups, which in turn leads to more individual reproductive success.

Trump, Biden clash on Covid, racism, climate

Over 47 million Americans have already cast their votes

Washington, Oct. 23: US President Donald Trump and his challenger Joe Biden clashed over Covid-19, immigration, racism and climate change during their final debate, ahead of the November 3 presidential election, presenting Americans with sharply divergent views of where they would lead them over the next four years.

The two leaders traded barbs during the debate that lasted just over 90 minutes, attacking each other's positions on controlling the raging Coronavirus pandemic and curbing the country's world-leading death toll of over 2,23,000.

The prime-time debate in Nashville, Tennessee, was a less acrimonious and more substantive affair than their previous showdown on September 29, which devolved into insults and name-calling. This prompted the debate organisers to put in place muted microphones during the candidates' opening statements on each topic to minimise disruption.

The debate, deftly moderated by NBC's Kristen Welker, saw plenty of personal attacks between 74-year-old Trump, a Republican, and his 77-year-old Democratic rival, Biden, whose mutual dislike was quite evident. Millions of Americans have already made up their minds about the election, with more than 47 million people having cast early ballots by mail or in person due to Covid-19 fears.

The figure exceeds the early vote total in 2016. There are about 230 million eligible voters in total. The Coronavirus dominated the opening minutes of the Trump-Biden face-off with President Trump terming the contagion a "world-wide problem". "This has been a worldwide problem, but I've been congratulated by many countries on what we've been able to do," he said. Trump once again blamed China for the virus and said Beijing failed to prevent the disease from becoming a pandemic. — *PTI*

India, China 'filthy', says Don, rejecting climate talk

Nashville, Oct. 23: US President Donald Trump on Thursday described the air in India and China as "filthy" as he denounced Democratic rival Joe Biden's plans to tackle climate change.

At their second and final presidential debate, Trump renewed his criticism that action on climate change was unfair to the United States.

"Look at China, how filthy it is. Look at Russia, look at India — it's filthy. The air is filthy," Trump said at the debate in Nashville. Trump charged that Biden's climate plan was an "economic disaster" for oil states such as Texas and Oklahoma.

Biden said that climate change is "an existential threat to humanity. We have a moral obligation to deal with it." "We're going to pass the point of no return within the next eight to 10 years," he said.

The planet has already warmed by around one degree Celsius (34 degrees Fahrenheit) from pre-industrial levels, enough to boost the intensity of deadly heat waves, droughts and tropical storms.

Trump has pulled the United States out of the Paris climate accord, which aims to cap global warming "well below" two degrees Celsius.

Trump's remarks come days before Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Defense Secretary Mark Esper visit New Delhi for talks on building the growing US-India partnership.

At the first presidential debate, Trump also spoke critically of India, questioning its coronavirus data amid criticism of his handling of the pandemic.

China's foreign ministry on Friday said Beijing hoped the US would "stop dragging China into its election campaigns." — *AFP*



US President Donald Trump, Democratic Presidential candidate former US vice-president Joe Biden participate in the final presidential debate at Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee. — *AFP*

TRUMP SAYS HE WILL VOTE IN PERSON

Washington, Oct. 23: President Donald Trump is taking his own advice and plans to vote in person in the presidential election on Saturday in Florida.

Trump is heading to his home state on Friday for campaign rallies at The Villages and in Pensacola. He's scheduled to spend the night at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach and says he'll vote on Saturday before he flies

north for more campaign rallies.

Trump revealed his plans on Thursday after the presidential debate with Democrat Joe Biden. Earlier this year, as Trump pressed unfounded claims about fraud surrounding mail-in and absentee ballots, Trump said people should be required to show up in person at the polls to vote. Trump also has voted by absentee ballot in the past. — *AP*

CEOs OF FB, TWITTER ORDERED TO TESTIFY BY GOP SENATORS

Washington, Oct. 23: The GOP push against Facebook and Twitter accelerated on Thursday after Republican senators threatened the CEOs of the social media companies with subpoenas to force them to address accusations of censorship in the closing weeks of the presidential campaign.

With Democrats boycotting the hearing, the Republican-controlled Senate Judiciary Committee voted to authorise the legal orders if Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg and Twitter's Jack Dorsey did not agree to testify voluntarily.

The committee wants to hear from them about "the

suppression and/or censorship of two news articles from the New York Post," according to the subpoena document. Senators also want information from the executives about their companies' policies for moderating content "that may interfere" with federal elections.

Representatives of Facebook and Twitter declined comment. The urgency ratcheted higher Thursday as US officials said Russian hackers have targeted the networks of dozens of state and local governments in recent days, stealing data from at least two servers. — *AP*

US gives approval to use remdesivir against Covid

Washington, Oct. 23: US regulators on Thursday approved the first drug to treat Covid-19: remdesivir, an antiviral medicine given through an IV for patients needing hospitalisation. The drug, which California-based Gilead Sciences Inc. is calling Veklury, cut the time to recovery by five days — from 15 days to 10 on average — in a large study led by the US National Institutes of Health.

It had been authorised for use on an emergency basis since spring, and now becomes the first drug to win full Food and Drug Administration approval for treating Covid-19. President Donald Trump received it when he was sickened earlier this month.

Veklury is approved for people at least 12 years old and weighing at least 40 kilograms who need hospitalization for their coronavirus infection. For patients younger than 12, the FDA will still allow the drug's use in certain cases under its previous emergency authorization. The drug works by inhibiting a substance the virus uses to make copies of itself. Certain tests are required before starting patients on it.

And the label warns against using it with the malaria drug hydroxychloroquine, because that can curb its effectiveness. "We now have enough knowledge and a growing set of tools to help fight Covid-19," Gilead's chief medical officer, Dr Merdad Parsey, said in a statement.

The drug is either approved or has temporary authorisation in about 50 countries, he noted. Its price has been controversial, given that no studies have found it improves survival. Last week, a large study led by the World Health Organ-

Pope cautioned on Covid after he met infected Bishop

Canberra, Oct. 23: Pope Francis has been warned of potential exposure to Covid-19 after a Vatican diplomat was infected, Australian media reported on Friday.

Archbishop Adolfo Tito Yllana, the Holy See's ambassador to Australia, had a face-to-face meeting with Francis at the Vatican on Oct. 6, less than two weeks before testing positive to Covid-19 in Australia, *Nine News* reported.

Australian authorities say a diplomat who flew into Sydney on Oct. 9 had tested positive to the Coronavirus. They won't reveal the diplomat's identity. The diplomat tested positive 10 days after he started quarantining at home in the national capital Canberra, the Australian Capital Territory Health Department said in a statement.

The department said the risk of infection was "low" for the two people who drove the diplomat 300 kilometers (185 miles) from Sydney to Canberra. Australia's Health Department said in a statement on Friday "all relevant international state parties have been notified." The Vatican did not immediately respond to a request for comment. — *AP*

isation found the drug did not help hospitalized Covid-19 patients, but that study did not include a placebo group and was less rigorous than previous ones that found a benefit. Gilead charges \$2,340 for

UN CHIEF URGES G20 TO UNITE, FIGHT PANDEMIC

United Nations, Oct. 23: The UN chief says it's "very frustrating" that leaders of the 20 major industrialised nations didn't come together in March and establish a coordinated response to grapple with the Coronavirus in all countries as he proposed. The result, he says, is every country is taking its own sometimes contradictory actions, and the virus is moving "from east to west, north to south," with second waves of infections now affecting many countries.

