

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
NELLORE | FRIDAY | 23 OCTOBER 2020

WEATHER
Max: 34.2°C
Min: 25.8°C
RH: 69%
Rainfall: 1.2mm
Forecast: clear.
Max/Min temp. 34/25 °C

COVID-19

COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+51,807)	(+638)
77,56,206	1,17,277

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+1,579)	(+5)
TS: 2,27,580	1,292
(+3,620)	(+16)
AP: 7,96,919	6,524

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

4,18,28,671

DEATHS

11,40,016

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES

213

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana

Tithi: Nija Ashwayuja Shuddha Saptami till 6.58 am

Star: Uttarashada till 1.30 am (Saturday)

Varjyam: 9.10 am to 10.48 am; 5.41 am to 7.22 am (Saturday)

Durmuhurtam: 8.33 am to 9.19 am; 12.23 pm to 1.09 pm

Rahukalam: 10.30 am to 12 noon

HUIJI CALENDAR

Rabbi-ul Awwal 5, 1442 AH

PRAYERS(SHAHI MASJID)

Fajar: 4:51 am

Zohar: 11:55 pm

Asar: 4:09 pm

Maghrib: 5:48 pm

Isha: 6:58 pm

SUNSET TODAY 5:45 PM

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6:03 AM

MOONRISE TODAY 12:27 PM

MOONSET TOMORROW 12:00 AM

COUNTER POINT

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

SHORT TAKES

No foolproof anonymity: Justice

New Delhi: Retired Justice B N. Srikrishna on Thursday said anonymous data is not foolproof and can be de-anonymised in future. Legislation can only make entities de-anonymising the data answerable to the law, he added. Justice Srikrishna headed the committee on framing data protection norms, set up by the Ministry of Electronics and IT. The government in the draft personal data protection bill has favoured processing of anonymous data to protect privacy of individuals. He further said the personal data protection bill is before a joint parliamentary committee and it will be good if it comes out soon. "What is thought to be anonymous can be de-anonymised tomorrow. Therefore, there is no foolproof anonymity. All that law can say is take it as anonymous, if you do de-anonymity, identify the person, then you will be answerable to law," Srikrishna said at a FICCI event.

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HC pulls up SEC on official residence in Hyd

STATE... PAGE 3

AP records 3,620 new Covid cases, 16 deaths



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Navy gets 1st batch of women pilots



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Senate panel nod to Amy's SC nomination

SPORTS | 8

Bayern off the blocks in Champs League



Stealth submarine



Anti Submarine Warfare Stealth Corvette, *INS Kavaratti* decked up during the Commissioning Ceremony at Naval Dockyard in Visakhapatnam on Thursday.

— Eastern Naval Command

Jagan: Comprehensive land survey from Jan. 1

MD ILYAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 22

Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Thursday directed officials to conduct a comprehensive land survey with the aim of providing permanent land ownership. Reviewing a meeting of officials on survey of lands in the state, CM Jagan suggested that the survey could be started from January 1, 2021, and completed by August 2023, without leaving any errors.

As the survey would be conducted after a long gap of about 100 years, the Chief Minister asked officials to increase the number of survey teams and use latest technologies like drones and rovers towards digitalising land

records.

Jagan Mohan Reddy said land registration services should be provided within all village secretariats, along with equipment for survey, with surveyors trained in the latest technology. He wanted that the entire digitalisation process be made tamper-proof.

Officials informed the CM that the entire survey will be held in three phases and arrangements for the same are in progress. All details collected during the survey will be updated online on a regular basis directly from the drones and rovers along with a GIS-tagged picture.

The survey will be taking place over 1.22 lakh square kilometre throughout the state. 4,500 survey

teams will be surveying the entire area simultaneously. A pilot survey project is being conducted at Takkellapadu in Jaggayyapeta mandal of Krishna district using latest technology.

Officials stated that 70 base stations will be required for the survey of which a few have already been established. At the same time, necessary steps are being taken to solve pending land disputes through mobile courts in villages.

Deputy Chief Minister Dharmana Krishnadas, chief secretary Nilam Sawhney, CCLA special chief secretary Neerabh Prasad, Commissioner of Stamps and Registration Siddarth Jain and other officials participated in the review meeting.

CENTRE TO TALK TO STATES ON SCIENCE POLICY

New Delhi, Oct. 22: Union minister Harsh Vardhan on Thursday held detailed consultations with the states for the formulation of Science Technology and Innovation Policy (STIP) 2020, the Department of Science and Technology said.

Addressing a virtual meeting with the state ministers and senior officials of the Ministry of Science and Technology, Vardhan said the policy aims to re-energise the country's scientific ecosystem and redefine the priorities and sectoral focus so as to directly translate efforts in S&T for the benefit of the society and economy.

— PTI

TRP probe: Lens on financial deals

Mumbai, Oct. 22: The Mumbai police have started scrutinising the financial transactions of five channels, which were allegedly involved in fake Television Ratings Points (TRP) scam, an official said on Thursday.

The financial transactions that took place in the last five years are being examined, he said. "The Crime Intelligence Unit (CIU) of the Mumbai crime branch has started the process of scrutinising the financial transactions of these five channels that happened in the last five years," the official said.

It will also examine their revenue sources, he said. "During the investi-

gation conducted so far, it has been observed that there was a sudden spike in the number of transactions," he said, without giving any further details.

The police will also slap sections related to forgery in the case, including IPC sections 408, 463, 465 and 468, he said.

Meanwhile, the police recorded the statement of CFO of Republic TV channel S. Sundaram and he will again be called on Friday. Executive editor Niranjan Narayanswamy will also be called for questioning, he said. The probe team has recorded the statement of Republic TV's distribution head Ghanshyam Singh in the case, he said.

— PTI

BREATHE | EASY

Pollution Control Board checks for chemicals like sulphur dioxide released due to garbage burning

Air quality in state improves after prolonged lockdown

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 22

Ambient air quality in 15 major cities/towns in Andhra Pradesh was found to be relatively good when compared with last year, thanks to the lockdown due to Covid-19 and the incessant rainfall.

The Andhra Pradesh Pollution Control Board (APPCB) monitors ambient air quality on a regular basis in major cities/towns from January to December every year.

The air quality is checked in Srikakulam, Vizi-anagaram, Visakhapatnam, Kakinada, Rajahmundry, Eluru, Vijayawada, Guntur, Ongole, Nellore, Kurnool, Tirupati, Chittoor, Kadapa and Anantapur.

The APPCB looks for the presence of chemicals like sulphur dioxide which gets released into the atmosphere due to burning of garbage; nitrogen dioxide from burning of municipal solid waste and vehicular emissions; ammonia gas from municipal drains and public toilets and carbon

monoxide, mainly from exhaust pipes from vehicles.

Based on the direction from the national green tribunal in a case, the APPCB has come up with an action plan on how to control air pollution and entrusted a specific task to each department

department to implement it. Accordingly, the APPCB has taken up the responsibility to monitor ambient air quality by setting up such stations on a permanent basis in some municipal areas in the state while municipal bodies have been asked to take up clearing of garbage at public places and ensure no open burning of garbage.

They are also asked to clear roads of dust and take up construction of cement-concrete pavements to avoid dust rising into the atmosphere. The road

transport authorities are asked to keep tab on vehicles causing pollution by regularly checking their emissions to measure pollution levels. They are also supposed to keep strict check on whether vehicles have pollution under check certificates. The police department too has its role to play in regulating vehicular traffic to avoid traffic jams so that the emissions from vehicles are not concentrated in only some areas causing air pollution.

APPCB authorities main-

tain that the data generated for ambient air quality for 10 particulate matter shows 52 micrograms per meter cube on an average from January to August, 2020, while 62 for the corresponding period in 2019, indicating that the air quality has improved.

The other reasons for such a remarkable change in ambient air quality in the state is the imposition of lockdown in several phases to contain the spread of Covid-19 and also the incessant rainfall. The centre-imposed lockdown

regulated public movement, suspension of all public transport, people staying indoors, reduced movement of vehicles and people avoiding mass social gatherings, all of which improved air quality. Closure of several manufacturing and reduction units also helped improve air quality.

Similarly, the prolonged spell of rainfall, despite the damage, helped maintain air quality with no major dust particles and other pollutants entering the atmosphere.

Respect daughters as goddesses: PM

Recalls provision of death for offenders

RAJIB CHOWDHURI and ANIMESH SINGH | DC KOLKATA/NEW DELHI, OCT. 22

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday called upon people to "respect daughters like Goddess Durga" and urged all citizens to "stand by" women. His message comes after the rising cases of violence against women, including rape. This was the first time that Prime Minister Modi had inaugurated a Durga Puja in West Bengal.

Speaking after "virtually" inaugurating a Durga Puja organised by the BJP at the Eastern Zonal Cultural centre at Kolkata's Salt Lake area on Mahashasti, on Monday morning, Mr Modi said:



Narendra Modi

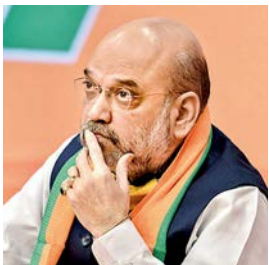
"In Bengal, Durga is welcomed and treated as a daughter. This philosophy is the basis of our spiritual consciousness. That is why we are taught to respect all daughters like Ma Durga. On the occasion of Navratri, she is worshipped. And Durga Puja is about worshipping women's power."

With Assembly elections in West Bengal just over five months away, the

PM's address was shown by the party on television screens in all 78,000 election booth areas across the state.

Mr Modi added: "Women's power always has the ability to beat evil. It is the responsibility of all to stand by it in an organised way. This is also the BJP's culture and determination. The government is alert about the security of women. Punishment for rape has been made a lot stricter. There is also a provision for the death penalty for offenders."

In his address, the PM at several points tried to speak in Bengali, with a Hindi accent, apparently to compete with the TMC's recent Bengali sub-regionalist campaign.



Amit Shah

HOME MINISTRY EASES OCI, PIO VISA CURBS

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, OCT. 22

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

The MHA said it was giving permission to all Overseas Citizen of India and Person of Indian Origin card holders and other foreigners to visit India for any purpose, except on a tourist visa. This will enable foreigners to visit India for business, conferences, jobs, studies and research. "The government will make a graded relaxation in visa and travel restrictions for foreigners who wish to enter or leave India," the MHA order said. If the validity of such visas has expired, fresh visas can be obtained from the Indian mission or post concerned. The permission for OCI and foreign nationals to enter India includes air or water routes through authorised airports and seaport immigration.

ONION PRICE HITS ₹100/KG AFTER RECORD RAINS

VADREVU SRINIVAS | DC KAKINADA, OCT. 22

Onion prices have again skyrocketed to Rs.100 per kilo in the open market in East Godavari as imports from Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kurnool of Andhra Pradesh have drastically decreased due to recent rains which badly hit the crop.

The state government is making arrangements to bring 1000 tonnes of onions to the state to be sold at Rythu bazaars, a kilo a person. This is usually the season of the arrival of onions from Maharashtra and Karnataka and the market is flooded with onions.

■ Page 2: Export of onion stopped by rains

CAPITAL ISSUE

ENTRANCE TEST FOR RGUKT-IIT ON NOV. 28

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 22

The common entrance test (CET) for admissions into Rajiv Gandhi University of Knowledge and Technologies (RGUKT) IIT will be held on November 28.

A notification for the same was released by Minister for Education Adimulapu Suresh here on Thursday. He said that normally admissions to IIT are based on SSC marks but this time around they had decided to go ahead with the test without such a benchmark as exams were not conducted because of corona pandemic. He said the CET results would be declared on December 5.

