

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

VIJAYAWADA | FRIDAY | 7 AUGUST 2020

**WEATHER**  
Max: 33.0°C  
Min: 25°C  
RH: 54%  
Rainfall: 23.7 mm  
Forecast: Cloudy.  
Max/Min temp.  
33/25°C

**COVID-19 CUNT**  

CASES	DEATHS
(+53,701)	(+913)
19,59,822	40,732

covid19india.org

**STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS**  
(+2,012) (+13)  
TS: 70,958 576  
(+10,128) (+77)  
AP: 1,86,461 1,681

**CASES AROUND THE WORLD**  

1,88,33,253  
**DEATHS**  

707,136  
**COUNTRIES AREAS WITH CASES**  

213

worldometers.info/  
coronavirus

**ASTROGUIDE**  
Sarvari: Dakshinayana  
Tithi: Shravana Bahula Chaturthi till 2.07 am (Saturday)  
Star: Purvabhadra till 1.34 pm  
Varjyam: 12.14 am to 2 am (Saturday)  
Durmuhurtam: 8.33 am to 9.23 am; 12.47 pm to 1.38 pm  
Rahukalam: 10.30 am to 12 noon  
**HJRI CALENDAR**  
Zulhijja 16,1441 AH  
**PRAYERS**  
Fajar: 5.15 am  
Zohar: 1.30 pm  
Asar: 5.15 pm  
Maghrib: 6.50 pm  
Isha: 8.15 pm  
**SUNSET TODAY 6.37 PM**  
**SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.48 AM**  
**MOONRISE TODAY 9.19 AM**  
**MOONSET TOMORROW 9.32 PM**

**COUNTER POINT**

Not medical reports, we have to check their bank statements before starting treatment!

**IN BRIEF**  
105-yr-old shows how to fight virus

**Kurnool:** At a time when youngsters are dreading the very word Coronavirus, here is a 105-year-old woman who set a classic example of a true-blue warrior while conquering Covid-19 at the Covid Hospital here. She had comorbidities like blood pressure and blood glucose impairment, said G Narendranath Reddy, KGGH Superintendent. She fought valiantly and showed exemplary determination to beat the odds and survive, he said.

## 1 killed in boiler blast at Nandyal

**Kurnool:** One person died and two others were injured in a boiler blast at SPY Reddy Agro Industries in Nandyal. The accident occurred in a captive power plant within the factory when maintenance works were being carried out on Wednesday. The worker succumbed at Government General Hospital on Thursday. A spokesman said it was preparing for an NGT visit and was engaged in hydraulic stress testing of the boiler and its parts.

■ **Page 3: Anaparthi MLA tests positive for Covid-19**  
■ **Page 3: Tirumala priest infected by Corona succumbs**



## NATION | 4

**CBI registers case to probe Sushant's death**



## WORLD | 5

**Don's FB post of kids immune to Covid deleted**

## SPORTS | 6

**Sara surges into Palermo quarters**



# Defence ministry pulls out Chinese incursion report

PAWAN BALI | DC  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 6

The defence ministry on Thursday pulled down a document from its website which had for the first time officially acknowledged that Chinese troops had “transgressed” in at least three places in Ladakh and that the situation in the area due to “aggression by China” is “sensitive” with the stand-off likely to be “prolonged”. There was no official word on why the document, which was uploaded on Tuesday, was removed after two days.

This comes when the fourth and fifth round of Corps Commanders talks between India and China seem to have been unable to achieve a breakthrough on further disengagement in Pangong Tso and other friction areas. The government is yet to come out with a formal statement on the outcome of the fifth meeting. China has refused to move its troops out of the Fingers area in Pangong Tso and the Depsang-Daulat Beg Oldi

● **CHINA REFUSED** to move its troops out of the Fingers area in Pangong Tso and the Depsang-Daulat Beg Oldi sector.

sector. The defence ministry document had said that Chinese aggression had been increasing along the Line of Actual Control and more particularly in Galwan Valley since May 5. “The Chinese side transgressed in the areas of Kugrang Nala, Gogra and north bank of Pangong Tso lake on 17-18 May, 2020,” it said.

While engagement and dialogue at the military and diplomatic level is continuing, “the present standoff is likely to be prolonged,” it said. “The situation in Eastern Ladakh arising from unilateral aggression by China continues to be sensitive and requires close monitoring and prompt action based on evolving situation,” it added.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi continued with his attack on Modi government over its handling of

situation with China in Ladakh sector. “Denying China is in our territory and removing documents from websites won’t change the facts,” tweeted Mr Gandhi.

According to sources, China has built up its forces not only in Ladakh but all along the LAC. Army Chief Gen Manoj Mukund Naravane is on a two day visit to Tezpur-based 4 Corps to review the security situation along the China border in North-East.

The Chinese are occupying the Finger 5 area in the Pangong Tso and are still continuing to hold the ridges in the Finger 4 area. During the initial phase of disengagement, Chinese troops had vacated the banks of the lake in Finger 4 on July 9 and returned to Finger 5. Chinese troops still have to vacate the area between Finger 5 and Finger 8, which India claims is its territory. Satellite images have shown huge build-up by Chinese at Pangong Tso with permanent structures.

# RBI lets people to restructure loans, ends moratorium

FALAKNAAZ SYED | FC  
MUMBAI, AUG. 6

Even as the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) disappointed borrowers by not extending the loan moratorium, it has announced a one-time restructuring of loans taken by individuals, corporates and small businesses.

In his Monetary Policy statement on Thursday, RBI governor Shaktikanta Das said, “The disruptions caused by Covid-19 have led to heightened financial stress for borrowers across the board... Accordingly, it has been decided to provide a window to enable lenders to implement a resolution plan with respect to eligible corporate exposures as well as personal loans.”

According to RBI, personal loans mean credit facility extended to individuals, which include consumer credit, education loan, loans given for

creation or enhancement of immovable assets (housing loans) and loans given for investment in financial assets such as shares, debentures.

The resolution of personal loans will be available only to those borrowers who were repaying their loans regularly as on March 1. Eligible borrowers’ accounts will continue to be classified as standard till the date of invocation of resolution under this framework.

The borrowers should choose this option before December 31, 2020 and the resolution must be implemented within 90 days.

“The resolution plans may inter alia include re-scheduling of payments, conversion of any interest accrued, or to be accrued, into another credit facility, or, granting of moratorium, based on an assessment of income of the borrower, subject to a maximum of two years.”

# BJP sarpanch shot, cadre quitting party

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC  
SRINAGAR, AUG. 6

The killing of a village head associated with the BJP in southern Kulgam by suspected militants on Thursday triggered a new wave of resignations by party activists across the Kashmir Valley.

Over half a dozen BJP workers took to social media platforms to say they were dissociating from the party. Some even sought forgiveness from the militants. The police said at about 9.30 am militants shot and critically wounded BJP sarpanch Sajad Ahmad Khanday in Vesoo village of Qazigund area in Kulgam. “He was evacuated to Anantnag’s Government Medical College Hospital, but succumbed,” the police said.

The medical superintendent, Dr Muhammad Iqbal Sofi, said Khanday was brought dead to the hospital.

The police said the slain sarpanch feared a threat to his life and was given

## MANOJ SINHA IS J&K’S NEW LT. GOVERNOR

DC CORRESPONDENT  
with agency inputs  
NEW DELHI/SRINAGAR, AUG. 6

The Centre appointed former minister of state for railways Manoj Sinha as Jammu and Kashmir’s new lieutenant-governor, replacing G.C. Murmu. This is believed to have been done to send a clear signal that it wants to restart the J&K political process. Sinha reached Srinagar on Thursday by a state plane and is likely to be administered the oath of office on Friday.

accommodation in a “secure camp” for Kashmiri Pandit migrants at Vesoo, “but today he went to his (native) house without informing the police”.



Relatives grieve for their loved ones who were killed in a fire at the Shrey Hospital in Ahmedabad, outside the mortuary of the Civil Hospital. — AFP

# 8 Covid patients killed in fire inside Gujarat hospital ICU

**Ahmedabad, Aug. 6:** Eight Coronavirus patients died in a fire inside the ICU ward of the privately run Shrey Hospital in Navrangpur, Ahmedabad, at 3 am on Thursday. A hospital para-medical staff member was injured. The ICU is located on the top floor of the four-storey hospital building.

“41 other Covid-19 patients who were in the general ward on the lower floors were rescued and shifted to another hospi-

tal,” said Rajiv Kumar Gupta, an IAS officer.

Shrey Hospital was sealed for investigation, said Gupta, who has been deputed in Ahmedabad as an officer on special duty. Preliminary investigation showed that the fire was caused by a short circuit, he said.

Municipal commissioner Mukesh Kumar said, “We have learned that an electric short circuit led to a blast. The blaze spread in the ward within minutes.”

According to Chirag

Patel, an attendant who saved the lives of three elderly patients, there were 11 patients on the fourth floor when the fire broke out.

Deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel said that another attendant received 25 to 30 per cent burns injuries while trying to save the patients.

Additional commissioner of police R.V. Asari told reporters that Bharat Mahant, a trustee of the hospital, was being questioned. — PTI

## Port city has suffered a series of accidents

## SAFETY IGNORED

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC  
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 6

Failure to update the mandatory “off-site emergency plan” is said to be one of the prime reasons for a series of industrial mishaps in the state, especially in Visakhapatnam.

As per the norms of Manufacture, Storage and Import of Hazardous Chemicals (MSIHC) Rules of 1989, every district in the state must have an off-site emergency plan with details of the hazardous industries present in the district, storage capacity of hazardous chemicals like styrene or ammonia, names of personnel handling storage of such substances, their contact numbers,

● **THOUGH AP State Disaster Management Authority** has collected details of all hazardous industrial units and carried out simulations at Guntur in 2018, there has been no further follow and updating of data.

