

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

VIJAYAWADA | FRIDAY | 31 JULY 2020

## WEATHER

Max: 33.0°C  
Min: 26°C  
RH: 54%  
Rainfall: 23.7 mm  
Forecast: Cloudy.  
Max/Min temp.  
33/26°C

## COVID-19 CUNT

CASES (+54,969)  
DEATHS (+786)  
16,39,268 35,786

covid19india.org

## STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+1,811) (+13)  
TS: 60,717 505  
(+10,167) (+68)  
AP: 1,30,557 1,281

## CASES AROUND THE WORLD

1,73,38,525  
DEATHS 6,73,070  
COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES 213

worldometers.info/coronavirus

## ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana  
Tithi: Sravana Shuddha Dwadasi till 10.44 pm  
Star: Jyeshtha till 7.05 am  
Varjyam: 5.13 am to 6.48 am (Saturday)  
Durmuhurtam: 8.32 am to 9.23 am; 12.48 pm to 1.39 pm  
Rahukalam: 10.30 pm to 12 noon  
HILIRI CALENDAR  
Zuhijia 9,1441 AH  
PRAYERS  
Fajar: 5.15 am  
Zohar: 1.30 pm  
Asar: 5.15 pm  
Maghrib: 6.50 pm  
Isha: 8.15 pm  
SUNSET TODAY 6.40 PM  
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.47 AM  
MOONRISE TODAY 3.55 AM  
MOONSET TOMORROW 3.20 PM

## COUNTER POINT



Let's declare independence on 15th!

## IN BRIEF

### 2.20 L to get YSR Pension

Vijayawada: Over two lakh people, who applied for YSR Pension Kanuka in July, will get a pension on August 1. This increases the total pensioners under this scheme to 61.28 lakh.

Full report on Page 2

## WATER | FIGHT

# AP told to stop Seema project

MD ILYAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, JULY 30

The Krishna River Management Board (KRMB) has directed the Andhra Pradesh government to stop the work on the Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Scheme as it had violated the provisions of the AP Reorganisation Act.

KRMB member Harikesh Meena sent a letter to AP's Special Chief Secretary, Water Resources Development, stating that the work on the Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Scheme, which was taken up by Andhra Pradesh, including the calling of tenders, was violating the APRA 2014.

Citing letters of the AP government, Mr Harikesh Meena said granting administrative approval to new projects, vide GoAP G0 RT No 203 dated May 5, 2020, is a violation of Section 84 and para-7 of the Eleventh Schedule of the AP Reorganisation Act, 2014.

As the AP government has not submitted the project's Detailed Project Report (DPR) to the KRMB or the Central Water Commission for appraisal, he said the KRMB has directed that "the government of Andhra Pradesh shall not go ahead with the project, till the same was appraised by KRMB/CWC and the sanction of Apex Council is obtained".

He said the Telangana government had complained that AP has begun tender process violation of the instructions of the KRMB.

## KCR SAYS TELANGANA WILL NOT PART WITH EVEN A DROP OF ITS WATER TO AP

S.A. ISHAQUI | DC HYDERABAD, JULY 30

Unanimously resolving that it will not part with a drop of water from the rightful share of Telangana in Krishna and Godavari waters, in a high-level meeting chaired by Chief Minister K. Chandrababhan Naidu, the state government on Thursday decided to explore all possibilities to protect the rights of the state over the waters of both rivers at any cost.

The meeting held at Pragathi Bhavan discussed the letter written by the Central water resources

ministry secretary M.P. Singh to the state government asking it to convene the Central Water Resources Ministry (CWRM) apex council meeting on August 5 to resolve the water disputes between the Telangana and AP.

The meeting was of the firm view that the state should utilise its rightful share of water in Godavari and Krishna rivers and there should not be any compromising attitude on this.

The meeting has also decided to complete all ongoing projects on a fast track basis.

## AYODHYA PRIEST, 16 SECURITY MEN TEST COVID +VE

Ayodhya, July 30: Acharya Pradeep Das, the assistant to the chief priest of the Ram Janmabhoomi temple, and 16 cops on duty at the temple, where the groundbreaking ceremony for the Ram temple is expected to be held on August 5, tested positive for Coronavirus. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to attend the ceremony.

appropriate behaviour like wearing masks, avoiding gatherings, following hand hygiene and maintaining distance," the OSD said. According to scientists, herd immunity against Covid-19 in India is likely only in pockets given the many socio-economic groups in the country

## SONIA ADMITTED TO HOSPITAL FOR ROUTINE CHECK

New Delhi, July 30: Congress president Sonia Gandhi was admitted to Sir Ganga Ram Hospital on Thursday for routine tests, hospital authorities said. She was admitted to the private facility here at 7 pm for "routine tests and investigations", the hospital said in a bulletin. "Her condition is currently stable," Dr D.S. Rana, the chairman of the Board.

## In search of ancient life



A United Launch Alliance Atlas V rocket launches at Space Launch Complex 41 at the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station on Thursday. The biggest, most sophisticated Mars rover ever built, bristling with cameras, microphones, drills and lasers, is part of an ambitious, long-range project to bring the first Martian rock samples back to Earth to be analyzed for evidence of ancient life.

— AP

## HORSE TRADING RATES WENT UP, SAYS GEHLOT

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs JAIPUR/NEW DELHI, JULY 30

A day after governor Kalraj Mishra gave the go-ahead for convening the state Assembly from August 14, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Thursday claimed that the "rates of horse trading" in the state have increased.

"After the Assembly session was announced last night, the rates of horse trading have increased. Earlier, the first instalment was of ₹10 crore and second was of ₹15 crore. Now it has become unlimited and all know who is doing horse trading," Mr Gehlot said. Targeting Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati for her statements against him, the Rajasthan Chief Minister accused the former UP chief minister of acting at the behest of the BJP.

The Rajasthan Congress has decided that its MLAs will continue to remain together till the session begins. The decision was taken at a meeting of the Congress Legislature Party held at the Fairmont Hotel, on the outskirts of Jaipur, where MLAs loyal to Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot have been holed up since July 13.

# Disengagement incomplete: MEA

## China's claim regarding LAC debunked

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC NEW DELHI, JULY 30

India on Thursday countered China's claim that frontline forces of the two countries have "completed" disengagement at most locations at the LAC in the Ladakh sector, saying that though some progress has been made, military disengagement has not yet been completed.

India's statement followed Chinese ambassador Sun Weidong's claim earlier on Thursday that the troops of the two countries have "disengaged in most localities" and that China is not a strategic threat to India. "Border troops have disengaged in most localities, situation on ground is de-escalating and temperature is coming down. China is committed to peaceful development and is not a strategic threat to India," Mr Sun said while delivering a virtual address organised by a thinktank in New Delhi.

Contradicting Chinese claims, MEA spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said, "Some progress has been made, but the disengagement process has as yet not been completed. The senior

commanders of the two sides will be meeting in the near future to work out steps in this regard. We expect that Chinese side will sincerely work with us for complete disengagement and de-escalation and full restoration of peace and tranquillity in the border areas at the earliest."

The remarks from both sides came ahead of the fifth round of talks, likely later this week, between Corps Commanders of the two armies. In his address, the Chinese envoy compared India-China ties to "exquisitely crafted-glass" that should not be broken by "recklessness within seconds".

In what is also being seen as a warning against action by India on Chinese companies, the Chinese envoy also said that both economies are "highly complementary, interwoven and interdependent", adding that "forced decoupling is against the trend and will lead to a lose-lose outcome" for both sides.

The Chinese ambassador also blamed the "unfortunate" deadly Galwan Valley clash in mid-June on Indian troops, claiming they had attacked Chinese troops first, but added that neither side wants to see a repeat of such an incident.

Meanwhile, Australia on Thursday said it opposes any attempts to unilaterally alter the status quo along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) as it will only serve to increase tension and the risk of instability. In a statement on Thursday, Australian High Commissioner to India Barry O'Farrell also said Australia remains deeply concerned by "actions" in the South China Sea and that it rejected China's "unlawful maritime claims" in the region.

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## SHORT TAKES

## Next hearing on 3 capitals on Aug. 6

**Vijayawada:** The Andhra Pradesh High Court has directed the state government to file a counter-affidavit on a petition, which sought quashing of two committees set up by the government on three capitals issue, and posted the matter for the next hearing on August 6. Former Telugu Desam MLA Tenali Sravan Kumar filed a public interest litigation (PIL) in the High Court earlier asking the court to declare the appointment of an expert committee led by G.N. Rao and another high-powered committee as void. He stated that the reports of these two committees were the motive for initiation of two Bills dealing with AP Decentralisation and Inclusive Development of all Region, 2020 and also AP Capital Region Development Authority Repeal Bill, 2020. The court observed that a three-judge bench would hear the petition and direct the state government to file its counter-affidavit by August 6.

## BIE TO PUBLISH SHORT MARKS MEMO ON AUG. 1

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 30

Board of Intermediate Education (BIE) will make available second year general subjects' short marks memos of Intermediate Public Advanced Supplementary Examinations July, 2020, for download from its website 'bie.ap.gov.in' from 1 pm on July 31.

In a release issued here on Thursday, BIE secretary V. Ramakrishna stated that the short marks memos of second year vocational subjects and first year general and vocational subjects would be available for download on the same website from 1 pm on August 1.

## NIMMALA: GOVT NOT DOING MUCH TO FIGHT COVID

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 30

The YSRC government has failed to deal with the Covid pandemic in the state. There are no special hospitals with adequate beds, oxygen supply, ventilators and ICU facilities, alleged Telugu Desam MLA Nimmala Rama Naidu.

The MLA said the government re-designated the existing government hospitals as Covid centres, instead of creating special facilities. "Half-cooked or tasteless food is being served to patients at quarantine centres and pregnant women are having a tough time due to lack of services at both government and private hospitals in the state. He alleged that the government was not keeping its promise of paying ₹15,000 towards funeral expenses of Covid victims.