Ahead of the Group of 20 summit next month, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in an interview that he hopes the international community now understands "they need to be much more coordinated in fighting the virus." Guterres says the United Nations also will be "strongly advocating" during the G-20 summit for a guarantee that when a vaccine is available, "it becomes indeed available and affordable for everyone, everywhere." — *AP*

Libya rivals sign 'permanent' truce

Geneva, Oct. 23: Libya's two warring factions signed a "permanent" ceasefire agreement on Friday after five days of talks at the United Nations, which hailed the deal as a historic moment following years of turmoil and bloodshed.

"Today is a good day for the Libyan people," said Stephanie Williams, the UN's acting envoy to the troubled North African country, where a UN-recognised government in Tripoli has been battling a rival administration based in the east and dominated by military commander Khalifa Haftar. "The two Libyan delegations... signed a complete, country-wide and permanent ceasefire agreement with immediate effect," she told journalists afterwards.

Williams said the parties agreed that "all military units and armed groups on the front lines shall return to their camps", while "all mercenaries and foreign fighters" must leave within three months.

Analysts have warned that further measures are needed to prevent spoilers undermining the deal in a country wracked by conflict for nearly a decade, since the overthrow and killing of dictator

● **STEPHANIE WILLIAMS**, the UN's acting envoy said the parties agreed that "all military units and armed groups on the front lines shall return to their camps", while "all mercenaries and foreign fighters" must leave within three months.

Moamer Kadhafi in a NATO-backed uprising in 2011.

Since then, it has been dominated by armed groups, riven by local conflicts and divided between the two bitterly-opposed administrations.

Tripoli is held by the internationally recognised Government of National Accord, while a parliament based in the eastern city of Tobruk is backed by Haftar's forces.

But hopes for a solution rose after the two sides separately announced in August that they would cease hostilities.

Ahmed Abu Shahma, who headed the GNA delegation in Geneva, urged Libyans to come together and rebuild a united, stable country.

"We have had enough suffering, enough divisions, enough bloodshed," he said at the signing ceremony. — *AFP*

World's largest fountain opens in Dubai



Dubai launches the Palm Fountain in a bid to break a Guinness World Record as the world's largest fountain, at Palm Jumeira. Spread over 14,366 square feet of seawater, the fountain's super shooter stands tall at 105 metres and comes alive with over 3,000 LED lights. — *AFP*

SINKING | RISK 1.3 million barrels of crude may spill into water, no water ingress found on vessel by expert team

Caracas, Oct. 23: Trinidad and Tobago said on Thursday that a damaged oil tanker off the island's coast was "stable" after opposition politicians in neighboring Venezuela warned of a potential "environmental catastrophe."

The damaged tanker, which is in the waters separating Venezuela and Trinidad and Tobago and is owned by Venezuelan state oil company PDVSA, threatens to spill 1.3 million barrels of crude into the water.

"The ship is straight and stable without any visible

risk of sinking," Energy Minister Franklin Khan said during a video conference in Puerto Espana.

The Nabarima tanker, anchored for several months in the Gulf of Paria, is used to store oil, but video footage shared on October 16 by the Fishermen and Friends of the Sea NGO showed it tilting.

A team of three "experts" boarded the ship on Tuesday, the day after receiving the green light from Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro's government, Khan said.

The findings showed that

"there was no water ingress on the vessel visible to the team. Which means the ingress reported in early September no longer exists," the minister said.

According to Khan, the team reported that maintenance tasks were being carried out on the ship, such as repairing and replacing pumps and electric motors if necessary, which the experts described as "quite satisfactory."

Eudis Girot, a Venezuelan oil sector union leader, said the 855-foot (264-meter) ship has had maintenance problems since 2014. But he said

those problems "have been ignored" by PDVSA.

Girot said several PDVSA employees reported on October 12 that the tanker was listing by eight percent while the engine room is flooded and water pumps have broken down.

"If the oil is not transferred, and even if the Nabarima can be stabilized, we risk a permanent environmental catastrophe," Venezuelan opposition legislator Robert Alcala said. The Nabarima is owned by Petrosucre, a company majority owned by PDVSA, with Italian

multinational oil and gas firm Eni holding a 26 percent share.

According to Luis Stefanelli, another opposition legislator, PDVSA has sent two ships to try to unload the Nabarima.

PDVSA on Tuesday started transferring the crude oil stored on the Nabarima with the vessel Icarus, according to the Trinidadian government. However, Khan recommended using a larger vessel, since the Icarus can barely hold a quarter of the tanker's 1.3 million barrel-load. — *AFP*



A video image released by the Fishermen and Friends of the Sea NGO shows the tilted Nabarima oil tanker.

DECCAN Chronicle

24 OCTOBER 2020

Polls before policy? BJP vaccine carrot unethical

The announcement of Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on the Assembly election campaign trail in Bihar on Thursday that the BJP would offer free anti-Covid vaccines to everyone in Bihar is apt to be seen as a con by the people of the state. This is because it is widely understood that the timelines for the arrival of a safe, effective, efficacious vaccine are fuzzy and confusing.

Top labs and top scientists in the world have made contradictory observations on this matter, although some governments, including our own, have chosen the seemingly reassuring way and hinted that we should have the cure in the bag early next year. Here too the basis is purely political, with not a shred of science attaching to it.

The government strategy is clearly to spread a 'feel-good' sentiment. The underlying message is that the government is in control, and that we are in trustworthy hands. Ms Sitharaman's statement appear to attempt to further that strategy, except that she was speaking on an election platform and unveiling her party's election manifesto for the state poll, where free vaccine is point one on the agenda.

There are hosts of problems with such an announcement, especially when it comes from the country's finance minister. Her wearing of the party hat is not relevant here. What's noteworthy is that only the ruling party could have made such a statement, and not its opponents. The Election Commission will therefore be called upon to see if this is a violation of the principle of each party being offered a level playing field. This is as far as elections go, but other questions also arise.

If Bihar is to get the Covid vaccine free, will other states also get it free? Has the cost of this been calculated? If the zero-price favour is only for the state going to the polls, then it is clearly a bribe — a case of the use of political power to influence an election in which the ruling coalition's prospects look less promising than previously. More, there is also the question of all states having equal status in the eyes of the Centre.

If cynical opportunism is what the BJP is playing at in order to defend its electoral position in Bihar, then Bihar can ask about the promise of a "special package" that has been spoken of *ad nauseam* by chief minister Nitish Kumar for more than a decade.

On the Coronavirus front, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had pointed the right way recently when he said that in the distribution of the vaccine the country will have to take the right lessons from the planning of logistics in the process of holding national elections or coping with natural calamities. This would need a national-level conceptualisation and distribution effort. Those at the frontlines of risk, such as health workers, will have to be prioritised, followed by those placed high under a hierarchical gradation of vulnerability, for example elderly people with co-morbidities. The BJP's announcement in Bihar mocks such planning and places narrow politics above the nation.

