

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

CHENNAI | FRIDAY 23 | OCTOBER 2020

WEATHER



Max: 33°C
Min: 26°C
Rainfall: 4 mm

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Aippasi 7
Tithi: Sapthami/ Ashtami
Star: Puradam/ Uthiradam
Rahukalam: 10.30 am to 12 noon
Yamagandam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm

PRAYERS

Fajar: 4.49 am
Jumma: 11.58 am
Asar: 3.14 pm
Maghrib: 5.46 pm
Isha: 6.58 pm
SUNSET TODAY 5.46 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.01 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 12.23 PM
MOONSET TOMORROW 12.02 AM

PM, Union ministers, CMs, political leaders greet Amit Shah on birthday

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union ministers, chief ministers and leaders of different political parties on Thursday greeted Union home minister Amit Shah on the occasion of his birthday and wished him a long and healthy life. While greeting Shah, who turned 56 on Thursday, the prime minister said the country is witnessing the dedication and excellence with which he is contributing towards India's progress. Modi tweeted, "Birthday wishes to Shri @AmitShah Ji. Our nation is witnessing the dedication and excellence with which he is contributing towards India's progress."

COUNTER POINT



Please vote for me... I have less criminal cases than other candidates!



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Intense rains in Chennai, suburbs



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Don mismanaged Covid-19: Obama

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Sunrisers beat Rajasthan Royals by eight wickets



Govt restores all existing visas, barring electronic, tourist and medical categories

DC CORRESPONDENT
With agency inputs
NEW DELHI, OCT. 22

The Union home ministry announced on Thursday that it had decided to restore with immediate effect all existing visas, except in the electronic, tourist and medical categories, almost eight months after being suspended following the coronavirus outbreak and the imposition of a nationwide lockdown.

The MHA said it was giving permission to all Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) and Person of Indian Origin (PIO) card holders and other foreign nationals to visit India for any purpose, except on a tourist visa.

CM promises vaccine will be free for all in TN

DC CORRESPONDENT
With agency inputs

Pudukottai, Oct. 22: Chief Minister K. Palaniswami on Thursday assured free immunisation against coronavirus for all people in the state as soon as a vaccine is made available.

"I would like to announce that as soon as the vaccine is developed (and made available to states) all people in Tamil Nadu will be immunised and the government shall bear the cost," he said.

The Chief Minister, on an official visit to review anti-Covid measures and development projects in the district, told reporters that vaccination should cover all sections of society.

Addressing a meet at the collectorate here, Palaniswami said due to the sus-



● Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami said that vaccination should cover all sections of society

tained and intensified efforts of the government, the transmission of the virus started to decline gradually.

"In view of appropriate treatment, fatalities were reduced and those getting infected have also been cut down and recoveries increased," he said and lauded the initiatives of the frontline workers including doctors, nurses and personnel from various government departments.

On an average, everyday, about 90,000 RT-PCR (Reverse Transcription Polym-

AstraZeneca vaccine volunteer dies in Brazil; co to go ahead with trial

Sao Paulo/ Frankfurt, Oct. 22: Brazilian health authority Anvisa said on Wednesday that a volunteer in a clinical trial of the Covid-19 vaccine developed by AstraZeneca and Oxford University had died but added that the trial would continue.

Oxford confirmed the plan to keep testing, saying in a statement that after careful assessment "there have been no concerns about safety of the clinical trial."

AstraZeneca declined to comment immediately.

A source familiar with the matter told Reuters

● The university earlier confirmed the volunteer was Brazilian but gave no further personal details

the trial would have been suspended if the volunteer who died had received the Covid-19 vaccine, suggesting the person was part of the control group that was given a meningitis jab.

The Federal University of Sao Paulo, which is helping coordinate phase 3 clinical trials in Brazil, said an independent review committee had also recommended the

trial continue. The university earlier confirmed the volunteer was Brazilian but gave no further personal details. "Everything is proceeding as expected, without any record of serious vaccine-related complications involving any of the participating volunteers," the Brazilian university said in a statement.

So far, 8,000 of the planned 10,000 volunteers in the trial have been recruited and given the first dose in six cities in Brazil, and many have already received the second shot, said a university spokesman. — *Reuters*

Tougher H1B conditions will affect Indians

Washington, Oct. 22: The State Department has proposed not to issue temporary business visas for H-1B speciality occupations which allowed companies to send their technology professionals for a short stay to complete jobs on site in the US, a move

which could affect hundreds of Indians.

The proposal, if finalised, will eliminate any misconception that the "B-1 in lieu of H policy" provides an alternative avenue for foreign professionals to enter the US for skilled labour that allows, and

potentially even encourages them and their employers, to circumvent the restrictions and requirements relating to the 'H' non-immigrant classification established by the Congress to protect US workers, the State Department said. The move, made pub-

lic on Wednesday, less than two weeks ahead of the November 3 presidential election, is likely to affect several Indian companies which send their technology professionals on B-1 visas for a short stay to complete jobs on site in the US. — *PTI*

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JEE-Main to be conducted in more languages: Minister

New Delhi, Oct. 22: The Joint Admission Board (JAB) for 23 IITs decided on Thursday that the computer-based JEE-Main for admission to engineering colleges across the country will be conducted in more regional languages, according to Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank.

The Joint Entrance Examination (JEE)-Main, which is also an eligibility test for the JEE-Advanced for admission to the IITs is currently offered in English, Hindi and Gujarati.

The test will be offered in regional languages from next year. "In line with the vision of #NEP2020, the Joint Admission Board (JAB) of #JEE (Main) has decided to conduct the JEE (Main) examination in more regional languages of India," Nishank tweeted.

— *PTI*

INS Kavaratti commissioned into Indian Navy

Visakhapatnam, Oct. 22: Chief of Army Staff General MM Naravane on Thursday commissioned the Anti-Submarine Warfare stealth corvette *INS Kavaratti* into the Indian Navy at the Naval Dockyard here. *INS Kavaratti* is the last of the four indigenously-built ASW stealth corvettes under Project 28 (Kamorta class) and has been designed by the Directorate of Naval Design, the Indian Navys in-house wing. — *PTI*

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SHORT TAKES

Gold worth ₹6 lakh seized at airport

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, OCT. 22

The Chennai air customs has seized gold worth ₹ 6 lakh at the city airport.

Based on a tip-off, Keedir Naina Mohamed (50) of Pasipattinam, Tamil Nadu, who arrived from Dubai by an Air India Express flight, was intercepted at the exit on suspicion of smuggling gold. On questioning, he confessed to carrying gold paste in the rectum. On search, two bundles of gold paste were recovered from rectum and on extraction 94 grams of 24k purity gold were recovered.

Further 20 grams of gold cut bit were recovered from his pant pocket. Total 114 grams of gold valued at ₹6 lakh were seized under the Customs Act. Further investigation is under progress.

Metro timings rescheduled for festival days

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, OCT. 22

On account of festival days, the CMRL has decided to reschedule its services which now are operated from 7 am to 9 pm.

The services will be extended till 11 pm on Friday and Saturday. To facilitate the passengers returning from festival holidays, CMRL has decided to begin its services on Tuesday from 5:30 am. In the ensuing week, services will be extended till 11 pm on Thursday. Trains will start from 5:30 am on Monday. The trains will run without peak-hour service during the extended duration.

Pondy logs 212 fresh Covid-19 cases; two deaths take toll 582

Puducherry, Oct. 22: Puducherry reported 212 new Covid-19 cases and two related fatalities which pushed the toll in the union territory to 582, a top Health department official said on Thursday. The 212 fresh infections saw the overall tally rise to 33,832, a release from the Director of Health and Family Welfare S Mohan Kumar said. A 65-year old woman from Karaikal was among the deceased, the release said. The new cases were identified after the examination of 3,847 samples, it added. As many as 195 patients were discharged during the last 24 hours, it said. The fatality and recovery rates stood at 1.72 per cent and 86.34 per cent respectively. So far, 2.78 lakh samples have been tested in the union territory, with 2.41 lakh of them testing negative for coronavirus. The result of remaining samples was awaited. The overall tally of COVID-19 cases stood at 33,832 after transfer of two cases to Tamil Nadu, the release said. The number of active cases stood at 4,039 while the number of people who have recovered and discharged was 29,211. —PTI

‘Say yes to lights, no to crackers’ campaign gets underway

T. SUDHEESH | DC
CHENNAI, OCT. 22

With Deepavali a few weeks away, the ‘Say No to Crackers’ campaign, supported by the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC), got underway online.

A twitter handle ‘Say No to Crackers’ is gathering attention as various creative kids started advocating the campaign. They have posted short video messages and creative works highlighting the need to say no to crackers in the time of pandemic. And they pledged not to persuade their parents to get them crackers in this Deepavali.

Supporting the campaign, Akash Parameswaran, Deputy Commissioner (North), GCC, says bursting crackers will be an added pollution to the atmosphere as thousands of vehicles are plying on the roads daily. We need to have cleaner breathing space in our city. We want a more lit-up Deepavali. Let us have more diyas and lamps but no crackers for a pollution-free Deepavali’, he said.

The campaign, initiated by the city-based NGO ‘Born to Win’, has started conducting drawing and painting competitions on the theme ‘cracker-free Deepavali in the time of



A girl shows her drawing supporting ‘Say No to Crackers’ campaign in Chennai on Thursday.

Corona’.

Aditi Madhusudhanan, an activist and trustee of ‘Born to Win’, said the sole objective of the campaign is to ensure a pollution-free Deepavali in the time

of pandemic. ‘It’s imperative to have a pollution-free Deepavali because the air pollution is a reason for lung complications and respiratory problems that will act as a catalyst

to increase severity of deadly Coronavirus. We began an online campaign on Wednesday as the first phase. We are planning to approach medical practitioners, celebrities and bureaucrats to create an awareness among people on the necessity of avoiding crackers during this Deepavali’, said Aditi.

She also pointed out that bursting of crackers had impacted not only human beings but also animals. ‘There are incidents of pets running amok after being traumatised by the noise of high-decibel crackers. Many animals including cattle and stray dogs were injured and lost eyesight after being hit by vehicles’, she said. It may be recalled that in 2017, a cattleshed in suburban Madipakkam caught fire from stray crackers and five cows were burnt to death.

Meanwhile, the situation on ground isn’t any different in the past seasons despite the Supreme Court banning polluting firecrackers in 2018. The Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board had last year fixed the time slots to burst firecrackers between 6 am and 7 am and from 7 pm to 8 pm. But residents across the city continued to burst firecrackers throughout Deepavali day and night.

240 kg of tobacco products seized, one held

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, OCT. 22

The police on Thursday seized 240 kilograms of banned tobacco products from a godown on the outskirts of the city and arrested a man for storing the products illegally for sale.

