

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA  
ANANTAPUR | FRIDAY | 16 OCTOBER 2020

## WEATHER



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

## COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+62,951)	(+863)
73,64,821	1,12,135
covid19india.org	
STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS	
(+1,432)	(+8)
TS: 2,17,670	1,249
(+4,038)	(+38)
AP: 7,71,503	6,357

### CASES AROUND THE WORLD

3,90,01,521
DEATHS
11,00,215
COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES
213
worldometers.info/coronavirus

## ASTROGUIDE

**Sarvari:** Dakshinayana  
**Tithi:** Adhika Ashwayuja Bahula Amavasya till 1 am (Saturday)  
**Star:** Hasta till 2.56 pm  
**Varjyam:** 9.54 pm to 11.18 pm  
**Durmuhurtam:** 8.32 am to 9.19 am; 12.25 pm to 1.11 pm  
**Rahukalam:** 10.30 am to 12 noon  
**HIJRI CALENDAR**  
**Safar ul Muzaffar 28, 1442 AH**  
**PRAYERS**  
**Fajar:** 5.31 am  
**Zohar:** 12.26 pm  
**Asar:** 4.28 pm  
**Maghrib:** 6.05 pm  
**Isha:** 7.21 pm  
**SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.08 AM**  
**SUNSET TODAY 6.25 PM**  
**MOONSET 12.42 PM**  
**MOONRISE 12.56 AM**

## COUNTER POINT

### Flashback



**We feel these masks will protect us from goons and police!**

Subhani, who began CounterPoint on December 11, 1992 and took only one break from work in his entire career, is on personal leave of bereavement. We present some of his best cartoons of rib-tickling wisdom published on Page 1 and on the Edit Page till he returns.

## INSIDE

■ **STATE... PAGE 3**  
**AP registers 4,038 new Covid cases, 38 deaths**

## SHOW TIME

**30% cinemas to commence operations initially**

# Theatres in AP to open on Oct. 22

**K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC**  
VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 15

Cinema theatres across Andhra Pradesh will start opening in phases from October 22, announced Visakhapatnam Distributors' Association president K. Vamsi Kishore. In conversation with *Deccan Chronicle* here on Thursday, he said though Central government has announced opening of cinema theatres, it issued the necessary guidelines only on Wednesday. As per that, cinema theatre managements will need to buy equipment to follow Covid protocols, like thermal guns, sanitisation liquids, making adjustments to fill only 50 per cent of seats in theatres, and marking queue lines outside the booking offices. "In addition to these, we need content to draw

# Cinemas across India open before festivals

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, OCT. 15

Cinemas theatres in several parts of the country opened after seven months on Thursday, with a few film enthusiasts venturing warily into movie watching in a Covid-19 'contactless' era of alternate seating, 50 per cent capacity, packaged snacks, thermal checks and sanitisation protocols.

crowds. None will spend money to watch old films. But new releases will have to come from Telengana. They will be released in TS and Andhra Pradesh simultaneously," Vamsi dis-

While theatres and multiplexes remain closed in states like Telangana state, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Chhattisgarh, they opened in several places, including Delhi and parts of Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat, with stringent dos and don'ts in keeping with the new normal. The TS government is yet to take a decision on the reopening of cinema halls.

closed. He said similarly, unless Maharashtra government gives permission to open theatres, no new Hindi movie can be sourced for exhibition in TS and AP. That will be another

reason for theatres to open in a staggered manner, he added. Both the Telugu-speaking states have around 1,500 theatres. But all the theatres may not open at one go. Initially, 30 per cent of cinemas will commence operations. Based on people's response, the others will take a decision. General secretary of Telangana Film Federation Komaram Venkatesh said TS is waiting for theatres to reopen in Andhra Pradesh. He maintained that it will not be viable for distributors if only one state opens its cinema halls. Theatre owners have also requested the government to waive power bills of the lockdown period or subsidise the amount as also tax. Vamsi recalled that former chief minister Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy removed the slab system of taxation.

## NATION | 4

**Nitish insulted by father, says Chirag**



## WORLD | 5

**Biden vows 11 mn will get citizenship**

## SPORTS | 8

**Mumbai gear up for Kolkata clash**



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# GST dues: Centre to borrow ₹1.1 L-cr on behalf of states

## It is not clear who will service interest, principal payments

**SANGEETHA G. | DC**  
CHENNAI, OCT. 15

In a move that may end the impasse with the states, the Centre has decided to borrow ₹1.1 lakh crore on behalf of the states under a special window to meet the shortfall of Goods and Services Tax (GST) compensation. Under the special window, the estimated shortfall of ₹1.1 lakh crore (assuming all states join) will be borrowed by the Government of India in appropriate tranches, the Centre said. The amount will be passed on to the states as a back-to-back loan in lieu of GST compensation cess releases. This will not have any impact on the fiscal deficit of the Centre. The amounts will be reflected as the capital receipts of the state governments and as part of financing of its respective fiscal deficits. This will avoid differential rates of interest that individual states may be charged for their respective SDLs (state development loans) and will be an administratively easier arrangement. It may also be clarified that the general government (states+centre) borrowings will not increase by this step. The states that get the benefit from the special window are likely to borrow a considerably lesser amount from the additional borrowing facility of 2 per cent of GSDP (from 3 to 5 per cent) under the Atmanirbhar package.

It was not mentioned who will service the interest and principal payments. A few states have been opposing the options given by the Centre to borrow money to fill the deficit and had asked the Centre to borrow money on their behalf. They included Punjab, Kerala, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh and Telangana. "It is a welcome step, though it does not meet our full demand. But the Centre has to come back to the discussion table and negotiate with the states on the issues pending. We have been allowed to increase our FRBM limit under conditions by 2 per cent. By giving up this, we are losing some ₹70,000-₹80,000 crore. That should be negotiated," said Thomas Isaac, Kerala finance minister. "Further, there should be a formal decision on the amount to be raised in the GST Council. Increase the additional borrowing limit by 0.5 per cent and that will give us some more space to manage the finances and then negotiate on the amount that should be raised," he added. According to him, out of the total shortfall of ₹2.35 lakh crore, an amount of ₹1.25 lakh crore will be remaining after paying ₹1.1 lakh crore. Of this, around ₹50,000 or ₹60,000 crore will be paid from the current year's cess. The remaining will be paid from the cess collected after 2022.

# Godavari dists under sheet of water

Water yet to recede from low-lying areas, rescue teams pressed into service

**VADREVU SRINIVAS | DC**  
KAKINADA, OCT. 15

Although skies have opened up in many places, rain havoc continues in both East and West Godavari districts. Waters are not receding in low-lying areas where most drains, streams and rivulets are overflowing and boys are swimming on the roads. SDRF rescue teams have pressed boats into service to take essentials to rain-hit people and also to bring those stranded in the two districts. The plight of people in the surroundings of Yanamadurru drain, Yerrakaluva, Tammileru, Yeleru-Polavaram-Pushkara canals is hopelessly bad. Agriculture minister Kurasala Kannababu, while pointing out that these were the heaviest rains in over a decade, assured that the government is taking all steps to help people who have been affected. He went around FCI



Kolluru sub-inspector Ujval Kumar shifts a child delivered on a flooded road to a hospital at Avulavaripalem village in Guntur district on Thursday. — TEJO ROY ELETI

Colony, Jana Chaitanya Colony, Madhuranagar, Adarsha Nagar, Tulasi Brindavan Colony, Rajeswarinagar, Teachers Colony and other areas in Kakinada Rural con-

stituency on boats. He said that SDRF and NDRF teams have been deployed along with boats to take up rehabilitation works. He instructed special officers and mandal tahsildars to

help the victims by using Secretariat members and volunteers. He said that many encroachments on drains have been removed and after water recedes, all other encroachments

would be removed. East Godavari District Collector D.Muralidhar Reddy said that 1.13 lakh people in 126 villages of 28 mandals have been adversely affected. In the rains from October 9 to 13, a total of 218 mm rainfall was recorded. Though depression crossed the Kakinada coast two days ago, the streams, rivulets and drains are overflowing and 1,300 hectares of paddy and 1,600 hectares of horticulture crops have been damaged and enumeration will start soon. He said that 33 villages are inundated in the district and 18 relief camps are providing rehabilitation to 4,460 people. He said that 61 kutch houses, 113 huts and 232 have been damaged as were three minor irrigation projects, one RWS and an electrical feeder. He along with Joint Collector G. Lakshmisha visited several rain-affected areas.

■ **Page 2: Yanamadurru drain is overflowing**

# Stalker stabs girl to death, tries to end life by suicide

**MD ILYAS | DC**  
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 15

A stalker killed a 20-year engineering student and later tried to commit suicide here on Thursday. This is the second incident of a stalker attacking a girl in three days. A painter Nagendrababu alias Chinna Swamy went to the house of V. Divya Tejaswini at Christurajapuram and demanded her love. When the girl

refused and an altercation ensued, Chinna Swamy attacked Divya with a sharp knife and tried to commit suicide by inflicting self-injuries. Divya was taken to ESI hospital and later to a private hospital but she did not survive. Machavaram police said that Babu, a resident of Christurajapuram, was stalking Divya for some months. However, she refused his advances. On

Thursday, soon after the brutal attack, her family rushed Divya to hospital but she died. The condition of Chinna Swamy who was admitted in GGH at Guntur is stable. His family members claimed that the two had married in a temple at Mangalagiri without informing elders and showed photos of Swamy with Divya.

■ **Page 2: Victim's mom says attacker family lying**

# Adivasi killed by hunter's stray bullet

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 15

A 22-year-old Adivasi youth died on the spot when a bullet fired from a country-made gun hit him while a hunt was on for wild boars in the forests under Dumbriguda police station on Thursday. Police are in search of members of a hunting team that disappeared after the incident. The victim has been identified as Buridi

Balaram of Gadabajalubu village in Dumbriguda mandal. Dumbriguda sub-inspector said a nine-member team including the victim, Balaram, went into the forest for hunting wild boars on Wednesday evening. They carried three guns and dispersed into groups in different directions before starting their hunt. ■ **Page 2: Hunters fired on hearing leaves rustle**

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OTHER STORIES

RAILWAYS DENIES FLOODING OF BRIDGE AT TUNI

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 15

The Railway authorities have denied that the bridge over Tandava river at Tuni was flooded.

A picture showing inundation of the bridge was published in these columns on Thursday.

A release issued from South Central Railway at Vijayawada on Thursday said the bridge was strong and safe and the storm water flowed below the bridge. It was an old picture of water running over the bridge that was circulated in social media

VICTIM'S MOM SAYS ATTACKER FAMILY LYING

From page 1

Swamy's brother Nagaraju claimed that the girl's parents knew about the marriage but they did not allow them to live together. Divya's mother V. Kusuma said that her daughter was well educated and would never fall for a painter, who was addicted to ganja.

AP Mahila Commission chairperson Vasireddy Padma consoled the bereaved family members. Ms Padma said that the girl's family was no way related to Swamy. She condemned the heinous crime and sought stringent punishment for the accused. She said that the state government is waiting for Centre's approval for the Disha Act.

Vijayawada city police commissioner Battina Srinivasulu said that they were taking statements and had started investigation after registering a case.

DURGA FLYOVER TO FORMALLY OPENED TODAY

DC CORRESPONDENTS  
VIJAYAWADA/TIRUPATI OCT. 15

The much-awaited iconic Kanaka Durga flyover in Vijayawada is all set for its formal inauguration on Friday after several postponements. Minister for roads and buildings M. Sankaranarayana said the flyover will be dedicated to the nation when Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy and Union minister for transport Nitin Gadkari jointly inaugurate it on Friday (October 16) at 11.30 am.

Sankaranarayana, Krishna district collector A. Md. Imtiaz and YSRC MLAs Malladi Vishnu and Jogi Ramesh inspected the Durga flyover on Thursday. The launch of Kanaka Durga flyover will ease traffic flow in the city as vehicles taking Vijayawada-Hyderabad highway can take the flyover instead of passing through the city.

The flyover was earlier scheduled to be opened on September 4 but the event got postponed due to the death of former president of India Pranab Mukherjee. Later, the government decided to inaugurate the flyover on September 18. The inauguration was again postponed after Union minister Nitin Gadkari tested positive for Covid-19.

The Union Minister for road transport and highways is also expected to participate in several other functions of laying foundation stones or inaugurating national highways in Chittoor district on Friday.

According to officials, Gadkari will perform online Bhoomi Puja for various projects worth ₹3,475 crore. The AP CM will also join the Union minister online for these events.

In addition, three projects completed in the district at an estimated cost of ₹1,244.59 crore will be dedicated to the nation.

The minister will take part in the inauguration of a newly built 48-km road on the NH-4 from Nalagampalli to the Karnataka state border. This stretch has been built at a cost of ₹1,110 crore to facilitate Tirupati-bound traffic from Karnataka.

Two Rail over Bridges (RoBs) built at a cost of ₹66 crore and ₹78.59 crore near Doddipalli and Muttrevelu on Tirupati-Chittoor road will also be inaugurated.

Foundation stones will be laid for development of 57 km of roads on NH-71 between Renigunta and Naidupeta at a cost of ₹2,225 crore. The Union minister will lay online foundation stone for construction of a 1.4-km long RoB on Pakala-Dharmavaram railway line near Kurabalakota on Madanapalli-Rayachoti highway.

State suffers crop damage in one lakh hectares due to rains

Paddy crops suffered the highest damage in about 70,423 hectares in AP

SAMPAT G.  
SAMRITAN I DC  
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 15

Andhra Pradesh has suffered damage to several crops in nearly one lakh hectares following the heavy rainfall of the last few days.

Based on a preliminary assessment, agriculture authorities have reported damage to several crops in about 90,000 hectares in as many as 11 districts, including Kadapa, Anantapur, Visakhapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari, Prakasam, Vizianagaram, Guntur, Kurnool, Srikakulam and Krishna. East Godavari has suffered crop damage in a large area covering nearly 39,000 hectares, while Prakasam registered crop damage only in about 200 hectares. Paddy crops suffered the highest damage in about 70,423 hectares, cotton in 13,165 hectares, black gram in 1,470 hectares, maize in 1,034 hectares, sugarcane in 669 hectares and chillies in 572 hectares.

Other crops like bajra, castor, groundnut, jowar, korra, ragi, sunflower, red gram, papaya, banana, soyabean, lily and flower crops, vegetables, onion, tobacco, jute, turmeric and green gram also suffered damages.

The authorities have also noticed sand casting in agricultural fields in about 476 hectares and soil erosion in 476 hectares.

Horticulture authorities have also come up with preliminary reports on damage to several crops in nearly 6,500 hectares covering districts like West Godavari, Kurnool, Vizianagaram, Prakasam, Kadapa, Visakhapatnam, East Godavari, Krishna, Guntur and Srikakulam.

