

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

KARIMNAGAR | MONDAY | 17 AUGUST 2020

## WEATHER

**Max:** 24.2°C  
**Min:** 21.0°C  
**RH:** 93%  
**Rainfall:** 9.7 mm  
**Forecast:** Cloudy sky. Rain or thundershowers likely. Max/Min temp. 26/21 °C

## COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+58,868)	(+945)
26,46,583	51,025
covid19india.org	
STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS	
(+1,102)	(+9)
TS: 91,361	693
(+8,012)	(+88)
AP: 2,89,829	2,650

### CASES AROUND THE WORLD

2,17,31,123	
DEATHS	
7,71,033	
COUNTRIES AREAS WITH CASES	
213	
worldometers.info/coronavirus	

## ASTROGUIDE

**Sarvari:** Dakshinayana  
**Titthi:** Shravana Bahula Trayodasi till 12.30 pm  
**Star:** Punarvasu till 6.42 am, and then Pushyami  
**Variyam:** 2.22 pm to 3.54 pm  
**Durmuhurtam:** 12.46 pm to 1.36 pm and 3.17 pm to 4.07 pm  
**Rahukalam:** 7.30 pm to 9 pm  
**HJRI CALENDAR**  
**Zulhijja** 26,1441 AH  
**PRAYERS**  
**Fajar:** 4.56 am  
**Zohar:** 12.30 pm  
**Asar:** 4.46 pm  
**Maghrib:** 6.46 pm  
**Isha:** 7.57 pm  
**SUNSET TODAY 6.40 PM**  
**SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.59 AM**  
**MOONRISE TODAY 3.56 AM**  
**MOONSET TOMORROW 5.26 PM**

## COUNTER POINT



The retirement time was not good... all our photos have gone into the inside pages!

## IN BRIEF

## 2 J&K districts get 4G internet

**Srinagar:** High-speed mobile Internet services were restored on a trial basis in one district each in Kashmir and Jammu regions over a year after the facility was suspended, according to an official order on Sunday. The resumption of 4G Internet services came days after the Centre had informed the Supreme Court that a committee was looking into the matter. According to the order issued by the J&K home department, the high-speed mobile data services will be restored in Ganderbal district of Kashmir and Udhampur of Jammu region with immediate effect.

## Teenager raped, killed in UP

**Lakhimpur Kheri/Lucknow:** A 13-year-old girl was raped and strangled to death in Uttar Pradesh's Lakhimpur Kheri district, police said on Sunday. Two men have been arrested for the crime that took place on Friday. Police dismissed reports that the girl had sustained grievous injuries on her tongue and eyes in the incident, and said the post-mortem stated that the death was due to strangulation after rape. The incident drew strong opposition condemnation, with Congress and SP leaders attacking the Adityanath government over the law and order situation in the state.

## WORLD | 5

**Don vows 'snapback' to revive Iran curbs**



## SPORTS | 8

**Hamilton wins Spanish Grand Prix**



## TABLOID

**The legend who lead a simple life**



# BJP controls Facebook in India: Rahul

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 16

The Congress on Sunday accused the BJP and the RSS of spreading “fake news and hatred” through Facebook and using the social media giant to influence voters.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi posted an article by a US media house *Wall Street Journal* which alleged social media manipulation by the BJP. The article claimed that Facebook looks the other way in cases of hate speech and objectionable content from leaders and workers of the ruling BJP. The *Journal* also reported that a top executive of the social media giant had said that punishing violations by BJP workers “would damage the company’s business prospects in the country”.

Tagging the article, Mr Gandhi tweeted in Hindi: “The BJP and the RSS control Facebook and Whatsapp in India. Through these media, they spread fake news and influence voters. At last American media has brought this to the fore”.

Senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor also flagged the issue.

“The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Information Technology would certainly wish to hear from Facebook about these reports & what they propose to do about hate-speech in India,” he tweet-

● **CONGRESS LEADER**  
Rahul Gandhi posted an article by the US newspaper *Wall Street Journal* which alleged social media manipulation by the BJP.

● **THE ARTICLE** claimed that Facebook looks the other way in cases of hate speech and objectionable content from leaders and workers of the ruling BJP.

ed. The BJP on its part was quick to point out the three-year old Cambridge Analytica data scandal and said the Congress should not point fingers.

Union information technology minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said: “Losers who cannot influence people even in their own party keep cribbing that the entire world is controlled by the BJP & the RSS. You were caught red-handed in alliance with Cambridge Analytica & Facebook to weaponise data before the elections & now have the gall to question us?”

BJP leader Kapil Mishra also made the same point. It “seems Congress is blackmailing Facebook to hide some serious crimes... Cambridge Analytica scam is just the tip of the iceberg of the Congress manipulating opinions and freedom of expression in India,” he tweeted.

# Chetan Chauhan dies of Coronavirus

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 16

Chetan Chauhan, one of India’s best known batsman and Uttar Pradesh minister, died of Covid-19 on Sunday.

He is the second UP minister to succumb to the Coronavirus after technical education minister Kamla Rani Varun, 62, on August 2.

The 73-year-old former cricketer was a BJP MLA from Naugawan Sadat and was holding the portfolios of sainik welfare, home guards, PRD and civil security.

Chauhan was the legendary Sunil Gavaskar’s longest serving opening partner, and made 2,084 runs in 40 Tests but could never score a century. Though reporting fewer

cases in the initial days of lockdown, Uttar Pradesh has seen a steady increase in the cases of Covid-19 after guest workers returned home.

Now the country’s largest populous state has fifth largest caseload after Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

Meanwhile, India went past the 26-lakh mark with 57,376 cases reported on Sunday.

The caseload stands at 26.45 lakh. Of this, 72 per cent or 19.15 lakh patients have recovered, while 6.78 lakh patients are being treated.

The country reported the death of 936 people in the last 24 hours, taking the toll to 51,021. The Covid related death rate is 1.93 per cent in India.

### INSIDE

■ **Page 5:** If elected, will stand with India against threats it faces: Biden



Authorities opened sluice gates of Hussainsagar on Sunday after water surpassed its full tank level of 513.41 feet.

— S. SURENDER REDDY

# Rain throws state out of gear, officials say don’t venture out

**Three dead; tanks, rivulets overflow, roads inundated; more rain forecast**

S.A. ISHAQUI | DC  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 16

At least three persons were killed and normal life was severely disrupted across the state on the third day of incessant rains on Saturday.

Several thousands of acres of standing crop and paddy nurseries were lost in floodwaters.

Two women, one about 80 years old and her 50-year-old daughter, died after their house in Nagarkurnool district collapsed. Bandi Venkatesh, 30, was swept away while fishing in Nakkavagu, which was in spate, on the outskirts of Matindla village in Chinnakodur of Siddipet district on Sunday.

The police is searching for his body.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Sunday forecast light to moderate rains or thundershowers in many parts of the state at least till Thursday.

The IMD also warned that a fresh low-pressure area was likely to form over the north Bay of Bengal around Wednesday which might result in continuation of the ongoing heavy rains beyond Thursday.

The disaster management department has advised people not to venture out except in emergencies in view the forecast of more rains. In Hyderabad, the GHMC has advised people to vacate dilapidat-

ed residential buildings.

Locals rescued three youngsters stranded in floodwaters of a stream in Asifabad district and three youngsters stranded in Musi river in Suryapet district on Sunday.

Many villages were submerged with seasonal streams and rivulets overflowing on the roads and causeways.

Major rivers were in spate forcing the water resources department to lift gates to discharge massive amounts of floodwater, resulting in the inundation of low-lying areas.

As many as 87 rain-dampened houses collapsed in Sangareddy. In Nalgonda district, over 50 irrigation tanks are overflowing. Five regulatory gates of the Musi project were lifted to 2.5 feet in view of the heavy inflows, at 11 am.

With the Musi river receiving continuous heavy flow, engineers have cautioned villagers along the river in Suryapet, Penpahad, Kethepally, Vemulapally and Maudugulapally mandals to stay alert.

In Suryapet district, road connectivity between Arvepally and Thungathurthy was disrupted due to overflowing of Rudrama Devi Cheruvu at Velugupally.

Traffic was forced to take alternative routes via Nagaram to reach Thungathurthy.

With the Godavari, Taliperu and Kinnerasani in full spate, traffic was

# GHMC officials are unreachable

MADDY DEEKSHITH | DC  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 16

Citizens calling up GHMC officials on numbers stored in their mobile-phones are suddenly meeting with no response.

It turns out that the GHMC has quietly made available only headline numbers of its officials, including commissioner D.S. Lokesh Kumar, on its website, citing a loophole in the Right to Information Act.

The GHMC contends that it is required under the RTI to provide only headline numbers.

Though the RTI Act mandates timely response to citizen queries and requests, none of the officials, including the commissioner, additional commissioners and zonal commissioners, are providing any information to public during emergency situations, including the Covid-19 outbreak and incessant rainfall.

### NUMBERS TO DIAL IN EMERGENCY

**Call centre:**  
040-21111111  
**DRF:** 040-29555500  
**Dial:** 100

Moreover, the corporation has not provided the right phone numbers of deputy commissioners and other staff.

The basic objective of the RTI Act is to empower citizens, promote transparency and accountability in working of government agencies, contain corruption, and make democracy work for people in the real sense.

It goes without saying that an informed citizen is better equipped to keep the necessary vigil on instruments of governance and make the government more accountable to the governed.

## FLOODWATERS REACH TEMPLE IN BHADRADRI

A. RAVINDRA SESHU | DC  
BHADRACHALAM, AUG. 1

The flooding in the Godavari is the worst in six years. The water level at Bhadrachalam crossed 54 feet and officials on Sunday have sounded a third warning. The local administration has been directed to shift people in low-lying areas in Bhadrachalam and those on river banks to safer places. The water level expected to touch 58 feet by Monday morning.

Following heavy rains, water reached the steps of the Lord Rama temple in Bhadrachalam and Vista Complex, Nityannadana Satram and other areas.

It is the first time since 2014 that 14 lakh cusecs of water is flowing downstream. Taliperu and Sabari, tributaries of the Godavari, are overflowing and about three lakh cusecs of water is joining Godavari from these two.

Officials have started evacuating people in low-lying villages like Dummugudem and Charla mandals while those from Sunnambattu village in Dummugudem were shifted to a flood relief camp.

■ **Page 3:** Crops in 10,000 acres badly hit

## Heavy rains cut off road connectivity to interior areas; affect Coronavirus tests

# Floods likely to worsen Coronavirus cases in state

BALU PULIPAKA | DC  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 16

The rains pounding several districts over the past three days have begun to impact Covid-19 control measures. The first sign of the impact was felt in the number of disease determination tests that were conducted statewide falling nearly by half.

While 21,239 tests were conducted between Thursday and Friday evenings, the next 24-hours saw only 12,120 tests being done, as per data

provided by the health department in its daily Covid-19 bulletins.

It is natural where ever there are floods, roads are cut off and access to villages is difficult, the tests will be fewer as healthcare personnel cannot reach such habitations, health minister Etala Rajendar told *Deccan Chronicle* on Sunday.

Asked how the government was bracing for a possible influx of Covid-19 patients with possible serious complications because of the flood-induced delays

RAIN-HIT			
DISTRICTS WITH HEAVY RAINS SHOW A HUGE DROP IN TESTING			
	Aug. 13	Aug. 14	Aug 15
Jayashankar-Bhupalapalli	13	12	0
KumrumBheem-Asifabad	17	12	3
Mulugu	12	13	8
Peddapalli	54	40	22
Warangal Rural	54	41	25
Warangal Urban	74	101	70
Mancherial	18	7	9
Bhadradi-Kothagudem	34	36	15

in testing or transportation, as well as the possi-

bility of victims of other waterborne diseases, the

minister said that plans were being readied.

With road access cut off to habitations in several districts, particularly those comprising the former united Warangal, Adilabad, Khammam, and Karimangar with the overflowing of rivulets, streams and tanks, testing for Covid-19 is believed to have been hit in these areas.

The health department’s daily Covid-19 bulletins do not provide district-wise daily testing numbers, though the respective district medical and health officers were releasing

daily testing and positive case figures earlier. This practice was ordered stopped by the health department in July.

The sudden loss of access to large numbers of people is also expected to impact the goal of ‘early testing’ and disease determination that, some doctors fear, could result in Covid-19 infected people being discovered after the disease sets in strongly that would clearly have an effect on their treatment duration and the chances of their survival.



## OTHER STORIES

## RISING CASES TRIGGERS FEAR IN OLD ADILABAD

PILLALAMARRI SRINIVAS | DC ADILABAD, AUG. 16

As many as 2,747 Covid-19 positive cases were reported and 34 deaths in old Adilabad district till late Thursday evening.

According to official sources, the positive cases are increasing day by day and the virus is spreading into the villages. Among the toll, 18 deaths were in Mancherial, nine in Adilabad, six in Nirmal and one in Kumarambheem Asifabad district.

However, a matter of concern is that many patients are hesitating to be in isolation in RIMS, Adilabad due to alleged poor facilities. They are opting home quarantine.

It is widely felt that the medical and the health department should create awareness among the positive patients about the medication that has to be followed when in home quarantine.

Towards, telephonic counseling by experts on the precautions that are needed to be taken can bring comfort to the families of the patients. Such counseling along with tips to be followed can speed up the recovery process, it is felt.

Medical staff must visit the house of positive patients and boost their morale and also educate the neighbours against social discrimination against Covid positive patients.



## FARMERS WORRIED ABOUT SPREAD OF PINK BOLLWORM

DC CORRESPONDENT ADILABAD, AUG. 16

Farmers in certain parts of Adilabad district are considerably worried about the spread of pink bollworm on their standing cotton crop. They are spraying neem oil to control the bollworm from spreading. "Linga Akarshana Buttal" (nets) are being set up in the fields to trap and kill the bollworm.

Seeram Venkanna, 40, of Kodad village in Talamadugu mandal said he has cultivated cotton over his 15-acre land. After he found pink bollworm on the crop, he has been spraying neem oil to get rid of the bollworm. The state government is supplying neem oil at a subsidised price of ₹200 per litre through its agriculture department. Farmers can use neem oil as a pesticide to contain pests, especially pink bollworm.

Pink bollworm has been attacking and damaging the standing cotton crop since the last three years. It has caused considerable losses to farmers owing to decrease in their yield. The pink bollworm is also spreading to other crops.

