





## SHORT TAKES

### ITDA TO FOCUS ON HEALTH OF ADIVASI WOMEN

DC CORRESPONDENT  
ADILABAD, AUG. 25

The officials of the Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA), Utnoor, are making efforts to learn as to why Adivasis pregnant women suffer from anaemia. A special medical camp was conducted in Keslapur village in Indravelli mandal on Monday. The medical and health department scanned 55 pregnant Adivasi women from four PHC sub-centers under Pittabongaram.

The initiation was taken after Telangana governor Tamilisai Soudararajan took note of the death of a pregnant woman Purka Jayasheela, 27, of Koyalpandri village in Indravelli mandal who was admitted to RIMS, in Adilabad district in June.

According to sources, ITDA, Utnoor, project officer Bhavesh Mishra has been focusing on providing nutritious food to pregnant Adivasi women suffering from anaemia. Adivasi leader Sidam Bheem-rao has asked to conduct research to know why anaemia is high among the Adivasis.

## SONIA HELPED IN CREATION OF TS, SAYS UTTAM

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“It is Sonia Gandhi alone who is responsible for creation of separate state of Telangana, that is an indisputable fact,” said TPCC president Uttam Kumar Reddy. He said “we are happy that Sonia Gandhi has agreed to continue as Congress president for another six months and we urge Rahul Gandhi to take over as Congress president after that and lead the Indian National Congress to a resounding victory in 2024 elections.”

“The episode that has been happening in the country and party circles in the last two-three days, it is really unfortunate that some senior leaders have leaked the content of a letter written by them on internal party issues.” Such issues need to be discussed in the party forum.

Congress Legislature party leader Bhatti Vikramarka and leaders including Marri Shashidhar Reddy, Ponnala Lakshmaiah, Mohammed Ali Shabbir, A. Revanth Reddy, Ponnann Prabhakar, Gudur Narayana Reddy and Gandhi family loyalist V. Hanumantha Rao expressed support to the leadership of the Gandhi family.

Some leaders are planning a signature campaign supporting the leadership of Sonia Gandhi and for Rahul Gandhi to be made her successor. AP Congress leaders want Sonia Gandhi to continue as the party's president and, in case change is inevitable, Rahul Gandhi must take charge.

In a letter addressed to Sonia Gandhi, APCC president Dr Sailaja-nath said that they had unanimously resolved that the incumbent should continue to lead the Congress at this crucial juncture where a fierce fight was the need of the hour to save democracy in the country. He said that history proved that Sonia Gandhi had taken several challenges head-on and succeeded.

Sailajanath said that in case Sonia Gandhi had decided to make way, Rahul Gandhi should shoulder the responsibility. He opined that no leader in the Congress could provide such a strong leadership and cautioned that any move to deprive the party of such a visionary and courageous leader would give advantage to divisive and dictatorial forces. He asserted that Rahul Gandhi had already proved that he had the daring to take on the ‘treacherous’ forces.

PCC vice-president N. Tulasi Reddy in a statement said, “We want our Congress president Sonia Gandhi to continue to lead the party.”

# Quick decisions, awareness drive gave results: Anjani

## DC INTERVIEW

*Responding to the challenges thrown by the Coronavirus pandemic, Hyderabad police commissioner Anjani Kumar undertook several initiatives to ensure the city emerged victorious. In an interview to Chandra Vardhan, Kumar spoke about the nature and magnitude of the challenges.*

**It must have been a challenge to implement a lockdown to contain the spread of the virus. How did you go about it?**

It was an unprecedented situation faced by any police organisation in the world. Hyderabad, the fourth largest city in India and an emerging global megapolis, has its own uniqueness. Our challenges were greater, more complex. We had a series of meetings, briefings, wireless conferences, teleconferences and videoconferences to ensure every constable and officer were on the same page. I told everyone the situation is like World War III, a war against Covid-19, which has affected over 180 countries. They realised the

uphill task, took up gigantic targets and ensured massive mobilisation needed.

**How did the lockdown start and pan out?**

In our first meeting Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao drew up an action plan and expressed his expectations from each and every wing of the administration – health, GHMC, police and others. Telangana was the first state to initiate a lockdown. The Hyderabad city police stepped out on the roads immediately to enforce janata curfew and other containment measures. The results were visible. Our initial Covid-19 infections were much less than other cities in India, though we have a population of about one crore.

**How did you motivate your force during the crisis?**

Initially, we motivated our 12,000-plus police personnel. We then worked on getting support from the



Hyderabad police commissioner Anjani Kumar

community. We went to every lane and spoke to residents. We assured them that we are with citizens round the clock. Our constables and officers were seen managing roads day and night. When the entire population was locked down inside houses, our brave people were out at odd hours. Every night, at around 1 to 2 am while returning home, I would stop at places to talk to and motivate our officers. We celebrated birthdays on the roads, greeted colleagues on their anniver-

saries from roads. It developed a great bonding with families. A senior Central government official called me to say never in the past 50 years was the image of police so high. We felt proud of our uniforms.

**What were the initial hiccups?**

At short notice, we deployed security personnel at places where none of us had any training or experience. We were asked to provide security to Covid-19 wards at Gandhi Hospital. We had to moti-

**IN OUR first meeting, Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao drew up an action plan and expressed his expectations from each and every wing of the administration.**

vate our officers to enter Covid-19 wards at short notice wearing PPEs. I salute my men who were prepared both physically and mentally for long duty hours inside the Covid-19 wards. Then came the identification of those coming from other cities and countries. Passengers of every aircraft and train were screened and analysed. Within the first few days, we checked over 15,000 people.

Movement of essential goods is equally important during the lockdown. Special teams were set up for this purpose. The CM was monitoring everything and taking regular feedback. His proactive leadership was a great source of encouragement.

Creating awareness about the virus was a huge

task. Helmets shaped like the Coronavirus was effective. I got messages on social media on the helmet campaign. The city police organised a card campaign by almost 900 students from Classes II to VII. Children prepared cards to show appreciation and gratitude for both police and medical departments.

**How was the coordination done at the field level?**

A Covid-19 Control Room was established headed by a joint commissioner of police, with a team of 35. They ensured movement of every lorry, van, autorickshaw for distribution of vegetable, milk, groceries and other essentials was smooth. We had to strike a balance between enforcing lockdown while allowing movement of essential goods.

**You are known to be tough. As it was not a general law and order concern, what approach did you adopt in tackling the crisis?**

Hyderabad is a hub of infrastructure activities.

Over two lakh guest workers from far-off states work here. Inspired by the CM's philosophy that guest workers are partners in economic development, it became our responsibility to look after them as a 'mool mantra'. We organised food and basic medicines for guest workers. Many donors, philanthropists and NGOs helped us in this. We adopted a humane approach as the crisis was of a different nature and magnitude.

We moved beyond policing duties. There were numerous cases where police personnel shifted pregnant women to hospitals in police vehicles when ambulances could not reach in time. The additional CP (crime), a lady officer, was coordinating this vertical. Fear of an imminent threat unites us. We are proud our teams and our citizens responded so positively. I have been a basketball player and a great fan of the game. I often remember a quote from Michael Jordan, “Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence win championships”.

# 282T of Covid-19 waste cleared

## Biomedical waste treated at 11 facilities

BALU PULIPAKA | DC  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 24

Telangana state has generated 281.8 tonnes of Covid-19 related biomedical waste so far, which has been treated and disposed at 11 biomedical waste treatment facilities, the Pollution Control Board (PCB) has said. On an average, since March 19 till August 18, the state was generating 1,842 tonnes of such biomedical waste. PCB officials, who revealed this information, were briefing forests and environment minister A. Indrakaran Reddy on pollution control measures and steps being taken on this front, at a meeting here on Monday.

The minister, after the meeting, launched the TSAIR app, for both Android and Apple devices, that can be downloaded from the respective app stores. The minister said people can check the ambient air quality levels at their locations. People can lodge complaints, upload photographs using the app, Indrakaran Reddy said.

He instructed officials of the PCB to provide live updates on the details of biomedical wastes collected from Covid-19 care facilities.

This information should include the amount of waste collected, and which treatment and disposal facility the material has been shifted to for disposal.

Any hospital that does not follow biomedical

# TS reports 1,842 new Covid cases

KANIZA GARARI | DC  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 24

The number of tests fell to 36,282 on Sunday, from more than 40,000 in the previous two days, according to data released by the health department in its Covid-19 bulletin on Monday. A total of 9,68,121 tests have been carried out so far.

There were 1,842 new cases and six deaths recorded in the state on August 23, taking the total to 1,06,091 and 761 deaths. Active cases are at 22,919 and those under treatment in home isolation are 16,482.

The number of active cases continue to be high as prolonged treatment is required. Besides, many patients are still coming very late to the hospitals.

In districts there are certain underprivileged communities have been unable to go to hospitals as they have no money for transport and or to buy medicines. These people are not coming forward at

all and their homes are having more than two cases.

Districts continue to reel under the burden of high infection rate. Testing is being done only for those who are able to make it to hospitals.

Karimnagar again saw a rise of 134 cases, Nizamabad 158, Suryapet 113, Ranga Reddy 109 and the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation 373 cases. The non-GHMC areas recorded 1,469 cases.

While the government helpline and numbers are available, people are still having problems finding testing centres as also their timings. Those who fall sick at night and have to rush to hospital are finding it difficult to get admission. That is leading to confusion, anger and also loss of precious time.

There is still a gap noted in information spread due to which these problems are occurring at the ground level.

waste disposal rules and guidelines should be punished, Indrakaran Reddy told the officials. He called for strict action against any industry or establishment flouting pollution

control norms.

“There is also a need for a comprehensive long-term pollution control and mitigation plan for the city of Hyderabad,” he said.

# Fugitive tests +ve, arrested

JAYENDRA CHAITHANYA  
T | DC  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 24

A 30-year-old remand prisoner who escaped from the isolation ward at the Osmania General Hospital by jumping from the second floor early on Monday morning was caught by the Afzalgunj police in the evening. He had fractured his leg while escaping.

His Covid-19 test returned positive after the prisoner escaped. He has now been admitted to Gandhi Hospital for treatment.

According to the Afzalgunj police, the accused, 30, a resident of Suryodaya Colony in LB Nagar, was arrested by the Alwal police for alleged theft and was lodged at the Cherlapally prison. As he had symptoms of Covid-19, he was admitted to OGH on August 21. He escaped at about 4 am on Monday.

The escort police who

noticed his escape lodged a complaint, and he was traced to Chaitanya Nursing Home at Ibrahimpatnam, where he went to get treatment for his fractured leg, said the police.

Afzalgunj inspector M. Ravindar Reddy said, “The team took necessary precautions as we learned that the Covid-19 test turned positive. He was brought in an ambulance and the police wore PPE kits.”

All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimin (MIM) president Asaduddin Owaisi has written to Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao requesting exemption of Motor Vehicle (MV) Tax

## See you next year



A girl whispers a wish to Lord Ganesh while bidding goodbye before the idol was immersed in Hussainsagar on the third day of Ganesh Chaturthi festival celebrations in Hyderabad on Monday. — S. SURENDER REDDY

## E-CLASSES IN SCHOOLS TO START SEPT. 1

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 24

Online classes in all schools in Telangana state will begin on September 1, the education department announced on Monday. The department said the decision to allow online classes as part of e-learning and distance education formats, will use various digital, TV and V-Sat platforms.

No decision has been taken yet on reopening of schools and recommencement of regular classes. Separate instructions will be issued as per Central guidelines on this. Until then, all schools and other educational institutions shall remain physically closed for students, the department said. All teachers have been instructed to attend schools regularly from August 27 and prepare e-content, and lesson plans. In its orders on restarting of classes, the department said the Director of School Education (DSE) has been instructed to follow an alternative calendar prepared by the SCERT. The DSE has also been instructed to issue detailed guidelines on this front.

# Owaisi plans bill against facial recognition tech

ATHER MOIN I DC  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 24

MIM president Asaduddin Owaisi, the Hyderabad MP, is contemplating introducing a private member bill in the ensuing session of Parliament proposing a ban on face recognition and remote biometric surveillance.

In a series of posts on his Twitter handle, Owaisi said the Supreme Court's Puttaswamy judgment had stated very clearly that privacy is a fundamental right. “There's a huge risk when our personal information is used without our consent. Most importantly, facial recognition technology is unreliable and biased,” he said.

Owaisi pointed out that such technology can record and use the gait to identify the person. Face recognition technology is inaccurate in identifying dark people, women, persons with disabilities and young people, he said.

Owaisi said: “accuracy of these technologies depends on the database. These databases are themselves riddled with bias. For example, a database of arrested people will obviously have an over-representation of SCs, STs & Muslims. Such technology

## HOW LONG WILL MUSLIMS BE SLAVES OF CONGRESS, MIM CHIEF ASKS AZAD

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 24

MIM president Asaduddin Owaisi, rubbing salt into senior Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad's wounds, asked for how long will Muslims remain slaves of the Congress. He described Azad's offer to resign from the party over Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's reported remarks about “collusion with the BJP” as ‘poetic justice’.

Owaisi was reacting to media reports that Rahul Gandhi had accused the 23 Congress leaders who wrote to Congress president Sonia Gandhi asking to overhaul the party

also obstructs us from freely exercising other rights for fear of surveillance.”

“A strong and stringent Data Protection Law is needed to protect our privacy and national security. Despite this urgency, the Union government has drafted a weak Bill that is unlikely to do much,” Owaisi said.

structure of “colluding” with the BJP. In an apparent reference to Rahul Gandhi, Owaisi said that anyone opposing “janeudhari leadership will be branded B-team (of the BJP)”. He said Azad used to refer to the MIM as the B-team of the BJP. “Now you're reaccused of the same,” he said.