Those aspiring for diploma courses in NG Ranga, SV Veterinary and YSR horticulture can also write the CET. Candidates have to register through www.rgukt.in.

RGUKT will offer the six-year Integrated B Tech Programme (PUC- 2 years + B Tech - 4 Years) which has 4,000 seats comprising 1,000 seats in their institutes at Ongole, Srikakulam, Nuzvid and Idupulapaya.

AP RELEASES PENDING DUES OF BAS

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 22

The AP government released ₹50 crore for clearing pending dues of the Best Available Schools Scheme on Thursday. Deputy Chief Minister Pushpa Srivani on Thursday said that all the pending dues of the previous government of the Best Available Schools (BAS) scheme for Tribal students in various districts was being cleared. She said that ₹50.31 crore was being released to clear the dues for the year 2017-18 and 2019-2020 from the funds of the Tribal Welfare Corporation.

Pushpa Srivani said that as per the BAS scheme the tribal students would pursue an education in private schools and the government would pay the fees to the private schools. She lamented that the earlier Telugu Desam government has left pending dues to the BAS, making it difficult to continue the BAS scheme. She stated that with the proactive move of CM Jagan Mohan Reddy to continue the scheme, all the pending dues are being cleared. She said that pending dues from the year 2017-18 till date to the tune of ₹50.31 crore is being cleared.

NAIDU NOT BUILT A SINGLE PERMANENT STRUCTURE: BOTSA

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 22

Minister for municipal administration Botsa Satyanarayana came down heavily on the leader of Opposition N. Chandrababu Naidu for creating a hue and cry that the present government is neglecting Amaravati region. The minister said that Naidu did not build a single permanent structure during his term. He said that on the other hand Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy government has already proposed to give municipal corporation status by merging Tadepalli and Mangalagiri regions, which includes Amaravati.

TENSION AS PRO-, ANTI-AMARAVATI SUPPORTERS STIR

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 22

Pro-Amaravati activists on Thursday conducted Maha Pada Yatra seeking protection of Amaravati as the only capital of the state from various places to Uddandarayunipalem marking the fifth anniversary of laying of the foundation stone for Amaravati. Meanwhile, supporters of three capitals also staged a parallel protest at Uddandarayunipalem, which created tension due to heated arguments between the two groups.

Bahujana Parirakshana Samiti leaders with their activists staged a rally in support of three capitals from Mandadam. They lamented that there was no use of one capital due to lack of appropriate accommodation as Amaravati did not give house sites to 52,000 housing beneficiaries. They claimed that three capitals would help develop all the regions of the State and hailed the decision of Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy.

Bala Puja



A priest performs Bala Puja at the Mallikharjuna Mahamandapam as part of Dasara festival celebrations in Vijayawada on Thursday.
C. NARAYANA RAO

INS Kavaratti formally commissioned in Vizag

ASW stealth corvette manned by a team of 12 officers, 134 sailors

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 22

Chief of Army Staff General Manoj Mukund Naravane commissioned *INS Kavaratti*, the Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) stealth corvette built under Project 28 (Kamorta Class), at a ceremony held at the Naval Dockyard here on Thursday.

Vice-Admiral Atul Kumar Jain, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command, Rear Admiral Vipin Kumar Saxena (Retd.), CMD, Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) Limited, Kolkata, and other dignitaries were present during the commissioning ceremony.

The event marks formal commissioning into the Navy of the last of four ASW corvettes designed indigenously by Indian Navy's in-house organisation – Directorate of Naval



Chief of Army Staff, General Manoj Mukund Naravane along with Commander-in-Chief of Eastern Naval Command, Vice Admiral Atul Kumar Jain CMD of GRSE Kolkata, Rear Admiral Vipin Kumar Saxena, and Commanding Officer of INS Kavaratti, Cdr Sandeep Singh pose for a group photo onboard INS Kavaratti during the Commissioning Ceremony at Naval Dockyard in Visakhapatnam on Thursday.

Design and constructed by GRSE.

General Naravane was presented a guard of honour on arrival at the Naval Jetty. Vice Admiral Atul Kumar Jain addressed the gathering, which was followed by reading out of the Commissioning Warrant of the Ship by its Commanding Officer, Commander Sandeep Singh.

Subsequently, hoisting of the Naval Ensign onboard for the first time and 'Breaking of the Commissioning Pennant', with National Anthem being played, marked the symbolic tradition of commissioning. Army Chief later unveiled the Commissioning Plaque and dedicated the ship to the nation. He also addressed the gathering attending the commissioning ceremony.

Named after capital of the Lakshadweep group of islands, *INS Kavaratti* has been constructed using high-grade DMR 249A steel produced in India.

The sleek and magnificent ship spans 109m in length, 14m in breadth and with displacement of 3,300 tonnes. It can rightfully be regarded as one of the most potent anti-submarine warships to have been constructed in India.

The unique feature of this ship is the high level of indigenisation incorporated in its production, which is in consonance with the national objective of "Atmanirbhar Bharat".

INS Kavaratti is being manned by a team of 12 officers and 134 sailors with Commander Sandeep Singh at the helm as first Commanding Officer. The ship would be an integral part of Eastern Fleet under the ENC.

Festive mood



Dancers perform at the Mallikharjuna Mahamandapam as part of the Dasara festival celebrations in Vijayawada on Thursday.
— DC

Double rail line commissioned

MD ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 22

The Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd (RVNL) has completed and commissioned 69-km of doubling of the railway line between Uppaluru-Gudivada-Moturu and Gudivada-Machilipatnam on Thursday. This is said to be the biggest such achievement of the Indian Railways. The newly commissioned double rail line section forms part of the Vijayawada – Gudivada – Bhimavaram – Narsapur, Gudivada – Machilipatnam and Narsapur – Nidadavolu Doubling and Electrification project of SCR, which is being executed at ₹3,000 crore.

The railway officials stated that the 69-km stretch had been opened for traffic in one-go. This new line holds huge potential to ignite the economy of the central coastal belt of Andhra Pradesh. In addition to significantly strengthening rail transport infrastructure for seamless movement of

freight and passenger traffic on rails, the new double rail line is bound to serve public aspirations in several ways.

They stated that business activity in the entire hinterland of the region, ranging from agriculture to aquaculture would get a big boost with access to various markets becoming more easy and convenient. This development to help people conveniently travel towards Rajahmahendravaram, Visakhapatnam, Vijayawada, Guntur, Nellore, Tirupati etc., in the state. Long-distance travel towards Chennai, Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Kolkata also to become more convenient. Yet another major benefit is that the project will pave the way for a reliable alternative rail route to the mainline between Vijayawada and Visakhapatnam, which can be used in the event of any disturbance to train services on account of natural calamities like cyclones and heavy rains.

TRAVEL | RELIEF

Railways taking care of measures for those boarding the trains

Daily trains to Hyd and Chennai resume

Passengers urged to follow Covid protocol

PATHRI RAJASEKHAR | DC
NELLORE, OCT. 22

Restoration of train services, especially to Hyderabad and Chennai, came as a big relief to the people of AP as RTC was not operating services to these two cities yet.

There are strong bonds since ages between the two cities and the people of coastal AP and they were forced to depend on private buses or hire cars these days to visit these cities because there were no daily trains.

Railway officials said the Narayanadri Express operating from Tirupati to Hyderabad was restored already and the Charminar Express from Chennai to Hyderabad also started operations on October 20.

Lauding the railways for restoring the train services to all parts of the country, a frequent traveller, P.S. Moorthy, from Nellore, lamented over non-availability of accommodation far several destinations during festivals. He said that both railways and

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, OCT. 22

South Central Railway (SCR) has sought the cooperation of its passengers to ensure a hassle-free journey during the Dasara festival.

To clear the festive, SCR is operating more than 68 festive special trains from October 20 in addition to the 42 regular services through the Division.

To stay in tune with the Covid-19 protocol passengers have been urged to strictly adhere to the guidelines like wearing masks, maintaining social distance and keeping hands hygienic.

According to a press release from the railways,

travelling public should take protective measures from Covid-19, pointing to the sudden spurt in cases after Onam in Kerala.

The superintendent of Nellore railway station, M.V.S.N. Kumar, said that

HC pulls up SEC for seeking official residence in Hyd

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 22

Andhra Pradesh High Court has pulled up state election commissioner N. Ramesh Kumar for wanting his house in Hyderabad to be declared as his official residence. The court asked whether having two official accommodations in both Vijayawada and Hyderabad was not a waste of public money.

High Court bench headed Justice B. Devanand was hearing a case in this regard on Thursday. Referring to the affidavit filed by the petitioner (state election commissioner) attaching pending bills, the court observed that some bills amounting to ₹40 lakh were related to making arrangements for conduct of polls. That

● The court also reserved its order on an interlocutory application filed by the state election commissioner complaining about no assistance and no support from the state government to the State Election Commission for holding elections in a free and fair manner.

amount had already been released by the state government. The court took note of other pending bills of ₹10 lakh for payment of fees to advocates.

When the petitioner informed the High Court that some posts had not been filled up by the state government in the State Election Commission, the court asked for details of the posts. The petitioner said a letter had been

written by him asking for appointment of attenders for him at his residence in Hyderabad, which had to be declared as the official residence of AP state election commissioner.

The judge took serious note of this and questioned the need for an official residence of AP State Election Commissioner in Hyderabad in addition to such a facility in Vijayawada. The judge wanted to know whether it would not be wastage of public money.

The court also reserved its order on an interlocutory application filed by the state election commissioner complaining about no assistance and no support from the state government to the State Election Commission for holding elections in a free and fair manner.

HC: Reconsider evaluation of 5 Group-1 queries

From page 1

The High Court's directive on postponement of Group-I Mains came while a High Court bench, headed by Justice R. Raghunandan Rao, was hearing a batch of petitions on Thursday. The bench also ordered the APPSC to reconsider evaluation of five questions in the Group-I Preliminary exams and prepare a fresh list of preliminary results.

In the petitions filed on conduct of Group-I Preliminary examinations, petitioners sought cancellation of the exam complaining that there were 51 translation errors from English to Telugu in the question paper. They further complained that APPSC had not allowed candidates to carry non-programmable calculators to use them for solving questions related to maths.

Counsel for the commission contended that in case of any translation errors, the candidates had been informed that they must refer to the English version, which was authentic. The counsel maintained that the English used in the question paper was of Class X standard, while the candidates appearing for the exam are going to work as Group-I officers.

The court, however, dismissed the petition seeking cancellation of the Group-I preliminary exam.

Similarly, with regard to a petition contending that the commission did not follow reservations for selection of candidates appearing for Group-I Mains, the APPSC counsel informed the court that there was no such rule. The counsel also pointed out that marks

● The court, however, dismissed the petition seeking cancellation of the Group-I preliminary exam.

obtained in Group-I prelims will not be considered for preparation of final merit list.

Accordingly, the court also dismissed the petition and upheld selection of candidates for Group-I Mains on 1:50 ratio without any reservation.

With regard to petitions challenging correctness of the final key of preliminary exams, the court directed the commission to reconsider evaluation of answers for five questions after taking the opinion from subject experts concerned and issue a fresh merit list of those qualified to appear for Group-I Mains exams. Meanwhile, sources in the APPSC have maintained that they have already started the exercise of referring the five questions to the expert panel to find out appropriate answers. Once, the correct answers are finalised, answers of candidates who failed to qualify for the Group-I Mains exams will be checked with the revised answers for the five questions. In case, they get requisite marks to be declared as qualified to appear for Group-I Mains exams, their list will be announced.

Candidates who have qualified to appear for the Group-I Mains exams have appealed to the APPSC to expedite conduct of the mains exams. However, those who are expecting to get qualified after the revised evaluation of five questions want adequate time for preparation.