● **UNION MINISTRY** of Environment and Forests and Petroleum, and Explosives Safety Organisation have a major role to play in ensuring industrial safety.

possible chances of major accidents and their on-site and off-site imp-acts, and details of rescue and relief measures to be taken up.

Every district is to have a ‘District Crisis Group’ with collector as its chairperson while deputy chief inspector of factories will be the member convenor, the other members being district-level officials from stakeholder departments like APPCB, fire, boilers, industries, revenue and

others. Though it is mandatory for the DCG to meet once in three months or at least once in a calendar year to take stock of developments in dealing with hazardous industries, such meetings hardly take place, with concerned officials preoccupied with their day-to-day activities. In case of Visakhapatnam, its “off-site emergency plan” was updated in 2007. In the last 13 years, several new hazardous

11, showing an average rise of 4.5 per cent a day.

Compared to India, the Coronavirus cases have doubled globally in 41 days — from 95 lakh cases on June 26 to 1.9 crore on August 6. The number of Covid-19 patients increased at the rate of 2.43 per cent in this period. On Wednesday, 2,71,325 cases were recorded globally. Of this, India’s contribution was 56,626 or 20 per cent.

The spread of infection, however, appears to have slowed down in most parts of the world. The top three countries in terms of caseload — the United States, Brazil and India — are contributing 61 per cent of new cases, while the rest of 210 countries or territories reporting the rest.

The saving grace is the falling death rate. Data available on worldometers.info shows that the death rate is gradually declining in spite of a steady rise in infections.

In the first phase when

the Covid-19 disease hit China, the death rate was at 41 per cent. The recoveries improved and death rate declined after China imposed a strict lockdown and controlled the spread.

The global death rate rose to 21 per cent when the Covid-19 pandemic reached the shores of an unprepared Europe. Relatively better understanding of the disease and treatment protocols brought down the death rate to 5.52 per cent. The global recovery rate is over 94 per cent.

As per official numbers, the death rate in India is one of the lowest at 2.09 per cent — occupying 108th place in a list that ranks countries for Coronavirus cases in descending order.

Countries like Yemen, France, the UK, Italy, Belgium, Hungary, the Netherlands, Mexico, which bore brunt of the deadly disease in the initial days had reported over 10 per cent death rate.

# Centre washes its hands off capital

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 6

Union Home Ministry has informed the High Court here on Thursday that the capital city of Andhra Pradesh is to be decided by the state government and the Centre has no role in it.

In a case between the petitioner Potluri Srinivasa Rao and respondents, Union of India and others, filed in 2018, Under-Secretary in the Union Home Ministry Lalita T. Hedao filed a counter affidavit in the AP High Court.

The counter affidavit mentioned that under Section 6 of AP Reorganisation Act, 2014, the Union Government had constituted an expert committee on March 28, 2014 under the chairmanship of K.C. Sivaramakrishnan to study alternatives for a new capital for the state of Andhra Pradesh.

The panel submitted its report on August 30 of the same year, which was sent to AP government two days later on September 1. The affidavit mentioned that the state government issued an order dated April 23, 2015 notifying the capital city to be named as ‘Amaravati’. It further said that, ‘The capital city of a State is decided by the

● **THE COUNTER** affidavit mentioned that under Section 6 of AP Reorganisation Act, 2014, the Union Government had constituted an expert committee on March 28, 2014 under the chairmanship of K.C. Sivaramakrishnan to study alternatives for a new capital for the state of Andhra Pradesh.

respective state government. Central government has no role in it.”

The affidavit also mentioned that the AP government through Andhra Pradesh Decentralisation and Inclusive Development of All Regions Act, 2020 which was published in the state gazette notification on 31/07/2020, has provided that there shall be three seats of governance in the state and they are to be called as capitals. Accordingly, Amaravati Metropolitan Region Development Area to be called as ‘Legislative Capital’, Visakhapatnam Metropolitan Region Development Area to be called as ‘Executive Capital’ and Kurnool Urban Development Area to be called as ‘Judicial Capital.’

■ **Page 3: Affidavit says 100% central funding**

## COLLEGES SET TO REOPEN FROM OCTOBER 15

MD ILYAS | DC  
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 6

After a near-seven months gap, colleges across the State will reopen on October 15.

Announcing this, Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy also stated that all Common Entrance Tests (CETs) would be conducted in September.

At a review meeting on higher education policy in the State, at Tadepalli on Thursday, he said that recruitment of assistant professors in universities to fill vacant posts would also commence shortly.

■ **Page 3: Human errors behind recent mishaps**

■ **Page 3: CM wants to boost enrollment ratio**



# DECCAN Chronicle

7 AUGUST 2020

## Did PM just discredit India's freedom fight?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has exhorted his fellow citizens to treat August 5 on a par with August 15, India's Independence Day. The call, made after conducting the *bhoomi puja* of the Ram temple at Ayodhya on Wednesday, August 5, defies logic and negates history. Ram's devotees, Mr Modi included, have every right to be joyous when their lord, venerated as *Maryada Purushottam*, or the epitome of honour, gets a proper abode; none has a reason to quarrel with them either. But drawing an impossible parallel with Indian Independence movement and the one for the temple has its risks. For one, the freedom movement was a unifier in itself — Indians of all hues, irrespective of their religion, caste, language, sex, race and region were part of it. Countless people willingly sacrificed their lives for the cause, or suffered in silence, or became martyrs or spent their lives in villages changing their faces. It was a movement to not only liberate this nation from the yoke of foreign rule but also an attempt to unshackle itself from the very many forms of bondages that stopped its citizens from living their lives to the full. And the best product of the movement was the Constitution of India — which promised every Indian citizen justice.

**Equally incomprehensible is the silence or subservience of the opposition, save of the Left, to the politicisation of an essentially religious ceremony. None seems to have an issue with the Prime Minister, accompanied by the chief minister of a state, laying the foundation stone of a place of worship of one religion.**

struction of the temple. Mr Modi's call for seeing the temple as a symbol of India's unity would have better acceptance had he mentioned those innocent victims and begged their pardon. Perhaps, it would have been a true tribute to Lord Ram.

Equally incomprehensible is the silence or subservience of the opposition, save of the Left, to the politicisation of an essentially religious ceremony. None seems to have an issue with the Prime Minister, accompanied by the chief minister of a state, laying the foundation stone of a place of worship of one religion. The Congress, as it has always been on the issue, is a confused lot, speaking in many voices. The Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party expressed no opinion, nor the DMK of Tamil Nadu. Kerala's CPI(M) chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan, however, made two points. One, India's secularist ideals would not have suffered this jolt had the Congress chosen to hold on to them. Two, our agenda must be to contain Covid-19 which has already affected 19 lakh people, and then bring succour to the people the pandemic has reduced to penury. That's some semblance of political sanity and sagacity, if you will.

## In Beirut, avoidable tragedy

A devastating instance of sheer human incompetence led to the ripping apart of a swath of the Lebanese capital Beirut, destroying its port and two giant grain silos, killing at least 135 people, besides injuring 5,000 and leaving three lakh people homeless while affecting the lives of 7.5 lakh citizens and causing an estimated \$3 billion in damage. Had the leaders of the judicial or executive branches of the tiny West Asian nation been able to sort out the storage of 2,750 tons of ammonium nitrate, confiscated from a financially distressed Russian cargo ship, rather than leave it lying in a port hangar for close to seven years, an explosion powerful enough to record 3.3 on the Richter scale and reverberate miles away in Cyprus would not have taken place.

It might have suited the leaders of Lebanon to have been in a position to blame it on saboteurs, terrorists, aggressors or conquerors, of whom the country, once proud of its label of 'Switzerland of the East', has seen aplenty in its history. It appears, prima facie, that an innocent enough spark from a welding torch set off stored fireworks, which in turn ignited the chemical that would have been far more useful as a base for fertiliser for a country that virtually imports all its food needs. A government, already in debt to the tune of 165 per cent of GDP, has so far offered a piffling \$66 million as relief even as it keeps its port officials under home arrest.

The scale of indecisiveness and lack of clarity on what to do with a chemical that has at least half the explosive power of TNT is risible. The human tragedy caused by such apathy, particularly when it comes to handling the complexity of man's ingenuity in making substances that can blow mankind to pieces, is shockingly revealing of the fecklessness of politicians who aspire for power but have little understanding of their responsibilities in safeguarding people. To them, investment in human safety seems the least priority.

### DECCAN CHRONICLE

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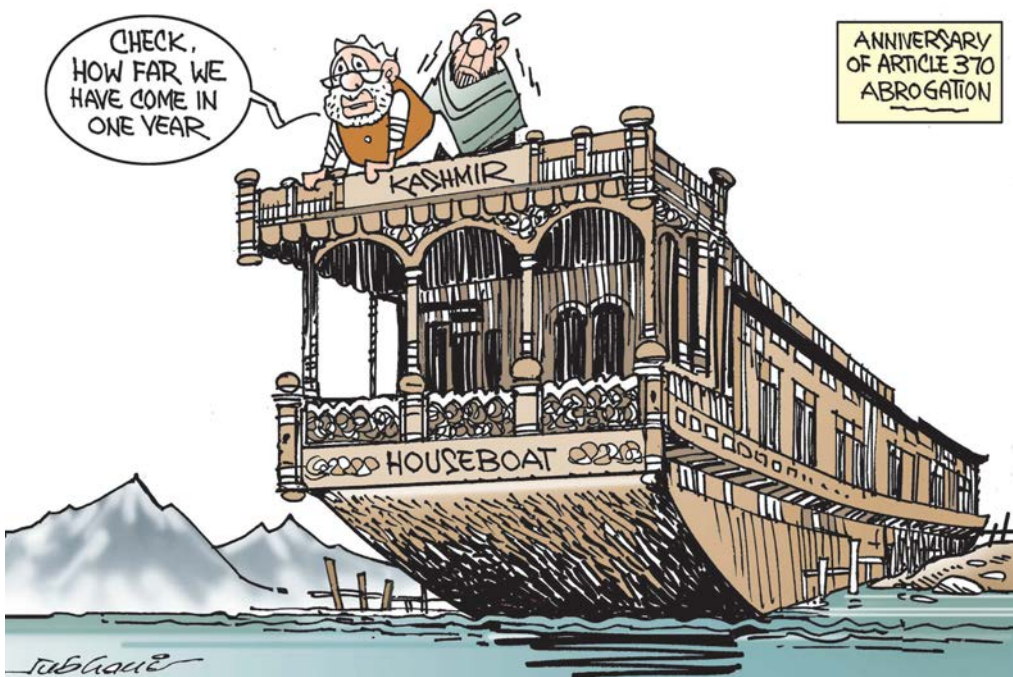
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Subhani



## Pandemic on rise: More questions than answers



Patralekha Chatterjee

Dev 360

Is the coronavirus seeping into every faultline in this country? The honest answer is: We don't know.