Owaisi posted on Twitter: “Ghulam Nabi Azadi sahab you had accused me of exactly this. Now you're accused of the same. 45 years of ghulam for this? Now it's proven that anyone opposing Janeudhari leadership will be branded B-Team. I hope Muslims now know the high cost of loyalty to Congress (sic).”

● **OWAISI POINTED out that such technology can record and use the gait to identify the person. Face recognition technology is inaccurate in identifying dark people, women, persons with disabilities and young people, the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimin leader said.**

# No option but to charge patients

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They have no other option but to recover these costs from patients.

Given the circumstances and rights of insurance patients, it has been decided to work out a feasible rate structure wherein all costs of personal protection equipment, disinfection kits and other Coronavirus-related expenses are distributed.

Deepthi Nemani, who has co-ordinated with insurance companies and hospitals, explained, “A baseline

● Apart from hospital stay in wards or intensive care units, packages include primary consultation fees, nursing charges, isolation, Covid-19 PPE, safety and biomedical waste management, oxygen and other costs. These have been included in the per-day cost for stay in hospital, which ranges from ₹7,000 to ₹15,000 per day and more.

structure has been aligned with PPE kits, allowances for healthcare staff, infection control measures, oxygen availability and intensive care unit charges. This allows patients to be in two brackets, wherein the costs

are divided. The costs of daily tests, pharmacy and cross consultations are, however, excluded from this. This has helped bring down the burden on both patients and hospitals, and is expected to reduce com-

plaints.”

Insurance companies are hoping this method will enable cashless patients to get admitting into private hospitals and also bring down complaints with regard to billing.

● Charges for complications related to co-morbid conditions are excluded from these packages, as they vary depending on the insurance company. It is thus difficult to give a baseline for this segment of patients, it is stated.





## OTHER STORIES

## K'NAGAR AMONG 12 DISTRICTS TO COMPLETE NREGS WORKS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KARIMNAGAR, AUG. 24

The members of the National Level Monitoring (NLM) team, Zubair and Nizamuddin paid a visit to Annaram and Kondapalkala villages in Manakondur mandal on Monday. They inspected the registers maintained under the National Rural Guarantee Employment Scheme (NREGS) and also the registers of two village panchayats in Karimnagar district.

The Central government has fixed certain targets of works to be undertaken under NREGS for the financial year 2020-21 in the districts across the nation. Only 12 districts have completed works during the Covid-19 pandemic in April, May, June and July. Karimnagar is among the 12 districts which have completed the NREGS works.

In view of the NLM teams visit to inspect works and check registers, 47 works were completed in Annaram village and 27 in Kondapalkala village.

The team interacted with the labours and enquired if the works carried out were done maintaining Covid-19 protocol. They also asked about how they received the daily wages, for how many days were they paid and if they wages were paid within 15 days after the work was completed? What kind of works they carried out in their respective villages? How they applied for the job? Who gave them the job cards and for how many days the job card was issued.

The team was informed that works were carried out on the feeder channel, farm ponds, Haritha Haram, road laying and desalination works of tanks under the NREGS and that the job cards were issued within two days along with allotment of the works.

## REVENUE MELAS BEGIN, TO BE HELD TWICE A WEEK

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NIZAMABAD, AUG. 24

Setting aside Covid-19 fears, people thronged municipalities in undivided Nizamabad district for redressal of property tax problems on Monday. All the seven Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) including Nizamabad Municipal Corporation have begun revenue melas. Besides Nizamabad, Bodhan, Kamareddy and Armoor Municipalities, new municipalities—Banswada, Yellareddy and Bheemgal also conducted revenue melas.

The state government will conduct revenue melas in all municipalities twice a week on Monday and Wednesday-till September 15 to settle issues related to property tax.

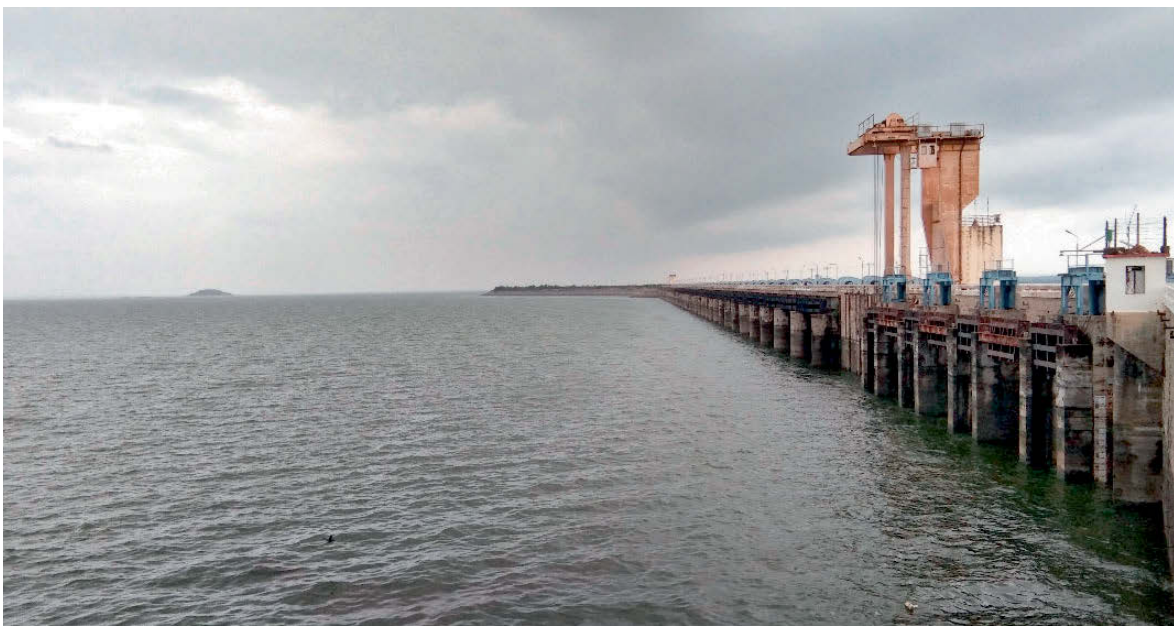
People submitted their applications in all ULBs seeking settlement of property tax related issues. In old municipalities, taxpayers complained about receiving tax over and above the assessed amount, double assessment, mistakes in the entries like name and change of names of owner after transactions (mutation). In new municipalities, instead of revision of property tax, most of the people sought rectifications in mutations.

In Nizamabad Municipal Corporation, additional commissioner M. Ravi Babu and revenue staff received 50 complaints. Of these 30 complaints were resolved on the first day of the revenue mela, five complaints were rejected and the remaining forwarded for field verification. Municipal officials believe that the number of complaints may increase soon.

In Kamareddy municipality, on the first day 10 complaints were received and were sent for redressal by the revenue staff. Banswada municipal commissioner K. Ramesh Kumar initiated a ward-wise campaign about the revenue melas. Flexi boards were set up in the town urging people to utilise the opportunity.

Speaking to Deccan Chronicle, Yellareddy Municipal Commissioner Mohammad Qamar said that they received complaints regarding mutation from property taxpayers. There is no scope for above assessment tax in Yellareddy town as it was upgraded as a municipality recently, he said. "We are trying to sort out problems related to property tax," he added.

■ **IN OLD municipalities, taxpayers complained about receiving tax over and above the assessed amount, double assessment, mistakes in the name and change of names.**



Water level in the Sriramsagar project at Pochampad in Nizamabad district on Monday.

— DECCAN CHRONICLE

## Sriramsagar nears full reservoir level

Water level is 1,088.80 ft, as against its full level of 1,091 ft

NARENDER  
PULLOOR | DC  
NIZAMABAD, AUG. 24

Sriramsagar Project in Nizamabad is reaching its full reservoir level. Heavy inflows have enabled the water level to reach 1,088.80 ft, as against its full level of 1,091 feet.

While the gross storage capacity of the dam is 90 TMC, the storage is currently at 78.98 TMC. As a result, officials have increased the outflow of water to Kakatiya, Saraswathi and Laxmi canals.

Last year on the same day, water level in SRSP

was 1,063.20 feet and storage was mere 17.60 TMC. The dam has so far received 65.76 TMC of water since June 1, 2020.

Inflows into the project on Monday are 15,822 cusecs while the outflow is 1,608 cusecs. SRSP officials released 600 cusecs of water to Saraswathi canal,

and 200 and 50 cusecs respectively to Laxmi and Kakatiya canals.

To meet the drinking water needs under Mission Bhagiratha, around 152 cusecs water has also been released to undivided Nizamabad, Adilabad and Karimnagar districts.

## YOUTH ARRESTED FOR ATTEMPT TO RAPE MINOR GIRL

DC CORRESPONDENT  
ADILABAD, AUG. 24

The Jainad police took a youth Boyar Akash into custody on Monday on charges of attempt to rape a minor girl.

It is learnt that, the accused Boyar Akash lured the girl who was playing in front of her house in Neerala village in Jainad mandal by offering her some food.

He then took her to a secluded place and attempted to rape her.

The police registered a case against the accused under Pocco following a complaint lodged by the girl's parents.



A shepherd gifts a sheep to minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav in Mahbubabad on Monday.

— DECCAN CHRONICLE

## State is encouraging traditional vocations, says minister Talasani

DC CORRESPONDENT  
WARANGAL, AUG. 24

Kisan credit cards were distributed to dairy farmers at Thorur in Mahbubabad district on Monday. Speaking on the occasion, minister for animal husbandry Talasani Srinivas Yadav said, "The TRS government is implementing the scheme for

the welfare of Golla and Kurumas community so that they can earn a better income." Referring to the sheep distribution scheme in Telangana, he said no state in the country was ready to implement such a huge scheme for the benefit of shepherds.

The state government has so far distributed 3.60 lakh sheep units in the

first phase and is ready to supply another 28,000 units. Later in the day Mr Yadav released over 9 lakh fish seedlings into Mylaram Balancing Reservoir at Raiparthi mandal in Warangal Rural district.

The government plans to release 2.52 crore fish seedlings in 851 tanks in the Rural district.

## Two collectorates go paperless

**Khammam/Kothagudem:** Covid-19 has forced the collectorates of Khammam and Kothagudem to implement paperless administration. Khammam collector R.V. Karnan asked the heads of the department to send files to his email. The grievance cell organised on Monday's was conducted via the App in the collectorate. Kothagudem collectorate, collector M.V. Reddy said that the file moment will be sped up.

## Parties seek pro-people new health policy

RAVINDRA SESHU | DC  
KHAMMAM, AUG. 24

Most political parties are insisting the government to strengthen the state's health sector given the alarming increase in the number of Covid-19 positive cases.

This has exposed the lacuna in the health sector and all government hospitals should be well-equipped to face the emerging situation. Lakhs of people are suffering because of the lesser number of tests and also because people are not sure who they have to approach when one shows corona symptoms.

CPI-M district secretary Nunna Nageswara Rao said, "It is time to improve the facilities in primary health centres.

One in 10 persons is a victim of corporate hospitals. A more qualitative PHC is the only way out and a review of the state's health policy is to be taken up on a priority basis."

CPI district secretary Potu Prasad said, "Thousands of health workers and laboratory assistant posts in government hospitals are lying vacant. This has hampered health services not only in PHCs and also district headquarters hospitals. The government should redress such defects."

■ **THOUSANDS OF health workers and laboratory assistant posts in government hospitals are lying vacant. This has hampered health services not only in PHCs and also district headquarters hospitals.**

District Congress Committee district Puvvalla Durga Prasad said, "The State government failed in tackling Covid-19 and Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao did not take the virus seriously. He should increase tests in the state to allay fears among the people of the state and the government should design a new health policy."

He said that the government that allowed Covid-19 treatment in private hospitals should monitor them as they were fleecing hapless patients and their families.

CPI (ML) New Democracy leader Potu Ranga Rao said, "The State and Union governments washed their hands off and left people to their fate."

Covid-19 cases have been rising alarmingly. About 1,500 cases were registered in the last four days with 528 cases being registered on Monday.

## TSHRC intervenes, helps BM rejoin bank after 15 yrs

PULI SHARATH  
KUMAR | DC  
KARIMNAGAR, AUG. 24

The timely intervention of Telangana State Human Rights Commission (TSHRC) has helped a bank manager to join duty after 15 years here.

Kapila Rambabu, working as a branch manager of Satavahana Grameena Bank, now called Telangana Grameena Bank from 1984 applied for sick leave in May, 1996 and later extended it until March 1997. Later, when he reported for duty, the chairman of the bank did not accept it.

Rambabu alleged that since he belonged to a downtrodden community, the chairman had shown racial abuse by refusing his resumption. Undeterred, Rambabu approached the High Court and sought justice.

After hearing the case, the court gave a verdict in his favour in 2005 and ordered the chairman of the bank to take him into service. However, he was not taken back.

Then, Rambabu approached the Human Rights Commission. The commission which took a serious note of the issue pursued the case. On July 28, it ordered the bank to reinstate Rambabu as per the orders issued by the High Court in 2005.

Receiving the orders from the HRC, the General Manager of the Telanga-

■ **KAPILA RAMBABU, working as a branch manager of Satavahana Grameena Bank, now Telangana Grameena Bank from 1984 applied for sick leave in May, 1996 and later extended it until March 1997.**

na Grameena Bank, C. Murali Mohan clarified that orders issued by the High Court were implemented and Rambabu was allowed to resume services.

Speaking to Deccan Chronicle, Rambabu said that he had been removed from his services without any reason in 1996 and for the past 25 years he has been fighting for justice.

"Prior to going on sick leave I used to get a monthly salary of ₹9,000. All these years, I faced hardships and I was mentally depressed. During these testing Covid-19 times, the HRC has given me a fresh lease of life. I will remain indebted to the Commission." He said bank officials were delaying settlement of his salary dues of all 15 years even after receiving orders from the High Court and HRC.