EXPORT OF ONION STOPPED BY RAINS

From page 1

But when the crop was coming to the harvesting stage, the rains hit and onion transactions, including exports, were stopped. "The consumption of all types of onions are 100 tonnes daily and Tadepalligudem traders are the main exporters of the onions. But now, not even 40 tonnes of onions are arriving in East Godavari. Automatically, the prices of onions has increased," said K. Babu Rao, a wholesale onion dealer at Kakinada.

The government was trying to bring onions from other states and open special onion counters for consumers, Rao said, hoping it will give some relief to the consumers. He opined that the situation would have been worse, as arrivals in the market have suffered for the past two months. However, an exporter in Tadepalligudem has made all arrangements to export onions to Bangladesh. But due to the lockdown, the cargo was halted at the borders. The exporters got the cargo back and sold it at cheaper prices and that's why onion prices are increasing at a slower rate. He said that the onions were sold at ₹170 to ₹190 per kilo during the same period last year.

The state government is making arrangements to sell the onions at ₹40 per kilo without compromising on quality. Agriculture minister, K. Kanna Babu, said the government is procuring 1000 tonnes to sell through Rythu Bazaars on the basis of Aadhaar card.

The extent of the crop has also decreased from 28,000 hectares to 25,000 hectares, said Kanna Babu, adding that due to the rains, 2600 hectares of the crop has been damaged.

trains, Kumar said that only passengers with RAC and confirmed tickets are allowed into the stations. The railways are taking care of Covid-19 preventive measures for passengers boarding the trains, said Kumar, and it is the responsibility of the state government to screen the passengers alighting at stations.

To avoid unauthorised entry into the station, passengers are allowed into the station only through the western entrance. Passengers have been asked to come to the station one hour before departure for thermal screening and sanitising baggage and hands. "Passengers are provided with sanitisers for use at entry and exit points of railway stations. They must also make use of face masks without fail during the entire journey," Kumar said, adding that passengers are not being allowed to use lifts or foot-over bridges in Nellore because of the possibility of the spread of the virus.

OTHER STORIES

65 TONNES OF OIL
PUMPED OUT OF
GROUNDED SHIPDC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 22

A private agency Gill Marine pumped out 65 tonnes of furnace oil from Bangladesh vessel MV Maa, which ran aground near Tenneti Park on October 14. The vessel as per preliminary estimates had 44 tonnes of furnace oil and nine tonnes of diesel.

Since the furnace oil was mixed with water from the engine, the quantity of furnace oil increased to more than 70 tonnes. Diesel will be pumped out from Friday, said managing director of Gill Marine Suresh Singh Gill.

He said the oil is being pumped into two oil tankers kept at the Jodugullapalem beach about 400 metres from the stranded vessel.

"We are taking all the measures to ensure that the oil is not spilt either on the water or sand," Gill said. He said after pumping of oil, the vessel would be completely washed and handed over to another agency for carrying out salvage operations. Officials from ICG, Indian Navy, VPT and Mercantile Marine Department are closely watching the defueling operations, Gill said.

4 ARRESTED, 24
STOLEN BIKES
RECOVEREDDC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, OCT. 22

The Tuni police arrested four persons, Jakkala Sandeep alias Sadeep (21), Indugubelli Sudhakar (20), Solla Sura Nagendra Kumar Raju alias Rau (27) and Vemulapudi Praveen (21) of Payakaraopeta village in Visakhapatnam District on Thursday and recovered 24 bikes worth ₹6 lakh from them.

To earn money for their luxuries, they had planned and started committing motor-cycle thefts by opening the locks with false keys or by shaking the handles forcibly, said the Tuni police.

According to sources, because of the serial motor-cycle thefts in East Godavari district, the Superintendent of Police Adna Nayeem Asmi motivated, encouraged and supervised the work of officers and staff of the district. Recently, the Alampur police recovered 108 bikes.

FOUR LORRIES
TRANSPORTING
SAND SEIZEDDC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, OCT. 22

Special Enforcement Bureau (SEB) sleuths have seized four sand-laden lorries, bound for Telangana state from Nellore, near Kavali on Thursday.

The SEB team also seized a pilot car leading the lorries, which were transporting sand illegally to the neighbouring state. The lorries have been handed over to the rural police in Kavali. According to the police, the sand was loaded in the lorries at Penna river in Nellore, and they were on the way to Hyderabad in Telangana. The police have put the value of the sand at ₹10 lakh.

CHARGE-SHEET
FILED WITHIN 6
DAYS IN RAPE CASEDC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, OCT. 22

The Rajavommangi police proved their efficiency by filing a chargesheet against the accused in a rape case in just six days. Even though the DISHA Act introduced by the state government has not been enacted completely, the police filed the charge-sheet.

According to EG district Superintendent of Police Adnan Nayeem Asmi, a 27-year-old man allegedly raped a six-year-old girl in Yerrapalem in Duserapamu Panchayat in Rajavommangi mandal of East Godavari district on October 15. Due to the heavy rains, the rivulets were overflowing, and the villagers, along with the girl's father, were busy observing the situation at a rivulet near the village during the night.

Taking advantage of the situation, the accused G. Varahalu alias Appanna came to the girl's house drunk and tried to harass the girl's mother sexually. The girl's mother went to her father to bring him to reprimand the man when the accused raped the girl.

Mr Asmi took the incident seriously and directed the investigation officials to speed up the inquiry and file a charge-sheet.

AP records 3,620 new
Covid cases, 16 deaths

3,723 infected patients discharged after recovery in last 24 hrs

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 22

Andhra Pradesh has registered 3,620 new Covid-19 positive cases, raising the overall tally to 7,96,919, apart from 16 deaths in the state during the last 24 hours, taking the death toll to 6,524.

The Coronavirus bulletin released here on Thursday by state health authorities listed that out of the 76,726 samples tested during the last 24 hours, 3,620 individuals have been found to be infected with Covid-19. Out of a total 73,47,776 samples tested so far in the state, 7,58,138 patients have been discharged after recovery, while 32,257 are still active with the virus and undergoing treatment.

Among the daily Coronavirus positive instances, West Godavari district registered the highest 631 cases, followed by 492 in East Godavari, 412 in

● **OUT OF** a total 73,47,776 samples tested so far in the state, 7,58,138 patients have been discharged after recovery, while 32,257 are still active with the virus and undergoing treatment. Chittoor district has registered the highest number of total 754 deaths due to Coronavirus.

Chittoor, 385 in Guntur, 370 in Krishna, 311 in Prakasam, 212 in Kadapa, 196 in Anantapur, 171 in Visakhapatnam, 126 each in Srikakulam and Nellore, 122 in Vizianagaram and 66 in Kurnool.

East Godavari district recorded the highest number of 1,12,186 cumulative Covid-19 cases, followed by 81,252 cases in West Godavari, 75,343 in Chittoor, 63,849 in Guntur, 63,307 in Anantapur, 59,027 in Kurnool, 58,668 in Nellore, 57,636 in Prakasam, 54,475 in Visakhapatnam, 50,586 in Kadapa, 43,136 Srikakulam, 38,573 in Vizianagaram, 35,986 in Krishna, 2,461 from other states and

434 from other countries.

The rate of recovery among Coronavirus-infected patients has been good in East Godavari with total 1,05,656 recoveries, followed by 77,141 in West Godavari, 70,843 in Chittoor, 60,987 in Anantapur, 59,547 in Guntur, 57,799 in Kurnool, 57,610 in Nellore, 54,286 in Prakasam, 51,807 in Visakhapatnam, 48,123 in Kadapa, 41,598 in Srikakulam, 37,495 in Vizianagaram, 32,351 in Krishna, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

Guntur district registered four deaths during the last 24 hours, followed by two each in Chittoor, East Godavari, Krishna and

Prakasam, and one each in Anantapur, Kadapa, Visakhapatnam and West Godavari districts.

Chittoor district has registered the highest number of total 754 deaths due to Coronavirus, followed by 598 in Guntur, 595 in EG, 565 in Prakasam, 543 in Anantapur, 539 in Krishna, 496 in Visakhapatnam, 486 in WG, 483 in Nellore, 480 in Kurnool, 421 in Kadapa, 338 in Srikakulam and 226 in Vizianagaram district.

State health authorities have discharged 3,723 Covid-19 infected patients after recovery from various hospitals in the state during the last 24 hours.

AP has conducted Covid-19 tests on 1,37,599 samples per one million population, recording a positive rate of 10.85, while Maharashtra tested 66,673 samples with a positive rate of 19.43 and Telangana tested 1,00,262 samples with a positive rate of 5.74.

WOMAN ENDS
LIFE, RELATIVES
SUSPECT MURDERDC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, OCT. 22

A 23-year-old pregnant woman allegedly ended her life at her house in Boreddypalle village under Chinnagottigallu mandal in Chittoor district late on Wednesday.

Family members of the deceased, however, alleged that her death was suspicious and could even be a murder by her husband, and lodged a complaint with the local police. The deceased has been identified as Haritha, 23.

Based on the complaint, SI Naik reached the village and inquired about the incident. A case of suspicious death has been registered and the victim's husband was taken into custody for further inquiry.

According to Bakarepeta Sub-Inspector M. Ravi Naik, the victim's husband Anand Reddy, 27, of Boreddypalle under Chinnagottigallu mandal has been working as a software employee in Bengaluru. He has been working from his home in Boreddypalle since the enforcement of lockdown in March. Haritha's mother Padmavathamma in her complaint alleged that her son-in-law has recently started suspecting her daughter's fidelity and used to harass her mentally and physically. The complainant also stated that they had received a call from their son-in-law late on Wednesday night that Haritha has ended her life by hanging herself at their house.

attractively. He said that all development programmes would be completed by 2021. He said that Padmavathi park would be developed at ₹2 crores, swimming pool, multistore complex and others.

Sri Venkateswara Anam Kala Kendram would be developed in two phases. An internal auditorium would be developed in the first phase and total development of the Kala Kendram in the second phase. He requested the people to follow all Covid-19 protocols.

TD demands release of
detained Dalit farmerDC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, OCT. 22

Tension prevailed at the police station in Venkatchalam near Nellore when TD leaders led by Nellore Parliament segment in-charge S.K. Abdul Aziz and former NUDA chairman Kotamreddy Srinivasulu Reddy demanded the release of a small farmer held by the police.

The leaders rushed to the station after police detained the farmer, Gali Jaipal of Anikepalli village in Sarvepalli constituency after he demanded the authorities to expose those who supplied paddy on his name to the paddy procurement centre since he had no role in the transaction.

Mr Aziz pulled up the police for taking Jaipal

● **Farmer Gali Jaipal of Anikepalli in Sarvepalli constituency was arrested after he demanded the authorities to expose those who supplied paddy on his name to the paddy procurement centre**

into custody and demanded impartial inquiry into the supply of paddy on his name. He took a dig at the ruling party leaders for their claims over being farmer friendly even after selling ₹8 lakh worth of paddy in the name of poor farmers like Jaipal.

He alleged that 100 Puttis of paddy was sold in the name of a farmer, Venkatarathnam in

KMC to spend ₹10 crore to
make Kakinada Green CityDC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, OCT. 22

Rajahmundry Municipal Corporation has taken up an ambitious plan to turn the historical city into a Green City by improving sanitation at ₹10 crore.

Already the Corporation levied garbage tax, and the response is encouraging. "However, greater awareness and cooperation is required from the people and non-governmental agencies should come forward to take it among the people," said the Corporation Com-

missioner Abhishiktha Kishore.