Pope and family values

Christians live their lives in the perpetual fear of their sins catching up with them as they fight the world, the flesh and the devil but Jesus Christ would not have intended it that way when he built his church on the rock called Peter, the first Pope. The Lord was unequivocal when he said "my yoke is light and my burden is easy", promising to make a break with a believer's life till then, tied to the tough knots of rules, rituals and sets of beliefs. The Church had different ideas about itself. Over the course of history, it built on itself immense structures and then the paraphernalia to protect them. The yoke ceased to be light and the burden grew to be daunting.

Pope Francis, the bag-carrying Franciscan in Jesuit robes who wrote encyclical *fratelli tutti* to drive home the point that all are brothers, now says LGBT persons have the same rights every other who belongs to the species has. *Francesco*, the newly-released documentary on the Pope, has him say this: "Homosexuals have a right to be a part of the family. They're children of God and have a right to a family. Nobody should be thrown out, or be made miserable because of it."

The conservatives say the Pope has only reminded the families of LGBT persons not to throw them out and that it is not an imprimatur for them to start families of their own; the liberals see some fresh thought entering the dogmatic Holy See. The debate could heat up in the coming days, and well, Jesus had seen it happening. "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword." We would say amen to that and then wait for the yoke to lighten and the burden to ease at the end of it all.

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Subhani



The 'perils' of euphoria: Govt messaging flawed

Shashidhar Nanjundaiah

Why are you people not listening?" That might as well have been the central problem for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's seventh Coronavirus-related address to the nation on October 20, when he exhorted us to adhere to the Covid-19 safety norms and not falsely assume that the Coronavirus has gone. The answer to that presumed question, however, lies in his government's political messaging in its health communications.

The problem is by no means exclusive to India. The United States and India now have the most numbers of Covid-19 cases, and arguably, mixed messages have exacerbated the crisis. The 2020 Ig Nobel Prizes for Medical Education — the global satirical "awards" for the worst inventions and ideas — was "awarded" to, among others, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump for "teaching the world that politicians can have a more immediate effect on life and death than scientists and doctors can".

In the US, Mr Trump outdid himself in September by offering a confusing array of rhetoric related to the Coronavirus, swaying back and forth between conflicting messages. As a result, that nation is divided between mask-wearers and non-wearers, largely differentiated on political lines of whose voice they trust. Just in one week in September, he announced that he had "downplayed" the pandemic in order to make people "feel safer". Exactly three days later, he claimed he actually played it up.

Prime Minister Modi's own rhetoric has been far more measured than Mr Trump's. By that I mean he and his ministers have gone about their Covid narratives with more planning and conviction. The concept of mixed messaging is valid — we need to hear the problem along with the solution.

Mr Modi's first address to the nation after the pandemic broke out was mixed — an appeal to people to be cautious as well as an appeal to their faith. "This loud sound is for thanksgiving, and also for the beginning of the victory march in a long fight," Mr Modi said in a tweet that followed his speech. As though in a Pavlovian response, his followers took out marches in the streets, disobeying the lockdown norms and affirming their faith in a leader's words. Is downplaying statistics the answer? This was a critical, almost rhetorical, question that I was asked at a recent webinar.

In times of crisis, governments and media platforms put in their best efforts to make available information and insights that are immediate and usable. These include critical health information to insights that build a psychological fortification and acceptance. The media's dependence on official sources is more pronounced than usual in a crisis. In that communicative framework, how has our government has disseminated public messages during this crisis, and to what effect?

When the pandemic broke out, the health ministry started issuing daily press briefings. These briefings were largely informative, albeit compulsively political as this government is known to be. Then, with no warning in May, the ministry took a break from the daily briefings and only restarted them much later. The horror of the migrant exodus had unfolded. When the briefings did restart,

there was forceful nationalism with convenient comparisons, positive spin de-emphasising the rising cases and deaths, and a defensive tone. In the interim, according to some reports, the government set up a committee to examine how to state with conviction that it did not botch up its policy on the migrant crisis.

"The industrialists and innovators turned the Covid situation into an opportunity, and successfully established a home-grown ventilator industry," health secretary Rajesh Bhushan said in August, adopting a storyteller's tone and demeanour. "The biggest news this week is that we have conducted two core tests... The number of recovered cases is more than double the active cases."

These are briefings of what the government hopes will be seen as achievements rather than problems. That fact that the pandemic is far from gone and is still worsening is downplayed. Euphoria is an obvious impact of the spin among believers. We see it all around us — educated, urbane people walking in groups with no masks on. In the environment of conflicting messages, it seems we assume the most convenient possibility — sometimes with unexpected results. A few days ago, I took an autorickshaw for a short ride to a store. The driver did not have a mask on. When I questioned him, his response was startling: "Corona is gone so I've stopped wearing it." When I prodded further, he explained: "There is only *sarkari* Corona left now. The government is play-

The media, too, must realise the damage overdependence on official sources brings, even in a crisis, and must temper the official narratives with scientific reason and simpler news that people can use

ing games, making money and enabling big people to make money."

As the World Health Organisation (WHO), points out, we are also in the middle of an infodemic: "An overabundance of information — some accurate and some not — that makes it hard for people to find trustworthy sources and reliable guidance when they need it." But should the blame be passed on as usual to the social media, where millions of people are talking about it and passing their own judgments, and to our mainstream media, where the bombarding of ever-developing stories and eclectic insights lead to public confusion, and leave the elephant in the room unaddressed?

Already, news platforms must grapple with evolving information and insights. Additionally, television news channels both relay and bust silly myths about the virus. On the other hand, they are carriers of information and political narrative. If the news-you-can-use becomes so mind-boggling, politically charged narratives only exacerbate public confusion. These official narratives often come in a nationalistic package, with a liberal dose of political braggadocio.

So, the narratives put out by government communicators — from the Prime Minister to health ministry officials — have often been too clever by half. There is a dire need for them to rethink the strategy that is dividing the nation between the panic-stricken and euphoric and stop taking undue advantage of the media's pronounced dependence on official sources during a health crisis. The media, too, must realise the damage overdependence on official sources brings, even in a crisis, and must temper the official narratives with scientific reason and simpler news that people can use.

The writer is a communications expert and has led reputed institutes of media and communications

LETTERS

WHY ONLY VACCINE?

Poll campaign in Bihar reached its nadir with the announcement of a free Covid vaccine. Why not announce free treatment in a corporate hospital and also a special space in a crematorium if one dies? The last promise that is left to ask people is to sit at home and their salaries will be credited to their bank. All this to grab power by hook or crook. This is the height of hoodwinking electorate.

D.S.P. Rao
Kakinada

No doubt, the poll promises have no face value anywhere on earth. Still the BJP promises every Bihari a free vaccine for Covid if it is voted to power is a bit unpalatable. It can be comparable only to the promise of the US President that every American citizen would get vaccinated by April. Anyway after such unrealistic promises, where no vaccine is in sight, leave alone being completely ready in the midst of pandemic, is unfair. Instead, political parties should promise people about their ideas on dwindling economy, loss of jobs, migrant issues and other problems.

Dr D.V.G. Sankararao
Vizianagaram

Presently, Bihar voters are given a choice of government jobs or free Covid vaccine and continuity or change of guard. Predictions indicate a re-election for the JD(U) and BJP combine, sending Paswan Jr into wilderness. Having tasted the rule of lawlessness of Lalu and his wife, the people may not try to hand-over power to untested, volatile and ambitious son Tejaswi.

