


DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
NELLORE | MONDAY | 12 OCTOBER 2020

WEATHER



Max: 29.0°C
Min: 26.0°C
RH: 83%
Rainfall: Nil
Forecast: clear.
 Max/Min temp. 29/26°C

COVID-19

COUNT


CASES	DEATHS
(+76,408)	(+1,080)
71,14,102	1,09,127

covid19india.org


STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+1,717)	(+5)
TS: 2,12,063	1,222
(+5,210)	(+30)
AP: 7,55,727	6,224


CASES AROUND THE WORLD



3,76,42,302



DEATHS
10,79,555



COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES
213

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvarti; Dakshinayana

Titthi: Adhika Ashwayuja Bahula Navami till 5.46 pm

Star: Pushyami till 10.14 am (Monday)

Variyam: 9.13 am to 10.49 am

Durmuhurtam: 4.20 pm to 5.07 pm

Rahukalam: 4.30 pm to 6 pm

HILIRI CALENDAR

Safar ul Muzaffar 23, 1442 AH

PRAYERS(SHAHI MASJID)

Fajar: 4.50 am

Zohar: 11.57 pm

Asar: 4.15 pm

Maghrib: 5.56 pm

Isha: 7.05 pm

SUNSET TODAY 5.51 PM

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.00 AM

MOONRISE TOMORROW 1.21 PM

MOONSET TODAY 3.22 AM

COUNTER POINT



They are planning to campaign with film actresses and news anchors!

IN BRIEF

Non-AC trains over 130kmph to be AC

New Delhi: Trains running on identified routes at a speed of 130 kmph or above on the railway network will have only air-conditioned coaches in the near future as part of the Railways' plans to upgrade the network, an official said on Sunday.Stressing that the ticket prices of such trains will be "affordable", railway ministry spokesperson D.J. Narain clarified that it should not be misconstrued that "all non-AC coaches will be made into AC coaches." "AC coaches are a technical necessity wherever the speed is above 130 kmph. Railways is working on a massive upgrade of the network," Narain said.

NATION | 4



Nadda kickstarts BJP campaign in Bihar

WORLD | 5



Joe may end cap on Green card: Indians

SPORTS | 8



Hamilton equals Schumacher record

20th Grand Slam title tie



Rafael Nadal celebrates after beating Novak Djokovic 6-0, 6-2, 7-5 in the French Open men's singles final in Paris on Sunday. The 13th Roland Garros title helps Nadal tie with Roger Federer at 20 Grand Slams. Nadal beat World No. 1 Djokovic who has won 17 Grand Slams so far. ■ **Full report on Page 8** — AFP

People in Delta demand Dasara special trains

VADREVU SRINIVAS I DC
KAKINADA, OCT. 11

Dasara festive season is normally the time when people head home to celebrate with their families. However, due to Covid-19 pandemic that has forced cancellation of several trains on this route, this time around they are a worried lot.

Those from the delta area like Tanuku, Undi, Akiveedu, Bhimavaram and other towns in West Godavari, who are working outside, are unsure of reaching their native

places. Only a few special trains are running on the main route towards V i s a k h a p a t n a m, Chennai, Hyderabad, Tirupati and Bangalore, but these trains do not touch delta area towns.

The railways have announced a special train from Kakinada to Lingampalli on October 25.

But by then, the festivities are almost over.

As many people come to West Godavari during that time, the locals want railway authorities to run special trains via these loop-routes and

ensure train connectivity.

They said that buses are charging exorbitant fares.

"Thousands of passengers travel to other cities and towns from the delta area and they spend Dasara at their home. Unfortunately, the railways has not introduced any special trains through these areas," said Undi Railway Passengers Association president Kommana Nagababu.

■ **Page 3: Railway doubling works underway**

CONG WOMAN PROTESTS 'RAPIST' NOMINEE, GETS HIT

Deoria (UP), Oct. 11: A Congress worker was roughed up by her colleagues at a party meet in Deoria after she alleged that a "rapist" had been given the ticket for the Assembly by-election, prompting the party to order a probe into the incident and expel two members for "indiscipline".

National Commission for Women (NCW) chairperson Rekha Sharma said she has written to UP DGP seeking strict action against the accused. The woman, Tara Yadav, lodged a police complaint against four office-bearers of the party, including the district president, for allegedly beating and molesting her.

As the videos of the ugly scenes at the meeting held on Saturday went viral sparking outrage, the state unit of the Congress termed it as a "political conspiracy" to defame the party.

■ **Report on Page 4**

Vizag beach gets 'blue flag' status

K.M.P. PATNAIK I DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 11

The Rushikonda beach of Visakhapatnam was accorded the Blue Flag tag along with seven other beaches in the country.

Announcing this here on Sunday, tourism minister Muttamsetti Srinivasa Rao said some more beaches in the state would be developed on the same standards to attract domestic and foreign tourists.

The other beaches are Sivarajpur (Gujarat), Ghogla (Diu), Kasarkod and Padubidri (Karnataka), Kappad (Kerala), Golden Beach (Odisha) and R a d h a n a g a r (Andamans).

A committee inspected 13 beaches and shortlisted eight.

The beaches are being developed by the Society for Integrated Coastal Management, an Union environment ministry body working for the management of coastal

● **THE OTHER** beaches which got the 'blue flag' status are Sivarajpur (Gujarat), Ghogla (Diu), Kasarkod and Padubidri (Karnataka), Kappad (Kerala), Golden Beach (Odisha) and Radhanagar (Andamans).

areas, in accordance with the Blue Flag standards.

The works on Rushikonda beach cost ₹7.7 crore.

The beaches should strictly comply with 33 environment and tourism-related conditions, set by the Copenhagen-based Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) in 1985.

In New Delhi, environment minister Prakash Javadekar said India had been awarded the third prize by the jury for international best practices for pollution control in coastal regions.

B. Nagesh say usually children from first to 10th classes are not given mobile phones by their parents. But they had to purchase them and invest in internet connection, so that children could attend online classes. Schools also demanded that monthly fee dues be paid, which turned out to be a huge burden as parents were already struggling to make ends meet because of downturn due to Corona crisis.

■ **Page 3: Internet poor for online classes**

Depression in Bay to cross AP coast tonight

Heavy rains forecast over many places in state today

K.M.P. PATNAIK I DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 11

The low pressure area over the east central and south-east Bay of Bengal concentrated into a depression over Bay of Bengal on Sunday and lay centred about 400 km south-south-east of Visakhapatnam, 450 km southeast of Kakinada and 490 km east-southeast of Narsapur.

It is very likely to intensify further into a deep depression during the next 24 hours and move west-northwest and cross the north Andhra Pradesh coast between Narsapur and Visakhapatnam on Monday evening.

Under its influence, rains are likely in many places in AP, Telangana and Odisha.

Winds reaching up to 50 kmph is likely along and off the coast during this period. Collectors of the coastal districts held emergency meeting and reviewed preparedness. They issued directions to the fishermen not to venture during this period. Local cautionary signal number three kept hoisted at Machilipatnam, N i z a m p a t n a m, Krishnapatnam and Vadarevu ports.



Thick clouds hover over the sky at Ramakrishna Beach due to the impact of the cyclonic storm in Visakhapatnam on Sunday.

— K. MURALIKRISHNA

Cops rescue 2 who fell in canal

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, OCT. 11

Two youth riding a motor-cycle had a miraculous escape when police and fire personnel rescued them from an overflowing canal near the railway under bridge on Pakala-

Damalacheruvu road in Chittoor district during early hours of Sunday.

According to Pakala sub-inspector K. Rajasekhar, the two youth Thulasiram (20) and B. Tharun (20), both hailing from Gunthagadanki village of Pakala mandal, were trav-

elling on the motorbike around 3 am on Sunday. Their bike slipped off the edge of the road and fell into the canal. Luckily, a passerby saw them falling and dialled 100.

■ **Page 2: Bike rider lost control over vehicle**

CBI takes over Hathras probe

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs
NEW DELHI/HATHRAS, OCT. 11

The CBI on Sunday took over the investigation into the alleged gang-rape and murder of a 19-year-old Dalit woman in Uttar Pradesh's Hathras district and registered an FIR under the relevant Indian Penal Code (IPC) sections.

The case was earlier registered at Chandpa Police Station in Hathras on a

complaint by the victim's brother.

Talking to reporters, CBI spokesperson, R.K. Gaur, said, "The complainant had alleged that on September 14, the accused tried to strangle her sister in the millet field. The case has been registered by CBI on the request of Uttar Pradesh government and further notification from government of India".

The 19-year-old woman died of severe assault injuries at Delhi's

Safdarjung Hospital on September 29. She was allegedly gang-raped on September 14 by four upper caste men whom she named in her dying declaration.

Victim's family alleged that the police hurriedly conducted her last rites without their presence or permission, while local police officers said the cremation was carried out as per the wishes of the family. The incident sparked furious protests and

demonstrations against the police and the UP government across the country.

The victim's family members will appear before the Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court on Monday. The court will record the version of the victim's family members in the case.

It had on October 1 asked the woman's parents to come to apprise it of their version of the incident. The hearing is likely to be held in-person.

AP RECOVERIES FROM COVID-19 CROSS 7L-MARK

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs
VIJAYAWADA/NEW DELHI, OCT. 11

The overall number of Covid-19 recoveries in the state crossed the seven lakh mark on Sunday as the caseload touched 7.55 lakh.

The decrease in Covid-19 cases continued on Sunday with the number of positive cases dropping to 5,210 from the earlier average of 10,000 cases per day. East and West Godavari districts remained on top. East Godavari has the highest caseload of 1,06,043 cases and West Godavari 75,000 cases.

More than 75,500 sample tests were conducted in 24 hours ending 9 am on Sunday.

Meanwhile, India recorded less than 1,000 Covid-19 fatalities for the eighth consecutive days on Sunday.

The number of active cases of Coronavirus stayed at less than nine lakh for the third day in a row. With increasing recoveries, India has sustained its leading global position with the maximum recovered cases.

The five top states with the maximum caseload — 61 per cent of the active cases — are also contributing more than half (54.3 per cent) of the total recoveries, the ministry said.

With a total 89,154 people having recuperated in a span of 24 hours, India's Covid-19 recoveries have

Mysore Dasara



A roundabout illuminated ahead of Mysore Dasara Festival, in Mysuru on Sunday.

— PTI

PM rolls out property cards, terms it a 'historical move'

New Delhi, Oct. 11: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday launched the physical distribution of property cards under the 'SVAMITVA' (ownership) scheme via video conferencing, and asserted that it is a "historic move" set to transform rural India.

The move will pave the way for villagers to use property as a financial asset for taking loans and other financial benefits. The PMO has said the launch will enable around one lakh property holders to download their property cards through an SMS

link sent on their mobile phones, and this would be followed by the physical distribution of property cards by respective state governments.

These beneficiaries are from 763 villages across 6 states, including 346 from UP, 221 Haryana, 100 Maharashtra, 44 MP, 50 Uttarakhand and two from Karnataka. (SVAMITVA stands for Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improved Technology in Village Areas. Speaking at the programme, Modi asserting that the government had done more for villages

in the past six years than what was done in the preceding six decades. The Prime Minister flayed those opposing the new farm laws, saying their politics was powered by brokers and middlemen, and accused them of using "foul language" and spreading "lies" in attacking the Centre.

Farmers are not going with those who have opposed the "historic" reforms enacted by his government, Modi said in a reference to the three contentious agriculture laws.

— PTI



IN BRIEF

APPSC GROUP 1
ASPIRANTS ON
TENTERHOOKSMD ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 11

Aspirants appearing for APPSC Group-1 Mains exam, worried over postponement of exams in view of a court case, are seeking that they be conducted as per the original November 2 to 12 schedule. As many as 8,351 candidates are appearing for Mains.

They lamented that the fate of Group-1 Mains examinations has been hanging in the balance for nearly two years as APPSC had postponed it several times due to various reasons, including a court case. They said that the Court did not object to the exam but put conditions that the results should be announced only after the final verdict of the court.

The APPSC issued notification for Group-1 Prelims in December 2018, conducted them in May 2019 and released the final key on November 1, 2019. As there were some mistakes and in keeping with the objections raised by the candidates, APPSC released a revised key. But when mistakes were repeated, several candidates knocked the doors of the High Court seeking justice and HC allowed APPSC to conduct Group-1 Mains on the condition that results should be announced only after the final verdict is delivered.

Candidates like D Siva, N Sarath and others said that according to sources the APPSC was planning to once again postpone the Group-1 Mains exam. They said that they were preparing for the Group-1 exam for years to become deputy collectors, DSPs, district fire officers, deputy superintendent of jails, assistant treasury officers, assistant accounts officers, regional transport officers, assistant prohibition and excise superintendents and mandal parishad development officers.

LAWYERS TAKE
OATH ONLINE FOR
FIRST TIMEDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 11

Bar Council of Andhra Pradesh created a history of sorts by enabling budding lawyers to take oath online on Sunday.

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the second batch of 220 young advocates, who had completed their LLB or BL, could not take their oath physically. As a result, Bar Council of Andhra Pradesh held a webinar to administer them their oath online. Bar council chairman Ganta Rama Rao and secretary B. Padmalatha were among those who participated in the oath-taking ceremony.

Padmalatha said now that the oath has been administered to the young lawyers, they will now be eligible to appear for the All India Bar Examination scheduled to be held on November 8. The last date for submitting applications for the exam is October 17.

ROADS IN EAST
GODAVARI
ARE TERRIBLEVADREVVU SRINIVAS | DC
KAKINADA, OCT. 11

Travelling on roads in East Godavari District have become a nightmare for motorists as well as pedestrians due to the potholes which are causing several accidents.

Travellers find it hellish to drive the vehicles and it takes more time to reach their destinations. In the rainy season, large pools of water collect on the roads, posing a great hazard to passersby as well as drivers. There are so many potholes that drivers have to be extremely careful.

Once a vehicle gets into a pothole, it is impossible to get it out. The Kakinada-Samalkot-Rajahmundry canal road is hell to passersby, vehicle drivers and passengers in cars, buses, lorries and even bikes as the road is hazardous.

The Dwarapudi to Mandapet road is also in bad shape. "We are not feeling like travelling on the plain roads which are worse than ghat roads. Ghat Roads are so better than these roads," said a passenger N. Muralikrishna. He said that when he was travelling in a bus and he thought of jumping from the bus unable to bear the body pain from the jolts. Sometimes, I thought, the bus may have overturned on the road due to the large potholes," he said.

Save Land Save Vizag



Youngsters along with elders busy in painting the canvass on "Save Land Save Vizag" theme during the Vizag Live Canvas Painting Competition organised by the City Speaks at the Palm Tree Lawns on the beach road in Visakhapatnam on Sunday.

— K. MURALIKRISHNA

TD protests on capital issue flop: Botsa

TD leaders got a stay on investigation into the Amaravati land scam fearing their arrest: Satyanarayana

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 11

Municipal minister Botsa Satyanarayana has said protests called by opposition leader N. Chandrababu Naidu against having three capitals for the state have turned out to be a flop show since people of all 13 districts have appreciated the move of Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on decentralisation of administration.