The damaged crops include cashew, carrot, cluster beans, mango, sweet orange, drumstick, Tapioca, oil palm and flowers like chrysanthemum and others.

They have said that nearly 11,110 farmers have been affected and the estimated loss has been pegged at ₹13,161.45 lakh. Farmers who suffered crop damage to the tune of 33 per cent are supposed to get financial relief or input subsidy and it has been estimated at ₹1,107.36 lakh.

Meanwhile, farmers are a worried lot as if the rainfall continues for a few more days, it may cause loss of crops due to soaking of roots of various crops in inundated fields for more than a week.

The authorities maintain that unless the water recedes from the fields, it will not be possible for officials to visit them and assess the exact damage or loss to the crops. However, they say that the state government has issued directions to enumerate the exact extent of crop damage or loss so that the farmers will be given financial relief crop-wise to help them raise the crops again.

Horticulture additional director, K. Balaji Naik, said, "We are expecting the crop damage or loss to rise further up to 10,000 hectares by the time we complete total enumeration. We don't expect any shortage of horticulture crops and resultant rise in their prices as there is market intervention to ensure supply and regulate prices."

All parties pay tributes to former President Kalam

DC CORRESPONDENTS  
VIJAYAWADA/KURNOOL  
/KADAPA, OCT. 15

Rich tributes have been paid to former President of India A.P.J. Abdul Kalam on his 89th birth anniversary, which is also observed as World Students' Day.

Paying his tributes, Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy tweeted, "Bharat Ratna Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam's story of persistence, ability and sheer courage is a guiding light to millions who dare to dream and work towards fulfilment of



Vegetable crops submerged in the banks of Krishna river near the Undavalli bund near Vijayawada on Thursday.

— C. NARAYANA RAO

Onion farmers worst hit in Kurnool district

D. SIVA RAMI REDDI | DC  
KURNOOL OCT. 15

With excess rainfall in Kurnool district during the kharif season, onion farmers are badly hit.

While the market rate per kg of onion is above ₹50, the growers have lost a good crop.

Market yard officials say onion prices are set to grow as there is a fall in supply to the market yard. The kharif season which began on a promising note in the month of June with early rains took no time to evaporate the hopes of farmers due to excess rainfall recorded.

In the month of June, the district saw 93 per cent excess rainfall. Against the normal 77.2 mm of rainfall, the district recorded 148.8 mm. It was followed by another bout of rainfall in July and the district recorded 122 per cent excess rainfall. Against 117.23 mm of normal rainfall, the district saw 260.7 mm.

VIZAG FLOOD LOSS PUT AT ₹85 CRORE

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 15

The loss due to the rains caused by the deep depression in Bay of Bengal has been put at ₹85 crore, said minister for tourism Muttamsetti Srinivasa Rao and collector V. Vinay Chand.

Addressing a press conference here on Thursday, they said crops were destroyed in 285 villages under 30 mandals and belonging to 13,175 farmers. He said paddy was destroyed in 5,075b hectares, sugarcane in 666 hectares and horticulture products in 85 hectares.

Similarly 157 km road was destroyed and 372 electrical poles were uprooted.

● THE ONION bulbs are germinating with fresh shoots and sprouts making the produce not fit for consumption.

It was only in August that there was a deviation of just two percent from the normal rainfall of 135 mm, said an official.

Again, in September, the district had 141 per cent excess rainfall as it received 302.9 mm against 125.7 mm rainfall.

In October, as of date, the district received already 98.5 mm rainfall against the full month average of 114.5 mm.

Surya Narayana Reddy, a farmer in Chapirevula village, near Nandyal, said that it was the excess rainfall that dashed the hopes of farmers during the kharif season. He said at least 30,000 acres of crops got lost in the man-made disaster of Kundu river as the river was used as a

Yanamadurru drain overflowing

From page 1

Yanamadurru drain is overflowing and waters are inundating fields.

Irrigation officials said that a breach has been developed in Nandamuru aqueduct and issued a second warning at the drain as it is overflowing at 39 feet, which is way above its original capacity of 32 feet.

It caused closure of hundreds of sluices from Duvva to Bhimavaram downstream canals.

The officials said that the rain water from Khammam district and Jagannadreddygudem, Buttayigudem and other rivulets reached Salt-Creek through Yanamadurru drain.

A farmer Dandu Suryanarayana Raju said that

carrying canal for lifting Krishna waters to take them to Nellore Somasila reservoir.

In respect of loss to standing crops, an official said that in September alone, due to heavy rains, 16196 hectares of crops were lost, affecting 28642 farmers spread over 240 villages in 35 mandals in the district.

Sambi Reddy, a farmer in Nandikotkur, said he had grown onions in eight acres of land and the crops were about to be harvested but heavy rains damaged the bulbs and the entire crop was destroyed.

Ms Jaya Lakshmi, Kurnool market yard official, said the supplies to the market yard had dwindled due to low harvest and onion rates are set to shoot up.

Venugopal Reddy, convener of Kundu Porata Samithi, said farmers in Koilkuntla, Chagalamarri, Nandyal, Panyam and Allagadda taluks have lost heavily due to floods.

the threat will remain until Yanamadurru drain is modernised. Flood Superintendent and Undi Irrigation Deputy Executive Engineer S. Venkateswara Rao said that the Yanamadurru drain was also overflowing.

Meanwhile, the Kakinada Municipal Corporation has engaged 10 boats to help those in slum areas which are completely inundated.

KMC additional commissioner K. Naga Narasimha Rao said that all steps were being taken up to drain out water.

Kakinada MLA Dwarampudi Chandrasekhara Reddy said that boats have been deployed to low-lying areas and all precautionary steps were being taken on a priority basis.

TD cheif: YSRC gives a damn to people's lives

YSRC failed in water mngt: Naidu

MD ILYAS | DC  
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 15

Telugu Desam chief N Chandrababu Naidu on Thursday slammed the YSR Congress government for 'not giving any value' to people's life and property when the State was crippled by heavy rains, floods and natural calamities. He alleged that the government has miserably failed in water management at a time when many districts were badly hit. He claimed that YSRC leaders were only interested in spreading false propaganda on the submersion threat to Am-

● CHANDRABABU NAIDU called upon his party leaders to visit all the flood-affected places and stand by the needy people in their hour of crisis. It would be the duty of the elected representatives to rescue people.

aravati Capital City rather than going to the rescue of the affected people.

Addressing a meeting with party leaders from the rain and flood affected districts, Mr Naidu expressed concern that thousands of villages were suffering for the past four days, crops were lost in over a lakh acres while paddy, cotton, chilli, groundnut, banana,

Announcement of nominated BC posts on Oct. 18

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 15

YSR Congress government is all set to announce names of chairmen and directors of the 56 BC corporations on October 18. Their nomination is aimed at supporting the economic and social development of the various castes within the backward classes.

BC corporations are being established for all those castes with a population of above 30 thousand. Women will be given priority in the nominated posts, with 50 percent of the directors' posts of going to them. Among the 56 nominated chairperson posts, 29 will go to women and 27 to men. All districts will be given importance when appointing BCs to the posts of chairpersons and directors.

Nominated posts of chairmen and directors will be announced for 56 BC corporations belonging to the castes of Rajaka, Kuruba/Kuruma, Thogata/Thogataveerakshetriya, Kunchiti Vakkaliga, Vanakulakshatriya, Pala-Ekari, Mudaliar, Ediga, Gandla / Telikula, Perika, Agnikula Kshatriya, Ayyaraka, Shaikh/Sheikh, Vaddera, Kummari Sha-

livahana, Krishna Balija /Poosala, Yadava, Nayee Brahmin, Padmasali, Noor Basha/Dudekula, Viswabrahmins, Sagara/Uppara, Gowda, Vaddelu, Bhatraja, Valmiki/Boya, Kurni/Karikalabhakthulu, Veerashaiva Lingayat, Besta, Mudiraj / Mutrasi, Jangam, Bondili, Muslim Sanchara Jathula, Chattadasrivaishnava, Arekatika/Katika, Devanga, Medara, Kalinga, Kalinga Komati/Kalinga Vysya, Reddika, Polinativelamas, Kurakula/Pondara, Srisayana, Mastyakara, Gavara, Nagaralu, Yata, Nagavamsam, Turupu Kapu/Gajula Kapu, Koppula Velama, Sistikaranam, Dasari, Surya Balija, Setti Balija, Stirasa and Most Backward Classes Corporation.

YSRC government led by CM Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has made seven BCs as ministers, and one deputy CM's post also going to them. The post of Assembly Speaker has also gone to a BC. Further YSRC government has also formed a BC Commission. The government has spent ₹33,500 crore on 2,71,37,253 BCs in the past 16 months through Jagananna Amma Vodi, YSR Cheyutha and several other schemes.

Govt to pay civic staff salaries

MD ILYAS | DC  
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 15

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy sought municipalities to achieve self-sustainability and assured that the government would pay salaries to all municipal employees.

He was speaking at a review meeting on municipalities and municipal Corporations vis-a-vis the Central guidelines of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) on Thursday. He stated that Urban Local Bodies should follow guidelines of the Centre particularly with regard to development programmes.

Mr Jagan Mohan Reddy stated that revenue earned by municipalities should be spent on the development works of the same municipality and clarified that the State government does not divert these funds for any other works.

The Chief Minister said that revenue of each municipality and corpo-

ration has to be spent locally on various projects and initiatives, as this makes them self-sustainable. He also announced that employees' salaries will be paid directly by the state government.

He directed the authorities to prepare a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) focusing on reforms that are to be brought in for providing better services to the public alongside developing municipalities and corporations, including the revenue expenditure of each municipality.

The CM wanted officials to focus on maintaining proper sanitation by keeping the water and sewerage system in good condition and cleaning them on a regular basis. Only charges for maintaining sanitation, water and sewerage have to be collected, he added.

Minister Botsa Satyanarayana, Chief Secretary Nilam Sawhney, and others were present.

Hunters fired on hearing leaves rustle

From page 1

One of the hunters, Purna, heard the rustling sound of leaves and immediately opened fire. On searching, he found that the bullet had hit Balaram, killing him on the spot.

Upon this, all hunters vanished from the spot, leaving behind Balram's body.

Balram's wife Pratima came to the police station on Thursday morning and lodged a complaint that her husband had

been shot dead.

Following this, police brought the body from the forest and sent it to the government hospital for post-mortem. They did not find any gun near the spot but collected some empty cartridges from the site of killing.

A case has been registered under section 302/part 2 of IPC and sections 25 and 27 of Indian Arms Act.

Police are also examining whether it was an intentional killing instead of a freak mishap.





## IN BRIEF

**14 red sanders logs seized**

**Kadapa:** The Proddutur forest officials held three accused and seized 14 red sander logs worth ₹1.75 lakhs and one truck. The accused were sent to remand on Thursday morning. According to the sources, following the orders of the Proddutur forest divisional officer Nagarjuna Reddy, the Range Officer Ravikumar and staff made a combing operation in Khajipeta section of Lankamala forest. They found some people trying to load these red sander logs into the truck. The forest officials held the accused and seized the vehicle and the red sander logs. The accused were presented in the court and remanded.

**Uniforms given to municipal drivers**

**Kadapa:** CITU district president Kamanur Srinivasu said that as a result of many movements, uniforms and raincoats were issued to drivers and sanitation workers today. He was addressing a meeting at Kadapa Municipal Corporation on Thursday under the auspices of AP Municipal Workers and Employees Union Federation Kadapa District Drivers Union. Raincoats and uniform cloths were handed over to the drivers.

**Golden hour crucial, says SP**

**Kadapa:** District SP Karur Karunapathy Nagendra Kumar Anburajan said that most of the deaths in the country were due to road accidents and hoped that the police would act in a timely manner at the time of the accident and save the lives of the victims with first aid. Police conducted an awareness program with experts on first aid for Highway Patrol, Blue Coat and White Coat personnel in the district on Thursday at the parade ground. Speaking on the occasion, SP said that about 1,270 people die in road accidents in our country on a daily basis. Victims can be rescued from a dangerous situation with first aid after reaching the scene immediately.

**TIRUPATI SP EXTENDS AID TO RAPE VICTIM**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
TIRUPATI, OCT. 15

The Tirupati Urban police on Thursday arrested the part-time Christian preacher, who allegedly sexually assaulted a 20-year-old girl near Thukivakam village under the Gajulamandam PS limits in Renigunta rural.

Disclosing the case details to mediapiersons here, SP Avula Ramesh Reddy said that the accused Mallem Devashayam was arrested at Tirupati bus stand on Thursday evening, three days after the victim filed a complaint at the Gajulamandam PS in this regard.

Brushing away the allegations levelled against the DISHA police that they didn't lodge a complaint when the victim approached them after the incident, the SP said that though the incident occurred on October 3, the victim has approached the police only on Oct 12.

"The accused allegedly threatened to eliminate the victim if she approached the police. She was scared and confined herself to her house. The victim, however, gained courage with the help of her friend one Nandini and approached the police on October 12 and lodged a complaint against the victim", the SP said.

"Soon after the victim lodged a complaint at the Gajulamandam PS on October 12, a special team led by DISHA DSP R. Ramaraju was formed to investigate the case. Acting on a tip-off, CI G. Amarnath Reddy, SI M. Srinivasulu arrested the accused at the Tirupati bus stand at around 4 pm on Thursday", he added.

The SP also extended financial assistance of ₹25,000 from his salary to the victim. He appealed to the people to lodge their complaints without any fear and asked them to contact either 100 or 8099999977 if they face any situation.

Meanwhile, reacting to a twitter post by the retired IPS officer M. Nageswara Rao, who alleged that police are reportedly under pressure to hush up the case, the Urban SP clarified that the department didn't try to hush up the case and that they didn't undergo any pressure regarding the case.

"Rumours and misconceptions spread fast on social media, leading to unwanted confusion and panic among the people. It's really unfortunate that a few retired police officials were also making false accusations against the AP police, supporting a political party," the SP said.

**Visual treat**

2,94,369 cusecs of floodwaters is let downwards from Nagarjunasagar as 16 gates of the dam were lifted on Thursday. Meanwhile, over 5 lakh cusecs of water was released from Srisaillam dam into the Nagarjunasagar dam due to heavy inflows on Thursday. Heavy rain in catchment areas of Krishna and Tungabhadra rivers led to a surge in the water inflow. Over 10 spillway gates of Srisaillam dam were opened to a height of 20 feet on Thursday to let out the excess water.

— TEJO ROY ELETI, D. SIVA RAMI REDDI

**AP registers 4,038 new Covid cases, 38 deaths**

**In the last 24 hrs, over 5,622 patients were discharged**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 15

Andhra Pradesh has registered 4,038 new Covid-19 cases in the last 24 hours, raising the overall tally to 7,71,503, apart from 38 additional deaths, taking the death toll in the state to 6,357.