Parthasarathy Mandadi
Tirupati

Big powers must respect UN: Indira

UNITED NATIONS, Oct. 23 Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi chided the great powers today for denigrating and ignoring the United Nations simply because they were no longer able to direct and control its activities

or use it as an instrument of national ends.

Addressing the General Assembly at its 25th anniversary commemorative session, she charged them with pursuing the same discredited policies of balance of power and spheres of influence that killed the League of Nations.

Farrukh Dhondy
Cabbages & Kings



"I am the last to finish a meal Because I eat so slowly O Bachchoo, must you be condemned Because of this as lowly!"

— From Row Row K. Gumbihara by Bachchoo

I've written in several genres for the small and large screen but, gentle reader, never a courtroom drama. And that's strange because as a viewer I find them fascinating, mesmerising even, if well written with the suspense maintained till the last word, as in Billy Wilder's adaptation of Agatha Christie's *Witness for the Prosecution*.

My taste for courtroom drama was perhaps formed when reading my grandfather's discarded paperbacks of the Perry Mason books by Erle Stanley Gardner. I still feel compelled, though I restrain myself, from dismissing a friend's, foe's or dining-table-guest's argument, with "that's incompetent, irrelevant and immaterial!" Those were Perry Mason's nails in the coffin of evidence, but I suppose I am more inclined to say "aiy don't be silly

yaar!" when confronted with some absurdity.

Having seen two very compelling courtroom dramas on television this week, made me wonder why I hadn't ever attempted the genre. I've always thought writing should reflect one's own experience, observation, insight and memory, even through the invention, as in Shakespeare or Dickens, of dramatic characters.

The first of the TV shows I admired was a recreation of the British 'Mangrove Nine' trial of 1970, in which four out of nine of the accused were friends and 'comrades' of mine and two others were people I knew. The trial arose from the West London Police's reaction to and attack on a demonstration of 160 black people protesting against the unjustified, repeated and destructive raids on a West Indian restaurant called The Mangrove.

The restaurant was owned by the late Frank Critchlow and was subjected to regular, vicious and destructive raids by the West London police under the pretext of closing down a drug den. The Caribbean community of Notting Hill and North Kensington used the

restaurant as a meeting place. I went there occasionally. No drugs were ever found and no prosecutions brought, though the police smashed up the restaurant, wrestled its clientele and arrested its owner, workers and customers without any evidence with which to charge them.

In reaction to the raids the 'political' elements and individuals in the community called a demonstration to expose these raids as racist attacks on the innocent. The British establishment, and the West London police force as its arm, had not faced such a militant protest before. The demonstrators, in the argot of the time were shouting slogans of Black power, notably "the Pigs, the Pigs, we gotta get rid of the Pigs". This was, in that era, a porcine metaphor for the police force (later known to the black young as "de Babylon").

The confrontation ended in a mild fracas, with flaying police batons, women being held on the ground by three burly policemen and some demonstrators aiming kicks at blue-uniformed crotches and shins.

Nine people ended up in court accused of riot and affray and other lesser charges. These charges were

absurd. It's possible that the British prosecutors were throwing the book, or even a shelf of the library, at the accused in order to *encourager les autres*.

The film of the trial, seen today as a historical milestone in the settlement of the new communities of Britain, is as fair a representation of the events and the court proceedings as dramatic reproduction can make it. Yes, I spotted twenty discrepancies or petty falsehoods in the retelling, with some characters with the wrong names and wrong accents, but the overall impression captured the events before and in the courtroom.

The second trial on screen was that of the Chicago 7, individual leaders of the hippie generation who opposed the draft law which would send thousands of young men and women to fight and possibly die in the American war in Vietnam. I remember following reports of the trial in which the accused had led protests against the Democratic Party convention in Chicago.

In both trials, the defendant's fate was in the hands of a jury. Jurors are not allowed to speak at or during a

trial, so the drama is confined to the interaction between the lawyers, the judge, the witnesses and defendants, with occasional contributions from the press and the spectators.

This re-enactment of the Chicago 7 trial, with Bobby Seale, the only black defendant, bound and gagged in public when he vociferously protested against a judgement of the bench, was also an essential and telling record of US history.

And now, gentle reader, I am inspired to mull over which trial I can dramatise and attempt to have produced for the screen. To tell the truth, I have only been indicted personally in one trial I which I defended myself and was acquitted of the charge of assaulting policemen in a London demonstration. Ten-minute drama if that. Then there were two trials in India in which I was peripherally involved: the failed attempt to get my film *Bandit Queen* banned and the dismissal of the case against my other film *Mangal Pandey, the Rising*. Both dramatic — the first with the future minister of the BJP, the late Arun Jaitley, appearing to represent, believe it or not, freedom of speech and truth.

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	40,685.50	0.31
Nifty 50	11,930.40	0.28
S&P 500*	3,448.13	-0.16
Dollar (₹)	73.60	-0.06
Pound Sterling (₹)	96.44	0.13
Euro (₹)	87.15	0.01
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	50,685.81	0.16
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	41.89	-0.57
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.844	-0.071
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.858	0.010

* As of 9:30 PM IST

IDBI Bank posts ₹324 cr profit, NPA ratio drops

IDBI Bank on Friday reported a net profit of ₹324 crore for the second quarter of the current fiscal year against a loss of ₹3,459 crore for the same period of the previous fiscal. Compared sequentially, the bank registered a 125 per cent jump against the first quarter net profit of ₹144 crore. Total income of the bank fell by 7.5 per cent to ₹5,761.06 crore during Q2FY21 compared to ₹6,231.02 crore in Q2FY20.

TechM Q2 profit declines by 5% to ₹1,065 cr



Tech Mahindra on Friday posted around five per cent fall in consolidated profit at ₹1,064.6 crore for September quarter of the current fiscal year. The company had a profit of ₹1,123.9 crore in the same quarter a year ago, it said in a statement. Income increased by 2.1 per cent to ₹9,489.3 crore during the period under review from ₹9,286.2 crore in the same period of 2019-20, the company said.

Crompton Greaves shares up 15% after Q2 results

Shares of Crompton Greaves Consumer Electricals surged nearly 15 per cent on Friday after the company reported a 27.77 per cent increase in consolidated net profit for the Q2FY21. The company on Thursday reported a 27.77 per cent increase in consolidated net profit at ₹141.68 crore for Q2FY21. The company had posted a net profit of Rs 110.88 crore for the July-September period a year ago.

Biocon Q2 profit declines 23% at ₹195 cr in Q2

Biocon on Friday reported a 23.01 per cent fall in its consolidated net profit to ₹195.4 crore for the second quarter ended September 30, mainly on account of higher expenses. It had posted a net profit of ₹253.8 crore for Q2FY21, Biocon said. Its consolidated total income stood at ₹1,760.3 crore for the quarter under consideration. It was ₹1,605.7 crore for the same period a year ago, it added.



RBI fears India entering recession in H1 of FY21

Deputy governor says lost output can't be regained for few years

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, OCT. 23

For the first time in its history, India has entered a technical recession in the first half of the year, said Reserve Bank of India deputy governor Michael Patra, quoting the projections of the central bank for real GDP growth for 2020-21.