## History sheeteer held for murder

ANUDEEP  
CEREMILLA | DC  
WARANGAL, AUG. 24

A flower vendor, Venkanna, of Kesamudram in Mahbubabad district was found murdered brutally in Girni Thanda village on Monday. His decapitated body was found in an open plot in Girni Thanda and his was traced to Kesamudram.

Police said that the accused was traced with hours of the murder being noticed and one Amgoth Harish of Girni Thanda was arrested.

According to the police, Harish is involved in several unlawful activities including theft, sexual harassment and attempt to murder. He is booked for eight cases in the Kesamudram police station and a history-sheet was also opened in his name.

On Sunday night, he called the deceased Venkanna to his house and they both consumed alcohol. Later Harish killed Venkanna and sliced his head from the body. He dumped the body in an adjacent

■ **ACCORDING TO the police, Harish is involved in several unlawful activities including theft, sexual harassment and attempt to murder. He is booked for eight cases in the Kesamudram police station and a history-sheet was also opened.**

open plot and threw the head wrapped in a plastic cover at Kesamudram.

The police who found the body and the head on Monday morning began investigation and cracked it within hours.

Mahbubabad DSP A. Naresh Kumar said that Harish is involved in a land dispute with one Karpurapu Gopal. With an intention to grab his land by scaring him, Harish murdered Venkanna and threw his body in Gopal's plot.

Mahbubabad SP Koti Reddy appreciated inspector Venkata Ratnam and SI Satish for the efforts in nabbing the culprit.

## Obeisance to the Lord



A farmer prays to the idol of Ganesh in a paddy field at Gopalpur village near Karimnagar on Monday. The stone idol was discovered a few years ago by the archaeology department. After the idol was discovered, the villagers would celebrate Ganesh in a big way, but due to the Coronavirus pandemic celebrations were not held this year.

— YELABAKA RADHAKRISHNA

## FAST | SPREADING

## In Adilabad district 60% cattle are affected

## Livestock hit by lumpy skin disease

PILLALAMARRI  
SRINIVAS | DC  
ADILABAD, AUG. 24

Lumpy skin disease, which is caused by an virus, is fast spreading among cattle in tribal and rural areas of old Adilabad district.

Owners of the affected cattle, such as buffalos, goats and cows, apart from hens, say these are showing symptoms similar to Coronavirus among human beings, like cold and fever.

In addition, the animals are developing lumps on their bodies.

The lumpy skin disease has been largely reported from Jainoor, Indravelli, Utanoor, Lingapur, Tamsi

and Talamadugu. Cattle owners say the daily milk yield of the animals has decreased.

Adivasis stated they have approached veterinary officials, but have not received any response yet.

As a result, Adivasis of Keslapur in Indravelli mandal have performed a special puja at the Nagoba temple, made the affected cattle go around the temple and sprinkled sacred water on them in the hope that these rituals will cure their cattle of the disease.

Keslapur sarpanch Mesram Renukabalai said many cows and goats in the area are suffering from the lumpy skin disease. Some of them have even died. She appealed to

the animal husbandry department to conduct a medical camp in the village to treat the cattle.

Talamadugu Congress ZPTC Goka Ganesh Reddy said that while not providing medicines, animal husbandry department officials have advised cattle owners to purchase medicines from private veterinary stores, which cost between ₹1,500 and ₹2,000 for each domestic animal.

Ganesh Reddy said they have called on collector Sikta Patnaik and brought the issue to her notice. He appealed to her to supply medicines free for saving the cattle from the fast-spreading lumpy skin disease.

Dr B. Kishan, assistant director of animal husbandry, Utanoor said the disease caused by a virus is spread across the state. He said the virus is spread by mosquitoes.

He said there is no specific vaccine for the disease but officials were using the goat foot vaccine on cows now.

There is no specific medicine to control the disease.

Dr Kishan said people must create smoke by burning neem leaves in cattle sheds to control the spread of mosquitoes and the sheds must be clean. Kishan said 60 per cent of cattle are affected with lumpy skin disease in the Adilabad district.

## STUDENTS, PARENTS OPPOSE SHIFTING OF JUNIOR COLLEGE

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KHAMMAM, AUG. 24

Students and parents are opposing the shifting of junior college from Kamepalli to Kusumanchi. The students also demanded that the government set up a hostel linked to the college immediately. The Junior college was set up two decades back and thousands of students from Kamepalli and Karepalli mandals have benefited.

Progressive Democratic Students Union district vice-president G. Mastan said that Kamepalli mandal is a backward area and many students belong to the landless class pass the inter from the institution. "With the shifting of the college, the poor will be distanced from the education. The government should roll back the decision."

Progressive Youth League leader N. Navya said that in the previous year 500 students completed inter. There is no bus facility to Khammam from the villages in the mandal and students cannot go to the district headquarters for studies. "Instead of shifting the college, the government should set up a hostel in the college," she said.

■ **THE COLLEGE was set up two decades ago and students from Kamepalli and Karepalli mandals have benefited.**

## VHP PROTESTS RESTRICTIONS ON GANESH FESTIVITIES

DC CORRESPONDENT  
WARANGAL, AUG. 24

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) activists staged demonstrations across old Warangal district on Monday protesting against the restrictions on Ganesh festival imposed by the TRS Government.

VHP leaders Kesireddy Jaipal Reddy and Katta Ramesh accused the government for its biased approach towards Hindu festivals.

"The government has failed to provide the kind of liberty to the Hindus that it allows to the other communities. People are closely watching the slanted approach of the government," Jaipal Reddy alleged.

The government has no objection to the mass gathering at Kondapochamma water release meeting has imposed restrictions for Ganesh festival in the name of Covid-19, the leaders pointed out.

The Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao who claims himself to be a hardcore Hindu is in fact terrorising the people, the leaders said.

The protesters demanded that the government protect the livelihood of those who depend on Ganesh idol making and other ancillary units.



## SHORT TAKES

PAK VIOLATES  
CEASEFIRE  
AGAINYUSUF JAMEEL | DC  
SRINAGAR, AUG. 24

The Army on Monday said that the Pakistani troops again targeted the Indian forward areas with small arms and mortar guns in Rajouri district along the Line of Control (LoC) earlier during the day.

A defence spokesman in Jammu said that the Indian Army retaliated “befittingly” to the “unprovoked ceasefire violation” by using the same caliber weapons.

The spokesman said that the firing and shelling from across the de facto border in Sunderbani sector of Rajouri started at 1.30 pm and was going on when reports last came in.

“Pakistan initiated the unprovoked ceasefire violation by firing with small arms and shelling with mortars,” he said adding that there was no immediate report of any casualty on the Indian side.

The police sources said that the Army together with J&K police, Border Security Force and various Central armed police forces have beefed the security up in frontier districts of entire Jammu region including Kathua, Samba, Jammu, Poonch and Rajouri to ensure that no militants sneak in these areas from across the LoC or International Border.

BIPIN RAWAT  
TALKS OF  
MILITARY OPTIONSDC CORRESPONDENT  
with agency inputs  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 24

In a strong message, Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat on Monday said that India has “military options” to deal with the Chinese transgressions in Eastern Ladakh if talks between both the countries at the military and diplomatic level don’t yield results.

“The military option to deal with transgressions by the Chinese Army in Ladakh are on but it will be exercised only if talks at the military and the diplomatic level fail,” Gen. Rawat was quoted by a news agency.

However, he refused to discuss in detail the military options that India could exercise to push back the transgressions by the Chinese Army in Ladakh sector, said the news agency report.

The military stand off between India and China is now nearing four months with no prospect of a resolution in near future.

The talks between the two sides have been going on for the last three months.

K'TAKA TO BE  
FIRST STATE TO  
IMPLEMENT NEP

**Bengaluru, Aug. 24:** Karnataka would become the first state in the country to implement the new National Education Policy, Deputy Chief Minister Dr. C. N. Ashwath Narayan said on Monday.

“The state government is making all preparations to bring in administrative reforms and amendments to the laws which are essential to implement the national education policy.

The state would become the first state in the country to implement the policy,” Narayan, who holds the portfolio of higher education, said while addressing the inaugural session of a five-day online workshop on “Highlights of the national education policy and its implementation.”

The workshop is being organised by the Bangalore University.

The Deputy Chief Minister said the state government is going ahead with regard to this with specific goals and a clear agenda.

“A high-level task force was constituted immediately after the draft of the policy reached us and this committee has already held several meetings,” he added.

According to him, the committee has already come out with suggestions to implement the policy in a phased manner and only the recommendations of the final stage are awaited.

The administrative and legal steps would be taken as soon as the final recommendations are made, he explained.

The new policy would make high quality education available to all students benefitting the whole system with quality teaching, Narayan said.

## Rahul fumes over timing of the letter

Former Congress chief says leaders should discuss differences in party platforms and not in media

**New Delhi, Aug. 24:** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday questioned the timing of the letter by a section of the party and attacked them for going public against the leadership, saying differences needed to be discussed in party platforms and not the media.

He also insinuated that the letter seeking leadership changes was written in cahoots with the BJP, as it came at a time when Sonia Gandhi was hospitalised and the party was fighting with the BJP in Rajasthan to save its government, sources said.

The charge invited sharp rebuttals from former minister Ghulam Nabi Azad at the meeting. Azad said he would resign if any such link with the BJP is established, the sources said.

In his brief moving intervention at the CWC, Rahul Gandhi is learnt to have said why that timing was chosen to send the letter when Sonia Gandhi was in hospital and the party was fighting the BJP in Rajasthan, insinuating that such a letter at the time would help the BJP, the sources said.

Azad, who is one of the signatories of the letter, read out the contents, saying the leaders are not questioning Sonia Gandhi and only wanted organisational reform in the larger interest of the party.

Earlier addressing the CWC, Rahul Gandhi said Sonia Gandhi had accepted the party presidency only after the committee last year urged her to take responsibility.

He took on the leaders who went public with their complaints saying, “it is the CWC where we discuss our differences and put out our thoughts, not the media.”

Meanwhile, party workers gathered at the AICC headquarters raised slogans, asserting that no one except from the Gandhi family would be acceptable as party chief. The scenes at the party headquarters were indicative of the growing tumult in the Congress with the party deeply divided on the leadership issue. Though the CWC meeting took place virtually, several Congress workers gathered outside the party’s 24 Akbar Road office and raised slogans in support of the Gandhi family.

Many carried placards like *Gandhi ke alawa adhyaksh manzoor nahi* (nobody is acceptable as president except Gandhi) and *Gandhi parivar ke alawa koi adhyaksh bana, toh party toot hi jayegi* (if anybody outside the Gandhi family becomes chief, the party will break).

As the main opposition party faces yet another internal crisis, several top leaders, including its chief ministers and state unit presidents, have rallied behind the Gandhi family, calling for Sonia to stay or Rahul Gandhi to take charge again. -PTI

CBI YET TO  
SUMMON RHEA  
AND FAMILYDC CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI, AUG. 24

Actor Rhea Chakraborty’s lawyer has requested people to avoid speculations and has clarified that the actress will visit the CBI office whenever she will receive summons in the actor Sushant Singh Rajput death case.

Chakraborty’s lawyer Satish Maneshinde issued a statement on Monday as some reports earlier in the day claimed that the actress and her father Indrajit have been summoned by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) as part of the probe.

The statement read, “Dear friends, Rhea Chakraborty & family have not received any summons from CBI so far. No sooner she receives it, she & family will attend as they did before Mumbai Police and ED as law abiding citizens. No speculations are necessary.”

IF RAHUL WANTS,  
WE WILL QUIT  
GOVT: MAHA  
CONG MINISTERDC CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI, AUG. 24

While several Congress leaders from Maha-rashtra expressed their faith in Rahul Gandhi’s leadership, state minister Vijay Wadettiwar said that the Congress will even get out of the power in Maharashtra if Mr Gandhi doesn’t want to continue alliance with Shiv Sena.

Mr Wadettiwar, who joined the Congress from Shiv Sena in 2005, said the Gandhi family has the capacity to lead the country and that Rahul Gandhi should be reinstated as the party president.

“The Congress party epitomises true democratic values, hence the letter written by some party leaders to Sonia Gandhi over demand for a full-time president should not be seen as opposition to current leadership,” he said.

Asked if Rahul Gandhi asked the Maharashtra Congress to snap ties with the Shiv Sena, Mr Wadettiwar said, “If he asks us to leave the government, we will do it immediately. We will not stay with the government one more day.”

KAMAL NATH  
WANTS SONIA  
AS CONG CHIEFRABINDRA NATH  
CHOUDHURY | DC  
BHOPAL, AUG. 24

Amid ongoing churning in Congress over leadership issue, former chief minister Kamal Nath on Monday threw his weight behind party’s interim president Sonia Gandhi unequivocally to continue as the chief.

Mr Nath, without the slightest hesitation, said Ms Gandhi should continue to lead the party, while fielding a question by reporters on the issue.

“I have already made it clear that Ms Gandhi should head the party”, he said.

The Congress veteran, whose proximity to the Nehru-Gandhi family being a ‘buddy’ of late Sanjay Gandhi is well known in Delhi political circles, ran a series of tweets a little past midnight on Sunday, to express his unambiguous support to Ms Gandhi to lead the party at this juncture. “It is nonsense to question Ms Gandhi’s leadership and suggest for alternative to her (to head the party). I appeal to her to continue to lead the party to strengthen it”, he tweeted.

17 injured as bldg  
collapses in Maha;  
70 feared trappedDC CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI, AUG. 24

Seventeen persons were injured after a five-storeyed residential building collapsed in Maharashtra’s Raigad district on Monday.

Around 70 people are feared trapped in the debris after the building, which was around 10 years old, collapsed at Kajalpura in Mahad tehsil around 7pm.