Addressing a press conference in Visakhapatnam on Sunday, the minister said the Chief Minister has a clear vision for developing all regions of the state equally. He maintained that people have not responded to Chandrababu Naidu's call for holding "Amaravati Parirakshana Solidarity Rallies" and protests at all mandals on Sunday morning.

Mr Satyanarayana

alleged Mr Naidu had used Amaravati for insider trading. He is now using the same Amaravati for organising protests by paid artistes, so that he could safeguard the wealth that he and his coterie have amassed. He said TD leaders have gone to court for getting a stay on investigation into the Amaravati land scam fearing their arrest.

Replying to a question, the minister said SIT investigation into the Visakhapatnam land scam will be completed soon. He maintained that the state government is ready to face any inquiry into the issue. He declared that there is no scope for corruption in the YSRC government, as the entire process of government is transparent.

On Mansas Trust, Mr Satyanarayana said it is a private matter of a family



Amaravati Parirakshana Samiti, political leaders protest against the three capitals on BRTS Road in Vijayawada on Sunday.

— C. NARAYANA RAO

and the state government has nothing to do with it. He accused Ashok Gajapathi Raju of launching false propaganda against the government.

The minister stated that the Chief Minister is establishing a medical college and super-specialty hospital in the region for providing medical services to people of tribal villages in Vizianagaram dis-

trict. But the TD leader, who served as Union aviation minister had failed in establishing the Bhogapuram Airport by rejecting the tender of Airports Authority of India.

Mr Satyanarayana said the government is focused on the Visakhapatnam Metro project for which a detailed project report is being prepared.

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 11

The Amaravati Parirakshana Samiti Mahila JAC leaders warned that they are ready to go to jail for the protection of Amaravati as solo Capital of AP and affirmed continuation of agitation till cancellation of three capitals decision by the YSR Congress government.

The pro-Amaravati activists participated in "Amaravati Walk" on the BRTS Road at Vijayawada on Sunday to mark 299th day of Amaravati agitation. Meanwhile, TD national general secretary and MLC Nara Lokesh will visit Amaravati protest

TD: Letter to CJJ
attack on judiciaryDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 11

Telugu Desam has described Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's letter to Chief Justice of India as "an attack on judiciary".

Leader of opposition in AP Legislative Council Yanamala Ramakrishnu on Sunday said it is laughable that CM Jagan, who is accused No. 1 in 12 chargesheets of CBI and five chargesheets of ED, has written a letter to the CJJ. He wanted to know how the Chief Minister could find fault with the High Court for staying the government's decision changing medium of instruction in schools to English when the Right to Education Act insists on mother tongue for imparting education.

Mr Ramakrishnu said, "It is unfortunate that on one hand the Chief Minister makes a mockery of democracy and Constitution while on other hand talks about violations of the same Constitution and democratic institutions. It is indeed audacious and

arrogant that Jagan Mohan Reddy is resorting to mud-slinging against judges. No prime accused in so many cases has displayed such audacity to attack courts in the past. This is undoubtedly a huge setback to judiciary of the nation," the senior TD leader observed.

He pointed out that Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had stated that AP CM had indulged in ₹43,000-crore corruption.

Mr Ramakrishnu claimed that Jagan Reddy's letter to CJJ would carry no weight. He suspected that the letter might be an attempt of CM to browbeat lower judiciary at a time when the CM's illegal assets case is coming up for daily trial in the CBI Special Court.

Former TD minister Bandaru Satyanarayana Murthy and other leaders also objected to CM Jagan writing a letter to CJJ.

Mr Satyanarayana Murthy asked BJP leaders of AP to make central government aware of the corruption being indulged in by YSRC government.

Lokesh to visit Amaravati

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 11

camp on Monday to mark 300 days of Amaravati agitation. He would visit Penumaka, Yerrabalem, Krishnayapalem, Thullur, Dondapadu and Ananthavaram and would express solidarity with the protesting farmers.

The APSMJAC leaders Sunkara Padmasree, Gadde Anuradha and others objecting to the restrictions of police to Amaravati protests, warned that they would call for Jail Bhara protests if the government continues to suppress their voice.

Ms Padmasree claimed that solo Capital will help in development of AP and further Amaravati will turn a game-changer by providing employment to youth. She said that major-

ity of structures were nearing completion in Amaravati but CM Jagan under vindictive politics stalled Amaravati project to shift Capital to Visakhapatnam.

CPM executive committee member Ch. Babu Rao alleged that BJP had colluded with YSR Congress government in three capitals and further alleged that YSRC government was trying to create differences among people of three regions in the name of three Capitals. He said that there is no need of constructing Amaravati following the Singapore model and further three Capitals of South Africa model and demanded to make Amaravati as "People's Capital".

People turn
to Sun God to
cure Covid-19D SIVA RAMI REDDI | DC
KURNOOL, OCT. 11

The medieval sun temple in Nandikotkur said to have been built by Chola king, Siri Singa Rayalu, in the 13th century, has now become a healing temple with a multitude of devotees turning to it to find a cure to the dreaded Covid-19.

Located on the fringes of Nallamala, this temple is a mainstay for thousands of devotees who trudge on foot to reach Shiva's abode at Srisailem. It was renovated in 1996 by Sri Mallikarjuna Rao. During ratha saptami, the rays of the sun fall on the feet of Suryanarayana deva. Many people from the different parts of the country flock to the temple to observe this great miracle. The sun god here is also called as the god of health.

Srinivasa Kidambi, a devotee, said that in the 13th century the Kakatiya emperor, Prathapa Rudra Deva, gifted the Nandikotkur region to Sirisingadeva who was the then army chief of the Kakaatiya empire. This region came to be called Navanandikotkur and later on it took the name of Nandikotkur. Sirisi-ngadeva kept his relatives and friends, Atmakur, Parum-anchala, Lingapuram, Byrapuram and Beeravolu as guardians of the place.

In the course of time, the Suryanarayana idol was damaged. The elders of the village formed a committee to re-structure

Since 1950, daily prayers and rituals are performed till today. During ratha saptami, the rays of the sun fall on the feet of Suryanarayana.

the idol. On the walls of the temple, we find inscriptions and writings by Chalukya and the Kakatiyas.

To the right side of the Suryanarayana temple, we find goddess Sri Bramarambika and the Mallikarjuna Swamy temples. In this temple, idols of goddesses Chayadeva and Ushadeva have been installed. These temples are constructed according to Kakatiya architecture with the consent of Sri Prathaparudradeva, the empire of the Kakatiyas. Navananda stupas were installed, following the Shiva tradition.

The area of the temple occupies 10 acres and a huge wall is constructed for the protection of the temple; The idol has a shrine and in the centre is a koneru (a stone-faced tank with steps for bathing).

Chittur Suresh Kumar, temple priest, said that people from different places of the country visit this for the blessings of Suryanarayana.

He said that since 1950, daily prayers and rituals are performed till today. During ratha saptami, the rays of the sun fall on the feet of Suryanarayana. Many people from the different parts come to observe this great miracle.

Depression in Bay leads to heavy rains

VADREVVU SRINIVAS | DC
KAKINADA, OCT. 11

The depression in Bay of Bengal is likely to intensify in the next 48 hours and cross the coast between Visakhapatnam and Narasapuram with 55km to 75 kms gales and thunder and lightning.

The State Disaster Management Commissioner K. Kanna Babu said that on Monday moderate to heavy rains are likely in Coastal Andhra and in North Andhra on Tuesday.

He asked fishermen not to venture into the sea. He said that the entire district administration has been put on alert.

Meanwhile, according to an official release, huge gales and moderate to heavy rains are likely to be experienced in Kakinada, Yanam and Narsapuram coasts in the next two days.

Low pressure area over east central and adjoining south east Bay of Bengal concentrated into a depression over West Central Bay of Bengal and lay centred at 5.30 am on Sunday near latitude 13.3 degrees North and longitude 86.5 degrees East about 430 kilometres South-South East of Visakhapatnam, 490 kilometres South East of Kakinada and 520 Kms East-South East of Narsapur. It is very likely to intensify further into a deep depression during the next 24 hours. It is very likely to move West-North West wards and cross north Andhra Pradesh coast between Narsapur and Visakhapatnam Monday night

On Sunday, East and West Godavari districts experienced heavy rains from morning along with thunder and lightning. The low-lying areas were

Control rooms to monitor rains in Krishna

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 11

With the Meteorological Department issuing a warning of heavy to very heavy rains, Krishna district administration has opened six control rooms to help people who may face emergency situations.

Krishna district collector A. MD. Intiaz pointed out that heavy to very heavy rains have been predicted until Tuesday. Officials have been asked to remain alert and keep tabs on all low-lying villages in various mandals of the district.

Contact numbers and locations of the control rooms are: Machilipatnam – 08672-252572, Vijayawada Collectorate – 0866-247805, Vijayawada Sub-Collector Office – 0866-2574454, Nuzvid Sub-Collector Office – 08656-232717, Machilipatnam RDO Office – 08672-252486 and Gudivada RDO Office –

NAGESWARA RAO
BALLEDA | DC
KADAPA, OCT. 11

Kadapa district has been receiving heavy rains since Saturday night due to low pressure in the Bay of Bengal.

Heavy downpour is being witnessed in entire Kadapa city, which has led to floods in several areas of the district headquarters.

RTC bus stand road, Court road, Ambedkar junction, Apsara circle, Mrityunjaya Kunta, Bhagyanagar colony, Nakash street, Fakir Palle and several other areas of

08674-243697.

Mr Intiaz has asked people to call their nearest control room for seeking any help. He said Vijayawada and Nuzvid sub-collectors, apart from

Heavy downpour is being witnessed in entire Kadapa city, which has led to floods in several areas of the district headquarters.

Drains overflowing onto roads are posing a health hazard for people.

The city are submerged with rain water. Motorists are facing severe difficulties as roads are knee deep under water.

Yerra Cheruvu in Mydukur has got filled to the brim with rain water. All rivulets and canals are

overflowing. All low level areas in Badvel have got submerged.

Drains overflowing onto roads are posing a health hazard for people.

All revenue divisions in the district have witnessed heavy rains including Jammalamadugu, Rajampet and Kadapa. Gandhi Vanka has caused floods in Gangarapuvandlapalli, Mahadevpalli and Gollamitla villages in Chakrayapet mandal.

Chinnamandem mandal reported the highest rainfall of 13.5 centimetres in Kadapa district.

The collector has ordered evacuation of people living in mud houses and low-lying areas. Fishermen have been asked not to venture into the sea for fishing.

BIKE RIDER LOST CONTROL OVER
VEHICLE AND FELL INTO THE CANAL

FROM PAGE 1

SI Rajasekhara said, "Due to continuous rain for the past two days, the local canal has been overflowing in Pakala mandal. The bike rider lost control and fell into the canal along with the pillion rider. While their bike got washed off, they held on to a rock. On receiving information, police rushed to the spot along with firemen. After a few minutes of searching, they spotted the two youth and rescued

After a few minutes of searching, police spotted the two youth and rescued them with the help of ropes."

Chittoor superintendent of police S. Senthil Kumar appreciated Pakala SI, his team and fire personnel for their timely action in rescuing Thulasiram and Tharun. Both work for a private factory near the mandal headquarters.

OTHER STORIES

Youth drowns in Bay of Bengal

Nellore: A youth drowned in the beach near Thummalapenta village in Kavali mandal, SPSR Nellore district, on Sunday. According to the locals, the youth, identified as Murali Lal, came to the beach, along with his friend, Ramasethu, this morning for swimming. The duo have been working in the construction sector in Kavali. After venturing into the water for a swim, they got carried away by a wave. A fisherman, who witnessed the youth, raised an alarm and alerted the marine police. The police could rescue Ramasethu but Murali Lal could not be found. A police constable, Malayadi, and Home Guards Ramesh and Samuel, took part in the operation. The trio, along with the locals, launched a search for Murali Lal.

Minister promises help to pvt schools

Nellore: Water resources minister Dr P. Anilkumar Yadav promised to sort out the problems of private school managements when the members of their association poured out their woes before the minister in Nellore on Sunday. After hearing to the problems, the minister called up education minister Adimulapu Suresh and briefed him about their troubles. He also spoke to the DEO, Nellore, and asked him to look into the issues. Andhra Pradesh Private Schools Association office-bearers Chatla Narasimha Rao and Kartham Pratap Reddy thanked Dr Anil Kumar and Adimulapu Suresh for their response.

Kadapa NGOs elect new body

Kadapa: A new governing body was elected for Kadapa NGOs Association on Sunday. The polls were monitored by MLC Vennapusa Gopal Reddy. The president and general secretary of the Association were unanimously elected under the chairmanship of AP Employees Federation Venkatram Reddy. M. Ramesh Kumar was elected as the new president and Subba Reddy as the general secretary. The newly elected members promised to try to resolve all the pending issues related to the employees.

Pleasure trip turns tragic as 2 drown

Tirupati: A weekend pleasure trip turned tragic for a group of students as two of them drowned in a local pond at Durgam Gattu, near Chandragiri Fort in Chittoor district. The bodies of the victims were retrieved by the Chandragiri police early on Sunday. According to Chandragiri SI Rama Krishna, the two victims Srirangam Srinivas, 27, and Anudeep, 23, along with one Nithin, 17, all hailing from various parts of Tirupati, went to the pond near the Chandragiri Fort for a swim on Saturday afternoon. The boys thought the water wouldn't be too deep and got inside the water body, but were stranded. Nithin managed to come out of the pond but Srinivas and Anudeep drowned.

19 KGBVs TO BE UPGRADED AS JUNIOR COLLEGES

**NAGESWARA RAO
BALLEDA I DC
KADAPA, OCT. 11**

Authorities are taking steps to upgrade all Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs) across the district to the level of junior colleges. These institutions were started to educate poor, marginalized and weaker sections of the girls who have gone from high school to intermediate level. While 29 KGBVs are operating across the district, junior intermediate had already started in 10 places last year. The rest of the 19 will also launch this year. Currently, 5,160 students are studying in KGBVs across the district. Each centre will be allocated 40 seats for the newly formed colleges. Through these 19 KGBVs, another 760 students will have the opportunity to pursue additional intermediate education. B. Koduru, B. Matham, Chakrayapeta, Khajipeta, Mydukuru, Lakkireddipalli, Pendimurri, Obulavaripalle and Valluru Kasturba Gandhi Vidyalayas in the district will start the BPC group in intermediate from this year. The government has permitted the MPC group in Penagaluru, Atluru, Chapadu, Chinnamandem, Duvvur, Galiveedu, Pullampeta, Rayachoti, Simhadripuram and Kashinayana KGBVs. Dr Ambavaram Prabhakara Reddy, District Project Officer, Samagra Siksha Abhiyan, said that the government was providing all kinds of facilities to students in KGBVs.

Corona recovery rate in AP increases to 93.06%

30 new Covid-19 deaths registered in past 24 hours in state

**DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 11**

Decrease in Corona positive cases in Andhra Pradesh has continued on Sunday with the number of positive cases dropping to 5,210 from an earlier average of 10,000 cases per day. East and West Godavari districts have remained on top of the state in number of Covid-19 positive cases registered.

