

DECCAN Chronicle

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WEATHER

Max: 30.8°C
Min: 23.1°C
RH: 68%
Rainfall: Trace

Forecast: Cloudy sky, moderate rains likely.
Max/Min temp. 32/23°C



COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+50,980)	(+814)
18,55,238	38,972

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+983)	(+11)
TS: 67,660	551
(+7,822)	(+63)
AP: 1,66,586	1,537

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

1,83,44,776

DEATHS

6,94,820

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES

213

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Shravana Bahula Padyami till 9.57 pm
Star: Shravanam till 8.11 am
Variyam: 12.24 pm to 2.06 pm
Durmuhurtam: 8.33 am to 9.24 am; 11.14 pm to 11.59 pm
Rahukalam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm

HJRI CALENDAR
Zuhijja 13,1441 AH

PRAYERS
Fajar: 4.50 am
Zohar: 12.32 pm
Asar: 4.49 pm
Maghrib: 6.54 pm
Isha: 8.06 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.47 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.56 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 7.34 PM
MOONSET TOMORROW 6.18 AM

COUNTER POINT



Be alert... now, political community spread of virus has started!

IN BRIEF

Karti, IT minister in quarantine

New Delhi: IT and Communications Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on Monday said he has gone into self-isolation for a few days as per protocol, since he had met Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday. Meanwhile, Lok Sabha MP and son of senior Congress leader P. Chidambaram, Karti, on Monday said he has tested positive for Covid-19. "I have just tested positive for #Covid. My symptoms are mild and as per medical advice I am under home quarantine. I would urge all those who have recently been in contact with me to follow medical protocol," he said in a tweet. He represents Sivaganga Lok Sabha seat from Tamil Nadu. — P71

Safe rakhi



It was a different kind of experience for girls at an orphanage in Musheerabad as they tie rakhi on Raksha Bandan in Hyderabad by maintaining social distancing norms.

■ Reports, more pictures on P2 — P. SURENDRA

J&K cites violence, Covid to slap curfew in Srinagar

Officials expect Black Day on 1st anniversary of abrogation of Article 370, shut UT's capital

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, AUG. 3

Curfew was clamped in Srinagar from Monday night. The authorities said that curbs would continue to be in force in Jammu and Kashmir's summer capital on Tuesday and Wednesday to hold back protests and ensure maintenance of law and order on the first anniversary of the Centre's stripping the state of its special status and splitting it up into two Union Territories.

Curfew or curfew-like restrictions are likely to be imposed on some other towns of the Valley as well whereas the security is being beefed up further in various parts of Jammu region.

The authorities have also announced the extension

● Curfew or curfew-like restrictions are likely to be imposed on some other towns of the Valley as well whereas the security is being beefed up further in various parts of Jammu region.

of the virtual lockdown necessitated by the spike in Covid-19 deaths and positive cases till August 8.

Kashmir Valley reported 433 and Jammu 157 fresh positive cases whereas eleven more people died of the virus on Monday, taking the toll to 407. The number of positive cases has already crossed the 22,000 mark.

Srinagar's district magistrate Shahid Iqbal Choudhary in an order said that the concerned

SSP has reported that a series of inputs have been received suggesting that separatist and Pakistan sponsored groups are planning to observe August 5 as a 'black day' and, therefore, there is apprehension of "violent actions and protests" which could "endanger public life and property."

The DC said that such an activity could also defeat the purpose of imposing lockdown to stem further spread of Coronavirus infections. "Therefore, it was decided to clamp curfew and strict security restrictions in the entire district with immediate effect till Wednesday night, he said adding that Covid-19 related emergency services have, however, been exempted from curfew restrictions."

Pak HC allows India to recruit lawyer for Kulbhushan case

SHAFQAT ALI | DC with agency inputs ISLAMABAD, AUG. 3

The Islamabad High Court on Monday ordered the Pakistan government to give "another chance" to India to appoint a lawyer for death-row prisoner Kulbhushan Jadhav.

A two judge-bench, comprising Chief Justice Athar Minallah and Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb, heard a petition filed by the Pakistan government to appoint a lawyer for Mr Jadhav.

The Pakistan government, in the petition, asked the court to appoint

a legal representative for Mr Jadhav so that it can fulfil its responsibility to see to the implementation of the ICJ's decision. It also claimed that Mr Jadhav refused to file a review petition to reconsider the verdict against him by the military court.

"Now that the matter is in the high court, why not give India another chance," Justice Minallah was quoted as saying by *Geo News*.

"India and Kulbhushan Jadhav should once again be extended an offer to appoint a legal representative" for the death row prisoner, he added.

The court ordered the ministry of foreign affairs to approach India and Mr Jadhav again to make them a part of the hearing. Attorney general Khalid Jawed Khan assured the court that the government will follow the court's directives. The judge also instructed officials to not make any unnecessary comments on the case.

Asked whether Indian lawyers could appear in Islamabad High Court on behalf of Mr Jadhav, Mr Khan said that "only Pakistani lawyers and those who are entitled to practice in Pakistan" can be appointed.

PRIVATE | INTEREST

Local politicians obstruct skywalks as they block view of their commercial complexes

No skywalk, forced to cross the road? Blame VIPs

MADDY DEEKSHITH | DC HYDERABAD, AUG. 3

Local politicians and influential persons have stopped the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) from building foot overbridges (FoBs), claiming that the structures obstruct the view of their commercial complexes in prime areas.

In 10 other areas, the planned FoBs are being relocated as they are in the Metro Rail corridor. These

FoBs, incidentally, were planned to be built on the corridor after Metro Rail services began.

According to sources, the GHMC a month ago decided to construct 38 FoBs in 120 days. It finalised the designs and earmarked ₹102 crore for the project.

When officials were about to lay the foundation stones of the FoBs at prime locations, influential people and local politicians opposed it, claiming that they would lose land.

● The government asked the GHMC to construct eight skywalks besides 52 FoBs. The GHMC floated tenders afresh. This year, the number was cut to 38. Over a period of eight years, tenders were floated at least 50 times.

● Ten FoBs each are proposed to be built in the LB Nagar and Serilingampally packages, seven in Charminar, four in Khairatabad, five in Secunderabad package and two in the Kukatpally package.

Besides, they said, the view of their malls and other properties would be marred by the FoBs.

The GHMC, and the traf-

fic police, then realised that 10 FoBs were planned on the Metro Rail corridors, where the stations have a staircase for general

pedestrians. All these FoBs will now be taken to other areas. "What was the need to construct a FoB in front of Gandhi Hospital where there are two Metro Rail stations within 500 metres, with escalators, elevators and staircases," asked a senior municipal administration and urban development official, requesting anonymity.

"The moment we start work, either a politician or a popular personality begins interfering and

even threatens the field workers with severe consequences. We will discuss with senior officials how to go ahead with the project without any interference," a GHMC official said.

The FoBs have been on paper since 2012. In 2017, the government handed over the project to the Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA). It said there was response from the bidders and handed it over to the GHMC in June 2018.

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TN rejects 3-language policy proposed in NEP

AIADMK says two-language policy will remain in force

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, AUG. 3

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami's expression of pain and anguish on Monday over the three-language formula in the new National Education Policy, and asserting that the state would continue with C.N. Annadurai's two-language policy, did not satisfy a belligerent Opposition that wanted a total rejection of the NEP as it had more flaws.

After holding a discussion with ministers and officials concerned with the education departments and educationalists, the Chief Minister came out with a statement that categorically said that the government was firm in following the two-language system as per the aspirations of the people and political parties, including the AIADMK.

Urging Prime Minister

● **TAMIL NADU** will never allow the Centre's three-language policy. The state will continue with it's dual language policy (of Tamil and English). The three-language formula in the NEP is painful and saddening.

EDAPPADI PALANISWAMI, TN Chief Minister

Narendra Modi to take into consideration the sentiments of the people and reconsider the NEP and allow the states to implement their own policies in education, Palaniswami said people had expressed their views on the issue through various agitations at different points of time.

Recalling the various protests against Hindi imposition in the state, Palaniswami said that former chief ministers M.G.

Ramachandran and J. Jayaalalithaa were firm on it. He said he had written to the Prime Minister in June 2019 against the proposal in the NEP for introducing a three-language system in schools and that his government would defend Tamil people and Tamil language if there was any threat to them.

While the founder of PMK, an electoral ally of the AIADMK, Dr S. Ramadoss welcomed the stand taken by the Chief Minister, the Opposition camp, led by DMK president M.K. Stalin, urged the CM to call a Cabinet meeting and pass a resolution against the implementation of the NEP.

In a letter to the CM, written by leaders of 11 political parties belonging to the Secular Liberal Alliance, the other flaws in the NEP were pointed out. In higher education the autonomy of the universities and the rights of the

states were sought to be taken away, the letter said.

The other charges included imposing Vedic culture in education, ignoring social justice but being silent on reservations, not concerned about women's education, attaching the autonomous Classical Tamil Research Institute to a university and saffronising school education.

Kamal Haasan, the founder of the Makkal Needhi Maiyam, in a tweet, welcomed the Chief Minister's stand but said that some other structures suggested in the NEP like National Assessment Centre, PARAKH, National Testing Agency and National Curriculum Framework would rob the states of their right and hence should be rejected.

BJP's state media president A.N.S. Prasad disputed Stalin's claim that the two-language policy was followed in the state.

Funeral of Covid patients proves to be challenging

KANIZA GARARI | DC HYDERABAD, AUG. 3

Social stigma regarding Covid-19 runs so deep that despite the bodies of patients of the disease being completely packed and sanitisation, burial grounds and crematoria are difficult to find to perform the last rites. The waiting time can be as long as 12 hours before families find a graveyard willing to accommodate their dead.

Those who die in hospitals in Hyderabad are not allowed to cremate or bury their dead in the districts. Within the city, the graveyards want the Aadhaar card for residence proof of the deceased person and hospital papers.

The body of a 40-year-old man was taken to his native village in Suryapet district but the villagers refused entry and it had to be brought back to the city. The man's body was finally cremated on the outskirts in Ranga Reddy district.

In another case, a 74-year-old resident of Shaikpet, a suspected Covid-19 patient, died within four hours of admission at a hospital. His body was released at 11 pm but the burial ground refused permission to bury it. The family took the body home.

■ Page 2: Families have to ask MLAs, MPs to help

Hospital's licence to treat Covid revoked

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, AUG. 3

The state government has revoked permission for Deccan Hospital, Somajiguda, to treat Covid-19 patients for overcharging patients.

The action was taken by the Director of Health and Family Welfare under the Epidemic Diseases Act. The government in its order stated that private hospitals were flouting the guidelines related to treatment charges.

The government stated that there were several complaints received against Deccan Hospital for overcharging and inappropriate billing. Those who are currently undergoing treatment must be charged on the

rates that have been fixed by the government.

Deccan Hospital managing director Dr Damodar Reddy said, "We have not received any such notice today. The only letter we got from the government was that our case hearing is on August 10."

A complaint against the hospital had been submitted to the Director of Health for overcharging by a patient and their relatives. Investigations into the complaint are being carried out and doctors at the hospital said all documents related to case have been given to officials.

A senior official said, "We will investigate a few more hospitals in the city as the caseload is now decreasing in the GHMC limits."

FEWER TESTS BRING DOWN TS CASE TALLY

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, AUG. 3

Telangana state recorded nearly 900 fewer cases on Sunday, but that was because the state government reduced the number of tests by about 9,759.

On Saturday, the government had conducted 19,202 tests and 1,891 persons had tested positive. On Sunday, the number of tests plunged to 9,443 and new cases fell to 983.

■ Full report on Page 2

TRS MLC, 2 MLAs TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

PULI SHARAT KUMAR | DC KARIMNAGAR, AUG. 3

TRS MLC Naradasu Laxman Rao and ruling party legislators Korukanti Chander Patel of Ramagundam and Gudem Mahipal Reddy of Patancheru tested positive for Covid-19.

Laxman had attended a meeting at Pragathi Bhavan on July 31.

In a rare move for a politician, Laxman Rao chose to get himself and his family members, who also tested positive, at the government-run Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences (NIMS). Patel has been admitted in a private hospital in Gachibowli.

Seven members of Laxman Rao's family, two staff members and two gunmen have tested positive. Three of the family members have joined NIMS, arrangements are being made to accommodate the others at the hospital.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, Laxman Rao said that he fell sick on July 31 after attending a meeting that was held in Pragathi Bhavan. The next day he went for a test in which he tested positive for Covid-19, along with his family.

■ Page 2: I have faith in NIMS doctors: Laxman

SHORT TAKES

LIQUOR SHOPS
TO REMAIN
OPEN TILL 11 PMDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, AUG. 3

The Prohibition and Excise department on Monday issued orders permitting liquor shops to operate in accordance with the condition of license i.e., from 10 am to 11 pm.

Prohibition and Excise director Sarfaraz Ahmad issued the circular asking district prohibition and excise officers and deputy commissioners of prohibition and excise to take necessary action with immediate effect.

The wine shops, which were opened for business on May 6 after remaining shut for almost 45 days during the lockdown, were hitherto operating till 9 pm.

I HAVE FAITH IN
NIMS DOCTORS:
LAXMAN

From Page 1

Asked why he had chosen a government institution for treatment while others had opted for private hospitals, Laxman Rao said he preferred NIMS as he had confidence in the efficiency of the doctors working there.

The arrangements at the hospital are on par with private hospitals and the doctors and hospital staff are providing better medical services, he said.

Ramagundam MLA Patel has been undergoing treatment at a hospital at Hyderabad for the past four days.

He released a video on Monday to inform the people of his constituency that he was undergoing treatment in Hyderabad and will not be available to meet them.

Before being tested positive, both the leaders attended several programmes along with others and participated in public meetings. Some of those who accompanied Laxman Rao and Patel have gone into home isolation.

Two members of Mahipal Reddy's family, an aide and a gunman also tested positive. Mahipal Reddy has been admitted to a private hospital.

Earlier, MLAs Vivekananda Goud (Quthbullapur), Bajireddy Govardhan Reddy (Nizamabad Rural), Bigala Ganesh (Nizamabad Urban), Manchireddy Kishan Reddy (Ibrahimpatnam), and Muthireddy Yadagiri Reddy (Jangaon) have tested Coronavirus positive, as also home minister Mahmood Ali and Mayor Bonthu Rammohan.

RESIDENTS
BARRICADE
GRAVEYARDSANJAY SAMUEL PAUL | DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 3

Residents in the neighbourhood of the Khoja Shia graveyard at Bowenpally barricaded its entrance on Monday. They fear that when Covid-19 bodies are buried, the infection may spread to the surrounding areas and create health hazards.

On being informed of the matter, the police intervened and resolved the dispute. There are around 13,000 Khoja Shia families in the city. The community has only one graveyard in the city at Bowenpally, near the vegetable market.

On Monday, the entrance was barricaded with dried branches and bamboo to obstruct people entering it. A body, which was supposed to be buried, was not allowed inside and this caused embarrassment to the family. This matter has been informed to the police and their intervention cleared the entrance, according to Noor Md Gilani, Co-operation Credit President, Khoja Ismail Jamat. He added that last month there were around fourteen deaths in the community of which two were Covid victims. When Alwal inspector P. Yadagiri assured the locals that there was nothing to fear, they agreed to remove the barricading.

● **THIS MATTER** has been informed to the police and their intervention cleared the entrance, according to Noor Md Gilani, Co-operation Credit President, Khoja Ismail Jamat. He added that last month there were around fourteen deaths in the community of which two were Covid victims.

● **ON MONDAY**, the entrance was barricaded with dried branches and bamboo to obstruct people entering it.



Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan celebrates Raksha Bandhan with plasma donors at Raj Bhavan on Monday.

Covid hits Rakhi fest

Sales of rakhis, sweets much lower compared to last year

ADITYA CHUNDURU | DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 3

Raksha Bandhan was a muted affair in Hyderabad because of the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on the economy. Sales of rakhis and sweets were much lower than usual on Monday.

A vast majority of Hyderabadis chose to stay at home, instead of visiting their brothers and sisters. They sent their greetings to each other on WhatsApp and Facebook.

Sweet shops experienced dismal sales figures. Poornachander Rao, manager of Emerald Mithai Shop on Lower Tank Bund road, said the shop sold only a quarter of the amount of sweets it had sold last Raksha Bandhan.

"Of course, sweets sales today were slightly higher than during ordinary days during the lockdown. There isn't enough movement of customers," he said.

Rao explained that he was struggling to hire employees who could prepare the wide variety of



A man seeks blessings from a girl of an orphanage in Mushirabad, who tied rakhi to him on Raksha Bandhan on Monday.

sweets they usually make during festivals. Rakhi sales were low as

well. A seller at Musheerabad said he didn't acquire much stock

● **A VAST** majority of Hyderabadis chose to stay at home, instead of visiting their brothers and sisters.

this year since his inventory from last year was sufficient for the sales he anticipated this year. "People did come to buy rakhis in the last week, but it was definitely much lower than any other year," he said.

Young school children got to experience the festival through online classes. They were made to dress up in ethnic clothing and tie rakhis to their siblings, if they had any.

Those who didn't have siblings — both boys and girls — were told to tie rakhis to their mothers and fathers.

Many political leaders also celebrated the festival on a private scale. Sisters of Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao tied him rakhis at Pragathi Bhavan. His daughter and former MP K. Kavitha tied a rakhi to her brother, IT minister K.T. Rama Rao.

GOVERNOR
PUSHES FOR
PLASMA BANKS.A. ISHAQUI | DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 3

Governor Dr. Tamilisai Soundararajan on Monday called for intensified efforts to set up a plasma bank to effectively coordinate between donors and Covid-19 patients who need the plasma, and save more lives.

The Governor was speaking after celebrating Raksha Bandhan with plasma donors at Raj Bhavan. She felicitated the donors and hailed them as saviours of lives. The Governor appreciated B. Nitin Kumar, an ITian from Mumbai, who donated plasma four times, and S. Siva Pratap, Syed Mustaf Irfan, Umer Farooque, Ennamsetty Akhil and Dr Roopa Darshini, all of whom have donated plasma twice.

The Governor stated that plasma donors have set a great example for others to emulate and added that through their visit the Raj Bhavan has become more divine.

The Governor said, "people without an iota of hesitation can approach the nearest available government hospital, as they have treated Covid-19 patients successfully."

She said, "I appreciate the government hospitals and doctors for their exemplary and humanitarian services. I salute frontline warriors like doctors, nurses, medical staff, police, sanitation workers and journalists for their commitment and selfless services during these challenging times." She appealed to private hospitals to treat patients at reasonable and affordable rates with a humanitarian approach, and not to overcharge and burden them and their families.

● **THE GOVERNOR** stated that plasma donors have set a great example for others to emulate and added that through their visit the Raj Bhavan has become more divine.



Laxmi Bai ties rakhi to her brother Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao on Raksha Bandhan on Monday.



Former MP Kavitha, sister of IT and Industries Minister K.T. Rama Rao, ties rakhi to her brother.



Alekya, daughter of IT and Industries Minister K.T. Rama Rao, offers sweets to her brother Himanshu after tying rakhi to celebrate Raksha Bandhan on Monday.



Hithasri, sister of TPCC chief N. Uttam Kumar Reddy, ties rakhi to her brother.

HC warns pvt
hospitals over
high chargesVUJJINI VAMSHIDHARA
| DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 3

The Telangana High Court on Monday took serious note of corporate hospitals fleeing Covid-19 patients and not handling over the bodies to their kin if the bills are not cleared, and directed the Union and state governments to take stringent steps against such institutions.

Justice T. Vinod Kumar was hearing a petition on the case of Ram Kumar Sharma, an ex-Army man, who died of Covid-19 at Sunshine Hospital on August 2. The hospital raised a bill of ₹8,68,832.30. Though his family paid around ₹4 lakh, the hospital refused to release the body.

Explaining the situation, advocate Pratap Narayan Sanghi filed a writ petition in the High Court by the way of a house motion as Monday

● **JUSTICE KUMAR** directed the station house officer of the Ramgopalpet police to immediately take steps to secure the release of Sharma's body.

was a holiday for Raksha Bandhan.

Justice Kumar directed the station house officer of the Ramgopalpet police to immediately take steps to secure the release of Sharma's body and hand it over to his son Naveen Kumar Sharma for performing last rites.

Justice Kumar impleaded the Centre suo motu and directed it and the TS Director of Medical and Health Services to examine the bills raised by the hospital. If the bills were found to be excess, the judge ordered serious action against the hospital for exploiting citizens. The court posted the matter for September 11.

TS reports 900 less Covid cases
in 24 hrs as govt reduces testingKANIZA GARARI | DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 3

Telangana state recorded nearly 900 fewer cases on Sunday, but that was because the state government reduced the number of tests by 9,759.

On Saturday, the government had conducted 19,202 tests and 1,891 persons had tested positive.

On Sunday, the number of tests plunged to 9,443 and those who tested positive fell to 983. The reports of 1,414 tests are awaited.

The total number of cases as on Sunday 8 pm stood at 67,660, according to the bulletin issued by the health department on Monday. While the GHMC area recorded 273 cases, Ranga Reddy had 73 and Karimnagar 54.

Eleven deaths were reported, taking the toll to 551. The death rate is 53.87 per cent in those with co-morbid conditions and 46.13 per cent did not have any problems and have died due to the virus, according to the bulletin.

The bulletin said 65.6 per cent of the patients were

men and 34.4 per cent women.

Those in the age group of 31 to 40 years were worst affected, both among men and women.

Senior citizens are less infected when compared to younger population, perhaps because they were staying home.

Meanwhile health minister Etala Rajendar along with senior officers of health department visited Gandhi Hospital and stated that patients and their relatives must be given a clear picture of their condition.

Rajendar insisted that all the rooms must be properly ventilated and patient care must be improved.

Doctors stated that plasma treatment is very important. If 13 patients were given plasma therapy, they were confident that 11 would survive. They insisted that donors must come forward to donate plasma.

With the serious cases now coming from districts, it is very important that there must be suffi-

14 ambulance staff
test Covid positiveRAVINDRA SESHU | DC
KOTHAGUDEM, AUG. 3

Fourteen staff members of the 108 ambulance service working in Bhadradi-Kothagudem district, who were shifted to deputation a fortnight ago to Hyderabad for Covid-19 services, tested positive for the Coronavirus on Monday.

They have been admitted to isolation wards in different hospitals in Hyderabad. A total of 16 staff members had been deputed to Hyderabad, four from Yellandu, five from Tekulapalli, six from Manuguru and one from Dammappet. All but two of them have taken ill.

The staff members after

cient staff in Gandhi Hospital.

There are 200 new beds being set up in the aca-

experiencing Covid-19 symptoms asked the officials to test them, following which they tested positive. Four of them are asymptomatic and have been sent to their villages.

The other patients were sent to Nature Cure Hospital and other isolation centres in Hyderabad. Ambulance services in Bhadradi district were hit after the employees were shifted to Hyderabad. About 71 persons tested positive in Khammam district on Monday. The medical employees collected 241 samples on Monday and 82 patients were discharged. There are another 82 patients in Khammam isolation ward.

demic block of the hospital and the minister along with officials inspected them.

AIRLINE PILOT
KILLED IN ROAD
ACCIDENTJAYENDRA
CHAITHANYA T. | DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 3

A pilot working with Indigo Airlines died when the cab in which he was travelling to the airport met with an accident on the Outer Ring Road at Rajendranagar on Monday morning.

The cab driver who suffered multiple injuries is battling for life at NIMS Hospital. Rajendranagar police identified the pilot as Preet Mahender Singh, 42, a native of Chandigarh and resident of Nallagandla, Serlingampally. He was living in the city for the last six months.

The accident took place at around 5.20 am. Police said cab driver Shiva Shankar, 20, could not estimate the speed of a truck that was climbing a gradient on the second lane of the ORR, and rammed into it from the rear.

Singh who was sitting beside the driver died on the spot. Cab driver Shiva Shankar suffered critical injuries and was taken to a private hospital from where he was shifted to Nizam's Institute of Medical Science, Punjagutta, for better treatment, the police said.

"The pilot was the captain of a flight scheduled from Bhuvaneshwar to Goa at 7 am, with a stopover at Hyderabad," said Rajendranagar inspector G. Suresh, adding that a case has been registered.

● **SINGH WHO** was sitting beside the driver died on the spot. Cab driver Shiva Shankar suffered critical injuries and was taken to a private hospital from where he was shifted to Nizam's Institute of Medical Science, Punjagutta.

Families have to ask MLAs, MPs to help

From Page 1

After innumerable calls, the family managed to make arrangements to bury the body at Balapur. The time was fixed at 5.30 am. When the family reached there with the body, they were asked to get permission from the local police and municipal corporator. The body was kept outside the gate till another round of calls were completed, and only after that was the burial done.

Families are having to call the local corporator, MLA and even the MP for

help as demands are being made by crematorium and burial ground managements which they are unable to understand. Non-government organisations that are facilitating families to perform the last rites are asking for some empathy to be shown to the bereaved families, and respect for the dead.

A person whose parents died the same day said: "My mother died due to Covid-19 in the hospital. By the time I collected her body, my father's condition turned serious. I left my mother's body at home and went to attend to my

● **FAMILIES** ARE having to call the local corporator, MLA and even the MP for help as demands are being made by crematorium and burial ground managements which they are unable to understand. Non-government organisations that are facilitating families to perform the last rites are asking for some empathy to be shown to the bereaved families, and respect for the dead.

● **IN THE** electric crematoria there are huge lines, and the waiting time is six to eight hours.

father, only to be handed over his body. I had to bury both of them and it took me six hours to find a place and ₹50,000 for all the procedures. The money was for the place, labour and additional

expenses as there were two Covid-19 bodies. I was scared to ask any questions as what mattered was finding a place to bury them."

In many other cases, the hearse drivers are either

burying the dead or performing the last rites as family members are not present for various reasons.

A driver on condition of anonymity said, "Since the last one month we are seeing lots of objections being raised to perform the last rites, either from local people or from groups who are closing the gates and demanding clearance from the police and local leaders."

He said the bodies are sanitised and packed properly but "no one is willing to listen."

He said that in some

cases there are only two or one family members with the body and the ambulance staff have to assist in performing the last rites. "Fear and stigma are making the last journey very difficult."

In the electric crematoria there are huge lines, and the waiting time is six to eight hours.

After proper checking, four persons are allowed inside while the others have to wait outside. Crematoria that are surrounding by housing colonies or gated communities are refusing to take the Covid-19 bodies.

From AP

PETITION IN HC TO
SUSPEND GAZETTE
OF 3 CAPITALSMD ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 3

The Amaravati Capital Conservation Committee has filed a petition in the High Court to suspend the Gazette of the three capitals. They challenged decentralization of administration and cancellation of CRDA orders as they were against norms.

They urged the court to direct the government not to shift Raj Bhavan, CM's office and the secretariat from Amaravati.

ACC secretary Dhanekula Rama Rao and seven other farmers filed the petition in the court. They sought a stay on the shifting of Executive Capital to Visakhapatnam and further on formation of Judicial Capital at Kurnool and switching of Amaravati as Legislature Capital.

The petitioners claimed that earlier the government appointed a High Power Committee on decentralized development of the State but there is no legality to that committee. They lamented that the government approving the report of the High Power Committee decided to trifurcate Amaravati into three capitals, which is against the Constitution. They claimed that the AP Reorganization Act clearly indicated single capital and hence the division of Amaravati into three capitals is illegal.

Meanwhile, several other leaders of TDP also are planning to file petitions in the HC to stall the process of three capitals and further to restrain moving of administration to Visakhapatnam by Independence Day.

JAGAN LAUNCHES
E-RAKSHABANDHAN
FOR WOMEN, KIDSDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 3

Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has launched a first-of-its-kind innovative programme "E-Rakshabandhan" to protect women and children of the state from cyber and other crimes.

Announcing that it is a gift to women on the Raksha Bandhan Day, he said 4s4u.ap.police.gov.in web portal will provide information on various issues, like how woman can deal with cyber crimes, harassment and other issues. The portal will inform how and where to complain about the crime and how to download the Disha App. It also has all important phone numbers that can be contacted.

The Chief Minister said, "I am happy to start two women-oriented programmes on the occasion of Rakhi Bandhan. Three MoUs have also been signed with major international companies today, which will empower women. And the web portal for women safety is also being launched on the same day."

CM Jagan said, "We have already passed the Disha Bill. It is awaiting President's nod. We have also started 18 Disha police stations, besides appointing special public prosecutors. Women welfare has been high on our priority. Immediately after forming the government, we have provided 50 percent reservations for women in nominated posts and in government contracts, besides implementing schemes like Amma Vodi, Vasati Deevana, Asara and Cheyutha. 30 lakh house sites are being registered in the names of women of the household."

The CM stated, "We have given the post of Home Minister to a woman as well to show our commitment. We have regulated liquor sale and have drastically brought down the sale of liquor. Permit rooms and belt shops have been closed. The latest portal too is in the best interest of the women."

Fund crunch hits infra sector

HMDA, GHMC mostly rely on special purpose vehicles to raise funds

MADDY DEEKSHITH | DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 3

The Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA) appears to have gone slow on building infrastructure projects. It had completed projects worth ₹9,226.10 crore during the 10-year Congress regime but has managed ₹208.60 crore worth of projects against the total sanctioned ₹1,561.50 crore in the last six years, within the Outer Ring Road (ORR).

Earlier, it had completed the PVNR Expressway, flyovers at Langer Houz and Hitec City, the Kukatpally road overbridge (RoB) and master plan roads in the Hyderabad Airport Development Area, development of the ORR including land acquisition and radial roads.

It also implemented the Hussainsagar and Cat-

hment area Improvement Project (HCIP), the bridge at Bapughat and Comprehensive Transportation Study for the Hyderabad Metropolitan Area.

It has since managed to partially execute the ₹170-crore Balanagar flyover, the ₹32-crore Radial Road No. 11 and the ₹6.5-crore ramps on the PVNR Expressway. Works worth ₹1,353 crore are pending.

Officials claimed that this was due to a severe financial crunch. The HMDA and GHMC have been mostly relying on special purpose vehicles including the Hyderabad Road Development Corporation Limited and the Musi Riverfront Development Corporation Limited to raise funds, apart from selling bonds and borrowing from financial institutions.

They said that execution agencies had failed to

WORK IN PROGRESS

- **1.9-KM SIX-LANE** flyover at Balanagar between Narasapur and Fathenagar crossroads, worth ₹387 crore.
- **BEAUTIFICATION** OF 20 lakes within ORR costing ₹120 crore.
- **3-KM RIVERFRONT** beautification at Nagole along Musi River
- **KUKATPALLY NALA** beautification at Begumpet flyover completed, proposals for other areas are under formulation.
- **CONSTRUCTION** OF ramps at Upperpally and Lakshminagar on PVNR Expressway.
- **9-ACRE SHILPARAMAM** at Uppal Bhagat, costing ₹10 crore.

acquire land despite having funds as the focus was on the irrigation and power sectors. Officials said the execution agencies will spend ₹50,000 crore in the next five years.