There were around 45 flats in the building, an official said, adding 25 persons have been rescued and shifted to a local hospital at Mahad, which is around 170 km from Mumbai.

Teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) have been moved to the spot for rescue operations.

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray spoke to the district officials and asked them to expedite



A file photo of senior Congress leaders Kapil Sibal and Ghulam Nabi Azad. Sibal and Azad rebutted after Rahul Gandhi charged that the letter seeking leadership changes was written in cahoots with the BJP, during a CWC meeting on Monday.

-PTI

5 chiefs from Nehru-Gandhi family,  
13 from outside since Independence

**New Delhi, Aug. 24:** As a leadership crisis grips the Congress, experts having chronicled the country’s oldest political party said on Monday that it may be theoretically possible for the party to have a president outside the Nehru-Gandhi family, but not practically.

The party’s history shows that it has had at least 13 presidents from outside the Nehru-Gandhi clan since Independence as against five from its first family.

However, the family members have been at the helm for a much longer period of time as against the others.

Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi have headed the party for the majority of the period since Independence.

Sonia Gandhi, who has been its longest-serving president, offered to quit at a stormy CWC meeting on Monday after a letter from more than 20 party leaders sought organisational reforms and a collective leadership, but she was urged to stay on as the interim chief till a full-

● **AMONG THE** leaders outside the Nehru-Gandhi family, J. B. Kripalani, B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Purushottam Das Tandon, U. N. Dhebar, N. Sanjiva Reddy, K. Kamaraj, S. Nijalingappa, P.V. Narasimha Rao and Sitaram Kesri among others have headed the party.

time president is appointed.

Among the leaders outside the Nehru-Gandhi family, J. B. Kripalani, B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Purushottam Das Tandon, U. N. Dhebar, N. Sanjiva Reddy, K. Kamaraj, S. Nijalingappa, Jagjivan Ram, Shankar Dayal Sharma, D.K. Barooah, K. B. Reddy, P.V. Narasimha Rao and Sitaram Kesri have headed the party.

The debate over whether a person from outside the Gandhi family was re-ignited last week when Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, in a year-old but recently published interview, endorsed her brother Rahul Gandhi’s stand on a non-Gandhi president for the Congress, saying there are plenty of people capa-

ble of leading the party.

Rasheed Kidwai, senior journalist and writer of the book *24 Akbar Road*, said the key issue before the party today is about the political leadership which has always been with the Nehru-Gandhi family.

“In the first general election, the slogan was ‘A vote for Nehru is a vote for the Congress’. Even 2004 onwards, Sonia Gandhi wielded the political leadership that now resides with Sonia, Rahul and Priyanka. So the political leadership of the Congress has by and large always been with the Gandhis and even non-Gandhi presidents have owed allegiance to them,” he said.

Asked if a non-Gandhi can run the party with the Gandhi family retaining the overall leadership, he said, “Theoretically yes, practically no.”

Sanjay Kumar, Director at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, said the tenure of Gandhi family presidents cannot be compared with non-Gandhi family presidents as there would be stark difference in the quantum

of tenures.

“A person from the Gandhi family is both an asset and a liability for the party. The person would be an asset as he/she acts as a glue for the party which keeps the party together. They are also a liability and that liability is coming to the fore more prominently now as the Gandhi family has not been able to inspire voters and leaders of the party,” Kumar said.

He opined that it is going to be very difficult for a non-Gandhi president to function in the prevailing situation as various factions could emerge and the pulls and pressures would be very high.

Sanjay K. Pandey, a political commentator and a professor at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), echoed similar views, saying it will be very difficult for a non-Gandhi president to work with the family having a dominant imprint on the party.

“Unless the Congress devises a mechanism to deal with such a scenario, the future of the party is not very bright,” he said.

-PTI

KAPIL SIBAL  
WITHDRAWS  
TWEET  
AGAINST RAHUL

**New Delhi, Aug. 24:** Senior Congress leader Kapil Sibal on Monday withdrew his tweet in which he had hit out at Rahul Gandhi, and said the former party chief had informed him personally that he had never made the “colluding with the BJP” remark.

Sibal is among the 23 party leaders who have written to Sonia Gandhi seeking “full-time” leadership that is active in the field and “visible” in party offices, devolution of powers to state units and revamping of the Congress Working Committee (CWC) in line with the party constitution among other changes.

As the CWC meeting was underway on Monday and it was reported that Rahul Gandhi had lashed out at the letter writers, Sibal tweeted, “Rahul says ‘we are colluding with BJP’. Succeeded in Rajasthan High Court defending the Congress Party. Defending party in Manipur to bring down BJP government.”

“Last 30 years have never made a statement in favour of BJP on any issue. Yet ‘we are colluding with the BJP!’”

Sibal said a little later that he was withdrawing the tweet.

“Was informed by Rahul Gandhi personally that he never said what was attributed to him. I therefore withdraw my tweet,” he said.

Sibal then deleted his earlier tweet in which he had hit out at Gandhi.

Tagging Sibal’s earlier tweet, Congress’ chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala also said that Rahul Gandhi hasn’t said a word of this nature nor alluded to it.

“Please don’t be misled by false media discourse or misinformation being spread. But yes, we all need to work together in fighting the draconian Modi rule rather than fighting & hurting each other and the Congress,” Surjewala tweeted.

Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad said a section of media is “wrongly attributing that, in CWC I told Shri Rahul Gandhi to prove that the letter written by us is in collusion with BJP-let me make it very clear that Shri Rahul Gandhi has neither in CWC nor outside said that this letter was written at the behest of BJP!”

-PTI

● **SIBAL IS** among the 23 party leaders who have written to Sonia Gandhi seeking “full-time” leadership that is active in the field.

CONGRESS IS ‘B’  
TEAM OF BJP,  
SAYS KERALA CMGILVESTER ASSARY | DC  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,  
AUG 24

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Monday hit out at the Congress accusing it of becoming the “B” team of BJP and paving the way for the growth of ‘Hindutva’ forces in the country.

The stinging remarks came during the reply to the no trust motion moved against the CPM-led LDF Government by Congress-led Opposition UDF in Kerala Assembly.

As expected, the no-trust motion was defeated 87 to 40 votes (current strength is 138) after a marathon day-long session which concluded with Mr Vijayan’s nearly four-hour long reply, the longest in the history of Kerala Assembly.

Vijayan said the Congress was ganging up with the BJP-RSS to topple the LDF government in Kerala.

KMSS to float  
political partyMANOJ ANAND | DC  
GUWAHATI, AUG. 24

After AASU and AJYCP, the Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS) has announced to float a new political party to challenge the growth of saffron brigade in Assam.

Regretting that the present government was not allowing its leader - a noted RTI activist Akhil Gogoi to come out of jail by implicating him on various charges, the KMSS president Bhasco D. Saikia said the organisation has already prepared the agenda and constitution of the party.

The party will field candidates in the upcoming elections. Also, the KMSS will hold discussions with all the organisations with which it collaborated during the recent movement against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019.

In 2015 also, the KMSS had launched a political outfit with the name ‘Gana Mukti Sangram

● **IN 2015**, the KMSS had launched a political outfit with the name ‘Gana Mukti Sangram Asom’, which they have decided to dissolve.

Asom’, which they have decided to dissolve.

The new party will have a new name, which the KMSS will make public soon.

The KMSS president said that if their leader Akhil Gogoi comes out of jail by the year end, then the new party will project him as its chief ministerial candidate. “But if he fails in the legal battle, we will chalk out a different strategy,” he added.

Pointing out that the new political outfit will be a regional political force that will represent the people of every caste, religion and tribe of Assam he said, “It will not compromise on any issue related to the interests of Assam and Assamese people.”



## SHORT TAKES

## TURKEY FLOOD: DEATH TOLL RISES TO 7

**Ankara:** Turkish rescue workers on Monday recovered the body of another victim of severe weekend floods that swept along Turkey's Black Sea coast, raising the death toll to seven, officials said. At least nine other people were reported missing. Helicopters hovered above the town of Dereli and the surrounding region in support of the search-and-rescue mission, which was launched after flooding caused by heavy rain washed away roads and buildings late Saturday. Interior Minister Suleyman Soyulu, who travelled to the region to oversee the rescue operation, said one more body was recovered early Monday. The private *DHA* news agency said the victim was a police officer who was riding inside a vehicle that was swept away by floodwater and fell into a ravine while heading to the disaster area. Two other police officers who were in the vehicle already had been confirmed dead. Two more officers and the operator of a mechanical digger are among the missing. Excavators were seen Monday clearing mud and debris in Dereli, which lies 12 miles (20 kilometres) inland from the Black Sea in Giresun province. — *AP*

## CONTAMINATED WATER: 500 FALL ILL IN CHINA

**Beijing:** Hundreds of people in eastern China have been infected with bacteria which can cause dysentery after drinking contaminated water, state media said Monday, prompting the closure of a local water plant. Nearly 500 people in the rural town of Baoyi — about 550 kilometres (342 miles) west of Shanghai — have developed fever and diarrhoea since late last week. A report by the local government published Sunday found they have been infected with the shigella bacteria — a genus of microbes that can cause dysentery. The town's water supply has been shut down and nearly 300 people have been hospitalised, county officials said. Video footage posted on social media by the state-run *People's Daily* on Monday showed patients sitting in rows of beds in a local hospital. Many of the patients were elderly or children, according to the newspaper. Fears over the safety of drinking water remain a problem for much of China — including its wealthiest cities, where many residents rely on bottled or boiled water. China's Ministry of Water Resources had improved water supply services for 256 million rural residents across the country by the end of July. — *AP*

## MANY ALLOWED TO BYPASS CLIMATE RULES

**Washington, Aug. 24:** Thousands of oil and gas operations, government facilities and other sites have won permission to stop monitoring for hazardous emissions or otherwise bypass rules intended to protect health and the environment because of the Coronavirus outbreak, *The Associated Press* has found. The result: Approval for less environmental monitoring at some Texas refineries and at an army depot dismantling warheads armed with nerve gas in Kentucky, manure piling up and the mass disposal of livestock carcasses at farms in Iowa and Minnesota, and other increased risks to communities as governments eased enforcement over smokestacks, medical waste shipments, sewage plants, oilfields and chemical plants. The Trump administration paved the way for the reduced monitoring March 26 after being pressured by the oil and gas industry, which said lockdowns and social distancing during the pandemic made it difficult to comply with pollution rules.

States are responsible for much of the oversight of federal environmental laws, and many followed with their own policies. *AP*'s two-month review found that waivers were granted in more than 3,000 cases, representing the overwhelming majority of requests citing the outbreak. Hundreds were approved for oil and gas companies. *AP* reached out to all 50 states citing open-records laws; all but one, New York, provided at least partial information, reporting the data in differing ways and with varying level of detail. Almost all those requesting waivers told regulators they wanted to minimise risks for workers and the public.

## 4 yrs on, Amatrice remembers Italy's earthquake dead

**Rome, Aug. 24:** Bells rang out before dawn Monday in the Italian town of Amatrice to honour the nearly 300 people killed four years ago in an earthquake that remains an open sore with so little rebuilt. The 6.0 magnitude quake cost 299 lives when it razed much of Amatrice and pummelled the neighbouring villages of Accumoli and Pescara del Tronto in the rugged, hilly region early on August 24, 2016.

On Monday church bells sounded at exactly 3:36 am, the moment the quake struck the sleeping villages, as the names of the dead were read out, Italian news reports said.

In Rome Italian President Sergio Mattarella voiced his "solidarity with all the victims and their families... on a dramatic night which also displaced more than 40,000" people whose homes, work places or schools were hit.

But Mattarella said "the work of rebuilding the destroyed localities is unfinished and continues with difficulty," particularly because of bureaucracy.

In a press release, he called on the Italian state to "demonstrate determination and efficiency at all levels." The Italian daily *La Repubblica* recently published an official report saying that as little as eight percent of rebuilding work had been done in the last four years.

The majority of work still in the pipeline "is still far from being completed or has not even started," the paper reported.

"To date, only 186 public interventions have been carried out, out of the 2,347 planned, that is to say a miserly 7.92 percent," the paper said.

Private projects, however, were further along, it added. Examples of slow progress include schools, where out of 250 planned projects, 75 have not yet started and 144 others were still in the planning stages. None of the nine hospital projects and none of the 126 municipal projects have begun, the paper added.

Regarding housing, "only seven out of 311 rebuilds have been carried out," it said. — *AFP*

## Half of world's oceans hit by climate change

**Pacific, Aug. 24:** The world's oceans have turned into a veritable sponge for our emissions, and new climate models suggest we've soaked them right through.

Since the 1950s, our planet's vast bodies of water have absorbed roughly 93 percent of the energy entering the climate system, and while most of that heating has been observed near the ocean surface, rising temperatures are now permeating even the deepest parts.

Real-world data on the deep ocean is hard to come by, but a new estimate, based on recent measurements and nearly a dozen climate models, suggests climate change has already impacted up to about half (20 to 55 percent) of the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Ocean basins. What's more, in just six decades, these human-induced changes in temperature and salinity could very well spread to 80 percent of the world's oceans. "We were interested in whether the levels of temperatures and salt were great enough to overcome natural variability in these deeper areas," explains climate scientist Yona Silvy from Sorbonne University in France. "That is, if they had risen or fallen higher than they ever would during the normal peaks and troughs."

Using temperature and salinity measurements

● **SINCE THE 1950s, our planet's vast bodies of water have absorbed roughly 93 percent of the energy entering the climate system, and while most of that heating has been observed near the ocean surface, rising temperatures are now permeating even the deepest parts.**

from the deep ocean and plugging these into 11 current climate models, the team simulated ocean and atmospheric circulation over the years, with and without the contribution of human emissions.