Six months into the pandemic, there are more questions than answers about the virus. No one really knows how many Indians have been infected by the new coronavirus, nor how many have died. Perhaps we will never know because so many are asymptomatic and there are cracks in our death registration systems.

This week, a young copywriter told me that his father had died of Covid-19 but the family had managed to persuade the hospital authorities into changing the cause of death into something else because they wished the body to be cremated traditionally.

Meanwhile, India's official Covid-19 tally has crossed the 19-lakh mark; and the death toll is close to 40,000. Currently, India has the largest number of confirmed Covid-19 cases in Asia and the third highest number of confirmed cases in the world, after the United States and Brazil.

There are masses of data swirling around.

According to government data, a cumulative total of 2,14,84,402 samples had been tested till August 4. At 2.10 per cent, India's Covid-19 case fatality rate since the first lockdown is low compared to the global average; 50 per cent of deaths have happened in the age group of 60 and above; 37 per cent deaths belong to the 45-60 age group; 11 per cent deaths belong to the 26-44 years age group; while 68 per cent of people who died were men and 32 per cent were women.

The government says 28 states/Union territories show a Covid positivity rate below 10 per cent, and this indicates that the testing strategy

is on the right track.

But the numbers we have don't tell the whole story.

Dr Hemant Shewade, a Bengaluru-based community medicine expert tracking the discourse around Covid-19 data in India points out that nationally, only 86 per cent deaths are captured by the civil registration system and only 22 per cent are medically certified for cause of death.

The Medical Certification of Cause of Death is not enforced in every state with equal efficiency. So far, it has been implemented only in certain hospitals and mostly in urban areas. This can give a very skewed picture even now, when there is a parallel system of Covid-19 death reporting (which are compiled by the district administration and shared with the state government and then with the Centre).

"There is a high possibility of the official Covid death figures coming from Covid-designated hospitals where only confirmed Covid cases, those suspected of having Covid and who reach the Covid hospital in an extreme condition are factored in," says Dr Shewade.

Not all states are equally equipped in terms of health and diagnostic infrastructure and human resources. Where testing is very low, and where medical certification of cause of death is low, it is likely that there will be a gross under-estimation of Covid-19 deaths. For example, Bihar, which has a population of over 120 million, has the lowest testing rate in the country, a mere four tests per 1,000 persons. This means a large number of cases may be going undetected.

There are other gaps in the data which impede our ability to understand the pandemic's trajectory. The data on Covid-19 tests in India doesn't make clear the distinc-

tion between the number of samples being tested and the number of people tested. There is also no official disaggregated data for every state on the RT-PCR tests (gold standard of coronavirus testing) and rapid antigen tests, says Dr Mohak Gupta, now part of the iCART Covid-19 research team and creator of www.coviddtoday.in, an open source project tracking India's state-wise progress against the Covid-19 epidemic.

Only a few states like Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Delhi share this information publicly but there are no updated national figures. We don't know how many among those who have antigen tests go for a follow-up RT-PCR test and what the results are. We also don't have statewide gender-disaggregated data on Covid deaths in any official portal nor the breakup between deaths in rural areas and those in urban areas. Dr Gupta points out that there is scant contact tracing data so we don't have a granular picture of how and where the virus is spreading, and stresses the need for real-time hospitalisation data and influenza-like illness (ILI) surveillance data in the public domain.

Then there is fear, which prevents insiders from coming forward to tell the truth.

"Unfortunately, there is no law in force that encourages potential whistleblowers in the public sector to bring complaints of corruption and wrongdoing to the attention of the competent authorities. Nor is there any mechanism to protect a whistleblower from reprisals for pointing the finger at wrongdoing. An available recourse is to make complaints to the lokayuktas. Hardly any parent law of such bodies empowers them to protect whistle-

blowers. The only remaining option is to move the courts directly, which few would want to do given the length of time it takes to get a conviction," says Venkatesh Nayak, programme head of the Access to Information Programme of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative. As for whistleblowing in the private sector, the extremely limited provisions in the 2013 Companies Act or the Limited Liability Partnerships Act don't inspire much confidence in potential whistleblowers, says Mr Nayak.

There is also no mention of whistleblower provisions in the laws governing societies and trusts, which are of colonial vintage. "It comes as no surprise that doctors and nurses working in entities regulated by any of these laws continue to suffer in silence or at the most make complaints through official channels at considerable risk to themselves and their careers. The only remaining option is to go on mass strike, as is now happening in Zimbabwe. However, the government will clamp down on such legitimate protests by invoking the Essential Services Maintenance Act or draconian provisions of the Disaster Management Act," he adds.

Successive governments have pushed the six-year-old Whistleblowers Protection Act under the carpet without bringing it into force despite repeated reminders from civil society and the media.

Telling the truth has never been easy. However, there are those who persist. As Mr Nayak points out, despite the restrictions imposed by the Covid-related lockdowns, citizens are using the Right to Information Act to demand details of action by governments to tackle the epidemic. But delays and refusals are common as are attacks on RTI activists.

*The writer focuses on development issues in India and emerging economies. She can be reached at patralekha.chatterjee@gmail.com.*

### LETTERS

#### WHITHER CONGRESS?

It seems that the grand old party has lost its voice amidst the chants of Jai Shri Ram. The BJP has every right to celebrate the ground-breaking ceremony of Ram temple construction in Ayodhya, as it's there in their election manifesto. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has expectedly lost no time in owning the success. He even stretched imagination to that far that he compared the struggle for Independence. The fumbling of the Congress is quite evident here. Instead of keeping mum, it has joined forces with the BJP helplessly.

**Dr D.V.G. Sankararao**  
*Vizianagaram*

PM Narendra Modi launched the works for the construction of Ram temple by launching the ground-breaking ceremony in Ayodhya, an historic occasion for which every Indian must be proud to be part of. But to make India Ram Rajya every one must live the social and ethical ideals of Lord Rama i.e., equal justice, brotherhood and unity.

**Kottala Venkataramudu**  
*Anantapur*

#### SCHOOL REOPENING

AP is enthusiastic in reopening schools, but schools future depends on the Covid-19 pandemic which is ravaging the state as also the country. The government's utmost duty must be to contain its spread than reopening schools or any other centres or institutes.

**D. Ravikumar**  
*Visakhapatnam*

#### 50 YEARS AGO IN

### DECCAN Chronicle

#### Govt. rapped for not getting Soviet maps corrected

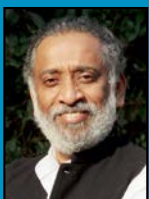
NEW DELHI, August 6

The Rajya Sabha today witnessed noisy scenes followed by a walk-out by members belonging to Opposition Congress, Swatantra the Jana Sangh and the Praja Socialist Parties.

It was in protest against the Government's failure to check what they described as "Soviet Union's continued cartographic aggression on India."

Drawing attention to the recent edition of the great Soviet Encyclopedia containing a political map of Asia showing large chunks of Indian territory as Chinese, the members charged that the Soviet Union has been printing such maps.

Dilip Cherian



Dilli Ka Babu

## Officer sent to PMO won laurels in TN

Any appointment in the all-powerful Prime Minister's Office (PMO) is viewed with great interest. So, when P. Amudha, who is a 1994 batch IAS officer of Tamil Nadu cadre, was appointed to the PMO as joint secretary, on a lateral shift basis, for the remainder of her five-year central deputation period, observers are speculating about her talent that can meet the high standards of the PMO. Before this appointment, Amudha was serving as a professor at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration in Mussoorie.

Interestingly, minutes after the news of her appointment emerged Tamil Nadu chief minister E. Palaniswami congratulated the IAS officer in a tweet and said that she had earned the goodwill of the state government as well as the

affection of the people through her honesty and efficiency. Amudha has earned her reputation as an effective field officer and ability to take swift decisions. Her peers recall her work during the Chennai floods in 2015 when she was special officer for monsoon relief in the state. It's these qualities that may have impressed the PMO to reel her in for what could be the most rewarding and challenging assignments for an IAS officer.

#### WHO WILL BE NEW RBI DEPUTY GOVERNOR?

A search committee headed by Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba will interview candidates for the post of deputy governor of the Reserve Bank of India on August 7, according to sources. This was meant to be held on July 23 but was put off without any explanation. The post

had fallen vacant after senior-most deputy governor N.S. Vishwanathan demitted office three months before the end of his tenure in March due to health reasons.

Besides Gauba, the committee includes RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das, financial services secretary Debasish Panda and two independent members.

The selected name from the interview will be sent to the appointments committee of the Cabinet headed by the Prime Minister for final approval. Sources say that the panel has shortlisted eight candidates for the posts.

The RBI Act mandates that the central bank should have four deputy governors — two from within the ranks, one commercial banker and another an economist to head the monetary policy depart-

ment. At present, the RBI has three deputy governors — B.P. Kanungo, M.K. Jain and Michael Debabrata Patra.