East Godavari has the highest 1,06,043 cases while West Godavari is in the second place with total 75,000 cases. The number of patients discharged after recovery during the last 24 hours is 5,509.

The total number of Corona positive cases in the state has reached 7,55,727 on Sunday. The figure includes 7,03,208 patients who have recovered, 6,224 are active cases while 6,159 patients have died. With recoveries increasing, the recovery rate has reached 93.06 per cent.

The state has registered 30 new Covid-19 deaths in the past 24 hours. Highest number of eight deaths have been registered in Prakasam district, followed by four deaths in Chittoor district, three each in East Godavari, Guntur, Kadapa and Visakhapatnam districts, two each in Anantapur and Krishna districts, and one each in Srikakulam and West



A boy not agreeing for Swab Test at IGMC Stadium in Vijayawada on Sunday. —DC

Godavari districts.

As many as 75,517 Coronavirus tests have been conducted in the past 24 hours, with 5,210 cases turning out to be virus positive. With this, AP has tested a total 65,69,616 samples, thereby topping the country in the number of Covid-19 tests conducted.

The single day highest number of 786 Corona positive cases has been registered in West Godavari district in the past 24-hours, increasing the total to 75,000 in which 6,035 are active cases.

The second highest number of 713 cases has been registered in Chittoor district, increasing the total to 70,322 in which 5,828 are active cases. East Godavari dis-

trict is in the third place, registering 701 new positive cases, increasing total positive cases to 1,06,043 in which 7845 are active cases.

Krishna district has registered 462 new Corona positive cases in the past 24 hours, increasing the total positive cases to 31,950 in which 2,877 are active cases. 431 new cases have been registered in Guntur district, increasing the total positive cases to 59,842 in which 4,933 are active cases. 418 new cases have been registered in Kadapa district, increasing the total positive cases to 48,019 in which 3,455 are active cases.

In Prakasam district, 362 new Corona positive cases have been in the past 24 hours, increasing

the total positive cases to 54,388 in which 4,046 are active cases. 311 new cases have been registered in Anantapur district, taking the total positive cases to 60,947 in which 1,773 are active cases. 288 new cases have been registered in Nellore district, taking the total positive cases to 56,678 in which 1,695 are active cases. 212 new cases have been registered in Srikakulam district, increasing the total positive cases to 41,698 in which 1,695 are active cases.

Visakhapatnam district has registered 190 new Corona positive cases in the past 24 hours, taking the total positive cases to 52,516 in which 2,694 are active cases. 175 new cases have been registered in Kurnool district, increasing the total positive cases to 58,105 in which 1,465 are active cases.

The least number of 161 new Corona positive cases in the past 24 hours have been registered in Vizianagaram district, increasing the total positive cases to 37,324 in which 1,920 are active cases. Seven new containment zones have been announced in Krishna district due to detection of new cases on Sunday. Krishna district collector A. Md. Imtiaz disclosed that the new containment areas are Varahapatnam, Puligadda, Chandrupatla, Kanukollu, Kommuru, Gowrisankuram and Seetannapalli.

RLY DOUBLING WORKS UNDERWAY

From page 1

He has written to the Ministry of Railways and General Manager of South Central Railways urging them to ensure that they introduce Dasara specials that touch the delta area to Hyderabad, Visakhapatnam, Bengaluru, Chennai and Tirupati. He pointed out that Circar Express, Seshadri Express, Cocanada Express and a few other trains used to run on this route.

Meanwhile, Railway line doubling works are underway through Bhimavaram-Vijayawada-Gudivada-Vijayawada. Already the 40-kilometre doubling works between Bhimavaram and Moturu near Gudivada have commenced from March 1.

According to railway sources, the doubling works of Moturu-Uppuluru near Vijayawada are nearing completion. Inspection by the Commissioner of Railway Safety would be completed by October 21 and the special trains can run from the next day, said Nagababu.

TD DEMANDS GOVT TO DROP CAPITAL SHIFT

**DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, OCT. 11**

TD cadres led by former Mayor and TD Nellore Parliament Segment in-charge S.K. Abdul Aziz and former NUDA chairman Kotamreddy Srinivasulu Reddy took out a rally demanding the government to drop the proposal to shift the capital from Amaravati on Sunday.

The TD leaders expressed solidarity with the people of Amaravati region who have been protesting against the move to shift the capital from the last 300 days.

Mr Aziz rebuked CM while alleging that he is insulting the farmers of Amaravati region though they have sacrificed their lands for new capital.

Mr Srinivasulu Reddy said that TDP would go to any extent to ensure that Amaravati remains as the capital of Andhra Pradesh.

POOR INTERNET HAMPERS ONLINE CLASSES

From page 1

Internet connectivity on city outskirts, semi-urban areas, towns and rural areas was very poor, which also affected conduct of online classes. This is why parents Narayana and Nagesh say they are eagerly waiting for schools to reopen, so that their kids could have proper education.

Another parent Sk. Nagur said he had purchased a tablet for his son to take online classes. But the device turned out to be a 'devil' as the child got addicted to games rather than studies. He said every family had been forced to spend ₹10,000-20,000 for purchasing mid-level gadgets for study purposes. Nagur lamented that children are attending online classes for 3 to 5 hours, but playing games on their gadgets for 10-12 hours, which has had an impact on their sleep and health. He said physical classes are better than online ones.

Majority of parents would send their children to schools if the government announced reopening of educational institutions in the coming days, Mr Nagur added.

Managements of various schools point out that the government had earlier decided to reopen schools from October 2, but later backed out.

They hope schools would at least open from November 1, as there has been a decrease in number of Corona cases in the state.

Large pushkaram crowds expected at Sangameshwaram

**D. SIVA RAMI REDDI DC
KURNOOL OCT. 11**

Large crowds are expected at the seven-river confluence Sangameshwaram for the Tungabhadra Pushkarams, whose calendar coincides with Karthika Masam, and will be held from November 20 to December 1.

Sangameshwaram will be one of the main ghats for Tungabhadra Pushkarams. The administration is working on improving facilities. Since it is Shai-va kshetram, Karthika Masam pilgrims prefer to offer prayers at Sangameshwaram, officials said.

Temple priest Telakapalli Raghunatha Sarma said that Tungabhadra has five rivers in it when it enters Kurnool district, Bhavanasi, Krishna River, and five rivers that merge into it beforehand, including Veni, Tunga, Bhadra, Bheemarathi, and Malapaharini to give it a preeminence and people believe it has sacred relevance, he said.

The Sangameswara temple is located near Muchumarri at the confluence of the Krishna and Bhavanasi rivers, in the foreshore of the Srisaillam reservoir, where it is submerged for part of the time. It surfaces when the water level recedes to a sufficient degree.

● **THE temple's wooden Lingam, Sangameshwaram, is believed to have been installed by Dharmaraja, the eldest of the Pandavas, after their visit to Srisaillam Mallikarjuna temple**

Raghunatha Sarma said that the temple was first submerged after the Srisaillam Dam was constructed in 1981, and surfaced in 2003. The temple's wooden Lingam, Sangameshwaram, is believed to have been installed by Dharmaraja, the eldest of the Pandavas, after their visit to Srisaillam Mallikarjuna temple.

Atmakur DSP Venkata Rao said that since a large number of pilgrims are expected at this spot, basic infrastructure is being worked out. Roads are being laid and water, public convenience systems, and other essentials are being carried out, he said. The Roads and Buildings department with a ₹120 crore budget is expediting works and improving roads leading to all 21 Pushkar ghats. Mantralayam and Kurnool are the other two Pushkara ghats.

IIT-T conducts online refresher training to APSHCL engineers

**AVINASH P.
SUBRAMANYAM I DC
TIRUPATI, OCT. 11**

The four-day refresher training program conducted online to the engineers of APSHCL (AP State Housing Corporation Limited) by the IIT Tirupati has concluded on Sunday. The programme has been undertaken as a part of the institute outreach activity for capacity building and skill development that can be helpful for the APSHCL to achieve quality construction in various housing projects.

A series of lectures were also delivered by the faculty members of the civil and environmental engineering

department of IIT Tirupati in the wide areas of RCC design for conventional as well as seismic loading, quality control tests for cement, steel, and concrete, soil exploration and testing techniques and foundation design.

Also, the knowledge of the latest developments and techniques for fast track construction and sustainability are disseminated through online lectures—over 1000 engineers, including 13 project directors, 42 EEs, 175 Dy. EEs, and more than 800 AEs and engineering assistants have attended the training program.

Ajay Jain, principal secretary to government, who presided over the inaugural

programme, said that the A.P. government's housing project (Navaratnalu Pedalandariki illu) for construction of 30 lakh houses would be taken up with quality materials taking into consideration energy efficiency and safety measures.

Director of IIT Tirupati Prof K.N. Satyanarayana expressed the need for ensuring quality construction for the poor and delivered lectures to the engineers covering the topics on quality control and safety practices in construction projects. Managing Director of APSHCL, Mr G.S. Naveen Kumar and Ch. Mallikharjun Rao, Chief Engineer, APSHCL, also spoke on the occasion.

Brahmotsavams: TTD top brass review arrangements

**DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, OCT. 11**

With the Navaratri Brahmotsavams of Lord Venkateswara in Tirumala fast approaching, TTD EO Dr K.S. Jawahar Reddy, along with Additional EO A.V. Dharma Reddy and CVSO Gopinath Jatti, reviewed the arrangements being done for the event. The trio inspected the galleries at the four mada streets in Tirumala on Sunday.

They also visited the Vahana Mandapam from

where the procession of Vahana Sevas commence. The EO examined the markings made to help the devotees maintain physical distance in the galleries and at the entry, exit points. He made suggestions on the arrangements in galleries.

On the other hand, Anantapur Range DIG Kranti Rana Tata and Tirupati Urban district SP Avula Ramesh Reddy also reviewed the security arrangements for the nine-day event scheduled to begin from October 15. The DIG informed the TTD top

brass that police department had made elaborate security arrangements for the annual fete. This apart, the police department is also geared up for the bandobust to be provided to VVIPs during the festival time. The DIG said that they would ensure that the Covid-19 protocols were followed during the nine-day event and made it clear that only devotees having darshan tickets will be allowed to Tirumala and even into the galleries to witness the processions of Vahana Sevas.

EDUCATION CAN EMPOWER WOMEN

**DC CORRESPONDENT
KADAPA, OCT. 11**

District in-charge Collector Midde Gowthami said that if girls were educated, women's empowerment in the country would be possible. She, along with Joint Collector Saikant Verma, was the chief guests at the celebrations held on Sunday on the occasion of International Girls' Day at the Collectorate. Sabha Bhavan under the auspices of the District Women and Child Welfare Department. The in-charge collector, Gowthami, said that the country is moving forward with the care of girls and the development of girls' education. There is still a lot of change that should come in the society for women empowerment.

Man kills wife after seeing fake video

**PATHRI
RAJASEKHAR I DC
NELLORE, OCT. 11**

Assuming that a nude couple in a video that he received through WhatsApp is his wife and her lover, a man axed his spouse to death at 4th Mile in Navalac Garden at Nellore Rural mandal.

He stabbed another woman to death, suspecting that she was responsible for the affair between his wife and another man.

The murders took place on October 9 but the incident came to light on Sunday after some relatives alerted the police when they found the bodies of the two women in the house. According to Harinath Reddy, deputy superin-

tendent of police, Nellore Rural, the accused identified as Kumari Nageswar Rao, 48, is a native of Pattapupalem in Vidavalur mandal of SPSR Nellore district.

He took a house for monthly rent of ₹8,000 in Nellore and shifted his family, allegedly suspecting his wife a few months back. Ge was engaged in arranging earthmoving machines for hire. There is no evidence to confirm the woman in the footage is his wife, Nirmalamma, 43, police said.

Nageswar Rao had also summoned a relative, Rangamangari Venkata Ratnamma, 42, and stabbed her to death, alleging that she supported his wife to have an affair with another

man even while the woman pleaded ignorance.

Police found the body of Nirmalamma on the bed and Ratnamma in the hall. DSP Harinath Reddy said they have formed a team to track down the accused.

Expressing confidence that they would nabbing the offender shortly, Harinath Reddy said the accused eliminated his wife based on the video though there is no resemblance to the deceased woman.

The DSP said that Nageswar Rao had two daughters, who are married, from his first wife and a daughter, studying Intermediate, with Nirmalamma. He said Ratnamma was also survived by two sons.

people are suspected to be involved in committing the crime.

The deceased has been identified as V. Nayakamma alias Nayak, a farmer who is also very calm by nature.

The Kotturu police said that the villagers had a

suspicion that Nayakamma was practising witchcraft and was responsible for the death of 30-year-old Ramesh Babu in the same village.

However, Ramesh's wife said that nobody was responsible for her husband's death.

45-YR-OLD MAN KILLED FOR 'PRACTISING WITCHCRAFT'

**DC CORRESPONDENT
SRIKAKULAM, OCT. 11**

The villagers of Pulagada in Kotturu mandal, Srikakulam district, killed a 45-year-old tribal and later, burnt the body on Saturday, suspecting him to be practising witchcraft. Over 15

SHORT TAKES

CONG ALLEGES K'TAKA CM'S KIN HAND IN SCAM

New Delhi, Oct. 11: The Congress on Sunday attacked the BJP over reported allegations of corruption against some family members of Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa in connection with a housing project and demanded a time-bound judicial probe into the matter.

When Leader of Opposition Siddaramaiah had made the allegations against the Chief Minister in the Karnataka Assembly last month, Yediyurappa had dismissed them as "baseless" and challenged the Congress leader to prove the charges.

Citing media reports, Congress spokesperson Abhishek Singhvi on Sunday alleged that the BJP government in Karnataka is "engulfed in the clutches of corruption with dented, tainted leaders ruling the roost".

"If the Chief Minister has the slightest sense of shame, he must resign or be sacked," Singhvi said.

He also questioned the "silence" of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP president J.P. Nadda over the reported allegations of corruption and kickbacks against the son, son-in-law, and grandson of Yediyurappa.

The matter relates to a ₹662-crore construction of an apartment project in Bengaluru, Singhvi said.

WOMAN DIES AFTER GIVING BIRTH TO 16TH CHILD IN MP

Damoh (MP), Oct. 11: A 45-year-old woman gave birth to her 16th child in Madhya Pradesh's Damoh district, but both of them died soon afterwards, a local health worker said on Sunday.

The woman, Sukhrani Ahirwar from Padajhir village in the district, delivered a baby boy at home on Saturday, Kallo Bai Vishwakarma, an Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) under the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), said.

"However, the condition of the woman and her newborn turned critical and they were rushed to a primary health centre, where both of them were pronounced dead," she added.

According to her, Ahirwar had given birth to 15 children earlier, however, the family had lost seven of them. District Chief Medical and Health Officer Dr Sanjeeta Trivedi confirmed the incident.

INDIA, CHINA CORPS COMMANDERS' TALKS TODAY

PAWAN BALI | DC
NEW DELHI, OCT. 11

Indian and Chinese Corps Commanders are scheduled to hold the 7th round of military talks on Monday where India will again press China to disengage from all friction points in Ladakh and restore the status quo of April 2020.