During the second half of the 20th century, Silvy and her colleagues found human-induced warming was responsible for most observed ocean changes — "statistically" and "unambiguously" different from what would occur naturally. Because heat and salt impact ocean density and circulation, this could have widespread implications. "This affects global ocean circulation, sea level rise, and poses a threat to human societies and ecosystems," says Silvy. Most of the time, heat and salt from the surface of the ocean are transported relatively slowly. — *Agencies*

## Storm Laura hammers Haiti, Dominican Republic, kills 12

Brought torrential rainfall, flooding, cut off villages, left many in dark

**Port-Au-Prince, Aug. 24:** Two hurricanes are expected to slam into the US Gulf Coast in the coming days, forecasters said Sunday, as Tropical Storm Laura killed at least 12 people when it struck Haiti and the Dominican Republic. US media said twin hurricanes were unprecedented in the Gulf of Mexico since records began 150 years ago.

Tropical Storm Marco strengthened into a hurricane with winds of 75 miles (120 kilometres) per hour, and is forecast to hit the state of Louisiana on Monday. Tropical Storm Laura hammered Haiti and the Dominican Republic with heavy rain, killing at least 12 people — 9 in Haiti and three in the Dominican Republic.

It was set to become a hurricane on Tuesday that could hit the US coastal region on Wednesday. The US National Hurricane Center said Storm Laura was "bringing torrential rainfall and life-threatening flooding" to Haiti, which shares Hispaniola island with the Dominican Republic. The storm killed three people in the Dominican Republic's capital Santo Domingo, said Juan Manuel Mendez, head of the country's Center of Emergency Operations.

A woman and a child died at home, while a young man died when a tree fell on his home, Mendez said. The storm has flooded houses, cut off remote villages and left more than one million Dominicans in the dark, Mendez added.

In neighbouring Haiti, a 10-year-old girl was among the nine dead, authorities said. They said some homes were flooded and evacuations were underway.

With brown water up to their knees, some residents tried to save what they could from their flooded homes, while street traders saw their goods washed away. "I didn't know there was bad weather forecast. We don't have electricity in my neighbourhood so I couldn't follow the news on the radio," said Sony Joseph, trembling with cold.

The Atlantic storm season, which runs through November, could be one of the busiest ever this year, with the Hurricane Center predicting as many as 25 named storms. Laura is the 12th so far.

Haiti, a country of 11 million, has seen a relatively low incidence of Covid-19 — with just over 8,000 cases and around 200 deaths to date — but authorities urged caution to prevent further spread in the aftermath of Storm Laura. "Wear your masks and respect distances, especially in temporary shelters," Interior Minister Audain Fils Bernadel said at a briefing Saturday.

"With Covid, we have considerably less capacity in our shelters." Storms



People walk in a flooded street in the neighbourhood of Pétion ville, Haiti, during the passage of Tropical Storm Laura on Sunday. — *AFP*

## Offshore oil and gas production crimped by approaching storms

● **THE INTERIOR Department said that based on company reports at midday, 114 platforms had been evacuated. That is 18% of the staffed platforms in the Gulf, but they account for 58% of Gulf oil production and 45% of its natural gas output.**

Oil and gas production in the Gulf of Mexico was slowed Sunday by the approach of two storms that led companies to remove workers from more than 100 offshore platforms.

The Interior Department said that based on company reports at midday, 114 platforms had been evacuated. That is 18% of the staffed platforms in the Gulf, but they account for 58% of Gulf oil production and 45% of its natural gas output.

Energy companies are also moving drilling rigs used to explore for oil and gas. Hurricane Marco is closer to the Gulf coast, but forecasters are more concerned about Tropical Storm Laura, which is expected to reach hurri-

cane status before slamming the coast around midweek.

A spokesman for Norway's Equinor said Sunday that workers were taken off the company's Titan platform, and production was stopped.

## 3 years after Harvey, some in Houston still waiting for help

**Houston, Aug. 24:** Some Houston residents say they endured difficult, often hazardous living conditions while waiting months, even years for help from the city to fix flood-damaged homes after Hurricane Harvey. Sleeping in a closet because it was the only space that didn't reek of mold.

Dealing with rodents and roaches that would come in through warped or rotted flooring. Couch surfing at 67 years old until patchwork repairs made a home temporarily

habitable. Those were just some of the things people dealt with as they waited for help they say never came, despite submitting — and resubmitting — paperwork.

Three years after Harvey, some Houston residents feel angry and abandoned as their repair efforts were bogged down by a city programme they described as slow and bureaucratic. The programme has finished rebuilding less than 70 homes since it started January 2019. Some residents, like

70-year-old Doris Brown, turned to nonprofits and the state. They also formed a group — the Harvey Forgotten Survivors Caucus — to bring attention to their plight.

"We have a right to be angry. We past angry now. We mad as hell," said Brown, whose home had to be rebuilt because of mold. City officials admit the repair programme's progress has been slow but blame this partly on the Texas General Land Office, or GLO, which oversees the funding. — *AP*

## Big Calif. wildfires rage on as death toll reaches 7

**Scotts Valley (US), Aug. 24:** Three massive wildfires chewed through parched Northern California landscape Sunday as firefighters raced to dig breaks and make other preparations ahead of a frightening weather system packing high winds and more of the lightning that sparked the huge blazes. There were hundreds of other wildfires burning Sunday across the state and nearly 250,000 people were under evacuation orders and warnings. The death toll from the fires reached 7 after authorities battling a big fire in the Santa Cruz Mountains south of San Francisco announced the discovery of the body of a 70-year-old man in a remote area called Last Chance. He had been reported missing and police had to use a helicopter to reach the area of about 40 off-the-grid homes at the end of a windy, steep dirt road north of the city of Santa Cruz. The area was under an evacuation order and Santa Cruz Sheriff's Department Chief Deputy Chris Clark said the discovery of the man's body served as a reminder of how



The LNU Lightning Complex fire continues to spread in Fairfield, California. — *AFP*

important it was for residents to evacuate from fire danger zones.

"This is one of the darkest periods we've been in with this fire," he said. California over the last week has been hit by 650 wildfires across the state, many sparked by more than 12,000 lightning strikes recorded since August 15.

There are 14,000 firefighters, 2,400 engines and 95 aircraft battling the fires. The Santa Cruz fire is one of three "complexes", or groups of fires, burning on all sides of the San Francisco Bay Area. All were started by lightning.

Fire crew made slow progress battling the blazes over the weekend, which

included a break in the unseasonably warm weather and little wind. But the National Weather Service issued a "red flag" warning through Monday afternoon for the drought-stricken area, meaning extremely dangerous fire conditions including high temperatures, low humidity, lightning and wind

gusts up to 65 mph (105 kph) that officials said "may result in dangerous and unpredictable fire behaviour". A fire in wine country north of San Francisco and another south-east of the city have with-

in a week have grown to be two of the three largest fires in state history, with both burning more than 500 square miles (1,295 square kilometres). The wind countryfire has been the most deadly and destructive blaze, accounting for five deaths and 845 destroyed homes and other buildings. Three of the victims were in a home that was under an evacuation order. Officials surveying maps at command centres are astonished by the sheer size of the fires, said Cal Fire spokesman Brice Bennett. "You could overlay half of one of these fires and it covers the entire city of San Francisco," Bennett said Sunday.

In Southern California, an 11-day-old blaze held steady at just under 50 square miles (106 square kilometres) near Lake Hughes in northern Los Angeles County. — *AP*

## Firefighters dig in ahead of high winds

**Scotts Valley (US), Aug. 24:** Three massive wildfires chewed through parched Northern California landscape Sunday as firefighters raced to dig breaks and make other preparations ahead of a frightening weather system. At the CZU Lightning Complex fire in the Santa Cruz Mountains, south of San Francisco, authorities said their effort was hindered by people who refused to heed evacuation orders and those who were using the chaos to steal.

Santa Cruz County Sheriff Jim Hart said 100 officers were patrolling and anyone not authorised to be in an evacuation zone would be arrested. "What we're hearing from the community is that there's a lot of looting going on," Hart said. He said eight people have been arrested or cited and "there's going to be more".

He and county District Attorney Jeff Rosell expressed anger at what Rosell called the "absolutely soulless" people who seek to victimize those already victimized by the fire. Among the victims was a fire commander who was robbed while helping coordinate efforts on Saturday. Someone entered the commander's fire vehicle and stole personal items, including a wallet and "drained his bank account", said Chief Mark Brunton, a battalion chief for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire).

"I can't imagine a bigger low-life," Hart said, promising to catch him and vowing "the DA is going to hammer him". The Santa Cruz fire is one of the "complexes", or groups of fires, burning on all sides of the San Francisco Bay Area. — *AP*



# DECCAN Chronicle

25 AUGUST 2020

## Letter a wake-up call to Congress on its future

The serious issues and concerns raised in a letter by a galaxy of senior Congress leaders, including several former Union ministers and former CMs, to Mrs Sonia Gandhi earlier this month are far-reaching, and how the party handles it will be crucial not only to its own future but to the state of our polity. While Mrs Gandhi was quick to call a meeting of the CWC to discuss the matter on Monday, the questions it raised are too wide-ranging to be resolved at one meeting.

The letter flagged the sense of drift in the party that many raised of late, and sought a “full-time” and “effective” leadership that will be “visible” and “active”. To an extent this could be seen as criticism of Mrs Gandhi’s stewardship for the past 12 months as interim president. But it would be wrong to regard her as its target — Mrs Gandhi is hugely respected by all sections of the Congress — and the letter’s primary aim might have been to deter any attempt to reinstall her son Rahul as Congress president, interim or otherwise. Mr Gandhi’s two-year term as chief wasn’t a great success, though he did lead it to a string of Assembly victories, before presiding over the Congress’ second successive Lok Sabha debacle in mid-2019, after which he swiftly resigned. Many Congressmen are unhappy that though not having any formal role, he plays an active role behind the scenes and takes decisions that “create confusion”. Many are upset that he doesn’t listen to them or they don’t have any access to him.

It’s undeniable that the Gandhis — Sonia, Rahul and Priyanka — are the Congress’ only nationally recognisable figures. All others are identified with a state or region. That gives them a unique standing. But that said, the Congress must also accept that if the Gandhis — for whatever reason — want to pass on the mantle, India’s only national Opposition party must make other arrangements. If it showed wisdom, it would be a huge mistake to treat the letter’s signatories as dissenters or rebels — let alone accuse them of playing the BJP’s game. Most have served the Congress for decades, many all their lives. It would do well to treat the letter as a wake-up call, on how to revitalise India’s grand old party so it can take on the BJP as well as several regional rivals.

Six years after it lost power to the Narendra Modi-led BJP, and again last year, the Congress failed to make any honest introspection on the reasons for successive defeats. Any problem cannot be tackled until one acknowledges it in the first place, but the Congress prefers to brush all inconvenient truths under the carpet. That is no solution. In any democracy, dissent, discussion and debate only strengthens a party, not weakens it. Congress leaders could look towards America’s Democratic Party, for instance, on how widely divergent views, freely expressed, built a stronger organisation to focus on the removal of Donald Trump. In India, the issues are many — the government’s handling of the economy, the pandemic, the Chinese intrusion, what stand to take on the Ram Mandir — which the party should discuss in depth before taking on the BJP. A stronger Congress means a stronger Opposition, which is vitally needed in India so that a government with a sweeping parliamentary majority can be kept in check.

## Politics over vaccine race

It’s like a repeat of the space race of the 1960s as the world waits expectantly for the promised silver bullet of a vaccine against the Coronavirus. The first nation to produce an effective, mass-produced vaccine could help their people achieve near normality while shedding a morbid fear of the virus. Most governments have failed to contain Covid-19 as evidenced in mounting caseload and their only hope is to get their hands on “the holy grail”, the hunt for which is, however, being driven by politics more than science.

Vladimir Putin of Russia jumped the gun in claiming success first but far from giving Russia another Sputnik moment brought only scepticism and West-inspired rumours that his daughter who got vaccinated had died. For obvious reasons, Donald Trump wants a working vaccine before Election Day (November 3). Narendra Modi had put out a teaser hinting at Independence Day heralding a magic “Made in India” moment. On the other hand, China is already vaccinating thousands of health care and other workers on an urgent basis through a mass programme run by the military. Authoritarian governments in Russia and China can hand out hurriedly developed vaccines or even placebos to its people. The free world must let science take the lead in passing careful judgment on the 78 vaccines that are confirmed as “active” now. USA’s Moderna with its mRNA-based vaccine and UK’s Oxford University-Jenner Institute with their adenovirus variety are the scientific leaders in developing a vaccine that can be franchised to production lines in record time once third phase clinical trials have evaluated their safety.

Realistically, a vaccine is months away, which gives time for countries to plan on how to achieve an equitable distribution. India is lucky to have the world’s largest vaccine manufacturer and so access should not be a problem. However, given the play of divisive politics, the fear is over how well we will manage the big task of inoculating over 100 crore people.