The State Government has the banned sale of gutka, pan masala and chewable food products that contain tobacco and nicotine as ingredients.

Following information about the storage of tobacco products, the anti-narcotics police raided a godown at Ranga Nagar in Chrompet, Chennai. The officials recovered around 240 kg of gutka and tobacco products.

Police arrested Stephen Gopi (37). He was arrested by the police in a similar case in 2018. Police said that Gopi procured the contraband from Karnataka and sold it here.

The anti-narcotics police handed over the accused to the Shankar Nagar police. Further investigation is under way.

SMART CHOICE



The Red Cross Society, Vellore, adopted a government primary school in Peenchanmandai hill village in Anaicut Union in the district, and refurbished it into a smart classroom, with freshly paved tiled floors and smart class gadgets. Minister for commercial taxes & registration K. C. Veeramani inaugurated the classrooms in the presence of district secretary, Red Cross Society of India, Indranath, and CEO, Vellore, S. Mars.

—K. Senthil Nathan

MP alleges goof-up of quota in SBI recruitment

A. ARUL PALANI | DC
CHENNAI, OCT. 22

Suspecting goof-up of reservation policy in the recruitment for clerks in SBI, Lok Sabha member S. Venkatesan has demanded the Central government to address the anomalies in the hiring.

In a letter sent to Mr Thaawar Chand Gehlot, Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment, on Thursday, the CPI (M) leader demanded the government to maintain a transparent procedure in ensuring reservation in the recruitment of SBI junior associates.

He said there is suspicion about reservation when results of the preliminary examinations for the junior associate posts were released on October 20 and cut-off marks were prescribed for different categories of shortlisted candidates for Tamil Nadu.

The cut-off mark in the results for general category was 62 which was same for OBCs and SC categories. For STs the cut-off was 59.5 whereas it was 57.75 for economically weaker sections. Since these cut-off marks are not in consonance with social realities, question arises naturally whether

In a letter sent to Mr Thaawar Chand Gehlot, Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment, on Thursday, the CPI (M) leader demanded the government to maintain a transparent procedure in ensuring reservation in the recruitment of SBI junior associates

reservation has been implemented properly in results, the MP said. Since the details of cut-off marks for all the candidates have not been published there is no scope for social audit to monitor adherence to policy of reservation and individuals receive only communications about their marks and cut-off for different categories.

The tests conducted by the IBPS is not subject to public scrutiny like RTI. IBPS recruits officials and clerks for public sector banks, which are bound to adhere to the government instructions on reservation. How can such an organization remain not answerable to RTI?

The MP asked why the whole list of shortlisted candidates with marks and details of categories is not made public? The general category includes candidates belonging to reserved categories also and their names will figure in general list when

they secure more marks than the cut-off mark prescribed for the said category. He said, “please inform whether such norms are adhered in letter and spirit?”

Her asked how many OBC, SC, ST, EWS candidates are there in general category in the list published now. What is the range of marks secured by the candidates of reserved categories in the OBC, SC, ST and EWS? (Maximum and minimum marks secured by each category) The EWS cut-off is less than the cut-off marks for OBC, SC and STs. How many EWS candidates appeared for examination and how many got short listed?

The MP also asked how many general, OBC, SC, ST candidates appeared for preliminary tests and how many got shortlisted category wise. What are the norms followed for treating candidates of reserved categories to figure in General list?

HC directive to Chennai port trust on election

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, OCT. 22

Pointing out that if some more stringent measures are imposed, there can be no impediment for the Chennai Port Trust to proceed with the election by way of check off system, pursuant to its notification, during this pandemic period, the Madras high court has imposed additional measures to be followed by the Chennai Port Trust along with the regular standard operating procedure, as provided by the Central and State governments, within its campus during the election.

Justice R.Suresh Kumar imposed the additional conditions while disposing of a petition filed by V.Selvaraj, an employee of Chennai Port Trust (CPT) and also the general secretary of the Trade Union called Bharatiya Port and Dock Employees Union, which sought to defer the check off system election during this pandemic period due to Covid-19.

The case of the petitioner was that in order to identify that, which Trade Union (recognized or approved Trade Union) functioning in the CPT) was able to muster more strength for the purpose of identifying and to nominate two number of trustees for the CPT administration, the



election process was undertaken. In this regard, the elections otherwise called ‘Check Off System’, being conducted periodically and accordingly this year check off procedure/system election for the year 2021 and 2022 has been slated to be conducted between October 15, 2020 and October 30, 2020 and accordingly, the CPT has issued a notification.

The grievance of the petitioner was that the pandemic situation due to Covid-19 was still looming large in the society and if the check off system election was permitted, large number of employees would be vulnerable for getting affected of Covid. Therefore, the election should be deferred, he added.

Vehemently opposing the same, A.Kumaraguru, standing counsel for CPT submitted that the CPT would

ensure that the SOP was being maintained with strict sense. If any stringent conditions were issued by this court, the CPT will implement the same in strict sense during the election, he added.

The judge said the check off procedure was part of the election process in order to identify the maximum command among the employees by a recognized Union for the purpose of nominating two members from the largest employees supported Trade Union, in the body of the CPT. Hence, it was an important task to be undertaken by the CPT.

However, at the same time, the CPT cannot stop with just issuing the SOP with a call to the employees to maintain the social distancing. They must ensure that, SOP was strictly followed in every place at all time in all sense, the judge added.

Pointing out several safety measures, the judge said if these measures were taken further in addition to the measures already been envisaged or taken by the CPT, this court feel that, the apprehension on the part of the petitioner would be seriously met and it would be ensured that, in the Covid-19 situation, the CPT campus shall not be a hub for the spreading of Covid-19.

Monsoon blues amid pandemic

B. Vijayalakshmi

Viewpoint

While Tamil Nadu became the fourth state in the country to cross seven lakh coronavirus cases on Thursday, there is a nagging fear that Covid spread might pick up pace during monsoon and ensuing winter. On Thursday, TN recorded 3,077 new infections and 45 more deaths. Besides, the festive crowd continues to throng showrooms and malls.

Meanwhile, the state government, this week, permitted all shops, restaurants and commercial complexes to function till 10 pm in view of the festive season and also to facilitate economic recovery.

People flock to shopping hubs and markets throwing caution to the winds. Nothing can stop the crowds in Kasimedu market every Sunday. A video clip which showed hundreds of people without masks shopping in a popular textile showroom at T Nagar went viral driving the Chennai corporation to crack the whip. The shop was sealed, but

instances of shops and restaurants violating Covid norms are being reported in newspapers and shared widely on social media.

The civic body should conduct surprise checks in shops, malls, showrooms at regular intervals and punish the violators. An unsparing corporation must make traders realize that if they violate Covid prevention norms they have to face penal consequences. Proper seating arrangements with adequate space, social distancing and mandatory masks will ensure safety of both employees and customers.

At the same time, virus may spread with a fall in temperature during monsoon. This may pose a major challenge to front-line workers and policymakers in implementing control measures. Even as people gear up for change in weather conditions due to onset of northeast monsoon, there are some who are haunted by the fear of influenza and respiratory infections. As Covid has similar symptoms like seasonal flu, self medication must be shunned. Consulting the doctor alone will help. Eating the right food and avoiding crowds will be best way to manage Covid during monsoon season.



Chitlapakkam road.



Children's hospital in Egmore.

Intense rains lashed the city and its suburbs on Thursday, causing inundation in several areas. The rains, which came in the evening after sweltering weather till late afternoon, were influenced by the depression over northwest and adjoining west central Bay of Bengal with the east west shear zone passing over the Chennai region, a Metrological official said. The pre-northeast monsoon showers lasted for over an hour.

—PTI

SHORT TAKES

CM, Dy CM greet
Amit ShahDC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, OCT. 22

Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami and Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam were among those from the State who greeted Home Minister Amit Shah on his birthday on Thursday.

'I have great pleasure in conveying my best wishes to you on your birthday. I pray Almighty to grant you many more years of good health and peace to serve the nation,' Palaniswami said in his message.

Panneerselvam, who spoke to Shah over phone, put out a tweet saying, 'His perseverance, grit and determination can be gauged from the success he achieved in all his endeavours.'

May the Almighty bless him with long life, good health and prosperity.'



Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami on Thursday joins farmers on bullock carts, as he inspected kudimaramathu works in the Kavinadu kanmai (irrigation tank), Pudukottai district, which forms part of the Cauvery-Vaigai-Gundaru rivers linking project. Health minister Dr C. Vijayabaskar and food minister R. Kamaraj are also seen.

—DC

Despite pandemic threat TN netted ₹40,718 cr investments, offered jobs to over 74K: CM

R. VALAYAPATHY | DC
PUDUKKOTTAI, OCT. 22

Despite the pandemic threat, Tamil Nadu has attracted a new investment of ₹40,718 crore, through 55 MoUs, which will provide employment opportunities for 74,212 persons, said Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami.

Inaugurating the ₹1,077 crore ITC Integrated Consumer Goods Manufacturing and Logistics Facility at Viralmalai near here on Thursday, Palaniswami also pointed out that with this new investment, the state stood first among others in the country during the current year in terms of attracting new investments.

He said, the ITC had provided jobs for 2,800 persons, most of them hailing from in and around Viralmalai, including 85

Inaugurating the ₹1,077 crore ITC Integrated Consumer Goods Manufacturing and Logistics Facility at Viralmalai near here on Thursday, Palaniswami also pointed out that with this new investment, the state stood first among others in the country during the current year in terms of attracting new investments

percent of women.

Later, Palaniswami declared open the 'Jallikattu Veeran' statue to commemorate the Viralmalai Jallikattu event, which found a place in the Guinness Book of Records last year. The chief minister also said that the much-awaited Cauvery - Vaigai - Gundaru rivers will be linked for which the government has made an initial sanction of Rs 700 crore, and that preliminary works were in

progress.

Despite this, the Opposition has been raising questions on the river linking project, quipped the chief minister. This project will be implemented at any cost, and the foundation stone for the same would be laid shortly added Palanisami.

He also inspected the Kavinadu Kanmai (irrigation tank) which is part of the Cauvery-Vaigai - Gundaru rivers linking project, where local farmers who came in bullock

carts and gave a traditional reception to the Chief Minister. In response to their welcome, the chief minister got into a bullock cart and greeted them.

Later, the chief minister went to the Pudukkottai collectorate and laid the foundation for new projects to the tune of ₹210 crore, and also distributed various welfare measures to the needy.

He also held discussions with members of women self-help groups and Pudukkottai Collector B Uma Maheswari and others, about the Corona virus preventive measures and other developmental activities.

Among others who accompanied the chief minister was Health minister Dr C. Vijayabaskar, Industries minister M. C. Sampath, Food minister R. Kamaraj, State housing board chairman Vairamuthu, and others.