He claimed that the CM's only obsession is how to get the Legislative Council abolished and how to get the assent of the Governor for three capital and CRDA repeal Bills.

## GOVT DIVERTING CENTRAL FUNDS, SAYS TD

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KADAPA, JULY 30

The Telugu Desam (TD) district president Reddeppagari Srinivasa Reddy and other leaders were refused permission by the Kadapa Central Prison authorities on Thursday to meet J.C. Prabhakar Reddy, who is in judicial remand in the jail.

Later speaking to the media outside jail, the Telugu Desam (TD) leaders said Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy and his party leaders were not taking the Covid pandemic seriously. They accused the government of diverting Central funds given for public health.

Meanwhile, TD district general secretary Baliseti Hariprasad, addressing a press meet, said the CM's talk talk on Coronavirus fight was zero in implementation. "Listing Covid treatment in Aarogyasri is not serving any purpose as doctors are afraid to treat patients," he observed.

Ridiculing the CM's directive to officials to provide beds to patients within 30 minutes of their reaching hospital, he wanted to know what was the use of it was not implanted. "Making 300 people wait for tests from 6 am to 6 pm is nothing but cruel," he said.

## Nearing completion



Workers lay the road on Kanakadurga flyover in Vijayawada on Thursday.

— C. NARYANA RAO

## Opposition asks govt to respect new edu policy

## New education policy calls for implementing mother tongue

MD ILAYS | DC  
VIJAYAWADA, JULY. 30

Opposition parties and academicians on Thursday welcomed the new education policy, which advocates imparting education in the mother tongue of students much to the chagrin of the Jagan government, which is determined to introduce English medium in schools.

YSRC leaders argued that the new policy announced by the Centre on Wednesday had clearly mentioned that mother tongue should be medium of instruction "wherever possible". "This means that mother tongue is not compulsory," they reasoned.

Adhikara Bhasha Sangham former chairman Mandalai Buddha Prasad, welcoming the decision, said this was a big setback to the AP government's English medium policy. The AP High Court also faulted the English medium decision of the Jagan government and now the new education clearly called for implementation of mother tongue. Hence, the government should continue Telugu medium to protect mother tongue, he observed.

Former MLC A. Aja Sarma said that the new education policy of the Union government supported mother tongue as

## NEP 2020 ON DEGREE BEING A 4-YR COURSE ECHOES CM'S STANCE: MIN

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JULY. 30

Affirming that the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 took into consideration many of the recommendations made by the state government, education minister Adimulapu Suresh said that Chief Minister Jagan Mohan was ahead of times in visualising a level playing field for all students.

Speaking to media here on Thursday, Mr Suresh said the CM's ideas reflected in the NEP 2020. Like NEP, Jagan held the view that poverty should not be a barrier to higher education.

"Our CM was the first to

medium of instruction, but the AP government was adamant to impose English medium in the state. "Children can easily understand lessons in their mother tongue. But the YSRC government conveniently hides the fact and deceives the masses.

The Jagan government should take back its decision in reverence to the new education policy. Jana Sena founder K Pawan Kalyan also welcomed the new education

say that degree should be of four-year course and announced the pre primary 1 and pre primary 2 which was echoed in the new policy."

Like Amma Vodi, the NEP talks about incentivising parents by cash transfer to bring down the dropout rate.

Mr Suresh alleged that the previous TD government behaved like a brand ambassador to corporate education and closed government schools. "Unlike the TD policy, our government has revived them and launched Nadu Nedu to improve infrastructure in schools. He stated that YSRC government earmarked ₹12,000 crore for educational institutions.

policy's push for implementation of mother tongue as medium of instruction in schools. Faulting English medium policy of the Jagan government, he said that the children would grasp subjects easily in their mother tongue and called for reconsideration of the policy.

He suggested that the government give parents choice to selection medium of instruction.

Former chief minister and TD chief N.

Chandrababu Naidu welcomed the new education policy rolled out by the Narendra Modi government to usher in reforms in accordance with the changing times.

Mr Naidu also favoured mother tongue as medium of instruction at least up to class 5th. TD MLC and educationist AS Ramakrishna, BJP leader P Thirupati Rao, several academicians and other leaders urged the government not to impose English medium on the people.

Minister for education Adimulapu Suresh said since the matter was in court, it's not fair to speak about it but the news appearing in a section of the press did not touch the core issues that the government implemented. "We have taken the opinion of parents and 95 per cent were in favour of the government decision, which was taken after careful consideration and consultations with NCERT."

Minister Suresh clarified that the new education policy clearly stated, "Wherever possible" about education in mother tongue.

"We have thoroughly discussed the NEP 2020 and will apprise the CM of the policy. Digitalisation of education was also a feature of our policy which found its place in the new policy."

## Call 7993822444 on illegal liquor: SEB

D. SIVA RAMI REDDY | DC  
KURNOOL, JULY 30

would be kept confidential, the SP said.

Additional SP Gouthami Sali, who is also the head of SEB activities said that controlling illegal transmission of sand and liquor is high on priority and necessary staff has been allocated by the Departments of Police and Excise.

As per records, the SEB police seized 29,439 liquor and beer bottles, 28,401 litres of ID arrack and 52,355 kg of jaggery.

They also destroyed over 5,19,875 litres of jaggery along during the raids. 6,698 persons have been arrested in this connection

and 1,856 vehicle seized during the transport of illicit liquor in total 4,806 cases.

The SEB also seized 3,276 tonnes of sand that was being illegally transported and 221 vehicles were seized in this matter. Around 203 cases were booked against 368 persons who were arrested for illicit sand transport.

He said that from May 16 to July 29 this year, the SEB police registered 5,009 cases in the district against 9,066 people who were involved in illicit transmissions and anti-social elements.

On Thursday, district SP K. Fakkeerappa opened the new office on the premises of the District Police Office.

The SEB was led by District Additional SP Gouthami Sali on May 16 in the district.

Since then, the SEB has continued its raids and surprise checks on illicit transmission of liquor and sand.

The teams also conducted raids on illicit and country-made liquor units and jaggery units at various parts of the district, especially remote and tribal tandas.

## 2.20 lakh new beneficiaries to get pension on August 1

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 30

Over two lakh people, who applied for YSR Pension Kanuka in July, will get a pension on August 1. This increases the total pensioners under this scheme to 61.28 lakh. Volunteers will visit the houses of the beneficiaries of the scheme on August 1 to pay them the pension.

Panchayat raj and rural development minister Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy said the government would be spending ₹1,478.9 crore towards the YSR Pension Kanuka

● YSRC government has sanctioned 2.20 lakh new pensions in just one month. He refuted the allegations of opposition parties of cutting down budgets for welfare schemes.

scheme in August. He said the government has replaced biometric mode of authentication of beneficiaries during the payment of pensions with geo-tagging technology and photo-identification because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

He said Andhra Pradesh is the only state which is distributing social security pensions at doorsteps of

the beneficiaries and the credit for this goes to Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, who established the volunteer system which has been playing a crucial role in the implementation of government welfare schemes.

The minister recalled the sanction of new pensions had become virtually impossible during the previous government but the YSRC government has sanctioned 2.20 lakh new pensions in just one month. He refuted the allegations of opposition parties of cutting down budgets for welfare schemes.



Mekapati Goutham Reddy

## AP PARTNERING WITH SAHELI TO HELP WOMEN

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JULY. 30

Minister for industries Mekapati Goutham Reddy on Thursday said that the Jagan government partnered with Amazon Saheli to promote handicrafts made by women in the state.

Addressing a virtual meeting with the representatives of Amazon, he said the government was collaborating with Amazon Saheli to encourage women to market their products. Talks were held with Amazon Saheli and opined that this would be a good platform for women to get exposure to global marketing opportunities.

The Saheli programme for artisans would start functioning in the State in a few days.

Mr Goutham Reddy said that Amazon would set up a Centre of Excellence in the state and priority would be given to take administration to the door-step of the people.

IT department secretary Bhanu Prakash, special general secretary Sundar, APTS MD Nanda Kishore, Government advisors Vidyasagar Reddy, Srinath Reddy, Lokeshwar Reddy, AISPL MD Rahul Sharma, State and local government head Ajay Kaur and public policy head Lobo were among those who attended the virtual conference.

● Talks were held with Amazon Saheli and opined that this would be a good platform for women to get exposure to global marketing opportunities. The Saheli programme for artisans would start functioning in the State in a few days.

## Hospital denies neglecting infant boy's treatment

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 30

A woman, who is undergoing Covid treatment along with her two-month-old infant son at the GGH Guntur, narrated her "sufferings" at the hospital through a selfie video on Thursday.

The woman and her son were admitted at the hospital on July 24 after they had tested positive.

She said that her son was facing severe problems due to Covid and urine infections. She bought injections prescribed by the doctors for treatment of her son's urine infection, but the staff did not administer it to the infant boy.

When the boy started crying, she ran from pillar to post and even met the RMO, but there was no response from anybody.

She said that the gynaecology and pediatric ward staff shut the doors on her saying that she should get treatment for

her son only in the Covid ward.

She alleged that a nurse filled the syringe with liquid medicine from the vial, but left the ward without administering it to her son despite her repeated requests.

The nurse, according to the woman, assured that a doctor would come and give the injection to the boy. But nobody turned up.

GGH superintendent Dr K. Sudhakar refuted the allegations of the woman and said that the doctors were administering the injections to the boy according to the prescription.

He said that there was only a few minutes delay as the doctor concerned was attending to emergency patients, but the woman turned edgy and released the selfie in a hurried manner.

He assured that the doctors were taking utmost care of the mother and child putting their own lives at risk.

## Fake doc arrested at Vijayawada GGH

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 30

A con woman, who visited the Covid ward in GGH Vijayawada in the past four days posing as a doctor, allegedly collecting money promising better treatment for patients, was handed over to police on Thursday.

According to police, she introduced herself to the patients as Dr Sailaja, and made a visit to the hospital daily for the last four days. She even entered the ICU where Covid-19 patients were being treated.

