

SHORT TAKES
**TS MINISTER,
WIFE, MLA
TEST POSITIVE**

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, AUG. 8

A second minister from the state, Ch Malla Reddy, tested positive for Covid-19. The minister, who looks after the labour portfolio, is the second from the state to test positive for the disease. Previously home minister Md Mahmood Ali had contracted Covid-19.

Meanwhile, Rohit Reddy, the TRS MLA from Tandur, is also learnt to have tested positive for Covid-19 on Saturday.

The MLA has since been admitted to a top corporate hospital in Jubilee Hills where he is undergoing treatment for the virus.

Malla Reddy announced in a brief video shared on some social media platforms that he had tested positive for Covid-19 last Sunday and spent a few days at a hospital and was now in isolation at a hostel. He said his wife had also tested positive for the disease.

The minister said he was doing well and called on people not to be scared of Covid-19 and to remain brave. "Start getting treatment early after testing and anyone can recover. My other health conditions are also under control," the minister said.

Several other TRS legislators have also tested positive for Covid-19.

**AP PLANS FRESH
SCREENING FOR
ASST PROF. JOBS**

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 8

The Andhra Pradesh government may go for a fresh screening test to select candidates to fill up to 1,100 posts of assistant professors in all 14 universities in the state by December.

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has recently given a go-ahead to take up recruitment of assistant professors in the sanctioned posts in all universities.

However, all plans with the state government on recruitment are subject to the final verdict from the High Court as there are more than 33 cases pending, some of them seeking an expeditious process of recruitment while others working on contract basis asking for job security.

Based on the direction from the Chief Minister, the state higher education authorities are going to approach the High Court and request it to take up all pending cases related to recruitment of assistant professors as a batch petition and deliver a final verdict on the issue.

**FATHER, 2
DAUGHTERS END
LIVES BY SUICIDE**

DC CORRESPONDENT
KADAPA, AUG. 8

In a tragic turn of events, a 53-year-old electrician, Dhanireddy Babu Reddy, allegedly died by suicide over family issues, and, unable to bear the shock, his two daughters also ended their lives.

The atmosphere in YMR Colony in Proddatur, where they lived, was poignant with relatives and neighbours consoling Babu Reddy's wife Vijaya Bharathi, 49, who fell unconscious on hearing of three deaths in the family.

The two daughters were Swetha, 26, who was married to Suresh Kumar Reddy, 30, of Tallamapuram in Proddatur Rural mandal and Sai Preethi, 21, a second year engineering student.

According to Proddatur Rural inspector Sattaru Viswanatha Reddy, Babu Reddy had spent around ₹20 lakh on his elder daughter's marriage. He believed that his son-in-law had a job and would take good care of his wife.

However, he realised that the boy had no job and his family was harassing his daughter. Unable to bear it any longer, he recorded a video in which he alleged that his son-in-law was harassing his daughter for more dowry and left home Friday evening. He ended his life on the outskirts of the town and his body was found on Saturday morning.

Hearing the news, Swetha and Sai Preethi ended their lives on the railway track on the Tippalur-Yerraguntla route.

The Proddatur police sub-divisional officer Losari Sudhakar, a police inspector Viswanatha Reddy, sub-inspector D. Sunil Kumar Reddy reached the spot and inspected the scene. After inquest, they shifted the bodies to Proddatur hospital for autopsy.

Cases likely to fall by Aug. end

Health director says state following, adapting to evolving Covid-19 treatments

BALU PULIPAKA | DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 8

Covid-19 cases will begin falling in Hyderabad and the rest of the GHMC limits by the end of August, the state health department predicted on Saturday. It said that cases in the rest of the state will begin falling by the end of September.

According to director of health services Dr G. Srinivasa Rao, the number of cases in GHMC limits was coming down. "The past few weeks, thanks to preventive measures

taken by the government, cases have reduced in Hyderabad. There is no distress and panic in the city. This is a good sign for the GHMC area with its one crore population," he said.

He, however, said cases in the neighbouring Ranga Reddy, Medchal-Malkajgiri districts were going up. Covid-19 cases were rising in several district headquarters, he said.

Addressing a press conference, he said the government was focusing on decentralising of identifi-

cation of Covid-19 cases and treatment so people identified with the disease can start receiving treatment quickly.

The recoveries were almost 70 per cent of the total identified cases and, in absolute numbers, it amounts to 99 per cent. Cases are going up worldwide with a mortality rate of seven per cent while for the country, the mortality rate was 2.5 per cent. In Telangana state, it is less than one per cent, he said.

Dr Rao said the government was following and adapting to evolving

Covid-19 treatment methods and protocols.

"This is a two-week disease. Full recovery is possible in two weeks. Symptomatic treatment in the first week, along with HCQ tablets, is giving good results. The government is keeping all its doctors across the state updated on the protocols. Using these methods, we are controlling the death rate from the disease in the state," he added.

The government has ensured stocks of medicines and disposables to meet the need for another

two months. The government has made extensive arrangements.

For people advised home isolation the government has stocked a total of 86,600 kits, with the required medicines, instructions and guidelines, in all the districts. Of these, 33,000 are available for use in GHMC limits.

He also said a total of 25,000 Remdesivir injections have been stocked in all districts of which 12,500 are available in government hospitals in GHMC limits, Dr Rao said.

18,000 BEDS IN STATE HOSPS TO GET OXYGEN

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, AUG. 8

Every one of the 18,000 odd beds in government hospitals and medical facilities in the state will soon be an 'oxygen bed' with 10,000 of these, including the 5,000 odd that currently have oxygen supply, to be brought online in the next few days, the state health department has said.

With Covid-19 making everyone realise how important providing supplementary oxygen to the patients is, and that it can make all the difference between recovery or death of such patients, the government has also called for tenders for extending oxygen supplies to all the beds in its hospitals.

"We are taking several steps to ensure as much oxygen as needed is provided to the patients. For instance, beds in maternity wards are also going to be provided with oxygen supplies," according to health department officials who spoke with the media on Saturday.

COURAGE 'CURE' FOR COVID-19

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, AUG. 8

The state health department on Saturday said that it has discovered the right cure for fighting Coronavirus infections.

It is "courage",

Director of Health Services Dr Srinivasa Rao told a news conference here.

Covid-19 duties take a toll on docs in district hospitals

KANIZA GARARI | DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 8

for them to work in these kits.

Due to this reason, all of them have been asking patients to maintain social distance but that is difficult for many to follow. The concept of social distancing is not understood properly and it is one of the prime reasons for the faster spread of the virus.

The death of Dr G. Naresh Kumar has caused a lot of anger among government and private doctors across districts. They state that there must be steps in place for doctors to protect themselves.

Doctors state that they have to work even on Sundays due to the emergency and there is no reprieve for them. Workload has increased four times and there are no extra hands to allow for rotational duties as was followed in Hyderabad.

A senior government doctor said, "We are doing out-patient duty, screening patients for Covid-19, non-Covid-19 cases are also high due to seasonal changes and there is a lot of administrative work that has to be completed. Even if we are exposed, the decision to isolate is not possible as there is so much work and there are no replacements." This adds to the viral load in the body, often not recognised on time even by doctors.

Doctors state that there are enough personal protection kits provided by the government but to wear it for eight hours is exhausting. They get dehydrated in these kits as they cannot go to bathroom, so their water intake is limited. Weather conditions are hot and humid, making it difficult

It remains to be seen of how many will join and work in the rural areas during these challenging times.

TS counsels hobs over excess billing

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, AUG. 8

complain that private hospitals were ripping them off with excessive billing, the health department has revoked the permission for two hospitals — Deccan and Virinchi — after it said it investigated complaints received from patients treated at these hospitals. Dr Rao said the department received 1,039 complaints on private hospitals of which more than 130 pertained to billing issues.

The health department has begun 'counselling'

corporate and private hospitals on the issue of billing Covid-19 patients and related issues, Director of Health Services Dr K. Srinivasa Rao has said.

It may be recalled that with many patients and their families taking to social media platforms to

Community testing



Personnel of Imasq, the mobile testing van for Covid-19, take swab samples from residents of Gunti Jangaiahnagar near LB Nagar in Hyderabad on Saturday.

— P. SURENDRA

TS logs 2,256 cases, 14 deaths

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, AUG. 8

The surge in cases continued with 2,256 people testing positive for Covid-19 and 14 others dying of the disease.

The overall caseload stood at 77,513 on Friday evening and the toll at 615, according to the Covid-19 bulletin issued by the state health department on Saturday.

The bulletin said 15,830 persons were under treatment at home and the

state had a total of 22,568 active cases.

The state tested 23,322 samples on Friday, and the overall test count reached 5,90,306.

Of the deaths, those attributed to Covid-19 is at 46.13 per cent and due to co-morbid conditions 53.87 per cent.

This is because those in the age group of 31 to 40 years have 25 per cent and those in 21 to 30 years have 22 per cent of the infection.

Those in the younger age

groups are severely affected and fatality rate in this age group is also high.

In the districts where there were a total of 1,792 cases noted, only those who have SARI (severe acute respiratory infection) are being tested. Those with mild infections are in isolation wards and if their symptoms are aggravating then testing is carried out.

District hospitals and public health centres are having a huge caseload and most of the serious

cases are being sent to Hyderabad for treatment.

The Covid-19 cases are at an all-time high in Warangal Urban at 187, Ranga Reddy 181, Medchal-Malkajgiri at 138 and Karimnagar at 101.

Government and private doctors who are treating these cases say that the pattern of the disease is more like that of the city and in districts too those who can afford are coming faster while others are coming late which is leading to severity.

— ANDHRA PRADESH

Despite good perks, docs in AP avoid Covid-19 duties

V.K.L. GAYATRI | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, AUG. 8

Though the government is offering a handful of sops like ₹1.5 lakh monthly salary, 15-day eight-hour work each month and postings at their preferred places, qualified doctors are reluctant to report for duties at Covid-19 hospitals in the state.

Even though Indian Medical Association (IMA), government officials and superintendents of Covid hospitals are repeatedly urging them, doctors are not reporting for work even after receiving appointment letters.

With regard to cumulative infections, East Godavari has emerged on top with 30,160 cases, followed by 26,032 in Kurnool.

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Though the district

administrations have cleared hurdles in recruitment of nurses, paramedical staff, and class IV employees on outsourcing basis, every district is facing a crisis when it comes to recruiting doctors for hospitals dedicated to Covid-19 treatment.

Recently, after IMA AP Chapter's negotiations with the state government, all the district chapters have swung into action and started massive exercises to recruit doctors in the government and private hospitals to attend to Covid-19 patients.

In a first, Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy directed the administrations to recruit doctors by giving government salaries and to also deploy them to private hospitals.

One of the Joint Collectors, Principal of Andhra Medical College, and a group of senior officials in association with the IMA, Visakhapatnam Chapter, identified 1,800 qualified doctors in the districts. The officials called all the 1,800 doctors over telephone and urged them to join in emergency medical aid. Finally, the administration gave appointment orders to 403 doctors.

I myself signed on the appointment orders but a majority of the selected doctors are reluctant to join Covid-19 services," lamented District Collector V. Vinay Chand.

According to information, Visakhapatnam district has recruited the highest number of doctors.

Kusuma and Pundit Venkateswarlu said that students are continuing home studies in this lockdown period hence there is no need of syllabus reduction.

They said that the basic knowledge of the students will be impacted due to decrease of syllabus and sought continuation of full syllabus by extending the time.

They said that usually summer holidays are after completion of annual exams in March but now the government can cancel summer holidays and should conduct annual exams next May to complete the syllabus.