Defence minister Rajnath Singh, foreign affairs minister S. Jaishankar, national security advisor Ajit Doval and Army Chief General M.M. Naravane among others are part of this crucial group.

Last week, the high-powered China Study Group had discussed the agenda for the 7th round of Corps Commanders level meeting on the five month old stand-off between the two armies in eastern Ladakh.

PAK VIOLATES CEASEFIRE IN POONCH, RAJOURI

Jammu, Oct. 11: Pakistani troops on Sunday shelled mortars in three sectors along the Line of Control in Poonch and Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir, a defence spokesperson said. The shelling from across the border in Degwar and Khari Karmara sectors in Poonch and Rajouri's Sunderbani drew a befitting retaliation by the Indian Army, he said, adding that there was no immediate report of any casualty. Pakistan initiated unprovoked ceasefire violation by firing with small arms and intense shelling with mortars in Degwar sector around 6.15 pm. It was followed by firing and artillery shelling in Khari Karmara at 6.40 pm, the spokesperson said. At 6.45 pm, Pakistani troops targeted forward areas along the LoC in Sunderbani sector of Rajouri, he said.

Nadda sounds poll bugle in Bihar with Gaya public rally

First public meeting by political party under the shadow of Covid pandemic

NAYEAR AZAD | DC
PATNA, OCT. 11

BJP chief J.P. Nadda kick-started the NDA's political campaign in Bihar by addressing a public rally at the historic Gandhi Maidan in Gaya on Sunday. He listed the works done by the NDA government at the Centre and praised Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's policies for the development of Bihar.

He also used the occasion to lash out at the Opposition parties, especially the Congress and the RJD, for misleading people and doing caste and religion-based politics.

"Modi believes in showing work to the people but the Congress has been doing politics based on caste and religion for political gains. Remember 'Modi hai to Mumkin hai' and 'Nitish hai to Pradesh agay badhega' (Modi makes it possible and under the leadership of Nitish Kumar the state will progress). The future of India is secure in the hands of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and it is important that we should support Nitish Kumar for the progress of Bihar," Nadda said.

Nadda appreciated the Nitish Kumar-led state government for extending help to people during Covid-19 pandemic.

He said, "The Nitish Kumar government took care of the people. Financial assistance was also provided by the state government to those who were stuck outside Bihar."

This was the first public meeting to be organised by a political party under the



BJP national president J.P. Nadda with party leaders and NDA candidates during the first election rally at Gandhi Maidan in Gaya on Sunday.

Congress forms committees, Surjewala to head key panel

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 11

The Congress will hold a meeting of its Central Election Committee on Monday where the last of the candidates to the 70 seats on which it is contesting in the Bihar Assembly polls would be finalised.

The party also formed various panels for the upcoming Assembly polls with party general secretary Randeep Surjewala named chairman of the election management and coordination committee.

The 14-member election

management and coordination committee includes senior leaders like Meira Kumar, Tariq Anwar, Shatrughan Sinha, Kirti Azad, Shakeel Ahmed and Sanjay Nirupam while Mohan Prakash would be the convener of the panel.

Elections to the 243-member Bihar Assembly will be held in three phases from October 28 to November 7. The counting would take place on November 10.

On Sunday, Congress president Sonia Gandhi also approved the setting up of the publicity com-

mittee, media coordination committee, public meeting and logistics committee, legal committee and office management committee for the Bihar elections, a party statement said. Congress spokesperson Pawan Khara will head the media coordination committee of which Prem Chand Mishra and Rajesh Rathor would be convener and co-convener respectively. While Subodh Kumar has been appointed the convener of the publicity committee, Jaeya Mishra was named the co-convener of the panel.

national general secretary Bhupendra Yadav.

From the state, Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi, Union ministers Nityanand Rai, Giriraj Singh Ashwini

NITISH TO HIT CAMPAIGN TRAIL FROM TODAY

Patna, Oct. 11: Bihar Chief Minister and JD(U) president Nitish Kumar will hit the campaign trail from Monday, when he will address people of several Assembly segments, spread across half a dozen districts that go to polls in the first phase of elections, a top leader of the ruling party said.

Sanjay Kumar Jha, JD(U) national general secretary and a key aide of the Chief Minister, said he will be addressing people in a total of 35 Assembly constituencies over the next couple of days.

"The campaign will be through virtual mode on October 12 and 13. From October 14, he is likely to fly to different parts to address election meetings while remaining physically present," Jha said.

He said the virtual campaign will commence on Monday evening, connecting the CM to 11 Assembly segments of six districts. This will be followed by addresses to 11 Assembly segments of five districts on Tuesday morning and another 13 constituencies of four districts in the evening.

— PTI

Hathras case: MP doctor who stirred row served notice

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC
BHOPAL, OCT. 11

An assistant professor of a government medical college in Madhya Pradesh has landed in a soup for staying with family of the alleged gangrape victim of Hathras in Uttar Pradesh recently by purportedly identifying her as their kin, with the authorities concerned serving a show cause notice to her for her conduct.

Dr Rajkumari Bansal, assistant professor of forensic science department in Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose medical college in Jabalpur, has been served a notice seeking an explanation for her conduct by the college authorities, according to dean of the college Dr P.K. Kasar.

It was not desirable for a public servant to take part in such movements and the matter was taken seriously by the authorities, he added.

Dr Bansal was seen among the family members of the 19-year-old victim, who died in hospital on September 29 during treatment, and replying to the visiting media persons on behalf of the family.

The special investigation team (SIT) constituted by Uttar Pradesh police to probe the incident has revealed her identity.

However, she was not yet contacted by the SIT so far for investigation into the matter. Dr Bansal, however, denied that she had ever given her identity as sister-in-law of the victim as was

being reported in a section of the media.

"I have never given my identity as the victim's kin. It was the media which described me as the victim's sister-in-law. I had never concealed my identity before the media", she told reporters on Sunday.

Dr Bansal said she was moved by the incident and decided to visit the victim's family on humanitarian grounds.

She met the victim's family on October 4 and stayed with them till October 6 following their request.

She chose to reply to questions by the media persons since the victim's family requested her to talk to them on their behalf.

She said she has donated her one month's salary to the victim's family. She also refuted the allegations that she had links with the Maoists and the Bhim Army. "I do not know how such allegations emerged and from where", she said.

Meanwhile, Congress MP and AICC legal cell chairman Vivek Tankha issued a veiled warning to the Madhya Pradesh government not to harass her to appease the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

"I appeal to the Madhya Pradesh government not to harass Dr Rajkumari Bansal to appease the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister. There are many people like her in the society who get emotionally involved in incidents such as Hathras", Tankha tweeted.

THACKERAY SHIFTS METRO CAR SHED FROM AAREY

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC
MUMBAI, OCT. 11

In a major decision, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray has announced that the metro car shed project at Aarey Colony has been shifted to Kanjurmarg in Mumbai.

"I had opposed the metro car shed at Aarey. The project will now be relocated to Kanjurmarg. The plot belongs to the government and it will be available at zero cost. No cost will be incurred for the purpose," Thackeray said in a webcast on Sunday.

Despite stiff Opposition from the Shiv Sena and environmentalists, the earlier Devendra Fadnavis-led government had decided to build a metro car shed at Aarey Colony, which is called the green lungs of Mumbai city. The citizens and green activists had protested the project citing the felling of trees and perceived damage to the environment in Aarey due to the project.

Spread over 2000 acres, the Aarey Colony is one of the few green spaces left in Mumbai. The Maharashtra government, on September 3, had declared 600 acre of Aarey land as a reserve forest.

"The government has now revised the forest area to 800 acre. Biodiversity in Aarey needs to be to conserved and protected. Nowhere is there an 800-acre jungle in an urban set up. Mumbai has a natural forest cover. There will be no infringement on rights of tribals in the Aarey forest," said the CM.

Thackeray earlier had also directed the state home department to withdraw cases registered against the protestors last year for opposing the felling of trees at Aarey Colony.

The Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Limited (MMRCL) had chopped more than 2,600 trees at Aarey colony on October 25 last year to construct a car shed for the ₹3200 crore underground Colaba-Bandra-Seez Metro corridor.

— PTI



People through a market at New Market area in Kolkata on Sunday for shopping ahead of the upcoming Durga Puja festival amid the Coronavirus pandemic.

Centre wary as winter, festivals approach

SANJAY KAW | DC
NEW DELHI, OCT. 11

Union health minister Harsh Vardhan urged people to stay away from large congregations and diligently follow Covid-19 guidelines during the upcoming festive season, saying no religion or God asks people to celebrate ostentatiously.

Requesting people to celebrate the approaching festivals at home with their loved ones instead of going out to fairs and pan-

dals, he said fighting against Covid-19 is everyone's foremost dharma and as the health minister it is his dharma to mitigate the virus and prevent deaths at any cost.

"Extraordinary circumstances must draw extraordinary responses. No religion or God says that you have to celebrate in an ostentatious way, that you have to visit pandals and temples and mosques to pray," Vardhan underlined.

During the fifth episode

of 'Sunday Samvaad', the health minister's virtual interaction with people on social media, Vardhan discussed the possibility of increased Coronavirus transmission during the coming winter season as transmission of respiratory viruses is known to increase during the colder weather.

"These viruses are known to thrive better in the cold weather and low humidity conditions. In view of these, it would not be wrong to assume that

the winter season may see increased rates of transmission of the Coronavirus in the Indian context too," he noted.

He stressed that if people congregate in large numbers to celebrate festivals, "we may be heading for big trouble".

Meanwhile, the number of Coronavirus cases in India increased to 7,053,806 on Sunday after the country recorded 74,383 infections in the last 24 hours. The death toll due to the deadly virus

reached 1,08,334 with 918 fresh fatalities being reported in the said period.

India is expected to become the pandemic's worst-hit country in the coming weeks, surpassing the United States, where more than 77 lakh infections have been reported.

As of now, India is the second worst-hit nation in terms of Covid-19 cases after the US and at the third spot in terms of fatalities globally after the US and Brazil.

ASSEMBLY | BYPOLLS

Party orders probe into incident, expels two members for indiscipline

Cong woman protests 'rapist' nominee, thrashed

Deoria (UP), Oct. 11: A Congress worker was roughed up by her colleagues at a party meet in Deoria after she alleged that a "rapist" had been given the ticket for the Assembly by-election, prompting the party to order a probe into the incident and expel two members for "indiscipline".

National Commission for Women (NCW) chairperson Rekha Sharma said she has written to Uttar

Pradesh director general of police seeking strict action against the accused.

The woman, Tara Yadav, lodged a police complaint against four office-bearers of the party, including the district president, for allegedly beating and molesting her.

As the videos of the ugly scenes at the meeting held on Saturday went viral sparking outrage, the state unit of the Congress

termed it as a "political conspiracy" to defame the party.

According to eyewitnesses, Yadav allegedly tried to "manhandle" party secretary Sachin Naik, and also hurled a bouquet towards him during the meeting on Saturday.

Yadav was protesting over the party nominating Mukund Bhaskar Mani for the November 3 by-polls, accusing him of being a rapist, a charge denied by

him. As she hurled a bouquet towards Sachin Naik, angry workers allegedly roughed up Yadav and whisked her out of the meeting venue, the eyewitnesses claimed.

"A police complaint has been received. The matter is being probed. However, no case has been registered so far," SHO Kotwali Chandrabhan Singh said.

Yadav, who claimed to be associated with the party for four years, said she

was only questioning the choice of candidate and never expected that the party members would react in such a manner.

"You have given the ticket to a rapist, and this has tarnished the image of Congress. You could have given the ticket to someone else. As I said this, I was pushed by someone from behind. Can I not even put forth my point of view. These people want to destroy the Congress and

end it," Yadav said.

In a statement issued on Sunday, the UP Congress said, "In the context of by-polls to the Deoria Assembly constituency, a meeting was held at the party office in Deoria on October 10. In this meeting, Deendayal Yadav and Ajay Kumar Sainthwar indulged in indiscipline, and have been expelled from the party with immediate effect."

— PTI

IN BRIEF

Thailand bus-train collision: 17 dead

Bangkok: At least 17 people died early Sunday when a train collided with a bus in central Thailand, officials said. The tour bus was travelling with 65 passengers on board when it crossed the railway track during rain in Chacheongsao, 80 kilometres east of Bangkok, where a train smashed into the vehicle. Prathueng Yookasem, the district chief officer, told Thailand's *PBS TV* that at least 17 people died and 30 were injured. "It was raining, perhaps, the driver did not see the train," he said. All of the injured were brought to two hospitals. Police say they are investigating. The bus passengers were travelling from Samut Prakan province to a Buddhist temple in Chacheongsao for a merit-making ceremony.

Mexico asks Pope for abuse apology

Mexico City: Mexico's president published an open letter to Pope Francis calling on the Roman Catholic Church to apologise for abuses of Indigenous peoples during the conquest of Mexico in the 1500s. In the letter published Saturday, President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador also asks the pope to lend Mexico ancient pre-Hispanic Mexican or colonial-era documents.

"The Catholic Church, the Spanish monarchy and the Mexican government should make a public apology for the offensive atrocities that Indigenous people suffered," the letter states. Lopez Obrador asked the Pope to make a statement in favour of Miguel Hidalgo, Mexico's 19th-century independence leader who was believed to have been excommunicated by the church for his involvement in the uprising.

France aircraft collision kills 5

Paris: An ultra-light airplane has collided with another small plane, killing five people as the two aircraft fell into gardens around a town southeast of France's capital. The collision occurred on Saturday in the skies above Loches, about 50 kilometres from Tours, southeast of Paris, according to the mayor, Marc Angenault, who was quoted by the France Bleu radio station. According to Nadia Seghier, head of the prefecture, the state authority of the Indre-et-Loire region, the ultra-light plane fell around a home near the town's centre without injuring people on the ground. The tourism aircraft, reportedly a four-seat single engine plane, fell into an uninhabited sector. Two of the dead were in the ultra-light plane and the three others in the other small aircraft. There were no reports of survivors. About 50 firefighters and 30 gendarmes rushed to the area of the crash, as well as aviation specialists, the radio station said.

N. KOREAN NEW MISSILE NAGS SOUTH

Seoul, Oct. 11: South Korea on Sunday urged North Korea to commit to its past disarmament pledges while expressing concerns over the North's unveiling of a suspected new long-range missile during a military parade. During celebrations marking the 75th birthday of its ruling party in Pyongyang on Saturday, North Korea paraded a variety of weapons systems, including two missiles that were disclosed for the first time to a foreign audience. One is what appeared to be an inter-continental ballistic missile that is larger than any of the North's known ICBMs, and the other would likely be an upgraded version of a missile that can be fired from submarines.

While some experts say they could be mock-ups of missiles under development, their disclosures suggest North Korea has been continuously pushing to boost its weapons capability amid a stalemate in nuclear diplomacy with the United States. South Korea's Defence Ministry said Sunday it was expressing concerns about the fact that "North Korea unveiled weapons including what was suspected to be a new long-range ballistic missile".