Cotton crop is cultivated over nearly eight lakh acres in the old Adilabad district, including four lakh acres in the current Adilabad district alone. Agriculture scientists and extension officers are advising cotton farmers on how to deal with the pink bollworm.

Rythu Swarajya Vedika district president Sangepu Boranna said pink bollworm has also been found in Gotkuri village in Tamsi mandal and Dhanora village in Indravelli mandal. He said agriculture department should supply "Linga Akarshana Buttal", so that farmers can set them up in their fields, trap and kill the bollworm.

■ **PINK BOLLWORM** has been attacking and damaging the standing cotton crop since the last three years. It has caused considerable losses to farmers owing to decrease in their yield. The pink bollworm is also spreading to other crops. It has attacked cotton crop in Tamsi, Talamadugu, Bela and Jainad mandals in Adilabad.



Health workers visit Dummugudem in Bhadradi district and counsel people to take precautionary measures to protect themselves for getting the Coronavirus. — DECCAN CHRONICLE

## Telemedicine a blessing in the times of Covid-19

Though still in its nascent stage 30% patients opted for it

A. RAVINDRA SESHU | DC KHAMMAM, AUG. 16

There has to be a thorough relook into the health services being offered in Telangana in the testing and turbulent Covid-19 times.

It is very difficult to identify Covid-19 patients merely based on the symptoms. The government hospitals, which are overburdened with Covid-19 cases, are unable to attend to patients suffering from other diseases.

Although the government began the telemedicine scheme, the system is not going well with people. However, in the given precarious situation, many persons suffering from fever and cold are opting for telemedicine technology, which is still in its nascent stage in the state.

Thirty percent of patients suffering from fever and cold have chosen telemedicine and get medicines on the advice of their respective family doctor.

● **TELEMEDICINE** eliminates any chances of transmitting infections and viruses from a patient to the healthcare professional. Telemedicine saves time and offers time-efficient solutions. It is a cost-effective solution and saves one from getting fleeced by corporate hospitals.

Sarita's case, (name changed), best illustrates the importance of telemedicine in the Covid-19 era. She says "My husband, brother-in-law and mother-in-law suffered from fever and cold. We were worried as I have a 11-month-old son in the house. We approached our family doctor Chandrasekhar and explained the condition.

The doctor sent medicines and asked us to administer them. He called every six hours and enquired about the fever. I

too administered medicines. When my husband asked him to conduct Covid-19 tests, the doctor did not allow us and told us that knowing whether we have Covid-19 or not is not important but recovery from the existing illness was crucial. All our family members recovered from the fever".

There are thousands of such Saritas', who are satisfied with the telemedicine system.

Dr DSL Anand said that telemedicine is the best way now to treat patients. Neither the patient nor the doctor will be free after coming to the hospital. "I administered more than 100 patients with Covid-19 symptoms using telemedicine", he said.

The condition in many towns in Khammam and Bhadradi districts is vulnerable. The government is not conducting tests on whoever comes to the hospital. Many private hospitals are not giving treatment to patients with fever as they suspect virus

infection.

It is very difficult for everyone to go to corporate hospitals as they are exploiting the situation. In this backdrop, many are calling family doctors and getting treatment over the phone.

Dr Chandrakanth said, "Telemedicine eliminates any chances of transmitting infections and viruses from a patient to the healthcare professional. Telemedicine saves time and offers time-efficient solutions. It is a cost-effective solution and saves one from getting fleeced by corporate hospitals. The government should consider expanding the system in Telangana."

The most important aspect of telemedicine is its ability to cater to the needs of the patients from any place at any given time. It is time to develop the system in Telangana. It is not only highly beneficial for occupational medicine but also helps formulate an efficient and reliable healthcare plan.

## COVID SAMPLE COLLECTION HIT DUE TO RAINS

DC CORRESPONDENT KHAMMAM, AUG. 16

People suspected to have contracted or have slight symptoms of the Coronavirus are not visiting the hospitals in the district due to rains. As a result the number of cases have also reduced.

Before the rains hit the district, officials would collect more than 300 samples on a daily basis. This number has now dropped to below 150 for the last four days.

On Sunday of the 119 samples collected only 35 tested positive for Covid-19 in the district.

147 persons were discharged from Covid-19 isolation centre in Khammam on Sunday.

There are 119 Covid-19 patients in the isolation centre in the main hospital and the Maddulapalli centre.

■ **BEFORE THE rains** hit the district, officials would collect more than 300 samples daily.

## Pvt hosps offer home-based care for ₹10K in Nizamabad

NARENDER PULLOOR | DC NIZAMABAD, AUG. 16

Certain private hospitals in Nizamabad district have started offering telemedicine to Covid-19 patients having mild-to-moderate systems, so that they can avail treatment while quarantining themselves at their homes.

Specialist doctors are available on call while nursing staff of the hospital enquire about vital parameters of the patient on a regular basis.

This development has come about after districts of Nizamabad and Kamareddy started reporting Coronavirus positive cases in double digits on a daily basis since the last one month.

The private hospitals are charging fee varying from ₹7,000 to ₹10,000 for a 14-day home-based treatment package.

The hospital provides two ply surgical masks, one box of gloves, pulse oximeter, and a thermometer. During home treatment, if the patient develops complications, s/he will be shifted to the designated Covid-19 hospital.

There are many patients who are availing such treatment without disclosing their status for fear of being ostracised.

Speaking to Deccan Chronicle, Yousuf Ali (name changed), a busi-

## PERSONALISED TREATMENT

The hospital provides two ply surgical masks, one box of gloves, pulse oximeter, and a thermometer. During home treatment, if the patient develops complications, s/he will be shifted to the designated Covid-19 hospital. Many patients availing such treatment.



## Private hospitals' contact

**Balveer Hospital,**  
Opp. Bus Stand  
92904 14000  
**Sri Vishnu Hospital,**  
Khaleelwadi 63052  
60921, 95732 32778

**Sai Ashwini Hospital,**  
Khaleelwadi 91213  
08856, 98488 22657  
**Gayatri Hospital,**  
Dwarakanagar 87123  
01111, 98489 91911

nessman, said he was cured of his Covid-19 through telemedicine. "I had mild symptoms and approached a doctor over phone. He provided me treatment through telemedicine", he explained, pointing out that those who can afford can take this treatment.

Meanwhile, the Medical and Health Department has accorded permission to four private hospitals in

Nizamabad for treating Covid-19 cases. These are in addition to the Government General Hospital in Nizamabad and area hospitals in Nizamabad and Kamareddy districts that are providing treatment to Coronavirus patients. Medical authorities are also organising Rapid Antigen Tests to identify persons suffering from Covid-19.



Warangal Urban district collector Rajeev Gandhi Hanumanthu speaks to officials at the new PMSSY Hospital in Warangal. — DECCAN CHRONICLE

## Lack of staff, facilities affect Covid services at MGM

ANUDEEP CEREMILLA | DC WARANGAL, AUG. 16

Treatment of Coronavirus patients has been severely affected at the MGM Hospital here due to lack of sufficient staff, facilities and no regular chief appointed to the institution ever since hospital superintendent Dr. B. Srinivas Rao resigned from his post.

Health minister Etala Rajendar, during his visit of Warangal two weeks ago, had assured that the post will be filled on a priority basis. But nothing of that sort has happened as yet. It is said none experienced enough is willing to take up the post given the challenges and responsibilities that come along with it, particularly during these tough Covid-19 times.

Dr. Nagarjuna Reddy, head of the Anaesthesia

■ **NONE EXPERIENCED** enough is willing to take up the post given the challenges and responsibilities that come along with it, particularly during these tough Covid-19 times. Dr. Nagarjuna Reddy, head of the anaesthesia department, is continuing as in-charge superintendent of the hospital.

Department, is continuing as in-charge superintendent of the hospital. The government is yet to take a call on confirming him in the post or appointing someone else.

Steering the hospital has turned out to be a tough job as several of its doctors and staff have contracted Coronavirus and are undergoing treatment. This has put a heavy bur-

den on other staff members on duty. As a result, efficient treatment has become a casualty.

Warangal Urban district collector Rajeev Gandhi Hanumanthu asserted that relevant measures are being taken up to deal with the situation. He said the fever and old surgical wards at MGM can hold 150 beds for Covid-19 patients and asked authorities to make arrangements in this regard.

Meanwhile, the 120-bed PMSSY Hospital being built on the Kakatiya Medical College campus is not yet ready for treating Coronavirus patients. "The hospital will be ready soon to take care of patients."

"Arrangements are underway to establish oxygen and ventilator facilities. We are making foolproof arrangements to avoid any problems in future," he added.



District collector K. Shashanka holds a review meeting with doctors of the Covid-19 ward in his chamber in the collectorate in Karimnagar district. — DC

## Karimnagar, Sircilla tone up measures to deal with Covid

PULI SHARAT KUMAR | DC KARIMNAGAR/SIRCILLA, AUG. 16

Administrations of Karimnagar and Rajanna Sircilla districts are taking initiatives to tone up measures for dealing with the increasing number of Coronavirus positive cases in these districts.

A special Covid-19 ward has been established at the main government hospital in Karimnagar district, where the number of beds available has been increased from 100 to 180. Oxygen facilities are available at all these beds. An ICU has been created with 25 beds. An additional 25 beds have ventilators facilities. There are also 26 special rooms with bypass machines for providing emergency medical services to Covid-19 patients.

To take care of additional patients, the state government has approved proposals of district administration for 15 more medical staff for the Covid-19 wards. 11 of them have already joined and are discharging their duties since August 10. Presently, there are four physicians, two pulmonologists, three anaesthetists, six nurses and nine patient care staff, apart from 12 sanitation workers, working in three



Government hospital in Karimnagar district. — DC

■ **A SPECIAL Covid-19 ward** has been established at the main government hospital in Karimnagar district, where the number of beds available has been increased from 100 to 180. Oxygen facilities are available at all these beds.

shifts at the Coronavirus wards.

But with the increasing trend of Covid-19 cases, district collector K. Shashanka has appointed two more physicians, one pulmonologist and two TB doctors. There is still a requirement of 32 staff nurses, one microbiologist, four pharmacists, eight lab technicians, and three oxygen supply technicians at district's main government hospital. Proposals in this regard have been sent to the government.

Administration of Raja-

nna Sircilla district too is taking similar measures at the government hospital. During his visit of the hospital, IT minister K. T. Rama Rao had appreciated doctors and staff for ensuring recovery of an 80-year-old Coronavirus positive woman.

With over 300 positive cases reported in the temple town of Vemulawada, district medical and health officer Dr. Suman Mohan Rao said a special isolation centre has been established at the Laxmiganapathi Complex with 60 beds.

Officials from health, police, revenue and municipal departments will be on duty at this centre to take care of patients and discharge them on recovery. The centre is especially for those patients who cannot be placed under home isolation, as their residences do not have a separate toilet facility for them. Dr. Suman Mohan Rao said.



Satavahana Lions Club members and corporator Bhooma Goud distribute face guards and mask in Karimnagar on Sunday.



## OTHER STORIES

CROPS IN  
10,000 ACRES  
BADLY AFFECTED

FROM PAGE 1

The fury has been such that flood water entered double bedroom houses at Gangulu.

Kinnerasani reservoir is receiving 28,000 cusecs of flood water which is being released downstream. When a breach developed at a bridge on Kinnerasani at Rangapuram in Paloncha mandal, officials filled it up with sand and soil.

Road connectivity between Charla and Venkatapuram and Bhadrachalam was cut off because water from rivulets flowed onto the roads.

The road between Nellipaka in Andhra Pradesh and Bhadrachalam was cut off as backwater from Godavari is all over the roads. All the streams in Charla, Dummugudem, Burgumpahad, Manuguru, Aswapuram, Pinapaka, Tekulapalli, Allapalli and Gundala have been overflowing. Edullabayyaram and four of its hamlets are surrounded by flood water.

Also badly hit are farmers as 10,000 acres in various mandals of Bhadradi district have stagnated and paddy farmers are worried that their crops could be gutted.

Transport minister Puvvada Ajay reviewed the flood situation and asked the officials to monitor the situation round the clock.

The six barrages that were built as part of the Kaleshwaram lift irrigation project are full. Road connectivity to 40 habitations in Gundala and Allapalli mandas was cut off as 14 streams are overflowing.

IRRIGATION  
PROJECTS IN  
ADILABAD HITDC CORRESPONDENT  
ADILABAD, AUG. 16

Irrigation projects have gone haywire with streams and rivulets overflowing with floodwater following heavy rains that lashed various parts of old Adilabad district on Sunday.

District collector Sandeep Kumar Jha inspected Bokkivagu mattadi in Penchikalpet mandal and visited the place where farmers and agriculture labourers were stranded in the flood water at Kumarambheem Asifabad district. He appealed to the people not to venture into tanks and projects for fishing since heavy rains are forecast again. He asked them to contact the toll-free number 08733-279333.

He visited low-lying areas in Penchikalpet and Bejjur mandals. Three youth of Kautaguda village who went fishing in Belgam rivulet in Asifabad and were stranded have been rescued. Meanwhile, Kumarambheem and Kadam projects have received heavy inflows.

Minister Allola Indrakaran Reddy held a review meeting with officials and took stock of the flood situation and asked the officials to be ready to deal with any eventuality.

Mudhole MLA Vittal Reddy and Nirmal collector Musharaff Farooqui visited Gundegam village in Bhainsa mandal and cautioned the villagers and officials about inundation in the floodwaters of Rangarao Palsikar, which has already impacted transportation between Bhainsa and Mahagam.

Additional collector of Mancherial, Ela Tripathi, visited Peddampet tank in Dandepalli mandal, alerted the locals and assured help. Swarna project in Nirmal district has received heavy inflows from rain-hit Maharashtra. Adilabad district collector Sikta Patnaik appealed to the people in low-lying areas to be safe and directed officials to deal with any eventuality.



From left: NDRF teams rescue residents from a flooded colony in Hunter road. A drainage being cleared at Nayeemnagar on Sunday.