State health authorities have released their Coronavirus bulletin here on Thursday reporting that out of 73,767 samples tested, 4,038 individuals have tested positive. In all, the state government has tested 68,46,040 samples so far. Of them, 7,25,099 patients have been discharged after recovery, while 40,047 patients are still active with the virus and taking medical treatment.

Among daily cases of new Corona cases confirmed, West Godavari takes the lead with 686 infections, followed by 548 in East Godavari, 489 in Chittoor, 421 in Krishna, 390 in Guntur, 299 in Prakasam, 281 in Kadapa, 232 in Anantapur, 196 in Visakhapatnam, 178 in Nellore, 119 in Srikakulam, 103 in Kurnool and 96 in Vizianagaram.

East Godavari continues to register the highest number of 1,08,434 cumulative Covid-19 positive cases, followed by 77,445 in West Godavari, 72,214 in Chittoor, 61,842 in Anantapur, 61,347 in Guntur, 58,536 in Kurnool, 57,469 in Nellore, 55,545 in

Prakasam, 53,178 in Visakhapatnam, 49,139 in Kadapa, 42,205 in Srikakulam, 37,921 in Vizianagaram, 33,331 in Krishna, 2,461 from other states and 434 cases from other countries.

The rate of recovery among Coronavirus-infected patients has been high in East Godavari with 1,01,116 recoveries, followed by 71,949 in West Godavari, 66,239 in Chittoor, 59,408 in Anantapur, 56,755 in Kurnool, 56,362 in Guntur, 55,752 in Nellore, 51,675 in Prakasam, 50,685 in Visakhapatnam, 45,525 in Kadapa, 40,417 in Srikakulam, 36,190 in Vizianagaram, 30,131 in Krishna, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

Among the 38 new deaths due to Covid-19, Chittoor accounted for nine deaths, followed by seven in Prakasam, five in Krishna, four in East Godavari, three each in Guntur, Kadapa and Visakhapatnam, and one each in Anantapur, Kurnool, Vizianagaram and West Godavari districts.

Chittoor has registered the highest number of 727 cumulative Coronavirus deaths, followed by 580 in East Godavari, 573 in Guntur, 550 in Prakasam, 533 in Anantapur, 512 in Krishna, 484 in Visakhapatnam, 480 in Kurnool, 477 in West Godavari, 474 in Nellore, 407 in Kadapa, 334 in Srikakulam and 226 in Vizianagaram.

**RTC RUNS 1,850 SPL BUSES FOR DASARA**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 15

The APSRTC is operating about 1,850 special bus services during the Dasara season starting from October 15 to 28 to various destinations from various depots.

However, APSRTC officials said that bus services would not be available to Tamil Nadu and Telangana during the Dasara season.

APSRTC would operate 562 special bus services to Bangalore from various depots. From East Godavari, APSRTC would operate six services, from Vijayawada, 18, from Guntur, six, from Ongole, 24, from Nellore, 24, from Chittoor, 184, from Kurnool, 92, from Kadapa, 68 and from Anantapur, 120 bus services to Bangalore. Further, APSRTC would operate six bus services to Pondicherry from Chittoor.

The APSRTC will operate 130 special services to Srikakulam from various depots, 250 special services to Tirupati, 342 special bus services to Vijayawada, 194 special services to Visakhapatnam, 46 to Rajahmundry, 30 to Ongole, 34 to Nellore, 24 to Kurnool, 26 to Kakinada, 20 to Kadapa, 20 to Guntur, 26 to Amalapuram, 12 to Bellary, 12 to Bhimavaram from various depots this Dasara to meet the demand.

APSRTC ED, operations, K. S. Brahmanandha Reddy, said that passengers can avail the advance ticket 'reservation' facility that has been provided on Dasara special buses. He said that authorities have been directed to increase the number of buses according to the demand. He said that talks on RTC services in Telugu states are not yet complete and buses are not running to Telangana. He said that they are hoping to restore APSRTC services to Telangana as soon as the talks between the two states' RTCs are fruitful.

■ APSRTC would not run buses to Tamil Nadu and Telangana during Dasara. Buses will be run to Bengaluru, Pondicherry

**COAL YARD TO BE MOVED FROM RAJAHMUNDRY**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
RAJAHMUNDRY, OCT. 15

Rajahmundry MP M. Bharat said that the Railway Board Chairman V.K. Yadav has agreed to shift the coal yard to some other place from Rajahmundry railway station.

He said that he has submitted a memorandum to the Board Chairman, seeking the shift of the coal yard and also development of Rajahmundry Railway Station. He said that due to the Coal Yard, the Rajahmundry City was being badly affected with environmental problems.

He said that the Railways has proposed a third railway line through the Railway Station, but it may take time.

He said that meanwhile, the coal yard should be shifted. He also said that East side railway platforms and roads should be developed by widening the road with 100 feet.

He said that the Board Chairman promised that the escalator facility would be provided to the third platform for the convenience of the passengers.

**SI, youth, locals turn midwives**

**MD ILYAS | DC**  
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 15

A timely response from the police and locals helped the safe delivery of a pregnant woman amidst unavailability of medical services in the Eepurulanka village, Kolluru mandal, Guntur district.

The village was surrounded by floodwater of the Nakkabavi Vagu stream due to the incessant rains and it cut off transportation due to overflowing of the floodwater on the causeway.

According to reports, N. Bhagayalakshmi's labour pains began and relatives started in a vehicle toward Kollur PHC for the delivery. But after traveling five kilometres, the causeway on the road was overflowing with Nakkabavi Vagu floodwater and they were forced to stop.

The relatives informed the villagers who rushed to the spot but no one dared to cross the gushing causeway out of the fear of being washed away. They called the 108 ambulance service but it failed to reach the village due to overflowing floodwater and stopped on the main road at a distance of one km on the other side of the stream.

The locals called the police and Kolluru SI, S. Ujaval

Kumar, rushed to the village and tied a rope with the help of palm trees on both sides. With the help of local youth, Kumar tried to shift the pregnant woman on a cot but she started experiencing severe labour pains, so they stopped there without crossing the causeway.

A youth, Vanukuri Gopikrishna, who works as a physical education teacher came forward to assist with the parturition. Kumar asked the woman and she gave her consent; her relatives and villagers also agreed. The locals immediately arranged curtains and Gopikrishna who was earlier trained in emergency medical conditions helped the woman to give birth to a baby girl.

Kumar said that as the delivery was not done safely. They carried the woman on a cot and he carried the infant in his hands and crossed the causeway safely. He said that the woman with the infant was shifted to Kolluru PHC in the 108 ambulance and her condition is now stable.

The relatives and villagers praised the services of Gopikrishna and Kumar and thanked them for saving the lives of both mother and infant, taking huge risks.

**6-yr-old girl sexually assaulted by 30-yr-old**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
KAKINADA, OCT. 15

A 30-year-old man sexually assaulted a six-year-old girl in Yerrampadu village of Rajavommangi mandal on Wednesday night.

The girl's parents lodged a complaint with Rajavommangi police station. According to the Rajavommangi CI M. Naga Durga Rao, the girl's father and some of the villagers were observing the canal situation to protect themselves from the waters.

Meanwhile, the accused went to the girl's house and committed a sexual attack

on her last night. When the parents came to the house, the accused fled away from the spot. They lodged a complaint with Rajavommangi police. He said the girl was admitted in government hospital at Addateegala. On Thursday, the SC ST Cell DSP G.Alia Sagar visited the spot and he inquired about the incident with the parents of the girl at Addateegala. The girl was sent to Government General Hospital at Kakinada for medical treatment.

Rajavommangii police registered a case under POCSO Act.

**27-year-old rapes deaf, dumb minor**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
KAKINADA, OCT 15

A 27-year-old youth allegedly raped a 14 year old dumb and deaf minor girl said to be daughter and the girl also gave a birth to a baby.

According to Ziddangi police in Rajavommangi mandal, Dalli.Simhachalam of Allimeeyapalem of Kotavutla Mandal in Visakhapatnam District is working in a hotel at Visakhapatnam and he developed a relationship with a woman belongs to Urlakulapadu village of Rajavommangi mandal.

In January, 2020, he came to her house where she was not there in the house.

Then, he saw the mentally ill-health girl and raped her. But, later, family members of the girl did not reveal the incident to anybody due to their reputation.

Meanwhile, the girl gave birth in Madhurawada in Visakhapatnam on October 4. But, the doctors informed the case to the Police. Ziddangi police arrested Simhachalam and a case was registered under POCSO Act.

Peddapuram DSP Aritakula Srinivasa Rao, Rajavommangi Circle Inspector M.Nagadurga Rao and Ziddangi Sub-Inspector Mohan Kumar visited the victims. Mr Srinivasa Rao said that the accused was arrested.

**ANKURARPANAM HELD AT TIRUMALA**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
TIRUPATI, OCT. 15

The traditional Ankurarpanam ceremony for Srivari Navaratri brahmotsavams was held as per the tenets of Vaikhanasa Agama at the hill shrine of Lord Venkateswara in Tirumala on Thursday evening between 7 pm and 8 pm.

As part of the customary Senadhipathi Utsavam, the Commander in Chief Vishwakshena was taken on a ceremonious procession within the Sampangi Prakaram (inside the main shrine) in view of Covid-19 restrictions.

The holy earth where

Goddess Bhoo Devi invoked was collected and filled in the mud pots kept in Yagashala and Navadhanyas were sown in the pots seeking the blessings of all the deities under the rays of moon by Acharya Purushas amidst chanting of Vedic hymns.

Usually the well grown seedlings signify how successful the event has been carried out. The important events in the nine-day grand festival include Garuda Vahanam on Oct. 20, Pushpaka Vimanam on 21st and Golden Chariot on 23rd. The brahmotsavams will conclude on Oct. 24 with Chakrasnanam.

**COPS FOIL LG VICTIMS' DHARNA**

**K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC**  
VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 15

The Visakhapatnam police on Thursday foiled a protest dharna planned by the LG Polymers styrene gas victims by refusing them to give permission to organise the programme.

Victims, mostly from R. Venkatapuram and other villages nearby, applied for permission to organise the meeting followed by dharna. On Wednesday, around midnight, they sent letters and notices to the villages that permission has been turned down.

The police also deployed a large number of personnel in the villages since midnight and did not allow a single person to step out of the house.

The main demand of the villagers was to shift the factory from the present location, disbursement of payment of ₹1 crore to three of the 12 victims who died after inhaling the gas and the general compensation to many people ranging from ₹10,000 to ₹50,000 to many people who were hospitalised.

On May 7, styrene gas leaked from the LG Polymers which killed 12 people. Secretary of the city unit of CPI(M) Dr N. Ganga Rao, who led the dharna, said the state government promised to build a super speciality hospital to treat the people who became sick after inhaling the styrene gas, but the project had not taken shape.

A makeshift hospital has been established in a school which is being managed by two nurses.

Ganga Rao said dharna would be organised on October 20 for which he would be submitting an application to the concerned authorities afresh.



People have a tough time to reach their houses after a colony gets inundated in floodwater in Kakinanda on Thursday.

**SFI: FILE CASES ON COLLEGE MANagements**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
KADAPA, OCT. 15

The Students Federation of India (SFI) has demanded that the police register cases against college managements for forcing students to pay pending fees in the name of exams.

SFI district president MR Nayak told reporters at his district office here on Thursday that the managements are forcing the students to pay the pending fees dues of engineering diploma, degree and PG colleges in Kadapa district. If they didn't pay dues they said that they would not allow the students for exams.

A person from Rajampet of Kadapa district cheated the public of over ₹3.5 crore and fled from the town limits with his family. The police filed a case against him and investigated. According to the information from the Sub divisional police officer Vupputuri Narayana Swamy Reddy, the person identified as Rajanikanth Reddy from Rajampet.

For the past 10 years, he has been doing chit fund business and collected money from their

**Chit firm operator flees with ₹3.5 cr**

**NAGESWARA RAO**  
**BALLEDA | DC**  
KADAPA, OCT. 15

A person from Rajampet of Kadapa district cheated the public of over ₹3.5 crore and fled from the town limits with his family.

The police filed a case against him and investigated. According to the information from the Sub divisional police officer Vupputuri Narayana Swamy Reddy, the person identified as Rajanikanth Reddy from Rajampet.

For the past 10 years, he has been doing chit fund business and collected money from their

customers.

He collected lakhs of rupees from some of the people for a monthly interest of ₹3 to ₹4 per ₹100. He didn't pay the interest amounts too and converted it into chit fund instalments.

For the last few months, he was unable to repay the amounts to the customers. They have suspected him and pressurised him to collect their amounts.

Following the pressure, he flew from the town with his family. One of his customers Raja Reddy and others complained to police on Thursday morning. A case was filed.

**IPL betting racket busted in Chittoor district: 15 arrested, ₹2.65L seized**

**AVINASH P**  
**SUBRAMANYAM | DC**  
TIRUPATI, OCT. 15

The Chittoor district police busted a cricket betting racket by arresting 15 punters and seized ₹2.65 lakh cash from their possession. Acting on a tip-off, the police teams conducted

surprise raids late on Wednesday in Kodigunta area near Murakambattu by-pass road in Chittoor rural limits where the gang was engaged in betting over ongoing Indian Premier League (IPL) matches.

According to Chittoor SP S. Senthil Kumar,

because of the ongoing IPL matches, the SP has directed DSPs Thippeswamy and Sudhakar to constitute special teams to intensify vigil in Chittoor urban and rural limits and other parts of the district.

Led by Rural CI K. Balaiah, two special teams comprised of SIs

Eswariaiah, Vikram, Naga Soujanya, Shekshavali, Anil Kumar and police personnel Raj Kumar and Sudhakar were formed to keep a strict vigil on betting activities.

The special branch police had received credible information regarding betting taking place in the ongoing

IPL matches. Based on the report, the two special teams raided the Kodigunta area late on Wednesday night. In the raid, the police teams succeeded in arresting 15 punters.

The police registered a case under Section 3 and 4 of AP Gaming Act against

the punters identified as Munendra (25), Dhanasekhar (29), Damu (25), Vinod (23), Narasimha (22), Shakil Khan (26), Ashok (23), Sujith (23), Sai Kumar (23), Vignesh (28), Chandra Babu (34), Yashwanth (26), Jagadeesh (23), Viswanath (23) and Yoganand (23) of Chittoor.



SHORT TAKES

BJP-BPF ALLIANCE HEADS FOR A SPLIT

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, OCT. 15

In what has indicated a split in the ruling BJP-led alliance in Assam, the BJP has decided to contest the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) elections alone, breaking a four years old partnership with Bodoland Peoples Front (BPF) in Western Assam. The council has been in the hands of BPF for the last 17 years at a stretch.

Assam minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said, “The BTC elections will be held in December and BJP will fight the elections on its own. We are not going to have any alliance with any party. To take forward the Bodoland Territorial Region on the road to an inclusive development, we need to set up BJP’s administration in the council and our objective is to reach this goal.”