— ANDHRA PRADESH

10,080 cases in AP, 97 deaths

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 8

infected patients have been discharged after recovery, while 85,486 are undergoing treatment at various hospitals in the state.

Among new cases, Kurnool has been badly affected with 1,353 cases, followed by 1,310 in East Godavari, 998 in Visakhapatnam, 976 in Anantapur, 963 in Chittoor, 878 in Nellore, 681 in West Godavari, 601 in Guntur, 525 in Kadapa, 512 in Prakasam, 450 in Vizianagaram, 442 in Srikakulam and 391 in Krishna.

With regard to cumulative infections, East Godavari has emerged on top with 30,160 cases, followed by 26,032 in Kurnool.

Though the district

Mohan Reddy announced the date of the reopening of schools from September 5 on the occasion of Guru Pujotsavam (Teachers Day).

Minister for education Aduimulapu Suresh said that the completion of the entire syllabus in a six-month period is a Herculean task but that the government decided to reduce the syllabus to help the students and teachers. He said that the state council of educational research (SCERT) was asked to work on the reduction of the syllabus and will suggest the decreased syllabus for each subject and class.

On the other hand, parents G.

Parents D.S. Prasad and K. Prabhu welcomed the decision of the government to reduce the syllabus.

They said that students are worried about completion of all lessons in six months which would be difficult. They said that the government can apply the reduction of syllabus for this year only due to the crisis and can restore the total syllabus from next year. They said that the government should announce the revised syllabus before the schools reopen to help the students to plan their studies.

DECCAN Chronicle

9 AUGUST 2020



Shashi Warrier

Off the beaten track

My first brush with a 'Madras autowallah'

These days, when I have time on my hands, my mind drifts back to old times, and to surprises, of which there are many. Back in the 1970s, my elder brother went off to college, to a hostel and to what I thought was freedom. Envious, I nagged my parents into allowing me to go on a longish train ride from our home in Trivandrum to Madras, some twenty hours away by the metre-gauge line that was, in those days, the sole direct rail route between those cities.

My parents saw me off with ₹50/- for expenses, tickets both ways, instructions on what not to eat on the train, and written instructions on how to get to my cousin's place in Besant Nagar from Egmore railway station. Also, for emergency use, I had the phone number of a friend of Dad's, and one final instruction relayed from my Madras cousin: *'Don't ever take an autorickshaw in Madras because the drivers are all cheats!'*

The train left Trivandrum in the afternoon, and I managed to follow Mom's instructions on food until dinner-time, when I succumbed to temptation and polished off a fragrant but forbidden chicken biryani. The night was pleasant and I slept well enough, even though the berth was merely a plank, and the ride was bumpy as it always was on metre-gauge railway lines.

I came awake to sunlight, a queue for the toilets, which I wanted desperately to use, and the sight of fellow passengers packing their bags, preparing to get off. I asked one of them how long it would take to get to Madras, and he replied, "Less than ten minutes." No hope, evidently, of making it to the toilet before that. I asked him about the buses my cousin had written about, and he replied, "Oh! No problem. There's one every twenty minutes. You'll get to Besant Nagar in an hour."

That roiling stomach made an hour look like an eternity. Dad's colleague was in Adyar. "What about Adyar?" I asked. "Is that closer?"

"Yes," he said. "About half the distance."

By now the train was drawing up at the platform and there was a surge to the door. Larger passengers loaded with luggage shoved me out of the way in their rush to get wherever they were going. Perhaps they, too, needed a toilet, I thought, and waited for my turn to step off the coach. Saving half an hour seemed important enough, I thought, to justify calling Dad's friend to ask if I could go straight to his place.

There were coin telephones in the concourse of the station. In those days the coin telephone system worked as follows: you got your coins ready and dialled the number you wanted to call. When the connection was made, you would be able to hear whatever the person you called said, but he or she wouldn't be able to hear you until the coin slotted into place. The phone wanted a ten-paisa coin, which I had, but what I didn't know was that it required a "new" or aluminium ten-paisa coin, not the steel ones I had. When I dialled Dad's friend, he couldn't hear me: all he knew was that some stranger was trying to get through to him.

I gave up after the second attempt and decided that my internal situation had now become an emergency, and so, against my cousin's emphatic advice, I took the auto, the first in a queue. The driver was a tall, lean, barefooted man in an orange lungi and a khaki shirt, with frizzy hair, a drooping moustache, and red eyes. I distrusted him on sight, but since the queue was rigorously enforced, I had no choice.

When I got into the vehicle and tried to tell him where I wanted to go, we discovered that he knew just enough Malayalam and I knew just enough Tamil for us to communicate basics



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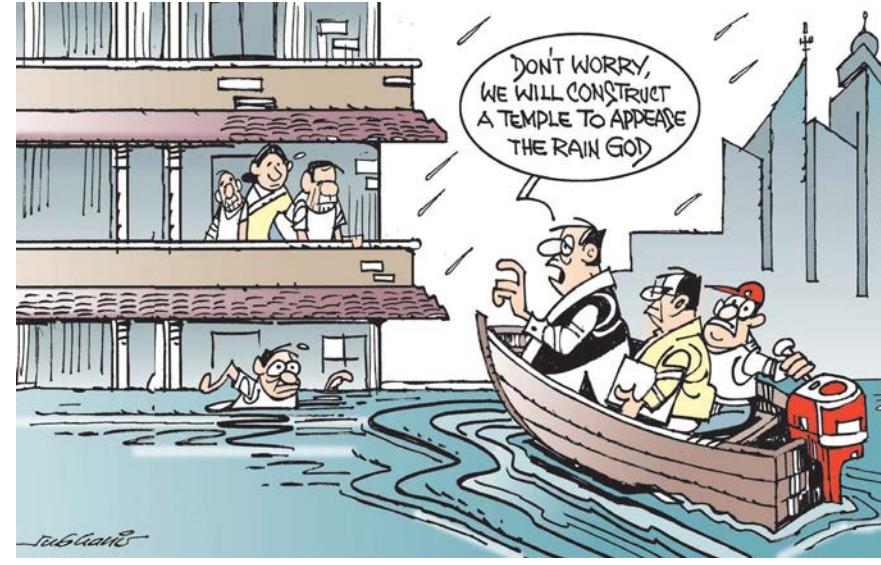
I remembered Mom telling me that the auto fare to Besant Nagar would be eight to ten rupees. This being my first time alone in a strange city, I kept my eyes glued to the meter as, in a very short while, it went up to what I thought was ₹13. I swallowed, collected my scattered wits, and told the driver there was something wrong with the meter. He stopped and got out of the vehicle to look at the meter, and burst out laughing, saying that it was showing only ₹1.30... While I shrank back into the passenger seat, he resumed the ride, his mood vastly uplifted by my display of foolishness.

When we got to the Besant Nagar bus stop, I couldn't find the sheet of instructions I'd been given, and had no idea how to get where I wanted. My emergency was now compelling, and I needed to find my cousin's house before things broke loose. The driver saw that I was in doubt, and asked me where I wanted to go. I told him my cousin's name, that she lived somewhere in the neighbourhood, and I didn't know exactly where. He knew that I was a stranger, a kid, didn't know the language, and was in some kind of trouble. He parked his vehicle, and told me in simple Tamil to follow him. He asked a couple of passers-by where so-and-so lived, and, in a couple of minutes, found their street. As we entered it, I saw my cousin at a second floor balcony watching our progress... Jackpot!

There was just enough time to hand the driver a ten-rupee note before rushing up the staircase: I've never climbed four flights of stairs that fast, and I'll probably never forget the relief that followed. But the enduring memory is of that evil-looking auto man who turned out a gem...

Shashi Warrier has written fairy tales, thrillers, a semi-fictional biography, satires, and a love story. Besides writing, he teaches strategic communication at a business school.

Subhani



Jaishankar's new vision may face a reality check



K.C. Singh

Come September, external affairs minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar's book *The India Way* will be out. His intention, stated on record, is to encourage "an honest conversation among Indians, without discouraging the world from eavesdropping". An excerpt published recently from the book's introduction outlines his worldview. It raises a number of interesting points.

First, serving foreign ministers generally avoid treatises on challenges and policy options of a government, constrained by the need for secrecy over real thought processes within a government. Henry Kissinger penned his four experience-based books — *White House Years* (1979), *Diplomacy* (1994), *On China* (2011) and *World Order* (2014) — after he left office. Similarly, other US secretaries of state like Madeline Albright, Condoleezza Rice and Hillary Clinton have penned their thoughts only after retirement. Thus, unable to write with candour about the diplomatic choices before the Narendra Modi government, Mr Jaishankar has chosen to provide broad perspective on the evolving geopolitics. In any case, he realises that in the current politically surcharged atmosphere, when the public wants answers on how the government proposes to counter the Chinese intrusions, it is best to play professor.

He expounds that the bipolar world is now gone and we are headed towards "multipolarity and less multilateralism". He ignores 50 years of Indian foreign policy after Independence when the non-aligned movement was born to defy the bipolar world and did provide, however fitfully, a third leg. India's alliance of convenience with the Soviet Union in 1971 enabled it to stymie America's support for Pakistan, its treaty ally. France under then President Charles de Gaulle pulled French forces out of Nato in 1966 to pursue more independent policies, reversed finally in 2009 as benefit was seen in coordinating action with European allies. So, the bipolar world of the Cold War era also had middle powers creating space for independent action. The world is now headed towards two looser alliances, as China extends its reach through the Belt and Road Initiative continental and via maritime domain. The proposed 25-year agreement between China and Iran and the Myanmar-China re-engagement after President Xi Jinping's January 2020 visit to that country will extensively extend China's reach, through ports and overland via Central Asia. Likewise, India has no option but to work with its Quad partners — United States, Japan and Australia — and other Asean members willing to join hands to balance Chinese assertiveness. Rather than multiple poles, multiple groupings of the willing are emerging to create a new balance and put China back on the guard rails. Critical to the shape the future will take will be the outcome of America's November election, but Mr Jaishankar dodges that issue, as PM Modi has already moved too deeply into the Donald Trump corner.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi handpicked Mr Jaishankar, first as foreign secretary, days after he handed President Barack Obama's visit to India in January 2015, by displacing an incumbent. Then he plucked him from retirement to make him external affairs minister. So, the book is meant to provide intellectual clothing to global convergence between right-wing populist leaders. Mr Jaishankar notes three seminal events constraining India's strategic options. One is Partition, which diminished India territorially and demographically,

enabling China to manipulate Pakistan and others in the Indian periphery. Two, delayed economic reforms. Three, the reluctance to espouse nuclear weapons, leaving India stranded between the signatories of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the five nuclear weapon powers, with differential powers and obligations.

Mr Jaishankar is right about the last point as India did have the knowhow and fissile material for a possible nuclear test before the 1967 cut-off date, which would have enabled it to sign the NPT as a nuclear weapon power. It has been speculated that after 1965 India-Pakistan war, PM Lal Bahadur Shastri may have authorised such a test had not he and Dr Homi Bhabha, the custodian of India's nuclear programme, died tragically within days of each other in January 1966. However, it must be contextualised that India was then in a defensive mode after the demoralising defeat in 1962 at Chinese hands and Jawaharlal Nehru's death in 1964.