— DECCAN CHRONICLE

Failed drainage system  
led to Warangal floods

A similar situation was faced four years ago

ANUDEEP  
CEREMILLA | DC  
WARANGAL, AUG. 16

Incessant rain for the past week has thrown normal life out of gear in Warangal. The existing drainage system has failed completely, inundating several colonies, rendering the residents homeless. Over 3,500 people have been rescued from their colonies and shelter has been provided in various function halls and government schools across the city.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Warangal Urban district president Rao Padma criticised the TRS government for not taking enough measures to avoid floods despite prior experiences.

She said, "The TRS government made tall claims about turning Warangal into a smart city, but today, the city does not even have the basic underground drainage system. During elections several such promises were made by him but none of them have been fulfilled as it is evident today."

The BJP president also alleged that the master plan of the city is being delayed for the past six years at the behest of the local TRS leaders. "It appears that the state is going to implement the master plan after as much land is grabbed by the TRS leaders," she said.

A similar situation was faced four years ago, when several parts of the city got inundated. Encroachment of nalas was blamed and the Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation (GWMC) vowed to raise an iron fist against illegal constructions on nalas. However, no such measures were taken.

"Previously, when the city was inundated in the flood, only temporary arrangements were made for name sake. The result can be seen clearly today. The encroachments and illegal structures have not been dealt with because of the backing of local politicians," district congress committee president Naini Rajender Reddy alleged.

Mr Reddy urged the GWMC to take up measures at least now on a permanent basis so that the Warangal and its people are not put into a difficult situation again.



An elderly woman is carried to safety by a NDRF member on Sunday.

— DC

Narsampet gets highest rainfall,  
over 350 tanks overflowingDC CORRESPONDENT  
WARANGAL, AUG. 16

Narsampet experienced the highest rainfall in the state and major lakes like the Pakhal, Rangaiya, Madannapet and another 350 tanks in the constituency are currently overflowing.

Local MLA Peddi Sudharshan Reddy said that the constituency experienced 70cm of rainfall during the week. He noted that such a large amount of rainfall was not experienced in the past 30 years.

"According to records, the Pakhal Lake breached its capacity in 1983 at a height of 4.5 feet. On the present day, it is overflowing from a height of about six feet," he informed.

The Rangaya Lake is receiving good inflows from the forest areas. To avoid danger to the nearby villages and crops, a canal has been created overnight to divert the water.

Mr Reddy said that the sluice gates of Pakhal Lake need to be rebuilt and the approval from the state government to rebuild the canals has been obtained.

However, the survey could not be conducted because of the rains. Plans are underway to

## ROADS IN MULUGU BLOCKED

DC CORRESPONDENT  
WARANGAL, AUG. 16

Due to the heavy rains in the district, several roads including the National Highway-163 got blocked on Sunday.

The Katakshapur causeway is engulfed in floodwater making it difficult for small vehicles to cross to the other side.

The bridge near Govindaraopet over Dayyala vaagu has started caving and poses a danger to anyone who tries to cross it.

The Jampanna vagu from Tapamancha has completely engulfed the road and the entire village of Medaram is inundated. The local tank in Kamaram village is overflowing on the Medaram-Tadvai road and presently only heavy vehicles can pass through the road.

take up repairs of canals up to 100km and execute the works using the latest technology by the end of the year.

"Several canals under the Pakhal Lake, Jalu bandam, Thunga bandam, Sangem canal got damaged. We will take up their

● **THE KATAKSHAPUR** causeway is engulfed in floodwater making it difficult for small vehicles to cross to the other side.

● **THE BRIDGE** near Govindaraopet over Dayyala vaagu is caving in and poses a danger to anyone who tries to cross it.

Jeedi vaagu in Eturnagaram mandal is in spate and the road from Eturnagaram to Brahmanapally is blocked. Several bridges between Venkatapuram and Bhadrachalam at Pathrapuram over Ballakattavagu, Veerabadraram over Kukkathogu vagu, Kondapuram over Jinnala vagu are blocked.

repairs as soon as the rains stop. Several agriculture canals got damaged under the Rangaya cheruvu and Madannapet cheruvu. The state has incurred a loss of ₹1 crore so far because of the overflowing of the Pakhal Lake," he said.

Munner river flows at  
23.06 feet in KhammamA. RAVINDRA  
SESHU | DC  
KHAMMAM, AUG. 16

Incessant rains for the last five days have paralysed life of people in Khammam district. The water level flowing in Munner River has reached 23.06 feet against its peak level of 26 feet.

Colonies in Pedathanda, Sainagar, Bokkalagadda and Venkateswaranagar have got submerged due to flood waters. Localities like Raparthinagar and NGO Colony are in rain water. Munner water has entered into houses at Danaivaigudem colony in 49th division. Residents of Bokkalagadda have been shifted to a flood relief centre opened at Government Women's Degree College. Another relief centre has been set up in Nayabazar College. Many streets in Khammam are wearing a desert look due to the incessant rains.

Khammam Municipal Corporation commissioner Anurag Jayanthi has been supervising the situation and overseeing oper-



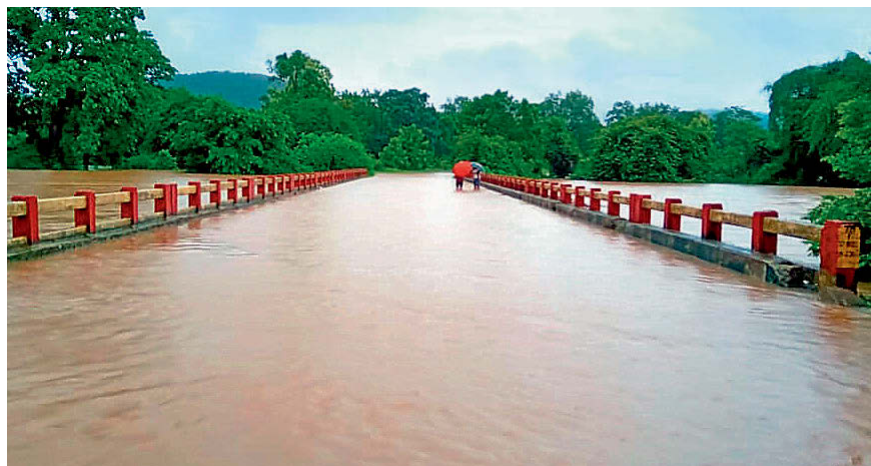
Rainwater inundates a colony in Kamepalli in Khammam district on Sunday.

ations. A control room has been set up in Khammam to monitor floods in Munner River.

Traffic over the old bridge on Munner, built during the British times, has been stopped as a precautionary measure. Vehicular movement has been interrupted between Naidupet and Kalavaoddu Centre in Khammam.

Streams in Karepalli, Wyra, Chintakani, Kongerla, Nelakondapalli, Madhira and Errupalem are overflowing. Rains have wreaked havoc in Kamepalli mandal. Crops like cotton, chilli and

— DECCAN CHRONICLE



Munner river overflows in Khammam on Sunday.

— Deccan Chronicle

Thousands shifted  
to safer groundsDC CORRESPONDENT  
WARANGAL, AUG. 16

Relief operations to rescue residents from the low lying villages and those along the banks of the River Godavari are in full swing, said Mulugu district collector S. Krishna Aditya on Sunday.

With the heavy rains and the River Godavari in spate, the district administration has already shifted nearly 2,000 people living in low-lying tribal hamlets to rehabilitation centres overnight.

As a precautionary measure, authorities have shifted as many as 456 residents of Bestawada, SC Colony, Ramannagudem, Kothur and Buttayigudem to several ashrams and other government schools.

Likewise, 600 residents of Akinapally, Podur, Kamalapur, Vadagudem, Kathigudem, Ramanakkapet, Guddegulapally and Bor Narsapur of Mangapet mandal have been accommodated in the local Zilla Parishad High School, community hall

and BILT factory in Kamalapur. The authorities also arranged shelter for the residents of several villages under Wajedu mandal.

"Buffer ration stock has been procured from the public distribution system to ensure food supply for the evacuees. Sanitation at each rehabilitation shelter will be looked after by a MPO. We transported the evacuees in RTC buses and auto-rickshaws. Two speed boats have been brought from Hyderabad and are being used at Kondai and Eturnagaram. We have also engaged expert swimmers besides procuring life jackets," the collector said.

Eturnagaram ITDA Project Officer Hanumant Kondiba Zendage and District Revenue Officer (DRO) K. Rama Devi monitored the relief operations.

A control room is working from Eturnagaram and people can contact it on 94937 50071 and 08717 231246.

IMD ISSUES RED  
ALERT FOR HEAVY  
RAINS IN TST.S.S. SIDDHARTH | DC  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 16

A red alert was issued for the city, owing to incessant rainfall that has been lashing it for two days.

The warning, issued by the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), said that heavy to very heavy rainfall is expected to lash isolated parts of the state, including Hyderabad, Ranga Reddy and Medchal Malkajgiri and the districts of Adilabad, Kumarambheem, Nizamabad, Kamareddy, Jagtial, Rajanna Sircilla, Siddipet, Jayashankar-Bhupalpally, Mulugu, Warangal Urban and Rural, Karimnagar, Peddapalli and Mancherial.

Over the last 24 hours, the highest rainfall in the city was recorded at the Sadarmahal GHMC office at 59.8 mm.

Heavy rain was also recorded at Asifnagar, Malakpet, Golkonda, Red Hills, Shaikpet and Jubilee Hills. Statewide, Alubaka, in Venkatapuram, received 224.5 mm, the highest.

The rains, officials said was due to a well-marked low-pressure zone. For the capital city the rains were most likely to be subdued from Monday onwards, and the sun would break through the clouds in the afternoon, IMD-Hyderabad director Dr K. Nagaratna said.

## Construct embankment to save villages: MLA

DC CORRESPONDENT  
WARANGAL, AUG. 16

There is a need to construct an embankment along the shores of the river Godavari in Mulugu district to save several villages from inundation, said Mulugu MLA Danasari Anasuya alias Seethakka.

The river Godavari passes through the Mulugu district through a stretch of about 100 km from Devadula to Akkinapally Mallaram.

"Several streams in the district are in spate and pass through villages to join the river Godavari. As a result, the villages are in danger of inundation. This situation can be addressed by constructing an embankment along the shore. I have raised the issue in the

assembly several times, and the file regarding the construction of the embankment is now pending with the Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao. I request him to clear the file at the earliest so that measures can be taken for the safety of these villages," she said.

The Congress MLA has been taking part in the rescue operations ongoing in the district to shift people in low lying areas to safe locations along with the district collector S. Krishna Aditya since late on Saturday night.

Ms Seethakka also asked the villagers of Mangapet and Eturnagaram to be alert as more water flow is expected in the river as water has been released from Kaleshwaram.



MLA Seethakka inspects a flooded area in Mulugu district on Sunday.

— DC



Rescued villagers take shelter in a school in Mangapet



SHORT TAKES

PAWAR FAMILY HOLDS MEET TO PACIFY PARTH

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC  
MUMBAI, AUG. 16

As Pawar family is trying to pacify disgruntled Parth Pawar, son of Deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar, the Opposition BJP took advantage of the situation and termed Parth, a mature leader. According to reports, a meeting was held in Baramati at Shrinivas Pawar's bungalow to speak to Parth regarding Sharad Pawar's public reprimand. Few days ago, NCP chief Sharad Pawar had openly called Parth 'immature' and said that he gives absolutely no importance to his grand-nephew's demand for a CBI probe in Sushant Singh Rajput's death case.

The meeting in Baramati was attended by father Ajit Pawar, mother Sunetra Pawar, Uncle Shrinivas Pawar and Aunt Sharmila Pawar on Saturday night.

On August 13, Parth had gone to meet NCP chief Sharad Pawar at the latter's residence Silver Oak in South Mumbai. However, he could not meet the NCP chief but had over two-hour long discussion with paternal aunt Supriya Sule.

According to the media reports, Sharad Pawar was scheduled to go to Baramati on Sunday but cancelled the visit after a telephonic conversation with Ajit Pawar, who was in Baramati, and returned back to Mumbai from Pune.

Meanwhile, BJP leader and Rajya Sabha member Narayan Rane said, "Parth is above 18 years and is mature enough. There must be a reason why he demanded a CBI probe in Rajput's death case."

PVT OPERATORS FREE TO CHOOSE HALT STATIONS

New Delhi, Aug. 16: Private operators who will be handed over 150 trains to ply on 109 routes by the Railways will have the freedom to choose halt stations of the trains they operate, documents released by the national transporter have shown.

However, the private operators have to submit in advance to the Railways the list of such intermediate stations on the trains' paths where they are proposing halts.

The private operators also have to provide the time in and time out at the intermediate railway stations, which shall form part of the train operation plan. This has to be submitted in advance and will be in place for at least a year, after which it can be revised, a draft of the Concession Agreement has said. "The Concessionaire shall have the flexibility in deciding the stops/ halts in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Concession Agreement," the Railways has said in reply to a query by one of the private players who attended the pre-application meetings.

The Railways has also said the number of such halts of the private trains will not be more than the number of existing halts of the fastest train of the Railways operating in that route.

KAFEEL KHAN'S DETENTION EXTENDED

Lucknow, Aug. 16: The Uttar Pradesh government has extended by three months the detention of physician Kafeel Khan under the National Security Act for his alleged provocative speech during the anti-Citizenship Amendment Act protests.

Khan was arrested in January for delivering the speech at Aligarh Muslim University on December 10, 2019. It is the second time his detention under the stringent law has been extended by another three months, this time beyond August 13.

Under the National Security Act (NSA), people can be detained without a charge for up to 12 months if authorities are satisfied that they are threat to the national security or law and order.

In an order dated August 4, 2020, the UP Home Department said the NSA was invoked against Khan on February 13, 2020, on the orders of the Aligarh District Magistrate. "The matter was then sent to the advisory council, which in its report, said there are 'enough reasons' to keep Khan in jail following which orders were given on May 6, 2020, to extend his detention under the NSA by three months, that is till August 13, 2020," the order said.

New normal



Devotees stand in a queue outside Mata Vaishno Devi cave in Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday. The shrine along with other religious places across the Union Territory reopened for devotees on Sunday after remaining closed for almost five months due to the Covid-19 outbreak. — PTI

Raj Bhavan under surveillance of Mamata, alleges Dhankhar

He also claimed that Maoism is now returning with support of state actors

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC  
KOLKATA, AUG. 16

West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar on Sunday alleged that Raj Bhavan is under the surveillance of the Mamata Banerjee government. He also observed the return of Maoism in the state.