The hospital staff grew suspicious and asked the woman about her identity. They were knocked off their feet when she nonchalantly replied: "I am Dr Shailaja... working here in the hospital."

Though they did not believe her claim, they nonetheless asked her to sign in the register to get a PPE kit and show her ID card.

To wriggle out of the tight spot, she reeled off contradictory answers.

First, she said she came on the insistence of her relatives. Then, the woman claimed she was an ayurvedic doctor and came to see her relatives in the ICU.

The staff initially mistook her for one of the 80 new doctors deputed to the hospital on Covid-19 duty. They also could not immediately establish her identity as she was wearing a PPE gear.

Machavaram CI Vinay Mohan said that realising that there was something fishy about her, the staff informed the police, who took her to the police station. During questioning, she claimed that she belonged to Prasadampadu and completed post-graduation. The police registered a cheating case and launched further investigation into her antecedents.

## State healthcare system is wilting under pressure to handle caseload in hospitals

## AP finds it tough to cope up with rising Covid-19 cases

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC  
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 30

With the phenomenal rise in Coronavirus cases in the state, the healthcare system is wilting under the pressure of caseload, resulting in deficient services and causing misery to people.

The family of a 70-year-old woman from A.T. Aghraharam in Guntur claims that the negligence of government hospital staff resulted in her death and that they are still awaiting their result of the tests conducted on them on July 24.

The woman, who suffered from chronic kidney disease, was taken to a local government hospital after a private hospital refused to perform dialy-

sis unless she was found negative for Covid-19 disease. The local government hospital, however, admitted her on July 17 as she had a fever. She was tested positive for Coronavirus on July 19 and after a few hours, she died of a cardiac arrest. The hospital had also reportedly delayed the release of her body from the mortuary. After repeated requests, the body was released two days later for cremation.

The health officials conducted Covid tests on her six primary contacts — her 72-year-old husband, two sons, a daughter, her husband and a 10-year-old grandson — on July 24. But till July 30, there was no communication from the health officials about the result. None of them

have any symptoms of Coronavirus infection. However, they have quarantined themselves as a precaution.

Speaking to this newspaper, the deceased woman's son, who works at a private firm in Hyderabad, said, "Our mistake of taking our mother to government hospital cost her life with no proper care. We begged literally to release her body from the mortuary. After our repeated pleas, our samples collected and test results are still awaited. It has been 11 days since our mother tested Covid-19 positive, but no health official informed us about our health status or bothers about it. We are staying in home isolation on our own to avoid the spread of disease in case we were also infected by

● Patients at Bommuru quarantine centre complained that no one was checking their temperature or providing them with suitable medication regularly.

the virus. If something similar had happened to illiterates, they would have roared around spreading the virus to all those who came into contact with them as there is an inordinate delay in the conduct of the test and declaring results."

The woman's husband says the delay in announcing results of their tests has affected their livelihood. "We run a petty business at home, but we have shut it as we are in home isolation. This is making us lose our only source of

income. We are not getting any healthcare. We could not conduct rituals to mark the death of my wife because we are quarantined. My son's employer calls him up regularly and asks as to when he will resume work. His job is at stake if he fails to attend to work immediately. But without knowing the result of Covid test, he cannot resume work. We don't know whom to approach," the 72-year-old man said.

A Class-IV employee, working in a government department in Rajahmundry, was infected with Covid-19 and her husband too was found to have been infected with the virus subsequently. When her colleagues — the primary contacts of the employee — approached local health

officials, they refused to oblige as the contacts needed to show more symptoms to collect swab samples and sent them to quarantine. The anxious employees, however, have got themselves tested privately and found that none of them were infected with the deadly disease.

Patients at Bommuru quarantine centre complained that no one was checking their temperature or providing them with suitable medication regularly. The patients said they were given amoxicillin tablets and B-Complex capsules, but not multi-vitamin tablets.

They said hydroxy-chloroquine tablets were given to some patients, who were having heart-related issues without checking their electrocar-

diogram. Health authorities claim such tablets need to be given only after checking the patient's ECG and caution that it may result in even fatality at times. The patients have also complained that they were being sent away from the quarantine centre after four to five days even without recovering from ailment to accommodate new patients.

A typist in the department of information and public relations at Nuziveedu, was denied admission in four private hospitals in Vijayawada as he was feeling breathless even though he was tested negative for Covid-19. Finally, he was admitted to a government hospital in the city with the intervention of the district administration.



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The Power to Surprise



## IN BRIEF

**Explosion victim succumbs**

**Nellore:** One among the critically injured in the fire mishap in a bulk drug manufacturing unit near Vinjamuru during the early hours of Wednesday, Sd. Hafeez succumbed to burns during treatment in a corporate hospital in Chennai late on Wednesday night. The condition of another victim, Rajanikanth and Bhaskar also stated to be critical, and they are also under treatment in Chennai. Hafeez is survived by his wife and two children aged below five years.

**Youth drowns while taking selfie**

**Kurnool:** One youth drowned in the Gajuladinne project near Gonegandla mandal headquarters on Thursday while he was taking a selfie. The deceased was identified as G. Sudhakar, 24, an auto mechanic, a resident of Kodumur town and the body was not yet found.

According to the cops, G. Sudhakar, along with his two other friends, reached the GDP dam on the site after the dam gates lifted with full floodwater on Thursday afternoon. Sudhakar drowned into the river when he was trying to get hold of his footwear that fell near the dam gates while they were photographing the dam site. Other visitors who were at the dam site tried to rescue but have failed to save him, and informed the police. The cops rushed to the spot and started rescue operation with the help of swimmers. The Gonegandla police have registered a case, and an inquiry is underway.

**Adivasis demand health emergency**

**Visakhapatnam:** The Adivasi organisations under the Joint Action Committee have demanded the government to declare a health emergency in the Agency area as the number of COVID-19 infections is increasing every day. As on Thursday, 88 positive cases have been reported, and of them, eight were discharged after successful treatment, according to the additional district medical and health officer, Dr Leela Prasad. "We have warned the government that the virus would infect the innocent Adivasis after the lockdown was withdrawn on June 8. It became true, and now the virus had spread to all the 11 mandals in the agency," JAC convener Ramarao Dora told this correspondent. He suggested to the government to supply essential commodities to the Adivasis at homes and declare a total lockdown to prevent the further spread of the virus.

**11 arrested, ₹31L property seized**

**Kadapa:** Kadapa police arrested 11 persons and seized 16 red sanders logs and vehicles worth ₹31 lakh on Wednesday evening. Following the orders of District SP Karur Karunapathi Nagendra Kumar Anburajan, Kadapa sub-divisional police officer Uppara Suryanarayana, Kadapa Urban inspector S. Mohammed Ali, Chennai SI Pedda Obanna and their staff raided the spot and found some smugglers loading the red sanders logs in a vehicle at Chennai Kondapeta bridge on Wednesday evening. The police team surrounded and attacked them. The police arrested six labourers belonging to TN, who were cutting red sanders and 5 smugglers. They seized 16 red sanders logs, an Innova vehicle, a Eicher truck, one Vista car and a motor cycle, all worth ₹31 lakh. The DSP congratulated the team involved in the raid.

**No permission for Chaturthi, Bakrid**

**Eluru:** West Godavari Collector Revu Muthyala Raju made it clear that no permission would be granted to install any flexes, hoardings or installing Ganesh Idols in pandals in the district on the occasion of Vinayaka Chaturthi festival on August 22. He said that due to curb the spread of Covid-19 virus, the installation of Ganesh Idols, Performing pujas in groups has been prohibited. At the same time, on the eve of Bakrid on August 1, slaughtering of cows, selling of cows for slaughtering and others have been prohibited.

**Sanjivayya varsity ranked 9 in country**

**Visakhapatnam:** Damodaram Sanjivayya National Law University in Visakhapatnam was ranked 9th in a national survey conducted jointly by India Today and Indian Today Marketing and Development Research Associates. On this occasion, the faculty congratulated Vice-Chancellor Prof. S. Surya Prakash.

**Out-patient treatment**

An ENT specialist attends an out-patient during general treatment at Government ENT Hospital in Visakhapatnam on Thursday. — P. NARASIMHA MURTHY

**AP records single-day spike of 10,167 cases**

68 deaths registered, 70,068 samples tested in last 24 hrs

**SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC VIJAYAWADA, JULY 30**

Andhra Pradesh recorded the highest ever single-day spike of 10,167 new Covid-19 cases and 68 deaths in the last 24 hours.

The state health department in its Covid-19 bulletin issued here on Thursday has reported that out of 70,068 samples tested, 10,167 individuals have been found infected with Coronavirus rising the tally to 1,30,557. The state government so far has carried out Covid-19 tests on 18,90,077 samples and of them 60,024 infected patients have been discharged after recovery while 69,252 are still undergoing treatment.

Among new infections, East Godavari continues to top the list by recording highest number of 1,441 cases followed by 1,252 from Kurnool, 1,223 from Visakhapatnam, 998 from West Godavari, 954 from

Anantapur, 946 from Guntur, 753 from Kadapa, 702 from Nellore, 586 from Srikakulam, 509 from Chittoor, 318 from Prakasam, 271 from Krishna and 214 from Vizianagaram.

With regard to cumulative positive cases, East Godavari has been worst hit with 19,180 cases followed by 15,723 from Kurnool, 13,762 from Guntur, 13,312 from Anantapur, 11,354 from West Godavari, 9,782 from Visakhapatnam, 9,589 from Chittoor, 7,230 from Kadapa, 6,530 from Krishna, 6,455 from Nellore, 6,168 from Srikakulam, 4,761 from Prakasam and 3,816 from Vizianagaram and 2,461 cases added from other states and 434 from other countries taking total cases to 1,30,557.