Stalin criticises CM

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, OCT. 22

DMK president M. K. Stalin took a swipe at Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami for offering to provide free immunization in the State once the vaccine for Covid-19 was ready, saying it was unbearable to see him posturing as a munificent lord.

Did the Chief Minister think that the vaccine was a freebie that he would give the people? Stalin asked in a tweet on Thursday, saying that it was the duty of a people's welfare government to provide medicines to the people.

The time for youth power to become a dominant force in the State was coming closer, Stalin said in a speech, saying

that 'Kalignar Government' (M. Karunanidhi government) would soon be formed, referring to the next Assembly elections.

Listing the various measures that M. Karunanidhi took as Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu for education and industrial growth, Stalin said the Dravidian movement came about with the idea of providing education and jobs to all, irrespective of gender. He was addressing, through a video conference, a free job fair at Sankarankoil in Tenkasi district organized by Venkateshkumar Memorial Trust when he said that the rulers at the Centre and State had failed to create jobs.

He lauded the 50 companies participating in the fair with an offer for a total of 3,000 jobs.

RAMADOSS' NEW DEMAND FOR CASTE BOARDS

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, OCT. 22

PMK founder Dr S. Ramadoss has come up with a new demand for the setting up of welfare boards for each of 236 caste groups in the State if they have a population of over 30,000 and appoint one of the community member as its head.

Placing the demand before the State government, Ramadoss said that the Andhra Pradesh government had done that by forming 56 boards exclusively for the castes and even appointed women in 29 of the boards.

Lauding the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Jagannathan Reddy for honouring the election promise that he gave after going around the State to understand the problems of the people informing the exclusive welfare boards.

By setting up the caste welfare boards, Tamil Nadu could be put on the path of enduring development, Ramadoss added.

River linking scheme in south TN: Final phase begins

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUNELVELI, OCT. 22

The final phase of the state's first river linking project was formally inaugurated on Thursday. The project linking Tamirabarani - Karumeniyaru - Nambiyaru - Pachaiyaru - Koraiyaru and Yelumichaiyaru rivers, which would divert 20 per cent (2.765 tmcft) of the average annual surplus water of around 13.76 tmcft to the rain shadow regions of Radhapuram, Nanguneri and Palayamkottai constituencies in Tirunelveli district and Srivaikundam constituency in Thoothukudi district, was launched in 2009 at a cost of ₹872.45 crore.

The project completed its three phases of construction by September, and has now stepped into its final phase, for which the foundation stone was laid by Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palanisami on August 7.

Group clash: Cases filed against DMK, AIADMK men

ARULOLI M | DC
THOOTHUKUDI, OCT. 22

The Vilathikulam police in the district on Thursday registered cases against 604 DMK and AIADMK men including sitting MLAs, for their involvement in a group clash.

The DMK cadre led by Thoothukudi MLA P. Geetha Jeevan, and the ruling party men led by Vilathikulam MLA P. Chinnappan, attempted to hoist their respective party flags in front of the Vilathikulam bus standing on Wednesday (Oct 21), shouting slogans against each other, which in due course, resulted in them attacking each other and hurling stones and logs at each other.

Local police who were deployed to disperse the mob also were attacked by the cadres, in which Vilathikulam DSP Kalaiakathiravan, was

Local police who were deployed to disperse the mob also were attacked by the cadres, in which Vilathikulam DSP Kalaiakathiravan, was injured.

In connection with this clash, Vilathikulam police on Thursday registered cases against 500 DMK men including Thoothukudi MLA P. Geetha Jeevan and former Vilathikulam MLA and new entrant to DMK, Markendeyan, under section 113, for illegal assembly, 270 for malignant act likely spreading infection of a disease dangerous to life, and a few other sections.

Cases under the same IPC sections have been registered against 104 AIADMK men also, including Vilathikulam MLA P. Chinnappan.

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The Power to Surprise

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SHORT TAKES

INDIA CLEARS
FINAL TRIAL OF
ANTI-TANK MISSILEPAWAN BALI | DC
NEW DELHI, OCT. 22

India on Thursday successfully carried out the final trial of the third-generation anti-tank guided missile "Nag", and it is ready for induction into the Indian Army. It will now undergo production and may also be deployed soon in Ladakh, that could see tank action in case of a renewed confrontation with China.

India was looking for an indigenous anti-tank missile and depended on imports, such as Israel's "Spike" anti-tank guided missiles. Nag will fulfil that need.

The DRDO said Nag's final user trial was done at 6.45 am Thursday from the Pokhran range. It said the missile was integrated with the actual warhead and a tank target was kept at a designated range. The missile hit the target accurately defeating the armour.

The missile has "fire and forget" "top attack" capabilities with passive homing guidance to defeat all main battle tanks that have composite and reactive armour.

Defence minister Rajnath Singh congratulated DRDO and the Army for the successful trial.

TS CROP LOSS IN
FLOODS PUT AT
₹8,633 CRORES.A. ISHAQUI | DC
HYDERABAD, OCT. 21

The Telangana government has informed the central team that according to a preliminary assessment crop loss was estimated at Rs 8633 crores and loss to roads was estimated to be around Rs 222 crore.

Chief secretary Somesh Kumar was giving a presentation on the extent of damage caused due to the floods in the state to a five-member inter-ministerial team led by Praveen Vasishta, joint secretary, government of India, at BRKR Bhavan on Thursday.

While briefing the team on the relief and rehabilitation measures being taken by the state government in the affected areas, Mr Kumar said the loss to Greater Hyderabad Municipal Council was estimated to be around Rs 567 crores.

PROHIBITORY
ORDERS TO STOP
PUJA GATHERINGAKSHAYA KUMAR
SAHOO | DC
BHAVANIPATNA, OCT. 22

The Odisha government on Thursday decided to clamp prohibitory orders under Section 144 of Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) at Bhawanipata in Odisha's Kalahandi district to prohibit large public gatherings during the season of Durga Puja and Chhatar Jatra of Maa Manikeswari and related pre and post rituals.

The decision was taken on Thursday to ensure strict implementation of the Covid-19 guidelines and avoid large congregations in the town, informed Kalahandi district collector Gavali Parag Harshad.

The administration also issued necessary guidelines to be followed during the festival to contain the spread of Coronavirus and ensure the safety of life of the general public.

An order issued in this regard mentioned that the prohibitory orders will remain in force from October 22 (midnight) till October 25 (midnight) to restrict the movement of the people.

Bihar poll fever set to rise as
PM, Rahul join campaigning

Modi to address three rallies with Nitish today; Congress leader to start with two

Patna, Oct. 22: The political temperature in Bihar is set to go up substantially as Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi take a direct plunge in electioneering on Friday, addressing a series of rallies for their respective alliances in the state.

Prime Minister Modi will address three rallies — at Dehri-on Sone (Rohtas district), Gaya and Bhagalpur — to seek support for NDA nominees for different Assembly constituencies going to vote in the first phase on October 28.

According to BJP sources and reports from the districts on Thursday, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar will join Modi at the rallies in Dehri and Bhagalpur. In Gaya, JD(U) leader in the Lok Sabha Rajiv Ranjan Singh Lallan will share the dais with Modi along with former chief minister and president of Hindustani Awam Morcha Jitan Ram Manjhi.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is also slated to launch his campaign in Bihar elections on Friday.

He will address two rallies Friday — at Hisua in Nawada and Kahaigaon in Bhagalpur district.

Sources in the Congress as well as in the RJD said that Tejashwi Yadav, the chief ministerial face of the Mahagathbandhan, will join Gandhi at Hisua, where Congress nominee Neetu Singh is taking on sitting BJP MLA Anil Singh.

In Kahaigaon, Rahul Gandhi will be accompanied by Shaktisinh Gohil and other senior party leaders, besides some district-level office bearers and candidates of the coalition partners. — PTI



Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Tejashwi Yadav addresses an election campaign rally in Kaimur district on Thursday, ahead of Bihar Assembly polls.

— PTI

JD(U) to focus on basic facilities

Patna, Oct. 22: The ruling JD(U) on Thursday released its manifesto for the Bihar polls, promising progressive schemes under second leg of the 'seven resolves' of good governance in the next five years if it returned to power.

Apart from outlining its future plans for the development of Bihar, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar-led party also referred to poll promises made by the rival Grand Alliance, including approving 10 lakh jobs, and sought to know from where would they manage Rs 5 lakh crore additional money

that will be required for fulfilling their "lofty" announcements.

It also hit out at the Congress, an ally of the RJD in Mahagathbandhan, for announcing that it would review the prohibition laws in force in the state and mocked at it for putting photograph of Mahatma Gandhi in its manifesto but talking about ending laws against liquor consumption, which Father of the Nation always espoused.

Bihar unit president of the JD(U) Basistha Narayan Singh and its working president Ashok

Chaudhary released the party manifesto for the three-phase state elections at a press conference here.

The manifesto puts a stamp to Mr Kumar's assertions that after completion of "Saat Nischay" (seven resolves) part I in his 2015-20 term, his future government would launch part II of it if voted back to power.

The first part of the seven resolves comprised seven schemes to ensure basic necessities such as supply of piped drinking water, construction of toilets and concrete drains and electricity connection to every household, which

the Chief Minister has said many times have almost been achieved.

Its second part will focus on enhancing skill of youths to brighten their jobs prospect, promoting entrepreneurship among women by providing them financial assistance, irrigation facility to every agriculture field and additional health facilities for people and animals.

Giving details, the manifesto promised that it would open centre of excellence in the Industrial Training Institute (ITIs) in every district and polytechnic at sub division. — PTI

Active cases in
India below 10%DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 22

The trend of steady decline in active cases in India continues as active cases are now below 10 per cent of the total cases for the last three days suggesting only 1 in 10 cases are active Covid-19 patients across the country. Presently, the active cases comprise 9.29 per cent of the total positive cases of the country that stands at 7.16 lakh.

The overall cases in India reached 77.07 lakh out of which 55,839 cases were detected in the last 24 hours. With 702 new fatalities, the total number of deaths in India are over 1.16 lakh.

According to Union health ministry, the daily Positivity Rate has also been less than five per cent over the past three days indicating that the spread of infection is being effectively contained. The daily Positivity Rate on Thursday was 3.8 per cent. Officials said the decrease in the daily positivity rate is simultaneously mapped by the falling active cases, which continue to be under 7.5 lakh on Thursday.

The total recovered cases are close to 69 lakhs and the difference between active cases and recovered cases is consistently increasing and stands at 61.59 lakh. In the last 24 hours, 79,415 patients recovered taking the national Recovery Rate to 89.20 per cent.