According to minutes of Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) that were released by the RBI on Friday, the RBI deputy governor said: "The projections of real GDP growth for 2020-21 that are set out for the first time in the MPC's resolution provide a sense of the wounds on the soul of the economy inflicted by Covid-19."

"If the NSO's provisional estimates for Q2 that are expected at the end of November corroborate at least the direction of these forecasts, India has entered a technical recession in the first half of the year for the first time in its history," Patra said.

The RBI deputy governor also said that it may take years for India to reach pre-Covid output as the potential of the economy has declined.

"GDP is an aggregative indicator of economic activity and hides the extent of human misery and the loss of social and human capital caused by the health crisis. Nonetheless, if the projections hold, the level of GDP would have fallen approximately six per

Double-dip recession likely in euro zone

Brussels, Oct. 23: Renewed restrictions to control the pandemic forced many businesses in the bloc's dominant service industry to limit operations, and nearly 90 per cent of economists polled by Reuters this week said there was a high risk the coronavirus resurgence would halt the nascent euro zone economic recovery.

"The euro zone PMI confirms that the second wave of the coronavirus is weighing more and more on the economy. A double-dip in the fourth quarter is becoming more likely at this rate," said Bert Colijn at ING.

IHS Markit's Flash Composite Purchasing Managers' Index, seen as a good gauge of economic health, fell to 49.4 from September's final reading of 50.4.

That was below the 50-mark separating growth from contraction and only fractionally better than the 49.3 predicted in a Reuters poll.

That headline PMI was dragged down by the service industry's PMI, which sank more than expected to 46.2 from 48.0.

"The further decline in the euro zone Composite PMI in October adds to the evidence that the second wave of infections, and the new wave of containment measures, is taking a heavy toll on the economy," said Jack Allen-Reynolds at Capital Economics. — Reuters

Wealth increases in India despite Covid

New York, Oct. 23: The pandemic that's led to more than one million deaths globally has also led to a decline in individual wealth, yet household wealth largely held up and even increased in China and India.

That's one of the main findings in Credit Suisse Group AG's 2020 Global Wealth Report released Thursday. Thanks to government and central-bank actions to mitigate the Covid-19 fallout, wealth rebounded from an initial slump in the first quarter of the year, adding \$1 trillion by June after ending 2019 at \$399.2 trillion.

"Given the damage inflicted by Covid-19 on the global economy, it seems remarkable that household wealth has emerged relatively unscathed," said economist Anthony Shorrocks, one of the report's authors, adding as a caveat that the findings are based on provi-

cent below its pre-Covid level by the end of 2020-21 and it may take years to regain this lost output."

"There is also an anecdotal sense that the economy's potential output has fallen, and the post-Covid growth trajectory will look very different from

Maharashtra invites Tesla to set up electric car plant

Mumbai, Oct. 23: Maharashtra is looking for potential investment from the US electric car major Tesla in the state and has held discussions with the company, weeks after Tesla revealed its plans to enter the Indian market.

State tourism minister Aaditya Thackeray said in a tweet on Thursday that industries minister Subhash Desai held a video call, in which he also participated, with the Tesla team, inviting the electric car maker to Maharashtra.

Maharashtra is already home to a host of domestic and foreign automobile manufacturers with Chakan Industrial belt near Pune a major automobile hub in the state.



"This evening I had the opportunity to participate in a video call by industries minister @Subhash.Desai ji with @Tesla team to invite them to Maharashtra. I was present not because of just the investment but my firm belief in electric mobility & sustainability @elonmusk," Thackeray said in a tweet.

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, OCT. 23

The legal battle between Amazon and Future Group will take much longer to come to a conclusion. A three-member tribunal may be finalised in a couple of days and the arbitration process can take six months to one year to conclude.

Amazon had recently approached the Singapore International Arbitration Centre objecting the ₹24,000 crore asset sale deal by Future Group with

Committee (MPC) may continue with an accommodative stance for an extended period of time.

The MPC members were keen to support economic recovery rather than control inflation even though it would drift from the original mandate of keeping retail inflation on an average between two and six per cent.

The MPC on October 9 had unanimously voted to keep the policy repo rate unchanged at four per cent for the second consecutive time and maintain an accommodative stance "at least during the current financial year and into the next financial year".

According to minutes, RBI governor Shaktikanta Das said there are downside uncertainties that could put sand in the wheels of the nascent recovery being witnessed.

"Primary among them is the risk of a second wave of Covid-19... Despite sequential improvement in Q3 and Q4, the full year GDP is expected to contract by 9.5 per cent with a strong rebound next year," Das added.

Aditi Nayar, principal economist at ICRA said, "While the MPC members clearly desire to support the economic recovery, inflation may not oblige by falling fast enough to allow for speedy or substantial rate cuts. In our view, the incoming price data suggests the chances of a February 2021 rate cut have dimmed."

India business begins to see uptick, says Unilever

New Delhi, Oct. 23: After a strict lockdown impacting sales, India has returned to the growth path again, Anglo-Dutch FMCG major Unilever has said.

The return of growth of India business, along with Brazil and continued recovery in China helped the company's emerging markets clock a growth of 5.3 per cent in the September 2020 quarter.

"India (business) grew low-single digit, driven by growth in foods and refreshment and hygiene. China grew double-digit led by beauty and personal care categories and a return to growth in food service, as the out-of-home eating channel returned to full capacity," Unilever said in its post-earnings statement.

After a strict lockdown earlier in the year, India saw a pick-up in economic activity, even though cases of Covid-19 continued to increase during the quarter, said Unilever.

India (business) grew low-single digit, driven by growth in foods and refreshment and hygiene. China grew double-digit led by beauty and personal care categories

UNILEVER'S earnings statement

India comes under the Asia, AMET (Africa, Middle East, Turkey) and RUB (Russia, Ukraine, Belarus) market region of Unilever, which has reported a turnover of 6 billion euros. "Underlying sales grew 4.5 per cent with 3.7 per cent from volume and 0.7 per cent from price, as lockdown restrictions eased across much of the region compared to the first half of the year," it said.

Earlier this Tuesday, its Indian subsidiary Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL) had declared the

results of the second quarter (July-September) reporting a better-than-expected rise net profit and revenues, signalling a revival of demand.

HUL's consolidated net profit rose 8.6 per cent to ₹1,974 crore in July-September, while revenue from the sale of products was up 13.7 per cent at ₹11,510 crore, the company had said in a regulatory filing.

The food and refreshment business saw nearly 83 per cent jump, while home care and beauty and personal care was almost near pre-Covid-19 levels.

HUL, maker of popular brand products such as Rin, Dove, Lux and Lifebuoy, said the worst is behind and is "cautiously optimistic" on demand recovery. The Indian economy had seen an unprecedented 23.9 per cent contraction during April-June as the lockdown imposed to curb the spread of coronavirus pum-melled demand. — PTI

Flipkart acquires 8% stake in AB Fashion Retail

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, OCT. 23

In a bid to build its omnichannel presence in the fashion business, Flipkart has acquired 7.8 per cent stake in Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail (ABFRL) for ₹1,500 crore.

The ABFRL board has approved the raising of ₹1,500 crore by way of preferential issue to the Flipkart Group.