He convened a meeting with the NGOs in the city. He said that due to the cooperation of the people and NGOs in particular, the Covid-19 impact could be reduced up to 50 per cent. He said that as a part of Swachh Sarvekshan programme, the Corporation levied a tax on garbage collection and 50 per cent of amount has been collected so far.

He said that the main junctions like Devichowk, Pushkar Ghat and others would be developed

Nandyal-Nagarkurnool NH to be a reality

D SIVA RAMI REDDI | DC
KURNOOL OCT. 22

With the Central government giving the nod to take up the Kalvakurthy-Nandyal road as a highway, the people on either side of the Krishna River in Kurnool and Nagarkurnool district are delighted as this would reduce the distance between Atmakur to Nagarkurnool by 50 km.

Minister for road transport and highways Nitin Gadkari is said to have

● **The project involves constructing a bridge across the Krishna river linking Somasila and Siddeshwara.**

cleared the file but official communication is expected, said Telangana State Engineer-in-Chief for Highways Ganapathi Reddy.

He said the proposed National Highway would be a prestigious project as it involves constructing a

bridge across the Krishna river linking Somasila and Siddeshwara. He said further details are awaited from the ministry of road transport and highways.

The people to people relation between Nandikotkur, Atmakur areas in Kurnool district and Kalvakurthy in Nagarkurnool district was very strong as frequent marriages take place between these people. Till now, they preferred only *putty* as a mode of transport to cross the Krishna river to

other banks. It is pertinent to note that 30 people drowned in the Krishna river a decade back while crossing the river.

Nandikotkur MLA Thogur Arthur said it was the long pending demand of the people, which would certainly improve the economy on both sides of the Krishna river.

Some interior areas like Kollapur, Wanaparthy, Nagarkurnool would become accessible to the people of Atmakur and Nandikotkur, he said.

● **CURRENTLY, THE Kadappa depot has 125 buses, 215 drivers, 150 conductors, 95 garage staff and 30 depot staff.**

ate expansion of roads in the interest of the welfare of the people.

Meanwhile, authorities are preparing proposals to



Lord Malayappa Swamy mounted atop Suryaprabha Vahanam, as part of the ongoing Srivari Navaratri Brahmotsavams at Tirumala on Thursday morning.

Lord taken on Suryaprabha,
Chandraprabha vahanamsAVINASH P.
SUBRAMANYAM | DC
TIRUPATI, OCT. 22

On the seventh day morning of Srivari Navaratri brahmotsavams Lord Malayappa Swamy taken out on *Surya Prabha vahanam* in Trivikrama avatar on Thursday.

Lord Malayappa was seated majestically in the Surya Prabha vahanam at Kalyanotsava mandapam inside Srivari temple in Tirumala. The vahanam was observed in ekantham due to the Covid-19 restrictions.

Legends say that seven horses drag the Sun God, who is the key architect of life, with Anura as his charioteer. Sun God is symbolically represented for blessing with good health and a bright future. The mythology says that the darshan of Lord Malayappa on Surya Prabha Vahanam will provide long life and good health, prosperity to the devotees.

Later, in the evening, Lord Malayappa Swamy taken out on Chandraprabha Vahanam inside the temple. Legends say that Chandra or the moon stands for promoting medicinal values among living beings, including plants. This vahanam seva signifies

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 22

The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD) presented silk robes to Goddess Durga during the Dasara Navaratri festival on Thursday. The Goddess adorned as Lalitha Tripura Sundari Devi gave darshan to devotees on the sixth day. The TTD team led by M.L.A. K. Parthasarathy presented silk robes on behalf of TTD to goddess Kanaka Durga.

Durga temple executive officer M.V. Suresh Babu, Vedic priests, welcomed Parthasarathy. Later the portrait of the Goddess and prasadam was given to the MLA.

Minister for Civil

the role of Chandra as Lord of herbal medicine and Ayurveda.

Tirumala Pontiffs Pedda Jeeyar Swamy and China Jeeyar Swamy, TTD EO K.S. Jawahar Reddy, deputy Speaker Kona Raghupathi, Additional EO A.V. Dharma Reddy, Board

Supplies Kodali Sri Venkateswara Rao along with his family members visited Kanaka Durga Temple for darshan of Goddess Durga. Temple EO Suresh Babu welcomed the minister. After the darshan the EO presented the minister with a goddess portrait and prasadam.

About 50 vedic archakas were being honoured by the Kanaka Durga temple trust board chairman P. Somi Naidu on Thursday. Each vedic archaka was rewarded with ₹3,500 cash, prasadam and garments. He said that honouring the priests during Dasara festive season was a custom and they have honoured 50 vedic archakas.

members Meda Mallikarjuna Reddy, Dr Nischitha, Chippagiri Prasad, Govind Hari, D.P. Ananth, Sekhar Reddy, CVSO Gopinath Jatti, Chief Engineer Ramesh Reddy, Peishkar Jagannathan Charyulu and others were present.

MINORITY LEADER
WARNS OF
FAST-UNTO-DEATHDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 22

The Indian Union Muslim League (IUM) AP president Basheer Ahmad threatened to launch a fast-unto-death protest if the government fails to develop the 450-year-old Hazrat Syed Shah Quadri and Ali Hussein Shah Quadri dargahs and mosque situated beneath Kanaka Durga flyover here.

Basheer Ahmad said that the then TD government acquired land of dargah for flyover promising to develop the shrine and further to pay compensation. He said minority leaders had several times appealed to the government and had met Deputy CM Amzath Basha to intervene but to no avail.

He alleged that the CM was being biased against Muslims as he had visited the Durga temple on Wednesday but did not visit the dargah which is situated on the footsteps of the hill. He lamented that the CM was not keen on developing dargahs despite acquiring the lands.

He stated that the TD government had taken 1500 yards of mosque land for construction of the Durga flyover but not pay the promised compensation.

Training to teachers
to contain spread
of virus in schoolsDC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, OCT. 22

Given the re-opening of schools from November 2, special training is being given to the teachers across Andhra Pradesh to identify students with Covid-19 symptoms and prevent the spread of the dreaded virus.

As part of the initiative, pulse oximeters are being supplied to the schools.

Across Prakasam district, 4,450 pulse oximeters are being distributed to the schools, and the teachers are being trained to make effective use of the meters to check oxygen level in the blood. District collector of Prakasam, Pola Bhaskar has instructed the teachers to strictly ensure social distancing between the students, especially during lunch hour as they would remove the masks to take food.

During a review on measures to be taken to save the children from the virus in Ongole on Thursday, he reminded that coexistence with Covid-19 has become inevitable in the prevailing circumstances.

He said that the challenge before the teachers is to arrest the spread of the virus among students

● **4,450 pulse oximeters are being distributed in the schools in Prakasam district**

while directing them to enlighten the students on precautionary measures to protect themselves from the virus.

He said they have procured 2,270 pulse oximeters at an estimated cost of ₹26 lakh and gave them to the Women Self Help Group members to protect 7.7 lakh families under Swayam Rakshana programme.

Joint collector (Secretariats/ Development) T.S. Chetan called upon the teachers to prevail upon students to wear masks, wash hands and maintain physical distance for the next three weeks to contain the spread of the virus.

Regional joint director of Education Department Ravindra, DEO V. Subba Rao, project officer of Sarva Siksha Abhiyaan Srinivasa Reddy, Officer in District Medical and Health Department, Dr P. Rathnavali and Social Welfare wing deputy director Lakshma Nayak were present in the review meeting among others.

BETTER | AMENITIES

The government plans modernise a total of 21 bus campuses across the state soon

Kadapa roads to be widened and bus stand modernised

NAGESWARA RAO
BALLEDA | DC
KADAPA, OCT. 22

District Collector Chevuri Harikiran directed the concerned authorities to immediately undertake road widening works as part of the beautification work in Kadapa city.

As part of Kadapa city development and beautifica-

tion works, the Collector along with JC (Development) Saikant Verma, Sub-Collector Pridhivitei and City Commissioner Lavanna inspected the roads in various areas on Thursday.

Considering the nine most important roads in the city in the first phase, a development plan has been prepared. The most important

part of this is the expansion of roads. In this context, the city has taken steps to remove illegal structures immediately to solve the problems of the people and eliminate traffic congestion.

Many people have already been compensated, though they have not been evacuated. He directed the concerned authorities to take necessary steps for immedi-

further modernise the Kadapa RTC bus stand, the district headquarters.

Preparations are underway to call tenders soon for these works. The state government has stepped in to modernise a total of 21 bus campuses across the state, including the Kadapa RTC bus stand.

In addition to the existing facilities, additional facilities

will be provided.

The bus stand area will also increase. Currently, the Kadapa depot has 125 buses, 215 drivers, 150 conductors, 95 garage staff and 30 depot staff. There are currently 12 platforms in the busstand. There are services from Kadapa to Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Chennai, Visakhapatnam and Vijayawada. As part of the modernisa-

tion work, the number of platforms at the bus stand will be further increased. More and better chairs will be arranged for passengers to sit on. Electric lights, drinking water and toilets are additionally provided. Electrical sign boards detailing the buses, shops and hotel facilities will be provided. Existing facilities will be further improved.

SHORT TAKES

ANTI-TANK MISSILE
'INS KAVARATTI'
COMMISSIONEDDC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 22

The indigenously built anti-submarine warfare (ASW) stealth corvette "INS Kavaratti" was on Thursday commissioned into the Indian Navy by Army chief General Manoj Mukund Naravane at a ceremony held at Naval Dockyard in Visakhapatnam.

Having completed sea trials of all her equipment, Kavaratti has been commissioned as a fully combat-ready platform providing a boost to the anti-submarine warfare capability of the Indian Navy.

INS Kavaratti is the last of the four ASW Corvettes, indigenously designed by the Indian Navy's in-house organisation, Directorate of Naval Design and constructed by Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata. The ship has upto 90 per cent indigenous content.

INS Kavaratti is manned by a team comprising 12 officers and 134 sailors with Commander Sandeep Singh at the helm as her first Commanding Officer. The ship would be an integral part of the Eastern Fleet under the Eastern Naval Command.

The ship is propelled by four diesel engines. It has state of the art equipment and systems to fight in nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) warfare conditions. The weapons and sensors suite onboard is predominantly indigenous and showcases the nation's evolving capability in this niche area. Some of the major systems developed indigenously include combat management system, torpedo tube launchers and Infra-Red Signature Suppression System among others. In addition to its anti-submarine warfare capability, the ship also has a credible self defence capability and good endurance for long-range deployments.

The ship has enhanced stealth features resulting in reduced Radar Cross Section (RCS), which make her less susceptible to detection by the enemy.

Kavaratti takes her name from erstwhile INS Kavaratti which was an Arnala class missile corvette. The older Kavaratti distinguished herself by operating in support of was Bangladesh's liberation in 1971.

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

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

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

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

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

BJP vows free Covid vaccine
for all in Bihar, 19 lakh jobs

Manifesto titled '5 sutras, 1 lakshya, 11 sankalp' unveiled by Nirmala Sitharaman

NAYEAR AZAD | DC
PATNA, OCT. 22

The BJP on Thursday promised free Coronavirus vaccine and 19 lakh jobs for youth in its manifesto for the Bihar Assembly elections. The manifesto titled '5 sutras, 1 Lakshya, 11 Sankalp' (5 sutras, one goal, 11 resolution) was unveiled by Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Patna.

"Bihar has set an example in its fight against Covid-19 pandemic. It is our resolve that as soon as the Coronavirus vaccine will be available after the approval by ICMR, we will provide free vaccination for people of Bihar", the BJP manifesto released on Thursday said.

The announcement has triggered a political row in the state ahead of polls as the Opposition coalition feels that the BJP is politicising the Covid-19 pandemic for electoral gains. The RJD leaders in Patna said that "the vaccine is for the entire nation and it should not be used as a political tool for winning elections".