"The Raj Bhavan is under surveillance. This should not happen. It undermines the sanctity of the Raj Bhavan. I will do everything to protect its sanctity. How can an office of the Constitution be under surveillance? I will take legal steps once our inquiry is over. Public servants should not get into political mode."

Nobody is above the law," the Governor told the media at an event to mark former prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's second death anniversary in Raj Bhavan.

Dhankhar claimed, "Important documents, which should not go out of Raj Bhavan without my sanction, are getting leaked outside. Documents are procured. I have initiated a very serious probe into it. Those, who have done this, have to pay a heavy price. On 14 August, a document was electronically shared using an app from here. That document came back to me from the highest authority of the govern-

ment."

Dhankhar noted, "The dangerous ado of Maoism is now getting visible with the support of state actors. West Bengal needs peace, tranquility and law and order."

His latest salvo came hours after he expressed his strong displeasure over the Chief Minister's absence at the 'at home' function at Raj Bhavan on Saturday.

Dhankhar tweeted, "Absence of CM and officials @MamataOfficial on occasion of Independence Day celebration at Raj Bhavan has like many startled and stunned me. We need to rise to occasion as respect to freedom fighters who gave their all to secure for us freedom and democracy. I am at loss of words (sic)."

Sharing a picture of the empty chair, he said, "The vacant seat meant for CM @MamataOfficial at celebration of Independence Day at Raj Bhavan speaks volumes — has created unwholesome situation that is not in sync with rich culture and ethos of WB. There is just no rationale for this unbecoming stance. CM and executive @MamataOfficial set bad precedent by not attending. Another painful instance of distancing from Constitution (sic)."

On Saturday morning, Mamata Banerjee visited Raj Bhavan and greeted Jagdeep Dhankhar on the occasion of the Independence Day in what appeared to be a "cordial meeting" after hoisting the National Flag on Red Road.

Bengaluru riots take caste turn

DC CORRESPONDENT  
BENGALURU, AUG. 16

The Bengaluru riots, during which the house of Pulikeshinagar MLA Akhanda Srinivas Murthy was burnt down and two police stations were attacked, has taken caste turn, with the BJP trying to portray the riots as an attack on a Dalit.

Sensing danger, the Congress quickly distanced itself from the SDPI (Social Democratic Party of India) and alleged that the violence was instigated by BJP activists to put the blame on the Congress.

While the Congress despatched a fact-finding committee headed by former deputy chief minister Dr G. Parameshwar, who himself is a Dalit, the BJP has constituted another fact-finding committee headed by former minister Aravind Limbavali, who belongs to the Bovi community from which Srinivas Murthy hails. BJP leaders B.L. Santhosh, Deputy Chief Minister Ashwathnarayana, ministers C.T. Ravi, B.C. Patil and others came down heavily on Congress for supporting the minority community blindly, who were attacking Dalits in the state.

KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar shot back saying that the BJP was the one which was following anti-Dalit policies.

On Saturday evening, former minister B.Z. Zameer Ahamed Khan led a group of Muslim clerics to the house of Srinivas Murthy to send a message that it was not a fight between Muslims and Dalits at Kadugondanahalli and Devara-

Jeevana Halli, where the riots took place. The clerics said they were ready to reconstruct the house of the MLA from community funds, if he agreed.

However, Zameer Ahamed Khan's earlier action had drawn flak from some of Congress leaders. Zameer had visited the houses of the three persons killed in police firing and distributed ₹5 lakh each. He had also said that the violence was instigated by miscreants, while all those killed were "innocent". The BJP was quick to seize on the issue and pointed out that Zameer and the Congress had links with the attackers but were calling them innocent. Some of the Congress leaders requested Siddaramaiah to advise Zameer not to identify himself with the attackers, as it would substantiate the BJP's claim that it was a fight between Muslims and Dalits.

Meanwhile, the special team investigating the riots has approached the cybercrime police for digital analysis of the crime scene. So far, the police has 8,000 telephone numbers, with an equal number of WhatsApp accounts, to be analysed. Besides, police has obtained thousands of Instagram and Facebook accounts as well as calls made using Facebook Messenger during the riots. The police is also analysing CCTV footage of over 800 cameras for further clues.

Guj: BSF nabs Pak fisherman

Bhuj (Guj), Aug. 16: Four Pakistani boats were seized by the Border Security Force on Sunday from 'Harami Nallah' creek along the India-Pakistan border in Gujarat's Kutch district, the force said.

A Pakistani fisherman, identified as Alla Bachao Siddique (25), from Sindh province of Pakistan was apprehended, while others managed to escape, it said.

A patrolling team of the BSF's Bhuj unit observed movement of four to five Pakistani men on boats near the 'Harami Nallah', in Kutch region, at around 6 am, it said. "The Pakistani fishermen were attempting to enter into Indian territory by taking the advantage of rough sea state. The alert patrol party of Border Security Force (BSF) intercepted the Pakistani intruders

the moment they tried to enter into Indian territory, while the intruders also saw the BSF patrol party and jumped into the water," the BSF said in a statement.

"The BSF patrol team chased them and apprehended one Pakistani fisherman and seized four fishing boats. Rest of the fishermen managed to escape into Pakistani territory by taking advantage of slushy and marshy terrain of the area," it said.

All four seized boats were searched and nothing suspicious was recovered from them, the border guarding force said.

In view of the incident, the BSF launched a thorough search operation of the area which was underway in the evening as well, and nothing suspicious was recovered thus far, it added. — PTI

GPR TO BE USED TO LOCATE BODIES IN IDUKKI

Idukki (Kerala), Aug. 16: Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) will be used to locate bodies buried in the landslide at Pettimudi in the district, where the death toll has risen to 58 with the recovery of three more bodies, a senior official said here on Sunday. The GPR would assist the NDRF, police, fire force personnel and locals, who have been engaged in search and rescue operations for the last nine days, District Collector H. Dineshan said.

"We have requested for a GPR from Chennai. We hope it will reach here by Tuesday. Currently 12 people are missing," he said. A massive mound of earth and slush, triggered by heavy rains, flattened a row of 20 one-room row houses made of tin and asbestos sheets, at Pettimudi in Rajamala on August 7. — PTI

Over 1L Covid cases recorded every two days

SANJAY KAW | DC  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 16

Coronavirus cases in India continue to race ahead, with over one lakh new infections being added every two days in the world's third-worst affected country. The country reported 63,489 fresh cases in the past 24 hours, taking the total tally to nearly 26.34 lakhs. Given the daily rise of nearly 1,000 deaths, India on Sunday surpassed the grim 50,000-mark in the total number of fatalities due to the deadly virus.

The country has also been reporting over 60,000 Coronavirus cases daily since August 7, barring August 11, when it registered 53,601 cases. India is the third worst-affected nation due to the pandemic after the United States and Brazil. It has been reporting a higher daily surge in cases for the past 12 days, according to World Health Organisation data.

In India, Mizoram is reportedly the only state with fewer than 1,000 cases, besides Lakshadweep, which continues to be Coronavirus-free, with no cases having been detected in the islands so far.

With 945 deaths reported in the last 24 hours, the total fatalities due to the virus in India have gone up to 51,025. The country's Coronavirus fatality rate has, however, dropped to 1.93 per cent, one of the lowest globally. The United States crossed 50,000 deaths in 23 days, Brazil in 95 days and Mexico in 141 days. India took 156 days to reach this figure.

The government said the mortality rate is low in India "because of aggressive testing and early detection coupled with quick isolation and effective treatment protocols". India's case fatality rate (CFR) is on a "continuous positive slide" and stands now at 1.94 per cent. The CFR is the proportion of incident patients dying because of a disease or injury in a certain time window.

India's recovery rate is now 71.91 per cent after 18.91 lakh people were discharged across the country. Of these, over 53,000 patients were discharged in the past 24 hours.

The country saw a record of highest single-day recoveries on Saturday, after 57,381 Covid-19 patients were cured. To further build on this achievement, 32

MONSOON SESSION TO SEE COVID-PROOF MEASURES

New Delhi, Aug. 16: Hectic preparations are underway for the Monsoon Session of Parliament with several first-time measures in view of the Covid-19 pandemic such as staggered sitting of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha and use of both chambers and galleries to accommodate members while following physical distancing norms, officials said.

The Monsoon Session is likely to begin in the last week of August or early September. According to the Rajya Sabha Secretariat, members of the Upper House will be seated in both chambers and galleries during the session.

This is the first time in the history of Indian Parliament since 1952 that such an arrangement will be in place, where 60 members will be seated in the chamber and 51 in the galleries of Rajya Sabha and the remaining 132 in the chamber of Lok Sabha. Similar seating arrangements are being worked out by the Lok Sabha Secretariat as well.

For the first time, large display screens and consoles for participation from galleries, ultraviolet germicidal irradiation, special cables between the two Houses and polycarbonate separators will be in place.

Rajya Sabha Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla at a meeting on July 17, after detailed examination of various options for holding the session, decided on using the chambers and galleries of both the Houses. — PTI

states and Union territories have exceeded the 50 per cent mark. About a dozen states or UTs have exceeded the national recovery rate. The gap between the recovered patients and active Covid-19 cases has increased further and crossed 11 lakhs, at 1,184,814 on Sunday.

The improvement in the recovery rate of Coronavirus patients is mainly being attributed to the continuous strengthening of the testing network in the country.

RAJNATH SINGH APPROVES PLAN OF NCC FOR MAJOR EXPANSION SCHEME

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 16

Defence minister Rajnath Singh has approved a proposal of the National Cadet Corps (NCC) for a major expansion scheme to meet the aspirations of youth in all the border and coastal districts.

As per the plan a total of one lakh cadets from 173 border and coastal districts will be inducted in the NCC. One-third of the cadets would be girl cadets. More than 1,000 schools and colleges have been identified in border and coastal districts where NCC will be introduced.

The proposals of the

scheme were announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his Independence Day address on Saturday. As part of the expansion plan, a total of 83 NCC units will be upgraded (Army 53, Navy 20, Air Force 10), to impart NCC training to the cadets in the border and coastal areas.

Army will provide training and administrative support to the NCC units located in the border areas, Navy shall provide support to NCC units in the coastal areas and similarly Air Force will provide support to the NCC units located close to the Air Force stations.

WOMEN | SAFETY

Move comes amid rise in number of complaints of mental abuse

NCW mulls launch of 24/7 helpline

New Delhi, Aug. 16: The National Commission for Women is planning to launch a 24/7 helpline in view of the rising number of mental harassment complaints since the coronavirus-induced lockdown.

The helpline will be launched in north India first and steadily expanded to the rest of the country, NCW chairperson Rekha Sharma said. The launch date for the helpline hasn't been decided yet, she said. In an interview to PTI, Sharma

said the helpline development project is being carried out in collaboration with the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh.

"The launch date of the helpline has not been finalised yet. It will be launched in north India first and slowly and steadily it will be extended to other parts of the country," she said. The decision comes amid a rise in the number of complaints of emotional and mental abuse received by the com-

mission over the last few months.

According to NCW data, it received 2,320 complaints related to mental harassment and emotional abuse from April, days after the lockdown was imposed in the country, till now.

In contrast, it received 1,550 such complaints between December 2019 and March 2020.

Elaborating on the issue, Sharma said mental tension for women increased during the lockdown. "Both men and women faced mental health prob-

lems during the lockdown. Women were working from home and doing all the (household) work and then they were not able to reach out to their parents even if they were getting mentally harassed. In normal circumstances, they were able to reach out to their family and friends and talk to them but (during lockdown) they were locked inside the house. So yes, mental tension increased during the lockdown," she said.

Sharma said the NCW worked 24/7 during the

lockdown to help women. "During the lockdown, we worked 24/7 because we knew women were not able to reach out to any other agency or their relatives and families," she said.

"We launched a WhatsApp number because we knew women were not able to go to the police station, reach us by post and many women do not even know how to send an email. Since the launch of the WhatsApp number, the number of complaints has increased manifold," she said. — PTI



## SHORT TAKES

PRO-DEMOCRACY  
STIR DRAWS BIG  
BANGKOK CROWD

**Bangkok, Aug. 16:** An anti-government protest in Thailand drew more than 10,000 people on Sunday, police said, the largest political demonstration the kingdom has seen in years as a pro-democracy movement gathers steam.

Student-led groups have held near-daily protests across the country for the past month to denounce Premier Prayut Chan-O-Cha — a former army chief who led a 2014 coup — and his military-aligned administration.

By Sunday evening the protesters — who are demanding major democratic reforms — had taken over the busy intersection around Bangkok's Democracy Monument, which was built to mark the 1932 revolution that ended royal absolutism.

Police closed off surrounding main roads to stop incoming traffic, and an official at Bangkok's Metropolitan Police Bureau said the crowd size had grown to 10,000 by 6 pm (1100 GMT). "Down with the dictatorship," the students chanted, many holding signs critical of the administration. Others held pigeon-shaped cutouts representing peace.

The gathering at Democracy Monument is the largest the kingdom has seen since Prayut staged a putsch in 2014.

Partly inspired by the Hong Kong democracy movement, the protesters claim to be leaderless and have relied mostly on social media campaigns to draw support across the country.

S. KOREA ACCUSES  
PASTOR AS COVID  
CASES SURGE

**Seoul, Aug.16:** South Korea accused a conservative pastor on Sunday of violating self-isolation rules and obstructing contact tracing at a church where 240 infections have fuelled the country's worst outbreak in over five months. The focus on the Sarang Jeil Church, led by Rev. Jun Kwang-hoon, revived bad memories of the country's biggest outbreak, among followers of a secretive Christian sect back in February.

South Korea on Sunday reported 279 new cases, more than double the 103 reported on Friday, with most of the new infections found in and around Seoul.

Aside from the infections linked to the church, there were also smaller clusters, including some 30 cases linked to a Starbucks outlet in the city of Paju, north of Seoul.

The surge in Covid-19 cases prompted authorities on Sunday to reimpose tighter social distancing curbs in the Seoul metropolitan area.

The health ministry said it had filed a complaint against Jun, an outspoken government critic, for violating self-isolation rules by participating in a rally on Saturday, and for "obstructing" a medical investigation into the outbreak by failing to provide a full list of church members for testing and tracing.