7,482 cases in Kerala: Kerala on Thursday reported 7,482 cases of Covid-19 taking the total active cases to 93,291. The cumulative caseload in the state now stands at 3,69,323 of which 2,74,675 persons have recovered, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has said. As of now 2.80 lakh persons are under surveillance across the state.

Karnataka recovers outnumber new cases: Karnataka reported 5,778 new cases of Covid-19 on Thursday which also saw 13,550 people were discharged after recovery, a health department bulletin said. "The number of recoveries in the state have outnumbered the number of new cases for the eighth consecutive day," health minister Dr K Sudhakar said.

AP records 3,620 new cases: Andhra Pradesh on Thursday registered 3,620 new Covid-19 positive cases, raising the overall tally to 7,96,919, apart from 16 deaths in the state during the last 24 hours, taking the death toll to 6,524. The Coronavirus bulletin on Thursday said cumulatively 7,58,138 patients have been discharged after recovery, while 32,257 are still active with the virus and undergoing treatment. Among the daily Coronavirus positive instances, West Godavari district registered the highest 631 cases, followed by 492 in East Godavari, 412 in Chittoor, 385 in Guntur and 370 in Krishna.

TS reports 1,456 new cases: Due to festive season and declining trend of Coronavirus in Telangana, health authorities have in the latest round tested only 38,565 samples for the virus and 1,456 of the samples turned out to be positive on Thursday.

With this, the total number of Covid-19 positive cases in the state has reached 2,27,580. There have been five new deaths, which has taken the death toll in TS to 1,292. Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation reported 254 new cases.

(With inputs from Thiruvananthapuram, Bengaluru, Vijayawada and Hyderabad bureaus)

Twitter puts Leh
in China; India
warns network

New Delhi, Oct. 22: India has warned Twitter over its location setting that showed Leh in China, saying any disrespect of the country's sovereignty and integrity is totally unacceptable.

In a strongly-worded letter, Ajay Sawhney, secretary in the ministry of electronics and information technology (MeitY), asked Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey to respect the country's sensitivities, sources in the ministry said.

Twitter came under heavy criticism and faced backlash from social media users after its geotagging feature displayed "Jammu & Kashmir, People's Republic of China" in a live broadcast from Leh's Hall of Fame, a war memorial for fallen soldiers in the Union Territory of Ladakh.

This triggered angry responses from netizens who demanded that stringent action be initiated against the micro-blogging platform. Twitter, earlier this week, called it a technical

issue which has been swiftly resolved.

Sources said Sawhney, in the letter sent on Wednesday, warned Twitter that any attempt to undermine the sovereignty and integrity of India will not just bring disrepute to the micro-blogging site but also raise questions about its neutrality and fairness as an intermediary.

Conveying strong disapproval of the government over misrepresentation of the map of India, Sawhney in his letter reminded Twitter that Leh is the headquarter of the Union Territory of Ladakh. And that both Ladakh as well as Jammu and Kashmir are integral and inalienable parts of India, governed by the Constitution of India. The government has asked Twitter to respect the sensitivities of Indian citizens and made it clear that any attempt by it to disrespect the sovereignty and integrity of India is totally unacceptable and unlawful. — PTI

SHIVRAJ TO
MOVE SC OVER
VIRTUAL RALLIESRABINDRA NATH
CHOUDHURY | DC
BHOPAL, OCT. 22

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Thursday cancelled his two poll meetings, scheduled to be held in Ashok Nagar district in the state, in the wake of restrictions imposed on election rallies by a local court in view of the pandemic.

Chouhan who had announced to challenge the directive by Gwalior bench of the MP High Court to nine district collectors in the state not to allow candidates or political parties to hold election rallies without compelling reasons, was scheduled to attend public meetings in Shadora and Bhandar in Ashok Nagar district ahead of the November 3 by-elections. "We will challenge the court's directive in the SC. A bizarre situation has emerged following the court order. In some parts of MP election rallies are allowed, while in some other parts they are not allowed. Even in Bihar, rallies and public meetings are held. There cannot be two laws in one land," he said.

PSU whistleblower to challenge Kerala govt

DC CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI, OCT. 22

The whistleblower in the ₹500-crore cashew import scam involving public sector Kerala State Cashew Development Corporation (KSCDC) has said he will move the High Court challenging the state government decision not to grant the investigation agency permission to prosecute the accused.

"It was shocking that the state government has denied the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) permission to prosecute the accused, including then KSCDC chairman R. Chandrasekharan and managing director K.A. Ratheesh," Kadakampally Manoj, who in 2015 got the Kerala High Court order a

● **CHIEF MINISTER** said the government denied the CBI permission to prosecute accused in the Rs 500-crore cashew import scam after it found no merit in the agency's findings.

CBI probe into the allegations of corruption in the import of cashew by KSCDC, told Deccan Chronicle on Thursday: "I have discussed the matter with my lawyer. I am trying to get the relevant documents."

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said in press conference on Thursday that the government conducted a detailed examination of the findings of the CBI and found them lacking in merit. "It's not just about one or two points," Mr

Vijayan said in Thiruvananthapuram. "All the findings lacked merit. We cannot sanction prosecution based on such a report. There is nothing to implicate the people involved as the processes were continuation of what had been going on in the company."

Mr Manoj said the CBI had completed its investigations and written to the state government in May this year seeking the permission to go ahead with the prosecution. "To the best of my understanding, the vigilance and the department of cashew has cleared the file for prosecution but the state cabinet decided otherwise," he said.

The case pertains to the import of cashew between 2005 and 2015 in which the corporation allegedly

incurred a loss of over ₹1,200 crore. Two committees, headed by senior IAS officers P.H. Kurian and Dr K.M. Abraham had found serious irregularities in the functioning of the corporation, including the import deals. The committee headed by Mr Kurian had even recommended summary supersession of the board of directors headed by Mr Chandrasekharan. The High Court, before ordering a CBI petition in September 2015, had perused two reports submitted by Dr Abraham, which reportedly listed instances of corruption in the case.

Mr Manoj had moved the High Court seeking a CBI probe as the government did not allow the state Vigilance to go ahead with the investigation.

COMPLAINT AGAINST
KANGANA FOR
MALIGNING JUDICIARYDC CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, OCT. 22

A Mumbai-based lawyer on Thursday filed a complaint against actress Kangana Ranaut for allegedly maligning judiciary in her social media posts. The lawyer approached a magistrate court in Andheri accusing Ranaut of allegedly posting a malicious tweet against the judiciary after another magistrate court in Bandra ordered the registration of an FIR against her. Following the Bandra court's order to the police to register a First Information Report against her, Ranaut posted "malicious and defamatory" tweets against the judiciary, terming it as "Papu Sena", lawyer Ali Kaashif Khan Deshmukh stated in his complaint before the Andheri court.

Deshmukh also accused Ranaut of sedition and causing disharmony between two religious groups through her tweets. The actor had "no respect for varied communities of India, law of the land and authorised government bodies" and even made fun of the judiciary, it stated. Last week, the Bandra court had ordered the police to investigate a complaint filed by one Munawwar Ali Sayyed which referred to Ranaut's and her sister Rangoli Chandel's tweets and other statements.

CBI consent withdrawn to
stop its misuse: DeshmukhSONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC
MUMBAI, OCT. 22

Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh on Thursday said that 31-year-old 'general consent' given by the state to the CBI has been withdrawn so that the central agency cannot be misused for political purposes.

On Wednesday late night, his department issued a notification stating the general consent withdrew to the CBI. Maharashtra is the fourth state in the Country to withdraw the general consent to the apex agency. Meanwhile, the BJP slammed Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray led Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government for this move.

Deshmukh said that CBI should not be used to settle the political scores. "Therefore, we have come out with the order yesterday (Wednesday) for the CBI in Maharashtra. If the CBI wants to take over any case, it needs to get the prior consent from the Maharashtra government," the home minister said.

The Maharashtra government's move came

close on the heels after the central agency took over a case registered by the UP Police against "unknown" channels and persons over alleged fudging of TRPs in Lucknow.

The development created apprehensions in the Maharashtra government that the CBI would take over a similar case on alleged fudging of TRPs registered in Maharashtra in a bid to move it away from the jurisdiction of Mumbai police.

Referring to the apprehension, Deshmukh said that the government wanted to avoid such a thing happening.

The home department's order said, "In exercise of the powers conferred by section 6 of the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946, the government of Maharashtra hereby withdraws the consent accorded to the Members of the Delhi Special Police Establishment vide Government Order dated 22nd February 1989."

A senior home department official said that the order does not have any impact on the previous cases.

However, the CBI now needs to take a case to case basis consent from the Maharashtra government for all cases in future.

Meanwhile, the BJP leader Kirit Somaiya said that the Congress, NCP and Shiv Sena are scared of the CBI because their scams could be exposed.

Shiv Sena spokesperson Sanjay Raut said that the CBI has a right to probe all cases of national importance. But the cases which are being probed by Mumbai police are being simultaneously transferred to the central probe agency by filing fresh FIR in a different state, which recommends CBI probe, resulting in landing of CBI in Maharashtra. "Now, we decided to not allow such things. The Mumbai police has its own rights, which are provided by the constitution of India. It should not be violated by anyone," Raut said.

Earlier, investigation into actor Sushant Singh Rajput's alleged suicide case filed by Mumbai police was transferred to the CBI after the actor's family filed abetment to suicide case in Bihar.

Navy's 1st batch of women pilots
'operationalised' on DorniersRAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC
KOLKATA, OCT. 22

The first batch of women pilots of the Indian Navy has been operationalised on Dornier aircraft by the Southern Naval Command (SNC) at Kochi. They are Lieutenant Divya Sharma from Malviya Nagar in New Delhi, Lieutenant Shubhangi Swaroop from Tilhar in Uttar Pradesh and Lieutenant Shivangi from Muzaffarpur in Bihar.

The three women pilots were part of the six pilots of the 27th Dornier Operational Flying



From left- Indian Navy pilots Lt Shivangi, Lt Shubhangi Swaroop and Lt Divya Sharma who were part of the six pilots of the 27th Dornier Course.

Training (DOFT) Course, who graduated as 'Fully operational Maritime Reconnaissance (MR) Pilots' at a passing out ceremony held at INS Garuda, Kochi on Thursday.

She has asNC Chief Staff Officer (Training) Rear

Admiral Antony George presented awards to the pilots who are now fully qualified on Dornier aircraft for all operational missions. These officers had initially undergone basic flying training partly with the IAF and partly

with the Navy prior to the DOFT course. Amongst the three women pilots operationalised for MR flying, Lt Shivangi was the first to qualify as a naval pilot on December 2 last year.