The equity capital will be raised at ₹205 per share. With this infusion, Flipkart Group will own 7.8 per cent equity stake in ABFRL on a fully diluted basis. The promoter and promoter group companies of ABFRL will hold about 55.13 per cent upon completion of the issuance.

The investment agreement provides Flipkart preemption rights and right of first refusal which are for a limited period of one to five years from the date of allotment of equity shares or if the equity shareholding of the investor falls below a certain threshold.

Through this partnership, the Flipkart Group will strengthen the range of brands offered on its e-commerce platforms Flipkart and Myntra, and enhance the range of pre-



mium international and Indian brands on offer. ABFRL owns brands like Pantaloons, Allen Solly and Peter England.

Flipkart's technology prowess will enhance ABFRL's omni-channel capabilities, enriching customer experiences while continuing to provide access to premium loyalty programmes and affordability constructs.

ABFRL, which has more than 3000 stores, plans to use this capital to strengthen its balance sheet and accelerate its growth trajectory.

The company plans to increase presence in emerging high-growth categories such as innerwear, athleisure, casualwear and ethnic wear.

ABFRL will also aggressively accelerate execution of its large-scale digital transformation strategy that will build strong omni-channel functionalities.

Centre to sell 15% stake in RVNL via OFS

New Delhi, Oct. 23: The government is planning to sell up to 15 per cent stake in Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd (RVNL) and has invited bids from merchant bankers for managing the share sale process.

"The GoI intends to disinvest up to 15 per cent paid up equity capital of RVNL out of its shareholding of 87.84 per cent through Offer for Sale (OFS) method of shares by promoters through the stock exchanges, the department of investment and public asset management (DIPAM) said while inviting bids from merchant bankers.

The government will appoint up to three merchant bankers for managing RVNL share sale.

Shares of RVNL closed at ₹18.80 on Friday. At the current market price, a 15 per cent stake sale would fetch about ₹580 crore to the exchequer. — PTI

GST racket on illegal ITC busted

New Delhi, Oct. 23: Busting an illegal input tax credit (ITC) racket, GST officials have arrested a wannabe chartered accountant for alleged involvement in passing on ITC of about ₹50 crore through a web of 115 fake companies, a source said.

Prince Manish Kumar Khatri, a partner of a CA firm in Ahmedabad, allegedly registered fake firms that were used to avoid paying GST by showing bills generated by them as ITC. In all, ITC of ₹50.24 crore was wrongfully passed on, the source said.

The source said Khatri is allegedly the key person involved in registration of 115 non-existent firms and filing of GST returns of such fake firms, thus passing on ineligible ITC for wrong availment and utilisation for GST payment. — PTI

is still battling six months shut down. Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) chairman Ajay Tyagi did refer to a disconnect between market and economy and some heavyweight stocks moving indices which can keep market range bound for some more time even if fresh Covid cases fall sharply as it has happened and economy recovers.

"It was clearly a dull week as we witnessed a lot of choppy trades with no

clear direction. Although we could reclaim 12,000 this week for Nifty-50, the momentum was clearly lacking as the benchmark once again looked a bit tentative around this, said Sameet Chavan, analyst,

technical and derivatives, Angel Broking.

After more than 1,000 points correction for the Sensex on Thursday i.e. October 15, the market has inched up and traded around the 11,900-12000

range. Momentum is lacking because the heavyweights, the main drivers of frontline indices have started underperforming.

In the week gone by Axis Bank, Tata Steel and Bharti Airtel gained the most while Reliance Industries, TCS and Mahindra & Mahindra lost the most in the BSE-30 index.

"The upper area of 12,025 has been acting as a key overhead resistance in the last couple of weeks and this hurdle could be

tested again in the coming week. A sustainable upside breakout of this hurdle could have a sharp positive impact on the market ahead," said Nagaraj Shetti, Technical Research Analyst, HDFC Securities.

"The short-term trend of Nifty continues to be range bound and the near-term uptrend status remains intact. There is a possibility of a retest of 12000-12050 levels by next week, before showing minor profit booking again from the highs,"

Shetti said.

However, some undercurrent in the economy could take the market higher as green shoots are visible now in the auto sector at least and the pharma sector is also poised to deliver good earnings like the IT sector.

Vinod Nair, head of Research, Geojit Financial Services said, "Results of upcoming elections both in India and the United States will have short term impact on the indices."



SHORT TAKES

Indian squad make online chess semis

Chennai: The top-seeded Indian women's team on Friday stormed into the semifinals of the Asian Nations (Regions) Online Cup 2020 Championship, while their male counterparts eked out a fighting win over Mongolia to secure the last four berth. The Indian women made short work of Kyrgyzstan in the last-eight round, winning the two match-ups easily — 4-0 and 3.5-0.5 — after having topped the preliminary Swiss system phase. The Indian women will face Mongolia in the semifinal on Saturday. The Indian men, on the other hand, were given a tough fight by Mongolia. Both the matches ended with a similar 2.5-1.5 scoreline in favour of India. The Indian men will take on Iran in Saturday's semifinal. Young woman Grandmaster R Vaishali continued her good run, winning both her matches. She beat Alexandra Samaganova. — *PTI*

Bottas fastest at Friday practice

Portimao, Portugal: Valtteri Bottas topped the times ahead of Formula One leader Lewis Hamilton in a one-two finish for Mercedes in Friday's opening practice for the Portuguese Grand Prix. Finn Bottas maintained a habit that has seen him enjoy being 'fastest on Friday', but not always with success on the following days, as he clocked a best lap of one minute and 18.410 seconds at the Algarve International Circuit 15 kilometres inland from the coastal town of Portimao. That lap was enough to lift him three-tenths of a second clear of six-time world champion and Mercedes teammate Hamilton, who this weekend is seeking to overtake Michael Schumacher and claim a record 92nd GP victory. — *AFP*

Aryna downs Coco in Ostrava thriller

Prague: Aryna Sabalenka came back from 2-5 down in the third set to defeat American teenager Coco Gauff and reach the Ostrava WTA quarterfinals on Thursday. The big-hitting Sabalenka, the world number 12, took two hours and 13 minutes to beat 55th-ranked Gauff 1-6, 7-5, 7-6 (7/2). The third-seeded Belarusian got off to a slow start against the patient Gauff who had few problems taking the first set. Sabalenka won the second 7-5 after breaking Gauff's serve for the first time, but then she started piling up the errors again to see the 16-year-old go 5-2 up in the decider. A racquet-smashing interlude helped her regain her composure. "After 5-2 in the third set I didn't care at all about the result," said Sabalenka, who had lost another three-set thriller to Gauff at Lexington in August. — *AFP*

Munoz grabs lead as Tiger teeters

Los Angeles: Colombia's Sebastian Munoz endured a roller-coaster round on his way to an eight-under par 64 Thursday to lead the PGA Zozo Championship while defending champion Tiger Woods struggled to a woeful 76. The 27-year-old South American star, had two eagles, eight birdies, five pars, two bogeys and a double bogey on his trip to the top of the leaderboard after the opening round at Sherwood Country Club. "I've become better with managing crazy ups and downs," Munoz said. Four-time major winner Rory McIlroy snapped a club in frustration on his way to a disappointing 73. — *AFP*

Live on TV

CRICKET

IPL: Chennai Super Kings vs Mumbai Indians from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

FORMULA ONE

Portuguese Grand Prix: Practice 1 from 2.25 pm; Practice 2 from 6.25 pm on Star Sports Select 2, HD

FOOTBALL

Spanish League: El Clasico — Barcelona vs Real Madrid from 7.30 pm on LaLiga page on Facebook

English Premier League: Aston Villa vs Leeds United from 12.30 am (Saturday) on Star Sports Select 2, HD

Italian League: Sassuolo vs Torino from 12.15 am (Saturday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

WWE SMACKDOWN

Bouts from 5.30 am (Saturday) on Sony Ten 1

THUNDERBOULT

Mumbai Indians thump CSK by 10 wickets

Sharjah, Oct. 23: Trent Boult and Jasprit Bumrah's devastating pace-bowling spell in tandem before Ishan Kishan's batting heroics helped Mumbai Indians post a comprehensive 10-wicket win over Chennai Super Kings in a completely lop-sided IPL match here on Friday.