YALE'S COVID  
SALIVA TEST GETS  
FDA APPROVAL

**New Haven, Connecticut, Aug.16:** The US Food and Drug Administration on Saturday granted emergency use authorization to Yale School of Public Health's saliva test to detect Covid-19, after a trial on National Basketball Association players and staff.

SalivaDirect, the fifth saliva test approved by the FDA for the disease, requires no swab or collection device and uses spit from people suspected of having the coronavirus, the agency said bit.ly/3fZyX30.

FDA Commissioner Stephen Hahn called the test "ground-breaking" in its efficiency and in being unaffected by crucial component shortages.

SalivaDirect is seen as a cheap, simpler and less invasive testing method that requires no extraction of nucleic acid and can use several readily available reagents.

The NBA has used the test in a program involving asymptomatic players, coaches and staff from various teams, after partnering with Yale in June, the school said bit.ly/3iOIYmf in a separate statement.

"We simplified the test so that it only costs a couple of dollars for reagents, and we expect that labs will only charge about \$10 per sample," Nathan Grubaugh, assistant professor at Yale School of Public Health, said.

One of the goals of the research team was to eliminate the need for expensive saliva collection tubes.

## Protests rage in Belarus



A woman takes pictures of anti-Lukashenko posters at the pedestal of a monument during an opposition demonstration in central Minsk on Sunday. The Belarusian strongman, who has ruled his ex-Soviet country with an iron grip since 1994, is under increasing pressure from the streets and abroad over his claim to have won re-election on August 9, with 80 percent of the vote.

— AFP

Telephone service  
starts between  
UAE and Israel

**Dubai, Aug. 16:** Telephone service between the United Arab Emirates and Israel began working on Sunday as the two countries opened diplomatic ties, part of a deal brokered by the US that required Israel to halt its contentious plan to annex West Bank land sought by the Palestinians for a future state.

*Associated Press* journalists in Jerusalem and Dubai were able to call each other from both landline and cellular phones registered to Israel's country code +972 from around 1:15 pm.

Over an hour later, Emirati officials acknowledged that Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan had called his Israeli counterpart Gabi Ashkenazi. Israeli Communications Minister Yoaz Handel issued a statement "congratulating the United Arab Emirates on removing the blocks."

"Many economic opportunities will open now, and these trust-building

● **IN THE UAE,** a federation of seven sheikhdoms on the Arabian Peninsula, a recorded message in Arabic and English would typically play prior to Sunday saying calls to +972 numbers could not be connected.

steps are an important step toward advancing states' interests," Handel said. Also on Sunday, Israeli news websites that had previously been blocked by UAE authorities, like the Times of Israel, the Jerusalem Post and YNet, could be accessed without using means to bypass internet filtering in the Emirates.

In the UAE, a federation of seven sheikhdoms on the Arabian Peninsula, a recorded message in Arabic and English would typically play prior to Sunday saying calls to +972 numbers could not be connected.

The advent of internet calling allowed people to get around the ban, though these too were often interrupted.

— AP

Israel shuts down  
Gaza fishing zone

**Jerusalem, Aug. 16:** Israel closed the Gaza Strip's offshore fishing zone on Sunday following a night of cross-border fighting with Palestinian militants, the most intense escalation of hostilities in recent months.

Palestinian militants in Gaza fired two rockets into southern Israel after Israeli airstrikes targeted sites belonging to the territory's militant Hamas rulers.

The military said the Iron Dome aerial defense system intercepted the two rockets that militants in Gaza launched at southern Israel. But police said rocket fallout caused damage to a house in the town of Sderot, and paramedics treated a 58-

year-old man for minor wounds from the exploding glass.

The Israeli army said the strikes were a response to explosive balloons launched by Hamas-affiliated group over the border, and attempts by Palestinian protesters to throw explosives at the Israel-Gaza perimeter fence and soldiers stationed along it.

Dozens of Palestinians took part in the protests. The military said the protesters "burned tires, hurled explosive devices and grenades towards the security fence and attempted to approach it."

The Gaza health ministry said Israeli gunfire at protesters wounded two Palestinians.

— AP

If elected, will stand with India  
against threats it faces: Biden

Prez candidate to will work on expanding two-way trade between India, US

**Washington, Aug. 16:** Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden asserted that if elected, his administration will stand with India in confronting the threats it faces and called for strengthening the "bond" between India and the US.

Presidential elections in the US will be held on November 3, 2020, and 77-year-old Biden is challenging incumbent Republican President Donald Trump in the polls.

"Fifteen years ago, I was leading the efforts to approve the historic civil nuclear deal with India. I said that if the US and India became closer friends and partners, then the world will be a safer place," Biden, who was vice-president in the Obama administration, said while addressing the Indian American community on India's Independence Day.

If elected president, Biden said that he will continue to stand with India against the threats it faces from its own region and along its borders.

He said that he will work on expanding two-way trade between the two nations and take on big global challenges like climate change and global health security.

If elected, the

**New York, Aug. 16:** Newsweek has apologised for an op-ed that questioned Sen. Kamala Harris' US citizenship and her eligibility to be Joe Biden's running mate, a false and racist conspiracy theory which President Donald Trump has not dismissed.

"This op-ed is being used by some as a tool to perpetuate racism and xenophobia. We apologise," read Newsweek's editor's note on Friday, which replaced the magazine's earlier detailed defense of the op-ed.

"We entirely failed to anticipate the ways in which the essay would be interpreted, distorted and

weaponised," read the apology, signed by Josh Hammer, opinion editor, and Nancy Cooper, global editor in chief.

But they ended the note by saying that the op-ed would remain on the site, with their note attached.

The op-ed was written by John Eastman, a conservative attorney who argues that the US Constitution doesn't grant birthright citizenship. Eastman sowed doubt about Harris' eligibility based on her parents' immigration status. Harris' mother was born in India and her father was born in Jamaica.

Newsweek earlier defended the piece, argu-

ing that Eastman "was focusing on a long-standing, somewhat arcane legal debate" about the 14th Amendment and not trying to "ignite a racist conspiracy theory around Kamala Harris' candidacy."

But the theory is false. Harris, who was tapped by Joe Biden to serve as his running mate on the Democratic ticket, was born in Oakland, California, and is eligible for both the vice-presidency and presidency under the constitutional requirements.

The question is not even considered complex, according to constitutional lawyers.

— AP

Democratic candidate said, he will work to strengthen the democracies where diversity is a mutual strength.

On this day, let us "continue to deepen the bond that endures between our nation's and our people," Biden said.

He said, "As president, I'll also continue to rely on the Indian American

diaspora, that keeps our two nations together, as I have throughout my career".

"My constituents in Delaware, my staff in the Senate, the Obama administration that had more Indian Americans than any other administration in the history of this country and this campaign with Indian

Americans at senior levels, which of course includes the top of the heap, our dear friend (Kamala Harris) who will be the first Indian American vice president in the history of the United States of America," Biden said.

Early this week, Biden scripted history by selecting Harris, 55, as his run-

ning mate in the US presidential election.

Harris, whose father is an African from Jamaica and mother an Indian, is the first-ever woman of colour vice-presidential nominee.

"We all know she's smart, she's tested, she's prepared. But another thing that makes Kamala so inspiring is her mother's immigrant story to the US that started in India, with pure courage that brought her daughters to this moment. I know the pride you feel. It's your story too," Biden said.

"For your sacrifices, and your family's courage, you became pillars of our community and our country. You're patriots and the frontlines of this pandemic. In this reckoning of systemic racism, you're making a real promise that America is a place where people of all races and religions can live together in peace," he said.

"But I know it's hard. I heart goes out to all those of you who have been the targets in a rise in hate crimes, and the crack-down of legal immigration, including sudden and harmful actions on H-1B visas. That for decades have made America stronger and brought our nation's closer," Biden said.

— PTI

## Trump vows 'snapback' to revive Iran curbs

**New Jersey Aug 16:** US President Donald Trump said on Saturday he will try a controversial "snapback" to force a return of UN sanctions against Iran, after the Security Council rejected Washington's bid to extend the arms embargo against the Islamic republic.

"We'll be doing a snapback," the president said, referring to the contested argument that the US remains a participant in the 2015 Iran nuclear deal — despite Trump's withdrawal from it — and therefore can force a return to sanctions if it

sees Iran as being in violation of its terms.

The president said the US will make its move next week.

Trump also said at the press conference at his private golf course at Bedminster, New Jersey, he would "probably not" participate in the 5 + 1 summit with Iran proposed by his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin.

Putin called on Friday for an online summit of the leaders of the five permanent members of the Security Council plus Germany and Iran over a possible extension of the

● **DONALD TRUMP'S** younger brother Robert died on Saturday after being hospitalized for an undisclosed illness, the US president said in a statement mourning his loss.

international embargo on arms sales in Tehran.

It was in this so-called 5 + 1 configuration that the Iran nuclear agreement was negotiated and concluded with Iran, which Trump then denounced.

"Probably not, I think we will wait until after the election," Trump said when asked about his pos-

sible participation in this summit.

The Trump administration's defeat Friday at the Security Council highlighted its isolation on Iran since Trump withdrew from the accord in 2018.

Only two of the Council's 15 members voted in favor of the U.S. resolution.

Washington's European allies all abstained, Russia and China voted against it, and Iran mocked the Trump administration for winning the support of just one other country, the Dominican Republic.

Trump argued Saturday

that Iran was a "different ballgame" now and that the country no longer has the funds to sponsor terror. "Iran wants me to lose so badly" in November's presidential election, he added.

If Trump follows through, the snapback could plunge the Council into one of its worst diplomatic crises, experts warn.

European allies have been skeptical on whether Washington can force sanctions and say the attempt may delegitimize the Security Council.

— AFP

## Investigation was launched by Canada and the federal police

## Govt accounts hacked in Canada

**Toronto, Aug. 16:** Tens of thousands of user accounts for online government services in Canada were recently hacked during cyber attacks, authorities said on Saturday.

The attacks targeted the GCKey service, used by some 30 federal departments and Canada Revenue Agency accounts, the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat explained in a press release.

The passwords and usernames of 9,041 GCKey account holders "were acquired fraudulently and used to try and access gov-



In this file photo a pictures shows binary code reflected from a computer screen in a woman's eye.

— AFP

ernment services," the authorities said.

All affected accounts have been cancelled.

About 5,500 Canada Revenue Agency accounts were targeted in this and another attack, the author-

● **THE ATTACKS** targeted the GCKey service, used by some 30 federal departments and Canada Revenue Agency accounts, the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat explained.

ities said, adding that access to these accounts has been suspended to protect taxpayer information.

An investigation was launched by the government and the federal police to determine whether there were any breaches of privacy and whether infor-

mation was obtained from these accounts, the authorities said.

According to the CBC, a number of Canadians have reported since the beginning of August that their banking information associated with their Canada Revenue Agency accounts has been altered.

Payments related to the Canadian Emergency Benefit, a financial assistance package put in place by the government in response to the Covid-19 outbreak, have also been issued in their names without their request.

— AFP

Voting rules revive fights  
over 'ballot harvesting'

**Las Vegas, Aug. 16:** As President Donald Trump's reelection campaign challenged Nevada's new voting law in court, the president and Republicans argued the rules would facilitate fraud and illegal voting. Chief among their criticisms was a provision allowing "ballot harvesting."

The Nevada lawsuit highlighted a practice that has long fueled Republicans' suspicions about mail-in voting.

Although widely practiced and rarely found to be abused, the rule permitting a third party to collect and return multiple ballots remains a source of partisan dispute. Those fights are likely to continue up to Election Day as states adjust their laws for the pandemic. One of the few recent instances of fraud related to ballot collection happened in North

Carolina in 2018, resulting in a congressional election being overturned.

More than half of states allow a third party to collect ballots. And political groups and campaigns from both parties have run ballot-collection programs aimed at boosting turnout and ensuring voters who are older, homebound, disabled, or live far from U.S. postal services can get their ballot returned.

"This is not new ground," Nevada's Democratic Assembly Speaker Jason Frierson said in a statement. "Allowing someone to assist a voter in turning in their ballot helps protect vulnerable populations, including our tribal and rural communities."

Trump and the GOP contend "ballot harvesting" opens the door for fraud and have fought to restrict it.

— AP

UPS, FEDEX WARN  
THEY CANNOT  
CARRY BALLOTS

**Los Angeles, Aug. 16:** United Parcel Service (UPS.N) and FedEx (FDX.N) on Friday shot down social media calls that they step in to deliver mail-in ballots from the US Postal Service, which is warning states of potentially "significant" delays.

"State ballots must be postmarked to be considered valid and only the USPS has lawful postmarking status. Therefore UPS, FedEx and other private parties cannot technically be involved in shipping ballots," UPS said.

Republican President Donald Trump on Thursday said he opposed providing funds for the struggling Postal Service for mail voting.

— Agencies

## Moment of pride



New York Empire State Building illuminated in the colours of the Indian flag on Independence Day.

— PTI



DECCAN  
Chronicle

17 AUGUST 2020

Bhushan ruling: Court  
in contempt of justice

The Supreme Court of India is perfectly justified when it says the judiciary is considered “the last hope when a citizen fails to get justice anywhere” but its decision to punish one who doubted its ability to deliver justice is problematic. The court’s observation on its own role in the democratic scheme of things came on Friday along with its finding that lawyer and activist Prashant Bhushan is guilty of criminal contempt of the court for his two tweets that were critical of it.

One of Mr Bhushan’s tweets suggested that access to justice was denied during lockdown, and he seemingly attributed the reason to the Chief Justice of India (CJI). In another tweet, he held the Supreme Court, and the last four CJIs in particular, responsible for “the weakening of democracy” in India in the last six years. Those who wonder why a lawyer should hold the judiciary responsible for the denial of access to justice and weakening of democracy may find their answers in the 108-page judgment itself. “The Indian judiciary is not only one of pillars on which the Indian democracy stands but is the central pillar,” insists the judgment. Is it not then fair that a citizen, who feels the structure of democracy is weakened, holds the institution which arrogates to itself the role of the central pillar, responsible? Isn’t he entitled to hold the view that the CJIs, as masters of the roster, have a role in it? The court does not share the view, obviously.