The HMDA has on its

books projects like the 18.35-km skyway from Paradise Junction to the Kandlakoya ORR junction on the Nagpur highway and another from Paradise junction to Shamirpet ORR junction on the Rajiv

Rahadari for 18.4 km.

Both skyways are proposed to have six lanes, with up and down ramps. The detailed project report (DPR) for the skyway to Rajiv Rahadari is complete and is under preparation for the one leading to the Nagpur highway.

The HMDA has proposed to develop a 528-acre layout in Kokapet with plot sizes of three to 10 acres for mixed use. The widening of service roads of the ORR from two lanes to four lane over 48 km from the TS Police Academy to Kollur is also on the cards. There is a plan to build additional interchanges at Narsingi, Kokapet layout and Janwada on ORR along with two overpasses. Skywalks for pedestrians with multiple connectivity are also proposed at Uppal and Mehdiapatnam, among others.

SIBLINGS NAMED
IN MURDER CASE
HACKED TO DEATHDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, AUG. 3

Two siblings, accused in a murder case, were hacked to death by a group of persons at Hazarigudem in Halia mandal of Nalgonda district early on Monday.

Police identified the victims as Anjaneyulu, 32, a farmer, and his elder brother Satyanarayana, 38, a private contractor. At around 3 am, a group of seven persons attacked the siblings with sharp weapons and hacked them to death. The victims were sleeping in front of their houses when they were attacked.

Police said that on February 4, Anjaneyulu and his eldest brother Hari Kumar, along with four others, had allegedly killed a youngster, Revanth, of the same village after suspecting that he was having an extramarital affair with Hari's wife. The accused were arrested on June 20, Hari and Anjaneyulu were released on conditional bail.

Halia circle inspector G. Chandra Shekar said that the murder of the siblings was to avenge the death of Revanth. After release from jail, Hari was advised not to visit the village, as he faced a threat.

"Inquiries revealed that Indira, mother of Revanth, hired some persons to kill Anjaneyulu, Hari, and Satyanarayana. Hari was in Hyderabad when the attack took place. Teams have been formed to nab the accused persons," said the inspector.

HISTORY SHEETS
AGAINST 31
PERSONS CLOSEDDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, AUG. 3

The Hyderabad city police on Monday closed history sheets against 31 persons, after observing a change of behaviour in them.

The 31 persons, all had the sheets opened in the South Zone for involving various criminal activities. After a close watch on them for several years, the city police have removed their names from the police records on Monday.

Hyderabad police commissioner Anjani Kumar said that the names of 31 rowdy sheeters are removed for being well-mannered and away from criminal activities.

Sanjay replaces
Hyd BJP unit
with 4 'districts'BJP Raja Singh, aspiring for
city chief's post, cries foulS.A. ISHAQUI | DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 3

Aiming for victory in the GHMC elections, BJP state president Bandi Sanjay Kumar has started reorganising the party units of Hyderabad city and the adjacent Ranga Reddy and Medchal-Malkajgiri districts to create more posts for leaders and strengthen the support base in the city.

Sanjay has decided to wind up the BJP Hyderabad city wing and constitute new units in its place by the dividing 15 Assembly constituencies under the Hyderabad district into four units, named Mahankali, Amberpet-Bathukamma, Bhagyalakshmi and Golconda. Sources in the party said Musheerabad, Sanathnagar, Cantonment and Secunderabad Assembly segments will be part of the Mahankali district, Amberpet, Khairatabad, Jubilee Hills and Malakpet will come under Amberpet-Bathukamma district.

Yakutpura, Charminar and Bahadurpura will constitute the Bhagyalakshmi district and Nampally, Karwan and Goshamahall will be grouped under the Golconda district.

Sources said that the Ranga Reddy and Medchal-Malkajgiri district units will be reorganised as LB Nagar and Malkajgiri units, bringing under them Kukatpally, Serlingampally, Ibrahimpatnam, Malkajgiri, Uppal, Medchal, LB Nagar, Patancheru and Quthbullapur

● **THE LONE** MLA of the party, Raja Singh, openly opposed the move and expressed his displeasure at the new state executive committee announced by TS BJP chief Sanjay Bandi.

Assembly constituencies. Sources said that Sanjay was of the opinion that reorganising the city unit and the Ranga Reddy district into six new units will give scope to induct more enthusiastic cadres so that they can work to strengthen the party to face the TRS and MIM.

The lone MLA of the party, Raja Singh, openly opposed the move and expressed displeasure at the new state executive committee announced by Sanjay on Sunday.

In a post on his Twitter handle, Raja Singh said that Sanjay took the decision without consulting senior leaders including himself. Sources said that Raja Singh was aspiring for the post of the Hyderabad unit president but the division of the city unit into four wings had cost him that chance.

Sources said that party leaders including Rajesh Reddy and Shyamunder Goud were contenders to head the Mahankali district, Deepak Reddy and Goutham Rao were aspiring for the Amberpet-Bathukamma unit post. For the Bhagyalakshmi district Su-render Reddy and Roop Raj Yadav and for the Golconda unit Uma Mahender and Bikshapathi are aspirants.

Servants rob ₹2cr
from city realtorJAYENDRA
CHAITHANYA | T.
HYDERABAD, AUG. 3

Servants of a household in Sainikpuri in Kushaiguda reportedly absconded with valuables worth about ₹2 crore, including gold and cash, on Sunday night.

The house, located at the Seventh Cross in Sainikpuri, belonged to realtor A. Narsimha Reddy. His marriage had taken place on July 29. He and his family left for his wedding reception at Falaknuma Palace around 5 pm on Sunday. When they returned around midnight, they found the lock of their main door broken. Their servant Bhim and his wife were not present in the outhouse.

On verification, Narsimha Reddy found that about 1.75 kg of gold, ₹2 lakh cash, a high-end watch and electronic items were missing. After he alerted the police, teams from Central Crime Station, Special Operations Team and other wings inspected the house. Footage of CCTV cameras at the house showed the servant couple walking away with a couple of bags.

Malkajgiri DCP Rakshita K. Murthy told the media, "Evidence has been found that the servants have taken away the property. The servant couple, hailing from Nepal, had been working at the house for the last six months. Special teams have been formed to nab them," the DCP added.

Crowding continues



A group of fabrication workers from Madhapur arrive at the Fever Hospital to get tested for the Coronavirus on Monday in Hyderabad, without following physical distancing norms. They reportedly had symptoms of the disease. — P. SURENDRA

Govt hosp. staffer tests +ve, ends life

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, AUG. 3

A 35-year-old Covid-19 patient, a government hospital staffer, from Kuchanpalli village in Medak district ended his life at his home early on Monday.

According to the Haveli

Ghanpur police, the victim was working at the Narsapur government hospital.

After having symptoms of Covid-19, he underwent tests at Kamareddi. The results were out on Saturday and he tested positive.

On doctors' advice, he

quarantined himself in a separate room at his home on Sunday. His wife, a staff nurse, and his parents and elder brother reside in the same house. His body was first seen by his wife.

"Prima facie, it is understood that the patient

was upset with contracting the virus.

On Sunday night, his wife advised him to do yoga for some time so that he would feel better, and he followed her advice but he took the extreme step later," said Ghanpur sub-inspector Shekar Reddy.

RAHMATULLAH
IS INCHARGE V-C
AT URDU UNIV.

Hyderabad, Aug. 3: Prof. S. M. Rahmatullah, an expert in the teaching public administration, has taken charge as officiating Vice-Chancellor, Maulana Azad National Urdu University, from Prof. Fatima Begum, according to a notification. Prof. Begum retired on July 31.

Prof. Rahmatullah is the senior-most professor at MANUU and has 38 years of teaching and research experience. He was previously incharge registrar and served as registrar from February 2013 to January 2015.

Prof. Rahmatullah was appointed as the Vice-Chancellor of Sri Krishnadeveraya University (SKU), Anantapur, AP in January 2019. — INN

Lockdown not a solution
to tackle virus, says KTRPULI SHARAT
KUMAR | DC
SIRCILLA, AUG. 3

IT minister K.T. Rama Rao said the government would not impose another lockdown. "Lockdown is not a permanent solution to tackle the pandemic," he said at an event at his Assembly constituency Sircilla on Monday.

The government had previously hinted at another lockdown to control the surging Covid-19 cases in the state. "Some friends are asking for imposing lockdown. A lockdown is not a solution. We may be able to slow Covid-19 cases to some extent but except causing some incon-

venience to people a lockdown is not a permanent solution," he said.

He said people would have to live with the virus by taking safety precautions till a medicine or a vaccine was found for Covid-19.

Rama Rao said the death rate of Covid-19 is very less in Telangana state when compared to elsewhere in the country. If people who recover from the Covid-19 start donating plasma, they can save the lives of other patients and contribute to the lowering of the death rate, he said.

He was speaking after inaugurating a Covid-19 isolation centre in the agriculture college at Sardapur and a special

Covid ward at the government hospital in Sircilla. He said people should not fear the virus but also should not neglect safety precautions. If they find any symptoms, they must visit the hospital and get tested.

"Even Union Minister Amit Shah, Chief Ministers of Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh contracted Covid-19," Rama Rao said and called for support for frontline warriors of health, police and municipal departments.

"With a positive attitude and smile, half the disease can be cured. Health officials must treat the patients with love and affection," he said.

QUICK | ACTION

Gang killed 5 pangolins in Dammamet forest, says officer

12 held for smuggling pangolin scales

T.S.S. SIDDHARTH AND
RAVINDRA SESHU | DC
HYDERABAD, KHAMMAM,
AUG. 3

Forest officials seized a large quantity of pangolin scales and arrested 12 persons over the weekend, following an investigation. The pangolin scales are said to have good demand in China.

Acting on reliable information, a team lead by forest officials of Kinnersani wildlife sanctuary recovered 10 pangolin scales

wrapped in a polythene cover from a person near Kothagudem.

The accused, Badavth Ravi, a resident of Kothagudem, said he had purchased these scales from a person in Bhadrachalam for ₹10,000 and was going to Chandrapur to search for a buyer when he was arrested.

He confessed that five pangolin scales were available with one Shaikh Rafi from Guntur who along with Ramchander Karmakar from the city and Soma Mani Prasad

were planning to sell them in Hyderabad.

Acting on this information, a team coordinated by forest divisional officer, Kothagudem, Appaiah, and forest divisional officer, wildlife management, Kinnersani, was sent from Kothagudem and in coordination with district forest officer, vigilance, Ramana Reddy, took the trio into custody. During the interrogation, they revealed that pangolin scales were in demand in the market.

They confessed that the

scales were available with one Kompelli Nagaraju, of Paloncha, who was arrested on Sunday. He confessed that he was in possession of 1.4 kgs of pangolin scales and an auto trolley to transport them. The pangolin was killed in the Tirumalkunta reserve forest.

A total of 12 persons have been arrested and remanded in Khammam sub-jail by forest reserve officer Srinivas Rao. Officials recovered a total of 4 kg of pangolin scales and said that efforts were on to nab

three remaining accused in the case. Kothagudem district forest officer Ranjit Naik said that the gang was employing Adivasis and collecting pangolin scales. It is suspected that the gang had killed five pangolins in Dammamet forest.

It is said that the pangolin scales are smuggled to China overland via Bihar, Manipur, Burma and Nepal. The pangolin scales are priced at ₹1 lakh to ₹1.5 lakh in China and they are used in producing traditional medicines.

LNJN NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF CRIMINOLOGY AND FORENSIC SCIENCE
(Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India)

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For eligibility criteria, remuneration, other details and application form etc. please see the vacancy circular on our website: www.nicfs.gov.in

davp 19125/11/0004/2021

IN BRIEF

Ex-Pope Benedict ill after German trip

Berlin: Emeritus Pope Benedict XVI has fallen ill after his return from a trip to his native Bavaria to visit his brother, who died a month ago, a German newspaper reported Monday. The daily Passauer Neue Presse quoted Peter Seewald, a biographer of the retired pontiff, as saying that the 93-year-old has been suffering from a facial infection since his return to Rome. Seewald, who has published several book-length interviews with Benedict, handed over a copy of the biography to the former pontiff on Saturday, the newspaper reported.

Isaias forecast to turn into hurricane

Vero Beach (US): Isaias was forecast to become a hurricane on Monday as it neared landfall in the Carolinas after bands of heavy rain from the tropical storm lashed Florida's east coast. The US National Hurricane Center issued a hurricane warning from South Santee River, South Carolina, to Surf City, North Carolina, in its 5 am advisory. Tropical Storm Isaias had maximum sustained winds of 70 mph (110 kph) and was expected to strengthen into a Category 1 hurricane, with winds of 74 mph (119 kph) or more. "We are forecasting it to become a hurricane before it reaches the coast this evening," senior hurricane specialist Daniel Brown said.

Drug peddling cat escapes Lanka jail

Colombo: A cat detained at Sri Lanka's main prison while allegedly trying to smuggle drugs and cell phone SIM cards has escaped, media reports said on Monday. The feline was detected by jail intelligence officials on Saturday at the high-security Welikada Prison, a police official said. He said nearly two grams of heroin, two SIM cards and a memory chip were found in a small plastic bag tied around the cat's neck. But it escaped on Sunday from a prison room where it was kept, the *Aruna* newspaper said. There was no immediate comment from prison authorities. The prison had reported an increase in incidents of people throwing small packets of drugs, cell phones and phone chargers over the walls in recent weeks.

Ex-Belgian King's statue damaged

Brussels: A bust of late Belgian king Leopold II, who exploited the country's brutally-run former central African colony as a personal estate, has been vandalised for a third time. Ruling the Belgians between 1865 and 1909, Leopold II was revered at home as the builder of his country, but his legacy came under the spotlight this year as anti-racist protests spread around the world. During his reign, the land that was then the Belgian Congo and is now largely in the Democratic Republic of Congo was run for his profit and millions of Africans were killed, tortured or died of the hardship of forced labour. When "Black Lives Matters" protests erupted this year triggered by anger in the United States at the latest police killings of unarmed black suspects, Leopold's many monuments were targeted. The latest incident is thought to have taken place late Friday, when a statue of Leopold outside the Africa Museum just outside Brussels was once again daubed in blood-red paint.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The General Public is hereby informed that, my clients Mr. MIRAJAZALI S/o. Mir Sajjad Ali, Age: 33 Years, Occ. Business, & MIR AFZAL ALI S/o. Mir Sajjad Ali, Age: 31 Years, Occ. Business, both are R/o. Darulshifa, Hyderabad, intend to purchase a Property bearing H.No. 2-4-1113/A, (Subdivided as 2-4-1113/A/1, 2-4-1113/A/2, 2-4-1113/A/3, 2-4-1113/A/4, Ground + Upper 2 Floors), Adm. 471 Sq. Yards, situated at Azam Jahi Road, Kachiguda, Hyderabad from its lawful owner Mr. Paramjit Singh S/o. Late Harbajan Singh for a valuable consideration and a substantial amount is paid as advance. If any person (s), Banks or Financial Institution having any right, claim, interest or objection in the above referred property shall approach the undersigned with all original relevant documents within (7) days from the date of this publication for settlement of issues if any, failing which my clients shall proceed and conclude the sale transaction and no claim or objection shall be entertained thereafter and deemed to be waived. **Md. Ali Mohiuddin, Advocate** # 16-7-723/5, Osmanpura, Hyd-24. Ph: 9848550101

Ransomware fear looms on US polls

FBI, security dept alerts local governments

Washington, Aug. 3: Federal authorities say one of the gravest threats to the November election is a well-timed ransomware attack that could paralyse voting operations. The threat isn't just from foreign governments, but any fortune-seeking criminal.