Indicating that Assam BJP is preparing to sever its ties with the BPF, Sarma said, “As on today the position is that our alliance with BPF is for five years only (till 2021). How the political equation will shape up depends on the situation in the next five years.”

SHIV SENA URGES CENTRE TO RECALL MAHA GOVERNOR

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC MUMBAI, OCT. 15

Continuing its attack on governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari, Maharashtra’s ruling party Shiv Sena has asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union home minister Amit Shah to recall him to preserve the prestige of Raj Bhavan.

“For last few months, the prestige of Raj Bhavan has been daily belittled by Koshiyari, who has shown how a person on the post of Governor should not act. His letter to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray should be called as an act of abrasiveness,” said Shiv Sena in an editorial in party mouthpiece ‘Saamana’ on Thursday.

In a letter written to Thackeray, the Governor has questioned the state government’s decision of not allowing the reopening of places of worship and asked if the Shiv Sena chief had “suddenly turned secular.” His letter had evoked a sharp response from the CM, who hit back saying he does not need the Governor’s certificate for his Hinduva credentials.

The ‘Saamana’ editorial said that the Governor had no business to support the ‘political agitation’ of BJP, who held protests demanding reopening of places of worship.

INDIA’S 1ST OSCAR WINNER BHANU ATHAIYA DIES

Mumbai, Oct. 15: Costume designer Bhanu Athaiya, India’s first Oscar winner, died at her home on Thursday after prolonged illness, her daughter said. She was 91.

Athaiya, who won an Oscar for her work in the 1983 epic film ‘Gandhi’, passed away peacefully in her sleep, her daughter Radhika Gupta said.

The last rites took place at the Chandanwadi crematorium in south Mumbai. “She passed away early morning. Eight years ago, she was diagnosed with a tumour in her brain. For the last three years, she was bedridden because one side (of her body) was paralysed,” her daughter said. The Kolhapur-born Athaiya, who worked till just five years ago, began her career as a costume designer in Hindi cinema with Guru Dutt’s 1956 superhit ‘C.I.D.’ She went on to work in over 100 films.

She won the Academy Award for Best Costume Design in Richard Attenborough’s ‘Gandhi’, with Ben Kingsley as the Mahatma, along with John Mollo. It’s too good to believe. Thank you Academy and thank you Sir Richard Attenborough for focusing world attention on India, Athaiya had said in her acceptance speech at the Academy Awards.

The veteran who defined the aesthetics of Hindi cinema through her prolific work, created some of Bollywood’s best remembered looks, including Vajrantihimala in ‘Aamrapali’, Waheeda Rehman in ‘Guide’ and Zeenat Aman in ‘Satyam Shivam Sundaram’.

In a career of more than five decades won two National Awards - for Gulzar’s mystery drama ‘Lekin’ (1990) and the period film ‘Lagaan’.



PM LIKELY TO ADDRESS RALLY NEXT WEEK

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, OCT. 15

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to address his first election rally in poll bound Bihar on October 23 or 24.

Modi may address his first rally in Arrah, which is currently represented by the RJD in the state Assembly and BJP in the Lok Sabha.

The Prime Minister, sources said, could also address around a dozen joint rallies with Chief Minister and JD(U) chief Nitish Kumar for NDA’s candidates.

The first phase of three phased polling in the state will take place on October 28. The ruling NDA’s poll plank is development while the Opposition camp has been highlighting “anti-incumbency” against the ruling coalition.

In 2015, Modi had announced ₹1.25 lakh crore special package for the state while addressing an official function. JD(U) was with the Opposition ‘mahagath-bandhan’ in 2015 which won the polls but the Nitish Kumar led outfit later rejoined the NDA camp.

Other than the Prime Minister, BJP president J.P. Nadda is likely to address more than 20 rallies, Union minister Amit Shah could address more than a dozen rallies, UP CM Yogi Adityanath and Union minister Smriti Irani could also address more than a dozen rallies.

Nitish behaved with my father haughtily: Chirag

LJP chief denies suggestions that he parted ways with JD(U) over seat-sharing



Chirag Paswan

Patna, Oct. 15: LJP president Chirag Paswan on Thursday trashed suggestions that he parted ways with Nitish Kumar’s JD(U) because of differences over seat-sharing for the Bihar Assembly polls, and accused the Chief Minister of harming the Dalit community by creating a sub-group of Mahadalits.

Paswan said his party had fought the Lok Sabha polls last year in alliance with the JD(U) because of the “compulsions” brought on by the return to the NDA of Kumar, whose party he accused of working against LJP candidates in the general elections in violation of the coalition dharma.

The 37-year-old, who recently lost his father Ram Vilas Paswan, the charismatic LJP founder, also alleged that Kumar had behaved “haughtily” when the late Union minister had called on him last year with the request to accompany him for filing nomination papers for the Rajya Sabha.

Paswan Sr. was a Rajya Sabha member and Union minister at the time of his death.

“I met Union home minister Amit Shah and BJP chief J.P. Nadda so many times in the recent past. Not once did the issue of seat-sharing crop up,” Chirag Paswan said in an interview, rubbishing suggestions that he raised a banner of revolt against the JD(U) after the latter tried to deny his party a fair share of seats.

“It must be kept in mind that the LJP has never been a fan of Nitish Kumar’s style of politics. He has harmed the Dalits by creating a sub-group of Mahadalits for his own

political gains,” he said. Chirag, who has to carry forward the impressive political legacy of his father, the tallest Dalit leader in Bihar since the redoubtable Jagjivan Ram, was bitter about how Kumar treated the LJP founder.

“Nitish Kumar remarked mockingly that my father could not have got elected to the Rajya Sabha without the JD(U)’s support since we had only two MLAs. He should remember that my father was promised a Rajya Sabha berth by the then BJP chief Amit Shah himself,” he said.

“And I felt so belittled when Nitish behaved in a haughty manner when my father called on him with the request that he accompany us for filing of nomination papers. He came only after the mahurat (auspicious timing) decided for the occasion had passed. No son could have taken such a treatment lying down,” he said.

The LJP chief also rubbished the Chief Minister’s ‘saat nischay’ (seven resolves) for public welfare, saying while the rest of the country was making so much progress, he was still talking about piped water and construc-

LJP using PM’s photos during campaign: HAM

NAYEAR AZAD | DC PATNA, OCT. 15

The NDA ally Hindustani Awam Morcha (HAM) on Thursday said that the party would write to the Election Commission to prevent Chirag Paswan’s LJP from using Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s photographs during poll campaigns.

“We are getting complaints from several constituencies that LJP is using the photograph of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to influence voters. LJP is not part of the NDA in Bihar and if this continues then we will write to Election Commission and also lodge complaints against LJP candidates who have been doing this. Those who did not do anything for Bihar are trying to mislead the voters by using Prime Minister’s photograph during their poll campaigns”, HAM Spokesperson Danish Rizwan said.

Before the announcement of seat sharing a week earlier, the LJP had pulled out of the NDA

● LJP has clarified that the party’s ties with BJP remain intact and it will not field candidates against the saffron party during Bihar elections.

defying the leadership of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar.

The LJP had, however, announced that the party’s ties with BJP will remain intact and it will not field candidates against the saffron party during Bihar polls.

The LJP has fielded 42 candidates against the JD(U) and two smaller NDA partners HAM and VIP for the first phase of polls. However, no candidate has been fielded against the BJP.

“Those who are saying that my party is using the Prime Minister’s photograph to influence voters must understand that I have been connected and influenced by his ideas. Our party is in alliance with the BJP nationally and I have always clarified my stand on issues like CAA and Ayodhya while

those who claim to be with him remained tightlipped over the issue”, LJP Chief Chirag Paswan said while talking to a TV channel in Patna on Thursday.

The 37-year-old leader also said that he was instigated by his father to fight Bihar polls alone to expand the party’s base.

Talking to reporters, Chirag Paswan further said that “Bihar first Bihari first” is the key for the development of the state and he wants the idea to be included into the agenda of the government after the elections.

“After Chief Minister Nitish Kumar announced his party’s vision *saat nischay* (seven resolves) part two, I was left with no option. I had to take a tough stand as I feel that the idea of *saat nischay* cannot take the state towards the development”, Chirag Paswan said. He further said that his party is in alliance with the BJP nationally and hopes that the next government will be formed by the BJP-LJP in Bihar.

tion of concrete roads and alleys.

“The Chief Minister never tires of proclaiming zero tolerance for corruption, crime and communalism. This flies in the face of the fact that graft has hit the implementation of every government scheme in the state. Horrific incidents like the

recent burning alive of a woman after rape took place in Buxar district.

“And communalism? What does he have to say about the comments of Nityanand Rai? He owes an answer. Unlike us, he is still a part of the NDA in Bihar,” Paswan said.

Rai, the Union minister of state for home and a

senior BJP leader, was recently panned by the Opposition for his remark at a recent poll rally that the RJD’s victory will turn Bihar into a safe haven for Kashmiri terrorists.

His comment was seen by the NDA’s rivals as an attempt at communal polarisation ahead of the elections. —PTI

CONG GIVES TICKET TO SHATRUGHAN SINHA’S SON

NAYEAR AZAD | DC PATNA, OCT. 15

The Congress is all set to launch Shatrughan Sinha’s son Luv Sinha in politics by giving him a ticket from Patna’s Bankipore seat which is considered a BJP’s stronghold.

He has been pitted against BJP’s three-time MLA Nitin Navin. Bankipore assembly seat comes under the Patna Sahib constituency that elected Shatrughan Sinha twice in 2009 and 2014 when he was in the BJP.

Sources said that the Congress, which is an ally of the RJD in Bihar, is trying to use the popularity and political influence of Shatrughan Sinha by giving the ticket to his son Luv Sinha from the seat.

As per the seat-sharing formula in the opposition coalition, the RJD which is the largest party in the grand alliance is contesting on 144 seats, the Congress 70 and Left parties 29 seats.

The Congress on Thursday released the second list of 49 candidates for the Bihar elections. Congress insiders said that “the party is distributing symbols to candidates after analysing their political influence in their constituencies. People of Bihar are fed up with the current government and want a viable alternative”.

Sources, however, said that a large section in the Congress is reportedly unhappy and resentment is brewing over the selection of candidates. Many senior political leaders feel that their suggestions were ignored by the state leadership while selecting candidates for polls.

Finishing touches



An artisan gives final touches on an idol of Goddess Durga in Chennai on Thursday, ahead of the Durga Puja festival. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said cancelling Durga puja celebrations was not an option, and urged people to maintain all Covid-19 safety protocols during the five-day revelry.

—PTI

INDIA HITS OUT AT CHINA ON LADAKH ISSUE

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, OCT. 15

New Delhi slammed Beijing on Thursday, saying it “has no locus standi to comment on India’s internal matters”, after China reportedly said it does not recognise the Union Territory of Ladakh.

China also does not recognise Arunachal Pradesh as part of India. In what is being seen as a veiled reference to China’s insistence that other countries follow the “One China Policy”, New Delhi “hoped that countries will not comment on India’s internal matters, as much as they expect the same of others”.

Meanwhile, following the latest round of talks with China for military disengagement in the Ladakh sector, India on Thursday reiterated that the “two sides have a better understanding of each other’s positions”, adding that the two countries will “maintain the current momentum of communications.

and abet cross-border terrorism against India and has also been resorting to unprovoked ceasefire violations to support terrorist infiltration. The Pakistani leadership continues to indulge in inappropriate, provocative and hate speech against India. Such support to terrorism against India and use of derogatory and abusive language are not conducive to normal neighbourly relations.”

Relations between the two south Asian neighbours have hit rock-bottom for the past few years due to Islamabad’s reported refusal to stop its cross-border terrorism.

11 DEAD AFTER CONSUMING SPURIOUS LIQUOR IN MP

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, OCT. 15

At least 11 people died after consuming spurious liquor in the temple town of Ujjain, police said on Thursday. All the deaths occurred in a gap of 10 hours on the intervening night of October 14 and October 15.

According to the police, the deceased comprised beggars, small-time vendors and daily-wage earners. Some of them were homeless and lived on pavements. Preliminary post-mortem reports have suggested that the deaths may have occurred due to consumption of denatured spirit.

According to Ujjain district collector Ashish Singh, the victims visited government hospitals in Ujjain from Wednesday evening onwards.

J&K parties form alliance to fight for special status

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, OCT. 15

The signatories of ‘Gupkar Declaration’ for defending Article 370 and 35A of Kashmir’s mainstream parties which they took at a meeting held at Mr. Abdullah’s residence on August 4, 2019, a day before the state was stripped of its special status and split up into two Union Territories.

The leaders of NC, PDP, Peoples Conference, Awami National Conference, CPIM and Congress had after the second meeting of the signatories issued a joint statement here saying that they are “wholly bound” by the “Gupkar Declaration” and “will unwaveringly adhere to it.”

On Thursday, all the signatories barring J&K PCC chief Ghulam Ahmad Mir attended the meeting and renamed the grouping as ‘Peoples’ Alliance for Gupkar Declaration’. Mr. Abdullah told reporters,

“We’ve decided to name the resolution as ‘People’s Alliance’ for the Gupkar Declaration. Our motive is to fight for the restoration of the pre-August 4, 2019 position. We will also fight for the rights that were snatched last year from J&K. Further, we want that the steps be taken for the resolution of Kashmir issue and all the stakeholders should be taken on board in this regard.”

He also said that the next meeting of the signatories will be held soon at which the future course of action will be devised and made public thereafter.

The others who attended the meeting are PC chairman and former minister Sajad Gani Lone, CPIM’s Mohammad Yousef Tarigami, J&K People’s Parties’ Movement leader Javed Mustafa Mir, ANC’s Muzaffar Shah besides NC vice president Omar Abdullah and party MP Hasnain Masoodi.

OFFICIALS TOLD TO SCALE UP COVID TESTING

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, OCT. 15

India’s overall cases of Coronavirus crossed 73-lakh mark on Thursday after 67,708 fresh cases were detected in the last 24 hours. The total number of deaths due to the virus has now crossed 1.11 lakh out of which 680 fatalities were recorded in last one day.

Union health ministry said that India is reporting a progressively high increase in the recoveries and a persistent decline in the percentage of active cases.

As a result, the doubling time of the infection has sharply improved and it is now almost 73 days. Health ministry officials said this indicates a substantial fall in the daily new cases and the consequent increase in time taken to double the total cases.

Calling for continued vigilance and a high state of preparedness against the Coronavirus pandemic, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday directed health authorities to scale up Covid-19 testing and sero-surveys and said the facility to get tested regularly and speedily at a low cost must be available to all at the earliest.

Chairing a review meeting of the research and vaccine deployment ecosystem against the Covid-19 pandemic, the Prime Minister also underscored the need for continuous and rigorous scientific testing and validation of traditional medicine treatments.