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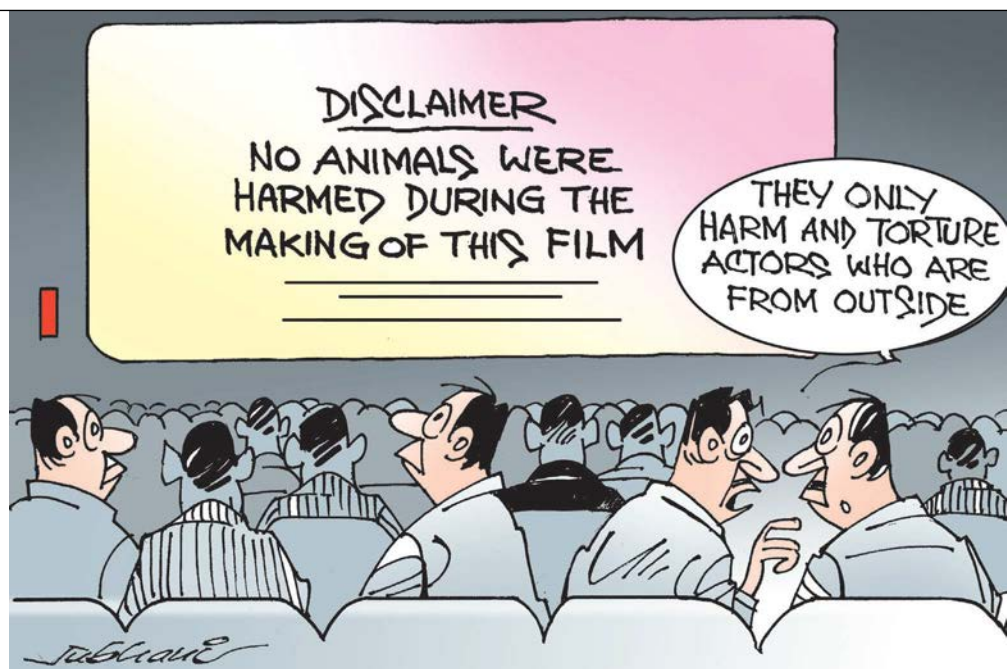
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Gram: CHRONICLE Postal registration no: No. H/SD-348/2006-08

Subhani



## India’s eco challenges: A matter of philosophy



Mohan Guruswamy

**Getting money to move India again isn’t a huge problem. What stands in the way are the philosophical blinkers.**

The divide between the Keynesians and the Chicago School is as intense and often antagonistic as the Sunni-Shia, Catholic-Protestant or Thelakara-Vadakarai-Iyengar divides.

Now the only dispute on national income is how much will be the contraction. The finance ministry hopes there won’t be any. The IMF has officially said it will be 4.5 per cent. The rating agencies predict a contraction of 6.8 per cent, while many are suggesting something closer to 10 per cent. How do we deal with it now? The government tends to be “conservative” in its outlook and has made no serious suggestion on an economic stimulus. What it calls a stimulus isn’t actually one. The problem is more philosophical.

Keynesian economics is a theory that says the government should increase demand to boost growth. Keynesians believe consumer demand is the primary driving force in any economy. As a result, the theory supports expansionary fiscal policy. The Chicago School is a neo-classical economic school of thought that originated at the University of Chicago. Its main tenets are that free markets best allocate resources in an economy and that minimal or zero government intervention is best for economic prosperity. They abhor fiscal deficits.

The only reason why the actual stimulus package is only Rs 63,000 crores is the obsession with fiscal deficits by Chicago economists like Raghuram Rajan and Krishnamurthy Subramanian, now chief economic adviser. They are true disciples of the Washington Consensus to judge countries like India by their fiscal

deficit size. The instruments used to beat countries like India into submission are ratings agencies like Moody’s, which just downgraded India. We shouldn’t lose too much sleep over it. India is a hardly a borrower abroad and is more of a lender, holding \$490 billion as reserves.

That’s why the CEA, asked about a big stimulus, said: “There are no free lunches!” That’s exactly what Milton Friedman said. But they quite happily ignore the fact that America is the biggest deficit financed economy in the world. Dr Rajan told Rahul Gandhi on his videoconference that a stimulus of Rs 65,000 crores would suffice in today’s situation. Nobel laureate Abhijit Banerjee and former CEA Arvind Subramanian suggest a stimulus package like the US or Japan. The US has announced a stimulus of over \$3.5 trillion, or over 15 per cent of GDP. Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s stimulus is just 0.3 per cent of GDP.

Many serious economists see fiscal deficits in a positive way. The great John Maynard Keynes believed deficits help countries climb out of economic recession. Fiscal conservatives, however, feel governments should avoid deficits and ensure balanced budgets.

The fastest growing economies in the world, and its biggest — the United States, China, Japan and most of western Europe — have the highest debt/GDP ratios. Japan’s debt/GDP is over 253 per cent before the latest stimulus of 20 per cent of GDP. China’s debt is over 180 per cent of GDP.

America’s debt/GDP is near 105 per cent, yet it is raising \$3 trillion as debt to escape the Covid-19 quagmire. India’s debt/GDP ratio is a modest 62 per cent, but

still it intends to pump in just 0.3 per cent of GDP as stimulus?

Pump priming the economy by borrowing is by itself not bad. It’s not putting the debt to good use that is bad. Nations prosper when they use debt for worthwhile capital expenditure with assured returns and social cost benefits. But we in India borrow to give it away as subsidies and to hide the high cost of government. To give an analogy, if a family must make a choice of borrowing money to fund the children’s education or to support a man’s drinking habit, the rational choice is obvious. The children’s education will have a long-term payback, while the booze gives instant gratification. But unfortunately, our governments always make the wrong choices.

If borrowed money is used productively and creates growth and prosperity, it should be welcomed. What we want to hear from the government is not about fiscal deficit targets, but economic growth, value addition, employment and investment targets.

What can Mr Modi do now to get us out of this quagmire? If the government abhors a stimulus financed by deficit financing, there are other options. But the PM is hamstrung with a weak economic management team with novices as the two key players, the finance minister and the RBI governor.

India has over \$490 billion nesting abroad earning ridiculously low interest. Even if a tenth of this is monetised for injection into the nation’s economy, it will mean over ₹3.5 lakh crores. At last count, the RBI had about ₹9.6 lakh crores as reserves. This is money to be used in a financial emergency. We

are now in an emergency like we have never encountered before. Even a third of this is about ₹3.2 lakh crores.

There are other sources of funds too but tapping these will entail political courage and sacrifices. Our cumulative government wages and pension bill amounts to about 11.4 per cent of GDP. After exempting the military/paramilitary, which is mostly under active deployment, we can target one per cent of GDP just by cancelling annual leave and LTC and rolling back a few DA increases.

The government can also sequester a fixed percentage from bank deposits, say five per cent of deposits between ₹10-100 lakhs and 15-20 per cent from bigger deposits for tax-free interest-bearing bonds in exchange. The 10 biggest private companies alone have cash reserves of over ₹10 lakh crores.

There’s money in the trees: all it needs is a good shakeup to pick the fruit. The pain of the lockdown mustn’t be borne by the poor alone. The government can easily target 5-6 per cent of GDP, or around 10-12 lakh crores, for the recovery fund as an immediately achievable goal.

This money can be used to immediately begin a limited basic income scheme, by transferring ₹3,000 monthly into Jan Dhan accounts of BPL people for the financial emergency period; fund GST concessions to move the auto and engineering sectors; begin emergency rural reconstruction projects to generate millions of new jobs and get our core infrastructure sectors like steel, cement and transportation moving again.

Getting money to move India again isn’t a huge problem. What stands in the way are the philosophical blinkers. Call it Chicago economics or the Gujarati mindset.

*The writer, a policy analyst studying economic and security issues, held senior positions in government and industry. He also specialises in the Chinese economy.*

### LETTERS

#### TABLIGHI ORDER

I fully share your views and your angst on the ‘Tablighi judgment’. What is more painful is the attitude of TV media which ignored the judgment. When the incident happened in New Delhi, all channels debated it for days. Now, there is total silence after the judgment was delivered. While I understand the predicament of the ‘committed’ channels, the silence of more ‘liberal’ channels is deplorable.

J.S. Sastry  
Hyderabad

#### SCHOOL REOPENING

It is a daring move by the AP government to reopen schools from September 5. With SOPs the schools can be open. It has been observed worldwide that children are not affected by Covid-19 like adults. The parents must be taken into confidence about the move.

P.R. Ravinder  
Hyderabad

#### SRISAILAM PROBE

The probe into the Srisailem blaze is welcome but officials too are responsible for not doing preventive maintenance at the power plant. The TS government’s ex gratia is very less. The lives of the lost ones cannot be measured in terms of money. The inquiry should be fair without any political pressure on officials.

Mohammed Wasif Ali  
Secunderabad

#### 23 drowned near Armoor: Godavari rising

FROM A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NIZAMABAD, AUGUST 24  
Latest reports indicate that the Godavari has started rising again this afternoon in the vicinity of Pochampad.

Reports from Sikkonda revenue circle in Armoor taluk say that 20 persons from the outskirts of

Gadkol village of Armoor were drowned in Kappalavagu in Ramadugu project. Three more bodies were reported to have been sighted in Peddavagu in Armoor taluk by field officers. Traffic in Nizamabad-Karimnagar road continues to be disrupted due to breaches of Peddavagu.

It may take several months for repairs to the bridge. It is suggested that PWD authorities should put up a steel ladder for pedestrians crossing.



Aakar Patel

The Central Bureau of Investigation has deputed five teams to investigate the death of an actor who killed himself. I do not know why the CBI is investigating this case nor do I understand why there is such great public interest in this issue.

I have been told that this is because of some political reason linked to the election in Bihar. If there is, I am not able to understand what it is. Bihar is the one of the oldest political entities in India, going back to the time of Chandragupta Maurya and Chanakya.

Are Biharis so naïve as to vote based on this sort of material? Perhaps they are, and I will be disappointed to know if this is the case. Bihar is one of the poorest parts of the world.

The state has been governed by two parties that have been in charge for a decade. Will the voter determine whether or not to vote for them based on a Bollywood event? If so, it is amazing. Two other reasons have been put forward as possible reasons for the pushing of this story.

First, that it is targeted at the son of the Maharashtra chief minister.

**On Covid-19, the data is clear. We are number three in the world in terms of the number of cases, we are number one in terms of the number of daily cases and we will likely end up with the most infected people in the world sometime soon. This is not the record of a government and a PM who is popular.**

Second, that it is aimed in some fashion at the Muslim actors of Bollywood.

That seems to me to be more reasonable given our times. This government is hostile to Muslims and will use any lie to attack them, including this one.

But to return to the question of voter interest, it was written last week by my friend Shekhar Gupta that the Prime Minister would return to power in 2024 unless he inflicted damage on himself. Gupta’s

argument so far as I have understood it is that the damage inflicted on the voter is not relevant because the voter doesn’t care about such things as the collapse in the economy, the record unemployment, the occupation of our land by the Chinese and the inability of this government to contain the Covid-19 pandemic.

Gupta did not explain in detail how he had come to this conclusion, but he said that a survey that had a previously good track record showed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was at the peak of his popularity.

Again, I do not know if this is the case, but it would be quite interesting if this were to be so. Our GDP has been declining since January 2018 for nine successive quarters, based on the Modi government’s own data. Unemployment has been the highest that it has ever been recorded in India, again according to the government’s own data. It is unclear who believes Mr Modi when he says that there has been no Chinese intrusion, I hope it is not the Prime Minister himself because that would be a sign of delusion.

We are currently engaged with the

Chinese in trying to get them to withdraw from our land, and our generals have had over half a dozen meetings with them already. Presumably, these meetings are being held because what Mr Modi says (or believes) is untrue. There is no reason to negotiate with them if they are not on our property.

On Covid-19, the data is clear. We are number three in the world in terms of the number of cases, we are number one in terms of the number of daily cases and we will likely end up with the most infected people in the world sometime soon.

This is not the record of a government and a Prime Minister who is popular.

In another nation, this would be signal disaster politically. Is it the case that for all or most Indian voters, their political affiliation is unrelated to their actual life?

Could it be that we vote as we do a Facebook like or Twitter forward? Is our political action through voting and support of a party based not on its performance but on its image? Surely this is not true, and even if it is true for many, it cannot be true for all. Certainly, it is not true for me.

But how many people think normally in this way? If there were many, then we would not have the circus that we do on a Bollywood actor’s death at a time which is the worst that I can remember, and I am not a young man. I cannot remember a time in my life when we had such economic strife, such levels of unemployment, a national epidemic and the enemy inside our house, and such little interest in these and a focus on Bollywood and temples and such things.

Is this who we really are as citizens, individuals and voters? I should hope not. I do not think that our young generation of this time certainly or the next will be so unconcerned about their politics. The question is whether the current generations of our time do not care about the nation’s security, their health, their employment and their future and whether they are more interested in Bollywood. I do not have the answer to this, but it is an answer that we will know for certain fairly soon.

Aakar Patel is a senior journalist and columnist



quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	38,799.08	0.95
Nifty 50	11,466.45	0.83
S&P 500*	3,420.46	0.69
Dollar (₹)	74.31	0.71
Pound Sterling (₹)	97.24	1.55
Euro (₹)	87.81	0.72
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	51,668.348	0.67
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	44.99	0.64
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.221	0.082
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.627	-0.013

\* As of 9:30 PM IST

Happiest Minds Tech proposes ₹110 crore IPO

Bengaluru-based IT services firm Happiest Minds Technologies has received market regulator Sebi's approval to float initial public offer. The offer comprises a fresh issuance of shares worth ₹110 crore and an offer for sale of up to 3.56 crore equity shares, according to the draft red herring prospectus. Its promoter Ashok Soota was also the founding CMD of Mindtree. Prior to this, he was the vice-chairman of Wipro.

Facebook to pay \$118 m to France in back-date tax



Facebook's French subsidiary has agreed to pay more than 100 million euros (\$118 million) in back taxes, including a penalty, after a ten-year audit of its accounts by French tax authorities, the company said on Monday. France, which is pushing hard to overhaul international tax rules on digital companies, has said the big tech groups pay too little tax in the country where they have significant sales.

Centre extends driving licence's validity to Dec. 31

The government has extended the validity of expiring driving licence and other motor vehicle documents until December 31 in view of rising Coronavirus cases in the country. This is the third such extension after the earlier advisories issued on March 30 and June 9. Earlier, the validity was extended till September 30. The government said this step aims to help out the citizens in availing transport-related services.

Vietnam tech firm sues TikTok for copyright

Vietnamese technology firm VNG is suing TikTok saying it does not have adequate licences for the songs being used in its videos, sources said on Monday. VNG is accusing the Chinese company of using audio tracks owned by Zing, a VNG subsidiary, without the company's consent, sources said. A petition seeks damages from TikTok and demands that it ceases use of Zing's music.