#### HALT OR GO TO J&K CADRE CHANGE?

The Centre stopped inducting new officers in the J&K cadre of the All India Services after the reorganisation of Jammu & Kashmir into two Union territories, J&K and Ladakh, in August last year. The process was recently reinitiated, but sources say, it has been put on hold again after receiving feedback from officers that it would lead to confusion.

The J&K cadre of IAS, IPS and IOFS officers was to be merged into the AGMUT cadre. However, according to the regulations, officers already serving in the J&K cadre at the time would continue in

the existing cadre. The cadre controlling authority for AGMUT is the ministry of home affairs while the other cadres are controlled by the department of personnel and training (DoPT).

Apparently, some officers approached the Centre saying that two officers of the same batch would end up under different controlling authorities which would lead to "confusion" and "create differences" between the officers. Seeing the resistance from the babus, the Centre has decided, for now, not to proceed with the proposed cadre merger. Some officers believe that any key decision on the merger will likely happen only after August 15.

*Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@Twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect.*



## SHORT TAKES

## TTD priest succumbs to virus

**Nellore:** A 45-year-old TTD priest succumbed to Covid-19 on Thursday while undergoing treatment at the Sri Venkateswara Institute of Medical Sciences in Tirupati. The priest, who also suffered from diabetes and obesity, was admitted to the ICU following shortness of breath on August 2. His condition deteriorated on Thursday evening after his shortness of breath got aggravated. He was put on CPR but died around 4 pm.

## Anaparthi MLA tests Covid +ve

**Kakinada:** Anaparthi MLA, Sathi Suryanarayana Reddy, was pronounced Covid-19 positive and sent into home isolation for 15 days. He released a video on Thursday in which he asks people not to worry about his health as he would take all precautions and get treatment. He said that many people are Covid-19 positive and he went to them to give courage and contracted it himself.

## 3 kids die in locked car

**Vijayawada:** Three children died due to asphyxiation in Remalle village of Bapulapadu mandal in Krishna district after they got stuck in a car on Thursday. The victims were identified as Hafsana, Yasmin and Suhana Parveen, all aged six years. Veeravalli SI I. Chantibabu said that the parents of the three children were working in Mohan Spintex in the village. The children, while playing in the open place in the company quarters, opened the door of the car and got into it. The car doors got locked and the children's cries for help did not reach anyone.

## Naidu used Amaravati: YSRC Party alleges Naidu did not develop plott promised to Amaravati farmers

MD ILYAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 6

Former minister and YSR Congress MLA, Kolu Parthasarathy, welcomed the clarification of the BJP-led union government about no role of the centre in the selection of capital in Andhra Pradesh. Alleging that opposition leader, N Chandrababu Naidu, deceived the public on the Amaravati issue, Parthasarathy claimed that Naidu is interested in protecting the Amaravati lands for real estate purposes.

Addressing a press meet here on Thursday, Parthasarathy refuted TD claims about spending ₹52,000 crore on Amaravati and clarified that the then government called tenders for ₹52,000 crore to get commissions before the 2019 elections. He alleged that TDP leaders collected ₹5,000 crore commissions in those tenders and Naidu changed Amaravati into a real estate business.

Claiming that Naidu allotted lands to Singapore firms and private companies free of cost and at nominal prices but fixed ₹2 crore to ₹4 crore per acre for government institutions, Parthasarathy said this shows his vision of development of private companies. He alleged that Naidu did not develop a single plot which was promised to Amaravati farmers in lieu of offering farmlands under the land pooling scheme. Stating that the YSRC government did not shift the capital from Amaravati as it would continue as legislative capital and that the government will develop Amaravati accordingly, Parthasarathy said that the TD government ruined Krishna and Guntur districts, by bringing up the 'green zone' and stalling development in the region to benefit the real estate agents of Amaravati.

## Let Naidu quit first, says Rama Subba Reddy

DC CORRESPONDENT KADAPA, AUG. 6

YSRC leader and former minister Ponnareddy Rama Subba Reddy has demanded that TD president Chandrababu Naidu, who is demanding a referendum on Amaravati, must resign first, along with his party MLAs and MPs, and get re-elected if they want to prove that people of the state want Amaravati as the capital.



Municipal Administration and Urban Development Minister Botsa Satyanarayana addresses a meeting at YSRC office in Visakhapatnam on Thursday.

— K. MURALI KRISHNA

## Naidu is selfish leader: Botsa

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, AUG. 6

Minister for municipal administration and urban development Botsa Satyanarayana on Thursday alleged that TD chief Chandrababu Naidu was a selfish leader and never cared for the people's interests.

Ridiculing his challenge to the YSRC to hold elections afresh to seek mandate on the three capital issue, the minister said Naidu violated all the laws to gratify his ambitions and those of his coterie.

"Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy wants to develop every region in the State, but Naidu is focusing only on Amaravati for his personal gains and that of one particular community," Botsa said and reiterated the Jagan government's commitment to develop Amaravati.

"We have declared in the Assembly that Amaravati would be developed. There is no going back on that word."

The Sivaramakrishnan Committee was constituted by the Centre but its recommendations were

not emulated by the Naidu government. "People of Vizag want development of their region, so do the people of Vijayawada. The development of the entire state is the goal of the government, not just the 29 villages of Amaravati," Botsa maintained.

He wondered why there was nothing on the ground if Naidu's claim of spending ₹5,000 crore for the capital was true.

The minister said those who wanted to join the YSRCP were welcome as far as they obeyed the party rules.

## TD objects to Centre's affidavit supporting YSRC

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 6

Opposition Telugu Desam has objected to centre's affidavit filed in Andhra Pradesh High Court stating that the Union government has no role in deciding on the capital of AP, as such a decision lies within the exclusive domain of the state government.

Addressing a press conference on Thursday, former TD MLA Bonda Umamaheswara Rao asserted that the centre does have a role since Amaravati was selected as capital based only on the Sivaramakrishnan Committee recommendations made under provisions of

the AP Reorganisation Act 2014. He pointed out that Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself had laid the foundation stone for Amaravati and at the time promised all support to develop Amaravati as a vibrant capital that would surpass even Delhi in grandeur and scale. He said the AP High Court too was established in Amaravati as per the Presidential Order issued in consultation with the Supreme Court. The then Chief Justice of India arrived and inaugurated the High Court in Amaravati.

Umamaheswara Rao said the centre had resolved the long-pending

Kashmir and Ladakh issues by intervening into the affairs of that state. The national leaders should not forget the fact that Amaravati was selected because it is a centrally located place located between Srikakulam and Anantapur at the two ends of the state. He demanded that the centre intervene into the Amaravati issue as the state government is playing a vicious "three cards' game" in the matter.

He alleged that having three capitals is a deep-rooted conspiracy of YSRC to grab lands and properties in Visakhapatnam and surrounding areas.

## AFFIDAVIT SAYS 100% CENTRAL FUNDING

From Page 1

The affidavit also mentioned several other issues including 100% funding from the Centre for execution of Polavaram irrigation project.

However, Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council Yanamala Ramakrishnu in a statement released here on Thursday called for Centre's intervention under Article 355 of Indian Constitution by saying that the Centre could intervene in state affairs in case of an external aggression and internal disturbance and also in case the state failed to be administered in compliance with provisions of the Constitution.

He stated the controversy dealing with setting up three capitals, needs to be resolved by the President, the Centre or the judiciary.

Referring to BJP's promise to come to the rescue of affected farmers due to relocation of executive capital from Amaravati to Visakhapatnam, the senior TD legislator said that the Centre was having exceptional powers to address the issue. However, he opined that ultimately the people would decide on the state's move to set up three capitals in the state.

## PRO-AMARAVATI WOMEN STAND UP AGAINST BJP

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 6

The pro-Amaravati women, upinarms over BJP support to the YSRC government on the three capitals, staged an innovative protest with nooses in Amaravati on Thursday.

Their protest at Thullur alleged the collusion of YSRC and BJP in killing of Amaravati. The women wore the nooses around their necks and warned that if the government fails to continue with Amaravati as the only capital of the state then they would commit suicide.

## YSRC ACTIVISTS: DON'T LET GANTA INTO PARTY

V.K.L. GAYATRI | DC VISAKHAPATNAM, AUG. 6

Atmosphere in the Bheemli assembly constituency, has got charged up suddenly after reports that TD leader and former minister Ganta Srinivasa Rao is preparing the ground for joining the ruling YSR Congress.

Ganta and the present Bheemli MLA and minister M. Srinivasa Rao are known to be at loggerheads. Under the circumstances, many YSRC activists and followers of Srinivasa Rao put up banners, formed human chains and staged dharnas across the Bheemli constituency opposing the entry of former TD minister into the party.

## Human errors behind recent mishaps in Vizag

From Page 1

Joint inspector of factories, Visakhapatnam, J. Siva Sankar Reddy said, "The recent mishaps in some industrial units are due to human error. The off-site emergency plan in Visakhapatnam district was last updated in 2007. We are trying to collect information pertaining to all industrial units with regard to hazardous substances they handle and other safety aspects."

The state government has recently issued G.O. No. 156 for taking up a special drive to inspect industrial units with regard to their compliance with safety and environmental norms. The drive would cover all hazardous chemical industries under MSIHC Rules, 1989; those

which store, manufacture or handle hazardous materials/chemicals; and those that handle explosive substances, apart from all red category industries. Accordingly, officials from all departments concerned have been directed to start inspecting targeted industrial units all over the state.

Sources from industry say over enthusiasm within governments of the day to attract new investors towards set up industrial units and encourage existing units by liberalising all existing norms is one of the major causes for occurrence of industrial mishaps in the state. This is because there is no concurrent inspection of compliance with safety norms, conduct of mock drills and other practices.