He appreciated the efforts of Ministry of AYUSH for conducting evidence-based research and providing reliable solutions in this difficult time, an official statement said.

● INDIA IS reporting a progressively high increase in the recoveries and a persistent decline in the percentage of active Coronavirus cases.



## IN BRIEF

**Kyrgyzstan Prez steps down**

**Moscow:** Kyrgyzstan President Sooronbai Jeenbekov announced his resignation Thursday in a bid to end the turmoil that has engulfed the Central Asian nation after a disputed parliamentary election. Jeenbekov, who has faced calls to step down from protesters and political opponents, said in a statement released by his office that holding onto power wasn't "worth the integrity of our country and harmony in society". "For me, peace in Kyrgyzstan, the country's integrity, the unity of our people and the calm in the society are above all else," Jeenbekov said. Kyrgyzstan, a country of 6.5 million people located on the border with China, was plunged into chaos following an Oct. 4 vote that election officials say was swept by pro-government parties.

**Raid on HK media tycoon's house**

**Hong Kong:** Hong Kong police raided the private offices of media tycoon and pro-democracy activist Jimmy Lai on Thursday, according to his aide Mark Simon who wrote in a post on Twitter that 14 police officers visited Lai's office and confiscated documents. Lai, 71, is an outspoken pro-democracy figure who regularly criticizes China's authoritarian rule and Hong Kong's government. He is also the founder of media company Next Digital, which operates pro-democracy newspaper *Apple Daily*. "I spoke with police they said they would remain until our lawyer arrived," Simon wrote. "They did not, they took documents and departed before our lawyer arrived." Police confirmed that they had conducted a search operation inside an office in Kwun Tong district on Thursday.

**Plea for equality law in Japan**

**Tokyo:** Sexual minority groups and human rights activists launched a petition on Thursday calling for an LGBT equality law in Japan in hopes that it can be enacted next year, when the country is to host the Olympics and will be the focus of international attention. "In this country, equal rights for LGBT people are not guaranteed by law or in their social lives," said Yuri Igarashi, co-representative of the Japan Alliance for LGBT Legislation, one of several organisers of the petition. "We call for the passage of an LGBT equality law in time for the Tokyo games, and as an Olympic legacy." Japan has slowly shown an increased awareness of sexual diversity but it is often superficial. Pressure to conform still forces many lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people to hide their sexual identities, even from their families.

**SPACE PROBE MAKES 1ST VENUS FLY-BY**

**Berlin, Oct. 15:** A spacecraft bound for Mercury swung by Venus on Thursday, using Earth's neighbour to adjust its course on the way to the solar system's smallest and innermost planet.

Launched almost two years ago, the European-Japanese probe BepiColombo took a black-and-white snapshot of Venus from a distance of 17,000 kilometres (10,560 miles), with some of its own instruments in the frame. The fly-by is the second of nine so-called planetary gravity assists that the spacecraft needs for its seven-year trip to Mercury.

The first, around Earth, took place in April. The European Space Agency has described the 1.3 billion-euro (\$1.5 billion) mission as one of its most challenging yet. Mercury's extreme temperatures, the intense gravity pull of the sun and blistering solar radiation make for hellish conditions.

BepiColombo will make one more fly-by of Venus and six of Mercury itself to slow down before its arrival in 2025. Once there, the spacecraft will split in two, releasing a European orbiter nicknamed Bepi that will swoop into Mercury's inner orbit while Mio, built by the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, gathers data from a greater distance.

Both probes are designed to cope with temperatures varying from 430 degrees Celsius (806 degrees Fahrenheit) on the side facing the sun, and -180 degrees Celsius (-292 F) in Mercury's shadow.

# Europe reels as it sets records

## France slaps 9 p.m. curfew on many of its cities, Londoners face travel restrictions

**Berlin, Oct. 15:** Fears rose Thursday that Europe is running out of chances to control its fall Coronavirus outbreak, as infections hit record daily highs in Germany, the Czech Republic, Italy and Poland. France slapped a 9 p.m. curfew on many of its biggest cities and Londoners faced new travel restrictions as governments imposed increasingly tough measures.

New infections have surged across Europe over recent weeks as the fall kicks in, prompting authorities to start re-imposing restrictions relaxed over the summer. The Czech Republic, Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain, France and Britain are among the countries causing particular concern. The head of the World Health Organisation's Europe office urged governments to be "uncompromising" in controlling the virus. "These measures are meant to keep us all ahead of the curve and to flatten its course," Dr. Hans Kluge said, while wearing a mask.

"It is therefore up to us to accept them while they are still relatively easy to follow instead of following the path of severity," Kluge cited epidemiological models that suggested if 95% of people wear masks and follow other social distancing measures, Europe could avoid about 281,000 deaths by February. But he warned that relaxing measures could lead to a five-fold increase in deaths by January. European nations as a whole have seen nearly 230,000 confirmed deaths from the virus — more than the nearly 217,000 reported virus deaths so far in the United States.

— AP

## EU CHIEF LEAVES SUMMIT TO GO INTO QUARANTINE AFTER STAFFER IS +VE

**Brussels, Oct. 15:** European Union chief Ursula von der Leyen was forced to leave an EU summit Thursday shortly after it opened because one of her close staffers tested positive for Covid-19.

She said that she herself tested negative but "as a precaution I am immediately leaving the Europe-

an Council to go into self-isolation." Von der Leyen had already been mingling with other EU leaders ahead of the formal opening of the two-day summit. Organisers had taken special precaution to keep leaders apart and make sure they respect all health regulations.

— AP

## SINGAPORE AND HONG KONG AGREE ON BILATERAL AIR TRAVEL BUBBLE

**Singapore, Oct. 15:** Singapore and Hong Kong have agreed on a bilateral air travel bubble, which will exempt travellers from the mandatory quarantine upon arrival, as the rate of Coronavirus infection declines in both regional aviation hubs.

To avail the flights, travellers will have to test negative in the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test for Covid-19, Singapore's Ministry of Transport

(MOT) on Thursday.

Travellers under the bubble will not be subject to mandatory quarantining, the release said, adding that there will be no restrictions on travel purposes and no need for a controlled itinerary. The MOT said the bubble can be "scaled by adjusting the number of dedicated flights upwards or downwards, or even suspended, in line with the latest developments".

— PTI

## CHINA FIRES TWO HEALTH OFFICIALS

**Beijing, Oct. 15:** A hospital president and the director of the health commission in the northern Chinese city of Qingdao have been fired after China's latest Coronavirus outbreak, authorities said Thursday.

A brief notice on the official microblog said Health Commission Director Sui Zhenhua and Deng Kai, president of Qingdao's thoracic hospital, were placed under further probe.

— AP

## DON SON BARRON TESTED POSITIVE

**Washington, Oct. 15:** Barron Trump, the teenage son of US President Donald Trump, contracted Coronavirus after his parents tested positive for Covid-19 but has since tested negative, First Lady Melania Trump has said. In a blog posted on the White House website, she said that Barron, 14, exhibited no symptoms, a departure from herself and the president, who have both said they experienced mild symptoms.

— PTI

# Navalny poisoning: Curbs on Russians

**Brussels, Oct. 15:** The European Union on Thursday imposed sanctions on six Russian officials and one organisation over the poisoning of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny with a Soviet-era nerve agent.

The move came a day after Russia's foreign minister warned that Moscow might respond with similar measures. The decision was agreed upon among the 27 EU envoys to Brussels. "The adopted restrictive measures consist of a travel ban to the EU and an asset freeze for individuals, and an asset freeze for the entity," the EU said in a statement.

The list includes two high level officials in the Presidential Executive Office, a director of the federal security service and two deputy ministers in the Russian defence ministry. The EU is also targeting the State Scientific Research Institute for Organic Chemistry and Technology.

EU foreign ministers agreed Monday to impose the sanctions, following a push by France and Germany to freeze the assets of those suspected of involvement and ban them from travelling in Europe under sanctions to combat the use and



Alexei Navalny

spread of chemical weapons. Navalny, an anti-corruption investigator and major political opponent of Russian President Vladimir Putin, fell ill on Aug. 20 during a domestic flight in Russia. He was flown to Germany for treatment two days later and is still recovering there.

Last week, tests conducted at labs designated by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons confirmed that Navalny was poisoned by a Novichok nerve agent. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said in an interview on Wednesday that "the Germans are not planning to provide any facts, despite all international and legal obligations. We respond in kind. This is diplomatic practice."

— AP

# Thailand declares emergency after unprecedented protest

**Bangkok, Oct. 15:** Thailand's government declared a strict new state of emergency for the capital on Thursday, a day after a student-led protest against the country's traditional establishment saw an extraordinary moment in which demonstrators heckled a royal motorcade.

After the pre-dawn declaration, riot police moved in to clear out demonstrators who after a day of rallies and confrontation had gathered outside Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha's office to push their demands, which include the former general's stepping down, constitutional changes and reform of the monarchy.

Several top leaders of the protest movement were taken into custody, with one later declaring on his Facebook page that he had been denied access to a lawyer and was being forced onto a helicopter and taken to a city in the country's north.

Police made 22 arrests. Despite a new ban against large public gatherings, several thousand people answered calls to rally in another area of the city later Thursday. The text of the emergency declaration



A pro-democracy protester reacts as police try to detain him during a rally in Bangkok on Thursday.

— AFP

said it was needed because "certain groups of perpetrators intended to instigate an untoward incident and movement in the Bangkok area by way of various methods and via different channels, including causing obstruction to the royal motorcade." The protest in

Bangkok's historic district was the third major gathering by student-led activists who have been pushing the boundaries of what is considered acceptable — and legal — language by publicly questioning the role of Thailand's monarchy.

The royal family has

long been considered sacrosanct and a pillar of Thai identity. King Maha Vajiralongkorn and family members are protected by a lese majeste law that has been used to silence critics who risk up to 15 years in prison if deemed to have insulted the institution.

— AP

# Citizenship: Joe woos immigrants

**Washington, Oct. 15:** Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden has vowed to provide citizenship to 11 million illegal immigrants if voted to power in the November 3 presidential election.

Biden identified this as one of his priorities in addition to beating the Coronavirus pandemic, rebuilding the economy and figuring out how to restore American leadership around the world. Responding to a question at a virtual fundraiser on Wednesday, Biden said there is a need to deal

with what's going on at the border.

"We're going to have to deal with the immigration crisis we have. I'm going to send the House and Senate an immigration bill that's going to provide access to citizenship to 11 million people," he said. President Donald Trump has been repeatedly calling for the quick deportation of illegal immigrants who "invade" the US and lamented that the current immigration system is "unfair" to those who came legally to America.

— PTI

## DUELLING TOWN HALLS FOR TRUMP, BIDEN AFTER DEBATE PLAN NIXED

**Washington, Oct. 15:** President Donald Trump and challenger Joe Biden will compete for TV audiences in duelling town halls instead of meeting face-to-face for their second debate as originally planned. They will take questions in different cities on different networks Thursday night: Trump on NBC from Miami, Biden on ABC from Philadelphia. Trump backed out of

plans for the presidential faceoff after debate organisers shifted the format to a virtual event following his Covid-19 diagnosis.

As the pace of the campaign speeds up, the two candidates first are taking care of other electoral necessities Thursday: Trump has a midday rally in battleground North Carolina, and Biden is raising campaign cash at a virtual event.

— AP

# China slams US over Tibet

**Beijing, Oct. 15:** China on Thursday slammed the US for appointing a Special Coordinator for Tibetan issues, describing Washington's move as political manipulation aimed at destabilising Tibet. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Wednesday named Robert Destro, Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labour, as the Special Coordinator for Tibetan issues.

Destro will focus on advancing dialogue between the Communist-run government in Beijing and the Dalai Lama, protecting the distinct religious cultural and linguistic identity of Tibetans, improving respect for their human rights and

much, much more, Pompeo said. Reacting to Destro's appointment, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said that the US move amounted to interference in China's internal affairs.

He said, "the setting up of the so-called special coordinator for Tibetan issues is entirely out of political manipulation to interfere in China's internal affairs and destabilise Xizang", the Chinese name for Tibet. Chinese officials in recent times have been referring to Tibet only as Xizang. "China firmly opposes that and never recognise that. People of ethnic groups in Xizang are part of the big family of Chinese nation," Zhao said.

— PTI

## BEIJING TRACKS U.S. NAVY SHIP'S PASSAGE THROUGH TAIWAN STRAIT

**Beijing, Oct. 15:** China says it tracked a US Navy warship as it passed through the Taiwan Strait and has its forces in the area on high alert, as tensions between the world's two largest economies and rivals for regional influence continue to simmer. The spokesperson for its Eastern Theater Command, Maj. Zhang Chunxuan, said air and sea forces were mobilized to keep tabs Wednesday on the USS Barry, an Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer.

Zhang said the US has recently been sending

"the wrong signal" to proponents of independence for Taiwan, a pro-US self-governing democracy that China claims as its own territory, to be annexed by force if necessary.

Although the Taiwan Strait is a public waterway, China is extremely sensitive to all US military moves in its periphery amid heightened tensions over Taiwan, the South China Sea, trade disputes and other issues. The US has been "seriously undermining peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait region".

— AP

# Provocations: France warns Turkey

**Ankara, Oct. 15:** France warned Turkey on Thursday that it could face European Union sanctions for its "provocations," after Ankara redeployed its search vessel on a new energy exploration mission in the eastern Mediterranean. Speaking in Paris after a meeting of the French-German-Polish 'Weimar Triangle', French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian reiterated the EU stance that unless Tu-

rkey shows "respect for the integrity of Greece and Cyprus" then the European Council will consider initiating sanctions.

"We are forced to note that there are permanent acts of provocation on the part of Turkey which are not bearable, and therefore we really wish that Turkey clarifies its positions and returns to a spirit of dialogue," he said.

Turkey redeployed its search vessel, Oruc Reis,

near the Greek island of Kastellorizo, reigniting tensions between Greece and Turkey over sea boundaries and energy drilling rights, and putting the future of the planned resumption of talks between Athens and Ankara to resolve disputes into doubt. Those talks were last held in 2016.

Those tensions had flared up over the summer, triggering fears of a confrontation between the two

historic rivals and NATO allies. German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said he understood Greece's unwillingness to engage in dialogue due to Turkey's decision to again dispatch its ship. Given Berlin's efforts to mediate between the parties "the behaviour by Turkey to conduct another provocation, resulting in the agreed process of dialogue not taking place, is annoying," Maas said.

— AP

# 450 Pak Oppn workers booked on rally eve

**Lahore, Oct. 15:** Over 450 workers from Pakistan's Opposition parties have been booked in Lahore and other areas of Punjab province ahead of the first grand anti-government rally on Friday by an alliance formed to oust Prime Minister Imran Khan.