The course comprised of one month of the ground training phase, which was conducted at various professional schools of the SNC and eight months of flying training at the Dornier Squadron of SNC, INAS 550. Lt Divya Sharma & Lt Shivam Pandey were adjudged 'First in Flying' and 'First in Ground' subjects, respectively.

IN BRIEF

London gas explosion: 2 die

London: Two people were killed after a suspected gas explosion that led to a building collapse in Southall, the west London suburb with a large Punjabi-origin Indian diaspora population. The explosion occurred at a hair salon and phone shop underneath a set of flats on Wednesday. Four adults and one child, of Punjabi-origin, were rescued at the rear of the property using a ladder, while several people from nearby homes evacuated the King Street area of Southall as London Fire Brigade worked on the "protracted" incident. The Metropolitan Police said the two people killed in the explosion are yet to be formally identified but some local reports indicate that the victims may be of Indian-origin. "A large explosion was found to have taken place inside a shop. Emergency services entered the building and sadly, two people were pronounced dead at the scene. Formal identification has not taken place.

Indonesia mine landslide: 11 die

Jakarta: Intense rains caused a landslide at a coal mine on Indonesia's Sumatra island that killed 11 miners, authorities said Thursday. The slide occurred Wednesday in a mine tunnel about 20 metres (65 feet) deep at Tanjung Lalang village in Muara Enim district of South Sumatra province, according to National Disaster Mitigation Agency spokesman Raditya Jati. Local rescuers have recovered all the bodies. Seasonal rains and high tides in recent days have caused dozens of landslides and widespread flooding across much of Indonesia, a chain of 17,000 islands where millions of people live in mountainous areas or near fertile flood plains close to rivers. Indonesia's Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Agency said the area could see light to moderate rainfall for the next three days. Most parts of Indonesia have entered the rainy season this October. In addition, the La Nina phenomenon in the Pacific Ocean can set off intense rainfall across the islands.

Trio who lived on ISS return to Earth

Moscow: A trio of space travellers safely returned to Earth on Thursday after a six-month mission on the International Space Station. The Soyuz MS-16 capsule carrying NASA astronaut Chris Cassidy, and Roscosmos' Anatoly Ivanishin and Ivan Vagner landed on the steppes of Kazakhstan south-east of the town of Dzhezkazgan at 7:54 a.m. (2:54 GMT) Thursday. After a brief medical checkup, the three will be taken by helicopters to Dzhezkazgan from where they will depart home. Cassidy will board a NASA plane back to Houston, while Vagner and Ivanishin will fly home to Star City, Russia. The crew smiled as they talked to masked members of the recovery team, and NASA and Roscosmos reported that they were in good condition. As part of additional precautions due to the Coronavirus, the rescue team members meeting the crew were tested for the virus.

LTTE DE-LIST MOVE: LANKA LODGES PLEA

Colombo, Oct. 22: Sri Lanka has appealed against a judgement from Britain's Proscribed Organisations Appeal Commission, which has delisted the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) as a proscribed terrorist organisation.

A foreign ministry statement issued here said that Sri Lanka has been made aware of the Open Judgement by the Commission on Wednesday. It said the decision of the Commission arises from an appeal filed in May 2019 by an LTTE front organisation challenging the decision of British Secretary of State for Home Affairs dated March 8, 2019, which refused the application by the group to de-proscribe the LTTE from the list of Proscribed Organisations under the UK Terrorism Act of 2000.

While Sri Lanka was not a party to these proceedings at the Commission and could not make direct representations, the Lankan Government assisted the British government by providing relevant information with regard to continued terrorist activities.

Iran behind emails to intimidate voters: US

Nat'l intel director says aim was to hurt Don in election

Washington, Oct. 22: US officials have accused Iran of being behind a flurry of threatening but fake emails sent to Democratic voters in multiple battleground states in a late-stage efforts to sway public opinion and interfere in the presidential election.

Purportedly from far-right, pro-Trump groups like the Proud Boys, the fake emails were apparently aimed at intimidating voters. John Ratcliffe, the government's national intelligence director, said the aim was to hurt President Donald Trump in the contest against Democrat Joe Biden, though he did not elaborate on how.

One possibility is the messages may have been intended to align Trump in the minds of voters with the Proud Boys after he was criticised for failing to unequivocally denounce the group during the first presidential debate. The threatening emails officials did not lay out specific evidence for how

Don mismanaged Covid-19: Obama

Washington, Oct. 22: Former US president Barack Obama delivered a diatribe against his successor Donald Trump on Wednesday, accusing him of mismanaging the pandemic, as he appealed to the people to come out and vote in favour of Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden.

Jumping into the electoral campaign in support of his former vice president Biden and his running mate Senator Kamala Harris, Obama appealed to the people to defeat Trump and elect the

they came to pinpoint Iran, but the activities attributed to Tehran would mark a significant escalation for a country some

Biden-Harris team on November 3. "They have a plan for the economy and the Coronavirus pandemic," Obama said in his maiden campaign appearance, asserting that the "Biden-Harris team will bring character and leadership back to government". Obama spoke as the sun set, the sky going from pink to gray, framed by the clouds and the Lincoln Financial Field behind him. He stood by himself on stage, far from even the cars in the lot. His podium was sanitized before he spoke. —PTI

cybersecurity experts regard as a second-rate player in online espionage. —AP

AFTER CHAOTIC DEBATE, TRUMP, BIDEN TRY AGAIN

Washington, Oct. 22: After meeting last month in perhaps the most chaotic debate in modern history, President Donald Trump and his Democratic rival, Joe Biden, will take the stage Thursday to give it another go.

The bar to improve upon their last prime-time meeting is low: Their first debate was punctuated by frequent interruptions, mostly from Trump, leaving the two men talking over each other and Biden eventually telling the president to "shut up."

A planned second debate didn't happen after the president was diagnosed with the Coronavirus and refused to participate in a virtual format. Biden and Trump instead participated in duelling town halls. —AP

H-1B speciality jobs: US against issuing biz visas

Washington, Oct. 22: The State Department has proposed not to issue temporary business visas for H-1B speciality occupations which allowed several companies to send their technology professionals for a short stay to complete jobs on site in the US, a move which could affect hundreds of Indians. The proposal, if finalised, will eliminate any misconception that the "B-1 in lieu of H policy" provides an alternative avenue for foreign professionals to enter the US to perform skilled labour that allows, and potentially even encourages them and their employers to circumvent the restrictions and requirements relating to the H non-immigrant classification established by Congress to protect the US workers, the State Department said.

The move, made public on Wednesday, less than two weeks ahead of the November 3 presidential election, is likely to impact several Indian companies which send their technology professionals on B-1 visas for a short stay to complete jobs on site in the US.

● **THE MOVE,** made public on Wednesday, less than two weeks ahead of the November 3 presidential election, is likely to impact several Indian companies which send their technology professionals on B-1 visas for a short stay to complete jobs on site in the US.

On December 17, 2019, the Attorney General of California announced a \$800,000 settlement against Infosys Limited to resolve allegations that approximately 500 Infosys employees worked in the state on Infosys-sponsored B-1 visas rather than H-1B visas, the State Department said. "The proposed changes and the resulting transparency would reduce the impact of foreign labour on the US workforce of aliens performing activities in a specialty occupation without the procedural protections attendant to the H-1B classification," it said.

In its federal notification issued on Wednesday, the State Department said the

US architecture firm seeking protection from rising labour costs in the country might believe it could lay off its US architects and contract for the same professional architectural services to be provided by a foreign architecture firm. If the foreign firm sought H-1B visas for its architects, it would be required to pay the prevailing wage for architects in the area of intended employment in the United States, presumably the same wage the US architects had been paid, and meet the other requirements enacted by the Congress to protect US workers.

But under the B-1 in lieu of H policy, the foreign architects could ostensibly seek B-1 visas and travel to the US to fill a temporary need for architecture services, as long as they retained a residence in the foreign country and continued to receive a salary, perhaps significantly lower than what is customary for US architects, dispersed abroad by the foreign firm (or under the auspices of a foreign parent or subsidiary), the State Department said. —PTI

Oxford vaccine trial on amid participant's death

London, Oct. 22: The University of Oxford says the late-stage trial of its Covid-19 vaccine in Brazil will continue following reports of a participant's death.

The university said it can't comment on specific incidents but an independent review found no reason to be concerned about the safety of the Brazilian trial. It says an "independent review, in addition to the Brazilian regulator, have recommended that the trial should continue." The Oxford vaccine is being developed in conjunction with the international pharmaceutical company

AstraZeneca. Trials are underway in the United States and the UK, as well as Brazil, to determine whether the potential vaccine is safe and effective in humans.

A team at Bristol University used recently developed techniques to validate that the vaccine accurately follows the genetic instructions programmed into it by the Oxford University team.

The experts say that the novel analysis provides even greater clarity and detail about how the vaccine successfully provokes a strong immune response. "This is an important study as we are able

to confirm that the genetic instructions underpinning this vaccine, which is being developed as fast as safely possible, are correctly followed when they get into a human cell," said Dr David Matthews, Reader in Virology from Bristol's School of Cellular and Molecular Medicine (CMM), who led the research. "Until now, the technology hasn't been able to provide answers with such clarity, but we now know the vaccine is doing everything we expected and that is only good news in our fight against the illness," he said. —PTI

Withdraw from UN N-ban treaty: US to countries

United Nations, Oct. 22: The United States is urging countries that have ratified a UN treaty to ban nuclear weapons to withdraw their support as the pact nears the 50 ratifications needed to trigger its entry into force, which supporters say could happen this week. The US letter to signatories, obtained by *The Associated Press*, says the five original nuclear powers — the US, Russia, China, Britain and France — and America's NATO allies "stand unified in our opposition to the potential repercussions" of the treaty.

It says the treaty "turns back the clock on verification and disarmament and is dangerous" to the half-century-old Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, considered the cornerstone of global nonproliferation efforts. "Although we recognize your sovereign right to ratify or accede to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), we believe that you have made a strategic error and should withdraw your instrument of ratification or accession," the letter says.

The treaty requires that all ratifying coun-

tries "never under any circumstances ... develop, test, produce, manufacture, otherwise acquire, possess or stockpile nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices."

It also bans any transfer or use of nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices — and the threat to use such weapons — and requires parties to promote the treaty to other countries. Beatrice Fihn, executive director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize-winning coalition whose work helped spearhead the nuclear ban treaty, said Tuesday that several diplomatic sources confirmed that they and other states that ratified the TPNW had been sent letters by the US requesting their withdrawal.