A ministry statement demanded North Korea abide by 2018 inter-Korean deals aimed at lowering animosities. South Korea's Foreign Ministry issued a separate statement urging North Korea to return to talks to produce progress in its past commitment to achieving denuclearisation and peace on the Korean Peninsula.

Anti-TB vaccine trials in UK

Trump no longer considered transmission risk to others

London, Oct. 11: Scientists in the UK will begin recruiting frontline healthcare workers to test if an old vaccine used to combat tuberculosis (TB), the *Bacillus Calmette-Guerin* or BCG jab, can be repurposed to help boost immunity against the Coronavirus as well. The University of Exeter in south-west England said on Sunday that it is leading the UK arm of the worldwide research called the BCG vaccination to Reduce the impact of Covid-19 in healthcare workers (BRACE) trial. Participants will be given either the BCG vaccine, currently given to more than 100 million babies worldwide each year, including in India, to protect against TB, or a placebo injection.

The BCG vaccine boosts immunity by "training" the immune system to respond to other subsequent infections with greater intensity. Researchers hope this improved "innate immunity" will buy crucial time to develop an effective and safe vaccine against Covid-19. "Covid-19 has killed more than a million people globally, with well over 33 million people acquiring the disease, sometimes in its severest forms. BCG has been shown to boost immunity in a generalised way, which may offer some protection against COVID-19," said Professor John

Campbell from Exeter University, who is the UK lead for the BRACE study.

"We're excited to be contributing to the large-scale, international BRACE study where we are seeking to establish whether the BCG vaccine could help protect people who are at risk of Covid-19. If it does, we could save lives by administering or topping up this readily available and cost-effective vaccination," he said. In the UK, routine BCG vaccination — which dates as far back as the 1920s — was stopped in 2005 because of low rates of TB in the general population.

Previous studies suggest that the BCG vaccine could reduce susceptibility to a range of infections caused by viruses including those similar to the novel coronavirus causing Covid-19. Examining the mechanism by which this may work is part of the trial being conducted by BRACE researchers.

The UK arm of trial is initially recruiting care home and healthcare workers in the south-west of England, who can attend clinics in Exeter. It is targeting these professionals because they work in fields with high exposure to Covid-19. — *PTI*

Adviser: UK running into Covid-19 headwind

London, Oct. 11: One of the UK's senior-most gov-

Trump no longer considered transmission risk to others

Washington, Oct. 11: US President Donald Trump is no longer considered a transmission risk to others, the White House physician has said, as the president held an in-person event on the White House lawn for the first time since contracting the Covid-19 disease. White House physician Dr Sean Conley said on Saturday, "This evening I am happy to report that in addition to the President meeting CDC criteria for the safe discontinuation of isolation, this morning's Covid PCR sample demonstration, by currently recognised standards, he is no

longer considered a transmission risk to others."

In a White House memorandum, Dr Conley said now at day 10 from symptom onset, fever-free for well over 24 hours and all symptoms improved, the assortment of advances diagnostics test obtained reveal there is no longer evidence of actively replicating virus.

"In addition, sequential testing throughout his illness has demonstrated decreasing viral loads that correlate with increasing cycle threshold times, as well as decreasing and now undetectable subgenomic mRNA," he said.

Trump, 74, and First Lady Melania tested positive for Covid-19 last week. The president was taken to a military hospital for treatment, which the White House said was taken as a "matter of abundance caution". After spending four days, he came back to the White House on Monday. White House physician Dr Sean Conley said on Thursday that the president was "safe" to return to public life on Saturday. In his first public address from the Blue Room Balcony of the White House, Trump said that he was feeling great. — *PTI*

INDIAN ENVOY SELF ISOLATES AFTER MEETING VIRUS +VE NEPAL MINISTER

Kathmandu, Oct. 11: India's Ambassador to Nepal Vinay Mohan Kwatra has been staying in self isolation after he met Nepal's Tourism and Civil Aviation Minister Yogesh Bhattarai, who tested positive for the Coronavirus on Saturday, an Indian official said on Sunday.

Ambassador Kwatra has

quarantined himself as he had met with Bhattarai, Indian Embassy spokesperson Abhisekh Dubey said. However, his health is good and he has not developed any symptoms of infection, he added. The duo had discussed ways to promote tourism in both countries. — *PTI*

Protest against Netanyahu



Israeli security officers detain protesters during a demonstration against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Tel Aviv, on Saturday. — *AFP*

28 ARRESTED IN WISCONSIN PROTESTS

Wauwatosa, Oct. 11: Police used tear gas on demonstrators and arrested 28 people during a third straight night of protests over the lack of charges against a suburban Milwaukee police officer who fatally shot a PoC teen, authorities said, as they took to Twitter on Saturday to outline what they called an "escalation in force by the protesters."

About 100 people gathered outside City Hall on Friday past Wauwatosa's 7 pm curfew and refused multiple orders to disperse, according to police. Police said they used tear gas on the crowd, after bottles were thrown at officers. On Saturday, the Wauwatosa Police Department posted on Twitter that people have been asking valid questions about the police response over three nights of protests. Police posted a picture of bottles they said were found in a backpack, including a bottle of lighter fluid, noting that the materials can be used to start fires.

"Over the past three nights, we have seen an escalation in force by the protesters," police tweeted. — *AP*

Prominent cleric shot dead in Karachi

Karachi, Oct. 11: A prominent Pakistani Sunni Muslim cleric was shot dead along with his driver by unidentified assailants in Karachi, police said on Sunday. Maulana Dr Adil Khan, head of Karachi's Jamia Farooqia seminary, was attacked in a market on Saturday evening, they said. According to a senior police official, as the car carrying Khan stopped near a shopping centre in Shah Faisal Colony to purchase sweets, armed pillagers opened indiscriminate fire on the car and fled.

The police official said it appeared to be a targeted attack. Khan was the son of late prominent scholar Maulana Saleemullah Khan, who founded the Jamia Farooqia, a seminary located in Shah Faisal Colony. Jamia Farooqia adheres to the Sunni Muslim teachings of the Deobandi sect.

The seminary spokesperson, Amjad Rizvi, said that the Maulana expired in hospital from multiple bullet wounds while his driver, Maqsood Ahmed, died on the spot. — *PTI*

IN RARE PUBLIC APPEARANCE, MARYAM TO ADDRESS OCT. 18 KARACHI PDM RALLY

Karachi, Oct. 11: In a rare public appearance, Maryam Nawaz, Vice-President of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), will address the grand anti-government rally on October 18 here organised by the alliance formed by the opposition parties to oust the Imran Khan-led government.

On September 20, the leaders of 11 major Opposition parties announced

formation of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) and launch of a three-phased anti-government movement under an "action plan" starting with countrywide public meetings, protest demonstrations and rallies before a "decisive long march" towards Islamabad in January 2021. The first anti-government rally is scheduled on October 16 in Gujranwala. — *PTI*

Joe may end cap on Green card: Indians

Washington, Oct. 11: Distressed that professionals from India on H-1B visas have to wait for decades to get their Green Card, Indian-origin law-

makers have expressed hope that a Biden administration would come to their rescue by removing the country cap on the legal permanent residency. A Green Card, officially known as a Permanent Resident Card, is a document issued to the immigrants in the US as evidence that the bearer has been granted the privilege of residing permanently. It allows a non-US citizen to live and work permanently in America.

Indian IT professionals, most of whom are highly skilled and come to the US mainly on the H-1B work visas, are the worst sufferers of the current

immigration system which imposes a seven per cent per country quota on allotment of the coveted Green Card or permanent legal residency.

One of the original co-sponsors of the Fairness for High Skilled Immigrants Act, Democratic Congressman from Illinois Raja Krishnamoorthi said on Saturday that removing per country cap from employment-based Green Cards would remove the Green Card backlog for Indian IT professionals, who are being brought here often to fill the shortages in the IT industry. "I'm hopeful that under a Joe Biden administration, we're finally going to be able to get this legislation through the Senate, and then signed into law," Krishnamoorthi said. — *PTI*

Joe 'shipped' jobs to China: Trump

Washington, Oct. 11: US President Donald Trump has alleged that Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden in his previous capacities as Senator and vice president was busy shipping jobs to China, prompting the latter to hit back.

Biden said Trump will be the first president in modern American history to "leave office with fewer jobs than when it began". Making his first public address from Blue Room Balcony of the White House after being discharged from hospital where he was treated for Covid-19 infection, Trump charged Biden and his campaign of taking the country on the path of socialism, which he vowed would not let him do. "The Democrats' is a socialist programme and

● **JOE BIDEN** is set to make his first general election campaign visit Monday to Ohio, signalling the former vice president's hopes of winning the state Democrats lost by a significant margin four years ago.

platform — and it really is more than socialist. It's not just socialist; it's beyond socialism," he said. As one member from the audience screamed "communist", Trump said, "Communist. That's about right."

Biden, who was campaigning in Erie city in the battleground state of Pennsylvania, alleged that Trump was only protecting the interests of the rich and billionaires. — *PTI*

Shelling dashes Karabakh truce

Stepanakert, Azerbaijan, Oct. 11: Hopes that a Russian-brokered ceasefire between Armenia and Azerbaijan might hold were further eroded Sunday, with both sides accusing the other of intensive shelling of civilian areas and escalating two weeks of fierce clashes.

Azerbaijan's foreign ministry said that overnight shelling by Armenian forces on the country's second largest city, Ganja, had left at least seven people dead and 33 wounded including children, less than 24 hours after the halt to fighting was supposed to take effect.

Rescuers in red helmets dug through piles of debris with their bare hands in search of signs of survivors, an AFP journalist in the city reported.

They retrieved one nearly naked body and gingerly put it in a white bag to be taken away in an ambulance while several horrified residents watched on and wept.

One witness said they were woken by a huge blast that levelled an entire square block of one- and two-storey houses in the early hours of the morning, leaving nine apartments destroyed. — *AFP*

CHINA CONSULAR ACCESS FOR TWO CANADIANS

Toronto, Oct. 11: The Canadian government said Saturday that China granted consular access to two detained Canadians in China for the first time since January.

The Global Affairs department said Dominic Barton, Canada's Ambassador to China, was granted virtual consular access to Michael Spavor on Friday and virtual consular access to Michael Kovrig on Saturday. — *AP*

TEMPLE IN SINDH VANDALISED, ONE ARRESTED

Islamabad, Oct. 11: A Hindu temple has been vandalised by a person in Pakistan's southeast Sindh province, according to the police. One person has been arrested and a case registered in connection with the incident which took place on Saturday, *The Express Tribune* reported. — *PTI*

NEW | FIND

Monkey species is probably the ancestors of some of the modern primates

Oldest monkey fossils outside of Africa found

Beijing, Oct. 11: Scientists have found that the fossil samples unearthed in a lignite mine in China belong to a monkey species that lived about 6.4 million years ago, a discovery which indicates that they existed in Asia at the same time as apes, and are probably the ancestors of some of the modern primates in the area.

According to the researchers, including Nina G. Jablonski from the Pennsylvania State University

in the US, the samples collected from a mine in southeastern Yunnan Province in China are "some of the very oldest fossils of monkeys outside of Africa". "It is close to or actually the ancestor of many of the living monkeys of East Asia. One of the interesting things from the perspective of paleontology is that this monkey occurs at the same place and same time as ancient apes in Asia," Jablonski noted. The study, published

in the *Journal of Human Evolution*, noted that the unearthed jaw and thigh bones were found in close proximity, "and are probably of the same individual". The scientists also uncovered a left calcaneus — heel bone — that belongs to the same species of monkey, *Mesopithecus pentelicus*.

"The significance of the calcaneus is that it reveals the monkey was well adapted for moving nimbly and powerfully both on

the ground and in the trees," Jablonski said. "This locomotor versatility no doubt contributed to the success of the species in dispersing across woodland corridors from Europe to Asia," she added.

According to the researchers, the lower jawbone and upper portion of the leg bone indicate that the individual was female. The scientists believe these monkeys were probably "jacks of all trades" able to navigate in the

trees and on land, and their teeth indicated they could eat a wide variety of plants, fruits and flowers, while apes eat mostly fruit. "The thing that is fascinating about this monkey, that we know from molecular anthropology, is that, like other colobines (Old World monkeys), it had the ability to ferment cellulose. It had a gut similar to that of a cow," said Jablonski.

The monkeys were successful since they could

eat low-quality food high in cellulose and obtain sufficient energy by fermenting the food and using the subsequent fatty acids then available from the bacteria. They said a similar pathway is used by animals like cows, deer, and goats. "Monkeys and apes would have been eating fundamentally different things. Apes eat fruits, flowers, things easy to digest, while monkeys eat leaves, seeds," Jablonski said. — *PTI*

DECCAN Chronicle

12 OCTOBER 2020

Recovery contingent on curbing Covid-19

After a six-month-long flow of negative news, the Reserve Bank of India's economic forecast has offered a glimmer of hope. While the annual economic growth rate would continue to be in the negative territory with an expected contraction of 9.5 per cent, RBI governor Shaktikanta Das said that the Indian economy will post a positive growth of 0.5 per cent in January-March quarter, unless the country witnesses a second wave of Covid-19 cases.

Though a half percentage growth is negligible, it shows that the economy has passed its worst phase. This optimism was also reflected in the manufacturing purchasing managers' index (PMI) for September 2020, which rose to 56.8 — its highest mark since January 2012 — supported by acceleration in new orders and production. The services PMI too has almost reached the positive territory in September with 49.8, which is shy of 0.2 points. Since PMI records business expectation, it needs to be seen as to which sector would contribute to this growth.

Public investment, therefore, remains the only way to kick-start the economy. However, the subdued tax collections would make it difficult to shoulder this responsibility. According to the RBI, there has been a 23.7 per cent contraction in gross tax collections.

Another data point that was not highlighted by the RBI governor is the rise in bank deposits. According to RBI data, banks have seven per cent more deposits in September compared to February. The loan books of the banks have risen merely by two per cent. When seen together, these metrics indicate that people who have surplus money are not confident enough to spend. Job losses and reduction in salary have reduced disposable incomes of lakhs of people and, as a result, taken a toll on consumption.

The central bank's optimism also betrays the fact that consumer confidence is at an all-time low. According to RBI's consumer confidence survey, people have curtailed spending and discretionary spending would continue to remain low in the near future. A subdued demand would make businessmen hesitant in expanding their operations. Exports, another key component of the Indian economy, are also languishing at low levels. Given the global economic outlook, Indian exports may not see a major revival unless the country can attract some of companies de-risking their operations from Chinese dependence. This, however, may not happen in the short term, as infrastructure in India remains woefully inadequate.

Public investment, therefore, remains the only way to kick-start the economy. However, the subdued tax collections would make it difficult to shoulder this responsibility. According to the RBI, there has been a 23.7 per cent contraction in gross tax collections and a 14.7 per cent plunge in transfer of taxes to states and Union Territories.

A full recovery in the economy, therefore, would be incumbent on how fast the world defeats the coronavirus. Until then, the economic activity will not reach the pre-pandemic levels and the bullishness of stock markets would not reflect the real state of the economy.