Political analysts feel that the 19 lakh job announcement by the BJP could also be an attempt to divert public attention from RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav who has been holding the NDA responsible for unemployment in the state and also recently announced around 10 lakh government jobs for youth after winning the election.

Talking about the issue, BJP state president Sanjay Jaiswal said, "Those who are making big announcements before the polls will start thinking about their families once they are in power." The manifesto was released a day before Prime Minister Narendra



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

— PTI

Modi is to begin his election campaign in Bihar.

The BJP also talks about turning Bihar into an IT hub, providing higher technical education including Engineering and Medical in Hindi to ensure that a large section of students benefits from the National Education Policy, better and stronger industrial base and making around one crore women self-reliant in the next five years if the NDA is voted to power.

"People of Bihar are politically sensitive and well informed. They are well aware and understand the promises political parties make. If anyone raises questions about our party's manifesto, we can answer them with confidence as we have fulfilled what we promised," Nirmala said.

Poll fever set to rise further with
Modi, Rahul campaigning today

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

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

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

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is also slated to launch his campaign in Bihar elections on Friday. He will address two ral-

lies Friday — at Hisua in Nawada and Kahalgao in Bhagalpur district.

Sources in the Congress as well as in the RJD said that Tejashwi Yadav, the chief ministerial face of the Mahagathbandhan, will join Gandhi at Hisua, where Congress nominee Neetu Singh is taking on sitting BJP MLA Anil Singh. In Kahalgao, Rahul Gandhi will be accompanied by Shaktisinh Gohil and other senior party leaders, besides some district-level office bearers and candidates of the coalition partners. — PTI

Twitter puts Leh
in China, India
warns network

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PSU whistleblower to move HC against govt

DC CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI, OCT. 22

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

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

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

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said in press conference on Thursday said that the government conducted a detailed examination of the findings of the CBI and found them lacking in merit.

"It's not just about one or two points," he said in Thiruvananthapuram. "All the findings lacked merit. We cannot sanction prosecution based on such a report. There is nothing to implicate the people involved as the processes were continuation of what

had been going on in the company."

Manoj said the CBI had completed its investigations and written to the state government in May this year seeking the permission to go ahead with the prosecution.

"To the best of my understanding, the vigilance and the department of cashew has cleared the file for prosecution but the state cabinet decided otherwise," he said.

The case pertains to the import of cashew between 2005 and 2015 in which the corporation allegedly incurred a loss of over ₹1,200 crore.

Two committees, headed by senior IAS officers P.H. Kurian and Dr K.M. Abraham had found serious irregularities in the func-

tioning of the corporation, including the import deals. The committee headed by Kurian had even recommended summary supercession of the board of directors headed by Chandrasekharan.

The High Court, before ordering a CBI petition in September 2015, had perused two reports submitted by Dr Abraham, which reportedly listed instances of corruption in the case.

Manoj had moved the High Court seeking a CBI probe as the government did not allow the state Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau to go ahead with the investigation despite its quick verification finding that there was corruption in the deals.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Maharashtra government's move came

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



IN BRIEF

London gas explosion: 2 die

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

Indonesia mine landslide: 11 die

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

Trio who lived on ISS return to Earth

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

LTTE DE-LIST MOVE: LANKA LODGES PLEA

Colombo, Oct. 22: Sri Lanka has appealed against a judgement from Britain's Proscribed Organisations Appeal Commission, which has delisted the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) as a proscribed terrorist organisation. A foreign ministry statement issued here said that Sri Lanka has been made aware of the Open Judgement by the Commission on Wednesday. It said the decision of the Commission arises from an appeal filed in May 2019 by an LTTE front organisation challenging the decision of British Secretary of State for Home Affairs dated March 8, 2019, which refused the application by the group to de-proscribe the LTTE from the list of Proscribed Organisations under the UK Terrorism Act of 2000. While Sri Lanka was not a party to these proceedings at the Commission and could not make direct representations, the Lankan Government assisted the British government by providing relevant information with regard to continued terrorist activities.

Iran behind emails to intimidate voters: US

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

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

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

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

Don mismanaged Covid-19: Obama

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

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

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

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

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

AFTER CHAOTIC DEBATE, TRUMP, BIDEN TRY AGAIN

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

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

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

Nigerian prison set afire after protesters shot



A general view of smoke arising from the Ikoyi prison that is on fire in Lagos on Thursday. Gunshots could be heard and smoke was billowing from the prison in central Lagos as fresh unrest rocked Nigeria's biggest city after the shooting of protesters. Police close to the scene told AFP that assailants had attacked the detention facility in the upscale Ikoyi neighbourhood. — AFP

SENATE JUDICIARY PANEL NOD TO DON NOMINEE BARRETT

Washington, Oct. 22: The Senate Judiciary Committee pushed through US President Donald Trump's conservative pick for the Supreme Court, Amy Coney Barrett, Thursday as Democrats boycotted the vote saying it was too close to the November 3 election.

The unanimous vote, with all Democrats absent, sets the stage for full Senate approval at the beginning of next week on Barrett, who will tilt the high court firmly to the right.

On Wednesday Democrats labelled the nomination process a "sham" that broke former Republican promises to never vote on a Supreme Court nominee so close to a presidential election.

"My Democratic Senate colleagues and I boycotted the Supreme Court nominee committee vote today," Senator Kamala Harris, a committee member who is the Democratic nominee for vice president, said.

"Let's be clear: This nomination process is a sham and shows how Republicans will stop at nothing to strip health care from millions of Americans with pre-existing conditions," she said, referring to Republican efforts to have the Supreme Court strike down a popular national health care program.

But Republican committee chairman Lindsey Graham dismissed their action, and, taking advantage of their absence, moved up the vote by almost four hours.

"That was their choice," he said before the vote.

— AFP

Oxford vaccine trial on amid participant's death

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

The university said it can't comment on specific incidents but an independent review found no reason to be concerned about the safety of the Brazilian trial. It says an "independent review, in addition to the Brazilian regulator, have recommended that the trial should continue." The Oxford vaccine is being developed in conjunction with the international pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca. Trials are underway in the United States and the UK, as well as Brazil, to determine whether the potential vaccine is safe and effective in humans.

A team at Bristol University used recently developed techniques to validate that the vaccine accurately follows the genetic

instructions programmed into it by the Oxford University team.

The experts say that the novel analysis provides even greater clarity and detail about how the vaccine successfully provokes a strong immune response. "This is an important study as we are able to confirm that the genetic instructions underpinning this vaccine, which is being developed as fast as safely possible, are correctly followed when they get into a human cell," said Dr David Matthews, Reader in Virology from Bristol's School of Cellular and Molecular Medicine (CMM), who led the research.

"Until now, the technology hasn't been able to provide answers with such clarity, but we now know the vaccine is doing everything we expected and that is only good news in our fight against the illness," he said.

— PTI

GERMANY CASES SPIKE PAST 10K IN NEW RECORD

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

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

The news comes the day after Health Minister Jens Spahn tested positive for COVID-19 himself. He has been quarantined at home and told *Bild* newspaper that so far he's just suffering from "cold-like symptoms."

— AP

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Deport Nawaz: Pakistan requests UK third time

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

A letter for the deporta-

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

Through the letter, the Pakistani government asked the British authorities to consider cancelling Sharif's visit visa, which has allowed him to live in London on medical grounds since November. The letter has cited Britain's own immigration laws of 1974 under which any person sentenced to impris-

onment of more than four years had to be deported to the country of his/her origin. When contacted, Shahzad Akbar, Adviser to Prime Minister Imran Khan on Accountability and Interior confirmed that the government has made three requests to the UK authorities to deport Sharif, with the last being on October 5.

The previous letter, he said, had been dispatched after the cancellation of Sharif's bail by the Islamabad High Court last month. — PTI

Withdraw from UN N-ban treaty: US to countries

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

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

The treaty requires that all ratifying countries

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

It also bans any transfer or use of nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices — and the threat to use such weapons — and requires parties to promote the treaty to other countries. Beatrice Fihn, executive director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize-winning coalition whose work helped spearhead the nuclear ban treaty, said Tuesday that several diplomatic sources confirmed that they and other states that ratified the TPNW had been sent letters by the US requesting their withdrawal. She said the "increasing nervousness, and maybe straightforward panic, with some of the nuclear-armed states and particularly the Trump administration" shows that they "really seem to understand that this is a reality: Nuclear weapons are going to be banned under international law soon." — AP



Donald Trump

U.S. TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN RETURNING: DON

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

Trump has repeatedly said that he would bring home all the US troops from "endless wars". It was also one of the promises he made during his 2016 Presidential campaign. Last month, he said that the United States will reduce the number of its troops in Afghanistan to 4,000 in a very short period of time. "We never had anything like it — and sacrificing American blood and treasure in endless foreign wars in countries that you've never even heard of. And they're all coming back. You know that, right? I hope nobody objects," Trump told his supporters on Wednesday at an election rally in Gastonia, in the battleground state of North Carolina.

"I think 19 years in Afghanistan is enough, wouldn't you say? We're like a police force over there. We have the greatest soldiers in the world, but over there we're like a police force. 19 years is enough," he said. "You think it's easy getting out with all the military-industrial complex, right? The military — beware the military-industrial complex. They are right but we are all coming home." — PTI

SAKHAROV | PRIZE

Lukashenko won his 6th term in a poll widely seen as rigged

EU awards HR prize to Belarus Oppn

Brussels, Oct. 22: The European Union has awarded its top human rights prize to the Belarus opposition movement and its leader, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, for their challenge to President Alexander Lukashenko's long, hard-line reign.

"It is an honour to announce that the women and men of the democratic opposition in Belarus are the 2020 Sakharov Prize

laureates," European Parliament president David Sassoli said. They have on their side something that brute force can never defeat: The truth. Do not give up on your fight. We are by your side."

The 27-nation bloc agreed this month to impose sanctions against officials suspected of election misconduct and a brutal security crackdown on protesters in Belarus. The EU has

● **SINCE THE** Aug. 9 polls that handed Lukashenko a victory with 80% of the vote, mass protests have rocked the ex-Soviet nation sandwiched between Poland and Russia.

warned it is ready to sanction Lukashenko himself if he fails to enter into talks with the opposition

and order an end to the repression launched after a disputed election. Lukashenko won his sixth term in office in a presidential election widely seen as rigged. Since the Aug. 9 polls that handed Lukashenko a victory with 80% of the vote, mass protests have rocked the ex-Soviet nation sandwiched between Poland and Russia.

Tsikhanouskaya, Lukashenko's main challenger,

got 10% of the vote. She and her supporters refused to recognise the results, saying the outcome of the vote was manipulated.

A 38-year old former English teacher with no previous political experience, Tsikhanouskaya joined the race after her husband who aspired to run for president was jailed. He has remained in prison.

— AP

DECCAN Chronicle

23 OCTOBER 2020

Bihar: Lalu son handful, but contest is wide open

Assembly polls in any state are consequential in the larger framework of our democracy, and in the case of Bihar they give us a feel of the political currents in the Hindi heartland which, historically, has had a particular salience in shaping the politics of the country. The three-stage state election in Bihar kicks off on October 28 and the result will be known on November 10, but so close to voting day it is not quite clear which way the wind is blowing. In the ordinary course, the outright win of the JD(U)-BJP alliance that chief minister Nitish Kumar leads might have been taken for granted since there are no known stars in the fray on the opposite side. This is indeed what media reporting and anecdotal evidence initially appeared to suggest.