Mr Jaishankar, in an article published recently, traces contemporary global dilemmas to differences over the "relationship between the State, politics, society, business, faith and the markets". This omnibus conclusion and his remarks on Partition as India's strategic burden deserve a riposte. Ironically, the minister's own party would be the first to contradict him on Partition. Were roughly 400 million Muslims of Pakistan and Bangladesh to join India's Muslims in an imagined undivided India, the demographics would be the BJP's electoral nightmare. If the November election produces a Joe Biden victory, and particularly if the Democrats capture both Houses, the Modi government's domestic policies will come under more scrutiny. President Barack Obama too had engaged the Modi government cautiously. He ended his 2015 state visit with a Srinagar speech reminding India of its constitutional pledge to uphold the "dignity of the individual", respect for religious diversity and freedom of faith. The Modi government's second term has mainstreamed majoritarian politics, ranging from Ayodhya, the Ram Mandir to the discriminatory Citizenship Amendment Act and the abolition of Jammu and Kashmir's special status.

The lesson from the past is that a united India is a stronger India. An India distracted by partisan politics loses its edge, regionally and globally. Intellectual hair-splitting and bandying about of geopolitical terms cannot change that.

Partition didn't stymie India. It was a historical inevitability due to irreversible communal polarisation, exacerbated by Muslims' fear of marginalisation in a democracy.

The writer is a former secretary in the external affairs ministry. He tweets at @ambkcsingh.

LETTERS

TRAGIC MISHAP

NRIs returning to their loved ones facing such a situation is pathetic (*16 die as AI flight falls into valley, DC, Aug. 8*). The survivors are no better than the dead with all their belongings and savings lost. Officials say they were fortunate that the aircraft did not catch fire. The ministers will hitch a joy ride to the accident site, order an inquiry, speak a few words to the inconsolable, present some irrelevant statistics. **Varghese George Secunderabad**

LOAN RESTRUCTURING

The RBI's decision to allow banks to restructure loans borrowed by MSMEs, corporates and individuals is timely (*RBI loan policy spells relief for borrowers, DC, Aug. 8*). Borrowers should be given time for restructuring loans to tide over the present financial crisis. **Katuru Durga Prasad Rao Hyderabad**

RAM NARRATIVE

Manan Kumar's statement is not true (*Progressives must unite to expose govt's 'Ram' narrative, DC, Aug. 8*). K.K. Muhammed, former regional director, North, ASI, part of the team of archaeologists which had carried out the first excavation in 1976-77 said that below the Babri mosque there were remains of a grand temple structure. **S. Nageswara Rao Hyderabad**

Apparently Lord Rama has approved construction of the Ram Mandir, but I am sure He might spring a surprise for Muslims. Wait, Lord Rama is looking into political side of the masjid destruction and mandir construction. **M.S. Murty Hyderabad**

NOT HANDLOOM

Saris worn by minister Smriti Irani and Priyanka Chopra are not handlooms (*Celebrities sport handlooms in support of weavers, DC, Aug. 8*). **Molugu V. Sreenivasulu Hyderabad**

Email your letters to info@deccanmail.com, editor@deccanmail.com. You can also send them to Editor, Deccan Chronicle, 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad-500 003.

Furore in Lok Sabha over Soviet maps

NEW DELHI, August 8 Barring the two Communist parties and the DMK, the entire Opposition in the Lok Sabha today walked out of the House to protest against Speaker G.S. Dhillon's rejection of their request for the admission of an adjournment motion.

Opposition members sought to move the adjournment motion to discuss inclusion of large chunks of

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

Chinese in the maps in the Great Soviet encyclopedia.

The DMK also joined the other parties in their demand for the admission of the adjournment motion in place of the call attention motion on the subject which stood in the name of Mrs. Tarkeshwari Sinha and four others. But, Mr. Era Sezhiyan who was the only DMK member present, stayed behind.

When Somen Mitra shoved Amar Singh out of Kolkata

Miffed Uma turns up

The Ram Janmabhoomi temple *bhoomi puja* at Ayodhya was a grand affair where everything went as per plan. But behind the scenes was disquiet within both the BJP and the Congress. Uma Bharti, a key figure during 1980s-1990s, Ram Janmabhoomi movement, first said she would stay away and then landed up on the banks of river Saryu. Uma was reportedly miffed that she was not formally invited at the first instance. The firebrand *sanyasin* has not been keeping well so the Covid-19 scare is said to have also played on her mind while initially declining to be there.

In the Congress, the leftist lobby worked hard to oppose Ram Janmabhoomi temple inauguration but pressure from party MPs worked. Rahul Gandhi took a nuanced position while Priyanka Gandhi, Amarinder Singh and Kamal Nath took a pro-temple stand. Nath organised *Hanuman Chaalisa* at his Bhopal residence and posted a picture of him in a saffron robe on Twitter. Not to be left behind, Mani Shankar Aiyar wrote a newspaper article pro-

fessing Congress faith in secularism.

Pilot intractable

There are no signs of truce in the Rajasthan Congress. The Ashok Gehlot government has dropped its charges, but rebel Sachin Pilot is reportedly still insisting upon the removal of Gehlot as Chief Minister. Peacemakers want Rahul, Sonia and Priyanka Gandhi to draft either Gehlot or Pilot into the AICC secretariat but both are unwilling. Rahul, who is set to return as AICC chief, is in particular opposed to the idea of jettisoning Gehlot as a pre-condition.

A quiet goodbye

It was a sad and quiet exit for Amar Singh who for most of his life remained boisterous and flamboyant. Defence minister Rajnath Singh, Jyotiraditya Scindia and Jayaprada were prominent persons who paid their respects at Singh's Chhattarpur farmhouse in Delhi minutes before his mortal



By WAQYANAWIS

remains were consigned to flames. Amar's political journey began in Kolkata with Subrata Mukherjee and against Somen

Mitra who died recently. During a Kolkata corporation election, the Amar-Somen animosity turned so intense that Amar had to flee Kolkata. He could only return to the city after giving an undertaking that he would not indulge in Kolkata's municipal politics. The initial setback in politics made Amar turn to the Birla and Bhartia households that gave him a big foothold in Delhi.

Celluloid patriotism

Have you heard of a Patriotic Film Festival? Well, everything is possible in New India. The National Film Development Corporation (NFC) is organising an online patriotic film festival as part of the Independence Day Celebrations 2020 by the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

Shyam Benegal's 1996 *Gandhi Se Mahatma Tak*, Bimal Roy's 1944 acclaimed Bengali film *Udayer Pathey*, Mani Ratnam's Tamil hit *Roja* (1992) and Rajkumar Santoshi's 2002 drama, *The Legend of Bhagat Singh* are some

of the acclaimed films which can be watched on www.cinemasofindia.com.

Just good neighbours

Love in the time of Covid: Nanavati Hospital, Mumbai, has been insisting that megastar Amitabh Bachchan is not a shareholder in Radiant Life Care, the private company that manages the hospital. However, an interesting development has come to light. Abhay Soi, the promoter and managing director of Radiant, and the Bachchans are soon going to be neighbours. Both families reportedly have bought apartments in the Uber luxury development Three Sixty West at Worli, which will be serviced by the Ritz Carlton Hotel chain. In the spirit of friendship and loving neighbourliness, we expect many more lyrical tweets in praise of the hospital from you know who.

The writer is a keen observer of the goings-on in backrooms of power

SHORT TAKES

AAI CHIEF: WILL TAKE ACTION AFTER PROBE REPORT

New Delhi, Aug. 8: Airports Authority of India (AAI) Chairman Arvind Singh on Saturday said "corrective action" will be taken after receiving the probe report on the Air India Express plane crash at Kozhikode airport on Friday.

The airport in Kerala, which has a tabletop runway, is operated by state-owned AAI.

Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) is probing the accident at the Kozhikode airport that has left at least 18 people dead, including the two pilots of the plane. The Digital Flight Data Recorder (DFDR) and the Cockpit Voice Recorder (CVR) have been recovered at the crash site.

Singh said rescue work is over and reasons for the crash would be known once the AAIB report comes.

"This report will tell us about all the issues... we are awaiting the inquiry report and then we will take corrective action," he said.

On whether there were any safety issues had come to the notice of the AAI in recent times, Singh replied in the negative.

AI EXPRESS SAYS 3 RELIEF FLIGHTS SET UP FOR PEOPLE

New Delhi, Aug. 8: Air India Express said on Saturday that three relief flights had been arranged to Kozhikode in Kerala to assist passengers and their family members affected by the plane crash a day ago.

Officials said Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri would go to Kozhikode on Saturday.

The Air India Express flight from Dubai with 190 on board overshot the tabletop runway at Kozhikode airport on Friday night while landing in heavy rains and fell into a valley 35 feet below and broke into two, killing at least 18 people.

Air India Chairman and Managing Director Rajiv Bansal, and Air India Express Chief Executive Officer K Shyam Sundar have already reached Kozhikode, according to a statement.

Bansal, along with senior airline officials, "rushed" to the accident site "to take stock of the situation and are being briefed by experts", Air India tweeted.

Two special relief flights have been arranged from Delhi and one from Mumbai for rendering humanitarian assistance to all the passengers and the family members, Air India Express, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the national carrier, said.

INDIAN CONSULATE TO BE OPEN FOR INFO ON AI CRASH

Dubai, Aug. 8: The Indian Consulate in Dubai will remain open on Saturday to help those who need assistance to travel to Kerala and provide information about the crash of the Air India Express flight that skidded off a hilltop runway and split in two while landing in heavy rain at an airport in Kozhikode, killing at least 17 people.

According to the Civil Aviation Ministry, the Boeing 737 aircraft on a flight from Dubai to Kozhikode overshot the runway at Kozhikode airport at 7.41 PM on Friday. There were 184 passengers including 10 infants, 2 pilots and 4 cabin crew on board the aircraft, the ministry added.

Captain Deepak Sathe, the pilot-in-command, and his co-pilot Akhilesh Kumar were among those who died, police and airline officials said on Friday.

AIR ASIA ABORTS TAKE OFF AT RANCHI AFTER BIRD HIT

Ranchi, Aug. 8: An Air Asia India aircraft departing for Mumbai on Saturday morning aborted its take-off at Ranchi airport after encountering a bird hit, said the airline spokesperson. This incident occurred a day after an Air India Express flight from Dubai with 190 people onboard overshot the runway at Kozhikode airport in rainy conditions and went down 35 feet into a slope before breaking up into two pieces, killing at least 18 people.

"AirAsia India aircraft VT-HKG operating from Ranchi to Mumbai as flight 51632 encountered a bird hit during scheduled departure at 11.50 am, today, 8th August 2020," stated the airline spokesperson.

Kozhikode, Aug. 8: Several injured passengers of the ill-fated Air India Express flight from Dubai which overshot the runway and crashed at the airport here are yet to get over the horror moments that took them close to death.

Survivors scrambled out of plane, saw heaps of twisted metal; many passengers were bleeding

"We did not realise what really happened other than the flight was shaking," said Ramshad, who was injured.

Ramshad's wife Sufaira and four-year-old daughter Saidasheri escaped without any serious wounds.

Similar is the experience of Ashraf, a native of east Kozhikode, now under treatment at the Medical College Hospital here, who said he was yet to recover from the shock.

"As soon as the flight crashed, the emergency door was opened and people jumped out to safety, another survivor said. Ashik, undergoing treatment at a hospital here, said the fire force personnel reached immediately and shifted the injured to hospital soon.

Vijaymohan, who escaped with minor injuries and is recovering in a private hospital, said he thought it was a nightmare, unsure whether he was dreaming it all or living through it.

"I could see heaps of twisted metal spread around when I opened my eyes after the initial shock of the impact," said Vijaymohan, a resident of nearby Malapparamba.

His wife Jameema is admitted in the ICU. The couple had gone to Dubai in December to join their son but got held up due to the Covid-19 induced lockdown.

Describing the horrific minutes that stretched into what seemed like hours, Riyas said the flight went around the airport twice before attempting to land.