Ransomware attacks targeting state and local governments have been on the rise, with cyber criminals seeking quick money by seizing data and holding it hostage until they get paid. The fear is that such attacks could affect voting systems directly or even indirectly, by infecting broader government networks that include electoral databases. Even if a ransomware attack fails to disrupt elections, it could nonetheless rattle confidence in the vote. On the spectrum of threats from the fantastical to the more probable, experts and officials say ransomware is a particularly realistic possibility because the attacks are already so pervasive and lucrative.

The FBI and Department of Homeland Security have issued

● **RANSOMWARE ATTACKS** targeting state and local governments have been on the rise, with cyber criminals seeking quick money by seizing data and holding it hostage until they get paid.

● **THE FEAR** is that such attacks could affect voting systems directly or even indirectly, by infecting broader government networks.

advisories to local governments, including recommendations for preventing attacks.

"From the standpoint of confidence in the system, I think it is much easier to disrupt a network and prevent it from operating than it is to change votes," Adam Hickey, a Justice Department deputy assistant attorney general, said in an interview. The scenario is relatively simple: Plant malware on multiple networks that affect voter registration databases and activate it just before an election. Or target vote-reporting and tabulation sys-

tems.

"With the 2020 election, election infrastructure has a target on its back," Colorado Secretary of State Jena Griswold said. "We know that election infrastructure was attempted to be undermined in 2016, and we know the techniques are shifting." The number of attacks has escalated in recent years, with targets including Texas' transportation agency and city computers in New Orleans.

A December report by cybersecurity firm Emsisoft tracked attacks against at least 966 entities that interrupted 911 services, rendered medical records inaccessible and hindered police background checks. "We're seeing state and local entities targeted with ransomware on a near daily basis," said Geoff Hale, a top election security official with Homeland Security's Cybersecurity Agency.

Steps taken to improve security of voter registration systems after the 2016 election could help governments fend off election-related ransomware attacks.

— AP

PAK DEFENCE MINISTER, FM INSPECT LOC

Islamabad, Aug. 3: Pakistan's foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi and defence minister Pervez Khattak on Monday visited the Line of Control (LoC) where they were briefed by the Army about the latest situation.

The two ministers, accompanied by the Prime Minister's Special Assistant on National Security Moeed Yusuf, visited the Chirki Kot Sector.

In a video message released before his LoC visit, Qureshi said he was visiting the LoC along with the Defence Minister to express solidarity with the Kashmiri people. The two ministers visited the Chirki Kot Sector where they were briefed by the Army about the latest situation of the LoC, officials said.

India has firmly told Pakistan that the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir has been, is and shall continue to be an integral part of India. Issues related to Jammu and Kashmir are an internal matter of India, the Ministry of External Affairs has reiterated. Pakistan has been unsuccessfully trying to drum up international support against India for withdrawing Jammu and Kashmir's special status on August 5 last year.

— PTI

Afghan troops take over jail after battling IS for hours

Jalalabad, Aug. 3: Afghan forces said they retook a prison in the country's east on Monday afternoon, following an hours-long battle a day after the facility was targeted by the Islamic State group in an attack that killed 29 people.

The prison is believed to be holding hundreds of IS members. The attack highlighted the challenges ahead for Afghanistan, even as US and NATO forces begin to withdraw following America striking a peace deal with the Taliban.

Defence Ministry spokesman Fawad Aman said the prison was taken back in the afternoon. The fighting also

left at least 50 wounded. Even as Afghan troops seized the prison in Jalalabad, the capital of Nangarhar province, some 115 kilometres (70 miles) east of Kabul, IS militants continued to fire on Afghan security forces from a nearby neighbourhood. Sporadic gunfire rang out from nearby residential buildings in central Jalalabad, an area of high security near the provincial governor's office.

As security forces swept through the prison, they found the bodies of two Taliban prisoners apparently killed by the Islamic State group, showing the tensions between the two militant fac-

tions battling each other in eastern Afghanistan.

The 29 dead included civilians, prisoners, guards and Afghan security forces, said Attaullah Khogyani, the provincial governor's spokesman. The attack began on Sunday when an Islamic State suicide bomber drove a car laden with explosives up to the prison's main gate, detonating the bomb. Islamic State militants opened fire on the prison's guards and poured in through the breach. The IS affiliate in Afghanistan, known as IS in Khorasan province and headquartered in Nangarhar province, claimed responsibility for the attack. — AP

For first time after 45 years, Nasa astronauts splash down in ocean

Cape Canaveral, Aug. 3: Two Nasa astronauts returned to Earth on Sunday in a dramatic, retro-style splashdown, their capsule parachuting into the Gulf of Mexico to close out an unprecedented test flight by Elon Musk's SpaceX company.

It was the first splashdown by US astronauts in 45 years, with the first commercially built and operated spacecraft to carry people to and from orbit. The return clears the way for another SpaceX crew launch as early as next month and possible tourist flights next year.

Test pilots Doug Hurley and Bob Behnken arrived back on Earth in their SpaceX Dragon capsule named Endeavour, less



The SpaceX Crew Dragon Endeavour spacecraft lands with Nasa astronauts Robert Behnken and Douglas Hurley onboard in the Gulf of Mexico off the coast of Pensacola, Florida.

— AFP

than a day after departing the International Space Station and two months after blasting off from Florida. The capsule parachuted into the calm gulf waters about 40 miles off the coast of Pensacola, hun-

dreds of miles from Tropical Storm Isaias pounding Florida's Atlantic coast.

"Welcome back to planet Earth and thanks for flying SpaceX," said Mission Control from SpaceX headquarters.

"It's a little bit overwhelming to see everybody here considering the things that have gone on the last few months since we've been off planet," Hurley said after arriving back home in Houston on Sunday evening where they were greeted by a small masked-gathering of family and officials, including Musk.

Musk had rushed to Houston from SpaceX headquarters in Hawthorne, California, to welcome them. He was clearly moved — and relieved — while addressing the group.

"I'm not very religious, but I prayed for this one," he said. "The astronauts' ride back to Earth was fast, bumpy and hot, at least on the outside."

— AP

Covid-19 hits Norway cruise ship, 40 test +ve

Copenhagen, Aug. 3: A Norwegian cruise ship line halted all trips and apologised on Monday for procedural errors after an outbreak of Coronavirus on one ship infected at least 4 passengers and 36 crew members.

The 40 people on the MS Roald Amundsen who tested positive have been admitted to the University Hospital of North Norway in Tromsø, north of the Arctic Circle, where the ship currently is docked.

"A preliminary evaluation shows that there has been a failure in several of our internal procedures," Hurlgruten CEO Daniel Skjeldam said in a statement. He added the company that sails along Norway's picturesque coast between Bergen in the south and Kirkenes in the north is "now in the process of a full review of all procedures, and all aspects of our own handling."

The cruise line has contacted passengers who had been on the MS Roald Amundsen for its July 17 and July 24 departures from Bergen to the Arctic archipelago of Svalbard, which is known for its polar bears. All 158 crew members on MS Roald Amundsen have been tested and 122 were negative. There were 209 guests on the first voyage.

— AFP

UK rolls out new rapid Covid tests

London, Aug. 3: Two new tests, both able to detect the Coronavirus in just 90 minutes, will be rolled out to hospitals, care homes and laboratories across the UK to increase testing capacity and distinguish between Covid-19 and winter flu in the coming months, the government said.

One of the tests, the 90-minute LamPORE swab tests, will be supplied by Oxford Nanopore, an Oxford University spin-off co-founded by Indian-origin CEO Gordon Sanghera, who

believes it also offers an "accessible global testing solution".

"We are honoured to be playing a part in fighting Covid-19 in the UK, and preparing the country for the winter virus season. Ever since we founded Oxford Nanopore, our mission has been to create disruptive, high performance technology that has a profound, positive impact on society," Sanghera said. Oxford Nanopore will be making 450,000 90-minute LamPORE swab tests available.

— PTI

WEARING MASKS OUTDOORS MADE MUST IN FRANCE

Paris, Aug. 3: Beach resorts along France's Atlantic coast, promenades on the Loire River, farmers markets in the Alps — they're among scores of spots around France where everyone is required to wear a mask outdoors.

The rules are on top of a decree last month requiring people to wear masks in stores and indoor public places.

— AFP

VIKAS KHANNA TO HELP INDIAN STREET VENDORS

New York, Aug. 3: Michelin-star chef Vikas Khanna, who will soon reach the milestone of having distributed 25 million meals across India amid Covid-19, is aiming to provide essentials to 10 million street vendors and their families. "We are securing ration and planning about 10 million meals around the country for street vendors," he said.

— PTI

PAGDI CEREMONY

Shri VASHULAL K. LAKHI
Pagdi will be held today 4th Aug. '20 from 4.30 to 5 p.m. at our Res: 40 Gunrock Enclave, Secunderabad. (Please pray for him from your respective homes)
Inserted by: Pushpa Lakhi (Wife), Deepak K. Lakhi (Son) & Family, Manohar Lal K. Lakhi (Nephew) & Family
(S/2021/000374)

SHRADDANJALI
I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Ps 23:6

KOMBATTA SETHU MADHAVAN GARU
DOB: 15.05.1961 DOD: 20.07.2020
Words cannot express our grief. Our loss remains.....
Inserted by: Nagaraju Gunupudi & Family Members
(S/2021/000373)

19th DEATH ANNIVERSARY IN EVERLASTING MEMORY OF OUR BELOVED MOTHER

Smt. SARASWATI DEVI
D.O.B: 04.08.2001
W/o Late Sri. SURAJ NARAYAN
D.O.B: 13.12.1984
Inserted by: Beloved Sons Mr. Raj Narayan & Mr. Chander Narayan Srivastava Children & Grand Children
(S/2021/000300)

10th ANNIVERSARY

D. R. KISHORE KUMAR YADAV
DOD: 04-08-2010
Your memories are always remembered in our hearts forever
Inserted by: Wife & Children Santhosh Sweets, R.P. Road, Secunderabad Ph: 9885307146

SHRADDHANJALI

Sri Prahalad Singh (Laddu)
from RJPS, Begumpet DOD - 03/8/20
We pray that the Almighty gives strength to all loved ones to tide over this sorrow. Laddu, You will be dearly missed and you shall forever live in our heart.
Inserted by: RJPS 1983 Batch School Friends

SHRADDHANJALI

Hemant Godbole
07-09-1953 - 22-07-2020
Deeply Mourned by: Anil, Sharad, Prasanna, Madan, Dr. Pramod, Ashok, Arun & 1969 VVBHS Batchmates

16th DAY CEREMONY

Sri K. SETHU MADHAVAN
DOB: 15-05-1961 DOD: 20-07-2020
Lunch follows at his residence Villa No.28, Mythri Villas, Phase -1, Sama Nagar, Hayath Nagar, on 4th August, 2020.
Inserted by: Glowsun Industries, Khidkee Shoppee Ph: 9849169918

2nd ANNIVERSARY
I'm the resurrection I'm the life. John 11:25

ROBIN SUNNY FRANCIS
DOB: 21-01-1957 DOD: 04-08-2018
May God restore ur life my Son.
In Tears: Mom, Dad, Sister
(S/2021/000310)

BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCE

PETER MCLEOD
Dearest Peter to hear your voice and see your smile and just sit and talk to you would be our dearest wish today on this your birthday thinking of you today and always we will love you forever.
Inserted by: Loving Wife, Son, Daughters & Loved Ones
(L/2021/000019)

28th ANNIVERSARY

Lt. SANJEEV JAIN 'SENA MEDAL'
2nd Jan 1968 to 2nd August 1992
He laid down his life in Kashmir Valley fighting for the Country. We salute Sena Medal awardee and our beloved Son and Soldier on his day of Martyrdom
Inserted by: FAMILY MEMBERS

16th DAY CEREMONY

K. SETHU MADHAVAN
Administrative Officer, Advocate General Office, High Court of AP. Expired on 20.07.2020
16th DAY CEREMONY on 04.08.2020 SHRADDHANJALI
Your blessings are guiding light to all of us You will always remain in our hearts.
Inserted by: K.Suresh (Brother) - 8790000455

BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCE
"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." Psalm 116:15

Mr. MADUGULA JOHN SUNDER
D.O.B: 4th August 1941 D.O.D: 23rd Sept 2019
We thank God for the blessing of you in our lives. You have been a loving husband, wonderful father, adorable grandpa and a smartly-dressed, soft-spoken, caring, compassionate and God-fearing gentleman. We cherish and treasure all the memories with you.
Inserted by: Wife: G. Padmalatha Children: Dr. M.J. Eliot & Family: Mr. M.J. Richard Walter & Family Mrs. M. Sabrina & Family

BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCE
Safe in the Arms of Jesus

RUTH ADAMS REGO
D.O.B: 4.8.1968 D.O.D: 17.1.2020
You were chosen Gods own Angel, we miss you every moment. The pain of losing you is immeasurable your love & devotion had no end. Our comfort is you are celebrating your birthday in Heaven.
Ivan, Marie, Gary, Raymond, Debbie, Jess, Jamshed, Sasha, Ethan & Kristin
(S/2021/000368)

4th DEATH ANNIVERSARY

S.P. SUBBA RAO
Ex. VST Co. Ltd., DOB: 05.03.1927 DOD: 04.08.2019
Residence 10-1-478, Shashi Nilayam, West Marredpally, Secunderabad.
Inserted by: SUNCHU FAMILY

1st Death Anniversary
The memory of the righteous is blessed - Prov. 10:7

C. A. J. Venkatachalam
DOB: 01.02.1942 DOD: 04.08.2019
Your sweet memories will remain in our hearts forever and ever.
Inserted by: Family Members Ph: 7995227812, 7780533763

6th DEATH ANNIVERSARY

NISTALA GOPALA KRISHNA
D.O.B: 03.11.1940 D.O.D: 04.08.2014
Your memories are always remembered in our hearts forever
Inserted by: Children: N. Srinivas, M. Revathy, N. Sona, S. Sai Usha and Grand Children and Sons-in-law. Ph: 9885823776, 9966403605

SAD DEMISE

MOHAMMED SHAMSHEER ALI
S/o. Late Mohammed Anwar Ali (Retd. Asst. Engg., Electric Dept.,) D.O.B.: 19-04-1943 D.O.D.: 01-08-2020
Namaz e Janaza and buried after Fajr Prayer on 1st August, Saturday @ Gajr Graveyard, Noor Khan Bazar, Hyd.
Inserted by: Daughters & Sons Mobile: 98495 87650

16th DAY CEREMONY

Sri K. SETHU MADHAVAN
DOB: 15-05-1961 DOD: 20-07-2020
Lunch follows at Residence Villa No.28, Mythri Villas, Phase -1, Sama Nagar, Hayath Nagar, on 4th August, 2020.
Inserted by: Family Members, Ph: 9246350010

SHORT TAKES

IMD ISSUES RED ALERT FOR MUMBAI

DC CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, AUG. 3

The India Meteorological Department has issued a red alert for Mumbai, Thane, Pune, Raigad and Ratnagiri districts in Maharashtra for Tuesday after upgrading its earlier rain forecast from “heavy-very heavy” to “extremely heavy”.

An IMD official informed that the rest of Maharashtra was very likely to get rain and thundershowers in isolated places during this period. He said the “extremely heavy” forecast means Mumbai, Raigad, Thane, Pune and Ratnagiri may get more than 204.5 millimetres of rain in a period of 24 hours.

“Mumbai, Thane, Pune would receive extremely heavy rainfall in isolated places on Tuesday and Wednesday. Raigad has a similar forecast between Monday and Wednesday,” he said, adding that the probability of the forecast is very likely, which means 51 per cent to 75 per cent of actualisation.