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

In the normal course, the fortunes of the CM, who has been in office for three consecutive terms, may have been the focal point of interest. But this time around there is a related issue that will be keenly watched, namely the trajectory of the BJP. But for a short break between 2015-17, Mr Kumar has been a steady ally of the BJP, helping the saffron party to consolidate its hold in the Gangetic plain. But there are signs that the BJP may have its own CM in the state. Like in neighbouring UP, where BJP by turns partnered the SP and the BSP before it raised its sights to include the CM's chair, in Bihar too the BJP may be getting ready to quit being bridesmaid. Chirag Paswan, the young, inexperienced, LJP leader, was thought to be its pawn in this venture. But there could be trouble ahead. If LJP cuts into JD(U) votes in any substantial way, its game may end up helping the RJD-Congress-Left Mahagathbandhan (Grand Alliance) pose an even bigger challenge to the JD(U)-BJP alliance, with JD(U) weakened on account of Mr Paswan's effort. Thus, the game that BJP-LJP is accused of launching may just turn out to be a double-edged sword.

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

Can America rein in Google?

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

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

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

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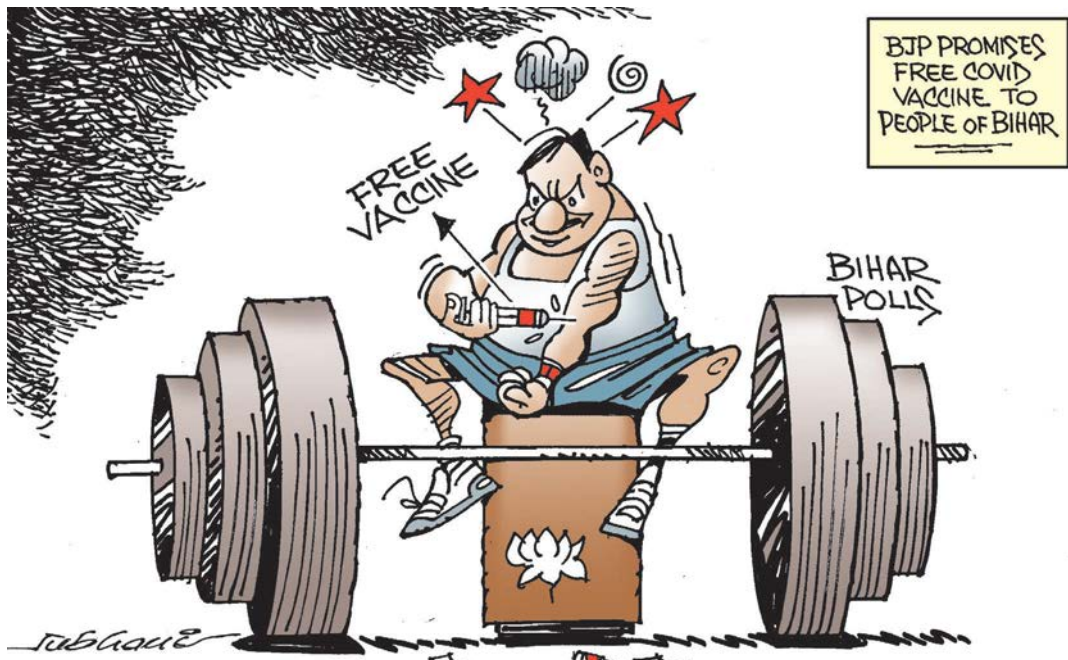
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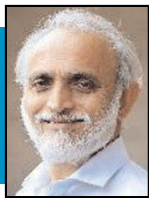
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Subhani



Hindutva a stumbling block for BJP in Bihar



Parsa Venkateshwar Rao Jr

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The writer is a Delhi-based commentator and analyst

LETTERS

ELECTION PROMISES

Prima facie there is nothing wrong in Tejaswi Yadav's commitment during his Bihar election campaign to provide 10 lakh government jobs to the youth in comparison to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's promise in 2014 to distribute ₹15 lakh to each citizen if he becomes the Prime Minister. Apart from such commitments, there were several promises that the PM had made but never fulfilled.

N.S. Sharma
Visakhapatnam

PUNJAB'S MOVE

The Chief Minister of Punjab has scored brownie points by moving the Bills in the Assembly (*Punjab makes a point, will other states follow?*, DC, Oct. 22). There has been a dissonance over the minimum support price (MSP). The ruling dispensation needs to make an all out effort to reduce the trust-deficit among farmers through discussion as they fear that the time-tested scheme which benefited them these years is in the process of getting eliminated.

Dr C. Ghanshyam
Visakhapatnam

FESTIVAL CAUTION

Andhra Pradesh has taken a timely step before the festivals (*AP launches 10-day Covid awareness programme, Oct. 22*). This move will have a positive effect on people. Other states too should take similar action after the PM's address.

K. Nehru Patnaik
Visakhapatnam

Pak offer for talks on Kashmir

UNITED NATIONS, OCT. 22. Pakistan offered today to open talks with India on the mutual withdrawal of their forces from Kashmir. President Yahya Khan, declared: "Let us move towards peace by holding discussions about the withdrawal from Kashmir so that its people are enabled to decide their future without any constraint or coercion from outside."

Gen. Yahya Khan made the offer during a policy statement before the 25th anniversary session of the UN General Assembly.

Saeed Naqvi
Wide Angle



Only Walter Mitty can dream Afghan troop withdrawal before US election

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

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

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

The US involvement in Afghanistan has been a great

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	40,558.49	-0.37
Nifty 50	11,896.50	-0.35
S&P 500*	3,436.26	0.02
Dollar (₹)	73.54	0.08
Pound Sterling (₹)	96.57	-0.57
Euro (₹)	87.16	0.09
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	50,709*624	-1.22
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	42.66	0.93
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.915	0.003
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.826	0.010

* As of 9:30 PM IST

Bajaj Auto profit declines 18.8% to ₹1,138 cr in Q2

Bajaj Auto on Thursday reported an 18.8 per cent year-on-year decline in July-September quarter standalone profit to ₹1,138.2 crore. This is even in its first full quarter of operations after India eased lockdown curbs as sales continue to remain under pressure. Income from operations declined 7.2 per cent year-on-year to ₹7,156 crore in Q2 FY21, with sales volume declining 10.2 per cent y-o-y to 10.53 lakh units.

Siberia holds world's biggest gold deposits



Polyus PJSC, Russia's largest gold producer, said its untapped Sukhoi Log deposit in Siberia holds the world's biggest reserves. An audit showed Sukhoi Log has 40 million ounces of proven reserves, CEO Pavel Grachev said. That means the field — accounting for more than a quarter of Russian gold reserves — is bigger than Seabridge Gold Inc.'s KSM Project in Canada and Donlin Gold in Alaska.

L&T Finance posts 79% jump in Q2 profit at ₹265 cr

L&T Finance Holdings Ltd has reported a 79 per cent jump in net profit at ₹265.12 crore for the period ended September 30, 2020 as against net profit of ₹148.31 crores for the period ended June 30, 2020. The total income was ₹3,508.91 crore during Q2FY21 as compared to ₹3,397.53 crore during the period ended June 30, 2020. The company has reported EPS of ₹1.32 for the period ended September 30.

NTPC tops PSUs in Forbes' best employer list

State-run power giant NTPC on Thursday said it has featured on the top on the list of Indian PSUs under 'World's Best Employer 2020', published by *Forbes*. The employers were also judged based on their Covid-19 responses, image, economic footprint, talent development, gender equality and social responsibility. The final list comprised 750 multinational and large corporations headquartered in 45 countries.



RBI calls for universal QR codes for payment

Sets March 31, 2022 deadline; bans new proprietary codes

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, OCT. 22

In a move that would make it convenient for customers to transact digitally, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Thursday asked Payment System Operators (PSOs) that use proprietary Quick Response (QR) codes to move to one or more interoperable QR codes by March 31, 2022.

The RBI also prohibited launch of any new proprietary QR codes by any payment system operator for any payment transaction.

The central bank said that the two interoperable

QR codes in existence — UPI QR and Bharat QR shall continue as at present. "The above measures are expected to reinforce the acceptance infrastructure, provide better user convenience due to interoperability and enhance system efficiency," said the central bank in a notification.

A QR code is a machine-readable code consisting of an array of black and white squares typically used for storing large amounts of information and facilitates mobile payments at the point of sale.

"Payment System Operators (PSOs) that use proprietary QR codes

shall shift to one or more interoperable QR codes; the process of migration shall be completed by March 31, 2022. No new proprietary QR codes shall henceforth be launched by any PSO for any payment transaction. The RBI shall continue a consultative process to standardise and improve interoperable QR codes, to enable beneficial features identified by the Phatak Committee," the RBI said.

A key hurdle in expansion of the ecosystem is that several payment operators use their own closed-loop system for payment processing. A close-loop QR system only accepts

payments from the mobile application of its deployer which goes against the principle of interoperability agreement between the third party payment application and the banks that govern the UPI ecosystem.

The RBI had constituted a committee led by Professor Deepak Phatak to review the current system of QR Codes in India and suggest measures for moving towards interoperable QR codes. The new norms are based on the recommendations of the committee.

The RBI also said the PSOs may take initiative to spread awareness about interoperable QR codes.

Global trade drops 5% in Sept quarter

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, OCT. 22

Despite making some recovery over the June quarter, global trade was still down five per cent in the September quarter. UNCTAD has revised the global trade projection from a decline of 20 per cent to 7-9 per cent drop for 2020. The UN trade body has also noted that India has made four per cent growth in exports in September.

UNCTAD found a five per cent drop in world trade in the third quarter of 2020 is an improvement from a 19 per cent decline witnessed in the second quarter but insufficient to pull trade out of the red.

The trade body expects the frail recovery to continue in the fourth quarter, with a preliminary forecast of three per cent degrowth compared with the last quarter of 2019.

"The uncertain course of the pandemic will continue aggravating trade prospects in the coming months," UNCTAD secretary-general Mukhisa Kituyi said.

"Despite some 'green shoots' we can't rule out a slowdown in production in certain regions or sudden increases in restrictive policies," Kituyi added.

It expects the value of global trade to contract by 7 to 9 per cent with respect to 2019 after revising the earlier projection of a 20 per cent decline.

Since the June quarter, trade trends have improved with earlier than expected resumption of economic activities in Europe and east Asia.

China has in particular restarted its economy much earlier than initially expected.

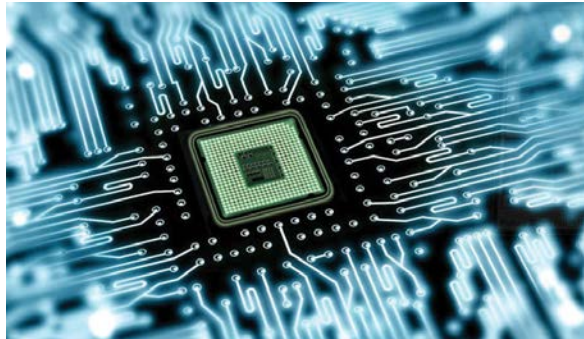
Berlin/Taipei, Oct. 22: On a scorching hot day in late August, representatives of Taiwan's government and industry crowded into the clinical cool of a state-of-the-art semiconductor facility for a symbolic moment in the global tech conflict.

They were attending the opening ceremony for a training centre built by Dutch company ASML Holding at a cost of about \$16 million, small change for an industry used to spending \$10 billion or more on a single advanced manufacturing plant.

The real value of the site in Tainan is strategic: It's one of just two such facilities outside the Netherlands capable of training semiconductor engineers to fabricate cutting-edge chips on ASML machines. Fellow US ally South Korea hosts the other — and Washington is working hard to ensure China never acquires the same technology.