"I was in the back seat. There was a big noise and I don't know what happened after that," he told a media channel after he was rescued.

Fathima, another passenger, said the flight landed with heavy force and mo-

Ashraf, a native of east Kozhikode, now under treatment at the Medical College Hospital here, who said he was yet to recover from the shock. Describing the horrific minutes that stretched into what seemed like hours, Riyas said the flight went around the airport twice before attempting to land.

ved forward.

Ashik, undergoing treatment at a hospital here, was thankful to the fire personnel who reached immediately and moved the injured to safety.

In a telephone interview from his hospital bed, Renjith Panangad, a plumber who was returning home for the first time in three years after losing his job at a construction company in Dubai, said the plane swayed before the crash and everything went dark.

He said he followed other passengers who crawled their way out of the fuselage through the emergency exit.

"A lot of passengers were bleeding," said Panangad, who escaped without major injuries. "I still can't comprehend what happened. As I am trying to recall what happened, my body is shivering."

He said the pilot made a regular announcement before landing, and moments after the plane hit the runway, it nosedived. "There was a big noise during the impact and people started screaming," he said.

— PTI, AFP

Govts announce ₹10L compensation

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, AUG. 8

The Centre and Kerala state governments announced ₹10 lakh each for the families of the victims of the Air India Express aircraft mishap at Kozhikode international airport on Friday, even as the civil aviation authorities recovered the black box, digital flight recorder (DFDR) and the

DC CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, AUG. 8

cockpit voice recorder (CVR) from the site. These are critical to find out the cause of the accident that killed 18 people, including the pilot Capt. D.V. Sathe and the co-pilot Akhilesh Kumar.

A team from the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) and experts of the flight safety department of the Director General of Civil Aviation arrived at the airport on Saturday to inspect the site of the mishap and the aircraft wreckage.

The experts will examine the CVR and DFDR to reach a conclusion on

UNION CIVIL AVIATION minister Hardip Singh Puri said weather conditions were unfavourable at the time of the landing because of the monsoon rains.

what might have led to the tragic accident of Flight AXB1344.

Union civil aviation minister Hardip Singh Puri said weather conditions were unfavourable at the time of the landing because of the monsoon rains.

The pilot seems to have tried to bring the aircraft to a halt on the runway but due to slippery conditions the plane skidded away leading, he said.

As many as 23 passen-

gers are in a critical condition in various hospitals in Kozhikode.

VIPs made a beeline to Kozhikode on Saturday. Governor Arif Mohammad Khan, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, civil aviation minister Hardeep Singh Puri, Union minister of state V. Muraleedharan visited the site of the accident and families of the victims and the injured in hospitals.

casualties could have been higher had the locals and security personnel not brought the injured to the hospital in time.

"It was an amazing rescue operation by the locals and the security personnel. We rarely see the speed and swiftness with which people were rescued from the site of such crash," said Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan while addressing the media in Kozhikode.

"I heard a huge sound. From the terrace of my house I could see the aircraft crashing into the 35 ft valley. In no time I collected my friends and hopped into a pick-up van and rushed to the runway," said Abhilash of Kondotty.

It seemed as if the entire village had descended on the spot to save people. "People just waited to help in whatever way they could," said a local.

2 INDIAN EXPATS STOPPED FROM FLYING SAVED

Dubai, Aug. 8: One may call it good luck, but for two Indian expats it was God who prevented them at the last minute from boarding the Air India Express plane that crashed in Kerala, killing at least 18 people on board.

Noufal Moin Vettet, an Ajman resident working as an office boy in a Sharjah school, was booked to travel on the flight and had checked in as per schedule. Vettet, a resident of Malappuram, Thirunavaya, whose visa was cancelled a week ago, told Gulf News: I was handed my boarding pass, but when I reached immigration, they told me I had to pay a fine of Dh 1,000 (₹20,430) for overstaying. I had only Dh 500 (₹10,215) with me.

"I called my school PRO and he told me to come back. He said they would follow protocols and pay the fines before sending me, he said. "When I heard about the crash, I was saddened for all the passengers. But I'm so relieved I missed it. God has been really merciful."

Afsal Parrakodan, a resident of Abu Dhabi, had a similar stroke of luck. "My work visa was cancelled about a week ago. After getting my boarding pass, I was told I had to pay a fine of Dh1,000 at the immigration counter, but I had only Dh500 on me. I was very keen to board the flight and be with my family. So I called a friend who brought me the additional Dh500, but by then, my baggage had been offloaded and the flight's doors were closed," said Parrakodan. "I was feeling very sad and called my mother to tell her I had missed the flight. But a few hours later, when I learnt of the crash, I couldn't help but feel relieved and thankful to God for saving my life," said an overwhelmed Parrakodan who plans to fly back next week.

— PTI



The mangled remains of the Air India Express flight, en route from Dubai, after it skidded off the runway while landing on Friday night, at Karippur in Kozhikode, Saturday.

PASSENGER TESTS +VE, RESCUERS ASKED TO GO INTO QUARANTINE

DC CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, AUG. 8

One of the passengers in Air India Express aircraft tested positive for Covid-19 while three others were suspected to have the infection.

Health minister K.K. Shailaja has asked all persons who took part in the rescue operations to report to their nearest health authorities and if required go into self quarantine as a precautionary measure.

"All persons who took part in the rescue will be tested," she added.

Around 50 CISF personnel who took part in the rescue work and their family members have been asked to go into preventive quarantine.

Another tragic case is that of 29-year-old Sahira Banu's

'Back home' selfie goes viral, but passenger dead

DC CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, AUG. 8

Kozhikode, Aug. 8: A selfie taken by Sharufudheen Pillassery, along with his wife and three-year-old daughter, in PPE kits inside the Air India Express flight from Dubai that crashed here, has gone viral as reports emerged that the journey turned out to be his last trip.

Before take off, Pillassery had posted the selfie, on his Facebook page with the caption "Back Home". However, he did not make it. While Sharufudheen succumbed to his injuries, his wife is seriously injured and undergoing treatment in a Kozhikode hospital.

She had gone to Dubai hardly 10 months ago and had taken the AIE flight to pursue her dream, a relative said. Her three minor children were also with her.

While two of her children, who survived, are undergoing treatment in two private hospitals, her youngest 10-month-old son died along with his mother in the crash. — PTI

WHILE SHARUFUDHEEN succumbed to his injuries, his wife is seriously injured and undergoing treatment in a Kozhikode hospital.

whose dream was to get a government job for herself and though married with three children that yearning never left her.

She had gone to Dubai hardly 10 months ago and had taken the AIE flight to pursue her dream, a relative said. Her three minor children were also with her.

While two of her children, who survived, are undergoing treatment in two private hospitals, her youngest 10-month-old son died along with his mother in the crash. — PTI

Rescue operation by locals brings down casualties

DC CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, AUG. 8

The massive rescue operations carried out by the local people of Kondotty taluk soon after the Air India Express aircraft accident has come in for huge applause. The CISF, state police, fire, rescue services staff and agencies did a commendable job in carrying out the rescue operations in record time.

"I saw the aircraft flying over the airport for some time. It was trying to land amid heavy rains. Soon I heard a deafening noise. We rushed to the spot and somehow managed to reach the aircraft. I could see people screaming, wailing and writhing in pain. Many were lying unconscious with broken limbs. Without waiting for a moment, we started to bring out people from the aircraft and

rushing them to hospitals in whatever vehicles were available," said Anzar, a local resident.

Most passengers were wearing PPE kits and face shields. The rescuers took care in rescuing all children including infant from the aircraft.

Since most passengers were critically injured, rushing them to hospitals within the "golden hour" was crucial to save their lives. The doctors say the

casualties could have been higher had the locals and security personnel not brought the injured to the hospital in time.

"It was an amazing rescue operation by the locals and the security personnel. We rarely see the speed and swiftness with which people were rescued from the site of such crash," said Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan while addressing the media in Kozhikode.

"I heard a huge sound. From the terrace of my house I could see the aircraft crashing into the 35 ft valley. In no time I collected my friends and hopped into a pick-up van and rushed to the runway," said Abhilash of Kondotty.

It seemed as if the entire village had descended on the spot to save people. "People just waited to help in whatever way they could," said a local.

Pune / Kozhikode, Aug. 8:

Captain Deepak Sathe, pilot of the ill-fated Air India Express flight, who died along with 17 others after the mishap at Kozhikode airport, had planned to pay a surprise visit to Nagpur to greet his mother on her 84th birthday on Saturday, his relative said.

"He had last met his parents in March and was constantly in touch with them over phone. They had last spoken a day before yesterday," his nephew Dr Yashodhan Sathe said on Saturday.

Captain Sathe lived with his wife in Mumbai. His mother Neela Sathe lives with her husband Vasant Sathe, a retired Colonel, in Bharatnagar locality of the city.

Sathe was a former Wing Commander of the Indian Air Force (IAF) and had served at the flight testing establishment. A passout of the National Defence Academy (NDA), Pune, topper in the 58th course and an awardee of 'Sword of Honour', Deepak served in the IAF for 21 years before joining as a commercial pilot with Air India in 2005.

Sathe had suffered multiple injuries on his skull. Due to his strong will power and passion he cleared the fitness test and started flying again, Niles said.



Captain Deepak Sathe

the family.

He has two sons. "Dhananjay lives in Bengaluru and he is trying to reach Kozhikode by road. His second son is in the USA and he won't be able to come," Dr Yashodhan said. Sources said Air India was trying to fly him home.

Captain Sathe had survived an air crash in the early 1990s when he was in the Air Force and was hospitalised for six months, his cousin Niles Sathe, who is adviser, finance, at the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), said in a Facebook post.

Sathe had suffered multiple injuries on his skull. Due to his strong will power and passion he cleared the fitness test and started flying again, Niles said.

— PTI

SHORT TAKES

KERALA RECORDS SINGLE-DAY SPIKE IN VIRUS CASESDC CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, AUG. 8

Even as Kerala struggled to come to terms with the Air India Express aircraft crash in Kozhikode and landslide in Rajamala in Idukki district, there was bad news on the Covid-19 front as well with the state recording biggest single day spike with 1420 cases on Saturday.

Of the people infected, 1216 contracted the infection through contact, 60 came from abroad, 108 from other states, the source of infection among 92 was yet to be known. The state recorded four deaths.

The only relief was that 1715 persons recovered from the infection.

NEDFI EMBARKS PLAN FOR MARKETPLACEMANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, AUG. 8

The north eastern development finance corporation ltd (NEDFi) has embarked upon an ambitious plan to facilitate the 'marketplace' for entrepreneurs of MSME sectors facing challenges in the northeast region due to the pandemic as much as structural reasons.

The facility that the NEDFi intends to create will be of help especially for entrepreneurs who are located away from Guwahati, the deputy general manager of the NEDFi, Ashim Kumar Das said, adding that product categories will include handloom and handicraft products, non-perishable food products as well as MSME products.

JAIPUR COPS TOLD TO PROBE PHONE TAPPING RUMOURS

Jaipur, Aug. 8: Rajasthan DGP Bhupendra Singh on Saturday instructed the Jaipur police to investigate the complaint lodged against the "rumours" that phone numbers of six MLAs lodged up in a Jaisalmer hotel are being tapped, according to a statement.

The DGP said the information is "utterly baseless, false and misleading" and asked Jaipur Police Commissioner Anand Srivastava to take immediate action in this regard, the statement said.

Amid a political crisis triggered by the revolt of dissident Congress leader Sachin Pilot against Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, the Congress had shifted the MLAs backing the CM to the Jaisalmer's Suryagarh hotel, accusing the BJP of the bid to topple its government in the state.