The spread of Coronavirus seems to very high in East Godavari as 12,919 active cases are there followed by 7,926 in Kurnool, 7,435 in

Anantapur, 7,351 in Visakhapatnam, 6,658 in West Godavari, 5,887 in Guntur, 4,345 in Chittoor, 4,338 in Nellore, 3,526 in Kadapa, 2,786 in Srikakulam, 2,180 in Prakasam, 2,062 in Vizianagaram and 1,821 in Krishna.

Among deaths reported in the last 24 hours, East Godavari and Guntur have recorded the highest number of nine each followed by eight each in Anantapur, Kurnool and Visakhapatnam, six each in Chittoor and Kadapa, four each in Prakasam and Vizianagaram, three in Krishna and one each in Nellore, Srikakulam and West Godavari.

With regard to cumulative deaths, Kurnool recorded a highest number of 187 so far followed by 160 in Krishna, 157 in East Godavari, 121 in Guntur, 105 in Anantapur, 101 in Chittoor, 100 in Visakhapatnam, 92 in

West Godavari, 66 in Srikakulam, 57 in Prakasam, 55 in Vizianagaram, 42 in Kadapa and 38 in Nellore taking total number of deaths to 1,281.

AP has conducted Covid-19 test on 35,395 samples for one million population by registering Covid-19 positive rate at 6.91 against nation's average positive rate recorded at 8.71. Maharashtra continues to record highest positive rate at 19.82 followed by Telangana at 14.80. Rajasthan has recorded lowest positive rate at 2.70 by testing 19,096 samples per million population while Kerala too competes with it by recording positive rate at 2.97 by testing 20,373 sample for one million population.

The state health authorities have discharged 4,618 patients after recovery in the last 24 hours, taking total number of discharges to 60,024 so far.

**No beds in Vizag, private hospitals fleece patients**

**K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC VISAKHAPATNAM, JULY 30**

While people are tensed about the availability of beds in the hospital, the managements of corporate and private hospitals are making money of the scary situation.

A brief enquiry on the latest situation revealed that the corporate hospitals are charging a minimum of ₹40,000 per day excluding ICU charges, PPE kits and doctors fees, while ordinary hospitals with non-AC facilities are charging a minimum of ₹15,000. These ordinary hospitals are not admitting serious patients or aged persons to avoid risks.

A senior medical professional, who leased out his hospital on the Bach Road to enterprising doctors for a good sum, said ₹15,000 is the lowest in

Visakhapatnam and availability of rooms depend on the discharges.

"As of now there are no rooms in Visakhapatnam and those who are depending on the government hospitals have to get treatment at home with the help of known doctors. Some NRIs are even paying ₹1 lakh per day for the treatment of their elderly family members who were being turned away by all the hospitals," the senior doctor told this correspondent.

The district administration has realised the situation and the collector is preparing to take over all the private hospitals in a day or two, said OSD for Covid management in north coastal Andhra and principal of Andhra Medical College, Dr P.V. Sudhakar.

"We have listed out 14 private and corporate and private hospitals and we have

told them not to charge fees from the patients. But we came to know that they are charging excess," Dr Sudhakar said.

He said all put together the Visakhapatnam city has 7,000 beds against the worst scenario target of 6,700 beds set by the state government.

As of now, there are 800 beds in GITAM Medical College, 650 in VIMS and 400 in Government Hospital for Chest and Communicable Diseases. Remaining beds are under corporate/private management control, he added.

A social activist said the Supreme Court has asked those private hospitals which have been given land at concessional rates by the government to treat a certain number of infected patients for free but none were adhering to the direction and giving treatment.

**IMPOSE TOTAL LOCKDOWN, SAYS EX-MLA**

**DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, JULY 30**

Former BJP MLA P. Vishnu Kumar Raju has demanded total lockdown in Vizag city due to the fast increasing Covid positive cases. He suggested that it would be better to go for total lockdown before the situation went out of control. Fearing a total collapse of the Covid care management, Mr Raju said he has been receiving frantic phone calls from people, mostly poor on how to reach a hospital for treatment of ordinary ailments and where to go in case they tested positive.

He said people suffering from non-Covid ailments were being shooed away by the hospitals, who have been demanding Covid test report before taking up treatment.

"Even if they go for test facing all the difficulties, they are not getting the report for days. Some people having serious cases have died and others are counting their days," Vishnu Kumar Raju said.

**NAVY SIGNS MoU WITH ANDHRA VARSITY**

**DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, JULY 30**

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was finalised between the Indian Navy and Andhra University, Visakhapatnam, for a PG Diploma course in Shipbuilding Technology to the special duty officers (Shipwright) on Thursday.

The MoU was signed by the Commanding Officer, INS, Vishwakarma on behalf of Indian Navy and the Registrar, Andhra University, in the presence of Dr P.V.G.D. Prasad Reddy, the Vice-Chancellor of Andhra University. The PG Diploma will benefit all the special duty officers who have undergone their commissioning course at INS Vishwakarma.

**Jains set up Covid Care Centre in Rajahmundry**

**VADREVVU SRINIVAS | DC RAJAHMUNDY, JULY 30**

Jains have set up a Covid Care Centre at Rajahmundry for their community members in East Godavari district with all facilities, including doctors, nurses, medicines, beds, food and entertainment. The centre has been set up at a Kalyana Mandapam.

"The centre is so convenient that it instils confidence among Covid-19 patients," said Jain Seva Samithi president Vikram Jain, who took the initiative in implementing the idea.

"Fear is a major factor that causes most deaths among Coronavirus-infected patients. If we

**COVID DIET AT JAIN CENTRE**

6 am: Hot water  
6.30 am: Lemon water  
7.30 am: Breakfast  
8.30 am: Tea or coffee  
9.30 am: Arogya raksha kashayam  
10 am: Vegetable soup  
11 am: Turmeric milk  
11.30 am: Dry fruits  
12.30 pm: Lemon water

have well-equipped quarantine centres, the mortality rate can be brought down drastically," he said.

Nearly 100 Jains had got infected with four of them succumbing to the

1 pm: Lunch  
3 pm: Steam  
3.30 pm: Tea and snacks  
4 pm: Ragi malt  
5.30 pm: Kashayam  
6 pm: Yoga  
7 pm: Lemon water  
7.30 pm: Dinner  
9 pm: Steam  
9.30 pm: Milk

virus. The centre has been established by the community to prevent additional deaths. Doctors and nurses present at the centre closely monitor the health of the patients.

**BITE | THE BAIT**

■ ₹1.5L per month for specialists, ₹70K for MBBS

**State offer may attract pvt docs**

**PATHRI RAJASEKHAR | DC NELLORE, JULY 30**

The state government's offer of ₹1.50 lakh per month for specialists and ₹70,000 for MBBS doctors, in addition to ₹50-lakh insurance coverage promised by the Centre and safety gear, is likely to make private doctors to treat Covid patients in the public sector hospitals.

It has also offered one-week quarantine after working for seven days and reacted positively to the Indian Medical Association's

request to provide Rs 50 lakhs insurance from the state government's side.

In fact, private doctors had not reacted favourably to the previous calls of the government to extend their services to Coronavirus patients.

According to IMA members, some of the reasons for the disinterest among private practitioners is that many of them have lucrative jobs in corporate hospitals or their own clinics.

Another downside is that there is no job guarantee after a six-month contract period. State sec-

retary of IMA Dr P. Panidhar said, "There is a good response from our members to extend services to Covid patients and they may join duty soon."

He said there is an unease among some doctors to serve Coronavirus patients following the death of RMOs at Tenali and Eluru recently. They are demanding ₹1-crore insurance cover, he said. IMA president of Nellore chapter Dr P. Chandrasekhar said their members have responded to their call to support government

efforts to deal with the dreaded virus.

The district administration has agreed to provide hotel accommodation to private doctors.

A large number of private doctors will take the offer if the government is willing to regularise their services after the expiry of their six-month contract, according to Chandrasekhar. IMA Nellore co-ordinator Dr G. Ashok said a section of private doctors are already attending to duties in private hospitals and may not prefer to go to the government hospitals.

**80 prisoners test +ve in AP jails**

**DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, JULY 30**

Even if all the precautionary measures were taken as per the Covid protocol, 56 prisoners tested positive in Rayalaseema region and 24 in Visakhapatnam Central prison as on Thursday.

Official sources said in Visakhapatnam Central Jail, 18 prisoners, including three women and six staff members, tested positive.

The jail authorities said they were negotiating with the district administration for their treatment. Special sanitisation has been launched and efforts are on to screen all the convicted and under trial prisoners.

Some of the under trial prisoners have asked their lawyers to make fresh efforts to get them bail

owing to the sensitive situation, sources said.

Other reports said 7 under trails were infected in Nellore Central prison during the last one month.

While 6 of them were given bail after treatment at the Government General Hospital in Nellore when the prisons department appealed the court to grant bail citing the stigma among the other prisoners if the infected returned to the jail.

One patient is still undergoing treatment at prison ward in GGH. The infections among under-trials forced the prison authorities to conduct Covid tests for 800 persons in the jail, including inmates and staff in three phases, superintendent of the prison Rajaseswar Rao said.

**‘Sri Rama’ rice offered to Ram Mandir fete**

**DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, JULY 30**

Chaluvadi Malli Vishnu Vandana, a miniature artist from Sullurupeta has written 'Sri Rama' on 50,116 rice grains and handed over to the local activists of Viswa Hindu Parishat (VHP) on Thursday so as to reach Ayodhya to be used in the temple foundation ceremony scheduled on August 5.

In response to the request made by Vishnu Vandana, the Ramajanna Bhoomi Nirman Committee asked the VHP and BJP activists to receive the offering on their behalf. Starting from 2017, Vishnu Vandana has written the name of the Lord 3,12,320 times on rice grains, and they were offered in the form of 'talambralu' for the Sitarama Kalyana Mahotsavams held at the temples of Vontimitta, Sullurupeta, Hyderabad and



Rice with Lord Rama's name on it. —DC



Chaluvadi Vandana

Mannar Poluru.