## HC: No coercive steps against pvt schools

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, AUG. 6

The Andhra Pradesh High Court has asked the State government not to use coercive methods against private schools in connection with the collection of fees.

A writ was filed by K. Tulasi Vishnu Prasad on behalf of Andhra Pradesh Private Un-Aided Schools' Managements' Association seeking permission to collect fee arrears of 2019-2020 academic year and fee for new admissions.

Vishnu Prasad said the Association had submitted several representations to the government for collecting arrears and fees but there has been no response.

Unfortunately, the Government is ignoring the fact that schools are functioning fully in online mode and most of the private

school teachers were working full-time from June and were engaged in taking online classes. He said that online education was expensive and involved additional expenditure, which was observed by many high courts in various writ petitions.

He said the writ was filed as Fee Regulatory Commission and the Departmental Officers of Education Department have been regularly issuing press statements and circulars restraining educational institutions from collecting fees from the parents and also threatening with penal action.

Pending disposal of the writ petition, the High Court passed interim orders restraining the state government and other respondents from taking any coercive steps against educational institutions.

## AP sees single day spike of 10,328 new Corona cases

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 6

After a brief lull in surge of Coronavirus infections, AP ndhra Pradesh registered single day spike of 10,328 new Covid-19 cases, raising the overall tally to 10,328, apart from 72 deaths due to the virus, taking the death toll to 1,753 in the last 24 hours.

The state health department, in its Covid-19 bulletin issued here on

Thursday, stated that out of 63,686 samples tested during the last 24 hours, 10,328 patients have been found to be infected with Coronavirus. The state government has so far tested 22,99,332 samples in all.

Of them, 1,96,789 patients have been infected with the virus, while 1,12,870 have been discharged after recovery. 82,166 persons are undergoing treatment for the infection in various hospitals across the state.



**SOUTH CENTRAL RAILWAY**  
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Details of the Tender Notices of S.C Railway can be seen on our website : [www.scr.indianrailways.gov.in](#)

**E-Tender Notice No. 21-2020 Dt. 05.08.2020**  
Senior Divisional Engineer / Coordination / Guntakal acting for and on behalf of The President of India, invites E-Tenders for the following works. Closing date & Time : 01.09.2020 at 15:00 hrs

**S.No.: 1, Tender No.: Engg-GTL-South-0893, Description of work:** Guntakal Division - RU-GTL & NDL-YA Section- Name of the work: 1) Hiring of One multi-Utility vehicle Non AC like Tata Sumo / Qualis / Trax / Bolero of equivalent for the period of two year for the use of ADEN/HX. 2) Hiring of Two Road vehicles / trucks of capacity of 4.5 tonnes for the period of two year in connection with the maintenance of track works under SSE / P. Way / HK and JMDG sections. 3) Hiring of Two Pickup trucks of 1 tonne capacity for the period of two years for SSE / P. Way / YA (In-charge) and JE / P. Way / NOSM (Total five vehicles). **Advertised Value in Rs. :** 72.25,104.96 ps. **Earnest money Deposit in Rs.:** 144500.00.

**S.No.: 2, Tender No.: Engg-GTL-South-0894, Description of work:** Guntakal Division - RU-GTL & GDR-RU Section- Name of the work: 1) Hiring of Two multi-Utility vehicle Non AC like Tata Sumo / Qualis / Trax / Bolero of equivalent for the period of two year for the use of ADEN/RU& ADEN/RJP. 2) Hiring of Two Road vehicles / trucks of capacity of 4.5 tonnes for the period of two year in connection with the maintenance of track works under SSE / P. Way / KOU and NRE sections. 3) Hiring of Two Pickup trucks of 1 tonne capacity for the period of two years for SSE / P. Way / KOU (In-charge) and SSE / P. Way / VKI (In-charge) (Total Six vehicles). **Advertised Value in Rs. :** 81.61,104.96 ps. **Earnest money Deposit in Rs.:** 163,200.00.

**S.No.: 3, Tender No.: Engg-GTL-Central-0895, Description of work:** Guntakal Division - Renigunta-Guntakal Section - Through formation treatment (TFFR) : Rehabilitation weak formation with blanketing material to RDSO-GE-0014 Specifications along with Geo textile for a length of 8.10 km (Locations enclosed in Annexure-A) **Advertised Value in Rs. :** 5,06,16,122.36 ps. **Earnest money Deposit in Rs.:** 4,03,100.00.

For Bid document and other details login to [http://ireps.gov.in](#). Any corrigenda will be issued on line only.

**Divisional Railway Manager / Works, Guntakal**

**Tender No. GTL-EM-12-2020-21 Date : 05.08.2020**  
Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer / Maintenance / Guntakal acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders for the following works.

**Tender No.:- GTL-EM-12-2020-21 Guntakal Division:** Gooty-Provision of sewage treatment plant 50 KLD with GLR and OHT for distribution of treated water including service building and electrical works at Gooty. **Approximate Value :** Rs. 1121116/-, **EMD:** Rs. 22400/-

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For further tender conditions / details and for downloading the tender documents, Please visit website at [http://www.ireps.gov.in](#) or [www.scr.indianrailways.gov.in](#)

## CM wants to boost enrolment ratio

From Page 1

The Chief Minister said, "It has been decided to reopen colleges on October 15 and son there after, Vidya Devena Vasathi Devena funds will be given. All Common Entrance Tests (CETs) should be completed by September."

He said that the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in higher education should go up significantly given the fees reimbursement and Vasathi Devena incentives. He wanted the GER to go up from the present 32.4 percent to at least 90 percent considering the financial relief that is being provided.

Jagan Mohan Reddy said, "Three-year degree courses will have ten-month apprenticeships.

Those who want to continue further will study the fourth year where skill development and job orientation courses will be introduced. The four-year course will be classified as Degree (Honours). Students should decide before whether they wished to go for the three-year course of four-year Honours. In the four-year professional courses like B Tech, the 10-month apprenticeship is compulsory. Those students who secure 20 credits would be given an Honours Degree."

The Chief Minister said, "The education system should be changed and a good curriculum will have a better value. Previously no government has focused on higher education but we have to put in our best efforts. Stringent

action should be taken against colleges guilty of flouting norms."

Giving the nod for filling up the 1,100 vacancies in universities for the posts of Assistant Professor, he said that government colleges should move towards self-sustenance. He said that the government has been spending ₹6,000 cores under Nadu Nedu in revamping old medical colleges, which had poor maintenance during the previous government's rule. In those horrible days, surgeries were carried out under cell phone lights and rats bit infants and there was no answer as to why generators were not functioning. He said that Nadu Nedu should be implemented in colleges as well and asked the officials to

prepare an action plan for the same.

The officials said that a cluster university will be coming up at Kurnool along with an Architecture University at Kadapa.

The Chief Minister asked the officials to start works on the tribal engineering college at Kurupam and to start universities at Prakasam and Vizianagaram districts besides a Tribal University at Paderu. He gave his nod for Telugu and Sanskrit academies.

Chairman of Higher Education Regulatory and Monitoring Commission, Justice Vangala Eshwaraiah, Education Special Chief Secretary Satishchandra and others participated in the review meeting.

## EXAM | RESULTS

Candidates can view their results at official site [www.vit.ac.in](#)

## TS student tops admission list at V.I.T

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC HYDERABAD, AUG. 6

Telangana state's Chagari Koushal Kumar Reddy from Sri Chaitanya Junior Kalasala topped the B.Tech admissions list announced by the Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT) on Wednesday. Out of a total of 1,83,059 students from around the country and 12 countries (West Asia, Indonesia, Nepal, Nigeria, Mauritius, Sri Lanka, the UK and

● **THEY CAN register for online counselling process which will begin on August 10.**

Singapore) that had applied for admission.

Two more students from the state, Thrinesh Reddy D. from Narayana Junior College and Neeraj Gunda of Sri Chaitanya Junior College, bagged the sixth and seventh positions, respectively. VIT Chancellor Dr G. Viswanathan, said that

admissions would be on merit, based on the normalised PCM/ PCB marks, JEE/ SAT scores obtained by the candidates. The ranks were declared for admission to 36 B.Tech. and BDes. programmes offered by VIT at its Vellore, Chennai, AP and Bhopal campuses. Under the GV School Development Programme (GVSDP), Central and state board exam toppers would be given 100 per cent fee waiver. Candidates with ranks up

to 50 would be given 75 per cent tuition fee waiver, those with ranks 51 to 100 50 per cent and candidates in ranks 101 to 1,000 would be given 25 per cent tuition fee waiver.

The district toppers (one boy and one girl) in all the districts of Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh who are studying in government schools in rural areas will be given 100 per cent fee waiver and exemption from hostel and mess fees

under the STARS (Support The Advancement of Rural Students) scheme.

Candidates can view their results at the institute's official website [www.vit.ac.in](#). They can register for online counselling process which will begin on August 10. Rank based counselling would be held in four phases. Admission for other three-year undergraduate and five-year integrated programmes is open.

**International Institute Of Information Technology, Naya Raipur**  
Plot No.7, Sector 24, Atal Nagar, Naya Raipur - 493661, Chhattisgarh

**M. Tech. Spot Admission 2020**

Applications are invited for **M. Tech. admission spot round** in CSE and ECE programs at IIIT-Naya Raipur. For further details kindly visit [www.iiitnr.ac.in](#). Vacant seats will be filled through the institute's own online application process, which shall close at **16:00 hours on 13th August, 2020**. Vacant seats will be allotted on **14th August, 2020**. Registrar

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## SHORT TAKES

## SUSHANT CASE: CBI BOOKS FIR AGAINST RHEA, OTHERS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 6

The CBI on Thursday registered an FIR against Bollywood actress Rhea Chakraborty, Indrajit Chakraborty, Sandhya Chakraborty, Showik Chakraborty, Samuel Miranda, Shruti Modi, and others in connection with the death case of Sushant Singh Rajput.