On Friday, it was claimed in a message circulated on WhatsApp that phone numbers of six MLAs lodged in the Jaisalmer hotel are being tapped. The message was circulated with a list of phone numbers. Reiterating his department's stand over the controversy, the DGP in the statement clarified that the Rajasthan Police did not tap the phone number of any legislator, "neither in the past nor in present". —PTI

25-YEAR-OLD FILES RAPE CASE AGAINST ODISHA COPAKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, AUG. 8

The Odisha police on Saturday faced an embarrassment after a 25-year-old woman alleged that she was raped by a subedar of the 7th Battalion of the Odisha State Armed Police (OSAP) at gunpoint for over four months.

The woman in her complaint lodged at Capital police station alleged that Subedar Debasia Swain on March 28 called her to his government quarters in the pretext of engaging her as a maid and immediately confined her to a room there.

"Subedar Debasia Swain called me to his official quarters in Unit 1 here on March 28 for domestic work with a monthly salary of ₹4,000. He told me that his wife and children have gone to their village due to the lockdown. Hearing this, I told him that I will come to work once his wife and children return from the village. But he confined me to a room in his quarters and threatened to kill me if I made any attempt to escape," the woman told reporters after lodging the police complaint.

She added that the cop used to rape her at gunpoint everyday after returning from duty.

SSR DEATH CASE: RHEA RELEASES TEXT MESSAGES IN HER SUPPORTDC CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, AUG. 8

In a bid to support her claims, Rhea Chakraborty, girlfriend of late Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput, on Saturday put out some text messages exchanged between them and gratitude notes, which she claimed were written by Rajput. Along with this, she uploaded a picture on social media of the 34-year-old actor's water bottle stating that these three things were the only property of Rajput that were in her possession.

During the Enforcement Directorate (ED) interrogation, Chakraborty claimed that the 500 sq ft residential property in Khar (East) was bought using her money and that she had not taken any monetary help from Rajput. The ED has not found any direct bank transaction between the two actors and the details of other accounts is now being checked.

The probe entails allegations by Rajput's father of Chakraborty taking away ₹15 crore from the deceased actor.

The statement recorded by Chakraborty and her brother Showik will be vetted with the findings in the probe, officials said. The ED will also question bank officials apart from Chakraborty's chartered accountant. The officials are using the case filed by Bihar police as the base of initiating the investigation, which has now been taken over by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

"All angles are being probed and details of the bank accounts of the family members is also being looked into," said investigating officials.

The Maharashtra government meanwhile filed their reply before the Supreme Court stating the case cannot be transferred to the CBI as the Bihar had no locus standi to register a case in connection with the incident that took place in Mumbai.

As it took a couple of hours for the security agencies including police and fire force personnel to reach the mishap spot, the locals mainly plantation workers tried to save as many people risking



A vehicle moves slowly through a waterlogged street following heavy rainfall in Kottayam district, in Kerala on Saturday. — PTI

J&K chief secy sparks row over 'corrupt' ministersYUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR, AUG. 8

Democratic Party (PDP) said that the CS has committed "gross abuse" of civil service rules and asked him "If no one sheds a tear for them why are the leaders jailed under PSA (Public Safety Act)". It termed Mr Subrahmanyam's remarks as "uncalled for and utterly flagitious."

The PDP accused him of having come to J&K "with a colonial mindset and being the chief executioner of RSS" in the erstwhile state. They have accused him of contravening service rules and breaching propriety.

The CS had on Friday while speaking to a group of visiting mediapersons here said, "J&K was a broken state and there was no system in place due to years of mis-governance, corruption and unbelievable levels of fraud committed by leaders of mainstream parties and separatist organisations." He had added that, therefore, "not a single soul had cried" over their detention on August 5 last year when the state was stripped of its special status and split up into two Union Territories.

The PDP alleged, "His only fame to glory is establishing a culture of impunity, polarised administration, systematic sidelining of local officers, fragmenting of bureaucracy on feudal lines and perpetuating the quid pro quo culture of rewarding incompetence. This is the part of the RSS campaign to destroy the identity of Kashmir and they are now attributing criminal charges on almost everybody in Kashmir in the name of terrorism, separatism and corruption."

Reacting sharply to his remarks, People's

Munnar landslide toll rises to 23; 43 trapped**12 out of 81 plantation workers on tea estate were rescued****Karnataka flood toll rises to 12**

Bengaluru, Aug. 8: Swollen rivers and flood-like situation continued to threaten lives and property in several parts of rain-ravaged Karnataka, where the death toll reached 12 on Saturday.

There were 81 people, most of them plantation workers of tea estates, in the area at the time of the mishap. Of these 12 were rescued from the spot on Friday. The local people carried out a massive rescue work.

Though there has been a respite from the rain in some parts, rivers continue to flow above the danger mark, inundating low-lying areas in several parts of Malnad, coastal and interior Karnataka. There are also reports of continued

their own lives amid heavy rains.

It was a humongous

landslides in hilly areas of Kodagu and Chikmagalur.

Total human loss from August 1 to 6 pm this evening in 12 rain and flood ravaged districts is 12 and five people are missing, according to official data. As many as 70 relief camps are active across the state so far where 1,292 people are taking shelter while 23 animals have died so far. While 276 houses are completely damaged, 1,913 are partially damaged. —PTI

The state government on Friday had dispatched 20 ambulances, medical teams, mobile medical units to provide assistance to the people trapped in the landslide.

Meanwhile, heavy rains continued to wreak havoc in Kerala with the Met department sounding red alert in Idukki, Thrissur, Palakkad and Wayanad districts.

Rahul hits out at govt over Asha workers' strikeDC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 8

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday hit out at the Centre over the ASHA health workers' strike demanding better service conditions and benefits, saying the government was "mute" already, but now maybe "blind and deaf" also.

"ASHA workers take

health protection to homes across the country. They are truly health warriors, but today they are forced to go on strike for their own rights," Mr Gandhi tweeted in Hindi.

"The government was mute already, but now maybe blind and deaf also," the former Congress president said tagging a media report about workers under the ASHA

being on a two-day nationwide strike from Friday.

The strike by almost six lakh ASHA workers has been called by central trade unions against the Centre for not providing adequate assistance – lack of safety equipment, delay in pittance – amid the Coronavirus pandemic.

Asha workers have played a significant role in contact-tracing, carrying

out surveys and organising awareness schemes for the Coronavirus in India.

They want better and timely pay, and a legal status that ensures minimum wages, to sustain their work of helping Indian officials track down high-risk contacts of Covid-19 patients across slums and hard-to-reach rural parts of the country.

PALGHAR LYNCHING CASE: MAHA CID FILES THIRD CHARGE SHEET

Thane/Mumbai, Aug. 8: The Maharashtra Criminal Investigation Department (CID), which is probing the Palghar mob lynching incident, has filed a third charge sheet in the case in a local court, officials said on Saturday.

In a related development, the CID also filed a charge sheet against two minor accused in the case in a juvenile court at Bhiwandi in Thane district on Friday, they said.

Last month, the CID had filed two charge sheets, one running into 4,955 pages and another of 5,921 pages, in a court in

Palghar taluka in Palghar district.

As many as 154 people have been arrested and 11 juveniles detained in connection with the incident, police have said. In all, three FIRs related to murder, armed rioting and other charges were registered in connection with the incident, in which two seers and their driver were lynched by a mob at Gadchinchale village in Palghar on April 16 when they were travelling in a car to Surat (Gujarat) to attend a funeral amid the coronavirus-induced lockdown.

—PTI

With a single-day rise of 61,537 cases, the country's coronavirus tally has reached 20,88,611 while the death toll rose to 42,518 with 933 fresh fatalities being reported in a day.

According to the Health ministry, India has one of the lowest cases per million at 1,469 as against the global average of 2,425.

"With focused efforts to reduce mortalities, India has registered one of the lowest deaths per million at 30 as compared to the global average of 91 deaths per million," said the health ministry.

There has been a sharp increase in Covid-19 recoveries.

With 48,900 patients discharged in the last 24 hours, the country's total recoveries has reached 14,27,005. The recovery rate, on a steady upward

rise, stands at 68.32 per cent.

The active cases, which are the actual case load for India at 6,19,088 account for 29.64 per cent of the total positive cases.

Union Health Secretary, Rajesh Bhushan chaired two high-level virtual meetings on Friday and Saturday to engage with the states reporting with high case load and higher Case Fatality Rate (CFR) than the national average.

Saturday's meeting focused on 13 districts concentrated in eight States or Union Territories.

"These districts account for nearly 9 per cent of India's active cases and about 14 per cent of deaths.

They also report low tests per million and high confirmation percentage," it said.

The Centre advised those states to address the issues of low lab utilisation, less than 100 tests per day for RT-PCR and 10 for others; low tests per million population; decrease in absolute tests from last week; delay in test results; and high confirmation percentage among the health care workers.

They were advised to ensure timely referral and hospitalization in view of reports from some districts of patients dying within 48 hours of admission.



UNION MINISTER WHO ENDORSED 'Bhabhi ji papad' POSITIVE

New Delhi, Aug. 8: Union Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal, who had recently endorsed 'Bhabhi ji papad' claiming that the snack will help prevent Coronavirus, himself tested positive for the deadly contagion on Saturday.

As per reports, Union Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs he currently admitted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIMS) in New Delhi.

With this, Meghwal becomes the fourth Union minister to have tested positive for coronavirus. Earlier in the day, Union Minister of State for Agriculture Kailash Chaudhary also tested positive for Covid-19 and is currently undergoing treatment at a hospital in Jodhpur.

The writer is a distinguished fellow at the Observer Research Foundation (ORF). — Agencies

New jobs opened for weaker sections in govt as old political leaders lose voice**Most of J&K adjusted to Art 370 abrogation**

Harsh V. Pant

It was a year back on August 5, 2019, that the abrogation of Article 370 and 35A was announced in Parliament, which led to the bifurcation of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories — Ladakh without a legislature, and Jammu and Kashmir with a legislature. It was a bold move, one which resulted in national and global rever-

berations as it came into effect on October 31, 2019. We have grown so used to the status quo that a change of this magnitude challenges our intellectual faculties. But it is also a reality that much as many of us would like to ignore it, the status quo in Kashmir had become unsustainable long back.

It was only the political and policy inertia that was keeping Indian policymakers from challenging it. A year on, despite the challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic, things are beginning to settle down

in both Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. With the development and empowerment process underway in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, this is likely to become even stronger in the future.

At the domestic level, there has been a big change in the way governance has been ramped up and has started benefiting those who were not really part of the national and intellectual discourse — the underprivileged and marginalised communities like Valmikis, Gorkhas and Dalits.

Even Prime Minister's relief package for socio-economic infrastructure announced in 2015 had not got the traction it deserved but in the last year various investments in infrastructure and other sectors has gathered momentum.

It is remarkable that while the critics continue to harp on a seeming lack of democracy in Jammu and Kashmir, grassroots democracy has actually been thriving with Panchayat Raj elections of 2018 witnessing a voter turnout of 74.1 per cent followed by elections to the

Block Development Councils held for the first time in the history of Jammu and Kashmir in October 2019 with a record 98.3 per cent voter turnout.

This has brought in new voices and new actors into the political arena, away from the stranglehold of a few families who dominated local politics. No wonder that few are calling for the restoration of Article 370 today.