She handed over the rice grains at a ceremony held on the premises of Sri Adi Lakshmi Sametha Karumariyamma temple, in the presence of senior RSS member B. Kodandarama Redd and others.

**Srivani darshan time extended**

**DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, JULY 30**

The TTD has extended the period of VIP break darshan tickets offered on donations to the Sri Venkateswara Alaya Nirmana (SRIVANI) trust from the present six months duration to one year.

The devotees who make donations of ₹10,000 or above to the SRIVANI Trust are eligible to get VIP break darshan tickets at Tirumala temple, and they can avail the privilege any time within the six months after the donation.

Following requests from devotees given the Covid-19 restrictions prevailing

across the country and even overseas, TTD has facilitated the devotees holding such break tickets to utilise them in the next 12 months.

Meanwhile, to promote e-Hundi facility for devotees of Goddess Padmavati Ammavaru, TTD has introduced e-Hundi facility at the Tiruchanore temple.

The devotees can make their contributions online directly either through the TTD website of www.tirupatibalaji.ap.gov.in or on Govinda mobile App.

The online facility is open for both the devotees who have already registered on the website and mobile app and to those who are yet to register.

**NEW DM&HO FOR EAST GODAVARI**

**DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, JULY 30**

Zonal malaria officer Dr B. Subrahmanyeswari has been given full additional charge as District Medical and Health Officer (DHMO) for East Godavari.

The incumbent DM&HO Dr M. Mallikarjun will retire on Friday. East Godavari district collector D. Muralidhar Reddy issued proceedings to this effect. The district has been witnessing an exponential rise in Covid-19 cases.



## IN BRIEF

**Pak Senate nod to 2 FATF bills**

**Islamabad:** Pakistan's Senate on Thursday unanimously approved two bills related to the tough conditions set by the global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog FATF, a day after they were passed in the National Assembly amidst vociferous protest from the Opposition parties. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Amendment Bill, 2020, and the Anti-Terrorism Act Amendment Bill, 2020, were presented by Advisor to Prime Minister on Parliamentary Affairs Senator Babar Awan. The bills include measures of freezing and seizure of assets, travel ban, and arms embargo on the entities and individuals, who are designated on the sanctions list of the United Nations and impose heavy fine and long-term jails for those facilitating militancy. The two bills passed by the National Assembly on Wednesday fulfil various requirements of the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force.

**Indictment: Plea by Zardari**

SHAFQAT ALI | DC ISLAMABAD, JULY 30

Pakistan People's Party (PPP) co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday submitted a plea in the court requesting to halt indictment proceedings against him in Thatta Water Supply reference. The accountability court has issued a notice to National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on Mr Zardari's plea. The court had decided to indict Zardari in Thatta water supply reference on August 4. Earlier, NAB court had postponed indictment of Zardari and his sister Faryal Talpur in mega money laundering case till August 7. In December 2019, Zardari was released on medical grounds after an accountability court in Islamabad issued separate rob-kar in the Park Lane Estate Company and the money laundering through fake bank accounts cases against him.

**JAPAN GAS LEAK KILLS 1, INJURES 17**

**Tokyo, July 30:** A sudden explosion from a suspected gas leak blew out walls and windows in part of a northern Japanese town Thursday morning, killing one person and injuring 17 others. There was no sign of a fire and investigators at the suspect a gas leak may have cause the blast, Koriyama fire department official Hiroki Ogawa said. Local media say a gas leak and explosion occurred at Onyasai restaurant. So far, one person was confirmed dead and 17 others have been taken to hospitals. Two of them were seriously injured, Ogawa said. The area has been closed off and neighbours have been evacuated. NHK footage showed only a skeleton left of a building, the steel structure gnawed and pieces of wall and glass scattered around. Several employees and customers at a nearby bank were injured, NHK said. The explosion occurred in a crowded business and commercial district close to the city's main train station, where hospitals, schools and the city hall are also located. "I heard a 'boom!' and felt the ground shaking, so I thought it was an earthquake, but the shaking didn't last very long so I realised it wasn't," an employee at nearby Kuwano Kyoritsu Hospital told NHK. Nobody was injured at the hospital, although some of its windows were shattered. The restaurant was undergoing repairs, according to its owner, casual dining group Colowide Co.

**9th century Shiva statue to be returned to India**

**London, July 30:** A rare late ninth century stone statue of Lord Shiva, which was stolen from a temple in Rajasthan and smuggled to the United Kingdom, will be returned to the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) on Thursday.

The stone Nataraj/Natesha murti, in "chatura pose with jatamakuta and trine-tri" and almost four-feet-tall, is a rare depiction of Lord Shiva in the Pratihara style.

It was stolen in February 1998 from Ghateshwar Temple in Baroli,

Rajasthan. In 2003, it came to light that the statue had been smuggled out to the UK.

"When this information was received in London, the UK authorities were contacted and with their support the matter was pursued with the private collector, who was in possession of the idol in London. He voluntarily returned the idol to the Indian High Commission in the UK in 2005," said the High Commission of India in the UK. In August 2017, a team of ASI experts visited the

India House and examined the idol, which took pride of place inside the building's main lobby. The experts confirmed that it is the same statue that was stolen from Ghateshwar Temple.

An Indian government communique said that in line with the government of India's renewed impetus to protecting India's cultural heritage and showcasing it to the world, the MEA along with India's law enforcement agencies have been actively pursuing investigations and restitution of stolen Indian antiquities.

**Trump floats poll 'delay' amid voting fraud claims**

It will require an act of the Congress to change the election dates

**Washington, July 30:** President Donald Trump is for the first time floating a "delay" to November's presidential election, as he makes unsubstantiated allegations that increased mail-in voting will result in fraud.

The dates of federal elections — the Tuesday after the first Monday in November — are enshrined in federal law and would require an act of Congress to change. The Constitution makes no provisions for a delay to the January 20, 2021 presidential inauguration.

Trump tweeted Thurs-

● Trump has increasingly sought to cast doubt on Nov election

ay: "With Universal Mail-In Voting (not Absentee Voting, which is good), 2020 will be the most INACCURATE & FRAUDULENT Election in history. It will be a great embarrassment to the USA. Delay the Election until people can properly, securely and safely vote?"

There is no evidence of widespread voter fraud through mail-in voting, even in states with all-mail votes. Five states already

rely exclusively on mail-in ballots, and they say they have necessary safeguards in place to ensure that a hostile foreign actor doesn't disrupt the vote.

Election security experts say that all forms of voter fraud are rare, including absentee balloting.

Trump has increasingly sought to cast doubt on November's election and the expected surge in mail-in and absentee voting as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic.

And Trump has called remote voting options the "biggest risk" to his reelection. — AP

**THREAT FROM CCP VERY REAL, SAYS POMPEO**

**Washington, July 30:** The threat from the Communist Party of China (CCP) is very real, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Wednesday asserting that the Trump administration has begun to take all the "right actions" to rebalance the relationship with Beijing in a way that protects and secures freedom for Americans.

"From America's national security perspective, the threat the President (Donald Trump) identified when he campaigned back in 2015 from the CCP is very real. And so we've begun to take all the right actions to rebalance this relationship in a way that protects and secures freedom for the American people," Pompeo said.

**Chinese bombers join South China Sea drills**

**Beijing, July 30:** China said on Thursday that long-range bombers were among the aircraft that took part in recent aerial drills over the South China Sea amid rising tensions between Washington and Beijing over the strategic waterway.

The exercises included nighttime takeoffs and landings and simulated long-range attacks, Defence Ministry spokesperson Ren Guoqiang said. Among the planes were H-6G and H-6K bombers, upgraded versions of planes long in use with the People's Liberation Army Air Force and the People's Liberation Army Navy Air Force, Ren said.

He said the exercises had been previously

scheduled and were aimed at boosting pilot abilities to operate under all natural conditions. It wasn't clear whether live bombs were used. Ren's statement appeared to distance the drills from recent accusations exchanged between the sides over China's claim to virtually all of the South China Sea, which it has buttressed in recent years by building man-made islands equipped with runways. The US this month for the first time rejected China's claims outright, prompting Beijing to accuse it of seeking to create discord between China and its neighbours. Five other governments also exercise claims in the South China Sea, through which around

\$5 trillion in trade is transported annually.

Previously, US policy had been to insist that maritime disputes between China and its smaller neighbours be resolved peacefully through UN-backed arbitration. But in a statement, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the US now regards virtually all Chinese maritime claims outside its internationally recognised waters to be illegitimate.

The shift does not involve disputes over land features that are above sea level, which are considered to be "territorial" in nature. "The world will not allow Beijing to treat the South China Sea as its maritime empire," Pompeo said.

— AP

**TIMES SQUARE TO DISPLAY RAM'S IMAGES**

**New York, July 30:** Images of Lord Ram and 3D portraits of the grand Ram Temple in Ayodhya will be beamed across the giant billboards in the iconic Times Square here on August 5 to celebrate the temple's groundbreaking ceremony, with organisers describing the commemoration as a one-of-a-kind and historic event.

community leader and President of the American India Public Affairs Committee Jagdish Sewhani on Wednesday said that arrangements are being made to celebrate the historic moment in New York on August 5, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to lay the foundation stone for construction of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya.

**4 ARRESTED UNDER NEW SECURITY LAW**

**Hong Kong, July 30:** At least 12 Hong Kong pro-democracy nominees including Joshua Wong were disqualified for a September legislative election, with authorities saying Wednesday they failed to uphold the city's mini-constitution and pledge allegiance to Hong Kong and Beijing.

Others who were disqualified include prominent pro-democracy activist Tiffany Yuen from the disbanded political organisation Demosisto, as well as incumbent lawmaker Dennis Kwok and three others from the pro-democracy Civic Party. It marks a setback for the pro-democracy camp, which had aimed to win a majority of seats in the legislature this year.

Earlier this month, they held an unofficial primary, with candidates like Wong topping the polls. Wong and many pro-democracy nominees had been asked to clarify their political stance earlier this week as their nominations were being reviewed. Other nominations were being reviewed, the government said

expressing support for the disqualifications.