Don't buy into US rhetoric

Just days before US deputy secretary of state Stephen Biegun commences a visit to New Delhi on Monday, America's national security adviser Robert O'Brien has observed, "The time has come to accept that dialogue and agreements will not persuade and compel China to change." The remark is in the context of the "CCP's (Chinese Communist Party's) territorial aggression" and China's "attempt(ed) to seize control of the Line of Actual Control by force".

Many may agree with the general drift of the US NSA's comment. It will become clearer after Mr Biegun's talks here if, officially, India at this stage would go so far as to withhold any further discussions and consultations — at the military and diplomatic levels — with China in order to make it move back its troops in Ladakh.

The Chinese aggression was evidently a key issue in the meeting of the Quad (US, Japan, Australia, India) foreign ministers in Tokyo earlier this month. The Quad, which began its journey as an informal grouping of liberal democracies of the Indo-Pacific region in 2007 in order to counterbalance China and act as a moderating influence on it, has been active of late. This arises from China's ongoing marked aggressive behaviour in the South China Sea and the Indo-Pacific littoral — aimed at territorial expansion — taking on a continental dimension in Ladakh.

The tenor of the US criticism of Xi's China has of late taken on a sharp political and ideological dimension. But India and other Quad members have been more calibrated, calling for a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" or FOIP. The situation in Ladakh is likely to loom large at the meeting of "2+2" — the defence and foreign ministers of India and the US — in New Delhi later this month. While being prepared for any military eventualities, it might be prudent not to cancel further talks with the Chinese unless it seems this would make Beijing reverse its militarist stance in Ladakh.

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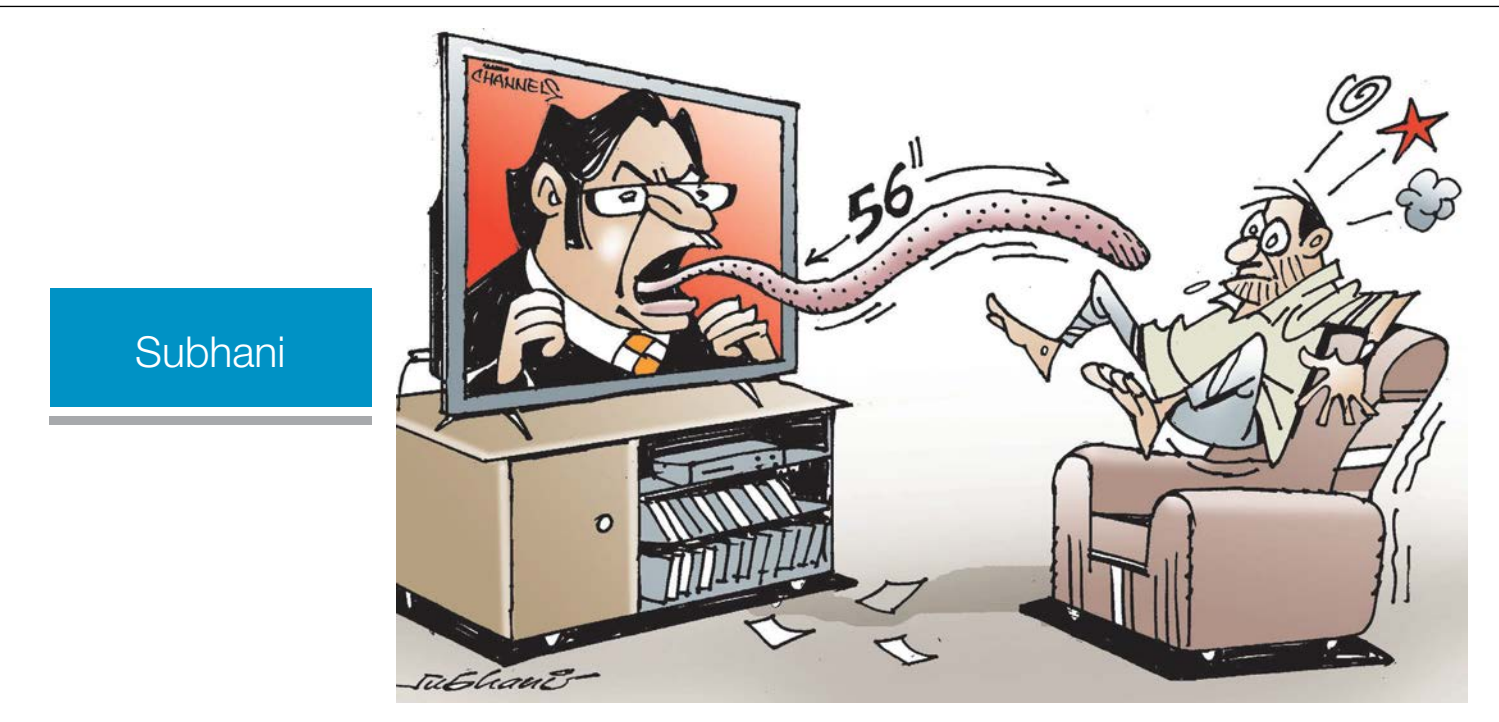
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Subhani

How farm laws might hurt national security



Manish Tewari

State of the Union

On the 27th of September, 2020, the President of India, Ram Nath Kovind, gave assent to the three farm bills, namely, The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020, The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020, and The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill, 2020, thereby paving the way for their notification as law.

These acts unconstitutionally passed by the Rajya Sabha have created great trepidation among the agrarian communities, especially in Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Western Uttar Pradesh, as also in various other parts of the country. The first two bills are especially troublesome because they have been perceived as the first act in dismantling both the public procurement and the Minimum Support Price regimes. What gives further credence to these concerns is the fact that the debt burden of the Food Corporation of India (FCI) in the current fiscal has already crossed 3.15 lakh crores and the government has no plans of defraying the debt. The FCI has barely any independent means of servicing this debt and if things continue as such FCI may just fold up. It would be pertinent to underscore that FCI is the principal instrumentality of the Union government for public procurement of agricultural produce in the country.

However, far more disconcerting than the economic imperative are the national security implications that have totally been ignored. It has the potential of destabilising the entire western border and creating conditions for the return of militancy to Punjab. However, to understand this properly, we must peep into the past.

The saga of Punjab has

since times immemorial been impregnated with the creed of resisting of aggression and persecution. For 800 long years, from the 11th to 18th century, Punjab saw at least 70 invasions that left the frontier ethos of Indian subcontinent heavily militarised with a culture of resisting exploitation and aggression becoming the dominant social strain. It was better to die honorably than live in ignominy.

However, it was in the nineteenth century especially on the 10 of May 1857 that the 11th and 20th Bengal Native Infantry Regiments in conjunction with the 3rd Light Cavalry rose up against the British Raj. They murdered their European officers and moved towards Delhi that was captured by the sepoys of Meerut within 24 hours and Bahadur Shah Zafar II was proclaimed as the Emperor of Hindustan. This kickstarted the First War of Independence. After the British succeeded in putting down the uprising the British plan to demilitarise Punjab that was supposed to be implemented in the wake of the Anglo-Sikh Wars never really came to fruition.

In fact, they had to re-militarise it based upon the martial race theory that they conceived. The martial race theory categorised the Dogras, Garhwalis, Gujjars, Gorkhas, Jats, Kumaonis, Pathans, Rajputs, Sikhs, Janjuas, Mahars, Kodavas, Gakhars, Ghumman, Khokhar and Yadavs as martial races. As a consequence, very heavy recruitment into the British Indian Army started taking place from undivided Punjab and the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) now in Pakistan from around the 1870.

Throughout World War I, the British recruited heavily from Punjab. About half a million men were recruited from the province. According to certain historians, 50 per cent of these recruits were Punjabi Muslims, 36 per cent

Hindus, 12 per cent Sikhs and one to two per cent Christians. However Sikhs were more in proportion than Punjabi Muslims when it came to people being recruited once they attained military age both at the cusp and again during the war. Moreover, during World War I, 75,000 acres of land on the Lower Bari Doab Canal alone was granted on peasant conditions to those who had distinguished themselves in the various battles of the Great War.

This process of recruitment exacerbated during the Second World War with the numbers from Punjab crossing a million. When the Second World War ended in 1945 most of the recruits were demobilised and came back to their respective villages. The Partition of India followed in 1947. The worst affected provinces were the Punjab and Bengal. More than a million innocents were slaughtered between July and September of 1947 in the Punjab alone. This was the direct consequence of dismembering a heavily militarised region without thinking through its implications.

Post 1947 agriculture, Armed Forces and immigration continued to be the main occupations of the people of Indian Punjab. Over a period of time due to the institution of the Recruitable Male Population policy in 1966 the share of Punjab in the Armed Forces started dropping and as barriers to immigration became higher agriculture soon became the mainstay for the people of the state.

Incidentally even today Haryana, which has only 2.2 per cent of India's population, contributes 7.82 per cent to the Armed Forces. Punjab with 2.4 per cent of the National population still contributes 16.6 per cent to the Armed Forces even though these num-

SYL provided the trigger to a festering yet nascent militant movement that soon evolved into full-fledged terrorism consuming the lives of thousands of innocent citizens

bers are a far cry from the pre-1966 days when both these states were a part of Joint Punjab formed post the merger of Patiala and the East Punjab States Union (PEPSU) and erstwhile British Punjab in 1956.

After the 1965 war the Minimum Support Price regime and public procurement were introduced in 1966-67 for wheat and later expanded to other commodities. This gave the Punjabi farmer an assured return on his produce. He could plan the future of his children assured of a safety net. The NDA/BJP government now wants to dismantle this social security architecture.

After the Green Revolution in 1974 the paddy and wheat cycle with public procurement and MSP as its two pillars brought prosperity to the Punjabi farmer. In 1982 when the Satluj Yamuna link canal (SYL) was sought to be constructed it had a very negative impact on the state for canal water is the mainstay of the agricultural economy. It provided the trigger to a festering yet nascent militant movement that soon evolved into full-fledged terrorism consuming the lives of thousands of innocent citizens while allowing Pakistan to destabilise this sensitive border state for over a decade and a half. Those were the bloodiest years for the state post-Independence. Even today Pakistan is hell bent on reviving militancy in Punjab. Weapon drops via drones and arrests of Pakistan-trained terrorists are regular occurrences.

Given this background how wise would it be from the national security perspective to dismantle both the public procurement and MSP regimes through these recent legislative enactments is a question that Prime Minister Modi must ask himself. Contrary to whatever the government may claim these laws have stoked the innermost fears of the people. The genie is out of the bottle. The NDA government has gone where angels fear to tread.

The author is a lawyer, Member of Parliament and former Union information and broadcasting minister. The views expressed are personal. Twitter handle @manishtewari.

LETTERS

NOT INDEPENDENT

We are still primitive after 73 years of independence (Dalit president of TN panchayat forced to sit on floor, DC, Oct. 11). Our mindsets need to be constantly tuned to the changing times. Look at the US where apartheid still prevails even after three centuries of Independence.

K. Nehru Patnaik

Visakhapatnam

HAIRCUTS

I have let my hair down (Papa's haircuts and other hair-raising experiences, DC, Oct. 11). It is rollicking and hilarious. Covid-19 has certainly made us learn some areas which were earlier Greek to us. This goes to prove the adage : "Necessity is the mother of invention."

Dr C. Ghanshyam

Visakhapatnam

VIDYA KANUKA

The fact that the Centre's contribution was not acknowledged by AP while distributing Vidya Kanuka should not be ignored. The previous government (of TD) also resorted to similar tactics while distributing freebies to BPL and poor families. At that time also we saw local BJP leaders questioning the impudence of the then CM. History is repeating after a change of government. The latest scheme should have been named "Prabhutwa Vidya Kanuka".

Govardhana Myneedu

Vijayawada

Email your letters to info@deccanmail.com, editor@deccanmail.com. You can also send them to Editor, Deccan Chronicle, 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad-500 003.

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

Site for Vizag steel plant selected

VISAKHAPATNAM, Oct. 11 The plant selection committee of the Union Government has approved Gajuvaka-Kanithi-Balacherru area for the proposed steel plant in Andhra Pradesh.

According to present indications about 6,000 acres would be earmarked for the plant at Gajuvaka area which lies on the grand trunk road.

The Anglo-American consortium and the Hindustan Steel had also recommended the same site for location of a steel plant.

An intensive study of the area would be made and extensive drilling operation will be conducted to study soil and rock conditions.— PTI

Kishwar Desai London Diary



Ill, Boris had a harder time; virus blow to James Bond

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, has said that new restrictions appear to be inevitable, which seems to indicate that things are going to get worse before we finally see the New Year. And so it is going to be corona carols for all of us! We can only hope that Santa comes along to stuff the Covid vaccine into our Christmas stockings.

If things were not gloomy enough already, the weather has turned wet and windy. There has been an odd day of sunshine now and then but otherwise we are in a standard English autumn. The political climate is no warmer except a lot of people are angry and fed up. The second coming of Covid has seen thousands of new cases every week. Everyone had thought the lockdown was over in August and we would be back to our usual round of pubs and parties. But now pubs are to be shut again as will restaurants. Nothing is certain and the rules keep changing.

The scientists are definitely quarrelling and they have been fighting for some time. Those advising Boris Johnson want dire lockdowns but others are complaining that we need herd immunity and freedom to mingle. London has escaped the worst so far but there are local lockdowns in the North. In Scotland, as of this week-end, all pubs, restaurants and cafes are shut. But cafes not serving alcohol are allowed to be open. So can a pub stay open serving coffee but not Irish coffee? No clarity yet!

The only constant is that like the scientists, the government is also at a loss. They are now not very sure about how they can calculate the precise numbers of those who got the virus. The latest is that the test and trace programme missed out on 50,000 cases because the computer was old as was the Excel spreadsheet and the last few rows were left out. So there are 50,000 people out there who tested positive but cannot be traced because the computer was dysfunctional. The test

and trace programme, according to the Prime Minister Boris Johnson was going to be a "Moonshot".

But let us face it, Boris has had a tougher time than other heads of state when he got Covid-19. Look at how luxuriously Donald Trump gets treated when he catches the virus — his own four-room suite in Walter Reed hospital with a personal chef and doctors and secret service staff. You have to feel sorry for the British Prime Minister. In 10 Downing Street there are no doctors or staff to look after the Prime Minister. When he had Covid last March, he was alone in a flat at the top of No.11. He was being supplied food pushed through the door, because his then pregnant girlfriend had to isolate elsewhere to be safe. Finally Boris had to check into hospital — but only because he was, by then, seriously unwell. We do not pamper our Prime Minister. If he wants a posh meal at home, he cooks it himself or orders a takeaway. Things are better at

Chequers but there are no chefs or housemaids in 10 Downing Street. The family has to cook, wash the dishes and do their own laundry. Now, I wonder how things are back in India?

James Bond normally comes to the rescue of the British people in distress. But this time he has struck a hard blow. The release of the latest Bond film *No Time to Die* was postponed for six months. We had even heard that cinemas were supposed to open with a bang and Bond. Now Cineworld, a cinema chain which owns 127 theatres, has decided to close them all down. Others may follow suit. It seems as though the great film industry in the UK is going to be badly impacted. How will one survive without eating popcorn and watching action on the big screen?