The writer is a distinguished fellow at the Observer Research Foundation (ORF). — Agencies

IN BRIEF

Russians fume over Governor's arrest

Moscow: Thousands of demonstrators gathered again Saturday in the major Russian Far East city of Khabarovsk to denounce the arrest of the region's governor a month ago. Sergei Furgal was arrested on July 9 on suspicion of involvement in murders and taken to jail in Moscow. The estimated 3,000 demonstrators protested the charges and want him returned to the city for trial. Furgal, who has been removed from his post, is a popular figure in the region bordering China about 6,100 kilometers (3,800 miles) east of Moscow. Since his arrest, daily demonstrations have been held in the city, with attendance peaking on weekends.

Indian man dies while rescuing kids

New York: A 29-year-old Sikh man died after he jumped into a river to rescue three children who were swept away in the US state of California, according to media reports. The man, identified as Manjeet Singh, was visiting Reedley Beach on Wednesday evening near his home in Fresno County when he saw the three children struggling in the Kings River, the Los Angeles Times reported on Friday. Two eight-year-old girls and a 10-year-old boy were playing in the river when they were pulled under a bridge by the current, Reedley Police Department commander Mark Ediger said.

800 rally over arrest of protest leader

Bangkok: Hundreds of demonstrators rallied in Thailand on Saturday, after police arrested two leading anti-government protest leaders in an apparent attempt to stifle growing political unrest. Around 800 demonstrators packed a concourse near a shopping mall in central Bangkok to hear speeches denouncing the arrests and call for Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-o-cha to resign. Tensions rose briefly as police officers moved in, telling the crowd they were only observing. They withdrew to a chorus of boos and chants for them to get out. After a period of relative calm in Thailand's fractious politics, the temperature is rising again with a wave of anti-government protests.

US kids, parents perform DIY tests

Washington: In a comfy suburb just outside Nashville, a young family swabs their noses twice a month in a DIY study seeking answers to some of the most vexing questions about the Coronavirus. How many U.S. children and teens are infected? How many kids who are infected show no symptoms? How likely are they to spread it to other kids and adults? "The bottom line is we just don't know yet the degree to which children can transmit the virus," said Dr Tina Hartert of Vanderbilt University, who is leading the government-funded study. Evidence from the US, China and Europe shows children are less likely to become infected with the virus than adults and also less likely to become seriously ill when they do get sick.

SCIENTISTS: COVID MAY HAVE LONGER INCUBATION TIME

Beijing, Aug. 8: The incubation period of Covid-19, which is the time after which those infected with the novel coronavirus start showing the first symptoms, could be as much as eight days — longer than previous estimates of four to five days — says a new study which involved the largest amount of patient samples to date in such an analysis.

The research, published in the journal *Science Advances*, identified pre-symptomatic individuals at their time of departure from the Chinese city of Wuhan, where the Covid-19 pandemic originated, and then followed these infected people until their symptoms developed.

According to the scientists, including Chong You from Peking University in China, the existing estimates of four to five days for the incubation period were based on small sample sizes, limited data, and self-reports that could be biased by the memory or judgement of the patient or interviewer.

Rajapaksa to take oath as PM

Party won in 145 constituencies, bagging a total of 150 seats with its allies

Colombo, Aug. 8: Mahinda Rajapaksa will be sworn in as Sri Lanka's prime minister at a historic Buddhist temple on Sunday, allowing the powerful Rajapaksa clan to consolidate their grip on power in the island nation.

The 74-year-old Sri Lanka People's Party (SLPP) leader, who polled over 500,000 individual preference votes — the highest ever recorded by a candidate in the country's history of elections — will take the oath of office for the ninth Parliament at the

sacred Rajamaha Viharaya in Kelaniya, a north Colombo suburb, according to an official statement.

The SLPP, led by Mahinda, registered a landslide victory in the general election, securing two-thirds majority in Parliament needed to amend the Constitution to further consolidate the family's firm grip on power for the next five years.

The party won in 145 constituencies, bagging a total of 150 seats with its allies, a two-thirds majority in the 225-member Parliament. It

● **THE NEW government has decided to restrict the size of the Cabinet to 26, though it can be increased up to 30 in terms of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution.**

polled 6.8 million votes (59.9 per cent).

On Saturday, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, 71, congratulated his elder brother Mahinda for winning the General Election.

"I extend my warmest

congratulations to Prime Minister @PresRajapaksa and all the candidates of the @PodujanaParty, who contested the recent General Elections and was elected to Parliament by popular vote and the National List," the president tweeted ahead of the swearing-in ceremony on Sunday morning.

The Cabinet of Ministers will be sworn-in on Monday, followed by the swearing-in of the state and deputy ministers, the Daily Mirror newspaper reported. The new government has

decided to restrict the size of the Cabinet to 26, though it can be increased up to 30 in terms of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution.

The Rajapaksa family — including SLPP founder and its National Organiser Basil Rajapaksa, who is the younger brother of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and former president Mahinda — has dominated Sri Lankan politics for two decades. Mahinda previously served as the president for nearly a decade from 2005 to 2015. — PTI

Relaxation time



Hikers walk in front with the Matterhorn mountain in background above the resort of Zermatt as heatwave sweeps across Europe on Saturday. — AFP

VOTERS WEARY OF PUERTO RICO PRIMARIES

San Juan, Aug. 8: Two candidates who both served as replacement governors in the wake of a Puerto Rican political crisis are competing against each other for a chance to win the job in their own right as the disaster-struck US territory holds primary elections.

Governor Wanda Vázquez of the pro-statehood New Progressive Party is seeking the party's nomination in a Sunday contest with seasoned politician Pedro Pierluisi, who represented Puerto Rico in Congress from 2009 to 2017.

Pierluisi was sworn in as governor last August when Governor Ricardo Rosselló resigned following widespread street protests over a profanity-laced chat that was leaked and government corruption.

The main opposition Popular Democratic Party, which supports Puerto Rico's current political status as a US territory, is holding a primary for the first time in its 82-year history. — AP

Whitmer meets Joe Biden as he approaches VP decision

Biden risks losing Black voters after race remarks

Lansing (US), Aug. 8: Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer travelled to Delaware last weekend to meet with Joe Biden, the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee's first known in-person session with a potential running mate as he nears a decision.

Whitmer visited Biden on Sunday, according to two high-ranking Michigan Democrats who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to discuss the matter publicly.

The first-term governor of the battleground state has long been on his short list of possible running mates. Flight records show a chartered plane left Lansing's Capital Region International Airport for Delaware Coastal Airport at 5:33 pm and returned at 11:16 pm.

The governor's office declined to confirm or deny the trip. "We don't discuss her personal schedule," spokeswoman Tiffany Brown said. Biden's cam-

paign declined to comment. He has spent months weighing who would serve alongside him if he wins in November. Biden has

pledged to select a woman

and has conducted an expansive search, including Senators Kamala Harris of California and Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, California Rep. Karen Bass and former Obama national security adviser Susan Rice. — AP

which rescued his floundering campaign. But that success was heavily dependent on older Black voters.

In a general election where Democrats say no vote can be taken for granted, young Black activists and elected officials say this week's missteps could make it harder to get their vote.

"Unlike the African American community, with notable exceptions, the Latino community is an incredibly diverse community with incredibly different attitudes about different things," he told the Latina reporter. He later walked back the comment. Black voters as a whole delivered the Democratic nomination to Biden, powering his commanding win in the South Carolina primary.

— AP

LAW & GOVERNANCE

If cops are convicted they will face charges: Attorney

Black girls handcuffed, probe on

Denver, Aug. 8: Prosecutors are investigating whether suburban Denver police officers should face criminal charges for putting four Black girls on the ground and handcuffing two of them after mistakenly suspecting they were riding in a stolen car, a district attorney said Friday.

The incident on Sunday attracted national attention after a video of the girls — some in tears — being detained in a parking lot spread on social media.

The traffic stop happened in Aurora, where officers are also being investigated following the death of 23-year-old Elijah McClain after he was placed in a

chokehold last year. In the Sunday incident, officers eventually determined the car carrying the girls, ranging in age from 6 to 17, had the same license plate number as the one they were seeking from another state. Aurora Police Chief Vanessa Wilson and the department are cooperating with the investigation, 18th Judicial District Attorney George Brauchler said in his announcement.

He called the public accounts of the confrontation "very concerning." "Everyone is entitled to be treated equally under the law," he said. "No one is above the law. If our investigation determines that

enforcement, but earlier this year he criticised members of Aurora's police department for helping shield an officer found passed out in his patrol car from criminal prosecution for suspected drinking and driving.

Aurora police apologised after the video taken by a bystander showed the girls, with the 17-year-old and a 12-year-old lying on their stomachs with their hands cuffed behind their backs. A 14-year-old girl was lying next to the 6-year-old, also on their stomachs next to the car. They can be heard crying and screaming as officers stand with their backs to the camera. A woman on the other side of

the car is seen being led away in handcuffs. An officer eventually helped the handcuffed girls sit up but left them with their hands behind their backs, and police eventually determined they had stopped the wrong car.

Part of the reason for the mix-up might have been that the car had been reported as stolen earlier in the year, police said. Driver Brittney Gilliam, who had taken her nieces, sister and daughter out for a day at a nail salon, has characterised the officers' actions as police brutality. "There's no excuse why you didn't handle it a different type of way," Gilliam said. — AP

HK, Chinese officials jeer at US sanctions

Hong Kong, Aug. 8: Hong Kong's leader and China's top representative in the city took pot shots at the United States on Saturday after the Trump administration sanctioned them and nine other officials for allegedly cracking down on freedom and undermining the local autonomy of the former British colony.

Chief Executive Carrie Lam took to Facebook to say that the US got her address wrong, listing the official address of her chief deputy instead. She noted that she was the deputy when she applied for her US visa in 2016. "By the way, my entry visa to the US is valid until 2026. Since I have no desire to visit this country, it looks like I can take the initiative to cancel it," Lam said.

The sanctions, announced on Friday by the US Treasury Department, block all property or other assets that the individuals have within US jurisdiction. Luo Huining, the director of the central government's liaison office in Hong Kong, said being included on the list shows that he has done what he should for the city and his country. "I don't have a penny of assets abroad. Isn't it in vain to impose 'sanctions'?"

Of course, I can also send 100 U.S. dollars to Trump for freezing," he said in a statement on the office's website.

Hong Kong Commerce Secretary Edward Yau, who wasn't sanctioned, called the sanctions "unreasonable and barbarous" and said they would harm US interests in the city, an Asian financial and shipping hub. Hong Kong has long enjoyed civil liberties not seen in mainland China because it is governed under a so-called "one country, two systems" principle in place since it reverted to Chinese rule in 1997.

However, Beijing imposed a national security law on Hong Kong at the end of June, following months of anti-government protests last year. The new law prohibits what Beijing views as secessionist, subversive or terrorist activities or what it sees as foreign intervention in Hong Kong's internal affairs. Police now have sweeping powers to conduct searches without warrants and order internet service providers and platforms to remove messages deemed to be in violation of the legislation. — AP

Schools in US face major virus test

Washington, Aug. 8: Reopening schools is easy. Keeping them open will be the hard part.

As educators prepare to welcome students back to class for the first time in months, schools' ability to quickly identify and contain Coronavirus outbreaks before they get out of hand will be put to the test in thousands of districts around the country.

Newly reopened schools in Mississippi, Indiana and Georgia have already reported infections just days into the academic year, triggering virus protocols that include swiftly isolating infected students, tracing their contacts and quarantining people they exposed.

"It doesn't matter if you open schools in July, like we did, or if you open in August, September or October. All schools are going to have to deal with the issue of positive Covid-19 test results," said Lee Childress, superintendent of Corinth School District in Mississippi, where more than 100 students are quarantined at home after being exposed to a handful of infected classmates.