A senior official in the agency said the CBI has booked six accused and others under sections including criminal conspiracy, abetment of suicide, wrongful restraint, wrongful confinement, theft, criminal breach of trust, cheating and criminal intimidation.

The agency sleuths are also in touch with Bihar Police, which was earlier investigating the case, said the official.

The case will be probed by the Special Investigation Team under Superintendent of Police Nupur Prasad and will be supervised by DIG Gagandeep Gambhir and Joint Director Manoj Shashidhar, both are senior IPS officers.

Rajput, 34, was found hanging from the ceiling of his apartment in suburban Bandra in Mumbai on June 14 and since then Mumbai police has been probing the case.

Bihar Police also swung into action following a complaint by Krishna Kishore Singh, 77-year-old father of Rajput, and a resident of Patna.

Patna Police had registered an FIR under IPC sections related to alleged criminal conspiracy, cheating and abetment to suicide among others on the complaint.

## KERALA TO SEE FALL IN CASES BY MID-SEPT: EXPERTS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, AUG. 6

Kerala's high level expert committee on Covid-19 Control believes that Coronavirus cases are expected to decline in the state by mid September if the state government continues with tough disease control and prevention measures.

Committee chairman Dr B. Ekbal said the state needs to strictly comply with the break-the-chain activities, strict quarantine and reverse quarantine measures to ensure the slide of Covid-19 by next month. The expert panel's statement comes close on the heels of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan directing the state police to contain the increasing cases of Covid-19 within two weeks.

However, experts say that before the slide Kerala Covid-19 cases are expected to peak by the end of this month or early September.

Meanwhile, on Thursday the state recorded highest single day tally of Covid-19 cases with 1,298 and the total cases so far crossed the 30,000 mark.

Of the new cases 1,017 contracted the disease through contact, 170 came from other states, 78 came from abroad and the source of infection of 76 is yet to be ascertained. The highest number of cases were reported in Thiruvananthapuram district with 219 of which 210 through contact, Kozhikode 174, Kasargod - 153, Palakkad - 136, Malappuram - 129.

At present 1.48 lakh people are under surveillance of which 1.36 lakh are under home/institutional quarantine, 11,437 are in hospitals.

## Rain havoc in Mumbai



A landslide took place at Pedder Road area of Mumbai after consistent rainfall on Thursday. Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray took stock of the state's preparedness in the wake of the heavy rains and asked authorities to remain alert. Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke with Thackeray and assured all possible support. — *Rajesh Jadhav*

## India snubs China for remarks on J&amp;K

Urges Beijing not to interfere in India's internal affairs

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 6

Hours after China raised the Kashmir issue at the 15-member UN Security Council at the behest of its all-weather friend Pakistan, India on Thursday said it rejected China's interference in India's internal affairs, adding that China's attempt once again "met with little support from the international community". New Delhi also "urged" Beijing "to draw the proper conclusions from such infructuous attempts".

This is the second time in two days India criticised China for its comments and actions on the Kashmir issue.

Making no secret of the close collaboration between China and Pakistan, Pakistan foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi tweeted Wednesday night that this was the third time in the past year that it was raised at the UN, thanking China "especially", saying Pakistan "welcomed" the meet.

The Chinese move in

## ‘India committed to its objective’

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 6

India on Thursday said it 'expects' China to work 'sincerely' with it for 'complete disengagement and de-escalation' at the line of actual control (LAC) in the Ladakh sector to ensure 'full restoration of peace and tranquillity' in the border areas.

This comes amid reports of a stalemate in the Sino-Indian military de-escalation in the Pangong Tso lake region due to the reported reluctance of Chinese PLA troops to pull back.

Ministry of external affairs (MEA) spokesperson, Anurag Srivastava, said, "As I have conveyed earlier, the special representatives of India and

collaboration with Pakistan was obviously planned at the UN on the first anniversary of India's revoking

China had a telephone conversation on July 5 where they discussed the situation in the border areas. They had agreed that early and complete disengagement of the troops along the line of actual control and de-escalation from India-China border areas in accordance with the bilateral agreement and protocols and full restoration of peace and tranquillity was essential for the smooth overall development of bilateral relations."

Making India's position clear, Srivastava added "India remains committed to this objective. We also expect that the Chinese side will work with us sincerely for complete disengagement and de-escalation."

Article 370, that granted special status to the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir state.

China first began

raising the Kashmir issue last year at the UNSC for informal deliberations soon after India revoked Article 370.

On Thursday, the external affairs ministry said: "We have noted China initiated a discussion in the UN Security Council on issues pertaining to the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir. This was not the first time China has sought to raise a subject that is solely an internal matter of India. As on such occasions, this attempt too met with little support from the international community. We firmly reject China's interference in our internal affairs and urge it to draw proper conclusions from such infructuous attempts."

India had on Wednesday too snubbed China, asking it to refrain from interference in India's internal affairs, hours after Beijing termed the revoking of Article 370 a year ago by New Delhi as "illegal and invalid".

India added that China had no locus standi on the issue.

## PUTIN LIKELY TO VISIT INDIA IN OCT.

New Delhi, Aug. 6: Russian President Vladimir Putin is expected to visit India in October this year for the Annual Bilateral Summit between the two countries, New Delhi said on Thursday. India said "regional and international issues of interest" are being discussed in exchanges between the two countries.

## TV ACTOR SAMEER SHARMA ENDS LIFE BY SUICIDE

DC CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI, AUG. 6

Television actor Sameer Sharma allegedly committed suicide at his home in suburban Malad.

The 44-year-old was found hanging from a ceiling fan in the kitchen of his flat at Neha building in Chincholi Bunder locality in Malad (West) on Wednesday night. Sharma has worked in popular serials like 'Yeh Rishta Hai Pyar Ke', 'Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi', 'Kahani Ghar-Ghar Ki'.

"We have not found any suicide note at the spot. It seems to be a suicide case. It is suspected that he hanged himself two days back. We have sent the body for an autopsy," said a senior inspector of Malad police station.

The incident came to light when the building's watchman peeped through the kitchen window and saw Sharma hanging.

## PM remembers Sushma on her first death anniversary

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 6

Tributes poured in on the first death anniversary of BJP leader and former External Affairs minister Sushma Swaraj on Thursday. Prime Minister Narendra Modi remembered her as "an articulate voice for India at the world stage" while Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu said she was a "blend of modern thinking and traditional values."

Swaraj passed away last year after a cardiac arrest hours after Parliament gave its nod to the bill nullifying the contentious Article 370 about which she tweeted that she was "waiting to see this day in my lifetime."

It was her last tweet and hours later she was rushed to the AIIMS where she breathed her last.

"Remembering Sushma Ji on her first Punya Tithi. Her untimely and unfortunate demise left many saddened.

She served India selflessly and was an articulate voice for India at the world stage," the Prime Minister tweeted.

Recalling how Swaraj used to visit him on every Raksha Bandhan to tie Rakhi, the Vice President said she was seen as "an epitome of Indian culture. She was a blend of modern thinking and traditional values. She was always respectful towards seniors and elders. She was one of the most affable Indian politicians and treated everybody with warmth and affection." Naidu addressed the first memorial lecture organised by the Panjab University in the memory of the late leader.

External Affairs minister and her successor S. Jaishankar said Swaraj was "always an inspiration." Paying tributes to her, Union law minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said "will always remember her as a great orator, visionary leaders and above all a compassionate human being."

Union home minister Amit Shah said Sushma Swaraj was a "towering figure of Indian polity, an outstanding parliamentarian and a brilliant orator who dedicated her entire life in the service of the nation. Her ideals will continue to inspire the generations to come."

Information and Broadcasting minister Prakash Javadekar said Swaraj was a great orator, lively person and a good human being. Javadekar also addressed an event 'Sushmanjali' organised in the memory of the late leader. Shiv Sena's Priyanka Chaturvedi said Swaraj was an "empowered, talented, dedicated and inspirational daughter of India while Union minister of food processing Harsimrat Kaur Badal said she was a "motherly figure and a role model to many" and will be remembered as an "excellent minister and an astute politician."

## Lalu shifted to RIMS director's bungalow

NAYEAR AZAD | DC  
PATNA, AUG. 6

Jailed RJD chief Lalu Yadav has been shifted from the paying ward of the Rajendra Institute Medical Sciences (RIMS) in Ranchi to the official residence of the hospital director located on the premises.

Sources aware of the development told this newspaper that the decision to move Lalu was taken after three of his caretakers tested positive for Covid-19 on July 25. This prompted his doctors to suggest the hospital authorities to shift 72-year-old RJD supremo to an isolated area.

Lalu Yadav is being treated for multiple serious ailments at RIMS Ranchi. Doctors said that he is suffering from heart, renal and other serious diseases and needed to be kept away from Covid-19 patients.

The BJP, however, feels that Lalu Yadav is getting "special treatment" from JMM-Congress-RJD led Mahagathbandhan government in Jharkhand. Talking to this newspaper on the issue, BJP spokesperson Nikhil Anand said, "If Lalu Yadav is being given any kind of special favour

beyond the existing law overlooking the jail manual then the matter is very serious. We would like to warn the Jharkhand government against giving any privileges to any person serving jail sentence."

Lalu Yadav was earlier criticised for using mobile phones and holding political meetings inside the RIMS premises. After he was shifted to the RIMS director's official bungalow, BJP leaders in Ranchi alleged that "the premises would be used as RJD headquarters where meetings will be held to discuss the upcoming assembly elections in Bihar".

After being convicted in the second fodder scam case involving the illegal withdrawal of ₹89.27 Lakh from Deoghar treasury, Lalu Yadav was sent to Birsamunda jail in Ranchi. He was later shifted to the RIMS in March 2018 after his health condition deteriorated.