One must stand with the court when it says “the Supreme Court is a protector of the fundamental rights of the citizens, as also is endowed with a duty to keep the other pillars of democracy i.e. the executive and the legislature, within the constitutional bounds”. But has it come to the aid of the people and protected their fundamental rights when it was warranted the most is the moot question. Some of the recent events are not particularly encouraging. We have the SC putting off for months together the hearing on the habeas corpus petitions, a constitutional guarantee against the State’s unauthorised usurpation of people’s liberties, moved by the people of Jammu and Kashmir. It initially refused to act when its intervention was sought to bring relief to the millions of guest workers who were forced to trek home following a government missive. It is yet to hear petitions against the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019, which many fear undermined the very idea of India. The highest court shocked many when it put preconditions to hear the students of a university who sought protection from governmental action. It will be a far-fetched claim if someone says such acts added to the dignity of the court and strengthened the people’s belief in the system; the contrary could very well be the truth. Believers in democracy could air their desperation publicly; little purpose will be served by shooting the messengers.

Dhoni made winning a habit

Mahendra Singh Dhoni is a sui generis. Coming as he did from a town in the hinterland and his first job as a railway ticket examiner, his background seemed all wrong and he was run out without scoring on his international debut. As he evolved from a gawky youth with long hair into a suave national icon he also transformed Indian cricket — on the field with his instinctive dynamism and in the selection committee room where he backed the men he saw as match winners.

Leading a bunch of young players, he stunned the world in the T20 World Cup in a format that was thought to be unsuitable for the laid-back temperament of Indian cricketers. Like Kapil’s Devils did in the 1983 World Cup final at Lord’s, Dhoni’s young guns had shown an ability to seize the moment. Indian cricket was a financial powerhouse by then but with few trophies in its cupboard. Dhoni changed that by bringing in his winning ways, leading from the front as one of the best finishers in the game and the safest catcher and alert stumper.

Soaking up the pressures while retaining an essential calmness to bring out the best of sporting skill sets was Dhoni’s forte. He became the only captain in the world to win across formats — T20 World Cup in 2007, World Cup in 2011 and Champions Trophy in 2013 after having first led India to the top rung of the Test ladder of merit, besides three IPLs for his favourite Chennai Super Kings and two Champions League titles.

In handling success with equanimity, Dhoni has become an inspirational national figure with a special place in his heart for men of the armed forces, who see him as an apolitical figure endowed with the ideal fighting spirit. He kept up the element of surprise in timing his retirement announcement, lacing it with the Armed Forces’ 24-hour clock — 1929 hours — in perhaps a hint of what he may like to do as a mentor. Close to 40, he gives up a young man’s international game while leaving Indian cricket in better shape.

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

Subhani



Find motive to work out  
Chinese checkers moves



Manish Tewari

State of the Union

It has been over 100 days now that the Chinese are squatting on Indian territory. They are refusing to move back. Neither the government nor any former official or for that matter any strategic thinker has answered the basic question — Why have the Chinese occupied our land? The Chinese, of course, choose to deny that they are in our territory and profess they are only at best on their perception of the Line of Actual Control.

For the sake of argument even if you buy the Chinese explanation, their behaviour still is in stark contrast to 1962 where the Chinese were tactically successful in the eastern sector. After launching an unprovoked aggression then they still chose too retreat 20 kilometres not from their professed claim line but from the Actual Ground Position as on November 7, 1959. The Chinese ceasefire declaration of November 19, 1962, stated as follows — “Beginning from 21 November 1962, the Chinese frontier guards will cease fire along the entire Sino-Indian border. Beginning from 1 December 1962, the Chinese frontier guards will withdraw to positions 20 kilometres (12 miles) behind the line of actual control, which existed between China and India on 7 November 1959. In the eastern sector, although the Chinese frontier guards have so far been fighting on Chinese territory north of the traditional customary line, they are prepared to withdraw from their present positions to the north of the illegal McMahon Line, and to withdraw twenty kilometers (12 miles) back from that line. In the middle and western sectors, the Chinese frontier guards will withdraw 20

kilometres (12 miles) from the line of actual control.”

What is the salience of November 7, 1959? It was on this date a seminal proposal was made to Pandit Nehru by the then Chinese premier Chou-en-Lai. Excerpts from that letter are worth quoting: “In order to maintain effectively the status quo of the border between the two countries, to ensure the tranquility of the border regions and to create a favourable atmosphere for a friendly settlement of the boundary question, the Chinese government proposes that the armed forces of China and India each withdraw 20 kilometres at once from the so-called McMahon Line in the east, and from the line up to which each side exercises actual control in the west, and that the two sides undertake to refrain from again sending their armed personnel to be stationed in and patrol the zones from which they have evacuated their armed forces, but still maintain civil administrative personnel and unarmed police there for the performance of administrative duties and maintenance of order. This proposal is in effect an extension of the Indian government’s proposal contained in its note dated September 10 that neither side should send its armed personnel to Longju, to the entire border between China and India, and moreover a proposal to separate the troops of the two sides by as great a distance as 40 kilometres. If there is any need to increase this distance, the Chinese government is also willing to give it consideration. In a word, both before and after the formal delimitation of the boundary between our two countries through negotiations, the Chinese government is willing to do its utmost to create the most

peaceful and most secure border zones between our two countries, so that our two countries will never again have apprehensions or come to a clash on account of border issues. If this proposal of the Chinese government is acceptable to the Indian government, concrete measures for its implementation can be discussed and decided upon at once by the two governments through diplomatic channels”.

In his reply on November 16, 1959, Nehru after extensive consultations both in the Congress Working Committee and his Cabinet rejected the proposal for all the right reasons outlined in that letter except insofar it applied to Ladakh. He wrote “I suggest, therefore, that in the Ladakh area, both our governments should agree on the following as an interim measure. The Government of India should withdraw all personnel to the west of the line which the Chinese government have shown as the international boundary in their 1956 maps which, so far as we are aware are their latest maps. Similarly, the Chinese government should withdraw their personnel to the east of the international boundary, which has been described by the Government of India in their earlier notes and correspondence and shown in their official maps. Since the two lines are separated by long distances, there should not be the slightest risk of border clashes between the forces on either side.” One can only speculate that had Nehru accepted Chou’s proposal the trajectory of Sino-Indian relations could have been different.

**Did Prime Minister Modi renege on some commitments given to President Xi in Wuhan and Mamallapuram, is it about distance from the US, accepting China’s new hedonistic world order or all of them?**

Since 1962, India and China have had a number of standoffs but eventually they were all surmounted some with casualties and others without any loss of life. Even Doklam that persisted for 73 days was eventually cracked through a fortnight of diplomatic negotiations in 2017. However, the current crisis is substantively distinctive for both Chinese belligerence and brazenness. They have killed 20 Indian soldiers and injured numerous more in at least three clashes in Ladakh alone. Ten Indian soldiers were taken hostage and subsequently released by the People’s Liberation Army.

Despite both foreign ministers speaking to each other, Mr Doval confabulating with his special representative equivalent, numerous conferences of the working mechanism for consultation and coordination on India-China borders affairs, five corps commander level exchanges and other tactical level military talks, the Chinese are not budging. In fact, in the July issue of the China-India Review, Ambassador Wei Sun Weidong has squarely blamed India for the current crisis. Unlike this government that pulled documents of the MOD website.

China has effectively moved the Line Actual Control westwards by creating new facts on the ground along the entire LAC in Ladakh. They have instigated Nepal and Pakistan to indulge in cartographic aggression. The question, however, remains, why? Did Prime Minister Modi renege on some commitments given to President Xi in Wuhan and Mamallapuram, is it about distance from the US, accepting China’s new hedonistic world order or all of them? Till the time we do not know what the Chinese want we will not be able to deal with them effectively going forward.

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

LETTERS

I-DAY MEMORIES

As an octogenarian, I vividly remember listening to Jawaharlal Nehru on radio as he said, “At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom.” The midnight speech, which gave a sense of what achieving freedom is like, was electrifying. It is very nostalgic to read about our freedom struggle stalwarts. The write-up of Aziz Pasha about Maqdoom Mohiuddin is very touching as one of my close relative was associated with his movement. Thank you for bringing out such inspiring memories of our warriors of the freedom struggle.

**Dhiraj Dangoria**  
Hyderabad

DHONI, THE GREATEST

M.S. Dhoni had all the best qualities. He is dedicated, honest and a legend in the cricket world. His simplicity on the field and outside is incomparable. I wish him a successful, healthy and long life. We will miss him in every match.

**Farkhunda Ali Khan**  
Hyderabad

M.S. Dhoni’s retirement from ODI has astonished all of us. He has again proved his simplicity as always by announcing his retirement on Instagram. Watching his journey from a small town to the cricket world and coming out as one of the most astute leaders was truly remarkable. The nation cherishes you MSD.

**Malik Mohammed Faisal**  
Hyderabad

Drug makers directed  
to restore old prices

NEW DELHI, AUG. 16 In a determined bid to push down prices, the Union Government today directed the drug manufacturers who have rained the price level to restore the level prevailing on May 15, the day immediately before the commencement of the Drug Prices Control Order.

In a directive to the manufacturers who revised the prices of drugs on August one, The Petroleum and Chemicals ministry said sternly that the “higher prices should not be enforced.”

Gautam Moorthy



MoD embargoes:  
Private sector has  
to play a key role

August 9, 2020, will go down as a red-letter day in India’s history. While the world and India, too, remained largely immobilised owing to the ubiquitous Chinese virus, the defence minister, Rajnath Singh, announced what is arguably the most historic reform ever undertaken by India’s ministry of defence (MoD). It put out a list of 101 major war fighting equipment, platforms and systems whose imports are to be progressively terminated from December 2020 to December 2025. There is supposedly yet another “negative import” list due. This left observers hard put to count the systems/platforms left out for future import.

A quick glance at the list indicates that 69 systems/platforms have the cut-off date of December 2020, 11 with December 2021, four with December 2022, eight with December 2023, eight with December 2024 and one with December 2025. A cursory look at the timelines would indicate to the astute observer that these have been drawn up keeping in mind the indigenised content already incorporated into the system.

With this announcement closing the tap on imports, India’s ranking as the second largest defence importer in the world next only to Saudi Arabia will certainly drop much to the relief of its government and citizens. Besides saving precious foreign exchange, it will also indicate to the world that India is no longer punching below its weight.

While all this is music to the ears of most Indians as it would boost manufacturing, employment and trade, thereby giving a fillip to the economy, how this would be operationalised is the question that needs to be addressed.

There is a lot of apprehension that has been expressed in the media. Some commentators have stated that this is nothing but new wine in old bottles being as it is a reiteration of the Defence Procurement Procedure 2016 (DPP-2016). However, if one examines that document in some detail, it is seen that this is simply not the case, but a logical conclusion of that policy four years down the line.

In the foreword prefacing that document, the then defence minis-

ter, late Manohar Parrikar, very presciently forecasted this conclusion. He had written, “Hence, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) is determined to treat DPP 2016 as a dynamic and an evolving document and is committed to making improvements based on emerging data and anecdotal evidence, to realise the vision of ‘Make in India’ in the defence sector.” It is evident that this import embargo list is neither a reiteration of that policy nor something completely new, but simply a consequence consistent with that policy.

The other apprehension is that India’s military-industrial complex has not matured enough to be standing on its own feet and delivering the goods. This too is fallacious as a number of platforms/systems that are now being manufactured in India is a testimony to the level of expertise achieved. This has taken place either through tie-ups with firms abroad (the strategic partnership model) or through the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) route.

Going forward, how this embargo would be operationalised is the question rightly asked. First,

India’s defence industry complex, tightly controlled by the government, represented by 41 ordnance factories and nine defence PSUs have now to compete with the private sector and can no longer bank on the Armed Forces to bail them out with orders whose pricing in many cases is exorbitant.

Second, within the private sector, there is a humongous scope for medium and small scale industries to rise to the occasion by ramping up capacities and building up a huge defence industry base to cater for ancillaries, sub-systems and components that would be required if India is going solo and not relying on government imports.

This leads us to the third important factor, which is that the private sector and the corporatised Ordnance Factory Board along with the defence PSUs are free to sign MoUs with original equipment manufacturers abroad to also import critical ancillaries, sub-systems and components for manufacture within India with transfer of technology and with proportionate offsets. This single significant step frees the government from getting involved in complex negotiations

with foreign firms and being compelled to adhering to stringent policies and rules laid down in the government financial regulations and the DPP (Defence Procurement Procedure 2020). All such manufacturers will also be free to export their products making India a net exporter of defence products.

The requirement to drastically reduce imports has long been felt but it needed a strong political dispensation and the will to carry it out. The road ahead is not going to be smooth but this single significant step taken by the government to wean itself away from imports in this crucial domain needs to be applauded. That it was in the making since 2016 is known. However, it appears to have been pushed through now because of the combination of a slackening economy, the deleterious effect of Covid-19 and, above all, by China’s transgressions in Eastern Ladakh. How this will play out remains to be seen.

**Lt. Gen. Gautam Moorthy (Retd)** is a former member of the Armed Forces Tribunal and a former director-general of ordnance services



## quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	37,877.34	-1.13
Nifty 50	11,178.40	-1.08
S&P 500*	3,372.85	-0.02
Dollar (₹)	74.90	-0.07
Pound Sterling (₹)	97.87	0.00
Euro (₹)	88.43	0.09
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	53,691.730	1.35
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	44.80	0.00
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.965	0.070
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.709	0.00

\* As of Friday/Saturday

## Zimbabwe annual inflation soars to 837%

Annual inflation in Zimbabwe accelerated to 837.53 per cent in July, the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency said on Saturday in a Twitter post. The year-on-year rate for June was 737.3 per cent. The monthly rate was 35.53 per cent, up from 31.7 per cent in June. The southern African nation is struggling with food and fuel shortages and a local currency that has imploded since being re-introduced last year after a decade-long hiatus.

## Chandra: Steel demand to dip significantly



Steel demand is expected to decline significantly in 2020-21. Most of the steel producing regions are expected to witness a decline in crude steel output due to production cuts amidst ongoing lockdowns. The global economic growth is expected to see a contraction of over 3 per cent in 2020, Tata Steel chairman N. Chandrababu Naidu said in Tata Steel's annual report, terming the slump as the "worst contraction" since the 1930s.

## Strict safety rules for construction machinery soon

To ensure greater safety on highways, the government has proposed stricter norms that include features like machine-mounted audible travel alarms, non-metallic fuel tank and wider operator visibility for construction equipment machinery. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has come out with a draft notification for construction equipment vehicles that addresses issues of safety requirements.