"We do not rule out the possibility that more nominations would be invalidated," it said.







## SHORT TAKES

## WOMAN SETS HERSELF ON FIRE IN PROTEST

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, JULY 30

A woman in a Madhya Pradesh village set herself on fire in protest against the anti-encroachment drive being carried out in her farmland by the local administration.

A video showing the woman identified as Shabra Bi (45), suddenly turning her into a ball of fire after pouring kerosene on herself while protesting against the anti-encroachment drive has gone viral.

Although the incident occurred on Tuesday, it came to light on Thursday when former chief minister Kamal Nath tweeted the video demanding a probe into it.

The woman, a resident of Atwas village under Satwas police station in Dewas district, received 20 percent burns following the incident. She has been admitted to a hospital in Indore. Her condition was stated to be stable.

Her husband Ramzan Khan alleged that the authorities were destroying the soybean crop in their field. “I do not know from where Shabra brought kerosene to immolate herself. She poured kerosene and lit herself by the time we could take a note of it”, he said. However, Dewas DSP Shivdayal Singh said Shabra Bi and ten others attacked the team of police and revenue officials leading to injuries to two revenue inspectors.

“There was a complaint that Shabra Bi and her family had encroached upon government land. The revenue court had settled the issue last week and the revenue team had gone there to free the land of encroachment when Shabra Bi and ten others attacked them”, he said.

## SOZ: WILL SUE GOVT FOR UNLAWFUL HOUSE ARREST

**Srinagar, July 30:** Senior Congress leader and former Union minister Saifuddin Soz on Thursday said he would sue the government for his “unlawful house arrest” since August 5 last year, when the Centre revoked the special status of Jammu and Kashmir, and termed the government’s response in the Supreme Court that he was not under detention as “falsehood”.

“I take a strong exception to the government stand before the Supreme Court that I had neither been put under house arrest nor had any restrictions been imposed on me since August 5, 2019,” Soz said in a statement here.

He said the government has resorted to “falsehood as it had unlawfully incarcerated me since August 5, 2019”.

“All this while, I was not allowed to move out of my premises. I left my premises twice, when I had to visit my ailing sister and I went to Delhi on 17th September, 2019 to 21st September, 2019 and 15th December, 2019 to 21st December, 2019 for seeking medical advice. Whenever I went out of my premises since August 5, 2019, I had to obtain permission from the government,” he said.

The former Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) president added that he has decided to sue the government for his “unlawful” house arrest.



Villagers on a banana raft move to a safer place from the flooded area of Goalbil, in Baksa district on Thursday. The flood situation in Assam improved further though one more person lost his life taking the toll to 108 even as more parts of Bihar were affected by the deluge caused by rise in water levels of rivers originating in Nepal. Also, actor-producer Anushka Sharma and Indian skipper Virat Kohli announced that they have pledged their support to the people of flood ravaged Assam and Bihar.

— PTI

## TN decides to extend lockdown till Aug 31

Restrictions on intra-state, inter-state travel continue

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, JULY 30

Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami announced the continuation of the current lockdown till August 31 with existing regulations and a few relaxations but clearly restricted intra-state and inter-state travel despite the Union ministry of home affairs doing away with e-passes.

Among the few relaxations are allowing industries, private companies and export firms that were earlier permitted to function with 50 per cent staff to increase it to 75 per cent, letting vegetable and grocery shops and other business establishments to be open for an additional hour — vegetables and groceries from 6 am to 7 pm and other shops from 10 am to 7 pm.

E-commerce has been allowed all over the state for both essential and non-essential goods and celebration of Independence Day on August 15 has been permitted with the adaptation of social distancing and other such norms for the prevention of Covid-19.

## Kerala govt nod for home care isolation of patients

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JULY 30

In a significant decision, the Kerala government decided to allow home care isolation for Covid-19 patients even as the state reported 506 cases on Thursday.

At a press conference, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said that the home care isolation system for Covid-19 patients would be implemented on an experimental basis.

Places of worship, other than the small ones earning less than ₹10,000 a year, would remain shut and restaurants and teashops can allow dine-in facility but in 50 per cent of their seating capacity. They can function between 6 am and 7 pm though takeaway would be

Initially healthcare workers who have tested positive will be treated at home.

The health officials will conduct house-to-house visits to assess the situation once the system is put in place.

In the event of complications like respiratory distress or any other medical emergency, the person would be moved out from home and taken to hospital or CFLT whatever his condition demands.

Those individuals who prefer to have home care isolation will have to submit an affidavit to the authorities concerned about their willingness to avail the facility.

The facility will be available in Thiruvananthapuram district initially and after examining the outcome, a decision will be taken on extending it to other districts.

Earlier, Thiruvananthapuram collector issued a notification in this regard.

allowed till 9 pm.

However, in containment zones no activity would be allowed and Section 144 would be in force everywhere, preventing more than five persons to gather in public.

The Chief Minister urged companies to encourage their employees to

work from home, said that the decision to continue the lockdown was taken on the basis of the views expressed by medical specialists, health experts, district collectors, senior bureaucrats and ministers, besides taking into consideration the Central government’s advice.

## Lab technician arrested for taking vaginal swab for Coronavirus test

HARSHADA PARAB | DC MUMBAI, JULY 30

In an incident that sent shockwaves across the state, the police arrested a lab technician in Maharashtra’s Amravati district after he took swab samples from a woman’s private parts.

State woman and child development minister

Yashomati Thakur, who is also the local MLA, has promised strict action against the accused. The police have slapped a rape case against him.

The incident took place on Tuesday when the 20 to 25 staff members of a local mall, including the 24-year-old victim visited a local testing centre for Covid-19 test after one of

their colleagues tested positive. However, after taking the nasal swabs of all staffers, technician Alpesh Deshmukh convinced the victim to also give swab sample from her private parts.

“The accused person convinced the victim that vaginal swab was necessary for the Covid test. Later, the victim realised

that she has been cheated and she filed the police complaint.

We have arrested the accused under Indian Penal Code Sections 354 (assault or criminal force on woman with intent to outrage her modesty) and 376 (rape), said a police officer from Badnera police station where the FIR has been filed.

## Ex-Samata party chief, 2 others get 4-year jail

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 30

A Delhi court on Thursday sentenced former Samata Party president Jaya Jaitley and two others to four years in prison for corruption in a 2000-01 case related to a purported defence deal.

Special CBI judge Virender Bhat also imposed a fine of ₹1 lakh each on all three and directed them to surrender before it till 5 pm on Thursday itself.

The Delhi High Court, however, put on hold Jaitley’s four-year jail term. The High Court has sought the CBI’s response on Jaitley’s appeal challenging her conviction and sentence in the case.

Jaitley, her former party colleague Gopal Pachherwal and Major General (retd) S.P. Murgai were held guilty of corruption and criminal conspiracy in the purported purchase of hand-held thermal imagers.

The case stemmed from ‘Operation Westend’ sting aired by a news portal in January 2001.

While convicting the

three accused, the court held that they, along with Surender Kumar Surekha (who later turned approver), were party to a criminal conspiracy that took place between December 2000 and January 2001 at Delhi.

The court observed that while Jaitley accepted ₹2 lakh illegally from Mathew Samuel, a representative of fictional company Westend International, Maj Gen Murgai received ₹20,000.

The illegal money was accepted for obtaining supply orders for hand held thermal imagers from the Army.

They were convicted of the offence of conspiracy (Section 120-B IPC read with Section 9 (taking gratification, for exercise of personal influence with public servant) of Prevention of Corruption Act.

The court held it is “proved beyond doubt that in the meeting in the hotel room on December 25, 2000, Surekha and Murgai assured their assistance to Samuel in procuring letter of evaluation for the product of his company

from the ministry of defence and also to arrange a meeting between him and accused Jaya Jaitley who would provide political cover to them in this regard.”

“It was agreed that Samuel would pay ₹1 lakh each to Surekha and Murgai and ₹2 lakh to Jaitley,” the court noted.

“Thus there had been an agreement between them to obtain the evaluation letter for the concerned product by illegal means, i.e. by resort to corruption and personal influence upon the concerned officials,” it said, adding, “Accordingly, Pachherwal arranged the said meeting for December 28, 2000. He too was present in the said meeting in the room of Jaitley along with Surekha, Samuel and Murgai.”

The court further said, “In that meeting, which took place in the official residence of the then Union minister for defence, George Fernandes, Samuel was introduced to Jaitley as a businessman whose company intends to enter the market of defence procurement.”

## Priyanka vacates official bungalow

**New Delhi, July 30:** Senior Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Thursday vacated her official bungalow at Delhi’s posh Lodhi Estate area before the deadline specified in the July 1 eviction order.

The central government, in the notice, had asked her to vacate the sprawling premises by August 1 or face monetary penalty.

An official statement issued by the Congress said Gandhi handed over the possession of her 35, Lodhi Estate bungalow, “previously allotted to her on security grounds”, to the CPWD on Thursday.

Sources close to her said she will be staying

for a few days in her Gurgaon penthouse before shifting to central Delhi, where she has finalised a house on rent. Renovations are currently going on in her new house in Delhi, they said.

“She will be residing in a temporary accommodation until a more permanent accommodation in Delhi rented by her is ready for use,” an official communication from the Congress said.

Earlier in the day, a team of central PWD officials visited her house and took the keys of the Lodhi Estate bungalow.

The Congress said that she has paid all electricity, water and previous dues. — PTI

## SC: Police to probe Sushant’s case

PARMOD KUMAR | DC NEW DELHI, JULY 30

The Supreme Court on Thursday junked a public interest plea seeking transfer of investigation in late actor Sushant Singh Rajput’s suicide case from Maharashtra police to Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

Asking the PIL petitioner Alka Priya to go to Bombay High Court if she has anything concrete to show, a bench comprising Chief Justice Sharad A. Bobde, Justice A.S. Bopanna and Justice V. Ra-

masubramanian dismissed the PIL observing “let police do its job”.