She said the "increasing nervousness, and maybe straightforward panic, with some of the nuclear-armed states and particularly the Trump administration" shows that they "really seem to understand that this is a reality: Nuclear weapons are going to be banned under international law soon." —AP

U.S. troops in Afghanistan returning: don

Washington, Oct. 22: The US has had enough of 19 years in Afghanistan, President Donald Trump has said, reiterating that American troops, who are the greatest soldiers in the world but acting as a "police force" in the strife-torn country, are returning. Trump has repeatedly

said that he would bring home all the US troops from "endless wars". It was also one of the promises he made during his 2016 Presidential campaign. Last month, he said that the United States will reduce the number of its troops in Afghanistan to 4,000 in a very short period of time.

GERMANY CASES SPIKE PAST 10K IN NEW RECORD

Berlin, Oct. 22: Germany's disease control centre is reporting a new daily record increase in Coronavirus infections, which rocketed past the 10,000 mark for the first time as the pandemic continues to spread.

The Robert Koch Institute said Thursday that it had recorded 11,287 new cases over the past 24 hours, shattering the previous record figure of 7,830 daily infections set on Saturday.

Islamabad, Oct. 22: Pakistan has requested the UK for a third time to deport former prime minister Nawaz Sharif from London to serve his prison term in the country after being sentenced in corruption cases, according to a media report on Thursday. Sharif, the 70-year-old supremo of the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) who was ousted from power in 2017 by the Supreme Court on corruption charges, is in London

for medical treatment.

A letter for the deportation of the three-time prime minister was handed over personally to the British High Commissioner here some three weeks ago, *Dawn* newspaper reported.

Through the letter, the Pakistani government asked the British authorities to consider cancelling Sharif's visit visa, which has allowed him to live in London on medical grounds since November. The

letter has cited Britain's own immigration laws of 1974 under which any person sentenced to imprisonment of more than four years had to be deported to the country of his/her origin. When contacted, Shahzad Akbar, Adviser to Prime Minister Imran Khan on Accountability and Interior confirmed that the government has made three requests to the UK authorities to deport Sharif, with the last being on October 5. —PTI

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 Executive Engineer,
 Public Health Division(M)
 PPT/PR/260/20-21 Dated:22.10.2020

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 Tender Notice No. S/12/2020-21, dt. 22-10-2020, (1) All tenders have been uploaded on Indian Railways-E-Procurement portal (IREPS)- www.ireps.gov.in. For details & necessary guidelines for quoting against e-tender. Please visit IREPS-Procurement portal. (2) The prospective tenderers are advised to get them registered on the website <http://www.ireps.gov.in> online. This registration is mandatory for participation in e-tendering and is free of charge. (3) Offers are to be submitted online only. Offers sent/submitted against such e-tenders through e-mail, post, fax or in person will be rejected summarily without any consideration. (4) This notice is for information during initial phase only. In future, no such notice shall be published. Vendors are requested to get registered with IREPS and visit portal www.ireps.gov.in for future tenders. (5) Please submit offers online for the following materials: **SN.1. Tender No.: 50/20/5113/OT/29/2020. Brief Description, P.L. No. & Quantity:** (1) PVC Insulated Armoured, Unscreened Underground Power Cable for Railway Signalling of size 2 core X 25 Sq. mm. Aluminium conductor conforming to RD50 Specification No. IRS: S-63/2014 & (Rev.4.0) IS:1554 (Pt.1), Qty-03 KM, for SSE/SIG/ Badarpur, P.L. No-040N002. (3) PVC Insulated Armoured, Unscreened Underground Power Cable for Railway Signalling of size 2 core X 25 Sq. mm. Aluminium conductor conforming to RD50 Specification No. IRS: S-63/2014 & (Rev.4.0) IS:1554 (Pt.1) Qty-04 KM, for SSE/SIG/ Fakiragram, P.L. No-5611N004. (5) PVC Insulated Armoured, Unscreened Underground Power Cable for Railway Signalling of size 2 core X 25 Sq. mm. Aluminium conductor conforming to RD50 Specification No. IRS: S-63/2014 & (Rev.4.0) IS:1554 (Pt.1), Qty-01 KM, for SSE/SIG/ Guwahati, P.L. No-5811N005. **Closing Opening Date:** 05-11-2020. **SN.2. Tender No.: 37/20/0576/OT/30/2020. Brief Description, P.L. No. & Quantity:** (1) Distributor Valve complete without common pipe Bracket. Material Spec.: RD50. No-02-ABR-02-Appendix-A1. Amnd.4 of Sept-16. P.L. No-36163822. Qty-10 Nos, for Dibrugarh Town/Workshop/Depot, Qty-100 Nos, for New Bongaigaon/Workshop/Depot, Qty-15 Nos, for New Jalpaiguri/GSD. **Closing Opening Date:** 18-11-2020. **PCMM**
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DECCAN Chronicle

23 OCTOBER 2020

Bihar: Lalu son handful, but contest is wide open

Assembly polls in any state are consequential in the larger framework of our democracy, and in the case of Bihar they give us a feel of the political currents in the Hindi heartland which, historically, has had a particular salience in shaping the politics of the country.

The three-stage state election in Bihar kicks off on October 28 and the result will be known on November 10, but so close to voting day it is not quite clear which way the wind is blowing. In the ordinary course, the outright win of the JD(U)-BJP alliance that chief minister Nitish Kumar leads might have been taken for granted since there are no known stars in the fray on the opposite side. This is indeed what media reporting and anecdotal evidence initially appeared to suggest.

But with the campaign picking up, the turbulence in the waters of the Ganga, Kosi, Gandak and the Son are becoming more evident.

In the normal course, the fortunes of the CM, who has been in office for three consecutive terms, may have been the focal point of interest. But this time around there is a related issue that will be keenly watched, namely the trajectory of the BJP. But for a short break between 2015-17, Mr Kumar has been a steady ally of the BJP, helping the saffron party to consolidate its hold in the Gangetic plain. But there are signs that the BJP may have its own CM in the state. Like in neighbouring UP, where BJP by turns partnered the SP and the BSP before it raised its sights to include the CM's chair, in Bihar too the BJP may be getting ready to quit being bridesmaid. Chirag Paswan, the young, inexperienced, LJP leader, was thought to be its pawn in this venture.

But there could be trouble ahead. If LJP cuts into JD(U) votes in any substantial way, its game may end up helping the RJD-Congress-Left Mahagathbandhan (Grand Alliance) pose an even bigger challenge to the JD(U)-BJP alliance, with JD(U) weakened on account of Mr Paswan's effort. Thus, the game that BJP-LJP is accused of launching may just turn out to be a double-edged sword.

Lalu Yadav's young son Tejashwi, who had been written off as a factor since his father is still languishing in jail and is not available to campaign, is actually turning out to be quite a handful with his promise of 10 lakh jobs the minute he takes office. The unemployment issue is serious all over India but has a special resonance in Bihar since the state saw the largest number of very poor returnees from the big cities in the wake of the coronavirus-related lockdown. In contrast, the CM's campaign is lacklustre, still harping on issues of a decade ago. The NDA is hoping that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will electrify the mood for the incumbents. If Mr Kumar beats the odds, he could remain CM even if the BJP does well. If he slips, and the BJP doesn't have a clear majority on its own (an unlikely scenario), the BJP may be pushed to scout for post-poll friends. That could muddy the waters.

Can America rein in Google?

The tech titan Google is facing an anti-trust suit filed by the US Justice Department accusing it of maintaining an illegal monopoly over Internet search and search advertising. This is the most significant step in years in which a backlash has been gaining strength, first in Europe and now in US, against the big four of the new economy — Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon. Spurred on by a collection of lawyers, economists and activists, governments have been pushed into questioning them for their monopolistic business practices. The big question to be answered now is whether Google has become far too successful for the good of technology and the free market that created such behemoths.

The tech battle isn't new. More than two decades ago, Microsoft was in the crosshairs for perversely abusing its domination of personal computer software. The seminar tech giant escaped any great fetters on its operations even as the tech world evolved with alternatives including Apple's operating system. Like Big Pharma and Big Oil, Big Tech had made its own rules for decades in attaining its Unicorn status. It bought out budding competitors or simply trampled upon them by virtue of deep pockets created by market capitalisation of more than trillion dollars and billions of reserve cash, some owed to miserly but clever tax non-compliance practices across nations.

Microsoft wriggled out of its existential crisis of 1998 and rebuilt. Google, with its virtual search engine monopoly, its most popular web browser Chrome, its Android technology and its unique business model in which the user does not have to pay a cent to access its search engine will doubtless employ the best legal brains to stretch out this battle against the Justice Department in years to come. The larger issue is should monopolies be broken up in countries that swear by free markets and capitalism in the fond hope of creating a democratic level playing field for all. Do regulators know enough on how technology works to write new regulations t rein in Google with its 2019 revenue of \$161 billion?

DECCAN CHRONICLE

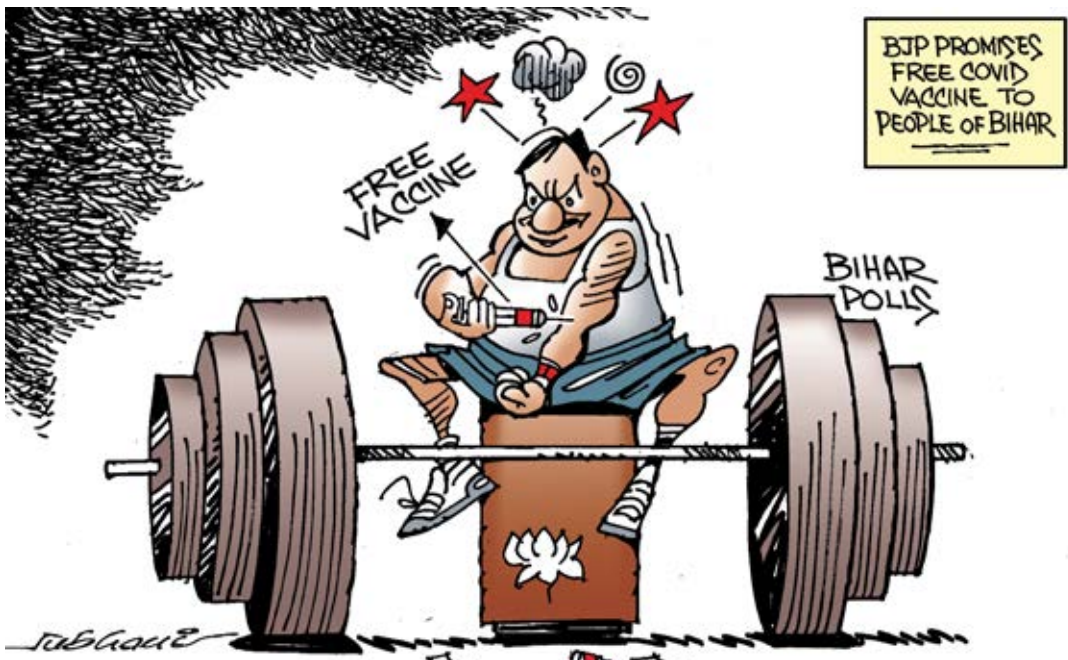
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Subhani



Hindutva a stumbling block for BJP in Bihar



Parsa Venkateshwar Rao Jr

In 2015, flush with the dramatic victory in the 2014 Lok Sabha election, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and then BJP president Amit Shah hoped to sweep the Assembly elections in Bihar, the other major Hindi-belt state in northern India. The first is of course Uttar Pradesh, the so-called cockpit of Indian politics, and in UP the BJP's calling card was Hindutva. Mr Shah thundered that if the BJP were defeated, crackers would be burst in Pakistan. And Mr Modi announced a huge financial package from the Central government in the loudest of tones. But Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal (United) and Lalu Prasad Yadav's Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), along with the Congress, scored an impressive victory. The Modi magic did not work. The BJP's defeat was also a rejection of Mr Modi at a time when it seemed that he was riding the crest of popularity, with an overwhelming victory in neighbouring UP in the 2014 general election. The victory of the Nitish-Lalu duo was interpreted as the unbeatable caste combine of all backward castes and the significant Muslim minority in the state.