## Peak power demand declines further to 5.65%

The slump in peak power demand has widened to 5.65 per cent in the first fortnight of August from a 2.61 per cent drop recorded in July, by the power ministry data. Peak power demand met was at 167.49 GW in the first half of Aug., down by 5.65 per cent from 177.52 GW recorded in Aug. last year. Peak power demand met was recorded at 170.54 GW in July this year, down 2.61 per cent from 175.12 GW a year ago.



## MFs change tack, take to value investing Funds book profit on top performers

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD  
MUMBAI, AUG. 16

Profit booking in stocks that had given high return from March 2020 lows and value investing in the large-caps and mid-caps where the upside potential is still intact were evident in mutual funds top picks and sell in July 2020. Thus, Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys and Mindtree became the top picks while Reliance Industries, HDFC, Maruti Suzuki and Mahindra & Mahindra were top sell based on their stock market performance.

Primary market offerings also attracted mutual funds' interest as they bought shares of Rossari Biotech and Yes Bank.

Mutual funds' top 10 buys in value terms in July, as per data compiled by Prime Database, included TCS, PI Industries, Infosys, ICICI Bank, Balkrishna Industries, Rossari Biotech, Yes Bank, Dr Reddy's Laboratories, ACC and Nestle India.

Page Industries, Mindtree, UPL, Petronet LNG, Cipla, Ashok Leyland, Indiamart, Intermesh, Voltas, State Bank of India and Ultratech Cement were the other top picks of the mutual funds in value terms, according to Prime Database.

Top companies where mutual funds sold shares in value terms in July included RIL, HDFC, Bajaj Finance, Eicher Motors, Axis Bank, Vedanta, Avenue Supermarts, Bajaj



Auto, Vodafone Idea, Hindalco Industries and Power Grid Corporation of India.

Mutual funds also reduced stake in Titan Company, Biocon, Maruti Suzuki, Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata Consumer Products, Emami and Indian Oil Corporation, Dabur India, Siemens,

Syngene International and IndusInd Bank.

The combined top holdings of the mutual funds at the close of July in terms of market value were HDFC Bank, Reliance Industries, Infosys, ICICI Bank, Bharti Airtel, HDFC, Kotak Mahindra Bank, TCS, Axis Bank and ITC.

## FPIs invest ₹28,200 cr in Aug.

**New Delhi, Aug 16:** Foreign portfolio investors (FPI) remained net investors in Indian markets in the first half of August, pumping in Rs 28,203 crore in debt and equities on a net basis.

Also, FPIs turned net investors in the debt segment in August after a gap of five months.

Experts attributed the inflows to better-than-expected corporate earnings and global liquidity.

Depositories data showed that a net sum of Rs 26,147 crore was invested in equities and Rs 2,056 crore in the debt segment by FPIs during

August 3-14.

In the debt segment, overseas investors turned net investors after a gap of five months. Before this, FPIs had invested Rs 4,734 crore in February.

Himanshu Srivastava, associate director-manager research, Morningstar India, said, "A combination of global and domestic factors has resulted in huge net inflows from FPIs in Indian equities."

Harsh Jain, the co-founder & COO of Groww, said the inflows are in correlation to the fall of treasury returns in the US.

—PTI

## Media catches MPC mood ahead of meet: RBI study



**Mumbai, Aug 16:** Media often captures the sentiments correctly ahead of monetary policy announcements by the central bank, says a study by the Reserve Bank of India officials.

Many media organisations, based on experts' analysis and movement of key macroeconomic variables in the immediate past, project policy action ahead of the actual monetary policy announcement by the central bank.

"It is found that (media) sentiment concentration was directionally in sync with the policy rate decision except on few occasions," said the article on 'Policy rate expectations in media,' written by Geetha Giddi and Shweta Kumari of RBI's Big Data Analytics Division, Department of Statistics and Information Management.

"Media disseminates, explains and interprets news to the general public, and also conveys concerns, perceptions and opinions of various economic agents to the policy makers," it added.

—PTI

## Cruising industry sees no gains from govt measures

SANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, AUG. 16

In a decision intended to provide relief to the industry during the pandemic, the Ministry of Shipping has rationalised the tariff rates of cruise ships for a limited period of one year. However, experts say a limited period offer will do no good to the industry, which will take a year to operate normally.

According to the ministry, the rate relaxation would be an immediate reduction in port charges ranging from 60 to 70 per cent. This includes port charges of \$0.085 per gross registered tonnage (GRT) instead of the current rate of \$0.35 for the first 12 hours stay and \$5 per passenger. The ports will not charge other rates like berth hire, port dues, pilotage and passenger fee.

For the period exceeding 12 hours stay, the fixed charges on cruise ships will be equal to the berth hire charges payable as per the Schedule of Rates, with 40 per cent discount as applicable for cruise ships. Further, rebates will be given based on calls cruise ships make—those making 1-50 calls per year will get 10 per cent rebate, 51-100 calls per year 20 per cent rebate and those above 100 calls per year will get 30 per cent rebate.

The new tariff rates are applicable from August 14 and will be in place till the same day next year. The ministry believes



this will give "substantial relief to the cruise industry in India, in line with the government policy to support the economy in the pandemic situation". However, no cruise liners are operating during the pandemic and are not expected to operate normally till it subsides.

"The revival of the tourism industry itself will take one year. Chances are very low that people will travel in cruise liners till the pandemic fears have completely vanished. So this one-year offer will have no impact on the industry. The government should have given these concessions for a five-year period," said Iqbal Mulla, chief council, Global Tourism Council.

"This is an unfeasible scheme and will serve no purpose," he added.

According to Ratna Chadha, co-founder and chairperson of Tirun

Travel Marketing, the tariff rates will be applicable to only domestic cruise ships, which are expected to start operations in November. "International cruises are not going to come to Indian ports soon," she said. However, she too is not sure when the industry will start functioning normally.

"This is a nascent industry and if the industry has to develop, it needs government push. We have been asking the government for incentives. At the moment, we are taking what the government is giving and we will show that we can flourish. We hope that the government will extend the rebate scheme beyond one year," she said.

Mulla finds that the rebate-system based on performance is discriminating as the targets seem unachievable in the current situation.

## It could be shortest recession: Birla

FC BUREAU  
with agency inputs  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 16

Hindalco Industries chairman Kumar Mangalam Birla has said the widely expected recession in 2020 will be the one of the shortest if the pandemic doesn't create a second wave. "Terming the pandemic-induced troubles as a once in-a-century crisis for the society and the economy, Birla, in a letter, cautioned shareholders that this year will see an economic contraction. This 2020 recession is turning out to be very different from the past recessions, he said.

"It has been too sudden almost off the cliff; its spread has been all-encompassing affecting almost every economy and sector, and the plunge in economic activity levels and employment has been unprecedented," Birla said.

On the positive side, this recession is likely to be one of the shortest, assuming no second wave of the pandemic recurs. As present lockdowns around the world get lifted, and businesses reopen, economic activity is likely to bounce back fairly quickly, he said.



Kumar Mangalam Birla

"Around \$9-trillion stimulus from different governments globally will help to support this recovery, along with the monetary actions by central banks. These policies will also help to restrict the second-order effects like defaults and bankruptcies," Birla said.

Some scars of the crisis will remain in the form of subdued consumer and business confidence. Some sectors, like airlines and hospitality, will take time to recover fully. And some supply chain disruption effects will linger.

As the world emerges from the current crisis, the next few years are likely to be marked by lack of buoyancy in growth, subdued commodity prices and infla-

tion, a cautious trend in project investments, heightened risks of de-globalisation and political uncertainty; and increased dependence of financial systems on ultra-loose monetary policy conditions, Birla said.

He mentioned that Covid-19 struck India at a time when the underlying economic conditions were subdued on account of heightened global uncertainty and stress in the domestic financial system.

"It is estimated that about 80 per cent of India's GDP originates from districts which were classified under red and orange zones during the lockdown, where economic activity remained severely constrained. Correspondingly, India's GDP is likely to contract in FY21, which would be the first such instance in over four decades," Birla said in the letter.

Given the fog of uncertainty all around, it is hard to be prescient in these times, Birla said. "But there is little doubt on one reality: companies with quality leadership, sound business fundamentals, and a track record of winning in turbulent times, will emerge as champions in the new global order," he said.

## PSBs may manage without additional capital infusion

**New Delhi, Aug 16:** The government may not have to inject fresh capital into the public sector banks (PSBs) as the one-time loan restructuring permitted by the RBI has reduced their additional fund requirement.

Also, the poor credit off-take on account of the pandemic may obliterate the need for significant growth capital during the current fiscal, sources said.

There may not be a sudden surge in non-performing assets (NPAs) after the six-month moratorium comes to an end this month, as it is followed by one-time loan restructuring, the sources said, adding, provisioning requirement is also low for the debt recast accounts.

Moreover, most of the public sector banks have taken approval in advance for raising tier-I and tier-II capital in the current fiscal depending on the need.

Despite all these, if at all there is a need for regulatory capital requirement by some public sector banks towards the end of the fiscal, the government will provide that, the sources said.

In 2019-20, the government infused Rs 70,000



crore into PSBs to boost credit for giving a strong impetus to the economy.

However, the government refrained from committing any capital in the Budget 2020-21 for the PSBs, hoping that the lenders will raise funds from the market depending on the need.

After the second quarter numbers are out, the government may do a performance appraisal and assess the capital position of the public sector banks.

According to a senior official of a public sector bank, loan restructuring will act as balm for the economy stressed from the Covid-19 crisis.

Many borrowers are under stress because their businesses are running at 50 per cent capacity, impacting their cash flow, which compromised their capacity to service debt.

Banks, under a board-approved loan restructuring programme, can save such accounts from turning bad by extending the repayment period, reducing the interest rates or offering an extension of the moratorium to avoid an immediate shock.

Still some of the accounts would turn NPAs, especially those which were under stress even before the outbreak of the pandemic, and banks are gearing up for meeting that challenge, the bank official said.

According to rating agency Fitch, "Raising capital remains challenging in the current environment. However, the new policy will reduce transparency over asset quality, which could further hinder some paths for capital-raising."

—PTI

## UAE, ISRAEL FIRMS SIGN FIRST DEAL

FARAH ELBAHRAWY  
AUG. 16

The UAE-based Apex National Investment agreed to conduct research on the coronavirus with Israel's TeraGroup in what could be the first cross-border deal after the two countries began normalising relations.

TeraGroup is "the first business to inaugurate trade, economy and effective partnerships between the Emirati and Israeli business sectors," Apex National Investment Chairman Khalifa Yousef Khourai said in a statement on the state-run Emirates News Agency on Sunday. The deal was described as a "strategic commercial agreement." —Bloomberg

## Super tiny stocks outdo Wall St. megacaps

AMENA SAAD  
AUG. 16

Tech behemoths have been Wall Street's obsession all year. But the tiniest of stocks have surreptitiously been making a comeback—in a big way.

The Russell Microcap Index, whose members have a value of \$300 million on average, is up more than 60 per cent from this year's stock-market lows, outperforming both the tech-heavy Nasdaq 100 and the S&P 500. The tiny-stock gauge is having its best month relative to the US equity benchmark since September 2017.

"The good-looking big boys and girls have been touted as the only game in town this year. These large, domestic, safe, easily rec-

ognized, fast-growing, and sexy stocks have been the ticket," wrote Jim Paulsen, chief investment strategist at the Leuthold Group. "But, like the S&P 500 this year, the really tiny—those Mighty Microcaps—have shown their FAANGs!" he said, referring to the popular Facebook, Amazon, Apple, Netflix and Google-parent Alphabet.

It's a demonstration of the market weirdness this year, with the most beaten-down stocks recovering toward pre-pandemic levels even as unemployment remains around 10 per cent and signs mount the recovery is slowing. Unprecedented support from the government and central bank has given a lifeline to small companies. At the same time, retail investors



have rushed in, chasing momentum names without always scrutinising their balance sheets.

Tiny companies, which often swing at a higher velocity during times of turbulence than their larger brethren, were among the most punished during the coronavirus crash. They tend to be more indebted and have less cash on hand. But many ana-

lysts see potential for them to outperform once a recovery begins.

That's because their profits are often depressed in a recession and the companies have more room to improve during a rebound, said Michael Sheldon, executive director and chief investment officer at RDM Financial Group Inc.

But the performance in micro-caps is remarkable given that more than half of the members didn't make any profit in the latest quarter. More intriguingly, unprofitable ones have seen their shares outperforming, rising an average 13 per cent this year. That's triple the 4 per cent gain from those that made money.

Data from website Robintrack.net suggested

retail investors have been part of the forces behind some of the parabolic gains.

Vaxart Inc has soared 2,500 per cent this year as it was selected to take part in the Trump administration's Operation Warp Speed, meant to crank up development of a Covid vaccine. The price explosion coincided with a surge in ownership on brokerage platform Robinhood. From fewer than 2,000 owners in January, the number of shareholders on Robinhood has jumped to near 90,000 this summer.

"If the Micros truly can keep up with the Bigs, investors should consider diversifying some of their S&P 500 allocation," said Leuthold's Paulsen.

—Bloomberg

## M&M unveils new Thar, launch in Oct.

MICHAEL GONSALVES  
PUNE, AUG 16

Mahindra & Mahindra, India's biggest utility vehicle maker, has unveiled the all-new Thar, the much anticipated off-road tough SUV to boost sales in Asia's third biggest economy.

The Mumbai-based automaker will launch this new capable vehicle for sale on October 2 when the price would also be revealed. Experts estimate it to be tagged at Rs 10 lakh-Rs 15 lakh.

It will face competition from the new Force Gurkha, which is also expected to arrive in the coming months.

"Thar is an icon," Ramkripa Ananthan, chief designer of automotive business at M&M, said proudly.

"There were many aspects that were intrinsic to its character. We retained them and at the same time, we also addressed some of the customer requirements," he said.

Of course, the classic proportions of the Thar had to be changed. Mahindra increased the track to 1,820 mm to liberate more space inside the cabin. The company has also unsized the tyres, and now Thar sits on R18 tyres. Thar's wheelbase was increased for easier ingress and egress.

Thar, which was first launched in India back in 2010 promises more comfort and convenience, apart from its par excellence driving capabilities.