Neighbouring Palghar district would get heavy to very heavy rains at a few places on Tuesday and the intensity would increase on Wednesday, the IMD said.

SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN TESTS POSITIVE AGAIN

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC
BHOPAL, AUG 3

Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivrāj Singh Chouhan’s samples tested positive again on Monday making him extend his stay in the hospital here where he was admitted on July 25 for treatment of Covid-19. A health bulletin where he has been admitted, said, “CM’s RT-PCR test for SARS-Cov-2 on the 9th day was positive. His medical parameters are normal”.

Earlier on Sunday, Mr Chouhan tweeted that he was healthy and not showing any symptoms of infection. He would be discharged from the hospital if his latest samples tested negative.

State home minister Narottam Mishra also confirmed that Mr Chouhan would stay in hospital for now. Mr Chouhan would chair Tuesday’s virtual cabinet meeting from the hospital, he added. Madhya Pradesh has reported 33,535 coronavirus positive cases and 886 deaths so far.

KIN OF ABDUCTED TA JAWAN APPEAL FOR HIS RELEASE

DC CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR, AUG. 3

The parents of a Territorial Army jawan who was abducted by suspected militants from a remote village of Jammu and Kashmir’s southern Kulgam district a day ago while making an appeal for his release said on Monday that they needed him the most “to stay alive”.

The soldier Shakir Manzoor was reportedly abducted by gunmen after they intercepted his car while he was travelling through Damhal Hanjipora, a militancy-infected area of Kulgam, on Sunday evening.

Before taking him along forcibly, the suspected militants reportedly torched his vehicle, the police sources here said.

The police said a massive search operation was soon launched in the area to secure the release of Mr. Shakir who is a resident of Harmain village of neighbouring Shopian district.

The police also said that he was on leave and was heading home for Id when his car was intercepted by gunmen.

Mr. Shakir’s parents while making a passionate appeal to his captors said that he has to take care of his four sisters and them.

“We appeal to the abductors to please forgive him if he has committed a mistake and let him go for the sake of God. He is needed by us to stay alive,” his father told reporters.

He added, “We learnt that his vehicle was burnt and when we reached the spot we only found the damaged car, but no trace of him.”

One of his sisters said, “We appeal to the abductors to please let him go. We don’t need anything, we have everything. Just let our brother go and return to us. He is needed by his aged parents and us. We don’t need this job. We just need our brother.”

Spl dress with nine gems for Lord Ram

Clothes are made using soft material such as ‘makhmal’ as they are for Ram Lalla who is a child

Ayodhya, Aug. 3: For the past three and a half decades, brothers Shankarlal and Bhagwatlal ‘Pahaadhi’ have been stitching clothes for Ram Lalla in Ayodhya. Their dedication will manifest in the splendid dress they have meticulously crafted for the deity to wear on August 5, during the bhoomi puja ceremony of the Ram temple.

Operating from their shop named after their late father Babulal and located in the city’s Badhi Kutiyaa area, the brothers stitch clothes for only deities and seers.

“My father late Babulal started stitching the clothes of Ram Lalla in 1985. He used to carry our sewing machine to the Ramjanmabhoomi and stitch the clothes with me and my elder brother in tow,” Shankarlal, 54, said on Monday.

“The three of us used to make the clothes of Lord Ram. The dresses were made and stitched virtually in front of the deity. Since then, our work is continuing,” he said.

Shankarlal said that for Wednesday, the day of bhoomi puja to mark the beginning of the construction of the grand Ram temple in Ayodhya, two sets of dresses have been made — one is green, while the other is orange.

“The clothes are made using soft material such as makhmal (velvet). After all, they are for Ram Lalla who is a child. The green dress has been made keeping in mind the day-specific colour, while orange is considered auspicious,” he said.

On Wednesday, the green dress will be worn first and the orange one later, Shankarlal said.

The special dress for the

ceremony has nine gems stitched in golden thread. “There is grandeur in the clothes of the Lord as well,” he said.

On Sunday, the dresses were handed over by the tailors, said Acharya Satyendra Das, the chief priest of the Ram temple.

“A day-specific colour scheme is followed for the dresses worn by Lord Ram. On Monday the dress is white, on Tuesday it is red, while on Wednesday it is the turn of the green dress for the Lord,” Shankarlal said.

On Thursdays the idol is dressed in yellow, Fridays are for cream-coloured dresses, on Saturdays it is the turn of blue clothes while on Sundays pink clothes adorn the deity.

Shankarlal also said the same cloth, with which Ram’s dress is stitched, is used to make dresses for Lakshman, Bharat, Shatrughan, Hanuman and Shaaigrām.

“Earlier, 11-metre-long fabric was required to make the dress, but now, we need about 17 metres of cloth. Once the grand temple is built, I do not know how much cloth will be required to make one set of dresses for Lord Ram and others,” Shankarlal said.

At present, Shankarlal is assisted by his nephews Pawan Kumar, Sanjay Kumar and Shrawan Kumar.

“My son Rajveer is in class 7. As soon as he clears class 8, he will join me,” he said.

Shankarlal’s elder brother Bhagwatlal ‘Pahaadhi’ attributed their stitching expertise to God.

“The entire family is involved in this. Whatever qualities have been given by God, we are making dresses using those qualities only. It is He who is



A model of Ram temple displayed at Kar Sewak Puram in Ayodhya on Monday. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to attend the Bhoomi Puja ceremony of Ram Temple in Ayodhya on August 5. — PTI

● **FOR THE DAY** of bhoomi puja to mark the beginning of the construction of the grand Ram temple in Ayodhya, two sets of dresses have been made — one is green, while the other is orange.

getting them made by us, as He gets everything done.”

Interestingly, the brother duo and their family members depend on other tailors for their own apparels.

“We only make clothes for Lord Ram and some clothes of seers. We do not accept any orders from the common people. We even do not make our own

clothes. Our own clothes are made using the services and expertise of other tailors,” Shankarlal said.

Meanwhile, as details of the invitation card and guest list were unveiled on Monday, reports said that only five people will be on the stage for the event — Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat, Uttar Pradesh governor Anandiben Patel, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Mahant Nritya Gopaldas.

The invite, which has an image of the idol of “Ram Lalla” or infant Lord Ram, mentions Modi and three others. — PTI

Thackeray unlikely to attend event

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC
MUMBAI, AUG. 3

Owing to the Coronavirus outbreak in Ayodhya, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray is not likely to attend the bhoomi puja ceremony of the Ram Mandir in the holy town.

“The situation is critical in Ayodhya and everyone believes VIP movement should be as less as possible. The Prime

Minister is going there, we wish him well. The Chief Minister can go there later any time,” said senior Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut on Monday.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will perform the bhoomi puja of the proposed Ram Mandir at Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh on August 5.

Raut’s remarks have come after UP minister Kamal Rani Varun succumbed to the virus.

SSR death: Patna cop quarantined

NAYEAR AZAD | DC
PATNA, AUG. 3

The tussle between Bihar and Maharashtra police over the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput intensified on Monday after an IPS officer from Patna, Vinay Tiwary was directed to stay under home quarantine by the BMC authorities.

Reacting over the incident Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar said, “Whatever happened to the officer was unfortunate. Our DGP will speak with the authorities in Mumbai”.

When asked whether he would speak with Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray regarding the alleged mistreatment of Bihar cadre IPS officer in Mumbai, Nitish Kumar said that “this is not a political issue for us. We are aware of our legal responsibilities. Bihar DGP would be discussing the issue with authorities in Mumbai”.

The alleged mistreatment of the Bihar police team in Mumbai also snowballed into a political controversy. Political leaders across the party line on Monday raised the issue in the state Assembly and urged Nitish Kumar to recommend a CBI probe into the

death of Sushant Singh Rajput.

The demand was first raised by Neeraj Singh Bablu, a BJP MLA and Sushant Singh Rajput’s cousin.

“It is evident that the Maharashtra government is trying to create hurdles in the way of Bihar police who has been sent to investigate the case. Forcing an IPS officer to stay under home quarantine hours after he arrived in Mumbai to lead the probe also raises serious doubts”, BJP MLA and Sushant Singh Rajput’s cousin said.

Neeraj Singh’s demand for CBI probe was supported by the leader of the opposition Tejashwi Yadav who said that “the RJD was the first party to make the demand. I have also requested the state government that the upcoming film city in Rajgir should be named after Sushant Singh Rajput”.

The Bihar police had launched an investigation into the case after the deceased actor’s father K.K. Singh lodged an FIR against actress Rhea Chakraborty on July 25. He had also alleged huge financial irregularities and accused Rhea’s family of cheating and abetment of suicide.

VINEETA PANDEY | DC
NEW DELHI, AUG. 3

Amid daily reporting of a huge number of coronavirus cases, India has taken a step forward in race against time to develop a vaccine. The Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) has given approvals to the Serum Institute of India (SII) to conduct Phase 2 and 3 human clinical trials of the Oxford University developed Covid-19 vaccine candidate in the country.

The SII, one of the largest manufacturers of vaccines in the world, has been chosen by Oxford and its partner AstraZeneca to manufacture the vaccine COVISHIELD once it is ready for larger use. Currently, phase 2, 3 clinical trials of the Oxford sponsor vaccine are going on in the United Kingdom, while phase 3 clinical trials are on in Brazil and phase 1, 2 clinical trials are going on in South Africa. The vaccine candidate has shown promising results during its phase-1 trials in the UK in which two Indians were also administered the vaccine.

The SII had last month sought permission from

● **AS PER THE STUDY** design, each subject will be administered two doses at a gap of 4 weeks - first dose on Day 1 and second on Day 29.

● **OFFICIALS SAID** the safety and immunogenicity will be assessed at predefined intervals.

DCGI to conduct these trials in India. The approval for conducting phase-2 and 3 clinical trials by the SII was granted by the DCGI after an evaluation based on the recommendations of the Subject Expert Committee (SEC) on Covid-19.

The SII will conduct an “observer-blind, randomised controlled study” to determine the safety and immunogenicity of COVISHIELD on healthy Indian adults, said sources. Accordingly, 1,600 persons at 17 sites will participate in the trials.

As per the study design, each subject will be administered two doses at a gap of 4 weeks - first dose on Day 1 and second on Day 29. Officials said the safety and immunogenicity will be assessed at predefined intervals. SII will have to submit safety data, evaluated by the

Data Safety Monitoring Board (DSMB), to the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO).

The clinical trial sites which have been proposed for the study be distributed across India and include AIIMS-Delhi, B.J. Medical College-Pune, Rajendra Memorial Research Institute of Medical Sciences (RMRIMS)-Patna, Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research-Chandigarh, AIIMS-Jodhpur, Nehru Hospital- Gorakhpur, Andhra Medical College-Vishakhapatnam and JSS Academy of Higher Education and Research-Mysore.

Covid-19 cases in India are on a steep rise as the country reported 57,972 fresh cases in the last 24 hours taking the country’s overall figures to 18,03,695, as per union health ministry. So far 38,135 deaths have been reported out of which 771 took place in the last 24 hours. However, according to COVID19India.org by Monday evening, India had about 18.31 lakh total cases and close to 38,500 deaths.

India is now reporting the highest number of daily cases in the world

followed by Mexico as daily high reporting in the United States of America and Brazil came under check. According to ICMR chief Dr Balram Bhargava it is difficult to predict whether or not India will see a second wave of Covid-19 infections and there will be smaller peaks at different times due to the varied geography of the country. According to the union health ministry, India continues to improve the Case Fatality Rate (CFR) which is now 2.11 per cent and recovery rate is 65.77%. Country’s Test Per Million (TPM) has increased to 14,640 and 24 states and UTs have reported higher testing per million than the national average.

Meanwhile, the union health ministry on Monday issued protocols to be followed at fitness centres like gymnasiums and yoga institutes. As per guidelines, only asymptomatic persons with Aarogya Setu app should be allowed and they must maintain social distancing and wear of visor while exercising. Such centres in containment zones will not be allowed to open and spas, sauna, steam bath. Swimming pools too will remain closed across the country.

BABRI LITIGANT INVITED FOR CEREMONY

Ayodhya, Aug. 3: Iqbal Ansari, who was a litigant in the Ayodhya land dispute case, has decided to gift a ‘Ram namī’ stole and a copy of the Ramcharitmanas to Prime Minister Narendra Modi when he attends the bhoomi puja ceremony for the Ram temple here on Wednesday.

“Yes, I have received the invitation from Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust for the bhoomi puja ceremony. I will certainly attend it. The dispute is over now after the court’s verdict,” said Ansari (69).

“Our Prime Minister is coming. I will meet him and give him a ‘Ramnamī’ stole (with Ram’s name written on it) and Ramcharitmanas as a present,” Ansari said.

His father Hashim Ansari, the oldest litigant in the Babri Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi land dispute case, died at the age of 95 in 2016 after which the son started pursuing the case in the court.

Talking about Wednesday’s ground-breaking ceremony to mark the beginning of the construction of a grand Ram temple here, Ansari said, “I belong to Ayodhya. All this (temple’s construction) will change the fate of Ayodhya. We all want our child to get better opportunities”.

He further said, “I respect sadhus and saints. I am happy to have received the invitation for the ceremony. I think it is Lord Ram’s will that I attend it”.

— PTI

WOMAN SELLS EARRINGS FOR DAUGHTER’S ONLINE CLASSES

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, AUG. 3

A mother of standard VIII student in Odisha had to sell her earrings to buy a smartphone for enabling her child to attend online classes.

According to reports, Archita Bhoi, a student of Rodhapur Government Upper Primary School and native of Balisahi village in Cuttack, was not able to attend the online classes as her family did not have a smartphone. Her father, a daily wage earner, could not buy her a smartphone.

Archita was forced to stay at home after her school was closed while her father, Gagan Bhoi, was also left jobless after the Covid-19 lockdown.

“Initially, I was attending online classes with a friend who lives around two kilometers away from my village. But visiting so far every day was getting difficult,” she said.

With no option left, Archita’s parents decided to buy her a smartphone so that she could take online classes. But, as it was too costly for them, so Archita’s mother decided to sell her gold earrings.

No. of active terrorists in Valley comes down

PAWAN BALI | DC
NEW DELHI, AUG. 3

There has been a decrease in terrorism in the Kashmir Valley with 70 incidents reported this year against 107 during the same period last year, said sources in security establishment on Monday.

According to the report, security forces were able to foil six attempts of IED blast in Kashmir Valley by the terrorists through their timely detection, preventing serious casualties. The report said that the security forces have been able to stabilise situation in Kashmir after Article 370 was abol-

ished last year.

It said security forces carried out aggressive anti-terrorists operations to prevent them from creating trouble in the Valley and also increased vigilance at the Line of Control so that Pakistan reportedly is not able to send terrorists into Kashmir.

Due to these measures, the number of active terrorists present in Valley has come down to less than 200.

Last year, there were Intelligence reports that some 350 terrorists were waiting at various launch pads in PoK to infiltrate into Jammu and Kashmir.