Schools are trying to mitigate the risk of transmission by spreading desks apart, serving meals in the classroom and keeping groups of students together throughout the day. Many schools — but not all — will require students and staff to wear masks, which health experts say is critical to cutting down on spread.

Administrators say it might be difficult to control the mixing and mingling that happens at every school. Asymptomatic carriers could silently spread the virus to many others. A student might not remember every contact, or be reluctant to tell the truth because that would mean forcing friends into quarantine. — AP

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Face coverings made must in UK

London, Aug. 8: Face coverings are now a legal requirement across most indoor settings in England and Scotland from Saturday as part of the UK government's efforts to curb the spread of Covid-19.

Under the new rules, face masks or some form of face covering must now be worn in cinemas, museums, places of worship and aquariums besides public transport and shops and supermarkets, where it was already mandatory.

In Scotland, the rule also covers banks and beauty salons and in the devolved administration of Northern Ireland face coverings in all enclosed public spaces will become compulsory from Monday. Those who break the law on wearing face coverings, unless exempt on certain narrow health and age grounds, could be fined up to 100 pounds, with greater police presence in place to ensure the rules were

being followed. The move comes as the government extended localised lockdowns in northern England and added the city of Preston in Lancashire within the remit of stricter measures, as the spread of the deadly Coronavirus failed to show a decrease in the number of cases per 100,000 people in the region.

"I chaired a meeting of the Local Action Gold Committee, and unfortunately, the data does not yet show a decrease in the transmission of this terrible virus," said UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock. "It means we must keep the current restrictions in place to allow more time for the impact of this ban on indoor gatherings to be felt, and make sure local residents and their loved ones are protected. At the request of the local area we are also extending the restrictions to Preston," he said. — PTI

SHORT TAKES

Tokyo Olympics OC member +ve

Tokyo: Two employees of the Tokyo Olympic organizing committee have tested positive for Covid-19, officials said Saturday. That brings to three the number of employees of the committee who have tested positive since the pandemic began. Organisers said a man and a woman had tested positive but gave few details. They said the man was in his 20s and the woman in her 30s, and that both were now working from home rather than at the headquarters located near Tokyo Bay.

Many of the organizing committee's employees have been working remotely though some have returned to office work in the last few months. The organising committee has a staff of 3,500. The 2020 Tokyo Olympics have been put back to July 23, 2021 due to the pandemic. The original closing ceremony was to have been Sunday, August 9. Japan has reported just over 1,000 deaths from Covid-19. Like the country, Tokyo has been largely spared. — AP

Svitolina, Bertens out of US Open

New York: Two more top-10 women — Elina Svitolina and Kiki Bertens — will miss the U.S. Open, joining No. 1-ranked Ash Barty in skipping the Grand Slam tennis tournament during the Coronavirus pandemic. The U.S. Tennis Association also announced on Friday that Barbora Krejčíková withdrew. The fifth-ranked Svitolina, a Ukrainian who was a semifinalist at Flushing Meadows a year ago, posted Friday on social media that she doesn't "feel comfortable to travel to US without putting my team and myself at high risk."

No. 7 Bertens, who is Dutch, wrote on Instagram that one of her concerns is the need to be quarantined upon returning to Europe after the U.S. Open, which runs from Aug. 31 to Sept. 13 and will not have any spectators.

The French Open — where Bertens reached the semifinals in 2016 — is scheduled to begin Sept. 27. She also wants to play on the clay-court tournament in Rome before heading to Paris for the Grand Slam. — AP

Martic, Kontaveit in Palermo semis

Palermo, Sicily: Top-seeded Petra Martic and fourth-seeded Anett Kontaveit advanced to the semifinals of the first tour-level event in five months at the Palermo Ladies Open on Friday. Martic beat qualifier

Aliaksandra Sasnovich 7-6 (5), 7-6 (3) then Kontaveit defeated Italian teenager Elisabetta Cocciaretto 6-1, 4-6, 6-1.

Martic was coming off a three-set win a day earlier. "I had two tough matches and my body's holding up well," Martic said. "I have no major issues, just maybe soreness that I'm sure we all have in the first tournament back."

"It feels nice to be reminded of how it feels to be that kind of tired. But all in all I'm happy. I had some good weeks of practice and it's paying off." Kontaveit said she was looking forward to facing Martic.

"I was doing fitness for a long time," Kontaveit said of the break due to the coronavirus pandemic. I started playing a lot of tennis 1 month ago," she said. — AP

TESTING DAY FOR REPSOL HONDA TEAM

Brno: One lap pace eludes Alex Marquez in Brno as Stefan Bradl gains more speed during a busy day, the Repsol Honda Team pair ready to fight forward on Sunday.

It was a day of contrasts for MotoGP rookie Alex Marquez, the 2019 Moto2 race-winner was pleased with his race pace but continued to search for one-lap speed. Having cut 1.2 seconds off his best time from Friday to Saturday morning, Alex ended Free Practice 3 just 1.298 seconds off first but down in 19th and would enter Q1 as a result.

After a few minutes of running in Free Practice 4, Alex Marquez suffered a fall at Turn 8. Unharmed, Alex re-joined the session and showed strong race pace throughout.

A difficult Q1 session saw the rookie struggle to put together an ideal lap, he will line up on the seventh row of the grid for Sunday's race as a result but is prepared to be aggressive off the line and show his pace.



Manchester City's Raheem Sterling (centre) celebrates after scoring against Real Madrid in their Champions League Round of 16 second leg match at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester on Friday. The hosts won 2-1. — AP

VARANE FLOP SHOW

City pounce on Raphael mistakes to dump Madrid

Manchester, Aug. 8:

Manchester City took advantage of two shocking mistakes by Raphael Varane to beat Real Madrid 2-1 in their Champions League last 16 second leg on Friday and advance to the quarter-finals as Pep Guardiola came out on top in his duel with Zinedine Zidane.

The Frenchman had never been knocked out of Europe's elite club competition as Real coach, leading them to three consecutive victories between 2016 and 2018 in his first spell before returning to the job last year.

But Madrid had been left with a mountain to climb in this tie after throwing away the lead to lose 2-1 in the first leg in Spain in February, before the coronavirus forced the competition into hibernation.

An identical defeat at an empty Etihad Stadium means it is City who advance 4-2 on aggregate.

Without Sergio Ramos due to suspension, Real

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE



Real Madrid defender Raphael Varane (right) reacts after Raheem Sterling (unseen) scored Manchester City's first goal. — AP

were undone by mistakes by their other first-choice centre-back.

Varane was dispossessed

inside the box in the ninth minute allowing Raheem Sterling to put City ahead, and his poor headed back-pass attempt gifted Gabriel Jesus another

goal midway through the second half.

Before that second goal the tie had been in the balance with the in-form Karim Benzema having scored for the visitors just before the half-hour mark.

The circumstances may be highly unusual, but this is still City's finest Champions League result, their most significant victory in a knockout tie.

THIS DEFEAT IS ON ME, SAYS VARANE

French defender Varane insisted on facing up to his two mistakes and admitted: "This is on me. I failed, and I have to admit it."

ZIDANE IS NOT TOO DOWNBEAT AFTER LOSS

Real Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane said he remained "proud" of his team for their achievements this season despite the Spanish giants going out of the Champions League. "We can't be happy about today because we have lost a game and gone out, but we have to be proud of what we have done over the season," Zidane said after the match.

Real overhauled

Barcelona to win La Liga for the first time since 2017.

However, they have now been knocked out of the Champions League for the first time with Zidane as coach — the Frenchman led Real to glory in the competition in three straight years during his first spell in charge.

— AFP

Lyon lay Juve low, in quarters

Turin (Italy), Aug. 8: Lyon qualified for the quarter-finals of the Champions League on Friday despite losing 2-1 in Turin.

A goal up after winning Friday's first leg, French side Lyon will face Manchester City at the final tournament in Lisbon after drawing 2-2 on aggregate and going through on away goals.

Lyon squeezed past the Italian champions thanks to Maurizio Sarri on Saturday after his first season in charge ended with the team's Champions League exit.

Despite winning the Italian title, Sarri paid the price for the round-of-16 loss to Lyon on Friday.

The club would like to thank the coach for having written a new page in Juventus' history with the victory of the ninth consecutive championship, the culmination of a personal journey that led him to climb all the divisions of Italian football, the team said.

Sarri also left Chelsea last year after only one season in charge — despite winning the Europa League. — AP



Juventus' Cristiano Ronaldo reacts during the Champions League Round of 16 second leg match against Lyon in Turin on Friday. — AP

utes left in the opening period before crashing a second home on the hour mark.

However Juve performed poorly and Lyon managed to hold on to set

up a clash with Pep Guardiola's City, who put out 13-time winners Real Madrid, on August 15.

Despite their nine consecutive Italian league titles in a row, Juventus

could not get past a French side that finished seventh in Ligue 1 this season.

RONALDO NOT ENOUGH FOR 'CURSED' JUVE

Juventus coach Maurizio Sarri said he was "bitter" as the Italian giants crashed out of the Champions League despite a Cristiano Ronaldo double giving the hosts a 2-1 win over the French club on the night.

"I am very bitter, I understand how much this competition is cursed for Juve," said Sarri.

The Turin side have won the tournament twice, but not since 1996. They have been runners-up seven times, including twice in the last five years.

Sarri's side were coming off a tough battle to win a ninth consecutive league title in Italy.

— AFP

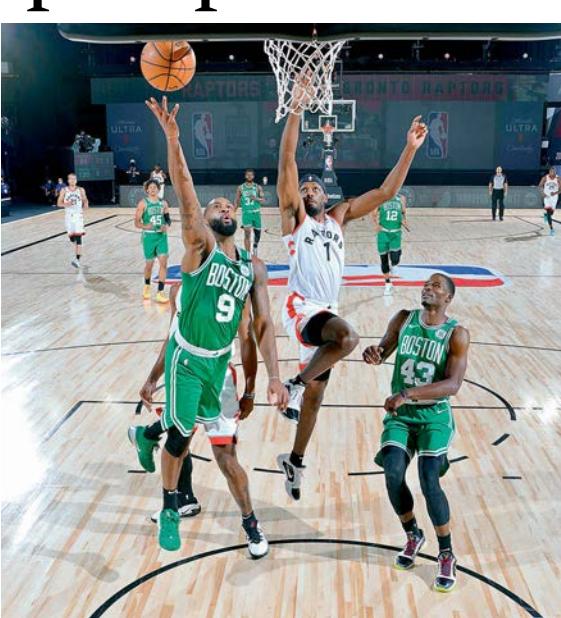
Celtics rip Raptors as Nets, Magic cruise

Miami, Aug. 8: Jaylen Brown and Jayson Tatum powered the Boston Celtics to a 122-100 rout of defending NBA champion Toronto on Friday, keeping the Raptors from clinching the Eastern Conference second seed.

Brown scored 20 points, Tatum added 18 and Kemba Walker added 17 for the Celtics (46-23), who pulled within 3.5 games of second-place Toronto and three ahead of fourth-place Miami.

"We're getting there. I don't want to put a cap on it, say where our ceiling is, but we're improving every day and we don't want to stop," Tatum said.

The Celtics, who boasted seven double-figure scorers, never trailed against the NBA's second-best defensive squad, jumping ahead 52-37 at halftime and outscoring the



Brad Wanamaker (left) of the Boston Celtics drives to the basket during their game against the Toronto Raptors in Orlando, Florida, on Friday. — AP

much different.

The Brooklyn Nets and Orlando Magic clinched the last two berths in the East playoffs in different fashions.