Given their shared heritage, the Thar resembles the Jeep Wrangler and its overall proportions are similar.





## SHORT TAKES

Former cricketer  
Chetan no more

**New Delhi:** One of Indian cricket's most well-known batsmen without an international hundred, former opener Chetan Chauhan died on Sunday due to Covid-19 related complications after being put on life support for nearly 36 hours.

Chauhan, who was 73, was serving as the Minister of Sainik Welfare, Home Guards, and Civil Security in the Uttar Pradesh cabinet. He is survived by his wife and son Vinayak.

"My elder brother Shri Chetan Chauhan has left us today after fighting a good battle. I sincerely thank everyone who had prayed for his recovery. His son Vinayak will be reaching anytime and we will then perform last rites," his younger brother Pushpendra said.

Chauhan, who was the legendary Sunil Gavaskar's longest serving opening partner, was admitted to Sanjay Gandhi PGI in Lucknow on July 12 after being testing positive for Covid-19. Due to kidney related ailments, his health deteriorated and he was shifted to Medanta hospital in Gurugram.

— PTI

Lyon roar past  
crumbling City

**Lisbon:** Moussa Dembele broke his Champions League drought in timely fashion in Lisbon on Saturday after Maxwel Cornet again proved a thorn in Manchester City's side with his fourth goal in three games against the Premier League heavyweights.

Quite remarkably, no player has struck more often versus Pep Guardiola's City since the start of the 2018-19 season than the Ivory Coast international, with only Tottenham forward Son Heung-Min breaching their defence as many times.

Converted into a wing-back this season by Lyon coach Rudi Garcia on the left of a 3-5-2 formation, Cornet has adjusted seamlessly to the new role after spending most of his time at the club as a right-sided attacker.

While Cornet's magnificent first-time finish gave Lyon the lead against City on 24 minutes, it wasn't until the introduction of top scorer Dembele that the French side administered the knockout blow to one of the competition's favourites for the title. — AFP

Hamilton claims  
Spain Grand Prix

**Barcelona:** Lewis Hamilton claimed his 88th Formula One career victory and, with it, an outright record 156th podium finish on Sunday when he drove his Mercedes to a masterful victory in the Spanish Grand Prix. It was the world championship leader and six-time champion's fifth win in Spain and his fourth in consecutive years, extending his record run of finishes in the points to 39.

Hamilton came home 24 seconds ahead of nearest title race rival Max Verstappen of Red Bull who finished 20 seconds ahead of Valtteri Bottas in the second Mercedes.

Hamilton had shared a record 155 podium finishes with Michael Schumacher whose other records for championships and wins are in the Briton's sights this year. His victory increased his lead in the drivers' title race to 37 points ahead of Verstappen. Sergio Perez was fourth ahead of his teammate Lance Stroll and Carlos Sainz of McLaren. — AFP

STAGE SET FOR  
NBA PLAY OFFS  
IN ORLANDO

**Miami:** An NBA season unlike any other shifts into high gear on Monday with the start of the playoffs in the league's quarantine bubble in Orlando, Florida.

Antetokounmpo's Bucks arrived at the bubble virtually assured of the top seed in the Eastern Conference and own the best record in the league as they head into a first-round meeting with the Orlando Magic. — AFP

**NBA Playoffs: Boston Celtics vs Philadelphia 76ers from 4 am (Tuesday) on Sony Six; Los Angeles Clippers vs Dallas Mavericks from 6.30 am (Tuesday) on Sony Six.**

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 Alwai 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

## THERE IS ONLY ONE 7

## Fans, teammates want BCCI to retire Dhoni's jersey number

**New Delhi, Aug. 16:** Players and fans Sunday urged India's cricket board to retire Mahendra Singh Dhoni's number seven jersey in a tribute to the two-time World Cup winning captain.

Dhoni, 39, called time on his 16-year-old international career Saturday with a cryptic message on his *Instagram* post that read "From 19.29hrs consider me as retired".

The Board of Control for Cricket in India confirmed the news in a statement, saying: "The boy from Ranchi, who made his One-Day International debut in the year 2004, changed the face of Indian cricket with his calm demeanour, sharp understanding of the game and astute leadership qualities."

Dhoni's legions of fans including 7.8 million *Twitter* followers and former teammate Dinesh Karthik said they did not want to see 7 on the back of any other Indian cricketer's jersey.

"I hope the @bcci retire the #7 jersey in white ball cricket Good luck with your second innings in life, I'm sure you'll have a lot of surprises for us there too," Karthik, a wicketkeeper-batsman, tweeted.

Former batsman Mohammad Kaif agreed, writing on *Twitter*: "Can't imagine any one else wearing a Number 7 India jersey again."

There is no provision to retire jerseys in cricket, unlike in football.

But the BCCI unofficially retired batting great Sachin Tendulkar's number 10 shirt a few years after his retirement.

Dhoni, a flamboyant wicketkeeper-batsman who led India to win the inaugural Twenty20 World Cup in 2007 and lifted the 50-over showpiece event in 2011, was born on July 7.

He is a self-confessed fan of Portuguese football megastar Cristiano Ronaldo, who also wears a famous number seven jersey.

"@BCCI should retire 'Jersey Number 7' as a Tribute to Legend MS Dhoni," a fan wrote on *Twitter*.

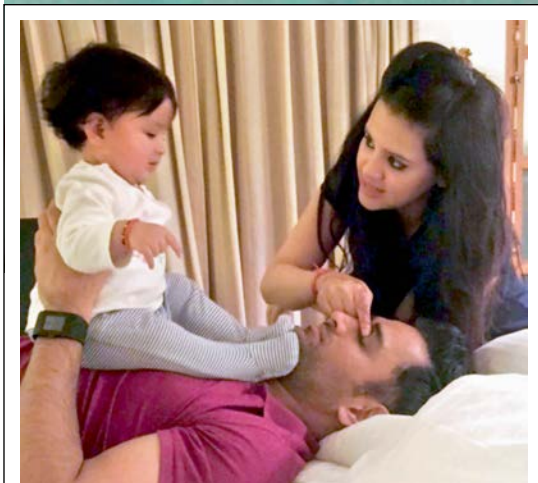
Dhoni, dubbed 'Captain Cool' because of his unflappable style, will continue to lead his team Chennai Super Kings in the Indian Premier League starting in the United Arab Emirates next month.

The Indian women's team's ODI captain Mithali Raj also congratulated him.

"The man who immortalised jersey no.7, whose sharp mind and a cool head earned him the tag of #CaptionCool, the man who fulfilled billion indian dreams by two World Cup trophies and who bid adieu in his inimitable style. Congratulations #MS Dhoni on an outstanding career," she tweeted. — PTI



Former Indian captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni in this file photo.



Former Indian cricketer Mahendra Singh Dhoni spends some quality time with his daughter Ziva and wife Sakshi in this file photo.

Proud of you,  
says Sakshi

**New Delhi, Aug. 16:** For someone who has the reputation of keeping his emotions in check, Mahendra Singh Dhoni must have held his tears back when he decided to quit international cricket, felt his wife Sakshi while lauding the legend's phenomenal accomplishments.

Sakshi, in a social media post which she shared both on *Instagram* and *Twitter* along with a picture of the former India skipper, congratulated Dhoni on his career.

"You should be proud of what you have achieved. Congratulations on giving your best to the game. I am proud of

your accomplishments and the person you are!" wrote Sakshi.

"I am sure you must have held those tears to say goodbye to your passion. Wishing you health, happiness and wonderful things ahead!" she posted.

Called 'Captain Cool' for his calm demeanour and exceptional leadership qualities, Dhoni has etched his name as one of world cricket's great.

Sakshi ended her post with American poet Maya Angelou's quote, "People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." — PTI

WARNE WANTS  
MAHI TO PLAY  
THE HUNDRED

**Melbourne, Aug. 16:** Retirement from international cricket done, Australian spin legend Shane Warne now wants Mahendra Singh Dhoni to get on with the game and consider being part of his team London Spirit in next year's The Hundred tournament.

Two-time World Cup-winning former India captain Dhoni retired on Saturday, putting endless speculation about his future to rest.

Spinner Warne said he should give serious consideration The Hundred now.

"I just wonder if I could get him down to the London Spirit next year for The Hundred. I might put out a call to see if he wants to play at Lord's. I'll find the money, MS!" Warne told *Skysports*.

The Hundred' is a 100-balls-per-side tournament of the England and Wales Cricket Board which was scheduled to be launched in June this year but had to be postponed to next year due to the prevailing Covid-19 pandemic. — PTI



Former Indian cricketer Mahendra Singh Dhoni (left) poses for a photograph with Indian wicketkeeper Dinesh Karthik after their 2019 World Cup semifinal loss against New Zealand.

## DHONI THE WORDSMITH

I thought I should throw the ball to someone who really wants to do well in international cricket.

— ON HANDING JOGINDER SHARMA THE LAST OVER IN 2007 T20 WC FINAL

God helps those who help themselves. I said God is not coming to save us.

— JOKED LATER ABOUT THE DRESSING ROOM TALK BEFORE THAT TOUGH CHASE AGAINST SRI LANKA IN 2011 WC FINAL, WHICH HE FINISHED WITH A SIX.

You die, you die. You don't see which is the better way to die.

— AFTER HAVING BAD AWAY SERIES' AGAINST ENGLAND AND AUSTRALIA

Actually...Virat used a knife. He stabbed Shikhar, who just recovered out of that then we pushed him to bat. These are all stories...maybe Warner Bros or somebody should pick up this and make a nice a movie out of it.

— ON THE CONTROVERSEY REVOLVING AROUND VIRAT KOHLI AND SHIKHAR DHAWAN

Words fall short a lot of times in life and I think this is one of those moments. All I can say is that you will always be that guy who sat in the last seat of the bus. We have shared a great camaraderie, friendship, understanding because we have always played for the same roles, same goals, which was to make the team win. I have said it before, I will say it again, you will always be my captain.

— VIRAT KOHLI

One of the most influential man in the history of Indian cricket. His impact in and around cricket was massive. Will surely miss him in blue but we have him in yellow. See you on 19th (Sept.) at the toss.

— ROHIT SHARMA

In any list of cricket's greatest, not greats but the greatest, you have to include this man. This man is second to none. And coming from where he did he changed cricket for all times to come. And his beauty is he did it in all formats. I salute you Lieutenant Colonel M. S. Dhoni.

— RAVI SHASTRI

Congrats @msdhoni on a brilliant international career. I loved and enjoyed every contest we had as players and now I still have to find ways to stop you winning games against the @DelhiCapitals. Look forward to saying it in person in a few weeks time.

— RICKY PONTING

Welcome to the retirement club, MSD! What a magical career!

— KEVIN PIETERSEN

Congrats @msdhoni on a fantastic career, he is one of the coolest guys I've played against on the park.

— DAVID WARNER

## Dhoni's retirement style sets a precedence

Hemant Kenkre  
Silly Point

In many ways August 15th, India's Independence Day, may have heralded a new nomenclature to the 'eras of cricket' in the new normal of today. The words BC and AD can now be known as 'Before Coronavirus' and 'After Dhoni' in Indian cricket's parlance.

"Thanks a lot for ur love and support throughout. From 19.29 hrs consider me as Retired." With these words on his *Instagram* handle, Mahendra Singh Dhoni (MS) walked into the sunset of international

cricket. It was not a lengthy post swooning with words but a simple statement of saying it was all over from international cricket for the man from Ranchi. One who had taken the job of a ticket checker in the Indian Railways which would enable him to play cricket at a national level. And play cricket he did, with aplomb and a style never seen before.

Just the way he had announced his retirement from Test cricket, through a press release, mid-series while in Australia, MSD's

'announcement' on an important day turned out to be without fanfare, a trait he is known for. He played his cricket with a certain proclivity based on hunches inclining towards unpredictability, never seen before in the history of the game in India. No wonder, his boss and former president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India called him an 'instinctive cricketer.'

An incident recounted to me by former Bombay (Mumbai) skipper Milind Rege in 2009 will put MS's psyche in perspective. Rege was in charge of the Brabourne Stadium, the venue of India's third and final Test against Sri Lanka. A few days before the match, Rege asked MS if he would like to take a look at the pitch which was being prepared.

"You can give us whatever pitch you want, it's fine by me. We will play on it," was his polite reply as he continued practicing with the team. India ended up winning the Test by an innings and 24 runs taking the team to the top of the International Cricket Council (ICC) Test rankings.

MS's penchant for doing things his way made him unique from others, as a player and captain. Whether it was honouring a senior colleague — inviting former skipper Sourav Ganguly to lead the team in the field for the final time against Australia in 2008 — or not picking up VVS Laxman's call in 2012 regarding VVS's retirement, the acts had the MS stamp all over them. When Zaheer Khan's hamstring gave way during the

2011 Lord's Test match, MS pulled off his gloves to drive home the point that Khan wasn't match fit when the match began.

That MS would retire was a given considering the ICC Twenty20 (T20) world Cup was moved ahead a month ago. Though he never made a statement, his desire to wear the number 7 jersey for India must have been his last wish before he called it a day. Many believe that his body wasn't that of the MS they knew while playing the shortest and most testing formats of the game and he should have called it quits after India's loss to New Zealand in the 2019 ICC World Cup.

Continuing or retiring from the game is a personal decision taken by the

player himself even whatever the writing on the wall may be.

If Sunil Gavaskar was post-partition India's first cricketing superstar, MS can well be called the country's first cricket rockstar. From sporting long locks during his early days to wearing a military logo on his gloves during the ICC World Cup, 2019, he loved making statements. While Gavaskar created symphonies that would have made Beethoven proud, MS took fans through the purple haze of a Jimi Hendrix experience, signing each gig with a unique stamp.

The colour yellow will now replace the blue as MS embarks to play his 13th season of the Indian Premier League (IPL). This would have been one where he would give his all

to try and make the team for the ICCT20 World Cup which now stands postponed.

Pushing 40, MS's energies will be now be directed towards pleasing his (and his IPL team's) fans. One is bound to see a refreshed MS leading his band of faithfuls with a complete sense of freedom.

After leading his country to three ICC championships (including two World Cup wins) and the number one spot in ICC Test rankings, there's not much MS would have wanted to prove as a player and captain. His retirement will, thankfully, end the debate concerning his future and may start another one. The future of Indian cricket (short-format games) in AD — 'After Dhoni.'