With the embarrassing loss, CSK are all but out of reckoning for the play-offs with just six points from 11 games, while MI jumped to the top spot with 14 points from 10 matches.

Bowling in tandem, Boult (4/18) and Bumrah (2/25) reduced CSK to 21 for 5 inside the Powerplay period with three and two wickets respectively and CSK never recovered from there, limping to 114 for 9, largely thanks to Sam Curran's 52.

Needing 115 for a win, Kishan (68 not out), opening in place of regular skipper Rohit Sharma who missed out due to a hamstring injury, and Quinton de Kock (46 not out) knocked off the required runs in just 12.2 overs.

The duo toyed with the CSK bowling attack on a dreadful day for the MS Dhoni-led side.

The left-handed Kishan, who has not had a substantial score after his knock of 99 against Royal Challengers Bangalore, was at his attacking best as he smashed six fours and five sixes during his 37-ball innings.

— *PTI*

Trent Boult of Mumbai Indians celebrates the wicket of Ruturaj Gaikwad of Chennai Super Kings during their IPL match at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium on Friday. — *BCCI*

SCORECARD

Chennai Super Kings Innings: Ruturaj Gaikwad lbw b Boult 0, Faf du Plessis c de Kock b Boult 1, Ambati Rayudu c de Kock b Bumrah 2, N Jagadeesan c Yadav b Bumrah 0, Mahendra Singh Dhoni c de Kock b Chahar 16, Ravindra Jadeja c Krunal b Boult 7, Sam Curran b Boult 52, Deepak Chahar st de Kock b Chahar 0, Shardul Thakur c Yadav b Coulter-Nile 11, Imran Tahir not out 13, Extras (B-1, LB-3, W-8) 12. **Total (for 9 wickets in 20 overs) 114.** **FoW:** 1-0, 2-3, 3-3, 4-3, 5-21, 6-30, 7-43,

8-71, 9-114.

Bowling: Trent Boult 4-1-18-4, Jasprit Bumrah 4-0-25-2, Krunal Pandya 3-0-16-0, Rahul Chahar 4-0-22-2, Nathan Coulter-Nile 4-0-25-1, Kieron Pollard 1-0-4-0.

Mumbai Indians: Q de Kock not out 46, I. Kishan not out 68, Extras (LB-2) 2. **Total (for no loss in 12.2 overs) 116.** **Bowling:** D. Chahar 4-0-34-0, Hazlewood 2-0-17-0, Imran Tahir 3-0-22-0, S. Thakur 2.2-0-26-0, R. Jadeja 1-0-15-0.

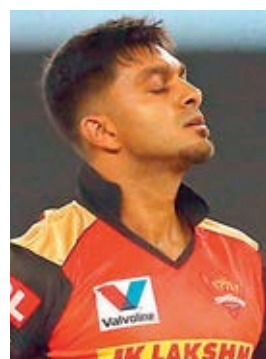
It was do-or-die game for me, says Vijay Shankar

Dubai, Oct. 23: All-rounder Vijay Shankar says he treated the match against RR as a 'do-or-die game' as his good show with both bat and ball may have saved his place in SRH's playing XI.

Manish Pandey (83) and Shankar (52) stitched an unbroken 140-run partnership to help SRH chase down RR's 154 for six on Thursday.

"If you ask personally it was a do-or-die game for me. That's how I saw this game. I didn't have the best of time with the bat, so I had to perform in this game and fortunately or unfortunately, we lost early wickets which made the team to send me up the order," Shankar said.

The Tamil Nadu crick-



Vijay Shankar

eter, who also picked up a wicket on Thursday, said the team should have previous couple of close games.

"We just slipped in the last minutes. A win like this will give confidence to each and every member of the team. We can win the remaining

games and keep ourselves alive in the tournament," he said.

After SRH lost two early wickets during their chase, Shankar said their plan was simple — forge a partnership and take the game as deep as possible.

"Manish was actually hitting the ball really well early on. I actually didn't bat (faced) that many balls before this innings. I batted just 18 balls before this innings so it was really important for me to have a feel of it. Archer was bowling quick so it was important for me to stay at the wicket.

"We wanted to take the game deep so I opened up and then we got few boundaries and it made things easier for us," he said. — *PTI*

IPL POINTS TABLE

Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
Mumbai Indians	10	7	3	0	14	+1.448
Delhi Capitals	10	7	3	0	14	+0.774
Royal Challengers Bangalore	10	7	3	0	14	+0.182
Kolkata Knight Riders	10	5	5	0	10	-0.828
Sunrisers Hyderabad	10	4	6	0	8	+0.092
Kings XI Punjab	10	4	6	0	8	-0.177
Rajasthan Royals	11	4	7	0	8	-0.620
Chennai Super Kings	11	3	8	0	6	-0.733

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

Warner all praise for middle order

Dubai, Oct. 23: Sunrisers Hyderabad skipper David Warner on Thursday said their middle order, under the scanner in the ongoing IPL, proved itself by guiding the team to a victory against Rajasthan Royals.

Manish Pandey (83) and Vijay Shankar (52) scored unbeaten half-centuries after Warner and Jonny Bairstow were dismissed early in the run chase to help SRH register a comfortable eight-wicket win.

"It is just great to show people that we do have a middle order.

"For them to come out and play like this, I am so happy for them. They showed they can build a platform for us to get across the line. Or set a big total. I am chuffed for them," Warner said at the post-match presentation.

Jason Holder, who was brought as a replacement

for the injured Mitchell Marsh, impressed in his first match of the season. The West Indies Test skipper came up with figures of 3/33, while also affecting a run out to destabilise the RR innings.

"Jason adds an extra string to our bow. His height. His experience. And he couldn't bat today, but he is an all-round package," Warner said.

The Sunrisers excelled on all fronts and Warner felt a victory like this was needed going ahead.

"It was a stunning performance. Starts with the toss where you questioned my decision to chase. We were able to bring them back after powerplay. All in all, the kind of game we were asking for," he added.

Jofra Archer dismissed Warner yet again and the Australian said it was frustrating. — *PTI*

Spirited SRH take on hungry KXIP

Dubai, Oct. 23: Their campaign back on track with a hat-trick of wins, Kings XI Punjab will take on another resurgent team — Sunrisers Hyderabad — here on Saturday in a must-win IPL game for the two well-matched sides.