— Reuters



Kalyan Jewellers plans ₹1,000-cr public issue

■ DRHP filed; promoter to offload shares worth ₹250 cr

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, AUG. 24

Kalyan Jewellers has filed a draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) with SEBI to raise ₹1,750 crore through an Initial Public Offering, which could be one of the largest IPOs in the jewellery retail segment. The IPO comprises of equity shares of face value of ₹10 each of Kalyan Jewellers aggregating up to ₹1,750 crore, comprising a fresh issue of ₹1,000 crore and an offer for sale of ₹750 crore, comprising up to Rs 250 crore by promoter T.S. Kalyanaraman and up to ₹500 crore by Highdell Investment, a portfolio company of Warburg Pincus. The net proceeds from the fresh issue will be utilised towards working capital requirements and for general corporate purposes.

The Kerala-based company now has a pan-India presence with 107 showrooms across India as well as 30 showrooms located in the Middle East as of June 30, 2020. Promoters currently hold 76 per cent stake in the company while rest of the 24 per cent is held by Warburg Pincus. Warburg Pincus had invested Rs 1200 crore in Kalyan Jewellers in 2014 and had pumped in another Rs 500 crore in 2017. In FY20, revenue from operations of Kalyan Jewellers stood at ₹10,100 crore, of which 78.19 per cent was from India and 21.81 per cent was from the Middle East.

PNB to raise funds via market

New Delhi, Aug. 24: The country's second largest state-owned lender Punjab National Bank on Monday said that it does not envisage approaching the government for capital support rather it intends to raise funds from the market, which seems to have appetite for the public sector banking space. The bank has shareholders' approval for raising ₹14,000 crore, comprising ₹7,000 crore of the equity alone, from the market to meet COVID-related impact and finance growth, Punjab National Bank managing director S.S.

WE ARE confident of going to the market with respect to Tier II and Tier I bonds during Q2 and Q3 while we are looking at the end of Q3 or during Q4 for QIP (qualified institutional placement),"

S.S. MALLIKARJUNA RAO, Chairman, PNB

Mallikarjuna Rao said in a virtual interaction. "As on today, it does not appear (approach government for capital). If you look at market appetite also there is intent to contribute to public sector space in general," he said. This is evident from the recent issuance of Tier II bonds of Bank of Baroda and PNB as coupon rates were reasonable, he said.

"There is an appetite in the market. So, unless we test in the market, it would not be appropriate for us to think of government for contribution... We are confident of going to the market with respect to Tier II and Tier I bonds during Q2 and Q3 while we are looking at the end of Q3 or during Q4 for QIP (qualified institutional placement)," he said.

— PTI

Aug. deals at 10-year high

New York, Aug. 24: Companies raised the most funds in global equity and debt markets for August in a decade as homebound bankers spend their summer fixing deals off the back of trillions of dollars of stimulus worldwide to fight the pandemic. Companies have raised \$65.5 billion through IPOs and high-yield bond issuances globally so far in August, the highest for that month in at least 10 years, according to Refinitiv data. They raised \$98.6 billion in July

and \$126.5 billion in June, which was the highest in 20 years. It comes as governments and central banks have made at least \$15 trillion of stimulus available to help economies withstand the fallout of the coronavirus pandemic. The fact that bankers and investors were working during the traditional August holiday month, due to coronavirus travel restrictions, also made it easier for deals to be executed, corporate advisors said. "The liquidity in

financial markets is the key point driving the number of deals we have seen in August," said Rishi Jalan, Citigroup's co-head of Asia debt syndicate, noting the pandemic had helped speed up the corporate deal process in some ways. "People have adapted to the current environment. Roadshows have been turned into calls and investors are making themselves available quickly, people are engaging with deals at short notice," he said.

— Reuters

Stamp duty cut to boost realty

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, AUG. 24

In order to boost real estate transactions during the festive season, some of the states are planning to cut stamp duty rates and registration charges. Maharashtra and Karnataka are mulling a reduction in stamp duty and registration charges this festive season beginning with Ganesh Chaturthi, according to Anarock Property Consultants. Stamp duty charges in Karnataka are five per

cent for properties costing more than ₹35 lakh, 3 per cent for properties priced between ₹21 lakh to ₹35 lakh and two per cent for properties up to ₹20 lakh. A lower stamp duty for affordable properties was announced in the last state budget and it might be extended to properties above ₹35 lakh as well. In Maharashtra, stamp duty charges are five per cent in key cities like Mumbai, Pune, Nagpur and Nashik and six per cent in others. A 2-3 per cent reduction in rates

will result in significant savings for homebuyers. Stamp duty rates in other major states largely hover anywhere between 5-8 per cent, but states like Delhi, UP, Rajasthan, Punjab and Haryana offer relaxation of 1-2 per cent in stamp duty for women buyers. "To ease inventory pile-up and cost overruns, many players have already topped off discounts with added incentives such as booking amount refunds, statutory fees waivers, cash-back

schemes, easy payment structuring and assorted freebies. A stamp duty rate cut could push sales into the green during the festive season," said Anuj Puri, chairman, Anarock Property Consultants. In previous unprecedented times of extreme market stress – such as post structural reforms like demonetisation and Real Estate Regulatory Authority – some state governments had given concessions to boost their sluggish real estate markets.

Four SBI MDs vie for bank's chairman post

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO NEW DELHI, AUG. 24

With the tenure of incumbent chairman of State Bank of India (SBI) Rajnish Kumar ending on October 7, the government has reportedly scheduled a virtual interview for the post on August 28. As per a top source in the finance ministry, all the four managing directors (MDs) of the bank will appear for the interview on August 28. "Earlier, three candidates – the bank's managing directors Arijit Basu, Dinesh Khara and SC Setty – were asked to attend the interview. After Ashwani Bhatia, who has

● FOUR SBI managing directors are in the race for the chairman's post. The bank will also a new vacancy for an MD post after Arijit Basu retires in the end of October though he is also vying for the chairman's post.

recently resigned as SBI MF MD, took over as fourth SBI MD on August 24, he was also told to appear for the interview," the source said. "Although all the aspiring candidates have been intimidated by the concerned authority over telephone, no official communication for the inter-

Mittal hints at hike in mobile data tariff



New Delhi, Aug. 24: Bharti Airtel chairman Sunil Bharti Mittal on Monday hinted at an increase in mobile services prices in the next six months, saying that data at low rates is not sustainable for the telecom industry.

He said that 16 GB data consumption a month for ₹160 is a tragedy. "You either consume 1.6 GB of capacity per month either at this price point or you may prepare to pay a lot more. We are not wanting \$50-60 like the US or Europe but certainly \$2 for 16 GB a month is not sustainable," Mittal said at an event. Mittal also said that the average revenue per user (ARPU) is expected to cross ₹200 in six months on digital content consumption. ARPU is the

measure of revenue generated per user for a telco. "We need a ₹300 ARPU in which you will still have lower end at ₹100 a month with decent amount of data. But if your consumption is largely around watching TV, movies, entertainment and depriving other vital special services networks, then you need to pay for that," Mittal said at the launch of a book written by Bharti Enterprises execu-

tive Akhil Gupta. Airtel reported an increase in the ARPU to ₹157 in the first quarter ended June 30, 2020. The rise in ARPU came after the tariff hike by Bharti Airtel in December 2019. Mittal said that while telecom operators have served the nation during the difficult times, the industry needs to invest in 5G, more optical fibres, submarine cables etc. "Businesses which are not in telecom, also need to adopt digital. You should see solid ARPUs building up in the next 5-6 months for the industry to be sustainable. We are down to 2-3 players now. India is a very price conscious market. In six months time, we should be crossing the mark of ₹200 for sure and ₹250 would be ideal," Mittal said.

Markets get boost from global cues

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, AUG. 24

Despite a higher number of new Covid-19 cases being reported across the world, market indices in the country moved up to a six-month-high owing to positive global cues, government announcement providing GST relief to smaller businesses, measures for unlocking of the economy and measures to protect domestic chemicals industry.

The Sensex gained 0.95 per cent or 364.36 per cent to close at 38,799.08 and the Nifty-50 gained 0.83 per cent or 94.85 points to close at 11,466.45. Nifty Bank index gained 2.39 per cent due large gains for HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank both of which rose more than 2.5 per cent. Shrikant Chouhan, executive vice-president, Equity Technical Research, Kotak Securities said, "Global cues helped the Indian market to close in positive territory with the exceptional strength shown in US futures, Hong Kong and European markets. News of a stimulus package later in the week helped boost the overall sentiment." The FDA approved the emergency use of anti-

● CONTINUING RALLY in the broader market has brought midcap and small-cap indices closer to their one-year high. ● BSE SMALL-cap index gained 1.57 per cent closing at 14,855.09 while the 52-week high is 14,946.21. BSE Mid-cap index gained 0.44 per cent to close at 15,019.07 while the 52-week high is 15,930.78.

body-rich blood plasma from recovered patients on Covid-19 patients which had a positive impact on global markets. Continuing rally in the broader market has brought midcap and small-cap indices closer to their 52-week high levels. BSE Small-cap index gained 1.57 per cent closing at 14,855.09 while the 52-week high is 14,946.21. BSE Mid-cap index gained 0.44 per cent to close at 15,019.07 while the 52-week high is 15,930.78. "Farm prospects have soared with rains most well-spread in three years. Early onset and good distribution of the south-west monsoon has paved the way for robust kharif output, raising hopes in hinterland."

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, AUG. 24

Microsoft Corp. on Monday said that it will train the Indian teaching faculty in quantum computing skills through a training programme called 'Train the Trainer'. The programme would be organised by Microsoft Garage in collaboration with Electronics and ICT Academies at Malaviya National Institute of Technology, Jaipur, and National Institute of Technology, Patna. "This programme will train 900 faculty from universities and institutes across India through E&ICT Academies at

Insti-tutes of National Importance such as IIT Kanpur, IIT Guwahati, IIT Roorkee, MNIT Jaipur, NIT Patna, IIIT-D Jabalpur, and NIT Warangal, equipping academics with the required skills to start building their quantum future," Microsoft said. Quantum computing applies the properties of quantum physics to process information. Quantum computers will enable new discoveries in healthcare, energy, environmental systems, smart materials, and beyond. Microsoft is bringing the capabilities to develop for this quantum future, to the cloud with Azure Quantum.

PwC. "What Covid has accelerated is the sophistication of SWFs trying to build diversification and resilience into their portfolio – and hence looking for other asset classes." Sovereign funds have been more bearish on property than public pension funds, another big investor in the sector, Global SWF found. While they have outstripped the pension funds in overall investment across most industries and assets this year, by two to one, that ratio is reversed for real estate.

— Reuters



## SHORT TAKES

## Future Group out as IPL sponsor

**New Delhi:** Retail conglomerate Future Group, which is currently going through a restructuring phase, has pulled out of BCCI's central sponsorship list for the Indian Premier League. Future Group has been forced to pull out as the company is reportedly on the verge of a takeover and has suffered losses due to the prevailing hostile economic climate in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. "Yes, Future Group has pulled out of IPL central sponsorship and that's the reason their logo has been removed from the IPL website. At this point of time, I won't like to elaborate on the development," a BCCI veteran confirmed the development. "Future Group has been in bad shape since the start of Covid-19. It was bound to happen that they wouldn't have been able to spend ₹40 crore to be a part of BCCI's central sponsorship pool. Hence, the pull-out is not a surprise," the source said. — PTI

## Rain halts James' 600-wkt chase

**Southampton:** England pacer Jimmy Anderson was frustrated in his bid to reach 600 Test wickets after seeing another catch spilled off his bowling on the fourth day of the third and final Test against Pakistan on Monday. Pakistan was 41-0 in its second innings and trailing by 269 runs when more rain arrived at the Rose Bowl, prompting an early lunch to be taken. The stoppage extended well into the afternoon because of a wet outfield, increasing Pakistan's chances of avoiding defeat.

It was a solid morning session for Pakistan openers Shan Masood (13) and Abid Ali (22), except for when Anderson — on 598 career wickets — found the edge of Shan's bat in the fifth over and the ball flew to wicketkeeper Jos Buttler. Inexplicably, Buttler failed to get a glove on it, the ball hitting his midriff and bouncing to the ground. The 38-year-old Anderson is looking to become the first fast bowler to reach 600 wickets. — AP

## Dustin Johnson wins British Open

**New York:** Dustin Johnson seized the World No.1 ranking in emphatic style on Sunday, firing an eight-under par final-round 63 to win the US PGA Northern Trust by 11 strokes. Johnson finished with a 30-under par total of 254 at TPC Boston, with Harris English a distant second on 265 after a closing 69. Johnson's 22-under third-round total had given him the largest 54-hole lead on tour this season — five strokes — and he was quick to build on it on Sunday. He set the tone with an eight-foot eagle putt at the second, set up by a magnificent seven-iron over the water. He tapped in for birdie at the fourth and rolled in a four-foot birdie at the fifth. Birdie putts of 10 and 13 feet at the seventh and eighth saw him make the turn five-under for the day, and he rolled in another four-foot birdie at the 12th. The only thing that slowed him was a weather delay. — AFP

## DONCIC MAKES QUICK WORK OF LA CLIPPERS

**Miami:** Luka Dončić wasn't about to let a sprained ankle slow him down, nailing a game-winning three-pointer at the buzzer to lift the Dallas Mavericks to a 135-133 overtime playoff win over the Los Angeles Clippers on Sunday. The 21-year old, who was playing with a tender ankle and missing his offensive sidekick Kristaps Porziņģis, finished with 43 points, 17 rebounds and 13 assists to level the first-round NBA Western Conference playoff series at two games each. "This game was from another planet," said Mavericks coach Rick Carlisle. Dončić made a basket with 50 seconds left to tie the score 130-130 then gave Dallas a two-point lead with a spinning move to the basket with 19 seconds remaining. — AFP

Regd. No. H/SD/509/2018-20  
Printed and Published by K. Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited. Printed at Deccan Chronicle Press situated at Plot No. 9 Alwal Village, Vallabh Nagar Taluk, Medchal Malkajgiri Dist. Telangana and Published at 36, S.D. Road, Secunderabad-3. RNI Registration No. 3081/1957. Editor: Aditya Sinha

## MANKAD NOT A JOKE

## Vinoo's name unfairly used for run out, feels Karthik

**Abu Dhabi, Aug 24:** Senior India wicketkeeper-batsman and Kolkata Knight Riders captain Dinesh Karthik finds it extremely unfair that the legendary Vinoo Mankad's name is used in a negative manner for a dismissal which is absolutely legal.