But some cheering up has been done by the Queen as usual. She has buoyed sinking spirits by honouring the many wonderful doctors and nurses and other "warriors"

who were at the frontline of fighting Covid. Every year she bestows honours on people in June, which is her official birthday month. Due to Covid the date was put back to October. Normally there is intense competition and lobbying by the top people to grab a gong. One is told that there are even agencies you can hire to secure you an honour, though that sounds a bit odd. (What do they do — sidele up to the Queen, and whisper in her ear?) But this time, it is the many ordinary people — NHS nurses, volunteers who donated their time to prepare free meals or encouraged people to exercise daily online — 414 of them have been honoured, out of a total of 1,495. This spirit of helping others is a unique thing about the local culture. It is wonderful that this is being recognised.

Kishwar Desai is an award-winning author. Her latest book, The Longest Kiss: The Life and Times of Devika Rani, will be out by November.

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	40,509.49	0.81
Nifty 50	11,914.20	0.67
S&P 500*	3,477.13	0.88
Dollar (₹)	73.14	0.13
Pound Sterling (₹)	94.67	0.30
Euro (₹)	86.31	0.20
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	51,558*236	0.00
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	42.82	-0.52
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.937	-0.002
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.769	0.002

* As of Friday/Saturday

FPIs invest ₹5,245 crore into equities in Oct.

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have invested Rs 1,086 crore on a net basis so far in October in Indian markets, tracking encouraging factors including improved GST collection, acceleration in economic activity and positive global cues. Depositories data shows FPIs pumped in a net Rs 5,245 crore into equities and withdrew Rs 4,159 crore from the debt market during October 1-9.

Cello re-enters stationery biz after 5 years



After selling its stationery business to France's BIC five years ago, the Cello Group is re-entering the category and plans to launch products in the local market. In Dec. 2015, BIC Group acquired Cello Pens for Rs 540 crore. "We have just started stationery business with a different brand name (Uno-max)... here was a non-compete (agreement)... so we couldn't do same products portfolio," Gaurav P. Rathod, MD, Cello Group, said.

Snapdeal on-boards over 5,000 mfg-sellers

Snapdeal has added over 5,000 manufacturer-sellers on its platform so far this year, most of them in the September quarter, exceeding the target it had set for itself earlier in the year, a company official said. Adding new sellers will help the e-tailer to ramp up its Diwali sales plans as direct shipment to buyers help manufacturers move stocks faster to customers. The marketplace has over 5 lakh registered sellers.

H&M to expand physical stores in India

Swedish apparel retailer H&M will continue to expand its physical stores in India although it is closing down 250 stores globally, betting on the long-term potential of the country. H&M, which opened its first store in India in 2015, has 48 outlets in 24 cities but may not open as many stores in the next five years, as it also focuses on enhancing its digital presence, according to H&M India's country manager Janne Einola.



₹20-crore entry capital recommended Panel for low base for microinsurers

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, OCT. 11

At a time when millions of Indians, especially in the informal sector, have lost their livelihoods to the Covid-19 pandemic, a panel set up by the insurance regulator has recommended a steep cut in the entry level capital requirement for floating a standalone microinsurance company to help accelerate the expansion of this segment. The panel wants the threshold be cut to Rs 20 crore, from the current requirement of Rs 100 crore for microinsurance companies.

Stating that India would need to allow multiple players in the field if it wants to substantially increase insurance penetration, the panel has suggested that microinsurance companies, as well as cooperative and mutual insurers, should be allowed to act as composite insurers to transact both life and non-life business through a single entity. "Their portfolios should have a balance of both life and non-life business," said the panel.

However, the changes would require amendments to the Insurance Act, 1938 to bring the standalone microinsurance business under the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India's (Irdai) purview. This will include defining microinsurance, microinsurers, reducing the capital requirement and/or giving powers to insurance



regulator to decide on capital requirements for standalone microinsurance companies.

However, amending the Insurance Act, 1938, may require time. In the immediate term, the central government may be approached to issue rules under Section 24(2)(c) read with Section 14(2)(g) of Irdai Act, 1999 giving the Irdai powers to put in place a regulatory framework for floating micro insurers.

Such an approach was adopted by the government to allow insurers in special economic zones (SEZs) when there was no specific power with the Irdai for regulating entities in SEZs said, the Irdai-appointed committee in its report.

"India too will need to improve access for multiple players if it wants to substantially increase insurance penetration. This is all the more urgent in the current context of the Covid-19 pandemic when millions of Indians, especially in the informal sector, have lost their livelihoods, are now leading more insecure lives and

are falling back into poverty," said the report.

The committee has also suggested that a risk-based capital (RBC) approach should be adopted to enable the progressive growth of the microinsurance business while maintaining the highest prudential standards.

Referring to the low insurance penetration, the report said, "Dedicated standalone microinsurance institutions can close this gap by making insurance affordable and available to low-income families, thereby providing a measure of risk mitigation and security. The committee therefore recommends that the government and the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India license such businesses which can cater to the low-income segment."

The Irdai had constituted the committee in February 2020 consisting of members from NGOs, independent consultants and experts working in financial inclusion and regulatory fields.

GST COUNCIL TO MEET AGAIN TODAY TO IRON OUT DIFFERENCES

New Delhi, Oct. 11: The GST Council in its meeting on Monday is likely to discuss the suggestion of non-BJP ruled states of setting up a ministerial panel to develop consensus on the issue of compensation, sources said.

The Council, chaired by Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman and comprising state finance ministers, will for the third time in a row discuss the issue of funding the shortfall of goods and services tax (GST) revenue of states.

While some opposition ruled states are demanding that a Group of Ministers be set up to arrive at a decision on the mechanism for funding the compensation shortfall, BJP-ruled states, which have already opted for the borrowing option given by the Centre, are of the view that they should be given a go-ahead so that they can get money quickly.

The 43rd meeting of the council will discuss the single agenda of the way forward, sources said. In its previous meeting last week, the council had decided to extend the surcharge on taxes on luxury goods such as cars and tobacco products beyond June 2022, but failed to reach a consensus on ways to compensate states for loss of tax revenue.

The projected total compensation shortfall in current fiscal stands at Rs 2.35 lakh crore.

—PTI

Oil PSUs asked to build 50,000 houses for renting

New Delhi, Oct. 11: The petroleum ministry has asked oil PSUs such as Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) to build 50,000 houses for renting to migrant workers as part of the government plan to develop affordable rental housing after millions of labourers fled cities for villages amidst the coronavirus lockdown.

The ministry wants IOC and other public sector undertakings (PSUs) under its administrative control such as Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL), Gail India Ltd and Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) to build the housing units on their land, three officials who attended a meeting on the subject said.

The meeting, they said, was chaired by oil minister Dharmendra Pradhan who asked the PSUs to come up with plans to build the housing units at the earliest.

The ministry had on October 5 tweeted about the meeting, saying Pradhan "held a meeting with officials of MoPNG and PSUs to review the efforts made by PSUs in providing houses on rent to migrants and urban poor working on oil & gas projects under the affordable rental housing scheme of @MoHUA_India."

MoPNG is the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, while MoHUA is the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

"The Affordable Rental Housing Complexes, a sub-scheme of #PMAY



Dharmendra Pradhan

aims to provide ease-of-living to urban poor and migrant workers in need of affordable housing near their work sites as a result of the #Covid19 induced reverse migration," the ministry had tweeted without giving details.

Under diktat from the ministry, the PSUs have started looking for land within or near their installations for the housing project, the officials said.

However, some of the PSUs officials found little merit in the move.

They said operating units such as refineries rarely have spare land and they often struggle to house new units or staff. Also, the new projects such as pipelines are in remote areas where migrant workers may not be willing to go.

Those working on oil and gas projects are often housed in temporary housing units near the project sites and it may be difficult to get them into rented units, they said.

The government had in July approved a plan to develop affordable rental housing for migrant workers after millions of labourers fled cities for

villages as the lockdown left many of them without jobs and homes.

The scheme, part of a housing project aimed at providing housing for all by 2022, was aimed at converting existing vacant government housing into affordable rental housing complexes (ARHC).

Private developers could also participate.

The programme will benefit about 3,00,000 workers initially, according to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs statement issued after the Cabinet approval of July.

The plan, announced initially in May as part of a coronavirus stimulus package and approved by the Cabinet in July, will offer subsidised loans, tax incentives and additional floor space allowances to developers.

No government agency has a database of the total number of migrant workers in India. The government had recently informed the Supreme Court that approximately one crore migrant workers had returned home in Shramik Special trains, buses and on foot since the lockdown began on March 25.

—PTI

Sail to produce HH rails for high-speed lines

New Delhi, Oct. 11: State-owned steel maker Sail plans to commence commercial production of head hardened (HH) rails in this fiscal, its chairman Anil Kumar Chaudhary said.

HH rails are special rails used in high-speed freight corridors and metro rail projects. Such rails are manufactured using the head hardening technology to bear about 50 per cent higher pressure compared to normal rails.

Sail has set up facilities for production of HH rails at the new Universal Rail Mill (URM) at its Bhilai Steel Plant in Chhattisgarh, and the cold trials for the same have already been completed, Chaudhary said.

"Though the commissioning of the facility has got delayed on account of Covid-19 pandemic, the company is planning to commence commercial production of the head hardened rails during the current financial year as per the requirement of Indian Railways," he said.

He said the company meets the requirement as and when any order is received from the Railways.

—PTI

Project completion drags in H1

SANGEETHA G. CHENNAI, OCT. 11

Lockdown and unlock restrictions have affected completion of capacity expansion projects to the extent that the value of projects commissioned in the past two quarters are a fraction of those completed in the pre-Covid quarters.

Projects commissioned during the September and June 2020 quarters were worth Rs 32,600 crore and Rs 24,000 crore, respectively. In comparison, project completions averaged Rs 1.3 lakh crore per quarter in 2019-20 and

Rs 1.6 lakh crore per quarter in 2018-19, says CMIE's CapEx service that tracks project execution.

Most projects completed in the September 2020 quarter were in the infrastructure sector. Rail and road transport claimed the biggest share among all sectors. These two together accounted for 43 per cent of the total completed projects. The transport infrastructure services sector accounted for 35 per cent of the total value of commissioned projects.

Government projects accounted for 63 per cent of all commissioning of projects in the September

quarter.

In the last three quarters, government projects accounted for over 60 per cent of all commissioning, with the private sector going slow.

"Private sector projects could take much longer to revert to aggressive completion of projects. While the logistical reasons for slowing down of project completions may be getting over, the problem of depleted demand will linger and will remain a hindrance to project completions," says CMIE.

If the lockdown was not a good period to implement a project, it was also not a

good time to decide about abandoning a project. Hence, compared to the past, the number of projects getting abandoned during the nine-month period till September 30 remains modest. Projects worth Rs 77,500 crore were abandoned during the nine-month period. In the past five-six years, such a number had averaged Rs 1.52 lakh crore per nine-month period.

While implementation of projects worth Rs 9.9 lakh crore was stalled during the first nine months of 2020 till September 30, projects worth Rs 9.2 lakh crore have been revived.

Action-packed week ahead for stock market

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, OCT. 11

This is billed to be an action packed week for the stock market. UTI AMC and Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders will debut on the bourses on Monday. The day could also see the market's full response to the RBI's policy decisions on Friday.

Tech majors Wipro, Infosys, and HCL Technologies will announce their results on October 13, 14 & 16, respectively. The Supreme Court will hear the matter of loan moratorium and interest waiver on Tuesday, October 13.

Macroeconomic data release of IIP, CPI and WPI inflation numbers are also scheduled on Monday & Wednesday.

US stimulus packages and upcoming presidential debates will also be closely watched for cues.

Experts believe the market is poised to scale higher due to improving macro-economic scenario, the pick-up in industrial activity and gradual return to normalcy with Covid-19 cases flattening.

Last week, Tata Steel informed the stock exchanges about highest-ever quarterly deliveries of 5.05 million tonnes of steel in the quarter, a jump of 72



per cent quarter-on-quarter, and 22 per cent year-on-year in the second quarter of FY20, signalling a continued pick-up in demand for steel. JSW Steel also reported a jump in its crude steel production for the second quarter, and also in its capacity utilisation as the company produced 3.85 million tonnes of steel in the quarter.

The bull party may continue in the market, with the RBI policy measures favouring heavyweight financials and IT sector majors expected to announce good numbers.

HDFC Bank will be kicking off the earnings season for banks on Saturday.

Ajit Mishra, VP-research, Religare Broking, said, "We feel the recent buoyancy in the banking, financials and IT majors could help the Nifty to retest the 12,100 zone. On the flip side, the 11,600-11,800 zone would act as a cushion in case of any profit-taking."

LOW | APPETITE

A reason for weak interest in these stocks is limited free float

Five of 12 PSU bank stocks trade near face value

New Delhi, Oct. 11: Five out of 12 public sector banks are trading near the face value of their equity shares on the bourses, regardless of a rally in stock benchmark indices, an analysis shows.

Shares of Indian Overseas Bank are even trading below the face value of Rs 10 per share. On the BSE, the stock closed at Rs 9.27 on Friday.

The Chennai-based bank tapped the market first in September 2000, offloading part of the government's stake at the face value of Rs 10 per share.

Remaining four public sector banks— Bank of Maharashtra, Uco Bank, Punjab & Sind Bank and Central Bank of India—are trading near the face value of Rs 10 per share.

Shares of Punjab & Sind Bank closed at Rs 10.81 and Bank of Maharashtra at 11.29 on Friday. Mumbai-based Central Bank of India is slightly better positioned, with a closing price of Rs 12.45 per share followed by Kolkata-based Uco Bank at 12.14 per unit.

Gurpreet Sidana, chief operating officer, Religare Broking Ltd, said, "We've witnessed a



remarkable recovery in the benchmark in the last few months but the PSU banking pack is still struggling.

"After the initial rebound, mostly PSU

banking stocks are again hovering closer to their 52-week lows."

There are multiple overhangs on the sectors, including asset quality concerns, subdued business environment and low credit offtake.

All these issues put together are weighing on stock prices of the PSU banks and even the biggest name on the list, SBI, is not spared as it is currently quoting less than the sum total of value of its subsidiaries, Sidana explained.

One reason for the low interest of investors in these stocks is their limited

free float, an analyst said, adding that most of the banks have government holding of over 90 per cent, leaving a limited number of shares for the public to trade.

The government holding in Indian Overseas Bank is at the highest level of 95.84 per cent followed by Uco Bank at 94.44 per cent, Bank of Maharashtra at 93.33 per cent and Central Bank of India at 92.39 per cent. The government holding in Delhi-based Punjab & Sind Bank was at 83.06 per cent at the end of June 30, 2020.

—PTI

SHORT TAKES



S. Tony

Football coach Tony passes away

Hyderabad: Football coach and vice-president of the Telangana Football Association S. Tony passed away in Secunderabad early on Sunday. He was 69 and is survived by his wife, two sons and three daughters. His last rites were performed on Sunday evening.