Both KXIP and SRH are on the same pedestal, having garnered eight points apiece after 10 games, but the Hyderabad outfit is a rung ahead in the eight-team standings, on the fifth spot by virtue of a better net run rate.

And both the teams need to win their remaining four games to guarantee their place in the play-offs. It has been a terrific turnaround especially for KXIP after a slow start to the tournament.

After the initial hiccups, KXIP got its campaign back on track with three consecutive wins — over mighty DC, MI and RCB and the KL Rahul-led side would be hoping to carry the winning momentum forward to break into top four. While KXIP's batting is in the safe hands of skipper Rahul, Mayank Agarwal, Chris Gayle and Nicholas Pooran, the shaky form of Glenn Maxwell remains a concern.

SRH too find itself in similar position and needs to win its remaining four matches to seal a play-off berth. The side managed to keep itself in the play-off hunt with a confidence-boosting eight-wicket win

NUMBERS GAME

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL:

- Matches: 15
- Hyderabad: 11
- Punjab: 4

MEETING IN 2019

- Kings XI Punjab beat Sunrisers Hyderabad by 6 wickets at Mohali
- Sunrisers Hyderabad beat Kings XI Punjab by 45 runs at Hyderabad

MEETING IN 2020

- Sunrisers Hyderabad beat Kings XI Punjab by 69 runs at Dubai

FOR THE RECORD

- Sandeep Sharma who took 99 wickets at an average of 25.10 in 86 innings of as many matches for Kings XI Punjab and Sunrisers Hyderabad, needs just one wicket to become the 15th bowler to complete a century of wickets in IPL.
- Lokesh Rahul with 540 runs at an average of 67.50 and a strike rate of 135.67 in 10 innings is only batsman to cross 500-run mark in this IPL.

— *S. PERVEZ KAISER*

over RR on Thursday night after three consecutive defeats. The positive for SRH is that despite Warner and Jonny Bairstow departing early in the 155-run chase against RR in their last match, young Manish Pandey (83) and Vijay Shankar (52) rose to the occasion and shared an unbeaten 140-run partnership to secure win. Jason Holder's inclusion has added firepower to SRH's bowling attack. — *PTI*

DC look to derail wobbling Kolkata

Abu Dhabi, Oct. 23: Table-toppers DC would expect more from their batsmen after an underwhelming performance in the loss to KXIP when they take on a low-on-confidence KKR in an IPL game here on Saturday.

For Delhi, opener Shikhar Dhawan has been in brilliant form but even his record-setting hundred was not enough to save the side from a defeat against KXIP for lack of contribution from other batters.

Young Prithvi Shaw needs to bat with more responsibility at the top since Dhawan may not be able to rescue the side all the time. Shaw's last four innings have included two ducks.

Skipper Shreyas Iyer too has not been hitting the ball as fluently as he was before suffering a side strain. Rishabh Pant, who made a comeback from injury against Punjab, too has not yet set the stage on fire.

Iyer and Pant, along with Marcus Stoinis, form the

backbone of Capitals' middle order. They are vital cogs in DC's wheels and need to do more than just making good starts.

Pacer Anrich Nortze, who has been instrumental in Capitals' superb run thus far along with his South African compatriot Kagiso Rabada, had a niggle and missed the last match against Punjab.

If he comes back, it will add sting to DC's attack. If he plays, Australian pacer Daniel Sams will have to make way for him.

KKR are heading into the contest after an embarrassing batting performance against RCB.

Blown away by Mohammed Siraj's furious spell, KKR managed just 84 runs on the board.

It certainly was a confidence-crushing defeat and KKR need to regroup quickly.

Sitting at fourth place in the table with 10 points, they would be desperate to increase their tally to stay alive in the play-offs race. — *PTI*

NUMBERS GAME- DC vs KKR

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL:

- Matches: 24
- Kolkata: 13
- Delhi: 10
- Tied: 1+

MEETING IN 2019

- Delhi Capitals beat Kolkata Knight Riders in Super over after match ended in a tie at Delhi
- Delhi Capitals beat Kolkata Knight Riders by 7 wickets at Kolkata

MEETING IN 2020

- Delhi Capitals beat Kolkata

Knight Riders by 18 runs at Sharjah

FOR THE RECORD

- Rishabh Pant who scored 1926 runs at an average of 35.66 in 61 innings of as many matches, needs 74 runs to become third Delhi Capitals batsman to score 2000 runs in IPL.
- Dinesh Karthik will equal Suresh Raina's record of 193 matches in IPL. Only Mahendra Singh Dhoni (200 matches) and Rohit Sharma (197 matches) appeared in more matches.

— *S. PERVEZ KAISER*

An empty feeling at the 1st Clasico

Barcelona, Oct. 23: For some it has been decades since they last missed a Clasico at the Camp Nou but this weekend they have no choice but to stay away.

One of the biggest matches in the global football calendar, Barcelona's home clash with Real Madrid is usually played in front of over 90,000 fans but on Saturday will unfold in a kind of void, as not only the stands but even the streets outside will be empty. "It's not just a football match," says Joan Bertran, the president of Pena Anguera, one of Barcelona's most historic supporter associations, who has attended every Clasico at the Camp Nou for the last 48 years.

To rub salt into the wounds, those prevented from entering the Camp Nou this weekend will not even get the second best thing: meeting up to watch the game with friends and fellow supporters.

"We'll go from having 600 people for the Clasico to no people and not a single euro," says Albert Devesa, manager of the Overlla Negra, whose frustration at the timing of the recent measures is clear.

Although a 1400 GMT kick-off, picked to allow fans in Asia to watch, was not ideal, Devesa was confident he would fill his huge tavern, an old industrial building in Barcelona, where many fans come to watch games. — *AFP*



Lucas Moura of Tottenham Hotspur in action during the UEFA Europa League first round match against Linzer ASK at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in London on Thursday. — *AFP*

Tottenham lay LASK low; Milan send Celtic packing

Paris, Oct. 23: Gareth Bale said it felt good to be "loved and appreciated" after helping Tottenham to a 3-0 win over LASK of Austria in the Europa League on Thursday.

Despite Bale starting, it was on-loan Carlos Vinicius who made an impressive debut in the Group 'J' opener.

Vinicius started in place of the resting Harry Kane and he made goals in either half for Lucas Moura and Son Heung-min, while he would have also netted himself had Andres Andrade

not scored an own goal. Bale made that goal where Andrade put through his own net.

Leicester made the perfect start in Group 'G' with a comfortable 3-0 win over Zorya Luhansk of Ukraine. James Maddison, Harvey Barnes and Kelechi Iheanacho were on the scoresheet.

In Glasgow, Celtic struggled against Serie 'A' leaders AC Milan who were 2-0 up at half-time thanks to goals from Rade Krunic and Ibrahim Diaz.

Mohamed Elyounoussi reduced the arrears after the break, but Jens Petter Hauge broke clear to secure Milan's Group 'H' 3-1 win in stoppage time.

Earlier Thursday, Arsenal came from behind to down Rapid Vienna 2-1 and Rangers beat Standard Liege 2-0. David Luiz put them level with a deft glancing header off Nicolas Pepe's free-kick, with Aubameyang then tapping home to bag the three Group 'B' points.

Elsewhere, Bayer Leverkusen ran riot 6-2 against Nice. — *AFP*

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