Mankad, during the 1948 Tour of Australia, ran opposition batsman Bill Brown out at the non-striker's end after he backed up too far despite repeated warnings. The Australian media outraged over it and called it "Mankading" even though Sir Don Bradman found the dismissal to be perfectly legal.

"There are two issues I have with this 'Mankad' run out. First is the implementation of it. Second is the name 'Mankad' run out," Karthik said.

"All the way from Don Bradman to Sunil Gavaskar, everyone has said it's completely within the rules. The ICC and MCC have also taken a stand that it is okay. So I don't see the reason why bowlers or any team that does it is looked at in a negative way.

"The person who did it first time was Vinoo Mankad. Interestingly, he was alert enough to do that dismissal. But more importantly, nobody remembers the batsman who got run out. It was Bill Brown," he pointed out.

Karthik's comments have significance because of Delhi Capitals coach Ricky Ponting's recent comments that he would have a chat with Ravichandran Ashwin and advise him that the dismissal is against the 'Spirit of the Game' referring to the India spinner running out of Jos Buttler during the last edition.

Karthik said the dismissal should not be called 'Mankading', especially when the ICC and MCC call it just a run out.

"If Mankad was the first person who did that run out, Bill Brown was the first person who got run out for being silly and walking out of the crease. Why is it that people remember Mankad and not Brown?" he asked.

Karthik suggested that the TV umpire should be called in to check whether the batsman is backing up too far and if so then that particular run should be disallowed. — PTI



Kings XI Punjab's captain Ravichandran Ashwin runs out non-striking batsman Jos Buttler of the Rajasthan Royals in an IPL match last year.

## Ashwin bats for free ball if batsman leaves crease

**New Delhi, Aug 24:** Senior India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin on Monday suggested the introduction of a "free ball" for bowlers if non-strikers back up too far, sticking to his stand that there was nothing wrong with running such batsmen out.

Ashwin ran out Jos Buttler during an IPL match between Kings XI Punjab and Rajasthan Royals in 2019 when the Englishman left the non-striker's end much before the delivery was bowled, triggering an age old 'spirit of the game' debate.

While what Ashwin did was well within the rules of the game, his new IPL team coach Ricky Ponting of the Delhi Capitals doesn't agree with this particular mode of dismissal.

"Make it a free ball for the bowler. If the batsmen gets out of that ball, the batting team will be

**Make it a free ball for the bowler. If the batsmen gets out of that ball, the batting team will be docked 5 runs. Free hit adds to the drama for a batter, let's give a chance to the bowlers too.**

— R. ASHWIN on Mankad debate

docked 5 runs. Free hit adds to the drama for a batter, let's give a chance to the bowlers too," Ashwin tweeted in response to Dinesh Karthik's assertion that it was unfair to link the dismissal to spirit of the game or call it 'Mankading' as it is permitted by laws of the game.

"As of now everyone watches the game hoping that 'the bowlers will get smacked today'," the off-spinner said.

His suggestion is similar to the concept of free hit, which allows the batsmen to score the maximum without the fear of being dismissed if the bowler delivers a front-foot no ball.

When a Twitter user asserted that the game is primarily for batsmen, Ashwin retorted, "Then take the run out on your chin and stay in!!!"

What followed after Ashwin's tweet was a discussion on his timeline with former India cricketers W. V. Raman, S. Badrinath, Rohan Gavaskar and commentator Harsha Bhogle providing their opinion on the issue.

"I think the rule should be simple and take away any subjective element like 'normal delivery position' and just say 'non-striker stays in till the ball is released'," Harsha Bhogle said. — PTI

## ONE MISTAKE AND EVENT IS DOOMED, SAYS KOHLI

**Dubai, Aug. 24:** One mistake could "spoil" the entire tournament, Royal Challengers Bangalore captain Virat Kohli on Monday warned his colleagues in the IPL's first virtual team meeting, while imploring them to do all they can to keep the bio-bubble secure.

It was a team meeting like no other but Kohli meant business straight-away as he urged his colleagues to strictly follow the protocols put in place by the authorities in the UAE, the venue of the upcoming edition of IPL, in view of Covid-19 pandemic.

"We have followed what's been told to us and I would expect everyone to be on the same page in terms of securing the bubble at all times and making sure that nothing is compromised," Kohli said.

"...Because I think one mistake by any one of us could literally spoil the whole tournament. And none of us want to do that," he added.

RCB's director of cricket operations Mike Hesson, who was present in the meeting along with head coach Simon Katich, spoke about the consequences of violating the rules after Kohli posed him a question.

"It (violation) will be dealt with very seriously. For accidental breach, players will be removed and sent into isolation for seven days and then come back only after he tests negative. There will be strong consequences if players chose to do that. Players will sign a document which explains the consequences," Hesson said.

The Indian captain stressed on the need to develop a good team culture from the first day.

"I can't wait to get to our first practice session, something that we all are going to cherish. An opportunity to create a good team culture from Day 1," Kohli said. — PTI



Bayern's goalkeeper Manuel Neuer (centre) lifts the trophy after Munich won the Champions League final against Paris Saint-Germain at the Luz Stadium in Lisbon, Portugal, on Sunday. Bayern won 1-0. — AP

## Bayern best PSG, clinch CL trophy

**Lisbon, Aug 24:** Kingsley Coman headed Bayern Munich to a sixth European Cup title, scoring against boyhood club Paris Saint-Germain to seal a 1-0 victory in the first Champions League final to be played without fans.

While Bayern won its first final since 2013 on Sunday, PSG have yet to lift the European Cup despite more than \$1 billion being spent on players in nine years.

More than \$500 million was spent on Neymar, Kylian Mbappe and Angel Di Maria but PSG looked far from formidable or threatening against the Bavarian giants who felt more assured on European club football's biggest stage.

As the costly front three were frustrated in front of goal, it was instead a winger who was born in Paris and started his career at PSG who inflicted the blow.

The 24-year-old Coman ghosted in at the far post unchecked by the PSG defense and was ready to meet a cross from Joshua Kimmich in the 59th minute.

It was Bayern's 43rd goal of a perfect European campaign that has seen Bayern become the first team to win all 11 Champions League matches.

It capped an incredible transformation this season under Hansi Flick, who emerged from the shadows in November, with a promotion to the top coaching job with Bayern fourth in the Bundesliga.

The European Cup joins the Bundesliga trophy — won for an eighth successive season and the German Cup. Bayern join Liverpool as six-time champions of Europe, only

## \$500m STRIKE FORCE NEYMAR, MBAPPE FAILS

**Lisbon, Aug 24:** Neymar and Kylian Mbappe sat side by side on Paris Saint-Germain's bench after the 1-0 loss to Bayern Munich in the Champions League final here.

While Mbappe stared at the field in despair, Neymar cried and covered his face on Sunday.

It wasn't the ending they had hoped for. PSG must go for yet another year without the Champions League title after lackluster performances by Neymar and Mbappe. The French team's biggest stars had disappointing performances after helping PSG to reach the final of the top European club tournament for the first time.

PSG paid big money — a combined 402 million euros (\$474m) on the pair in 2017 — to sign them in its bid to finally win the Champions League, but they couldn't come through in the decisive game. Both Mbappe and Neymar failed to capitalise on first-half chances that could have changed the story of the game, and neither was effective in the second half when PSG needed to come back from a goal down. — AP

behind AC Milan (seven) and Real Madrid (13). It was the first final to end 1-0 since Real Madrid beat Juventus in 1998 which was also the last final to feature teams who qualified as domestic champions. — AP

## Dhoni &amp; Co. bond over virtual gaming

**C. SANTHOSH KUMAR | DC CHENNAI, AUG. 24**

Forced to spend a week inside the four walls of their luxurious hotel rooms upon arrival in Dubai, Chennai Super Kings have found a way to connect with each other — through virtual gaming.

All IPL franchises have landed in the UAE for the 13th edition of the league, starting on September 19, but players and officials are currently on a week-long self-isolation to adhere to the bio-bubble protocols laid out by the

BCCI. During every IPL, Chennai Super Kings set up a 'team room' packed with a TT table, PlayStation and other indoor games, but now that the players can't step out of their individual rooms, virtual games such as PUBG and Call of Duty are keeping them entertained. It's no secret that M.S. Dhoni loves combat games and football.

A CSK official said the players are slowly getting used to the new normal.

"The first few days have been really challenging as we have to ensure that players follow all protocol

and at the same time keep themselves occupied. The rooms here don't have balconies which means they are totally cut off from each other," he said.

While a few led by Dhoni and his close friend Monu Kumar Singh connect through online gaming, some others kill time reading books and binge-watching movies and shows on OTT platforms. Shane Watson spends his time planning and shooting content for his vlog — T20 Stars.

The official said all players have been given customised indoor workouts

for the quarantine period. "For the first week, the hotel has provided small workout equipment in every room. Players have to train twice a day. The team trainer gives them feedback through videos," the official added.

Three-time champions Chennai Super Kings are staying at Taj Dubai, overlooking the spectacular Burj Khalifa.

The 55-member contingent, including their marketing and social media teams, are staying in a separate block with no access to outsiders. The BCCI has allotted two offi-

cials from the Anti Corruption and Security Unit (ACSU) per franchise.

With the hotel providing South Indian food throughout the day, CSK are feeling very much at home.

"There is a set menu for breakfast, lunch and dinner. The food tray is left outside their room. The players are also ordering in their choice of food," the CSK official further added.

Senior players and coaches have been allotted suites that come with a fully-equipped kitchen.

## Ageing young, Anderson is a history in making



Hemant Kenkre  
Silly Point

'Pakistan are faced with a mountain to climb,' screamed a news headline post the second day's play of their third and final Test match against England. The mountain in this case referred to the mammoth 583 runs that the hosts had put up thanks to a dedicated effort by Zak Crawley who notched up his first Test hundred (a workmanlike 267 runs) in his eighth Test appearance.

More than the mass of runs that the Pakistanis will face (this is written

before the third day's play) the real mountain they will need to ascend is a tortuous terrain that goes by the name of James Michael Anderson. The 38-year old Lancastrian is currently standing on an achievement that will further his name in the history of Test cricket. Just four wickets from getting to the mark of 600 Test scalps, the fit, six footer will use every trick in his book to seal his deal with history over the next two days.

Playing in and against

England has been considered a major yardstick that tests a batsman's proficiency. And, over the last decade, playing the team in their back yard with Anderson in the eleven is a different ball game. When India last toured the British Isles in 2018, skipper Virat Kohli was faced with two major tasks. The first being winning the Test series and the second being getting Anderson, his tormentor in the 2014 series, out of his way.

Just four notches from standing tall, atop a major peak, Anderson has come a long way from his rather humble beginnings in international cricket. For someone who was thrown directly into the deep end against Australia to make his debut in a One Day International in 2002,

Anderson has come a long way overcoming many personal hurdles. For starters, the 'Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde' swing, from great to the ordinary on many occasions, had people wondering which avatar will step on to the field earlier in his career.

From starting his journey in international cricket alongside relative unknowns like Robert Kirtley and Craig White as fellow seamers, Anderson's rise to the top, bowling in tandem with current partner Stuart Broad has been remarkable. With 1107 Test wickets between them, this combination has been a major challenge for international batsmen to contend with in the longest format of the game. The impact these two have had

on English cricket over the last decade has been tremendous.

They say fast bowlers hunt in pairs. Anderson and Broad will go down in the annals of cricket as a lethal pair akin to Fred Trueman and Brian Statham of the old. Watching them speak to one another before the start of an over, where they dissect the batsman's weakness and exchange notes goes to show how solid the understanding between the two British homies is. Complementing each other is the hallmark of a great pair.

From Dennis Lillee and Jeff Thomson to Andy Roberts and Micheal Holding, cricket fans have been privileged to watch these greats keep challenging the greatest batsmen of

their time.

When Trueman passed (what was, in August 1964) an unbelievable achievement of 300 Test wickets getting Neil Hawke caught at slip by Colin Cowdrey against Australia at the Oval, he was asked if his record would ever be broken. "Aye, but whoever does it will be bloody tired," quipped the Yorkshireman who was known for his legendary quotes throughout his career.

Just two years away from 40, one wonders for how long Anderson will continue being England's go to man in Test cricket.

The way one is watching him bowl in the current series against Pakistan it looks like Anderson still has the mojo to keep ticking on like a Swiss watch.

The spring in his step is still as sprightly as it was when he started out. So are the tricks with the ball which flummox the best in the business.

His agility in the field is comparable to men much younger to him.

For a fast bowler/seamer, getting past the 600 mark in Test cricket is an amazing achievement.

With the top three slots of maximum Test wickets staying with spinners, Anderson is poised to become the first of his category to get in to the exclusive club. When England tours India (for a five-Test series) in February 2021 one does hope Indian fans will get an opportunity to see this magnificent warrior display his wares in the sub-continent for the last time.