As the US-China confrontation takes root, the ability to craft chips for everything from artificial intelligence and data centers to autonomous cars and smartphones has become an issue of national security, injecting government into business decisions over where to manufacture chips and to whom to sell them. Those tensions could kick into overdrive as Communist Party leaders set a five-year plan that includes developing China's domestic technology industry, notably its chip capabilities.

Semiconductors made from silicon wafers mounted with billions of microscopic transistors are the basic component of modern digital life and the building blocks of innova-



tion for the future. They are arguably one of the world's most important industries, with sales of \$412 billion last year; scale that up to the electronics industry that depends on chips, and it's worth some \$5.2 trillion globally, according to German manufacturers.

At once highly globalised and yet concentrated in the hands of a few countries, the industry has choke points that the US under the presidency of Donald Trump has sought to exploit in order to thwart China's plans to become a world leader in chip production.

Washington says Beijing can only achieve that goal through state subvention at the expense of US industry, while furthering Communist Party access to high-tech tools for surveillance and repression. For both sides, Taiwan, which is responsible for some 70 per cent of chips manufactured to order, is the new front line.

Beijing is increasingly hostile toward Taiwan. Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co.'s status as the world's largest contract chipmaker — a trend taking over the industry — the go-to supplier for Apple Inc. and the focus of next-genera-

tion chip-making, adds another dimension to China's enmity.

Just a couple of kilometers from the new training center, cranes dot a massive construction site where TSMC is building "fabs" in which it will manufacture the most advanced chips in the world — chips that are no longer available to China's Huawei Technologies due to US export controls.

China's intentions are so alarming to America because chips can be dual-use items with military applications, according to a former official familiar with the US administration's efforts.

China — the world's biggest semiconductor market, accounting for more than 50 per cent of all chips sold — isn't standing by as its high-tech ambitions are kneecapped.

China's five-year plan for the chip industry will lend it the same strategic importance Beijing gave to its atomic bomb programme. What's more, a law passed on October 17 may allow China to hit back at the United States, with speculation that it could prompt export controls on rare earths used in chip production.

— Bloomberg

Boycott China call fails to hit China handsets 3 in every 4 smartphones sold in India are Chinese

New Delhi, Oct. 22: Smartphone segment in India rebounded after the lockdown to touch an all-time high of 50 million units in September quarter with Chinese companies collectively holding 76 per cent market share, according to research firm Canalys.

All the top five smartphone vendors — Xiaomi, Samsung, Vivo, Realme and Oppo — saw their shipment grow in the third quarter compared to the year-ago period.

"Smartphone shipments in India recovered in Q3 2020, posting 8 per cent growth to 50 million units (from 46.2 million units in year-ago period). This is an all-time record for smartphone shipments in a single quarter in India," Canalys said in a statement.

Xiaomi remained the market leader with 26.1 per cent share, shipping 13.1 million units.

Samsung reclaimed the second place from Vivo,

Ongoing tension between India and China has been a hot topic in the past few months, but we have yet to see a significant impact on purchase decisions of mass market customers

VARUN KANNAN, Canalys analyst

with 10.2 million units (20.4 per cent share) — helped by its aggressive product portfolio and pricing strategy in the low-end paid off, it added.

Vivo had 17.6 per cent share (8.8 million units), while Realme had 17.4 per cent share (8.7 million units) and Oppo had 12.1 per cent share (6.1 million units) in the said quarter.

Apple regained momentum in India in the third quarter with double-digit growth to nearly 8,00,000 units.

Despite a call to boycott Chinese products after a

bloody border clash in Ladakh, Chinese vendors collectively comprised 76 per cent of total smartphone shipments this quarter, which has grown from 74 per cent a year ago. This is, however, slightly lower than the June 2020 quarter, when Chinese companies had around 80 per cent cumulative share.

"Ongoing tension between India and China has been a hot topic in the past few months, but we have yet to see a significant impact on purchase decisions of mass market customers," Canals Research Analyst Varun Kannan said.

However, the tensions have caused Chinese smartphone brands to act conservatively in recent months, reducing their marketing spend, and carefully trying to project the image that they are important contributors to, and stakeholders in, the economic future of India, he added. — PTI

Real estate sees hope in future

FC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, OCT. 22

The future sentiments in the real estate market have turned positive for the first time this year, though the current sentiments still remain negative.

The *Future Sentiment Score* for Q3 2020 of the Knight Frank-Picci-Naredco Real Estate Sentiment Index, which shows the sentiments of the stakeholders of the industry for the next six months, climbed the optimistic zone at 52 points for the first time in 2020. It moved up from 41 in the previous quarter. The *Current Sentiments Score*, an indicator of past six months, also recorded a significant improvement from the previous quarter low of 22 points to 40 points in Q3 2020.

A score of above 50 signifies 'optimism' in sentiments, a score of 50 means the sentiment is 'same' or 'neutral', while a score below 50 shows 'pessimism'.

This revival in sentiments is attributed to the remarkable upturn seen

in the real estate business, especially in the residential segment, in the third quarter of 2020 as a result of the unlocking process.

In Q3 2020, residential launches and sales bounced back from the Covid-induced decline, across cities. The office sector also resumed operations, at varying occupancies across markets as occupiers took steps to ensure continuity in business operations to their highest potential. 'These developments have turned the stakeholder outlook on the real estate sector to optimism, as reflected in the Future Sentiment score of Q3 2020.

"Low home loan rates and discounts and attractive offers for residential homes, have pushed sales velocity in the third quarter. While the volumes are yet to catch up to the pre-Covid levels, the spurt has been instrumental in perking up sentiments. Similar positivity is visible for the office sector as well, where we have seen a revival of leasing activities," said Shishir Bajjal, chairman and MD, Knight Frank India.

DRL servers face cyber attacks

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, OCT. 22

Dr Reddy's Laboratories Ltd, the country's second drugmaker by market value, said on Thursday that it had isolated all its data centre services as a preventive measure after it detected a cyberattack. "We are anticipating all services to be up within 24 hours and we do not foresee any major impact on our operations due to this incident," Dr Reddy's chief information officer Mukesh Rathii said, commenting on the development.

The company, which has tied up with Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) for conducting clinical trials of Sputnik-V Covid-19 vaccine in India, did not reveal the source of the attack.

The breach could possibly aimed at accessing classified information from the servers.

As per the tie-up, RDIF will supply 100 million doses of the vaccine to Dr Reddy's upon regulatory approval in India.

According to sources, the company had temporarily closed down its plants in the United States, United Kingdom, Brazil, India and Russia because of the breach.

Honda exports over 2,000 bikes

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, OCT. 22

The emission technology upgrade to BS-VI has Indian OEMs a new opportunity for sales exports. Thus, the made-in-India badge is now expanding its footprint to all corners of the world.

The Japanese automaker Honda Motorcycle & Scooter on Thursday said it has exported more than 2,000 completely knocked down or CKD kits of its next generation 125cc, advanced and stylish bike SP125 to Europe since August 2020.

The company has an export portfolio of 18 two-wheeler models and supplies to 25 export markets led by Asia, Middle East and Latin America.

The SP125 BS VI bike is currently manufactured at the Tapukara plant in Rajasthan, which has a manufacturing capacity of 1.2 million units a year.

The SP125 was the first BS-VI motorcycle launched by Honda in November 2019. It has 19 new patent applications, a completely new 125cc HET engine with eSP technology that delivers 16 per cent more mileage. — Reuters

MNREGA pulls down employment rate in Oct

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, OCT. 22

After recording a month-on-month recovery till September from the lows of April, the employment rate has once again dropped in the first three weeks of October. The significant drop in MNREGA man-days has pulled down rural jobs and stagnated the employment rate.

The employment rate of 2019-20 stood at 39.4 per cent. It fell to 27.2 per cent in April 2020 but recovered to 30.2 per cent in May. In June, it further recovered to 36.2 per cent and then to 37.6 per cent in July. There was a marginal drop in August to 37.5 per cent, but September once gain saw a recovery to 38 per cent.

However, the first three

weeks of October show signs of continued stress. The employment rates of the first three weeks were 37.6 per cent, 37.5 per cent and 37.9 per cent, as per CMIE's Consumer Pyramids Household Survey.

Fall of the employment rate revealed in the first three weeks of October 2020 is entirely because of a fall in the employment rate in rural India.

The weekly employment rate had touched 39.9 per cent in the week ended September 6. But, in the week ended October 4, the rate was down to 39 per cent and then it slipped further to 38.8 per cent in the week ended October 11. It recovered to 39.5 per cent in the week ended October 18, but was still lower than the September average.

More electric vehicle firms queue up to go public

Detroit, Oct. 22: Missed out on the Tesla rally but still want to surf the electric vehicle wave?

A stream of EV-related startups backed by blank-check firms are lining up to go public so there's plenty of choice. But like Tesla in the early days, few have products ready to sell or any likelihood of generating significant revenue anytime soon.

Instead, investors will be relying on rosy production, sales and revenue forecasts for new cars, trucks and batteries, all

set to be jostling for a slice of markets that will be far more crowded than when Tesla's cars first hit the road.

Take Fisker Inc, for example. It was launched in 2016, just three years after the bankruptcy of its predecessor and early Tesla rival Fisker Automotive. In July, Fisker Inc announced a \$2.9 billion reverse merger deal with Spartan Energy Acquisition Corp, a Special Purpose Acquisition Company (SPAC), and is planning to go public later this year.

● INVESTORS WILL be relying on rosy production, sales and revenue forecasts for new cars, trucks and batteries, all set to be jostling for a slice of markets that will be far more crowded than when Tesla's cars first hit the road.

It has no revenue and its Fisker Ocean electric sports-utility vehicle (SUV) is at least two years away from production in a project heavily dependent on nailing down deals

with partners who will build the car and provide key components.

That's not particularly unique for young companies in the sector looking to use SPACs to go public and bypass the scrutiny of a traditional IPO process, according to company presentations and interviews with executives and investors.

That also didn't seem to be an issue earlier this year when US electric truck maker Nikola Motors used a SPAC to go public. Shares in the com-

pany that hopes to generate revenue next year almost trebled after listing on the Nasdaq exchange.

But they slumped when a short-seller questioned whether founder Trevor Milton had made false claims about Nikola's technology, forcing the 38-year-old entrepreneur to step down as chairman — and making some investors more cautious.

However, Bill Rinna, director of Americas vehicle forecasts at LMC Automotive, projects total U.S. EV sales in 2024 will

just top one million. Tesla could account for half that volume, with GM, Ford and VW taking significant shares as well, analysts say.

Whether fund managers dangling blank-check deals will pursue a more cautious approach in the post-Nikola environment, despite the potential red flags, remains an open question. But with Nikola as a cautionary tale, and Fisker sparking additional concerns, some investors have become more choosy. — Reuters



SHORT TAKES

Badminton World Jr event is off

New Delhi: The 2020 World Junior Badminton Championship, which was postponed to be held in New Zealand in January, was on Thursday cancelled in wake of Covid-19 pandemic. The competition was originally planned for September-October but was pushed to January amid the raging pandemic.