The affable Tony played for the Andhra Pradesh Police team and later joined IDL from where he took voluntary retirement back in 1975.

Tony was also the founder of Shastri Soccer Club at Trimulgherry, which was established in 1963. He also maintained the Susai Senior Football Club and Sachdev Sports Football Club.

He produced many international and national footballers from the Secunderabad Cantonment area.

Tony was also the coach of St Andrews School team which was champion of the 7th, 8th and 9th editions of the Jaya Rao Memorial Inter-School football tournament at Bolarum grounds.

The Telangana football Association conducted an online condolence meeting at 11.30 am which was attended by all the TFA office bearers, referees and senior players. A two-minute silence was also observed during the class for referees and coaches at Gymkhana Grounds.

Former Indian captain Victor Amalraj expressed condolences to the bereaved family members. The Hyderabad Globe Football Club too paid rich tributes to Tony.

Mixed day for girls at Asian chess

Chennai: The Indian women's chess team endured mixed fortunes, winning the first two matches before being upstaged by Iran which pushed them to eighth spot after three rounds of the Asian Online Nations (Regions) Cup Team Championship on Sunday.

The team led by Mary Ann Gomes started with a 4-0 rout of Syria before edging Mongolia 2.5-1.5.

In the third round, the top-seeded Indians went down 1.5-2.5 to sixth-ranked Iran despite R. Vaishali (Elo rating 2149) winning on the top board against Sarasadat Khademalsharieh, the highest rated player in the event at 2393. Bhakti Kulkarni and P. V. Nandhidhaa lost against Mobina Alinasab while Padmini Rout drew with Anousha Mahdian enabling Iran to pull off an upset.

In the second round game against Mongolia, India won narrowly. — PTI

Alex conquers 1st MotoGP podium

Le Mans, France: The Repsol Honda Team achieved their best result of the season to date, Alex Marquez stunning with second place from 18th on the grid as Stefan Bradl makes it a double top ten. It was another cold start to the day in France for round 10 of the MotoGP World Championship. Forecasts had predicted it to stay dry throughout, but the French sky had other ideas just moments before the lights went out. A delayed start due to rain on the grid saw the race declared wet and had the entire field switch to wet tyres, the race distance reduced by one lap.

Alex shot forward from 18th on the grid and made up eight places in just a few laps. The gap to eventual race-winner Petrucci proved too big as Alex crossed the line in front of a delighted Repsol Honda Team.

Live on TV

CRICKET

IPL: Royal Challengers Bangalore vs Kolkata Knight Riders from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

TENNIS

St Petersburg Open: Matches from 3.30 pm on Sony Six, HD

WWE RAW

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

Royals in the pink

Tewatia, Parag snap Rajasthan's 4-match losing streak

Dubai, Oct. 11: Rahul Tewatia's uncanny ability to win tricky games rescued Rajasthan Royals yet again as they eked out a five-wicket victory against Sunrisers Hyderabad to snap their four-match losing streak in the IPL, here on Sunday.

Tewatia, who became a household name with five sixes in an over against Kings XI Punjab, smashed an unbeaten 45 off 28 balls as Royals overhauled the 159-run target with a ball to spare.

Along with Riyan Parag (42 not out off 26 balls), Tewatia won the game in 'Royals' style keeping Steve Smith's men in the mix after they were reduced to 78 for 5 in 12 overs.

With two needed off two balls, Parag hit Khaleel Ahmed for a six over extra cover and broke into an impromptu 'Bihu jig'. They added 85 runs for the sixth wicket in eight overs when their illustrious international stars flattered to deceive.

Tewatia brought back memories of the Sharjah night but this time it was Rashid Khan who was at receiving end in the 18th over as the left-hander struck three consecutive boundaries.

With 22 needed off two overs, Tewatia launched into T. Natarajan, who lost his length trying to bowl yorkers, for a four and a six over short fine leg that swung the match in favour of Royals.

Earlier, Manish Pandey struck an impressive half-century but Rajasthan Royals restricted Sunrisers Hyderabad to 158 for 4 in stipulated overs. — PTI



Rahul Tewatia (left) and Riyan Parag of the Rajasthan Royals during their Indian Premier League match against Sunrisers Hyderabad at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium on Sunday. — BCCI

SCORECARD

Sunrisers Hyderabad: David Warner b Archer 48, Jonny Bairstow c Samson b Kartik Tyagi 16, Manish Pandey c Tewatia b Unadkat 54, Kane Williamson (not out) 22, Priyam Garg run out (Archer/Buttler) 15. **Extras:** (nb-1, w-2) 3. **Total:** (for 4 wks, in 20 overs) 158.

FOW: 1-23, 2-96, 3-122, 4-158

Bowling: Jofra Archer 4-0-25-1, Shreyas Gopal 4-0-31-0, Kartik Tyagi 3-0-29-1, Jaydev Unadkat 4-0-31-1, Rahul Tewatia 4-0-35-0, Ben Stokes 1-0-7-0.

Rajasthan Royals: Ben Stokes b Ahmed 5, Jos Buttler c Bairstow b Ahmed 16, Steven Smith run out 5, Sanju Samson c Bairstow b Rashid 26, Robin Uthappa lbw b Rashid 18, Riyan Parag (not out) 42, Rahul Tewatia (not out) 45. **Extras:** (lb-4 w-2) 6. **Total:** (for 5 wks, in 19.5 overs) 163.

FOW: 1-7, 2-25, 3-26, 4-63, 5-78.

Bowling: S. Sharma 4-0-32-0, Khaleel Ahmed 3.5-0-37-2, T. Natarajan 4-1-32-0, A. Sharma 1-0-11-0, Rashid Khan 4-0-25-2, Vijay Shankar 3-0-22-0.

IPL POINTS TABLE

Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
Mumbai Indians	7	5	2	0	10	+1.327
Delhi Capitals	7	5	2	0	10	+1.038
Kolkata Knight Riders	6	4	2	0	8	+0.017
Royal Challengers Bangalore	6	4	2	0	8	-0.820
Sunrisers Hyderabad	7	3	4	0	6	+0.153
Rajasthan Royals	7	3	4	0	6	-0.872
Chennai Super Kings	7	2	5	0	4	-0.588
Kings XI Punjab	7	1	6	0	2	-0.381

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

Quinton, Surya script MI win

Abu Dhabi, Oct. 11: Mumbai Indians defeated Delhi Capitals by five wickets in an Indian Premier League match here on Sunday.

Opener Shikhar Dhawan scored unbeaten 69, while skipper Shreyas Iyer made 42 as DC scored 162 for four.

For MI, Krunal Pandya picked up two wickets giving away 26 runs.

Later chasing the target, Quinton de Kock and Suryakumar Yadav scored 53 each to guide MI home with two balls to spare.

Earlier, Dhawan gave himself enough time to play sheet anchor's role even as MI bowlers did a decent job in the slog overs to not let the batsmen play too many big

SCORECARD

Delhi Capitals: Prithvi Shaw c Krunal Pandya b Boult 4, Shikhar Dhawan (not out) 69, Ajinkya Rahane lbw b Krunal Pandya 15, Shreyas Iyer c Boult b Krunal Pandya 42, Marcus Stoinis run out 13, Alex Carey (not out) 14. **Extras:** (w-5) 5. **Total:** (for 4 wks, in 20 overs) 162.

FOW: 1-4, 2-24, 3-109, 4-130

Bowling: Trent Boult 4-0-36-1, James Pattinson 3-0-37-0, Jasprit Bumrah 4-0-26-0, Krunal Pandya 4-0-26-2, Kieron Pollard 1-0-10-0, Rahul Chahar 4-0-27-0.

Mumbai Indians: R. Sharma (c) c Rabada b AR Patel 5, O de Kock c Shaw b Ashwin 53, S. Yadav c Iyer b Rabada 53, Ishan Kishan c A. Patel b Rabada 28, H. Pandya c Carey b Stoinis 0, K. Pollard (not out) 11, K. Pandya (not out) 12. **Extras:** (w-4) 4. **Total:** (for 5 wks, in 19.4 over) 166.

FOW: 1-31, 2-77, 3-130, 4-130, 5-152

Bowling: K. Rabada 4-0-28-2, A. Nortje 4-0-28-0, A. Patel 3-0-24-1, R. Ashwin 4-0-35-1, H. Patel 2-0-20-0, M. Stoinis 2.4-0-31-1.

shots. Dhawan's unbeaten 69-run knock came off 52 balls with six fours and a six, while Iyer's 33-ball 42

had five shots to the fence.

After Prithvi Shaw (4) was snared early by Trent Boult and Ajinkya

Rahane too following him back in the dug out soon, there were no free runs for the Capitals in the beginning after electing to bat.

Rahane, playing his first game of the season, was trapped in front of the wicket by Krunal Pandya, introduced timely by MI skipper Rohit Sharma, considering that the India Test vice-captain struggles against left-arm spinners.

With in-form Iyer and Dhawan at the crease, the boundaries came here and there. It kept the scoreboard ticking at a decent run-rate.

Iyer's trademark along the ground-strokes, played with straight bat, were effective and a treat to watch. — PTI

CSK'S BATTING MAIN WORRY FOR DHONI

Dubai, Oct. 11: Chennai Super Kings skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni says batting has become his team's major worry in an IPL campaign thrown haywire by "too many holes in the ship".

"Too many holes in the ship and when you try to plug one there is water flowing from another. We need to get our act together," Dhoni said after they lost to RCB by 37 runs on Saturday night.

"Batting has been bit of a worry and today also it was evident. We can't just keep turning up..It is almost the same thing that is happening maybe the individuals are different." — PTI

KKR fret over Russell's fitness, Narine's chucking complaint

Sharjah, Oct. 11: Kolkata Knight Riders will have a lot on their plate when they take on a resurgent Royal Challengers Bangalore in an IPL match here on Monday with their lethal weapon Sunil Narine blunted by a chucking complaint and fitness clouds hovering over enforcer Andre Russell.

Narine, who have had multiple complaints of suspect action against him, is again in trouble after on-field umpires' report post KKR's thrilling two-run win against Kings XI Punjab in which the spinner played a massive role.

Not only KXIP, the match against CSK also witnessed Narine's entry after 10 overs, stifling M.S. Dhoni's men. It seemed that the

NUMBERS GAME

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL:
● Matches: 24
● Kolkata: 14
● Bangalore: 10

MEETING IN 2019

● Kolkata Knight Riders beat Royal Challengers Bangalore by 5 wickets at Bangalore
● RCB beat KKR by 10 runs at Kolkata

FOR THE RECORD

● AB de Villiers' duck in the previous match against Chennai Super Kings was ninth in 148 innings of 160 matches in IPL.
● Virat Kohli scored 674 runs at an average of 37.44 in 21 innings of 24 matches against Kolkata Knight Riders in IPL.
— S. PERVEZ KAISER

spinner was getting his mojo back and could have

been a handful for Virat Kohli's in-form men.

However, the first warning (a second one would bar him from bowling) from the IPL authorities is certain to ring alarm bells in the KKR camp as he was supposed to be Dinesh Karthik's 'go-to' man in pressure situations.

Andre Russell, who hurt his knee when he accidentally dived into the advertisement boards after missing a catch on Saturday, could also be a doubtful starter.

RCB, on the other hand, are coming into the game following a 37-run morale boosting victory against CSK and will fancy their chances. The biggest positive for RCB is that captain Kohli is slowly hitting the peak. — PTI



Spain's Rafael Nadal celebrates his 6-0, 6-2, 7-5 win over Novak Djokovic of Serbia in the French Open men's singles final at Roland Garros in Paris on Sunday. — AP

Nadal lifts 13th French trophy

Paris, Oct. 11: Rafael Nadal demolished Novak Djokovic 6-0, 6-2, 7-5 to win his 13th French Open and equal Roger Federer's all-time record of 20 Grand Slam titles on Sunday.

For world number one Djokovic, the defeat ended his hopes of an 18th Slam and of becoming the first man since Rod Laver in 1969 to win all four majors twice.

Nadal, 34, claimed his 100th match win at Roland Garros against just two defeats since his 2005 debut.

The Spaniard, the oldest champion in Paris since Andres Gimeno in 1972, claimed the title without dropping a set.

He finished the one-sided affair with just 14 unforced errors to his opponent's 52. "Congrats to Novak for another great tournament. Sorry for today. We've played plenty of times together — one day one wins, another the other," said Nadal.

"After all the things I have been through in my career with injuries, I could not have done it without my family."

Nadal said he wasn't even thinking about matching Federer's record.

"It's been a very tough year. Winning here means

LEADING MEN'S GRAND SLAM WINNERS

20: Roger Federer (SUI)
20: Rafael Nadal (ESP)
17: Novak Djokovic (SRB)
14: Pete Sampras (USA)
12: Roy Emerson (AUS)
11: Rod Laver (AUS), Bjorn Borg (SWE)
10: Bill Tilden (USA)

everything to me so it's not about equalling Roger on 20, for me today it's just a Roland Garros victory," said Nadal who had skipped the US Open due to the global health crisis.

"Roland Garros means everything to me. I spent most of the most important moments of my tennis career here.

"Just playing here is a true inspiration. The love story I have with this court and city is unbelievable."

For Djokovic, it was just his second loss of 2020 following his default at the US Open.

'KING OF CLAY'

"Today, Rafa showed why you are the king of clay. I was out-played by a better player."

Nadal also used his victory speech to thank organisers for staging the tournament, pushed back from its traditional May-June slot due to the coronavirus pandemic. — AFP



Lewis Hamilton of Mercedes celebrates on the podium after winning the Eifel Grand Prix at the Nuerburgring racetrack in Nuerburg, Germany, on Sunday. — AP

HAMI EQUALS SCHUMI'S RECORD WITH 91st WIN

Nürburgring (Germany), Oct. 11: Lewis Hamilton controlled his emotions on Sunday as he equalled

Michael Schumacher's record of 91 F1 wins with a measured triumph and thoughtful homage at the Eifel Grand Prix.

After completing his seventh win of the season, Hamilton was surprised to be greeted by Mick Schumacher, the son of the German seven-time champion. Mick presented a red helmet from his father's career collection to Hamilton.

"Congratulations on a great achievement," said Jr Schumacher.

"Thank you so much," he said. "It's such an honour. I don't know what to say. When you grow up watching someone and idolising them..."

"Seeing his dominance for so long, I don't think I imagined I would be near

him in terms of records so it's an incredible honour.

"As I came in the pit lane, that was only when I realised I had equalled the record. "I hadn't computed it when I crossed the line — and I couldn't have done this without this incredible team pushing behind me. So, a big thank you — and huge respect to Michael."

Taking full advantage of team-mate and pole-sitter Valtteri Bottas' early retirement with engine problems, the runaway series leader and six-time champion drove a well-judged race to claim his landmark victory. On a circuit where Schumacher, a seven-time champion, won five times, Hamilton came home 4.5 seconds ahead of Red Bull's Max Verstappen to take his second Nurburgring victory, the other for McLaren in 2011. Daniel Ricciardo was third for Renault. — AFP

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