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 demon-

strations and rallies before a "decisive long march" towards Islamabad in January 2021. The first anti-government rally is scheduled on Friday in Gujranwala city, some 80 kms from Lahore, followed by another rally on October 18 in Karachi, in Quetta on October 25, Peshawar on November 22, Multan on November 30 and then a rally in Lahore on December 13.

The Opposition leaders announced that they would use all political and democratic options, including no-confidence motions and mass resignations

from Parliament to seek "the selected" prime minister's resignation. The Opposition parties have accused the powerful army of rigging the 2018 elections that brought Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party to power. The Opposition parties are openly opposing the military's interference in politics and elections for the first time in the recent history of the country.

The PDM comprises mainly three mainstream Opposition parties — PML-N of Nawaz Sharif, PPP of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Jamiat Ule-

ma-i-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) of Maulana Fazlur Rehman.

Launching a crackdown ahead of PDM's first major anti-government show, Punjab police got into action and booked over 450 workers, mostly of PML-N, in different parts of Punjab province under Covid-19 violations and also arrested scores of PDM workers. Police stations in Gujranwala, Mandi Bahauddin and Lahore registered cases against over 450 Opposition workers under sections 269 and 188 of Pakistan Penal Code for holding a public gathering without

observing Covid-19 SOPs.

Former prime minister and PML-N supreme leader Nawaz Sharif, who is London since November last year, in a tweet, said that police should refrain from arresting the PDM leaders. "Police must NOT comply with Imran Niazi's workers, raid their homes or hinder their travel to Gujranwala," he said.

Former premier and PDM leader Shahid Khaqan Abbasi said the government's panic over the first public meeting of Opposition has exposed its reality.

— PTI

**11 parties formed the Pakistan Democratic Movement and launch of a three-phased anti-govt movement**

**06 rallies: In Gujranwala (Oct. 16), Karachi (Oct. 18), Quetta (Oct. 25), Peshawar (Nov. 22), Multan (Nov. 30) & Lahore (Dec. 13).**

"Pokharel, who is known for his tilt towards the North, has been transferred to the Prime Minister's Office, apparently in a signal to New Delhi ahead of the forthcoming visit to Nepal by the Indian Army chief," senior journalist and editor of *Janamanch Weekly* Pralhad Rijal said. Indian Army chief Gen. M.M. Naravane is scheduled to visit Nepal in the first week of November and the details of the visit is being worked out, a Nepal Army spokesperson said in a statement.

— PTI



# DECCAN Chronicle

16 OCTOBER 2020

## Rainy spotlight on bad urban planning

The overnight heavy rains that pounded Telangana state, Andhra Pradesh and parts of Karnataka and Maharashtra have claimed scores of lives and caused destruction of property worth crores of rupees on Wednesday and if the weatherman gets it right, the region will continue to face the threat in the coming days, too. Apart from the loss of lives, the rains left several busy residential areas and commercial streets in Hyderabad flooded and houses and shops inundated. Power supply was disrupted for hours together. Even the road to the airport was washed away in the rains, marooning the city for all practical purposes.

The way the rain fury threw life out of gear in the Telangana state capital leaves some disquieting questions about our urban planning. It is unacceptable that one night's rain can bring the civic life of a growing city to halt. The threat is not specific to Hyderabad — Chennai and Mumbai had similar experiences in the recent past while the others are waiting for their turn. True, the impact of global warming and sudden changes in the weather patterns are tough to handle at the local level but the citizen's and official culpability should not go unnoticed. It's a shame that the cities which were built with proper drains decades or even centuries ago now drown in flood waters. Hyderabad had a proper way out for water in the form of River Musi but it has now become a waste dump and a victim of mindless encroachment despite several recovery plans. The smaller ones have been lost forever. It is not that the planners cannot foresee this happening and ensure that life is not completely disrupted overnight. Adequate warning and advance planning can ameliorate the hardship of the people and reduce the loss of property. The disastrous cyclones that regularly visited the eastern coast, especially Odisha, and claimed thousands of lives no more repeat their dance of death now, thanks to the improved advance warning systems and an efficient governmental machinery that ensures that the cyclone passes its way as is its wont but no lives are lost. Thiruvananthapuram, the capital city of Kerala, was saved from the devastating floods in 2018 and 2019 after a project named Operation Anantha was implemented with focus on clearing the drains five years ago. It was made possible by the determination of a team of officials, led by the chief secretary, and helped by the stringent provisions of the National Disaster Management Act, 2005.

An action plan on a similar pattern which uses technology and concepts of advance planning must be introduced in our cities to save them from such calamities. The bodies responsible for disaster management at the national, state and district levels must be made operational full-time. Laws on urban planning must be implemented strictly, violators punished ruthlessly and bureaucrats responsible for the lapses made accountable. No society which swears by rule of law can allow the situation where law-breakers thrive at the cost of the lives and livelihoods of the rest. This is the least the government can do for the city dwellers.

## Hate squad's scary agenda

So frightening has the monster of social media grown that it is causing serious concern in responsible quarters about the cohesiveness of our Armed Forces. This was recently conveyed in an open letter to President Ram Nath Kovind by more than one hundred veterans from the Army, Navy and the Air Force. The retired personnel, including former Chiefs, have urged that action be taken against fake social media posts that spread divisiveness within the forces on the religious basis.

Social media posts have spread the canard that a "Muslim Regiment" of the Army had to be "dismantled" when it refused to take up arms in the 1965 war against Pakistan. The truth is that such a regiment never existed. But social media posts seek to exploit the ignorance of the people, and their gullibility, when they circulate false, malicious, communal propaganda.

Since such posts are not sent out by stray, well-meaning but ignorant individuals, but typically by tens of thousands of organised foot soldiers of hate squads that occupy the Internet highway, it is time the government stepped in with alacrity to punish those who attempt to sow discord and mistrust within the Armed Forces.

At a time when our forces are busy dealing with the twin menace emanating from Pakistan and China, these cyber armies with their disturbing agenda may, sometimes even unwittingly, have become instruments of psy-ops (psychological operations) of forces hostile to India.

In India's Armed Forces, soldiers of all faiths have distinguished themselves, and they are not grouped on a religious basis but fight in multi-class formations in the singular cause of defending this country. The example of Havildar Abdul Hamid, who was posthumously awarded the Param Vir Chakra for his gallantry against the Pakistan Army in the 1965 war, is of course legendary. But there are so many others. The antecedents of those posting about the so-called "Muslim Regiment" must be examined and suitable punishment awarded quickly.

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Subhani

Flashback



## The 'beauty of oneness': Has today's India lost it?



Karan Thapar

As I See It

I admit memories can be deceptive and as you grow older they could even become misleading, but the India I recall from my teens seems a very different country to the one I live in today. Of course, we were a poorer country, few people travelled abroad whilst most hankered for foreign goods. Simple telephones were a luxury, trunk calls a nightmare, journeys by plane a treat and there was only black and white television. On the other hand, Coca Cola cost 25 paise and five rupees was considered generous pocket money for a 13-year-old. But these are not the differences I have in mind.

There was something else about the old India that we took for granted in the 1960s which we are in danger of losing today. Long before Sunil Khilnani coined the evocative phrase "the idea of India", we lived it every day at Doon School. We had no idea of our caste or what it implied. Religion, which is tearing us apart, seemed irrelevant. Rich or poor, intelligent or dim, fat or thin, fair or dark, short or tall, these attributes did not create divisions between us. They did not matter. We were one. Strange as it may sound, we were so similar it felt as if we were the same.

It's this sentiment the now withdrawn Tanishq advertisement sought to celebrate. Created to promote its Ekavatam brand of jewellery — and remember that word means oneness — this is what the company itself says of the advertisement: "The idea behind the Ekavatam campaign is to celebrate the com-

ing together of people from different walks of life, local communities and families during these challenging times and celebrate the beauty of oneness." So it wasn't simply selling golden baubles. It was promoting, actually revelling in, "the beauty of oneness". That's an elevated and captivating phrase for what politicians prosaically call "unity in diversity".

This is the silken thread that binds together the many different people of India. We speak in a multitude, even a babel, of languages, prefer contrasting cuisines, dress differently, look dissimilar and pray to a perplexing pantheon of gods. Yet each of us calls himself Indian and is proud of it. This is because "the beauty of oneness" is an instinctive part of us. You could even say it's our raison d'être.

Yet this was the target the trolls were after when they attacked Tanishq's Ekavatam campaign. The advertisement they excoriated celebrated the love of a Muslim mother-in-law for her Hindu daughter-in-law. It's a love that transcends the foolish but often impregnable walls that rigid faith can erect between people. A love that gives meaning and fulfilment to the relationships that really matter in our lives.

The trolls, however, called it "love jihad". Not only is this oxymoronic but it mocks and challenges the belief our different religions do not divide the Indian people. The fact some pray westwards facing Mecca whilst others do so blowing conch shells in temples does not preclude affection for each

other. Some may wear a cross, others a tilak or topi, but these differing symbols of faith do not separate us or, even, define us. There is a lot more that we share in common. This is the idea of India and the trolls were trying to tear it apart.

Tanishq has allowed them to succeed. But I don't blame the company alone. That would be too narrow. The Tata Group cannot escape responsibility. Let me explain why. How could they not have been aware of the deeper, stronger, richer message that the advertisement sought to convey? Indeed, how could they not have intended it? The advertisement was not created in a fit of forgetfulness nor was it accepted without considering the consequences that could follow. After all, it was so obviously doing more than just selling jewellery. It was a haunting picture of something the Tatas know we are in danger of losing — "the beauty of oneness". It was a call to awaken India. A reminder of what makes us one country.

So when the Tatas withdrew this advertisement, they also turned their back on this message. I am pretty certain they know this and I believe they must be embarrassed by it. Consider carefully their explanation for what they have done. It's not just weak and unconvincing, it's actually contradictory. "We are

**The Tata Group cannot escape responsibility. Let me explain why. How could they not have been aware of the deeper, stronger, richer message that the advertisement sought to convey? Indeed, how could they not have intended it?**

deeply saddened with the inadvertent stirring of emotions", it begins. So what do they do? Stand up and fight back, as their convictions would expect of them? No. They decided to "withdraw this film keeping in mind the hurt sentiments and well-being of our employees, partners and store staff". But whose sentiments did that advertisement hurt? Only that of the trolls. And if there is any threat to the well-being of their employees, partners and store staff — and, sadly, that could be so — it's enhanced security that they need, not a cowardly retreat.

The Tata Group has let down India. There's no denying that fact. However, corporations don't think in these grandiloquent terms except when their chairmen are making speeches to attract public attention. What's more surprising is that the Tatas have also let themselves down. This is a company that's always been credited with a vision that encompasses more than growth and profit. It's created an image of the Tata Group that we have all bought into. Now that picture has developed cracks.

I don't know Ratan Tata well. However, on the few occasions we have met I sensed there was more to him than just an outstandingly successful businessman. My hunch is that he knows this too. I would say he values this extra quality. He's probably silently proud of it. But, today, when he looks at himself in the mirror, will he be happy with the image that is reflected back?

I know he will see the difference. But will it upset him? Or will he comfort himself with the excuse that this is a change which is necessary to succeed in Narendra Modi's India?

*The writer is a television commentator and anchor*

LETTERS

### RAIN HAVOC

It's unfortunate that a heavy downpour has wreaked havoc in AP and Telangana state leading to loss of lives and enormous damage to infrastructure. The magnitude of devastation was clearly visible in the visuals. The damage caused could have been minimised if the city was planned properly..

**Dr D.V.G. Sankararao**  
Vizianagaram

### DWCRA GROUPS

It is a novel scheme for women to contribute their spare time with hand tools and minimum electricity (*DWCRA funds get misused, DC, Oct. 15*). It promotes handicrafts and will unearth hidden talent. They need not depend on money lenders who charge exorbitant interest. Unfortunately, this has become a lending scheme. The political leaders dare not interfere lest they lose vote bank. Some members will either discount the cash benefit or lend it to the group leader, who will dominate the group.

**P. Ramakrishna**  
Rajahmundry

State governments failed to implement the programme in its true spirit irrespective of the party in power. Given its huge enrollment of rural and urban women, parties in power treated it as a solid vote-bank and public funds are being allocated accordingly to encash it. It's time to curb loopholes in the system and weed out the rich from the programme.

**Udatha Rama Chandra Rao**  
Yeleswaram, East Godavari

50 YEARS AGO IN  
DECCAN  
Chronicle

### World probe panel on Netaji's death urged

NEW DELHI, Oct. 15. Jana Sangh Member of Parliament M.L. Sondhi today demanded establishment of an international commission to probe into the circumstances leading to the disappearance of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

Addressing a press conference here, Mr. Sondhi said several foreign countries like USA, UK, Germany, Japan, Soviet Union, China and also Taiwan had valuable information about Netaji.

Skand Tayal



## India weighs options as it faces Chinese intransigence

The seventh round of the corps commander-level talks between India and China on Monday has not led to any notable advance on the Indian demand of a comprehensive disengagement by China from all the areas of the ongoing standoff in Ladakh. The prospects are receding for any significant reduction in force mobilisation before the onset of winter.

This round was held in the background of the foreign ministers' meeting of India, the United States, Japan and Australia in Tokyo on October 6 under the "Quadrilateral" security dialogue format. In these days of most high-level meetings being virtual, the Quad ministers met in person, in a sign of both the agenda's urgency and the imperative of confidential confabulations secure from any cyber snooping. US secretary of state Mike Pompeo travelled to Tokyo despite President Donald Trump being stricken by the Wuhan virus.

Mr Pompeo did not mince words and named Chinese Communist Party for its "exploitation, corruption and coercion". He elaborated: "We have seen this in the South, in the East China Sea, the Mekong, the

Himalayas, the Taiwan Straits."

In contrast, India's external affairs minister S. Jaishankar refrained from pointing any finger at China, let alone the CCP, despite the ongoing aggressive actions by the People's Liberation Army in Ladakh.

On the same day, the German delegation at the UN General Assembly delivered a joint statement on behalf of 39 countries conveying their "grave concern on the human rights situation in Xinjiang and the recent developments in Hong Kong". The statement called on China to "respect human rights, particularly the rights of persons belonging to religious minorities, especially in Xinjiang and Tibet".

The statement was signed inter alia by India's three Quad partners — the US, Japan and Australia — and also by several other important strategic partners like Canada, France, Britain and Germany. But India was conspicuous by its absence from the list of signatories.

In an angry response, the Chinese ambassador to the UN termed the well-founded accusations as "groundless" and said that China "opposes interference in internal affairs". This is ironic as China has repeatedly

backed Pakistan in its futile efforts to raise the Kashmir issue at the UN Security Council, which is clearly an internal matter of India.

India has also refrained from making any official statements on possible upgrading of its ties with Taiwan or on the unilateral actions by China in Hong Kong in violation of its treaty obligations with Britain.