DECCAN Chronicle

4 AUGUST 2020

Restoring status quo in Ladakh: Long haul ahead

The border stalemate with China continues in eastern Ladakh. This is a sanitised way of putting things. However, the bitter reality is that the military standoff is in areas that lie well to the west of the absurd claim line of China first propounded in November 1959 - as its westernmost region; in other words, many kilometers inside Indian territory, which India did not accept. The threat is that even if China vacates some of this in order to appear reasonable in diplomatic or military negotiations, it will still be inside Indian territory or on the Indian side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC). And the risk — on the basis of what appears to be in the minds of policy makers in Beijing behind the scenes — is that China may seek to compel India to accept the territories it may vacate as no man's land. This means Indian patrols may not return to those areas. The Chinese ambassador in New Delhi was unambiguous in his public remarks less than a week ago that Chinese forces were within the "traditional" frontier of China. This would appear preposterous not only to Indians but also to objective international observers of China's frontier regions, particularly in relation to its sovereignty claims on Tibet and Xinjiang and also China's ambitions in respect of its southern and south-eastern maritime frontiers that rub up against several countries of the Indo-Pacific. The region China claims in Ladakh has been incorporated as part of its Xinjiang military districts. This means China has pushed the Uighur country by thousands of square kilometres west of the Tarim river basin to which it is geographically, historically and culturally confined after gobbling up Aksai Chin in the 1950s.

Regrettably, China's present claims, no matter how outrageous, have been buttressed by the Prime Minister's June 19 remarks made in a conference with senior Opposition leaders, leaving them aghast. Now Beijing throws Mr Modi's words at us and tries to absorb territories to which it laid no formal claims before November 1959 (which India had not accepted in any case). It is not likely to be easy correcting this Himalayan blunder, although our external affairs minister, our defence minister and top military leaders are working hard at it. Four rounds of military negotiations and conversations between India's and China's foreign ministers, and our national security adviser with his counterpart on boundary negotiations, have been largely futile. A fifth round commenced Sunday and nothing is known about its outcome. In light of the Chinese ambassador's recent observations, it is unrealistic to expect encouraging news. In response to Chinese moves all along the approximately 4,000-kilometre Himalayan frontier, India too has massed its forces. But the job they have is to push back invaders. It looks like it will be a long haul through a bleak winter. Accompanying international political moves are an imperative.

Not the model patient

These are testing times. Home minister Amit Shah, Uttar Pradesh BJP president Swatantra Dev Singh and Karnataka CM B.S. Yediyurappa have all been diagnosed with Covid-19 within hours of one another. In a sobering turn, the only woman in the UP Cabinet passed away a day after another senior party leader in Andhra Pradesh also succumbed to the Coronavirus. The SARS-CoV-2 is indeed the great leveller — or not — with MP Karti Chidambaram and TN Governor Banwarilal Purohit found positive among others. India's Covid-19 tally has risen to 18 lakhs — the daily case count surpassed 57,000 on successive days.

Over in Ayodhya, 15 policemen and a priest had contracted the Coronavirus and by Monday, the number rose by five. But that — and the pandemic raging — has not deterred the Prime Minister and his loyal entourage from their bhoomi puja agenda. At any rate, only five people will be on the dais — including RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat, UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and the PM.

Commendably, a few are distancing — despite receiving an invitation even while Babri demolition co-accused L.K. Advani and M.M. Joshi were only asked over telephone, Uma Bharti will not attend — she would be at another spot on the Sarayu bank. She would arrive only after "everyone has left, in order to protect the PM and thousands others".

Mr Shah's decision to get himself admitted in Medanta, Gurugram, has drawn flak. Opposition leaders wondered as to why he chose to give reputed facilities like AIIMS and Safdarjung Hospital a miss since public institutions need the patronage of the government to inspire trust. But conversely, when the country's home minister chooses private hospitals over public ones, it does say something about, if not the latter's efficiency, but the government's own investments in and expectations from public healthcare. The virus has completely exposed it. India simply does not have the infrastructure to tackle the Coronavirus.

ADITYA SINHA
Editor

K. SUDHAKAR
Printer & Publisher

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Kishwar Desai
London Diary

Covid-19 returns, holidayers bear brunt; A Suitable Boy looks great!

Another scorching weekend, 100°F! And while we dither as a country between being locked down or being let out, pubs are full — especially those which can offer outside seating. You don't see much social distancing there nor on the beaches where people flock every warm weekend. Many are working from home, so office time is flexible — and what can one do when sunshine beckons?

But now everything is changing, because Covid-19 is back. Leicester was the first city to be out under lockdown a fortnight back. Now the virus has spread to Manchester, East Lancashire and Yorkshire. With Id, there was a lot of inconvenience for Muslims as any meeting between more than two families indoors is banned under lockdown.

Before that, the rules of going out kept changing as well as for holidaying abroad. After an initial complacency till mid-March, and a tight lockdown till mid-July, things had begun to finally move forward. Both the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson and the Chancellor "Disby" Rishi, wanted to restart the economy in a hurry. But Boris is now worried,

scared of a second wave. So rules changed again, catching holiday makers unawares.

Earlier last week, foreign travel to European destinations was allowed. Then Spain had a second wave of Covid-19. Many who had landed in sunny Spain, including a UK Cabinet minister, were told that upon return they face a fortnight's quarantine. As the policies are now being made keeping in mind the capricious ways of the virus, the rest of the year is going to be tough, till the vaccine arrives.

Last Sunday, we had the first episode of *A Suitable Boy*, based on novelist Vikram Seth's much loved book, and directed by Mira Nair. This is the first TV serial from the BBC with all Indian characters, who are not (for a change) caricatures or stereotypes. And not served with a dash of colonial masala, either. Nor is this a story of the Raj like *Jewel in the Crown* with mixed nationalities. This is hundred per cent desi. It looked beautiful and got five star reviews in the newspapers. So India, of a distant past, should be

This is the first TV serial from the BBC with Indian characters, who are not caricatures or stereotypes.

part of our Sunday evenings for a while. Yes, the local Indians are being critical about it — as are Indians elsewhere too — but this is the BBC version of India, and it looks good and feels good.

Speaking of the BBC, it is sad to record the passing away of Kailash Nath Budhwar, the first Indian head of the BBC Hindi and Tamil service. He had heralded an important change — as before him the head of the Hindi service had invariably been White. For many in the United Kingdom and listeners of the BBC Hindi Service he had been the voice of India, and will be missed.

Central London is deserted. But at the Trafalgar Square, there is a new presence. The fourth plinth has been reserved for bold and experimental sculpture which is given space for a while and then another one comes along. The latest

is called *The End is by Heather Phillipson*. It is a sculpture of whipped cream with a cherry on top. But it's not all cheery as there is a fly climbing up the side and a small drone. Don't laugh. It is thirty feet high and weighs nine tonnes. The artist said that it symbolised something about to collapse, like the United Kingdom after Brexit. Previous sculptures have been equally adventurous or pretentious, depending on which side you are on. One was a 'thumbs up', another was of Nelson's famous ship Victory inside a bottle.

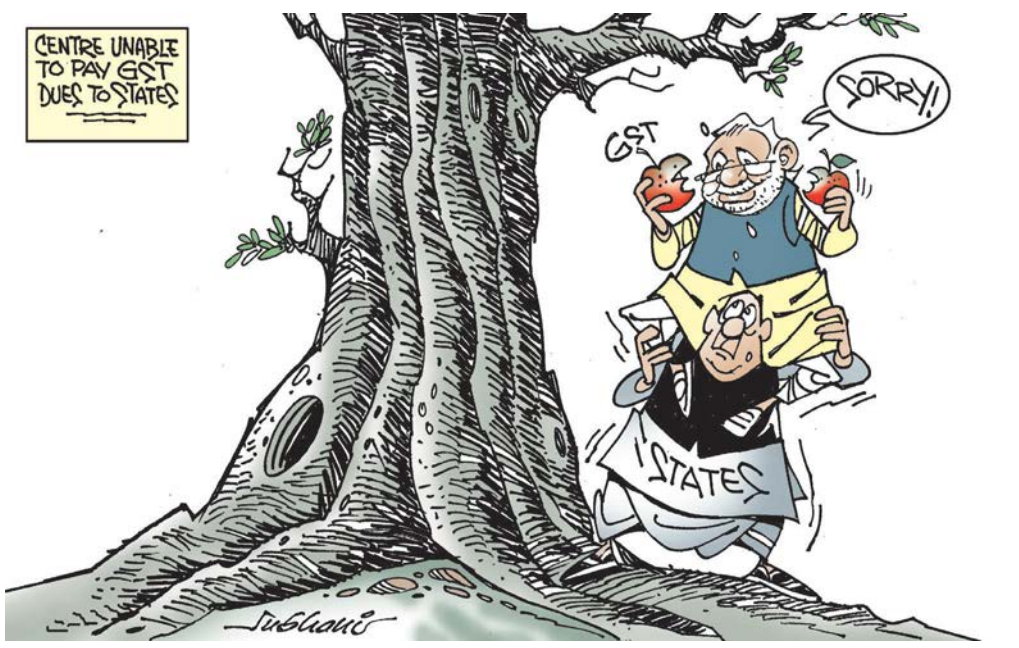
It was Ken Livingstone, while Mayor of London, who had the idea of opening up the empty plinth for installations or sculptures by young artists. Well done Ken! Looking at it I am always reminded of the empty canopy near India Gate. After the removal of the statue of King George V, in 1968, it has remained empty. Perhaps it too could be given over to modern Indian sculptors, displaying contemporary work.

Every time a new list comes out of people raised to Peerage, the House of Lords gets

abused in the media as useless, waste of money and so on. Boris has just announced his list and it is the usual mix of party political cronies — donors, retiring MPs, dissidents from the Opposition etc. But two names are noteworthy as friends of India. Jo Johnson, an old friend who was posted in Delhi as a correspondent for *Financial Times*, then became an MP and minister in the United Kingdom under successive Conservative governments. Jo had resigned on grounds of conscience because he could not agree with brother Boris's Brexit policy. Jo was helpful in setting up the Gandhi statue in Parliament Square. The other is Nemat Talaat (Minouche) Shafik the Director of the London School of Economics (LSE). She has set up Mahatma Gandhi Scholarship Fund for Indian students coming to LSE with a donation of £100,000 from the Gandhi Statue Memorial Fund.

Kishwar Desai is an award winning author. Her 6th book, the biography of the 1930s superstar, Devika Rani, The Longest Kiss, will soon be out.

Subhani



China's real target may be Arunachal Pradesh



Mohan Guruswamy

I have always believed that with having Lobtained by hook or crook just about all they wanted in Ladakh, the real prize the Chinese are eyeing is Arunachal Pradesh. The Chinese have never been explicit on how much of Arunachal they seek. I once saw an official map in a travel agent's office in Lhasa that showed only the Tawang tract as Chinese territory. In other maps I have seen in China, they have their border running along the foothills, which means all of Arunachal or what they now call "Southern Tibet".

The Chinese based their specific claim on the territory on the premise that Tawang was administered from Lhasa, and the contiguous areas owed allegiance to the Dalai Lama. Of late, the Chinese have given a glimpse of what their true intentions are by laying claim to Bhutan's Sakteng wildlife reserve area, which falls just below the Tawang tract.

When you look at this in the map, their intentions become clear. They are looking for a direct passage from occupied Tibet into the Assam valley.

The Mughals' Imperial India spanned from Afghanistan to Bengal but didn't go very much below the Godavari in the South.

The Imperial India of the British incorporated all of today's India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. It was the British who for the first time brought Assam into India in 1826 when they defeated Burma and formalised the annexation with the Treaty of Yandabo.

Only in 1886 did the British first foray out of the Brahmaputra valley when they sent out a punitive expedition into Lohit valley in pursuit of

marauding tribesmen who began raiding the new tea gardens. The area was apparently neither under Chinese nor Tibetan control: there were no protests either from the Dalai Lama or the Chinese agent in Lhasa. The British stayed put.

Tibet remained in self-imposed isolation and the race to be first into Lhasa became the greatest challenge for explorers and adventurers in the second half of the 19th century.

Not the least among these were the spies of the Survey of India, the legendary pundits. The most renowned of these was Sarat Chandra Das, whose books on Tibet are still avidly read today. As the adventurers, often military officers masquerading as explorers, began visiting Tibet, the British in India began worrying.

Reports that the most well known of Czarist Russia's military explorers, Col. Bronislav Grombchevsky, was sighted in Tibet had Lord Curzon, Governor-General of India, most worried. In 1903 Lord Curzon decided to send a military expedition into Tibet led by Grombchevsky's old antagonist, Col. Francis Younghusband. A brigade of Gurkhas and Tommies went over the Nathu La into the Chumbi valley and advanced unhindered till Xigatse. A Tibetan military force met them there but offered what can only be described as passive resistance at a place called Guru near Gyantse. Not a shot was fired back as the British Indian troops rained bullets on them, killing thousands.

From Xigatse, Younghusband made a leisurely march into Lhasa. The British got the Tibetans to agree to end their isolation and

having extracted trade concessions, withdrew in 1904 the way they came. In 1907, Britain and Russia formally agreed that it was in their mutual interest to leave Tibet "in that state of isolation from which, till recently, she has shown no intention to depart".

In 1913 the Tibetans declared independence after the collapse of the Chinese Qing dynasty and the establishment of a republic under Sun Yat Sen. They drove the Chinese garrisons in Tibet into India over the Nathu La. Also, in 1913, the British convened the Simla Conference to demarcate the India-Tibet border. The British proposed the 1914 McMahon Line. The Tibetans accepted it. The Chinese representative, however, initialed the agreement under protest. But his protest seemed mostly about the British negotiating directly with Tibet as a sovereign state and not over the McMahon Line as such.

In 1935, at the insistence of Sir Olaf Caroe ICS, then deputy secretary in the foreign department, the McMahon Line was notified. In 1944, J.P. Mills ICS established British Indian administration in NEFA, but excluding Tawang, which continued to be administered by the Lhasa-appointed head lama at Tawang, despite the fact that it lay well below the McMahon Line. This was largely as Henry Twynam, Assam's governor, lost his nerve and did not want to provoke the Tibetans.

In 1947 the Dalai Lama (the same gentleman now in Dharamsala) sent newly-independent India a note-laying claim "to some districts" in NEFA/Arunachal.

On October 7, 1950, the Chinese attacked the Tibetans at seven places on their frontier and made known their intention of reasserting control over all of Tibet. As if in response, on February 16, 1951, Maj. Relangnao "Bob" Khatang, IFAS, raised the Indian tricolor in Tawang and took over the tract's administration.

The point of this narra-

tion is to bring home the fact that India's claim over Arunachal Pradesh doesn't rest on any great historical tradition or cultural affinity. We are there because the British went there. But then the Chinese have no basis whatsoever to stake a claim, besides a few dreamy cartographic enlargements of the notion of China among some of the hangers-on in the Qing emperor's court. The important thing now is that we have been there for over a hundred years and that settles the issue.

Arunachal Pradesh has a very interesting population mix. Only less than 10 per cent of its population is Tibetan. Indo-Mongoloid tribes account for 68 per cent of the population.

The rest are migrants from Nagaland and Assam. As far as religious affinities go, Hindus are the biggest group with 37 per cent, followed by 36 per cent animists, and 13 per cent Buddhists. Recent census figures suggest a spurt in Christianity, possibly induced by pocketbook proselytising. In all, there are 21 major tribal groups and over 100 ethnically distinct sub-groupings, speaking over 50 distinct languages and dialects. The population of about a million is spread over 17 towns and 3,649 villages. With the exception of a few villages of Monpas that live north of the McMahon Line, it's an ethnically compact and contiguous area.

It is true that historically India never had a direct border with Tibet till the British took Kumaon and Garhwal from Nepal in 1846 and extended its domain over Arunachal in 1886. But the formidable Himalayas were always culturally a part of India and formed a natural barrier against ingress from the north, whether Tibetan or Chinese.

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

LETTERS

J&K AMBUSH

The Centre went about in a draconian way in repealing Article 370 (Year after J&K ambush, many thorny questions, DC, Aug. 2). If the sole objective was to alter the demographics of the region and provide relief to those persecuted, it could have been done in a democratic way, after dialogue. It is sad that people of the region are deprived of basic necessities and many of their leaders are still put under detention.