Nitish Kumar was not really the lily-white "secularist" that he projected himself to be because he was in alliance with the BJP in the 2005 and 2010 Assembly elections in the state, and the BJP's saffron hue was as prominent then as it ever was. His disapproval of Mr Modi's saffronism did not carry much conviction. But

after the 2015 Assembly poll victory, Nitish Kumar could not bear with the aggressive pressure tactics and intrusion of the impetuous and young Tejashwi Yadav, who was the deputy chief minister. And with a little help from Bihar BJP leader Sushil Kumar Modi, who conjured up a "crime", which is what the BJP has always been good at, Mr Kumar slipped out of the strangling grip of Lalu Yadav's family. And he was back with his old mate, the BJP, in 2017.

The present speculation about the outcome in the Bihar Assembly elections flows from the developments of 2015 and 2017. It is being argued that this is Nitish Kumar's "last stand", and the BJP is preparing to push him off the stage once the election is won because Mr Modi and Mr Shah have not forgiven Nitish Kumar's "betrayal"! There are of course serious flaws in the assumptions of the analysts, if not that of the BJP leaders themselves. The BJP is a second party in Bihar. It cannot hope to become the party of first choice. The BJP's hopes lie in the fact that after two decades of being the second party in Maharashtra, the BJP moved to the first position, edging out the Shiv Sena. But then the Shiv Sena chose to walk out of the alliance, and the BJP's lead position in Maharashtra came to nought.

It is keeping in mind the Maharashtra experience that Mr Shah, the BJP's spokesperson though he is not the president of the party any more, declared quite early that Nitish Kumar

would be the chief ministerial candidate of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), comprising the JD(U), BJP and Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) of the late Ram Vilas Paswan. More than the Machiavellian plot to avenge Nitish Kumar, the BJP leaders are reconciled to the fact that they cannot win without the JD(U). There is the plausible argument that Nitish Kumar and the JD(U) are in the same position as the BJP, and that Nitish Kumar can never hope to win an Assembly majority without the BJP.

There is the fact that Nitish Kumar is the last of the "big" leaders in the BJP camp, and he along with Lalu Prasad Yadav and Ram Vilas Paswan had been Bihar's political heroes. It is now time for a generational change. There is no leader in the JD(U) who can take Nitish Kumar's place. The BJP in Bihar does not have either first-rung or second-rung leaders, though there has been speculation that Union minister for law and justice, information technology and communications Ravi Shankar Prasad is a potential chief minister waiting in the wings. But he does not enjoy the same popular base that Nitish or Lalu do, and Paswan did in his own small limited way, and all of them had emerged from the Jayaprakash Narayan students' movement of the 1970s. It is too early

There is the fact that Nitish Kumar is the last of the 'big' leaders in the BJP camp, and he along with Lalu Prasad Yadav and Ram Vilas Paswan had been Bihar's political heroes. It is now time for a generational change.

to speculate whether Tejashwi Yadav will be the Gen Next leader of Bihar. Bihar's politics seems to be at the end of its political tether, though anti-BJP partisans would like to place their bets on Tejashwi Yadav and the RJD. The political formations as they exist now are caged in their caste grooves. No party can command the approval of the people across the caste barriers.

There is a political vacuum in Bihar, and there is room for some of the existing players to grab the opportunity and fill it up. The BJP could have done it, but it has shown that it is not confident about its ability to make it on its own. The deference shown by the BJP to Nitish Kumar is not pure goodwill. The diffidence of the BJP in Bihar perhaps could be traced back to then chief minister Lalu Yadav's assertive act of stopping Lal Krishna Advani from going to Ayodhya on his infamous "rath-yatra" in late 1990. It was a figurative act, and the BJP seems to have been stuck at the Bihar barricade. The Hindutva card has no resonance in Bihar and Mr Shah and Mr Modi are acutely aware of it. The poll surveys show that Mr Modi enjoys high popularity ratings, but they do not seem to be sufficient for the BJP to dare to go on its own in the state.

Two of the influential Hindi states are stuck in a past which they are not able to free themselves from, Bihar more so than even UP. The people in the state are hugely political, but they are not able to forge their political destiny. This election is much more than the victory or defeat of the major players in the fray. It is Bihar standing on the edge of an uncharted future.

The writer is a Delhi-based commentator and analyst

LETTERS

PUNISH THE CULPRITS

Apropos your editorial 'Rap-ist' trolls: Shame them (Oct. 22). Of late cybercrimes have been making news. While actor Vijay Sethupathi's daughter was sent a rape threat, a few days ago cricketer MS Dhoni's daughter also had received the same. This seems to be the most disgusting example of how social media platforms are being misused. Most of them who are involved in such cheap standards range in their teens and it is a serious issue which needs to be dealt with and appropriate punishment given. Security measures to prevent and protect anyone from these malicious attacks should be tightened up through cyber-security strategy. The bitter truth is that these teenagers are apparently going to be the future of the nation and one can wonder where the country seems to be heading shortly.

Jacqueline Netto, Chennai

FAUX PAS

IT IS utter atrocious on the part of the Centre to release a whopping sum of ₹3,737crore to its over 30 lakh employees citing it would encourage them to buy things for the upcoming Deepavali and other festivals, hoping it would revive India's slumped economy, even as millions of guest workers, and those who work in private sectors have lost their livelihood owing to the advent of Covid-19. It is a million-dollar query as to how the government could defenestrate the destitute just to appease the government employees totally oblivious of the fact that it is the poor who constitute majority of vote bank. Come what may, the allocated fund should be doled out for the poorest of the poor and that is where social justice lies.

E.S. Chandrasekaran, Chennai

BIHAR POLLS

TEJASWI YADAV has created a stir in election bound Bihar, by drawing very huge crowds. The Bihar election is by itself unique, apart from its singularity of caste centric politics, as it comes in the wake of near claustrophobia brought on by the Covid. The huge crowd in Tejaswi's rally could as much be about seeking a change in the political makeup as it could be a celebration of people of relief from prolonged social isolation. That said, the dynastic tradition does not fade easily. Chirag Paswan may well retain the pocket borough seats of his late father .In Tamil Nadu, Stalin of DMK is better placed as the inheritor to late Karunanidhi. Tejaswi has both, ennuoi out of incumbency for change and dynastic pull. The Bihar election is different .

R. Narayanan, Chennai

Saeed Naqvi
Wide Angle



Only Walter Mitty can dream Afghan troop withdrawal before US election

It always seemed an exaggeration that a dramatic announcement from Doha on the eve of the American elections on troop withdrawals would cause American voters to march to the polling booths doubly enthused to re-elect President Donald Trump. US chief negotiator Zalmay Khalilzad does not in the slightest resemble James Thurber's notorious daydreamer Walter Mitty to push for unrealistic deadlines. He is an eager beaver, but not desperately unrealistic.

When President Barack Obama had set firm deadlines for withdrawal, I made an extensive survey of the country for the Observer Research Foundation. I had concluded that the US is "not leaving Afghanistan today; it is not leaving it tomorrow". A superpower enters a major theatre with one set of interests but, over a period of time, develops multiple compelling interests.

Withdrawing empty-handed would be an admission of defeat. Since this is not on the cards, the only conclusion one can draw is that a plan for the future is not being disclosed for now.

The US involvement in Afghanistan has been a great

tragedy, but its frequent false starts in a rush to the exit door and announce withdrawal is material for a spoof by someone like Michael Moore. Take, for instance, the peace agreement the US signed with the Afghan Taliban on February 29 in Doha. So eager was US negotiator Zalmay Khalilzad to flourish a peace agreement just when the election campaign in the US was picking up that he would have inserted into the agreement anything that the Taliban wished. Read the title headline of that agreement — it is patently absurd: "Agreement for bringing Peace to Afghanistan between the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (which is not recognised by the United States as a state, and is known as the Taliban) and the United States of America."

The fragility of the agreement is transparent in the pulls and counter pulls that had obviously gone into the headline. There is an unbridgeable distance on Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's role, for instance. The Taliban will not talk to Mr Ghani, whom they describe quite brazenly as a US "toady".

Mr Ghani deludes himself if he imagines he is being "firm". He is coming across to the world at large

as a leader with a very thick skin. New Delhi wishes to keep up appearances. In the trapeze act, South Block does not wish to be seen loosening the clasp of Mr Ghani's hand midair. The zero-sum game with Pakistan may operate as a factor but, in deference to realism, not a defining one.

One of the advantages the US extracts from being a superpower is to keep making mistakes almost wilfully without any fear of being called to account. It is almost a forgotten story that in December 2001 that Nato, helped by Russia, Iran, India and the Northern Alliance based in the Panjsher Valley defeated Taliban and Al Qaeda. Panjsher was also the operational headquarters for Tajik hero Ahmad Shah Masoud. So strong was Masoud's opposition to the Taliban and Al Qaeda that he travelled extensively to acquaint various international bodies of the danger that Al Qaeda and the Taliban posed to Afghanistan. His summer 2001 address to the European Parliament, months before 9/11, was historic by any yardstick. The complete silence on this Masoud speech is surprising. His forces had picked up chatter about a possible Al Qaeda action

in the US mainland. He was speaking in Brussels. On September 9, precisely two days before September 11 (9/11), two Arabs disguised as journalists visited him in his hideout near the Tajik border for an interview. Their passports, it was revealed much later, had been forged in Brussels. These "journalists", while saying goodbye to Masoud, detonated their vests. All three died instantly. Two days later, the Twin Towers came down in New York. Is there nothing here that deserves investigation?