This cautious approach by South Block is in contrast with strong public opinion across this country, expressed vociferously in the mass media, that India openly favour Taiwan's independence and Tibet's autonomy. On October 7, many Indian newspapers carried full-page advertorials by the Republic of China (Taiwan) celebrating its October 10 national day. The Chinese embassy was hurt by this pinprick and in an open letter reminded its "media friends" that "there is only one China in the world".

South Block is carefully calibrating its response to China's aggression in Ladakh by going full throttle on military preparations, mobilising our strategic partners and sensitising public opinion for a lengthy standoff, but simultaneously keeping the dia-

logue with China civil and keeping all channels of communication open. South Block is taking care not to take formal positions in multilateral fora from which it may be difficult to walk back if the border standoff is resolved.

The forthcoming American presidential election is of critical importance for a global response to an aggressive and unilateralist China and its "wolf warriors". While President Donald Trump has openly identified China as the US's main future adversary on all fronts — technological, economic and strategic — and has the toughness and resolve to strongly push back, it will take time for a future Joe Biden administration's China policy to evolve. Recent Democratic Presidents like Bill Clinton and Barack Obama made tough statements on China, but practised a non-confrontational policy, allowing China to expand its occupation of the South China Sea and emasculate the manufacturing sector in the US and elsewhere, including India.

In television appearances after returning from the Tokyo Quad meeting, Mr Pompeo criticised China's aggressive behaviour and

noted that "Indians are seeing 60,000 Chinese soldiers on their border". The Trump administration is sending a strong signal to China that it stands by India by scheduling the next 2+2 dialogue of the foreign and defence ministers of the two nations on October 26-27, 2020, a week before the November 3 election.

The two principal options for India are either to declare open adversarial relations with the world's second biggest economic and military power or, in Mr Jaishankar's words, to seek a "new equilibrium with China". The Narendra Modi government is now following the second option of not engaging in verbal duels with China in full view of the world, defend its interests robustly at the borders and negotiate with China both at the military and diplomatic levels. The basic premise is that both China and India would prefer to avoid an all-out confrontation. This is the basis on which the new equilibrium is being sought in India-China ties, while keeping all options on the table.

*The writer is a retired diplomat and has served as India's ambassador to South Korea*



quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	39,728.41	-2.61
Nifty 50	11,680.35	-2.43
S&P 500*	3,461.45	-0.78
Dollar (₹)	73.37	-0.08
Pound Sterling (₹)	95.22	-0.70
Euro (₹)	85.96	0.13
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	51,503.32	0.06
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	42.52	-0.80
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.898	-0.003
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.711	-0.011

\* As of 9:30 PM IST

Govt bans import of ACs with refrigerants

The government banned imports of air conditioners with refrigerants with a view to promote domestic manufacturing and cut imports of non essential items. "Import policy of air conditioners with refrigerants ...is amended from free to prohibited," the directorate general of foreign trade said in a notification. The government is taking steps to promote domestic manufacturing and cut import bill of non-essential goods.

Lakshmi Vilas gets board nod for rights issue



Cash-strapped Lakshmi Vilas Bank said its board has approved plans to raise up to Rs 500 crore through a rights issue. Last week, the private sector lender had informed exchanges about receiving a non-binding offer from Aion-backed NBFC Clix Group for a merger. The old-generation Chennai-based private bank, faced a blow in late September when its shareholders voted out seven directors.

Paytm Mall's festive season sale from today

Homegrown e-commerce platform Paytm Mall said it will start its eight-day long 'Maha Shopping Festival' sale from October 16 with participation of over 5,500 brands. The firm's online sale coincides with Flipkart's 'Big Billion Days' sales and Amazon's 'Great Indian Festival' sale, but would run for a longer period. The firm said products from MSMEs, Made in India brands, emporiums will also be part of the sale.

Kia Seltos anniversary edition launched

Kia Motors India said it has launched a special edition of its SUV Seltos, priced between Rs 13.75 lakh and Rs 14.85 lakh, to mark the model's first year in the country. The Seltos anniversary edition is based on HTX trim and comes with petrol and diesel engine options. The 1.5-litre petrol trim with manual transmission is priced at Rs 13.75 lakh, while petrol automatic is tagged at Rs 14.75 lakh.



■ Sensex loses 1066 pts on profit-booking Rally comes to an abrupt halt

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, OCT. 15

A second wave of Covid infection in Europe, leading to severe restrictions, and fading US stimulus hopes led to a sell-off in global markets, triggering profit-taking in IT and financial stocks in the Indian market after a run-away 10-day rise.

The Sensex fell 1066 points to close below the 40000 level at 39728.41, down by 2.61 per cent. The Nifty-50 closed at 11680.35 down 290.70 points, or 2.43 per cent.

The market erased the last six days' gains in a single session and investors lost more than Rs 3.25 lakh crore of their wealth in a day. Market volatility could rise in the near term—the volatility index, NSE's India VIX, rose 9.14 per cent on Thursday.

Both foreign portfolio investors and domestic institutional investors were net sellers of equities



worth Rs 604.07 crore and Rs 808.29 crore, respectively.

Deepak Jasani, head of retail research, HDFC Securities, said, "Bank Nifty led the fall, erasing 3.36 per cent to close at 23,072. Weakness in the European markets led to a fresh bout of selling in our markets post 1300 hours. European stocks slumped, with investors concerned about the impact of a second wave of coronavirus on the economy without any imminent stimulus to cushion the blow."

The top losers among the financials included ICICI Bank (-4.07 per cent), HDFC Bank (-3.54 per cent) and SBI (-3.62 per cent).

The Nifty IT Index fell 2.87 per cent despite Infosys announcing over 26 per cent rise in July-September quarter profit and raised annual revenue forecast. Infosys shares closed 2.09 per cent down at Rs 1,113.25 on the NSE.

Other major losers included Reliance Industries (-3.68 per cent), TCS (-2.69 per cent) and Bajaj Finance (-4.98 per cent).

Cyient Q2 net profit down 15% to ₹84 crore

New Delhi, Oct. 15: IT firm Cyient on Thursday reported a 14.8 per cent decline in its consolidated net profit at Rs 83.9 crore for September 2020 quarter. The Hyderabad-based firm had posted a net profit of Rs 98.5 crore in the year-ago period, Cyient said in a regulatory filing. Its revenue decreased 13.4 per cent to Rs 1,003.3 crore for

the period under review as against Rs 1,158.9 crore in same period year ago.

On a sequential basis, the net profit was higher by 3 per cent from Rs 81.4 crore, while revenue increased 1.2 per cent from Rs 991.7 crore in the June 2020 quarter. "PAT increased by 3 per cent quarter-on-quarter mainly from higher operating income driven

by higher volume and efficiency," the company said.

Krishna Bodanapu, MD & CEO said the second quarter results are in line with its expectations. "This quarter we focused on setting up the business back on a growth path. We continued our rigour on efficiency improvement and building pipeline for the business," he said. —PTI

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APOLLO READY FOR 1M VACCINES A DAY

FC BUREAU CHENNAI, OCT. 15

Apollo Hospitals is prepared to administer one million Covid-19 vaccines daily. It has trained 10,000 professionals in safe vaccination protocols.

The Apollo Group will leverage its robust pan-India web of 19 medicine supply hubs with cold chain facilities and use its 70 hospitals, over 400 clinics, 500 corporate health centres, 4000 pharmacies alongside their omni-channel digital platform Apollo 24/7 to ensure massive administration capacity of Covid-19 vaccines, Shobana Kamineni, executive vice-chairperson, said. It has already trained 10,000 professionals.

Pent-up demand pushing recovery: BMW chief

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, OCT 15

BMW, India's second biggest luxury carmaker, which is seeing month-on-month sales recovery, said Q4 (October-December) will be better than Q3, which crossed 70 per cent sales recovery. "Now all our dealerships across the country are open and the market is responding and recovery of sales is happening," Vikram Pawah, president at BMW Group India, told Financial Chronicle.

He said he was seeing a lot of traction and the pent-up demand was pushing recovery in sales across all models of BMW cars, including the popular Mini vehicles.

"We have also lined up more product offensive such as the M-performance cars, 330i, 5-Series, X5 SUV and other models to stir up the market," Pawah pointed out.

He said the luxury car market in India would very much depend on the way the pandemic would flatten even as more and

Tata Group chases e-com deals to bolster retail

ANTO ANTONY & P. R. SANJAI OCT. 15

Tata Group is seeking to buy online retailers to beef up its presence in e-commerce, people familiar with the matter said.

The group has reached out to IndiaMart InterMesh Ltd, a business-to-business marketplace, for a potential stake purchase, the people said, asking not to be identified as the plans are confidential. IndiaMart's shares have surged 142 per cent in Mumbai this year, giving it a market value of about \$2 billion. Supermarket Grocery Supplies Pvt Ltd, commonly known as BigBasket, is also among Tata's potential investment targets, one of the people said.

Deliberations are at an early stage and there's no certainty Tata's pursuit of the assets will result in transactions, the people said.

A representative for Tata declined to comment, while V.S. Sudhakar, one of the BigBasket founders, also declined to comment.

"Any talk of IndiaMart being in discussions with Tata Group for investment or acquisition is completely baseless," Dinesh Agarwal, founder and chief executive officer of IndiaMart, said. —Bloomberg

MFIs could return to pre-Covid levels soon

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, OCT. 15

With collections improving to around 80 per cent of year-ago levels, the microfinance industry is expecting the business to return to pre-Covid levels in two to three months.

"Collection efficiencies have improved to 80-85 per cent levels by September. Some states like Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan have seen up to 90 per cent collections and some like Odisha and West Bengal are lagging behind with 75-80 per cent. Overall, by this month-end we would reach 90 per cent levels and probably in a month or two to 99 per cent levels," said Manoj Nambiar, chairperson of MFIN.

PN Vasudevan, MD and CEO of Equitas Small Finance Bank, too finds that collections have been steadily improving and have reached 80-85 per cent levels.

At a webinar by CRIF High Mark, Vasudevan said the industry will get back to pre-Covid levels



in two to three months. "Once the collections return to earlier levels, there will be demand for fresh loans. This is just around the corner and in two to three months, the industry will be back to pre-Covid levels," he said.

While collections have been improving month-on-month, disbursements are still at 50 per cent of pre-pandemic levels.

"The demand is there. People are in need for additional credit. But before we start providing them additional credit, we have to be sure about the resumption of their economic activity. Else, the loans will end up in delinquencies," said Nambiar.

According to him, NBFC-MFIs are extra cautious while lending. The credit checks have become more stringent and lenders are ensuring that the borrower has paying capacity.

"While the economic activity has not returned to normalcy, the level of stress is different in different states. Some states like Rajasthan, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu have seen higher economic activity compared to some others. Migrant labourers are also returning with the resumption of activity," he said.

APOLLO READY TO ADMINISTER 1 MILLION VACCINES PER DAY

FC BUREAU CHENNAI, OCT. 15

Apollo Hospitals is prepared to administer one million Covid-19 vaccines daily. It has trained 10,000 professionals in safe vaccination protocols.

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Apollo has already trained 10,000 professionals for this purpose.

"As the entire country awaits a vaccine for the deadly infectious disease, one of the major challenges will be around safe and orderly delivery of doses, for the population of 1.3 billion Indians, especially the vulnerable. We are happy to share that," she said.

NPS, Atal Pension AUM hits ₹5 L cr



MADHUSUDAN SAHOO NEW DELHI, OCT. 15

The Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) is expecting its asset under management (AUM) from the National Pension System (NPS) and Atal Pension Yojana (APY) to near Rs 6 lakh crore by the end of December.

The AUM has crossed the Rs 5-lakh crore mark this month.

The NPS has seen subscription of 70.40 lakh employees from the government sector and 24.24 lakh from the non-government sector over the last 12 years.

"With continuous rise of subscribers, the AUM has already crossed Rs 5 lakh crore as on October 10, 2020. We believe, it will be very close to Rs 6 lakh crore AUM by the year-end... Besides, the PFRDA is also seeing continuous onboarding of new subscribers, even during the current pandemic situation," said Supratim Bandyopadhyay, chairman, PFRDA, in a virtual meeting on Thursday.

The pension fund regulator has also formed a new panel to look into the fund managers' demand for higher commission.

"The PFRDA has also set up a committee to look into the demand raised by the seven pension fund managers to increase their commissions, which was currently hovering at around 1 per cent. The committee will submit its report by November end. We hope that few more players were likely to join the bandwagon in future," Bandyopadhyay said.

"During this pandemic, a growing realisation of both corporates and individuals has emerged that retirement planning is not a mere saving or tax benefit choice," he said.

MINDTREE Q2 NET PROFIT RISES 88%

New Delhi, Oct. 15: IT firm Mindtree on Thursday reported a 87.9 per cent rise in consolidated net profit to Rs 253.7 crore for the September 2020 quarter. It had posted a net profit of Rs 135 crore in the corresponding period last year, Mindtree said in a regulatory filing.

The Bengaluru-based company saw its revenue grow marginally to Rs 1,926 crore in the quarter under review from Rs 1,914.3 crore in the year-ago period, it added.

In dollar terms, its net profit rose 79.2 per cent to \$34.3 million, while revenue declined 3.7 per cent to \$261 million in the September 2020 quarter

over the year-ago period. At the end of the September 2020 quarter, the company's active client base stood at 283, and eight new clients were added during the quarter, the filing said.

Mindtree had 21,827 employees at the end of the September quarter with trailing 12-months attrition at 13.8 per cent.

"Our approach of redefining possibilities in the new normal for businesses enabled us to deliver a balanced H1 (first half of the fiscal) performance," Mindtree CEO and MD Debashis Chatterjee said.

The board has declared an interim dividend of Rs 7.5 per share. —PTI

MAKING | BIG BET Group reportedly in talks with Big Basket and IndiaMart

Tata Group chases e-com deals to bolster retail

ANTO ANTONY & P. R. SANJAI OCT. 15

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"Any talk of IndiaMart being in discussions with Tata Group for invest-



ment or acquisition is completely baseless," Dinesh Agarwal, founder and chief executive officer of IndiaMart, said.

Tata Group, which owns Jaguar Land Rover and tea maker Tetley, is scouting for local e-commerce assets at a time when the

race for Indian online shoppers is heating up.

While billionaire Mukesh Ambani's JioMart is seeking to shake up the industry dominated by the local units of Amazon.com Inc and Walmart Inc, Tata is seeking potential acquisitions to narrow the gap with its rivals.

Tata is pursuing a two-pronged strategy to modernise its online model, which is at present fragmented. Besides seeking acquisitions, it is also in talks with potential investors about taking stakes in a digital platform it is creating, people familiar with the matter

said last month.

Tata's digital platform will centre around an all-in-one e-commerce app that aims to bring disparate online businesses of its entrenched consumer units under one umbrella. These include Tanishq jewellery stores, Titan watch showrooms, Star Bazaar supermarkets, chain of Taj hotels and a joint venture with Starbucks Corp in India.