"...the entry restrictions in place and complexities related to the Covid-19 situation makes it impossible for the event to be planned and therefore hosted in New Zealand in January 2021 as currently scheduled," said Badminton World Federation (BWF) Secretary General Thomas Lund. However, Badminton New Zealand are still committed to hosting the BWF World Junior Championships and the BWF has accepted a proposal for them to stage the 2024 edition as a replacement for the edition lost. — PTI

Football great Pele turns 80

Sao Paulo: Brazilian football great Pele turns 80 on Friday, but the celebration will have to wait. The three-time World Cup winner will spend the day isolated with a few family members outside Sao Paulo, where he is expected to receive a flood of tributes from players, fans, celebrities and politicians. His long-time spokesman, Pepito Fornos, said Pele will likely spend his birthday at his mansion in the beachfront city of Guarujá, on the coast of Sao Paulo state, where he has been since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. He also has residences in Santos and Sao Paulo. He will only stay with his family. Fornos said Pele isn't speaking publicly because he is still mourning his brother Jair, who died of cancer in March. — AP

World's top trio sign for Big Bash

Sydney: All three of the world's top-ranked Twenty20 players have signed on for Australia's Big Bash League with Afghan spin king Rashid Khan Thursday confirming his return to the Adelaide Strikers. The 10th season of the eight-franchise tournament is set to start on December 3 and end with the final on February 6, with the Sydney Sixers defending their title. Rashid will be back for a Strikers side coached by Jason Gillespie. His return follows the signings this week of England's top-ranked batsman David Malan for the Hobart Hurricanes and Afghan allrounder Mohammad Nabi by the Melbourne Renegades. Others on board include English internationals Alex Hales (Sydney Thunder), Tom Banton (Brisbane Heat) and Tom Curran (Sydney Sixers). — AFP

Tennis champ Julia calls it a day

Berlin: Germany's Julia Goerges, a Wimbledon semi-finalist in 2018, announced her retirement from tennis on Wednesday. "I have always known that I would feel it when the right time has come to say goodbye — and the moment is here," the 31-year-old, currently ranked 45th in the world, posted on social media. "Thank you for everything you have given me", Goerges wrote in a love letter to tennis, "you will be in my heart forever". Goerges won a total of seven singles and five doubles titles on the WTA tour. — AFP

Live on TV

CRICKET

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

FORMULA ONE

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

FOOTBALL

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

WWE SMACKDOWN

Bouts from 5.30 am (Saturday) on Sony Ten 1

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Sun too hot for RR

Holder, Pandey script warm win against Royals

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

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

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

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

Playing his first match of the tournament, Holder came up with an impressive bowling effort while also affecting a run out to destabilise the RR innings. Rashid Khan (1/20) and Vijay Shankar (1/15) picked a wicket each.

For RR, Sanju Samson (36 off 26 balls) was the top scorer. Put in to bat, Robin Uthappa looked in rampaging form, hitting the first four and six of the innings. He quickly raced to 19 off 13 balls.

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



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

SCORECARD

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

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

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

20-1, Shahbaz Nadeem 1-0-9-0.

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

FoW: 1-4, 2-16.

Bowling: Jofra Archer 4-0-21-2, Ankit Singh Rajpoot 1-0-11-0, Kartik Tyagi 3-1-0-42-0, Ben Stokes 2-0-24-0, Shreyas Gopal 4-0-32-0, Rahul Tewatia 4-0-25-0.

IPL POINTS TABLE

Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
Delhi Capitals	10	7	3	0	14	+0.774
Royal Challengers Bangalore	10	7	3	0	14	+0.182
Mumbai Indians	9	6	3	0	12	+1.201
Kolkata Knight Riders	10	5	5	0	10	-0.828
Sunrisers Hyderabad	10	4	6	0	8	+0.092
Kings XI Punjab	10	4	6	0	8	-0.177
Rajasthan Royals	11	4	7	0	8	-0.620
Chennai Super Kings	10	3	7	0	6	-0.463

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

MCCULLUM NOT HAPPY WITH KKR APPROACH

Abu Dhabi, Oct. 22: Disappointed with his team's "timid approach" with the bat, Kolkata Knight Riders head coach Brendon McCullum has admitted that the crushing defeat against Royal Challengers Bangalore would definitely affect the morale of the side, but their destiny is still in their hands.

He believes KKR can go all the way to the final, despite just hanging on to the fourth spot.

McCullum admitted that they were not good enough and lacked intent in the lop-sided contest against RCB.

"This (loss) is going to affect a little bit in terms of our confidence. We need to work hard on ensuring our morale doesn't drop at the same time having those honest conversations around how we improve," McCullum said. — PTI

Virat handing me new ball boosted confidence: Siraj

Abu Dhabi, Oct. 22: Royal Challengers Bangalore pacer Mohammed Siraj, who ripped through Kolkata Knight Riders' top-order with a "magical performance", said skipper Virat Kohli's surprise decision to hand him the new ball lifted his confidence in the IPL match here.

Siraj's first three wickets came without conceding a run as he became the first bowler in IPL history to bowl two maidens in a single game. RCB restricted KKR to a paltry 84/8 and chased down the target in 13.3 overs.

Once Chris Morris generated swing early on, Siraj was asked to bowl the second over following a discussion with wicket-keeper AB de Villiers.

"We hadn't planned that I would open but when we went out, Virat bhai said 'Miyann, ready ho jao (Sir, get ready!),' you will have



Mohammed Siraj (right) of Royal Challengers Bangalore and captain Virat Kohli.

to bowl..." It boosted my confidence," the Hyderabad pacer said.

"Initially, I didn't think it would swing so much after seeing the wicket. I just backed my strength and really enjoyed a lot," he added.

Brought in the second over, Siraj struck in his third ball with a good

length ball that went away of Rahul Tripathi.

In his next delivery, he cleaned up Nitish Rana and in the next over, he accounted for Tom Banton with another outswinging delivery.

His bowling figures became the most economical this season.

— PTI

'SLOW WICKET ALLOWS ME TO ATTACK MORE'

Sharjah, Oct. 22: MI leg-spinner Rahul Chahar on Thursday said the pitches getting gradually slower in the UAE and bigger grounds than India has allowed him to attack the batsmen consistently in the IPL.

Chahar has taken 11 wickets in nine games with a decent economy rate of 7.40.

Asked to compare between the pitches here and the Wankhede in Mumbai, Chahar said, "In the starting matches, we felt that the wickets (here) were similar to the Wankhede stadium easy for batsmen."

"Like at Wankhede a spinner had to bowl on a shorter side, like five meter length, but here we are bowling fuller, because the grounds are big and pitches are slightly slow, we can bowl fuller, and can attack batsmen," added Chahar. — PTI

CSK up against formidable MI

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

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

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

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

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

However, they would be up against a formidable MI side which won five games in a row before KXIP halted the juggernaut, turning the tables in a double Super Over on Sunday night. The four-time IPL champions have been in ominous form and the varied bowling attack could prove a challenge for the CSK batters, who are low on confidence.

Also, the MI batting lineup has been in good nick

NUMBERS GAME

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL:

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

MEETING IN 2019

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

MEETING IN 2020

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

FOR THE RECORD

- Rohit Sharma who scored 3988 runs at an average of 31.65 and a strike rate of 130.54 in 148 innings of 152 matches, needs just 12 runs to become the first batsman to score 4000 or more runs for Mumbai Indians in IPL.
- Ravindra Jadeja who claimed 85 wickets at an average of 26.60 in 99 innings of 112 matches, will become the first Chennai Super Kings player to bowl in 100 innings in IPL.

— S. PERVEZ KAISER

with Quinton de Kock in splendid form while Rohit Sharma, Suryakumar Yadav and Ishan Kishan have had their moments. That's not all, the power-hitting abilities of Kieron Pollard and Hardik Pandya have rescued Mumbai Indians when the big guns have not fired. — PTI

ANDHRA | T20 LEAGUE

Titans, Chargers begin with wins

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT. 22

The Titans and Chargers got off to winning starts in the Andhra T20 League that commenced at the RDT Sports Complex in Anantapur on Thursday.

While the Titans beat Kings by six wickets in the opener, the Chagers laid Legends low by 56 runs in the afternoon game.

Narenreddy (64 — 34b, 3x4, 6x6) of the Kings and K. S. Bharat (64 — 39b, 7x4, 3x6) of the Chargers were the best batsmen on show, scoring a half-century each while K. P. Sai Rahul of Chargers took the bowling

honours by grabbing 4 wickets while conceding a mere 9 runs in the match against Legends XI.

BRIEF SCORES

■ Kings XI 144/5 in 20 overs (C. R. Gnaneswar 35, Narenreddy 64 (34b, 3x4, 6x6), D. Swaroop 2/27) lost to Titans XI 146/4 in 19.3 overs (Gulfaam Saleesh 47 (45b, 2x4, 3x6), D. Chaitanya 41 (37b, 2x4, 2x6, P. Tapaswi 2/21).

■ Chargers XI 138/7 in 20 overs (K. S. Bharat 64 (39b, 7x4, 3x6), S. K. Rashid 22 n.o, M. Harishankar Reddy 2/22, Ashish Reddy 2/15) bt Legends XI 82 in 18.4 overs (K. P. Sai Rahul 4/9, Ch Siddharth 2/23).

INDIAN TEAM ALLOWED TO TRAIN IN QUARANTINE

Sydney, Oct. 22: Sydney and Canberra are set to host the white-ball leg of India's tour of Australia after the New South Wales government allowed the visiting team to train during its mandatory quarantine upon arrival.

ESPNewsinfo on Thursday reported that New South Wales government and Cricket Australia have struck a deal to allow Indian and Australian players returning from IPL to train in Sydney while quarantining.

The Indian team was initially supposed to land in Brisbane but the Queensland state health authorities did not relax their 14-day quarantine rule to allow Virat Kohli and Co to train during that period.

India are scheduled to play three T20s, three ODIs and four Tests in Australia. The first two ODIs are set to be held on November 27 and 29 at the Sydney Cricket Ground before final game of the series in Canberra's Manuka Oval. The first T20 will also be played in Canberra.

The pink-ball Test will be at Adelaide from December 17 to 21. The Boxing Day Test from December 26 could also be held in Adelaide if the Covid-19 situation in Melbourne doesn't allow the authorities to host the game at the iconic MCG. — PTI

Reds pip Ajax, City win big

Paris, Oct. 22: Bayern Munich began their defence of the Champions League title in ominous fashion by crushing Atletico Madrid 4-0 on Wednesday, while Liverpool and Manchester City also won but Real Madrid suffered a shock defeat.

Liverpool shook off the absence of Virgil van Dijk to edge Ajax 1-0 behind closed doors in Amsterdam in Group 'D'.

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

THE RESULTS

Bayern Munich (Coman 28, 72, Goretzka 41, Tolisso 66)	4	Manchester City (Sergio Aguero 20-pen, Ilkay Gundogan 65, Ferran Torres 73)	3
Real Madrid (Modric 54, Vinicius Junior 59)	0	FC Porto (Diaz 14)	1
Shakhtar Donetsk (Tete 29, Varane 33-og, Solomon 42)	3	Inter Milan (Lukaku 49, 90)	2
Ajax Liverpool (Tagliafico 35-og)	0 1	Borussia Moenchenglbadach (Ramy Bensebaini 63-pen, Jonas Hofmann 84)	2

went down to a 3-2 home loss against Shakhtar Donetsk.

Two months after scoring the winner in the final against Paris Saint-Germain in Lisbon, Kingsley Coman put Bayern ahead against Atletico in Group A and later scored a stunning

individual effort to wrap up the victory at an empty Allianz Arena.

In between Leon Goretzka and Corentin Tolisso were also on target for the German champions, with the latter's strike a stunner from long-range.

Meanwhile, Real were 3-0 down at half-time against

Shakhtar at the Alfredo di Stefano stadium and fell short with a second-half fightback to get their European campaign off to a disastrous start.

Strikes from Tete and Manor Solomon, either side of a Raphael Varane own-goal, gave them a three-goal half-time lead. — AFP



Sergio Aguero (left) of Manchester City and his teammate Ilkay Gundogan (centre) fight for the ball with Porto's Pepe during their Champions League Group 'C' match at the Etihad stadium in Manchester on Wednesday. City won 3-1. — AFP