Maybe not before the November 3 US election, but is the curtain is about to be brought down on US involvement? Whether Mr Trump or Joe Biden wins, China, Russia, Iran are likely to remain America's principal adversarial concerns. And Afghanistan is a supreme vantage point from where to needle them.

A little over a year ago, just when US military involvement in Syria was winding down, one common chatter was about Jabhat al Nusra and its variants being flown to newer theatres of action. Russia's deputy foreign minister Morgulov Igor Vladimirovich told a high-powered conference in New Delhi,

with Zalmay Khalilzad in attendance, that militants were being flown from Syria to northern Afghanistan. "Only the Afghan government and the US controls the Afghan airspace." The blame cannot be placed at any other door. Mr Khalilzad mounted a token protest, but nothing more.

The following Friday, Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was more specific: Daesh groups were being flown to Afghanistan. The distinguished chronicler of the West Asian scene, Robert Fisk of London's *Independent*, made similar allegations. The allegation fitted neatly into the thesis that militants, trained to kill, cannot be sent to the slaughterhouse. They have to be deployed in other theatres where they are proximate to the Muslim population into which militancy has to be injected to stir up the Islamic cauldron — Xinjiang, the Caucasus and a handful of Sunni enclaves in Iran. Now comes the news that fighters from Idlib are being flown to Nagorno Karabakh.

The writer is a senior journalist and commentator based in New Delhi

SHORT TAKE

Football great Pele turns 80

Sao Paulo: Brazilian football great Pele turns 80 on Friday, but the celebration will have to wait. The three-time World Cup winner will spend the day isolated with a few family members outside Sao Paulo, where he is expected to receive a flood of tributes from players, fans, celebrities and politicians. His long-time spokesman, Pepito Fornos, said Pele will likely spend his birthday at his mansion in the beachfront city of Guarujá, on the coast of Sao Paulo state, where he has been since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic.

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

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

Sun too hot for RR

Holder, Pandey script warm win against Royals

Dubai, Oct. 22: Sunrisers Hyderabad defeated Rajasthan Royals by eight wickets in their Indian Premier League match here on Thursday.

Sent in to bat, Rajasthan Royals scored 154 for 6 in the allotted 20 overs. In reply, SRH chased down the target with 11 balls to spare at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium.

Manish Pandey top-scored for the winners with an unbeaten 83 off 47 balls while Jason Holder was the most impressive bowler with excellent figures of 3/33 in four overs.

Sunrisers opted to bowl after winning the toss at the Dubai International Stadium.

Playing his first match of the tournament, Holder came up with an impressive bowling effort while also affecting a run out to destabilise the RR innings. Rashid Khan (1/20) and Vijay Shankar (1/15) picked a wicket each. For RR, Sanju Samson (36 off 26 balls) was the top scorer. Put in to bat, Robin Uthappa looked in rampaging form, hitting the first four and six of the innings. He quickly raced to 19 off 13 balls.

However, his time in the middle was short lived. After Ben Stokes (32) hit Holder for back-to-back boundaries in the fourth over, the West Indies skipper effected Uthappa's run out as the Indian was late to turn back at the non-striker's end.

— PTI



Manish Pandey of Sunrisers Hyderabad hits a six against Rajasthan Royals during their IPL match at Dubai International Cricket Stadium on Thursday.

— BCCI

SCORECARD

Rajasthan Royals: Robin Uthappa run out 19, Ben Stokes b Rashid Khan 30, Sanju Samson b Jason Holder 36, Jos Buttler c Nadeem b Vijay Shankar 9, Steve Smith c Pandey b Holder 19, Riyan Parag c David Warner b Holder 20, Rahul Tewatia not out 2, Jofra Archer not out 16. **Extras:** (W-2) 2. **Total (for 6 wickets in 20 overs) 154.**

FoW: 1-30, 2-86, 3-86, 4-110, 5-134, 6-135.

Bowling: Sandeep Sharma 4-0-31-0, J. Holder 4-0-33-3, Vijay Shankar 3-0-15-1, T. Natarajan 4-0-46-0, Rashid Khan 4-0-20-1, Shahbaz Nadeem 1-0-9-0.

Sunrisers Hyderabad: David Warner c Ben Stokes b Jofra Archer 4, Jonny Bairstow b Jofra Archer 10, Manish Pandey not out 83, Vijay Shankar not out 52. **Extras:** (LB-1, W-6) 7. **Total (for 2 wickets in 18.1 overs) 156.**

FoW: 1-4, 2-16.

Bowling: Jofra Archer 4-0-21-2, Ankit Singh Rajpoot 1-0-11-0, Kartik Tyagi 3.1-0-42-0, Ben Stokes 2-0-24-0, Shreyas Gopal 4-0-32-0, Rahul Tewatia 4-0-25-0.

IPL POINTS TABLE

Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
Delhi Capitals	10	7	3	0	14	+0.774
Royal Challengers Bangalore	10	7	3	0	14	+0.182
Mumbai Indians	9	6	3	0	12	+1.201
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	10	3	7	0	6	-0.463

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

CSK up against formidable MI

Sharjah, Oct. 22: Their campaign turning from bad to worse, CSK are expected to try out a few of their younger players when they take on defending champions MI in an IPL match here on Friday.

Though skipper M. S. Dhoni conceded after the loss against RR that the season might be already over them, CSK can still get to 14 points if they win their remaining four games, giving them an outside chance of making the play-offs.

Things have gone pear-shaped for CSK since their win over MI in the tournament opener on November 19.

The team received a hammering at the hands of RR and would be without the services of the injured Dwayne Bravo, who is out of the tournament.

Dhoni himself has not been at his best along with the others barring Faf du Plessis.

However, they would be up against a formidable MI side which won five games in a row before KXIP halted the juggernaut, turning the tables in a double Super Over on Sunday night.

— PTI

NUMBERS GAME

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL:

- Matches: 29
- Mumbai: 17
- Chennai: 12

MEETING IN 2019

- Mumbai Indians defeated Chennai Super Kings by 37 runs at Mumbai (League)
- Mumbai Indians beat Chennai Super Kings by 46 runs at Chennai (League)
- Mumbai Indians beat Chennai Super Kings by 6 wickets at Chennai (Qualifier 1)
- Mumbai Indian beat Chennai Super Kings by one run at Hyderabad (final)

MEETING IN 2020

- Chennai Super Kings beat Mumbai Indians by 5 wickets at Abu Dhabi

FOR THE RECORD

- Rohit Sharma who scored 3988 runs at an average of 31.62 and a strike rate of 130.54 in 148 innings of 152 matches, needs just 12 runs to become the first batsman to score 4000 or more runs for Mumbai Indians in IPL.
- Ravindra Jadeja who claimed 85 wickets at an average of 26.60 in 99 innings of 112 matches, will become the first Chennai Super Kings player to bowl in 100 innings in IPL.

— S. PERVEZ QAISER

I will play wherever coach wants me to, says Fatkhuloev

NEHA SURANA | DC
CHENNAI, OCT. 22

As Tajikistan's most-capped international, Fatkhullo Fatkhuloev brings a wealth of experience to Chennaiyin FC squad. The 30-year-old winger, who joined the two-time ISL champions last week, is eager to showcase his full range of technical abilities when the season kicks off in Goa on November 20.

For Tajikistan, Fatkhuloev has scored nine goals in 68 appearances, including two strikes against India in the 2008 AFC Challenge Cup final defeat and in a 2013 international friendly win. As a professional player, Fatkhuloev has helped FC Istiklol win six Tajik top flight championships and five Tajik Cup titles during an initial eight-year stay. He also helped Istiklol reach the AFC Cup final twice during that period.

Excerpts from an interview.
On his journey: I am really proud to have played for my country over the years. Growing up as a young footballer, that is all I ever dreamed of. I have played 68 times for Tajikistan, the most by any player so far. And I hope and believe that this number will double in the future. I want to keep going for as long as possible.



Fatkhullo Fatkhuloev

And I am certain that my move to Chennaiyin FC and India will further boost my performance with the national team. Over the years, I have had the privilege to play for some of the best clubs in my country, especially Istiklol where I have spent the majority of my career. It has been a special journey so far.

On playing in different countries as a professional: There are definitely differences, that you have to adapt to. But we are professional footballers. And we also receive help and support wherever we go. I expect the level and quality of football in India to be different, but I will give my everything to ensure I raise my game and deliver on the pitch. And I believe I was born to play football, something I have loved doing. I have been blessed to have the career I have had and been surrounded by a great set of teammates and coach-

es. We have achieved a lot of success, and I hope to contribute more to Chennaiyin in the coming season of the ISL.

On his Chennaiyin FC move: There is no pressure. I only view it as an opportunity. My hard work and football journey have brought me to this situation and I consider myself fortunate for having received this opportunity. I will carry my experience to the pitch and try to help my team in achieving its objectives.

On his objectives for the ISL season: I wish to showcase the full range of my technical abilities and justify coming to India. And as a team player, I want to give my everything to the team's success. I will play wherever the coach wants me to.

On his experience of playing behind closed doors in Tajikistan league: (He represented FK Khujand and they finished runners-up). The experience was surreal. The time we are living in is surreal. But at the same time, life goes on, and it is good that we are able to continue doing what we love. Yes, it was weird to start with, but we have got used to it. I am looking forward to my time in India.

Reds pip Ajax, City win big

Paris, Oct. 22: Bayern Munich began their defence of the Champions League title in ominous fashion by crushing Atletico Madrid 4-0 on Wednesday, while Liverpool and Manchester City also won but Real Madrid suffered a shock defeat. Liverpool shook off the absence of Virgil van Dijk to edge Ajax 1-0 behind closed doors in Amsterdam in Group 'D'.

Van Dijk is set to miss the rest of the season with a knee injury but Jurgen Klopp's side kept a clean sheet and took all three points after Nicolas Tagliafico turned a wayward Sadio Mane shot into his own net on 35 minutes. Madrid, the record 13-time European champions, went down to a 3-2 home loss against Shakhtar Donetsk.

Kingsley Coman put Bayern ahead against Atletico in Group A and later scored a stunning individual effort to wrap up the victory.

THE RESULTS

Bayern Munich 4
(Coman 28, 72, Goretzka 41, Tolisso 66)
Atletico Madrid 0

Real Madrid 2
(Modric 54, Vinicius Junior 59)
Shakhtar Donetsk 3

(Tete 29, Varane 33-og, Solomon 42)

Ajax 0
Liverpool 1
(Tagliafico 35-og)

Manchester City 3
(Sergio Aguero 20-pen, Ilay Gundogan 65, Ferran Torres 73)
FC Porto 1

(Diaz 14)

Inter Milan 2
(Lukaku 49, 90)

Borussia Moenchengladbach 2
(Ramy Bensebaini 63-pen, Jonas Hofmann 84)

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