“The Mumbai police are probing the matter. If you want you can go before the Bombay HC and seek appropriate relief,” said the CJI refusing to entertain the plea.

Meanwhile, Sushant’s father Krishna Kishore Singh has filed a caveat in SC seeking to be heard before any decision is taken on Rhea Chakraborty’s plea seeking transfer of investigation into FIR lodged in Patna to Mumbai.

## MY GOVT TRIED TO ESTABLISH ‘RULE OF LAW’: NITISH

NAYEAR AZAD | DC PATNA, JULY 30

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Thursday said his government tried to establish “rule of law” in the state and never compromised on three “Cs” — crime, corruption and communalism.

He was speaking at the inauguration of 124 police buildings in Bihar through video conference.

“My government never compromised on crime, corruption and communalism. The scenario earlier was completely different. There used to be massacres in the state before 2005, but the scenario has changed now”, Nitish Kumar said.

“Our police have played a crucial role in establishing the rule of law in Bihar. There has been a zero-tolerance on crime and communalism and our police have worked hard in maintaining peace in the state”, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar said.

His statement has come at a time when the Opposition, especially the RJD, has been targeting Nitish Kumar on various issues including the Covid-19 crisis, flood and deteriorating law and order scenario in the state. RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav and the Congress have been hinting at using these issues as their main agenda during the Assembly elections scheduled to be held in October — November this year.

During the event, Nitish Kumar said that his government worked hard for the development of the state in the last fourteen years.

He also used the occasion to appreciate the medical fraternity and the police for their efforts to control the Coronavirus crisis in the state.

## Separatist camp in disarray, supporters bewildered

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, JULY 30

Jammu and Kashmir’s separatist camp has been in a state of stagnation since August 5 last year when the Centre cancelled the special status and downgraded the state by bifurcating it into two Union Territories.

Even the key faces in the separatist camp, who would earlier rule the roost and whose writ ran large over vast sections of Muslim population, mainly in the Valley, have miserably failed to play any predictable or even customary role in Kashmiri politics during past one year. This has pushed the entire separatist camp in disarray and its supporters in public dispirited and bewildered.

Weeks after the Centre moved harshly on J&K, it was widely rumoured in the Valley and beyond that some of the separatist leaders who were among those

365 DAYS AFTER 370

detained around August 5 signed bonds to secure their release.

As also reported by sections of the media, the detainees, mostly politicians from both mainstream and separatist camps, were offered to be released by the authorities on the condition that they sign the bond, agreeing to cease their political activities.

Even after the lapse of one year, the separatist leadership remains in the doldrums, unable to guide their supporters on the issues they would insist on being a ‘matter of life and death’ for Kashmir and its people.

Their issuing guarded statements occasionally is like ‘one swallow does not make a spring’, as was put by a supporter. He asserted,

“They have betrayed us.”

The BJP calls the jumble and the killing of over 250 militants including a couple of dozen top commanders in security forces’ operations since August 5 last year a “big achievement” of the Modi government. It also says that it has broken the Kashmir jinx.

Independent watchers, however, say the government’s brutal policies towards J&K have, on one hand, only decimated the India constituency in the politically sensitive Valley, and, on the other, proliferated a young generation of diehard legacy and that to handle it might not be an easy task ahead.

The not-so-good human rights situation in J&K has already prompted various international organisations and, also some countries other than Pakistan and its allies, to call for corrective measures.

## Recovery of waepons in Assam raises alarm

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, JULY 30

Security agencies in the state raised concern over the presence of large number of illegal weapons with former militants in Western Assam’s Bodoland Territorial Council.

While the security agencies succeeded in recovering some weapons, they admitted that former militants are still running a private militia and may turn out to be a serious threat to law and order situation in the area.

Though ministry of home affairs had made a major breakthrough by forcing all the factions of the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) to sign a peace accord that led to ceremonial surrender of arms before Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal in January this year. The separatist groups, which announced the end of armed struggle, however, deposited only 178 weapons, raising the eyebrows of security agencies that

feared these rebel groups withheld a large number of sophisticated weapons.

Asserting that these recoveries are alarming and indicate that a large number of sophisticated weapons are still in possession of surrendered militants and hidden, security sources said that sophisticated weapons recovered in the BTC area in recent times, belonged to different factions of the NDFB. Indicating that it is almost impossible to assess the number of weapons in possession of the militant groups, security sources said that all the factions are holding illegal weapons as these militant outfits did not deposit all their weapons while surrendering.

It is significant that all together 1,615 cadres which included 836 of the NDFB-Progressive, 579 of the NDFB-Ranjan Daimary faction and 200 of the NDFB(S) led by B. Saoragwra had laid down arms.

Pointing out that all the four factions claimed to

● **THE SEPARATIST groups** deposited only 178 weapons, raising the eyebrows of security agencies that feared these rebel groups withheld a large number of sophisticated weapons.

● **SECURITY FORCES** indicate that a large number of sophisticated weapons are still in possession of surrendered militants and hidden.

● **IT IS significant** that all together 1,615 cadres which included 836 of the NDFB-Progressive, 579 of the NDFB-Ranjan Daimary faction and 200 of the NDFB(S) had laid down arms.

have deposited 4,800 weapons security sources said that on scrutiny of the arms, it was found that only 178 weapons that NDFB cadres used were surrendered and remaining arms were junk and unused old weapons.

Security forces recovered

one HK-33 rifle, an M-16 rifle, an AK-47 rifle and 27 rounds of live cartridges on July 19 from Ghagrah Part II in Udalguri district. Police had also recovered a HK-33 Rifle with ammunition from No 4 Moinaguri under Bijni Police Station in Chirang district on Sunday evening.

Earlier a day before on Saturday, in two separate operations, the police recovered arms and ammunition from Kokrajhar and Baksa districts. Two AK-47 rifles, 2 9MM pistols and ammunition were recovered from Goreswar Police Station area and one AK-47 and ammunition from Simla Police Station area in the district.

In Kokrajhar, police had recovered a huge cache of arms and ammunition from beneath a bamboo grove in Duligaon area under Bagribari police station on Saturday. The recovery included an AK series rifle, two AK series magazines, one polythene sheet used for wrapping and covering the rifle and magazine to

which lubricant was applied, 30 AK series ammunitions in a plastic container half filled with rice husk.

Admitting that the recent recoveries of weapons have been a major success for the security forces and all out efforts must be made by police and security agencies to seize illegal weapons, security sources did not rule out the possibility of surrendered militants selling out the weapons that they kept with themselves to criminals or poachers.

Security sources also claimed that these weapons may be used during the BTC elections which have been deferred due to COVID-19.

It is significant that the ministry of home affairs had declared that Bodoland Territorial Council has become free from militancy as all the factions of militant groups joined the mainstream but recovery of illegal weapons has set the alarm bell ringing for the security forces.



quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	37,736.07	-0.88
Nifty 50	11,102.15	-0.90
S&P 500*	3,241.97	-0.51
Dollar (₹)	74.84	-0.04
Pound Sterling (₹)	97.16	-0.20
Euro (₹)	87.95	-0.04
Gold (10gm) (₹)	53,860.118	0.00
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	42.96	-0.79
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.825	-0.010
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.543	-0.038

Local shops to make Prime Day debut: Amazon

Over 100 small and medium businesses and start-ups on Amazon.in will be launching more than 1,000 new products across 17 categories on Prime Day this year on August 6 and 7. Thousands of local shops on Amazon sellers will be also making their Prime Day debut in India, the e-tailer said in a statement. Start-ups and small businesses from Amazons Launchpad programme will be launching unique products, it said.



Net rises to ₹13,248 cr in June quarter  
Reliance posts record profit

New Delhi, July 30: Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) on Thursday reported record net profit of Rs 13,248 crore in the June quarter after one-time gain from stake sale as well as bumper telecom revenues cushioned Covid-19-hit earnings from refining, petchem and retail segments.

The net profit in April-June was 30.6 per cent higher than it was in the same period a year back, and bettered the company's previous best of Rs 11,640 crore earning in October-December 2019, the company said in a statement.

The conglomerate said it had a one-time gain of Rs 4,966 crore from sale of 49 per cent stake in fuel retailing venture to BP plc.

This together with 183 per cent jump in Reliance Jio's standalone net profit to Rs 2,520 crore covered up drop in earnings from mainstay segments.

Ebitda (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortisation) declined by 11.8 per cent to Rs 21,585 crore "due to lower contribution from oil-to-chemical (O2C) business, which was impacted by significant demand destruction and margin pressure across transportation fuels and polyester chain."

Also, lower realisation in the export market also impacted profitability.

"Closure of stores and restrictions on operations across the country due to Covid-19 contributed to a



COGNIZANT Q2 INCOME DOWN 29%, SEES STRONG GROWTH AHEAD

New Delhi, July 30: IT major Cognizant has reported a 29 per cent drop in the June quarter net income at \$361 million (around Rs 2,701 crore), but is confident of logging strong growth in the coming quarters on the back of strong bookings and demand for digital services.

The US-based company, which posted net income of \$509 million in the June 2019 quarter, said it expects its FY2020 revenue to be in the range of \$16.4-16.7 billion.

For the June 2020 quarter, Cognizant's revenue saw 3.4 per cent decline (2.5 per cent in constant currency) at \$4 billion from \$4.14 billion in the year-ago period.

Cognizant, which has about 2 lakh employees based in India, follows January-December as financial year.

"We delivered a solid second quarter performance whilst continuing to improve our competitiveness," Cognizant CEO Brian Humphries said.

decrease in Ebitda of Retail business. This was partially offset by an increase in Ebitda of Digital services business due to improved margins and continued subscriber momentum," it said.

RIL chairman Mukesh D

Ambani said: "The severe demand destruction due to global lockdowns impacted our hydrocarbons business but the flexibility in our operations enabled us to operate at near normal levels and deliver industry-leading results".