Fraudulent withdrawal from government treasuries and use of fake bills and vouchers had surfaced in 1996. Officials conducting raids in 1996 had found that money was paid to non-existent companies for supplying fodder to the animal husbandry department.

## Panel has discretion to decide on prisoners' bail, parole: HC

DC CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI, AUG. 6

The Bombay high court on Wednesday said the high-powered committee set up by the Maharashtra government had the discretion to decide which prisoners were entitled to be released on temporary bail or parole amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

The HC also made it clear that no prisoner can claim right or entitlement to seek temporary release during the pandemic.

A division bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice Madhav Jamdar was hearing a petition filed by social worker Medha Patkar through her NGO 'National Alliance for People's Movements' challenging an order passed by the high pow-

ered committee.

As per the order dated March 25, 2020, the committee had said those prisoners who have been convicted or are facing charges under special Acts or in serious offences, wherein the punishment is above seven years, are not entitled to be released on temporary bail or parole amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

The petitioner's advocate S.B. Talekar had argued that the committee had exceeded its jurisdiction by classifying prisoners and it was infringing upon a person's fundamental right to equality.

The bench, in its order, however, noted that the principle of equality does not take away from the state the power of classifying persons for legitimate purposes.

"Equality before law does

not mean that things which are different shall be treated as though they were the same," the court said.

The bench further noted that the committee had a discretion to determine the category of prisoners who would be entitled to be released on temporary bail or parole.

"It is clear that the HPC (high-powered committee) balanced the rights of the prisoners to maintain maximum possible distancing to contain the spread of Covid-19 as well as the rights of the society," the court said.

"It is fallacious to contend that inmates can claim an absolute right for release in a situation like the prevailing pandemic as if it were flowing either from the Constitution or any other statute," the court said.

## WAR OF WORDS Shivraj: MP deserves GI tag for aromatic rice

## MP, Punjab fight over Basmati

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC  
BHOPAL, AUG. 6:

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Thursday slammed his Punjab counterpart Capt. Amrinder Singh for mounting pressure on the Centre to deny geographical indication (GI) tagging of basmati of MP, describing it unfair.

Chouhan said there was no basis for opposition to GI tagging of basmati of MP by Punjab Chief Minister since the state has 'written recorded history since 1908' for production of the variant of aromatic rice in 13 districts.

"Government of Madhya Pradesh strongly condemns the letter written by the Punjab Chief Minister to PMO (Prime Minister's Office) regarding allotment of GI tagging of basmati rice of 13 districts of the state", a tweet by chief minister's office (CMO) read.

Chouhan's office here ran a series of tweets justifying the state's demand for GI tagging of basmati rice grown in 13 districts of MP in the wake of Singh shooting a letter to the PMO on Wednesday demanding not to allow MP's basmati to get GI tag. In his letter, Singh argued that GI tagging to MP's basmati would not only be detrimental to

the interest of Punjab and other states who have already been awarded GI tag for their variant of the aromatic rice, but may also have an adverse impact on the export of basmati by India.

The Punjab Chief Minister said India exports basmati to the tune of ₹33,000 crore every year and any dilution in registration of Indian basmati may give advantage to Pakistan (which also produces basmati) in the international market in terms of characteristic and quality parameters.

The MP government, however, dismissed the concern expressed by Singh, saying that GI tagging to the state's bas-

mati would "provide stability to basmati prices in the international markets and boost our export".

"Madhya Pradesh has recorded history since 1908 of basmati production in 13 districts. Records of supplying seeds to farmers in MP in 1944 is recorded in the records of the Scindia state", a tweet by CMO here said.

The state government further said that the Indian Institute of Rice Research, Hyderabad, has recorded production of basmati since the last 25 years and added that exporters from both Punjab and Haryana have been procuring the rice variant from MP.



## IN BRIEF

Rajapaksas  
all set for  
landslide win

**Colombo:** Sri Lanka's strongman Mahinda Rajapaksa was poised to stage a political comeback on Thursday as his party took an early lead and was set for a landslide victory in the twice-postponed general elections, according to results announced so far. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was among the first world leaders to congratulate Rajapaksa on the outcome of the elections and said the two sides will work together to further advance all areas of bilateral cooperation and to take their special ties to ever newer heights.

"Thank you PM @narendramodi for your congratulatory phone call. With the strong support of the people of #SriLanka, I look forward to working with you closely to further enhance the long-standing cooperation between our two countries. Sri Lanka & India are friends & relations," Rajapaksa tweeted. The SLPP has polled more votes than its rivals, scoring over 60 per cent of the total votes in the 16 seats officially declared so far from the South, dominated by the Sinhala majority community. The party won 13 out of 16 seats. President Gotabaya Rajapaksa in a tweet described the results as a "great victory" for the ruling party. Rajapaksa's party is expected to win control of the 225-member assembly by a comfortable margin, according to analysts. In Galle district, the SLPP won seven out of nine seats on offer while in the neighbouring Matara district they won six out of seven seats on offer. The nearest rival is the new party formed by former presidential candidate Sajith Premadasa who has relegated his mother party, the United National Party (UNP), of former premier Ranil Wickremesinghe to the fourth place even below the Marxist Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna. The SJB has won only three seats from both districts.

Don's FB post of  
kids immune to  
Covid-19 deleted

**Houston, Aug. 6:** Social media giant Facebook, for the first time, has removed a post from US President Donald Trump in which he claimed that children were "almost immune" to Covid-19, saying it violated its policy against spreading "misinformation" about the Coronavirus. The post in question was a video clip of a Trump interview on Fox News Channel uploaded by the Trump campaign on Wednesday.

The US President claims in the clip that children are "almost immune" to Covid-19. While much remains unknown about the Coronavirus, children are believed to be able to spread it to others, even without symptoms.

"This video includes false claims that a group of people is immune from Covid-19 which is a violation of our policies around harmful Covid misinformation," Andy Stone, a Facebook policy spokesperson said in a statement.

A link to the post now diverts to a page that says, "This Content Isn't Available Right Now." It is the first time that Facebook has removed a post from Trump entirely, rather than labelling it, as it has done in the past, making it a rare instance in which it has been willing to censor the president.

In June, Facebook removed ads that the Trump campaign posted that featured a symbol Nazis used to classify political prisoners during World War II. Twitter also removed a link to the same video clip, which the official Trump Twitter account

Test travellers from  
'risk areas': Germany

**Berlin, Aug. 6:** Germany will require people arriving from countries deemed high risk, such as the United States, to take Coronavirus tests starting this weekend, the health minister said Thursday, as the country recorded its highest daily tally of new infections in three months. German officials have voiced alarm over a steady upward creep in the number of new infections over recent weeks.

The national disease control centre, the Robert Koch Institute, said 1,045 cases were recorded on Wednesday — the first time since May 7 that it has counted more than 1,000 new cases in a day.

Daily figures can be volatile or distorted by delays in reporting, and

the number is still far short of the peak of more than 6,000 reached in early April.

"What we are seeing is a lot of small outbreaks," Health Minister Jens Spahn told reporters. "People are getting infected at family parties, at their place of work or at community facilities." On top of that, school holidays — the dates of which are staggered across Germany's 16 states — are ending in some regions, increasing concerns that vacationers could bring home the virus. Last Saturday, the government started offering free tests for people returning to the country, a move that Spahn said likely contributed to the increase in recorded cases. — AP

@TeamTrump shared earlier on Wednesday.

Links to the tweet now point Twitter users to a message that the tweet violated Twitter's rules and is no longer available. The Trump campaign accused Facebook of "flagrant bias". "The President was stating a fact that children are less susceptible to the Coronavirus," Courtney Parella, the campaign's deputy national press secretary, said in an emailed statement.

A US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study involving 2,500 children published in April

found that about one in five infected children were hospitalised versus one in three adults; three children died. Two months ago, Facebook faced a backlash both inside and outside the company for not taking any action against Trump's May 29 comment, posted on Facebook and Instagram, in which he said about Minneapolis protests and civil unrest in the wake of George Floyd's killing by police: "Any difficulty and we will assume control but, when the looting starts, the shooting starts. Thank you!" — PTI

Lebanon officials shift blast blame  
as Macron calls for serious reforms

**Beirut, Aug. 6:** Lebanese officials targeted in the investigation of the massive blast that tore through Beirut sought to shift blame for the presence of explosives at the city's port, and the visiting French president warned Thursday that without serious reforms the country would "continue to sink".

The blast Tuesday, which appeared to have been caused by an accidental fire that ignited a warehouse full of ammonium nitrate at the city's port, ripped across the Lebanese capital, killing at least 135 people, injuring more than 5,000 and causing widespread destruction.

It also may have accelerated the country's Coronavirus outbreak, as thousands flooded into hospitals in the wake of the blast. Tens of thousands have been forced to move in with relatives and friends after their homes were damaged, further raising the risks of exposure.

French President Emmanuel Macron visited Thursday amid widespread pledges of international aid. But Lebanon, which was already mired in a severe economic crisis, faces a daunting challenge in rebuilding.

It's unclear how much support the international community will offer the notoriously corrupt and dysfunctional government. Macron, who viewed the devastated port and was to meet with senior Lebanese officials, said the visit is "an opportunity to have a frank and challenging dialogue with the Lebanese political powers and institutions".

He said France will work to coordinate aid. Losses from the blast are estimated to be between \$10 billion and \$15 billion, Beirut Governor Marwan Abboud told Saudi-owned TV station *Al-Hadath*, adding that nearly 300,000 people are homeless. — AP



Volunteers clean the rubble and broken glass from the streets in Beirut on Thursday in the aftermath of a massive explosion in the Lebanese capital. — AFP

Explosion likely  
an attack: Trump

**Washington, Aug. 6:** President Donald Trump on Wednesday continued to suggest that the massive explosion that killed at least 135 people in Lebanon might have been a deliberate attack, even as officials in Lebanon and his own defence chief said it's believed to have been an accident. "Whatever happened, it's terrible, but they don't really know what it is," Trump insisted. "Nobody knows yet."