Mohul Bhowmick
Hyderabad

The new J&K domicile law aims to grant a residential status to erstwhile excluded categories such as SCs, Gorkhas and Pakistani refugees. Surprisingly this has raised the hackles of some sections who are now shouting from rooftops about perceived demographic changes in the UT. They expelled lakhs of Hindus through a systematic murder, rape and arson.

K. Gopal Rao
Hyderabad

EDUCATION POLICY

The Prime Minister's boastful nature is exposed again while ignoring his failures with demonetisation, Coronavirus and so on (*NEP emphasises on job creators, says Modi, DC, Aug. 2*). Is it not a fact that many lost jobs after the note ban and that unemployment is at all-time high in his six-year regime? The country needs professionals, not politicians to resolve burning issues.

Kshirasagara Balaji Rao
Hyderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

Contract labour to go

NEW DELHI, August 3

Mr D. Sanjivayya, Minister for Labour, categorically declared in the Lok Sabha today that "Government's intention is to abolish contract labour."

He said, he considered it necessary to make the government's position on this issue known clearly for some members appeared to have some misgiving. But the Select Committee, to which the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Bill was referred had favoured exemption from this legislation of units employing less than 20 persons. The government had accepted this, Mr Sanjivayya said in his reply to the general debate. — PTI

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	36,939.60	-1.77
Nifty 50	10,891.60	-1.64
S&P 500*	3,298.16	0.83
Dollar (₹)	75.00	-0.26
Pound Sterling (₹)	98.18	-0.37
Euro (₹)	88.30	0.55
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	54,678.185	0.33
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	44.17	0.65
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.837	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.566	0.030

* As of 9:30 PM IST

UPI transactions reach a new high in July

As more people preferred contactless payments due to Covid-19 fear, Unified Payments Interface (UPI) transactions touched a new high in July. UPI transactions in July reached 1.49 billion compared to 1.34 bn in June, a growth of 11 per cent. After a decline in April, transactions had picked up and had stood at 1.23 bn in May. In value terms, UPI recorded transactions worth Rs 2.9 lakh crore in July, up by 11 per cent.

SpiceJet asked to stop 5-day discount sale



The DGCA has asked SpiceJet to stop its five-day discounted sale of tickets as the government-imposed fare limits, with upper and lower fare limits, are in place till November 24. SpiceJet on Monday morning announced a five-day "1+1 offer sale", offering one-way base fares starting as low as Rs 899 and a complimentary voucher with a maximum value of Rs 2,000 per booking for use in future bookings.

Job search for WFH rises 440% in February-July

Job searches for remote work or work from home in India have increased by over 442 per cent between February and July, the highest globally. Amid the pandemic, many jobs have become work-from-home jobs and with the flexibility and a variety of career options, it has become more popular than ever, global job site Indeed said. The job postings grew in sectors such as software tech, healthcare and marketing.

PVR's rights issue offer oversubscribed

Multiplex operator PVR's rights issue has been oversubscribed, according to data available with stock exchanges. Its rights issue opened on July 17 and closed on July 31. According to issue subscription data, PVR proposed to issue 38.23 lakh equity shares. The company's board had fixed rights issue price at Rs 784 per equity share, including a premium of Rs 774 a share over face value of Rs 10 per share.

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Person days under MGNREGA drops 57% Steep fall in rural job days in July

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, AUG. 3

Employment generated under the MGNREGA has dropped 57 per cent in July against the previous month. The rural employment guarantee scheme has been seeing month-on-month increase in person-days since April after the lockdown hit urban centres.

The initial data published by the government shows that the number of person-days has dropped from 64 crore in June to 27.3 crore in July, which is a massive drop of 57 per cent. Even the employment provided to households has come down by 41 per cent from 3.89 crore in June to 2.29 crore in July.

Both person-days and household employment have been growing since April. In the lockdown month of May, person-days stood at 56.8 crore, which was higher than the initial data for July. Work demand too dropped 31 per cent in July-from 6.2 crore in June to 4.26 crore in July. Work demand among households too dropped by 27.7 per cent.

According to Kruti Shah, economist, Emkay Global Financial Services, the sowing under kharif crop happened faster this year and the lower levels of farm activity in July would have reflected in the MGNREGA employment data. "The CMIE data also shows that the farm jobs have come down by 4 mil-



lion in July compared to June. During the lockdown months, farm jobs had bucked the overall employment trend. Seasonally farm jobs are

lesser in July compared to June," Shah said.

Compared to July 2019, person-days generated last month are still higher as a better monsoon improved the kharif acreage and sowing activity this time. Further, availability of labour also was higher this time due to the reverse migration of the labourers from urban centres.

Chances of these labourers having gone back to urban centres are very less in July as has been evident from the lower manufacturing PMI data. Manufacturing PMI, which was rebounding after hitting a historic low in April, dipped in July. "In July many of the industrial centres were still under lockdown. More relaxed restrictions in August can see better industrial activity. By September, we could see re-migration of the labourers happening as the wages as well as job demand are better in urban centres compared to rural areas," said Shah.

REALTY SENTIMENTS HIT ALL-TIME LOW

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, AUG. 3

Real estate sector sentiments have hit an all-time low in the June quarter. While future sentiments have seen an improvement, they still remain pessimistic.

The Knight Frank-Ficci-Naredco Real Estate Sentiment Index fell to 22 in the June quarter from 31 in March and 53 in December.

However, the score for future sentiments moved up to 41 in the June quarter against 36 in the March quarter.

Economic indicators dampen market spirit

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, AUG. 3

Stock market's benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty continued their losing trend due to deteriorating economic indicators on account of rising Covid cases and the lockdown impact.

RBI policy announcements scheduled for later this week also kept investors cautious and bearish. The Sensex declined 667 points, or 1.77 per cent, to 36,939.60 in one of the biggest single-day fall in the last five months. The Nifty-50 closed below 11,000 at 10,891.60, losing 181.85 points, or 1.57 per cent.

The market, after outperforming global peers in July, saw profit taking on Monday as the July manufacturing PMI data came lower at 46 compared to 47.2 in June, an indicator of low economic activity in the country compared to other parts of the world.

The July manufacturing PMI data in China came in at 52.8 and the Euro area PMI came in at 51.8,

which seemed to have raised alarm bells among investors in India.

Domestic loan growth also moderated to 5.8 per cent year-on-year for the fortnight ended July 17, 2020, said a report by Motilal Oswal Financial Services, adding "We expect loan growth of private banks to moderate to around 10 per cent versus around 18 per cent projected earlier (pre-Covid) for FY21."

Financials lost the most on Monday, as the Nifty Bank Index fell 2.33 per cent, led by IndusInd Bank (-3.74 per cent), Kotak Bank (-3.57 per cent), Axis Bank (-2.93 per cent), HDFC Bank (-2.60 per cent) and ICICI Bank (-0.88 per cent).

IT stocks also saw profit booking after gaining maximum among all sectors in July. The Nifty IT Index was down 0.64 per cent led by TCS (-1.42 per cent), Infosys (1.11 per cent) and Tech Mahindra (1.05 per cent). "Most private banks reported sequential decline in loan growth," Motilal Oswal said.

Manufacturing PMI contracts in July

FC BUREAU NEW DELHI, AUG. 3

With continuous slump in the manufacturing activities from intermittent lockdowns, India's manufacturing Purchasing Manager's Index, or PMI, declined to 46 points in July from 47.2 in June, still an improvement over the decline from 30.8 in May.

The manufacturing PMI in July contracted for the fourth month in a row, staying below the 50-mark separating contraction and expansion in growth. This is the index's longest spell of contraction since March 2009.

"The survey results showed a re-acceleration of declines in the key indices of output and new orders, undermining the trend towards stabilisation seen over the past two months," noted Eliot Kerr, an economist at IHS Markit.

"Anecdotal evidence indicated that firms were struggling to obtain work, with some of their clients remaining in lockdown, suggesting that we won't see a pick-up in activity until infection rates are quelled and restrictions can be further removed," Kerr added.

Last week, the IMF said high-frequency indicators signal plateauing of economic activity in India as the positive impact from unlock is not as strong as the negative impact of the lockdown.

GMR Infra to sell land, other non-core assets

New Delhi, Aug. 3: GMR Infrastructure is working on disinvestment of non-core assets, including land, and hopes to yield "significant value" even from 50 per cent of land monetisation, according to a document.

The airport-to-port conglomerate in an investor presentation said land at strategic industrial locations will benefit from the possible manufacturing dislocation from China.

"Plan is to divest large part of other assets identified as non-core divestment initiative," the document said and noted that it has 10,500 acres of port and industrial land and "even 50 per cent land monetisation" could yield significant value.

About its Kakinada Special Investment Region (SIR) in Andhra Pradesh, the group said that it is in discussion with a large number of clients for monetisation of land.

"Government of Andhra Pradesh signed MoUs with Haldia Petrochemicals Ltd to set up a refinery cum petrochem project in 2,500 acres and with HPCL-GAIL consortium for Petrochem complex in 2,000 acres land," it said and added that in addition, a pact has been inked with a stainless steel manufacturer for 500 acres and an Australian lithium refinery for 100 acre.

The port-based Kakinada SIR in the Krishna-Godavari basin has plans to set up an all



weather multi-purpose deepwater port, a logistics park, a petrochemicals cluster and an eco-industrial park, it said.

As per the document, an area of 4,650 acres there has been notified as SEZs and utility and environment approvals are in place.

In the Kakinada SEZ in Andhra Pradesh, however, the company has continued its efforts for various government approvals and technical studies and added that demand for industrial parks is expected to revive to pre-Covid-19 levels.

The group said infrastructure has not been much affected in the region due to Covid-19 as the company was able to re-mobilise and commence work quickly as workers were hailed from neighbouring areas and Hosur.

About the Krishnagiri SIR (Tamil Nadu), the

company said infrastructure development in 275 acres is in progress with all approvals in place.

The company said it is leveraging locational advantage to create clusters in aerospace, automobile, logistics, engineering and electronics sectors besides setting up a special investment region in joint venture with Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation (Tidco).

It said while the State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu (Sipcot) will acquire 500 acres for an industrial park, it has leased 20 acre to Toyota Boshoku for a manufacturing unit.

GMR Infrastructure's consolidated net loss for the quarter ended March 31 narrowed to Rs 1,126.82 crore, as against Rs 2,341.24 crore loss in the January-March period in FY19.

—PTI

Samsung crafts comeback as anti-China wave surges

SANKALP PHARTIYAL, HEEKYONG YANG NEW DELHI/SEOUL, AUG. 3

Samsung Electronics Co Ltd is forging a comeback in India's smartphone market with a new range of budget devices and a ramped-up online presence, aiming to recoup ground ceded to Chinese rivals such as Xiaomi Corp. Samsung, the only major non-Chinese player in the country, has already begun to gain ground, and a surge in anti-China sentiment in India following a border clash in June is expected to provide a fresh boost.

Samsung jumped to the No. 2 spot with 26 per cent market share in the second quarter behind Xiaomi's 29 per cent, according to tech researcher Counterpoint, as the South Korean company's diverse and inhouse supply chain helped it avoid product delays suffered by rivals during coronavirus lockdowns.

It was in the third position with a 16 per cent share in the previous quarter.

Once the unrivalled leader in the world's sec-



ond-biggest smartphone market, Samsung has over the past three years lost Indian customers to Chinese brands, whose devices are perceived as better value.

But India still accounts for some \$7.5 billion in annual retail smartphone revenues for Samsung, according to Counterpoint, making it the company's biggest market outside the United States.

It has built what it has described as the world's largest mobile phone man-

ufacturing plant on the outskirts of New Delhi, where it tests new devices and often assembles them for export.

That manufacturing power, and Samsung's ability to source many components internally, is helping it gain ground amid the pandemic. Chinese smartphone brands Xiaomi and Oppo suffered local production hiccups and product delays due to Covid-19, but Samsung was able to keep delivering phones smoothly.

Now it is building on the momentum. Samsung has launched seven new smartphones since June, three of them under Rs 10,000, including one in the Rs 5,600 range.

"The Covid crisis has pushed people to use smartphones for everything from online education to digital payments to even connecting with friends on video calls. That's why these budget phones are focused on the mass market," said a source familiar with Samsung's strategy in India.

—Reuters

Wockhardt to supply vaccines to UK



Bengaluru, Aug. 3: Wockhardt Ltd will supply millions of doses of multiple Covid-19 vaccines, including that being developed by AstraZeneca and Oxford University, under a deal with the UK government announced on Monday.

Shares of Wockhardt jumped 10 per cent after the news in a downcast Mumbai market.

The company has reserved fill-and-finish capacity—the final manufacturing step of putting vaccines into vials or syringes and packaging them—as part of the agreement, it said.

This is the latest step by the UK to secure supplies and production of Covid-19 vaccines after striking four deals with drugmakers to buy their potential shots.

"Fill finish is a critical step in the process to get the vaccine in a form to be given to patients. The agreement with Wockhardt will boost our capability to ensure that," Kate Bingham, chair of UK Vaccines Task Force, said in a statement.

The UK government has also reserved one fill-and-finish production line at a Wockhardt subsidiary in Wrexham, Wales for its exclusive use for the next 18 months to secure supply. It is expected to start the Wexham line in September.

AstraZeneca has indicated it would need 30 million fill-and-finish doses of their vaccine candidate.

—Reuters

Consumer behaviour changing: Chandra

New Delhi, Aug 3: A tremendous transformation, stemming from Covid-19, is expected in the mobility segment over the next two years, as consumers' move to "slow" travel—with personal versus public/shared transport—is likely to shape the future demand for passenger vehicles, according to Tata Motors chairman N. Chandrasekaran.

The turnaround journey of the company's domestic business has also been disrupted in 2019-20, as demand deteriorated sharply on the back of an abruptly slowing economy coupled with the spread of Covid-19.

Addressing shareholders at the company's annual report for 2019-20, Chandrasekaran said the global auto industry has grappled with multiple

issues during the year.

"On one hand, we saw greater clarity emerge on Brexit; yet on the other hand, mounting trade tensions, muted global growth and enhanced regulatory norms have fundamentally changed the contours of the business environment in which we operate. Next came the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in the final quarter of the year, which has ushered in a new reality for industries across the world," he said.

Chandrasekaran further said, "As we look ahead over the next two years, we anticipate a tremendous deal of transformation stemming from Covid-19.

Consumer behaviour will change in numerous ways, from demanding more integrated digital experiences to



N. Chandrasekaran

prioritising health and safety features across purchasing decisions. The move to 'slow' travel and personal (versus public and/or shared) transport may shape future demand for passenger vehicles."

Greater scrutiny will be placed on building environmental sustainability and climate resilience into the very core of business models, he said adding the Tata Motor Group is "well placed to

meet the demand opportunities that will arise from these important and fundamental shifts".

Referring to the performance of Tata Motors Ltd (TML), he said over the past two financial years, TML focused on refreshing its portfolio, improving structural efficiencies and streamlining internal processes. In doing so, TML turned a corner and delivered improved market shares, profitability, and positive free cash flows.

"In FY19, we delivered positive net income of Rs 2,021 crore, after making losses for five years. In both FY18 and FY19, TML produced positive free cash flows, following five years in negative territory." However, in FY20, this turnaround journey has been interrupted.

—PTI

SHORT TAKES

Top flight tennis resumes in Italy

Palermo, Italy: Tour-level tennis resumed after a five-month enforced break on Monday, and players at the Palermo Ladies Open had to handle their own towels and not shake hands of opponents.

The strict rules because of the coronavirus pandemic included no showers on site, and no autographs or photos with fans. Players in the singles main draw come from 15 countries, all in Europe.