Brooklyn, led by 22 points from Caris LeVert and 21 from Joe Harris, routed Sacramento 119-106. The Nets (33-36) ensured ninth-place Washington could not pull within four games to force a play-in series under NBA restart rules.

Orlando (32-38) had a chance to win and seal a berth but the Philadelphia 76ers rallied in the second half to beat the Magic 108-101.

Instead, the Magic reached the playoffs when Washington lost to New Orleans 118-107, leaving the Wizards (24-45) the only winless bubble team and too far back to threaten Orlando. — AFP

PGA CHAMPIONSHIP

Putter goes cold, Woods struggles

San Francisco, Aug. 8:

After Friday's barrage of misreads, short misses and rim-outs on greens he could not figure out, Tiger Woods might want to go back to his old putter. And find a new sand wedge while he's at it.

Woods, who got under par on Day 1 of the PGA Championship by swapping his usual putter for one that was a little longer, ended up in a battle simply to make the cut in the second round. He shot 2-over 72 to finish at even par at the midway point at Harding Park. He is eight shots behind leader Haotong Li.

Most of the problems had to do with his putting.

I really struggled with getting the speed of the greens today, he said. They looked faster than what they were putting. They were firm coming into the greens, but they weren't putting as fast as they looked.

And then as the day wore on, they got a little more fuzzy and got even slower.

On Day 1, he made 141 feet worth of putts. On Day 2, the grand total was 52 feet, and that was with the

pitch but sometimes you can fail. Today, I failed, and I have to admit it."

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Real Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane said he remained "proud" of his team for their achievements this season despite the Spanish giants going out of the Champions League.

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— AP



Tiger Woods lines up a putt during the second round of the PGA Championship golf tournament at TPC Harding Park in San Francisco on Friday. — AP

KO TAKES LEAD AT LPGA MARATHON CLASSIC

Washington, Aug. 8: Lydia Ko produced a barnstorming finish to snatch a one-shot lead with a six-under-par second round at the LPGA Marathon Classic on Friday.

The former world number one from New Zealand bagged back-to-back birdies on the 17th and 18th holes to leapfrog England's Jodi Ewart Shadoff for sole possession of the lead at Highland Meadows in Sylvania, Ohio.

Ko's pair of closing birdies bookended a blistering start to her round, when she reeled off four consecutive birdies over the first four holes to move into the lead. Her roller coaster 65 included nine birdies, three bogeys and six pars, leaving her at 13 under after 36 holes.

For most of the second round, it looked as if Ko would have to settle for a share of the lead with Ewart Shadoff.

— AFP

Sharma misses cut again, Sullivan leads

Hertfordshire (UK), Aug. 8:

Indian golfer Shubhankar Sharma carded a one-under par 70 in the second round of the English Championship but that was not enough to keep him alive in the low-scoring event.

Sharma aggregated one-under over two rounds, missing the cut for the second time in as many weeks in the UK Swing, which is taking place amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The year, even before the coronavirus outbreak, had not been great for the 24-year-old.

He has made just one cut on the European Tour in 2020 and that came in the first start at the Abu Dhabi Championship where he finished T-59.

Sharma aggregated one-under over two rounds, missing the cut for the second time in as many weeks in the UK Swing, which is taking place amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Andy Sullivan, who was T-4 at the British Masters, recorded the lowest nine of his European Tour career as he opened up a one shot lead heading into the weekend at the Hanbury Manor Marriott Hotel and Country Club.

Sullivan (62) turned in 34 with birdies on the first, sixth and ninth and a single dropped shot on the eighth but really came to life on the back nine with a 28 with seven birdies in nine holes.

The only ones he missed out were on 11th and 17th and is now 14-under and one shot clear of countryman Laurie Canter (65) and South Africa's Dean Burmester (63), who also had a 28 on the back nine. The cut fell at three-under and among those missing it were last week's winner Sam Horsfield and Gavin Green. — PTI

SHORT TAKES

Bottas barges to pole for top race

Silverstone United Kingdom: Valtteri Bottas outpaced his Mercedes teammate and world champion leader Lewis Hamilton by the finest of margins on Saturday to claim a dramatic pole position for the 70th Anniversary Grand Prix.

The Finn clocked a fastest lap in one minute and 25.154 seconds to beat the six-time world champion by only 0.063 in the final seconds of an enthralling qualifying session.

It was the Mercedes team's 67th front row lockout in Formula One.

"It feels good," said Bottas who was securing the 13th pole of his career 48 hours after signing a new contract to keep him at Mercedes next season. He added: "We have improved the set-up and the car since last week. Mentally, when you start on pole, you can only aim to win the race — and the starting point is good! It is so nice to drive this amazing car."

Hamilton explained his unexpected 'slip' to second. "I wasn't that great, but Valtteri did a great job and he deserves pole." — AFP

Biggies off the blocks for kit

New Delhi: German sports apparel and footwear major Puma could be the frontrunner in bagging the Indian cricket team's kit sponsorship rights while rival Adidas could also enter the fray.

However, it couldn't be confirmed whether Nike would re-bid after refusing BCCI's scaled down bid offer from their ₹370 crore (plus 30 crore royalty), which they paid from 2016 to 2020. "I can confirm you that

Puma has bought the ITT (Invitation to Tender) document worth ₹1 lakh. While buying bid document doesn't mean one is bidding, Puma has shown genuine interest in submitting a bid," a senior BCCI official said. It is learnt that Adidas too has shown interest but whether it will be bidding for the sponsorship rights is still not known. Even though some feel that the German giant could independently bid for merchandise products. — PTI

FAST & FURIOUS

Dhoni will retire when he is outrun: Manjrekar

Mumbai, Aug. 8: Former India batsman Sanjay Manjrekar on Saturday revealed Mahendra Singh Dhoni had told him he would consider himself fit for international cricket as long as he is "beating the fastest sprinter in the team."

Manjrekar, a well-known commentator, said he had a chat with the two-time World Cup-winning former captain regarding his future in international cricket during India skipper Virat Kohli's wedding in 2017.

"During Virat Kohli's wedding, I had a little corner time with him and he said as long as 'I am beating the fastest sprinter in the team, I am going to consider myself fit enough to be playing international cricket or playing high-level cricket,'" Manjrekar said.

"People like Tendulkar, Dhoni, these are champions on cricketers. Once they are on public stage, you will never see Dhoni ever on a public stage, like a cricket field, looking slightly unfit or unable to sprint or run..." he said on a sports show.

Dhoni's last outing in competitive cricket was the 2019 World Cup semi-final against New Zealand.

Manjrekar also reckoned Dhoni would come good in the IPL, saying the presence of "only four-five" good bowlers in the league is not enough to trouble the seasoned campaigner.

"He is going to be very good and one of the reasons he is so successful and consistent in IPL as a batsman as opposed to international is that he knows that there are about four to five bowlers to handle," Manjrekar said.

— PTI



Cricketers Hardik Pandya (left) and M. S. Dhoni run during a training session in this file photo.

Buttler leads English fightback

Manchester, Aug. 8: Jos Buttler and Chris Woakes both hit fifties to give England hope of an unlikely victory in the first Test against Pakistan at Old Trafford on Saturday.

England, set a challenging 277 to win, were struggling at 117-5 on the fourth day.

But World Cup winners Buttler and Woakes counter-attacked.

At the drinks break, England were 216-5 — just 61 runs shy of victory.

Buttler was 53 not out and Woakes 54 not out.

Wicketkeeper Buttler had had a poor match in the field, twice missing Shan Masood on 45 during the Pakistan opener's



Pakistan wicketkeeper Mohammad Rizwan (centre) celebrates with teammates the dismissal of England's Ben Stokes during the fourth day of the first Test match at the Old Trafford in Manchester on Saturday. — AP

first-innings 156.

Although he is one of the world's leading white-ball batsmen, Buttler had just one century in 44

Tests coming into this match, being played behind closed doors because of the coronavirus.

But whether it was cover-driving leg-spinner Shadab Khan or pulling teenage paceman Naseem Shah for another boundary, Buttler was able to put the pressure back on Pakistan. Together with Woakes he shared a fifty stand in just 49 balls.

And his own half-century came off just 55 balls, with seven fours.

Runs came from both ends with Woakes bringing up a 59-ball fifty when he cover-drove Naseem for the eighth boundary of his innings. — AFP

Brief scores: Pakistan 326 & 169 (Y. Shah 33, A. Shafiq 29, S. Broad 3/37, vs England 219 & 167/5 in 53 overs (J. Buttler 32*, C. Woakes 26*, Y. Shah 2/74).

Indian spinner Yuzi is engaged

BIPIN DANI
MUMBAI, AUG. 8

Rahul Dravid is not the only Indian cricketer who is married to a dentist. Another Indian cricketer and a chess player Yuzvendra Chahal's fiancee is also a dentist.

"Engagement will be done one day before the marriage. Because of Covid-19, the marriage will not happen soon," mother Sunita Devi said.

Team India's 30-year-old leg spinner Chahal has checkmated Mumbai dentist Dhanshree Verma.

The roka ceremony was performed in Mumbai. Chahal's father Krishan Kumar confirmed to this reporter.

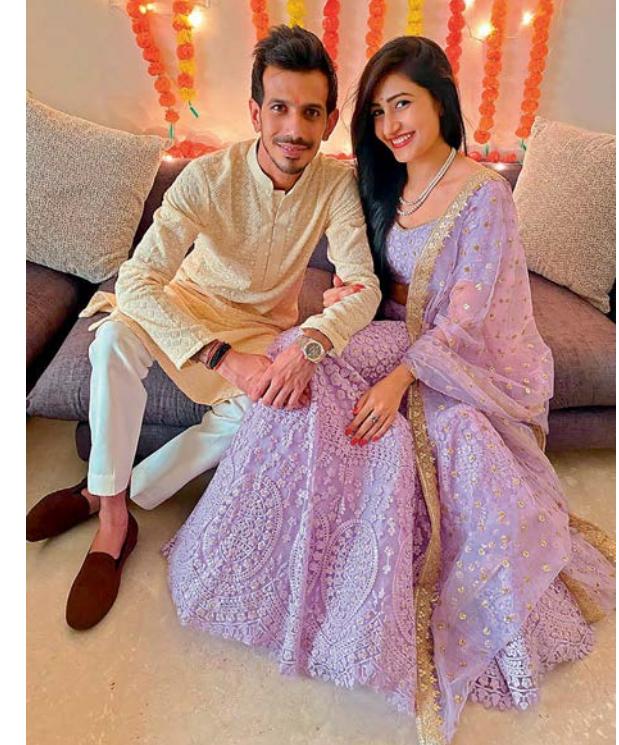
"Dhanshree Verma is a dentist in Andheri (West). Both met on social media but met each other person-

ally for the first time today. We all came from Delhi in the afternoon today and performed the roka ceremony," Kumar confirmed.

"Engagement will be done one day before the marriage. Because of Covid-19, the marriage will not happen soon," mother Sunita Devi said.

"Yes, my son will head to UAE for the Indian Premier League matches. Dhanshree will not be accompanying him," the mother added.

Chahal's family headed to Dhanshree's grandmother's house in the evening for dinner. Chahal's family but met each other person-



Indian cricketer Yuzvendra Chahal is all smiles with his fiancee Dhanshree Verma, a dentist from Mumbai.

Regd. No. H/SD/509/2018-20

Printed and Published by K. Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited. Printed at Deccan Chronicle Press situated at Plot No. 9 Alval Village, Vallabh Nagar Taluk, Medchal Malkajgiri Dist, Telangana and Published at 36, S.D. Road, Secunderabad-3.

RNI Registration No. 3081/1957. Editor: Aditya Sinha

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