The expansion of Ambani's Reliance Industries into technology and retail businesses has added urgency to Tata's plans. —Bloomberg



## SHORT TAKES

Commentator  
Bhimani no more

**Kolkata:** Veteran sports journalist and cricket commentator Kishore Bhimani died at the age of 80, family sources said on Thursday. He is survived by his wife Rita and son Gautam who is also a well-known TV personality.

"He had suffered a cerebral attack a few days back and was undergoing treatment," a family source said.

Bhimani was one of the most recognised English voices of the 1980s. Bhimani was commenting when Sunil Gavaskar became the first player to reach 10,000 runs in Test cricket, during the drawn match against Pakistan in Ahmedabad in 1987. One of the most sought-after Indian cricket writers who would be wooed by British publications in the 1980s, Bhimani was also on air during the final moments of the famous 1986 tied Test against Australia at Chepauk. — *PTI*

Medvedev rallies  
to beat Gasquet

**St. Petersburg:** Top-seeded Daniil Medvedev recovered from a shaky start to begin his defense of the St. Petersburg Open title with a

3-6, 6-3, 6-0 win over Richard Gasquet on Wednesday. Medvedev hit 22 aces to secure his first win since losing to Dominic Thiem in the U.S. Open semifinals, having lost in the first round in Hamburg and at the French Open. Medvedev set up a second-round match with Reilly Opelka, who earned a 3-6, 7-6 (5), 6-2 win over qualifier Nino Serdarusic.

Stan Wawrinka booked his spot in the quarterfinals with a 6-1, 3-6, 6-3 win over Evgeny Donskoy, a wild-card entry who has now competed in the St. Petersburg tournament 12 times. — *AP*

Weightlifting's Oly  
future in doubt

**Dusseldorf:** The future of weightlifting at the Olympic Games was put in further doubt on Wednesday after the governing body's interim president was ousted and the International Olympic Committee expressed concern. Interim president Ursula Garza Papandrea said that board members voted to remove her from office

Tuesday during a virtual meeting which she did not attend, after she had called the meeting for Wednesday. She said that first vice-president Intarat Yodbangtoey of Thailand was appointed in her place. Papandrea questioned the board's authority to remove her before a full electoral congress. She said board members repeatedly thwarted her attempts to reshape the IWF after an investigation alleged long-running corruption and doping cover-ups. — *AP*

Raja-Ram out of  
Spain Challenger

**Alicante:** The top-seeded Indian team of Ramkumar Ramanathan and Purav Raja bowed out of the ATP Alicante Ferrero Challenger following a straight set defeat, here on Thursday. Raja and Ramkumar lost 2-6, 2-6 to Gerard Granollers and Pedro Martinez. Ramkumar has already exited from the singles event of the euro 44820 clay court tournament after losing to Carlos Alcaraz. In the doubles, India's challenge is still alive as N Sriram Balaji had reached the quarterfinals with his Swiss partner Luca Margaroli. — *PTI*

## Live on TV

## CRICKET

**IPL:** Mumbai Indians vs KKR from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

## BADMINTON

**Denmark Open:** Quarterfinals from 5.30 pm on Star Sports 2 HD, 3

## TENNIS

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

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THE BOSS IS BACK  
Gayle returns with a bang as Kings XI pip RCB

**Sharjah, Oct. 15:** K.L. Rahul played a captain's knock and Chris Gayle fired in his first game since January as Kings XI Punjab finally ended their five-match losing streak with an eight-wicket win over Royal Challengers Bangalore in an IPL match here on Thursday.

Chasing 172 in a must-win game, the in-form opening pair of Rahul (61 not off 49) and Mayank Agarwal (45 off 25) got off to a flying start before Gayle (53 off 45) joined his skipper in the middle to get KXIP close to the finishing line.

Needing seven off the final two overs with nine wickets in hand, KXIP somehow managed to take the game to the last ball with Nicholas Pooran finally hitting the winning six. Both Rahul and Gayle smashed five sixes each, rendering the opposition attack helpless.

Batting first, skipper Virat Kohli top-scored with 48 off 39 balls in his 200th game for RCB before Chris Morris' 25 off 8 in the death overs took the team to 171 for six.

It was a rare all-round effort from KXIP who had failed to close out games earlier in the competition.

Mohammad Shami (2/45) conceded 24 runs in the final over that spoiled his figures after he got rid of Kohli and AB de Villiers but overall it was a much improved bowling effort by KXIP especially in the death overs.

Leg spinner M. Ashwin struck twice and pacer Chris Jordan took his first wicket of the tournament.

The run chase was supposed to be straightforward after Agarwal took the opposition to the cleaners in the powerplay before Rahul took over. As usual, the 41-year-old Gayle, batting at three, took his time early on before going ballistic.

Earlier, KXIP conceded only 25 runs from over 16-19 before Morris and Isuru Udana hammered Shami for three sixes. — *PTI*



Chris Gayle of Kings XI Punjab plays a shot on way to his half-century against Royal Challengers Bangalore during an IPL game in Sharjah on Thursday. — *BCCI*

## IPL POINTS TABLE

Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
Delhi Capitals	8	6	2	0	12	+0.990
Mumbai Indians	7	5	2	0	10	+1.327
Royal Challengers Bangalore	8	5	3	0	10	-0.139
Kolkata Knight Riders	7	4	3	0	8	-0.577
Sunrisers Hyderabad	8	3	5	0	6	+0.009
Chennai Super Kings	8	3	5	0	6	-0.390
Rajasthan Royals	8	3	5	0	6	-0.844
Kings XI Punjab	8	2	6	0	4	-0.295

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

## SCORECARD

**Royal Challengers Bangalore:** A. Finch b Ashwin 20, D. Padikkal c Pooran b Arshdeep Singh 18, V. Kohli c Rahul b Mohammed Shami 48, Washington Sundar c Jordan b Ashwin 13, S. Dube c Rahul b Jordan 23, AB de Villiers c Hooda b Mohammed Shami 2, C. Morris (not out) 25, I. Udana (not out) 10. Extras (b 4, lb 2, w 6) 12. **Total (for six wickets in 20 overs) 171.**

**For:** 1-38, 2-62, 3-86, 4-127, 5-134, 6-136. **Bowling:** Maxwell 4-0-28-0, M. Shami 4-0-45-2, Arshdeep Singh 2-0-20-1, Ravi Bishnoi 3-0-29-0, M. Ashwin 4-0-23-2, C. Jordan 3-0-20-1.

**Kings XI Punjab:** KL Rahul (not out) 61, M. Agarwal b Chahal 45, C. Gayle run out (Padikkal/de Villiers) 53, N. Pooran (not out) 6. Extras (lb 3, w 9) 12. **Total (for two wickets in 20 overs) 177.**

**For:** 1-78, 2-171. **Bowling:** Morris 4-0-22-0, Saini 4-0-21-0, Chahal 3-0-35-1, Udana 2-0-14-0, M. Siraj 3-0-44-0, Washington 4-0-38-0.

## NUMBERS GAME

## HEAD TO HEAD

## OVERALL:

- Matches: 26
- Mumbai: 20
- Kolkata: 6

## MEETING IN 2019

- KKR beat Mumbai by 34 runs at Kolkata.
- Mumbai beat KKR by 9 wickets at Mumbai.

## MEETING IN 2020

- Mumbai beat KKR by 49 runs at Abu Dhabi.

## FOR THE RECORD

- Andre Russell who has hit 99 fours in 54 innings for KKR needs one more to complete a century of fours.

- Rohit Sharma who has scored 3,944 runs at an average of 31.80 in 146 innings needs 56 runs to become the first batsman from Mumbai Indians to score 4,000 runs in IPL.

— *S. PERVEZ KAISER*

## DENMARK OPEN | BADMINTON

Srikanth storms  
into last-8 stage

**Odense, Oct. 15:** Ace Indian shuttler Kidambi Srikanth stormed into the Denmark Open quarterfinals with a straight-game win over Canada's Jason Anthony Ho-Shue here on Thursday.

The fifth seeded Indian took 33 minutes to get the better of his Canadian opponent 21-15 21-14 in the men's singles second round of the USD 750,000 Super 750 tournament, the only world tour event happening this year in a calendar thrown haywire by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The BWF was forced to cancel multiple tournaments and postpone the Asia leg and the World Tour Final to January next year due to the pandemic.

"It was close until 11 in both games. I'm just happy that I could continue that form throughout the match. I had to be alert to get back his shots," Srikanth told BWF.

The 27-year-old is likely to face world no.2 Chou Tien Chen of Chinese Taipei, who meets Ireland's Nhat Nguyen later in the day.

Talking about Chou Tien Chen, Srikanth said: "He's been playing well the last few years. It's definitely a match where I can understand where I'm at. That's the whole idea of playing this tournament."

"He hits hard, he's someone who has an overall

game, he has a hard smash, he knows when to attack and when to defend. He has matured. It's always good when you play a top 4 player."

In the opening game, Srikanth zoomed to a 9-4 lead before grabbing a three-point advantage at the break.

The Indian then reeled off six points to create a huge gap, which Jason couldn't bridge.

Srikanth fell behind 5-8 in the second game but bounced back with six straight points to reach 11-8 at the interval. The Canadian made it 10-11 after resumption.

Srikanth then stepped up the pace and was immediately rewarded as he opened up a 15-10 lead.

He constructed the rallies well to quickly jump to 19-11. Srikanth soon garnered 8 match points but sent one to the net and couldn't reach the shuttle next to concede two.

But his opponent went wide next and Srikanth sealed it comfortably.

The other Indian in the competition, Lakshya Sen, will be up against local challenger Hans-Kristian Solberg Vittinghus in his second round match later in the day.

Subhankar Dey and Ajay Jayram were also in the fray but made first round exits on Wednesday. — *PTI*



Kidambi Srikanth

Didn't know I bowled  
IPL's fastest ball: Nortje

**Dubai, Oct. 15:** South African speedster Anrich Nortje, who set the Indian Premier League ablaze by bowling the fastest delivery in the tournament's history, says he was unaware of the feat until after the end of the match.

The 26-year-old pacer clocked a breathtaking 156.2 kmph while bowling to Jos Buttler in the third over of Rajasthan Royals' run-chase against Delhi Capitals on Wednesday. He bettered compatriot Dale Steyn's (154.4 kmph) record in the process.

"I heard about it afterwards. I did not know about it at the time," Anrich told his Capitals teammate Shikhar Dhawan in a video posted by *IPLT20.com*.

Nortje added that he has been working hard on injecting pace in his deliveries. "I have been working really hard to get my pace up, been a couple of seasons. Been working on my

braced leg and my front arm... simple stuff. Happy to get some pace behind it but you obviously need to get it in the right area, that's the most important thing."

Bowling the fastest delivery did not have the desired result for Nortje as Buttler scooped it for a boundary. The Englishman had played the same shot in the previous delivery.

However, the duel didn't last long as the South African claimed Buttler's wicket with a 155 kmph thunderbolt, the second fastest ball in IPL history.

"Yeah, the battle against Buttler was interesting. I know he plays the scoop shots, but when he played the first one, it took me by surprise," Nortje said.

"I did not think he would do it again, but he played the shot once again on the next delivery. He played really well, but I stuck to my strength," Nortje added. — *PTI*

RAIN DAMAGE  
AT GAGAN'S  
ACADEMY

**Hyderabad, Oct. 15:** Seepage of water due to torrential rain has damaged equipment worth ₹1.3 crore, including rifles and pistols, in the city's Gun For Glory shooting academy run by Olympic medallist Gagan Narang.

In a post on *Facebook*, a gutted Narang spoke about the damage the rain has caused, calling it a "torrid 24 hours".

"It's been a torrid 24 hours for us at Gun For Glory Hyderabad. We had water seeping into our ranges, our equipment, machines, all inundated. Equipment worth 1.3 crore which included 80 brand new rifles and pistols for our new range and 9 years of hard work by the GFG team has been adversely affected, washed away by the deluge," Narang wrote.

## Virat looks up to Mary before fatherhood

**New Delhi, Oct. 15:** Expectant father Virat Kohli says he need not look beyond six-time world champion boxer MC Mary Kom when it comes to taking inspiration on how to strike a balance between parenthood and excelling in sport.

The India captain declared that he would seek to follow the path laid down by Mary Kom, a champion boxer and a mother of four. Kohli and his actor wife Anushka Sharma are expecting their first child in January next year.

"I can't think of anyone better than you to talk about being a parent and have a busy career like you," Kohli told her during an Instagram live chat on Wednesday evening.

Before they got underway with their interaction, the six-time world champion and Olympic bronze medallist congratulated the star couple.

"Being a mother, training, all those championships, how did you do it, how did you find the balance?" the celebrated Indian cricket captain wished to know from the 37-year-old Mary Kom, whose desire to dominate the ring remains as strong as ever.

The pugilist attributed it to the support system within her immediate family. "After my marriage, my husband has been a pillar of my strength. The support he gives me is immense. He takes care of everything that I could ask for, he is the ideal husband and father," she said.

"Also my children are second to none," she added.

It was appropriate when Kohli said the path laid down by Mary Kom is the ideal one to follow for any parent.

"You are such an inspiration not only for the women of the country but for everyone. What you have achieved in your sport, against all odds, against the shortcomings be it the facilities and all the other challenges that you must have faced..."

"You keep going through and finding your your path is something that is so inspirational for every-

Yadav (233 runs), who would like to continue in the same vein.

Ishan Kishan (186 runs) underlined his potential with a blistering 99 against RCB, but the Jharkhand player needs to convert his starts into big scores to make his presence felt.

Mumbai Indians coach Mahela Jayawardene would be pleased with the likes of Hardik Pandya and swashbuckling Kieron Pollard, who have been launching into the opposition attack with their big-hitting prowess along with Krunal Pandya.

Given the trio's abilities, they can rip apart the KKR attack, especially one sans Narine. On the bowling front too, Mumbai looks a settled unit with Trent Boult and Jasprit Bumrah providing early breakthroughs. — *PTI*



Virat Kohli (left) and Mary Kom during an Instagram live chat on Wednesday.

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**I can't think of anyone better than you to talk about being a parent and have a busy career like you.**

— **VIRAT KOHLI**  
captain of Indian cricket team

Kohli that it would take a full two-three days to talk about her journey.

"If I talk about my journey, it won't finish so early," she quipped.

About the message she would like to give to promising athletes, Mary Kom asked them to never give up and keep fighting, irrespective of what others feel.

"You will always have naysayers, so many people are talking negatively, the good things we do only lasts for a few days... These naysayers distract and disturb me a lot sometimes. "Many people are

one. I just wanted to say that you are a great inspiration for all of us. I am really honoured that I am getting to ask you these questions," Kohli said.

"We are in the journey to become parents ourselves, we take a lot of inspiration from what you have done, we are going to follow the same path."

Mary Kom was full of innocence as she told