A limited number of fans were allowed into the 1,500-seat stadium court and had to follow social distancing measures.

They watched sixth-seeded Donna Vekic of Croatia beat Arantxa Rus of the Netherlands 6-1, 6-2 in the first official event — for men or women — since early March. Vekic sealed a place in the second round on her second match point. Players and anyone who comes into contact with players were tested for Covid-19 before they departed for Palermo, upon arrival, and then again every four days. — AP

Payment issues, says players body

New Delhi: Many players have been dealing with the issue of late payment or non-payment of salaries in a host of domestic T20 leagues across the world, states the latest annual players' report.

The Federation of International Cricketers' Associations (FICA) found that over a third of all players have suffered in recent years. The Men's Global Employment Report 2020, put together by FICA, found that 34 per cent of all players had experienced payment issues. Global T20 Canada, Bangladesh Premier League, Abu Dhabi T10, Qatar T10, Euro T20 Slam and Masters Champions League are the six league identified as having problems in clearing the players' dues. While the BPL is the only established Full Member-run league in the list, others such as the GLT20 Canada, the Abu Dhabi T10 and the Euro T20 Slam have attracted well-known players from across the world. — PTI

Cool Keshavan is luge coach

New Delhi: Shiva Keshavan, the first Indian representative to compete in the luge event at the Winter Olympics, has been appointed chief coach as well as the High Performance Director of the national team by the Luge Federation of India.

In a letter addressed to the Arjuna awardee, the federation informed Keshavan of its decision to appoint him for the twin role while acknowledging his achievements representing India in the past 22 years. "The federation considered your performance and achievements and noted with appreciation that you have represented India for 22 years and have participated in 6 Olympic Games," federation president Deepa Mehta wrote.

The 38-year-old has also been handed the responsibility of talent scouting, infrastructure planning.

Keshavan represented India in six Winter Olympics from 1998 to 2018. He quit after the 2018 edition of the Games. — PTI

NIS STARTS A COURSE IN NUTRITION

New Delhi: The Netaji Subhas National Institute of Sports (NSNIS) Patiala and CSS-SRIHER, Chennai, on Monday launched six-month online courses in sports physiotherapy and sports nutrition aimed at grassroot-level development in the country.

It was a part of an MOU signed between the two institutes to launch these certificate courses in sports science which will give an opportunity to young qualified professionals to further specialise.

In the first leg, sports physiotherapy and sports nutrition courses have been launched online with admission to the courses starting on Monday. Sports Authority of India also plans to introduce courses in physiology, sports biomechanics, strength and conditioning, sports psychology. — PTI

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AGE OLD PROBLEM
BCCI moves in to weed out overage players

New Delhi, Aug. 3: The BCCI on Monday said it will grant amnesty to registered players who voluntarily declare any age fraud but those found to be in breach of the unusual scheme could be slapped with a two-year suspension.

The measures will be applicable to all cricketers participating in the board's age-group tournaments from the 2020-21 season onwards.

"Under this scheme, players who voluntarily declare that they have manipulated their date of birth by submitting fake/tampered documents in the past will not be suspended and allowed to participate in the appropriate age group level if they disclose their actual date of birth (DOB)," the BCCI said in a release.

"Players have to submit a signed letter/email along with supporting documents to BCCI Age Verification Dept. revealing their actual DOB before 15th September 2020."

The apex body also made it clear that if the players don't accept it now and are later found to be guilty of age fraud then they will be heavily sanctioned.

"However, if registered players do not disclose the facts and are found to have submitted fake/tampered DOB proof documents by BCCI, then they will be banned for 2 years, and after completion of 2-year suspension, they will not be allowed to participate in age group tournaments of BCCI, as well as, age group tournaments organised by the State Units."

The BCCI also said that "all cricketers committing Domicile fraud, including senior men & women, will be banned for 2 years" and "voluntary disclosure scheme does not apply for cricketers who have committed domicile fraud."

Among other measures, the governing body said for the under-16 age group tournament "only players who are between 14-16 years old will be permitted to register." — PTI



BCCI president Sourav Ganguly (right) with NCA chief Rahul Dravid in this file photo.

Board draws guidelines to resume cricket training

New Delhi, Aug. 3: The BCCI is forming a Covid-19 task force and it will include, among others, former captain and National Cricket Academy chief Rahul Dravid, the apex body said in its Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to State associations.

Players will have to sign a consent form before resuming training at their respective centres as per the standard operating procedure, which bars anyone above 60 years of age and individuals with underlying medical conditions from being part of the camp.

For resumption of training at the NCA in Bengaluru, the Covid task force will include Dravid, a medical officer, and BCCI AGM, Cricket Operations.

The 2019-2020 domestic season ended in March but the upcoming season, which usually starts in August, is set to be cur-

tailed due to the health crisis. "The health and safety of players, staff and stakeholders will be the sole responsibility of respective State Cricket Associations," read the BCCI guidelines on resumption of cricket. Support staff, officials and ground staff over 60 years of age and with individuals with underlying medical conditions are barred from attending training camps until "suitable guidelines are issued by the Government".

Before the commencement of the camp, the medical team should acquire travel and medical history (past 2 weeks) of all players and staff through an online questionnaire. Any player and staff suspected to have Covid-19-like symptoms should undergo PCR tests.

"Two tests one day apart (Day 1 & Day 3) should be done to account for false negatives. If both the test results are negative, only then they should be included in the camp," read the SOP. The players will have to wear a N95 mask (without a valved respirator) on the way to the stadium and will be encouraged to wear eyewear in public places as well as during training. Players are advised to take their own transportation on way to the stadium. — PTI

● For resumption of training at the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru, the Covid task force will include former Indian captain Rahul Dravid, a medical officer, a hygiene officer and BCCI AGM, Cricket Operations.

Trott is England batting coach

London, Aug. 3: Former batsman Jonathan Trott has been appointed England's batting coach for the upcoming three-Test series against Pakistan, starting on Wednesday.

The 39-year-old, who scored 3,835 runs in 52 Tests between 2009-2015 for England, will be joined by former New Zealand spinner Jeetan Patel and Warwickshire seamer Graeme Welch, the 'BBC' reported.

Trott, who played 68 ODIs and seven T20 matches, has scored 18,662 runs in first class cricket.

England and Pakistan will lock horns in a three-match Test series starting Wednesday at the Old Trafford in Manchester, followed by the next two games in the Ageas Bowl in Southampton.

England won the recently-concluded three-Test series, that mark the resumption of international cricket, against West Indies 2-1.

Swann hits out at England selectors

Meanwhile, former off-spinner Graeme Swann has slammed selectors for splitting England's most successful new-ball pairing of Stuart Broad and James Anderson during the recently-concluded Test series against the West

Indies, saying "you don't discard blokes with 500 Test wickets lightly".

England paid the price for dumping Broad in the first Test as they lost by four wickets at Southampton. With Jofra Archer missing the second Test due to a bio-secure breach, Broad returned to take six wickets as England bounced back with a 113-run win.

In the third Test, Broad was awarded the Man of the Match after he took 10 wickets to cross the 500-wicket mark and also scored a crucial 62 with the bat as England sealed the series with a 269-run win.

"How stupid did it look to break up England's most successful bowling partnership of all-time when we lost that first Test match?" Swann, who has taken 255 wickets in 60 Tests, was quoted as saying by 'Mirror.co.uk'.

"Jimmy and Broady have formed one of the most successful bowling double acts Test cricket has known. Why would you want to chuck it out before its sell-by date? I can understand the attraction of 90mph pace, and both Jofra and Woody are huge assets."

"But I'm sorry, you don't discard blokes with 500 Test wickets lightly," Swann said. — PTI

Misbah wants Pak to get off blocks early

London, Aug. 3: Pakistan coach Misbah-ul-Haq has urged his side to get off to a flying start in their Test series with England, saying they must be at their best "right from the word 'go'".

England are notoriously sluggish starters and have lost the opener in eight of their past 10 Test series,

including a recent 2-1 home success against the West Indies that marked international cricket's return from the coronavirus lockdown.

Misbah, suggesting England would have the advantage of momentum, told reporters on Monday: "We should be ready for an England team that

have already had three matches of experience and they won their last two Test matches. We have to really come in this Test series right from the word 'go' at our best if we want to win a Test series or a Test match here.

"We are aware that England have a slight advantage but if we are

alert and go 100 percent in the first Test match, that is the only way we can beat England, otherwise we will find ourselves in difficulty."

Misbah believes his side also have the batsmen to give their bowlers enough runs to defend. "It's always tough with the Duke ball in England

SJM SLAMS BCCI FOR CHINA LINK

New Delhi, Aug. 3: Shocked over the BCCI's decision to continue with the Chinese sponsors for the IPL, the RSS-affiliate Swadeshi Jagaran Manch (SJM) on Monday said people should consider boycotting the T-20 cricket league.

"The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and the Indian Premier League (IPL) Governing Council have shown utter disrespect to the Indian soldiers killed by Chinese troops with its decision to hold the cricket league with its Chinese sponsors," SJM's co-convenor Ashwani Mahajan said in a statement.

"At a time when the country is striving hard to make our economy free from Chinese dominance in the markets, the government is making all efforts to keep China out of our markets, this act of the IPL Governing Council is an aberration," Mahajan said.

VIVO, a Chinese mobile phone manufacturer, is the title sponsor of the IPL and has paid over ₹2,000 crore to the BCCI for a five-year deal.

BCCI invites bids for kit sponsor

Meanwhile, the BCCI on Monday invited bids for the team's kit sponsor and official merchandising partner rights through a tender process to replace Nike, whose contract is set to expire next month. The sports apparel giant had a four-year deal for ₹370 crore with a royalty of ₹30 crore.

Under the Invitation to Tender (ITT), the winning bidder will be granted the right to be the kit sponsor and/or the official merchandising partner and various other associated rights. — PTI



England fast bowlers Chris Woakes (left) and Stuart Broad celebrate a wicket on the final day of the third Test against West Indies at Old Trafford in Manchester in this file photo. — AFP

Pace problem for England

London, Aug. 3: England have the luxury of six specialist pacemen in their 14-man squad for this week's first Test against Pakistan at Old Trafford — a welcome "headache" for captain Joe Root.

The skipper can call on veteran new-ball partners James Anderson and Stuart Broad, the express pace of Jofra Archer and Mark Wood and the impressive Sam Curran and Chris Woakes.

The hosts rotated their

quicks during last month's 2-1 series win over the West Indies which, together with the upcoming campaign against Pakistan, forms a programme of six Tests in seven weeks.

That is a particularly tough schedule for fast bowlers in a season cut short by the coronavirus pandemic.

England's management has argued no paceman can play all six Tests, with the restrictions imposed by maintaining a bio-secure "bubble"

requiring several options to be immediately at hand.

But it is an issue they will need to handle with care given they have now lost the opener in eight of their past 10 multi-match Test series, which for all their resilience could prove costly if it happens against Pakistan.

Broad revealed on Sunday he felt "so low" after being omitted from the West Indies opener that he considered retiring. — AFP

Indian shuttlers in cozy groups

New Delhi, Aug. 3: India have been handed relatively easy draws in the twice rescheduled Thomas and Uber Cup Finals slated to be held from October 3 to 11 in Aarhus, Denmark.

The Indian men's team has been placed in Group 'C' alongside 2016 champions Denmark, Germany and Algeria, while the women's side has been clubbed with 14-time winners China, France and Germany in Group 'D' in the draw which was staged at the Badminton World Federation (BWF) headquarters in Kuala Lumpur on Monday.

Both the men's and women's team are seeded fifth in the tournament, according to the BWF release.

Indonesia, 13-time former champions, and six-time former winner Japan will headline as the top seeds for the Thomas Cup and Uber Cup respectively.

The prestigious event was originally scheduled to be held from May 16-24 but was postponed to August 15-23 before finally rescheduling it in October due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

No tournament has been possible since BWF had

shut down their World Tour and other sanctioned tournaments following the completion of the All-England in March due to the global health crisis.

In Thomas and Uber Cup Final, the top two teams in each group at the end of the group stage will make it to the knock-out round.

The Indian women's team had lost to champion China in the semifinal stage in the 2016 edition of Uber Cup. They also reached the semifinal in the 2014 New Delhi edition. — PTI

THOMAS CUP (men)
Group A: Indonesia, Malaysia, Holland and England.
Group B: China, Taiwan, Australia and France.
Group C: Denmark, India, Germany and Algeria.
Group D: Japan, South Korea, Thailand and Canada.

UBER CUP (women)
Group A: Japan, Taiwan, Egypt and Spain.
Group B: Korea, Indonesia, Australia and Malaysia.
Group C: Thailand, Denmark, Scotland and Canada.
Group D: China, India, France and Germany.

FAN FRAME



Aditya Bidarkar (centre) had the opportunity to meet South African cricket legend Jonty Rhodes (right) and Ryan Maron in Bengaluru in November last year.

RUSSELL, JAMES BOOST ROCKETS PAST BUCKS

Miami, Aug. 3: Russell Westbrook scored 31 points and James Harden added 24 Sunday to rally the Houston Rockets over NBA overall leader Milwaukee 120-116 despite a big night for Giannis Antetokounmpo. The Bucks led 112-104 after Khris Middleton's three-pointer with 3:14 to play, but Houston closed the game with a 16-4 run.

The Rockets went 21-of-61 from three-point range, matching an NBA record for the most three-point attempts by a club in a non-overtime game, with Daniel House hitting four and Harden among five other players who landed three from outside the arc.

The Rockets also rallied from seven points down in the final minute to defeat Dallas on Friday.

Westbrook, on a career-best run of 36 consecutive games with 20 or more points, hit 10-of-21 from the floor, 1-of-3 from beyond the arc, and 10-of-12 free throws. Harden had six steals, seven rebounds and seven assists.

Greek big man Antetokounmpo led the Bucks with 36 points, 18 rebounds and eight assists. Middleton had 27 points and 12 rebounds and Brook Lopez added 23 points and 12 rebounds. — AFP

Eye on Fifa Cup, talent hunt is on

New Delhi, Aug. 3: Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju on Monday said the government is riding on "mainstay" football to make India a sporting powerhouse and announced the formation of five zonal committees to hunt talent across the country.

Rijiju said the talent hunt initiative, to be funded by the Sports Authority of India under the Khelo India Programme in partnership with the All India Football Federation, will be the "most aggressive exercise" ever done. The committees will be formed in the next few months.

"We will form five talent scouting committees in the next few months, one for each zone — north, south, east, west and northeast — under Khelo India Programme of SAI in partnership with AIFF," Rijiju said during a virtual programme organised by Football Delh to mark the 36th birthday of India captain Sunil Chhetri.

"We cannot go with the usual approach, we have to go deeper in a professional way. It will be the most aggressive exercise we had ever done. We have to find out talented children below 12 years from every nook and corner of the country," he added. — PTI

GAMES IN GOA LEAGUE UNDER FIX SCANNER

New Delhi, Aug. 3: The Asian Football Confederation has red-flagged six matches of last year's Goa Professional League for possible "match manipulation" but the state association on Monday said there was not enough evidence.

The AFC had written to the integrity officer of AIFF, Javed Siraj, in March informing about "suspicious betting patterns indicative of match manipulation" in six matches held between October 16 and November 19 last year.

Goa Football Association secretary Jovito Lopes said his organisation had conducted an investigation but said match-fixing could not be proved due to a lack of evidence.

The matches involved local teams Calangute Association, Panjim Footballers, Guardian Angel Sports Club, FC Goa II and former I-League sides Dempo, Salgaocar and Sporting Clube. — PTI