J&J vaccine protects monkeys with one shot

JULIE STEENHUYSEN  
JULY 30

Johnson & Johnson on Thursday kicked off US human safety trials for its Covid-19 vaccine after releasing details of a study in monkeys that showed its best-performing vaccine candidate offered strong protection in a single dose.

When exposed to the virus, six out of six animals who got the vaccine candidate were completely protected from lung disease and five out of six were protected from infection as measured by the presence of virus in nasal swabs, according to the study published in the journal *Nature*.

"This gives us confidence that we can test a single-shot vaccine in this epidemic and learn whether it has a protective effect in humans," Dr. Paul Stoffels, J&J's chief scientific officer, told Reuters in a telephone interview.

The drugmaker said it had started early-stage human trials in the United States and Belgium and would test its vaccine candidate in more than 1,000 healthy adults aged 18 to 55 years, as well as adults aged 65 years and older.

The US government is backing J&J's vaccine effort with \$456 million in funding as part of a spending spree aimed at speeding production of a vaccine.

Audit found cybersecurity lapses at NPCI last year

New Delhi, July 30: A government audit of India's flagship payments processor last year found more than 40 security vulnerabilities, including several it called "critical" and "high" risk, according to an internal government document seen by Reuters.

The audit, which took place over four months to February 2019, highlighted a lack of encryption of personal data at the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) which forms the backbone of the country's digital payments system and operates the RuPay card network championed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The March 2019 government document cited the storing of 16-digit card numbers and other personal information such as customer names, account numbers and national identity numbers in "plain text" in some databases, leaving the data unprotected if the system was breached.

The NPCI said in a statement to Reuters it is regularly audited in the interests of security and senior management reviews all findings, which are then "remediated to (the) satisfaction of the auditors".

National cyber security coordinator Rajesh Pant, whose office coordinated the audit, also said in a statement to Reuters that "all observations raised in last year's report have been confirmed as resolved by the NPCI".

The audit was undertaken to provide the National Security Council with an overview of the NPCI's



defences against cyberattacks. The PMO and the finance ministry did not respond to a Reuters request for comment.

The audit's findings underscore the data-security challenges faced by the NPCI which processes billions of dollars daily via services that include inter-bank fund transfers, ATM transactions and digital payments.

Set up in 2008, the NPCI is a not-for-profit company, which as of March 2019, counted 56 banks as its shareholders, including the State Bank of India, Citibank and HSBC.

RuPay has grown to account for almost two-thirds of nearly 900 million debit and credit cards issued in India as of October, according to NPCI and central bank data.

The audit followed a Reserve Bank of India inspection report on the NPCI in July 2017 that found lapses in its internal auditing practices, operational risks and improper whistleblower policies.

There was "lack of awareness of risks and

risk culture in the institution," according to a mostly redacted version of the 37-page report that was obtained by Reuters via the Right to Information Act (RTI) last year.

The 2019 government document about the audit also noted: "There is a strong need for proper governance."

The RBI conducted another inspection between November and December 2019. A 33-page report on that audit included its assessment of NPCI's governance and operational and credit risks. But most of the report, also obtained by Reuters via the RTI Act, was redacted by the central bank, which cited the need to protect India's and the NPCI's economic interests.

The March 2019 government document said a variety of card numbers were unencrypted within the NPCI database for the country's network of almost 250,000 ATMs, while unencrypted RuPay card numbers could also be seen in the organisation's server logs.

GAMES

SHORT TAKES

Danish cries foul over Umar case

New Delhi: Former Pakistan spinner Danish Kaneria, who has been trying get his life ban for spot-fixing lifted, on Thursday said PCB's decision to reduce Umar Akmal's suspension for failing to report corrupt approaches smacks of double standards.

The likes of Mohammad Amir, Mohammad Asif and Salman Butt, who too were found guilty of spot-fixing like Kaneria, have been allowed back into the PCB fold. "You call it zero tolerance policy for corruption. Umar was proved guilty but still his ban has been halved. They showed compassion in his case. Amir, Asif, Salman too were allowed to come back, why leave me out?" he asked.

"Why don't they show the same compassion in my case? They say I talk about my religion (he is a Hindu) but what do I say when the discrimination is crystal clear. I am just going by simple logic," he said from Karachi. Independent adjudicator Faqir Mohammad Khokhar stated in his order on Tuesday that the case against Akmal was proved to the hilt. — PTI

Shooting coach is Covid-19 positive

New Delhi: A shooting coach at the Dr Karni Singh Range here has tested positive for Covid-19 but the development will not force a closure of the facility, where the Olympic core group will start training from August 1. The Sports Authority of India (SAI), in a press release, said the woman coach intimidated the result of her test to it on Thursday but since she did not come in contact with any of the shooters, the facility will remain open for training. The Karni Singh range was reopened on July 8. "The coach had visited the centre's administrative department only on July 24. She did not visit the field of play or interacted with any athlete training at the centre," SAI stated.

Champs thumped

Juve crash to humiliating defeat in Italy



Cagliari's Luca Gagliano (left) celebrates after scoring during their Italian league match against Juventus at the Sardegna Arena stadium in Cagliari, Italy, on Wednesday. Cagliari won 2-0.

Criminal case against Fifa chief Infantino

Geneva, July 30: A criminal case against FIFA president Gianni Infantino was opened Thursday by a Swiss special prosecutor, plunging world football's governing body in a new scandal.

Special prosecutor Stefan Keller has concluded there is enough evidence to take the case to court after investigating the circumstances of a meeting Infantino had with Swiss attorney general Michael Lauber, who offered his resignation last week.

"Keller has uncovered elements that make up reprehensible behavior," according to a statement from the Swiss authority overseeing the federal prosecutors office.

Keller opened a criminal case against Infantino as well as Valais prosecutor Rinaldo Arnold, and has sought authorisation to open a legal case against Lauber, too, according to a statement from the Swiss authority.

Keller, a legal expert named to the post of special prosecutor on June 29,

found possible infractions included abuse of public office, breach of official secrecy, assisting offenders and incitement to these acts, the supervisory authority for the office of the attorney general said in its statement, adding other criminal acts and proceedings could also be considered.

The Bahraini is senior vice president of FIFA so would be in line to replace Infantino temporarily if he was suspended due to the criminal case.

BARTY SAYS NO TO US OPEN OVER COVID

Sydney, July 30: World number one Ashleigh Barty pulled out of the US Open Thursday over "significant risks" from the Coronavirus pandemic in a major blow for the Grand Slam, which is scheduled to start in New York on August 31.

The Australian is the biggest name so far to withdraw from the tournament, with her decision coming as the United States marked a grim milestone when its Covid-19 deaths topped 150,000.

"My team and I have decided that we won't be travelling to the US for the Western and Southern Open and the US Open this year," she said in a statement to Australian media.

"I love both events so it was a difficult decision but there are still significant risks involved due to COVID-19 and I don't feel comfortable putting my team and I in that position."

"I wish the USTA all the best for the tournaments and look forward to being back in the US next year," she added.

Her decision came despite the New York area keeping Coronavirus cases at a relatively low level since spiking in March and April while areas such as Florida, Texas and California have become hotspots.

It was not unexpected from Barty, who last month expressed concerns about the US Open going ahead, and she won plenty of support Thursday on social media for her "sensible" decision to give it a miss.

Barty, who surged to the top of the rankings last year and has stayed there since, said she would continue to monitor the situation.

Willey whips Irish cream

Southampton, July 30: David Willey marked his return to England duty with five wickets during an Ireland collapse at Southampton on Thursday as One-Day International cricket resumed for the first time since the Coronavirus lockdown.

Willey took 5-30 as Ireland were all out for 172 in 44.4 overs after losing the toss in a match that launches the new World Cup Super League, which will determine qualification for the 2023 50-over showpiece in India.

Curtis Campher stood tall amidst the ruins with an unbeaten 59 while Andy McBrine made 40 for Ireland.

Given the first over by England captain Eoin Morgan, Willey needed just four balls to have Ireland batterman Paul Stirling chipping an

inswinger to the skipper at midwicket.

And Ireland were 7-2 when captain Andy Balbirnie was caught behind driving at Willey.

Ireland ODI debutant Harry Tector was then bowled for a nine-ball duck by Saqib Mahmood.

Gareth Delany hit five fours in his 22 before he struck Willey straight to Tom Banton at backward point. And next ball the 30-year-old Willey, the son of former England batsman and umpire David Willey, had Lorcan Tucker lbw for a duck on review to leave Ireland in dire straits at 28-5 inside seven overs.

BRIEF SCORES

■ Ireland 172 in 44.4 overs (Gareth Delany 22, Kevin O'Brien 22, Curtis Campher 59 n.o., Andy McBrine 40, David Willey 5/30, Saqib Mahmood 2/36) vs England — AFP

JUNIOR CRICKET

Sunil is named South mentor

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, JULY 30

Cricket Association of Telangana secretary Sunil Babu Kolanpaka has been appointed South Zone mentor of the Junior Cricket Championship (JCC) that was launched earlier this year by Seven3Sports to promote the game among Indian youth.

The initiative aims to create 100 private clubs across the country for boys aged 8 to 18 across three age segments through talent hunt as JCC plans to engage them on an integrated platform.

"It's a great privilege to be involved with this project which focuses on schoolkids and strives to provide them exposure. Also, it's a pleasure to work alongside former Indian cricketers," Sunil said pointing to Chetan

Sharma, Ashok Malhotra and Surinder Khanna who are mentors of Central, East and North Zones respectively.

Dronacharya Awardee Sanjay Bhardwaj is the mentor for West Zone.

Malhotra is president of the Indian Cricketers Association while Khanna is on the IPL Governing Council as the ICA representative.

"JCC is specifically designed to integrate online and offline cricketing activities and will offer a fair, inclusive and merit-based opportunity to all. Matches will be played on a zonal basis followed by a national round, from which a team will be selected and provided exposure in England," Sunil said, adding interested players should log on to https://jcc-india.com/ for pre-registrations, for a fee.