Investigators probing the deadly blast that ripped across Beirut on Tuesday are focused on possible negligence in the storage of tons of ammonium nitrate, a highly explosive fertilizer, in a waterfront warehouse. The Lebanese government ordered the house arrest of several

port officials. On Tuesday, Trump called the explosion a "terrible attack" and said American generals told him it was likely caused by a bomb.

"They seem to think it was an attack," Trump said. "It was a bomb of some kind, yes." Defence Secretary Mark Esper contradicted the president Wednesday, saying most people believe the explosion "was an accident, as reported". But later in the day, Trump insisted nobody knows for sure. "How can you say accident if somebody left some terrible explosive-type devices and things around perhaps — perhaps it was that. Perhaps it was an attack," Trump told reporters during a White House briefing. — AP

OZ PLEDGES  
\$1.4MN FOR  
BEIRUT RELIEF

**Beirut, Aug. 6:** The Australian government has pledged an initial 2 million Australian dollars (\$1.4 million) to the relief effort in Lebanon following the deadly blast that ripped across the capital Beirut on Tuesday.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison told reporters Thursday that the aid will be provided to the World Food Programme and to the Red Cross for food, medical care and essential items. He says his country is considering another round of support.

Morrison says some Australian Embassy personnel were injured but "they are safe and accounted for and we wish them a speedy recovery".

He also thanked the US Embassy officials in Beirut for their support. — AP

FINANCIAL  
Chronicle

VIJAYAWADA | FRIDAY | 7 AUGUST 2020

quick  
BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	38,025.45	0.96
Nifty 50	11,200.15	0.89
S&P 500*	3,326.43	-0.04
Dollar (₹)	74.92	0.04
Pound Sterling (₹)	98.64	-0.81
Euro (₹)	88.78	-0.35
Gold (10gm) (₹)	55,850.752	1.36
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	45.60	0.43
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.862	0.035
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.515	-0.028

\* As of 10:30 PM IST

Gold and silver  
prices touch  
new record high

Gold and silver prices touched record levels in the national capital on Thursday and the yellow metal rose by ₹225 to ₹56,590 per 10 grams amid strong rally in the international market, according to HDFC Securities. Silver price surged by ₹1,932 to ₹75,755 per kilogram. On Wednesday, it had closed at ₹73,823 per kg. In the previous trade, the yellow metal had closed at ₹56,365 per 10 grams.

RBI expects higher inflation,  
negative economic growth

■ Pauses rate cuts for now; maintains accommodative monetary stance

FALAKNAAZ SYED  
MUMBAI, AUG. 6

Belying expectations, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India on Thursday kept rates unchanged on Thursday owing to uncertainty around inflation despite signs of growth faltering further. The MPC voted to maintain an accommodative stance, thus opening up possibilities for more rate cuts.

"While economic activity had started to recover from the lows of April-May, a surge in fresh infections have forced re-clamping of lockdowns in several cities and states to 'level-off' various high-frequency indicators," RBI governor Shaktikanta Das said in his monetary policy address.

The MPC expects headline inflation to remain elevated in Q2FY21 and sees it easing in the second half of the financial year. For 2021, the real GDP growth is expected to be negative.

It refrained from providing growth-inflation forecasts while sticking to the direction based guidance. "Real GDP growth in the first half of the year is estimated to remain in the contraction zone. For the year 2020-21 as a whole, real GDP growth is also estimated to be negative," Das said.

He said that the RBI will do whatever is required to revive the economy in the wake of the pandemic.

All the six members of the MPC voted for a status quo in rates.

**RESERVE BANK OF INDIA**

**Bi-monthly Monetary Policy Review**

**Highlights**

- Policy rate unchanged at 4%, reverse repo at 3.35%
- Loans against gold enhanced to 90% of the value from current 75% to mitigate COVID-19 impact on households
- To continue with the accommodative stance to revive growth
- Supporting economic recovery assumes primacy in conduct of monetary policy in uncertain global environment
- Sees upside risk to inflation, projects moderation in Oct-Mar
- GDP growth to be negative in current fiscal
- Stressed MSME borrowers eligible for loan restructuring if their accounts were classified standard
- Allows lenders to provide window to restructure loans of corporate, individual borrowers to ease COVID-19 impact
- A new resolution window for corporate and personal loans to be framed
- To put in place safeguards for opening of current accounts and overdraft accounts for customers availing credit facilities from multiple banks
- Priority Sector Lending (PSL) to include startups
- Increased limits for renewable energy, including solar power, and small and marginal farmers and 'Weaker Sections' under PSL
- To allow a pilot scheme for small value payments in offline mode while safeguarding interest of users, liability protection
- Proposes Online Dispute Resolution for digital payments
- Rs 5,000 crore additional liquidity facility to be provided by the National Housing Bank to boost liquidity in housing sector
- Rs 5,000 crore liquidity support to NABARD to aid agri sector
- Economic activity had started to recover, but surge in infection has forced imposition of lockdowns
- Monetary Policy Committee conscious of primary mandate to achieve inflation target of 4% within a band of +/- 2%

## Start-ups get RBI's priority tag

SANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, AUG. 6

In a major boost to start-ups, now their loans will come under priority sector lending. RBI will also look into regional disparities in priority sector lending (PSL).

The PSL guidelines were last reviewed in April 2015. In these five years, the country has seen a lot of activity in the start-up space. Acknowledging the potential of start-ups

in boosting the economy, RBI has broadened the scope of PSL to include start-ups.

As per PSL norms, RBI mandates banks to lend a certain portion of their funds to specified sectors like agriculture, micro, small and medium enterprises, export credit, education, housing, social infrastructure, renewable energy, etc.

Further, RBI has also increased the PSL limits for renewable energy.

As part of reviewing the PSL guidelines, an incentive framework is also being put in place for banks to address the regional disparities in the flow of priority sector credit. While higher weightage will be assigned for incremental priority sector credit in the identified districts having lower credit flow, a lower weightage would be assigned in identified districts where the credit flow is higher.

Positive Pay,  
offline card  
payment soon

SANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, AUG. 6

Enhancing the security of cheque payments, RBI will introduce Positive Pay for all cheques of ₹50,000 and above.

As for digital payments, RBI also wants offline payments through cards, mobile wallets and devices to become possible for remote areas with low internet connectivity.

In order to check increasing cheque frauds, RBI has decided to introduce a mechanism of Positive Pay for all cheques of value ₹50,000 and above, RBI said.

This measure will cover approximately 20 per cent of all cheques issued in the country in volume terms and 80 per cent of cheques in terms of value.

RBI also wants to make offline payment through cards, wallets and mobile devices possible. "There has been considerable growth in digital payments using mobile phones, cards, wallets, etc. Lack of internet connectivity or low speed of internet, especially in remote areas, is a major impediment in adoption of digital payments," the central bank said in its statement.

Gold can get  
you 90% of its  
value as loan

SANGEETHA G.  
CHENNAI, AUG. 6

In order to provide higher liquidity to households and small businesses, RBI has increased the Loan-To-Value (LTV) ratio of gold loans offered by banks from 75 per cent to 90 per cent. However, the higher LTV will not be available for non-banking finance companies.

As per the current guidelines, gold loans sanctioned by banks for non-agricultural purposes should not exceed 75 per cent of the value of gold ornaments and jewellery.

"With a view to mitigating the impact of Covid-19 on households, it has been decided to increase the permissible loan to value ratio (LTV) for such loans to 90 per cent. This relaxation shall be available till March 31, 2021," said RBI.

Higher LTV will put more money in the hands of the customer for the same volume of gold pledged. Gold prices have appreciated more than 40 per cent since the beginning of the year. Due to the price appreciation, the loan amount has naturally increased by 40 per cent even at an LTV of 75 per cent. Once the LTV is increased to 90 per cent, this will increase the loan amount by another 15 per cent. This will solve the liquidity issues of small scale business persons and traders, who account for the largest chunk of the customer base, as well as individuals to a great extent.

The new LTV will be available for a window of eight months. Fresh loans issued post March 31, 2021 will come under 75 per cent LTV.

BYJU'S ACQUIRES CHILDREN-FOCUSED  
CODING START-UP FIRM FOR \$300M

SANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, AUG. 6

Byju's has acquired ed-tech start-up, WhiteHat Jr for \$300 million. With the National Education Policy pushing for skills such as coding, this will provide Byju's a major boost.

Founded in November 2018, WhiteHat Jr specializes in coding. With coding fast emerging as a key skill for the future, this

integration will help Byju's to further expand its offerings. This partnership is timely with the government pushing skills such as coding from early classes with the New Education Policy 2020, Byju's said in a release.

WhiteHat Jr has presence in India and the US. It had recently announced plans to expand to other global markets like Canada, UK, Australia and New Zealand.



## SHORT TAKES

## Camps for junior athletes from Oct.

**New Delhi:** The national training camps for junior athletes will begin in a phased manner from October 1, the Sports Authority of India (SAI) said on Wednesday.

It was decided in SAI's Mission Olympic Cell review meeting that training of junior athletes at its National Centres of Excellence (NCOE), shut since March due to the COVID-19 outbreak, will start in a phased manner from October.

The SAI, however, said that the respective state governments where the NCOEs are situated will take the final call, keeping in mind the health and safety of athletes and coaches amid the pandemic. — PTI

## 258 juniors make TOPS scheme

**New Delhi:** The Sports Authority of India (SAI) on Wednesday shortlisted 258 athletes from across 12 sporting disciplines for support through Target Olympic Podium Scheme Developmental Group, also known as Junior TOPS. The support will be extended through a group/systems approach and a monthly out of pocket allowance of ₹25,000 will be given to every athlete. Of the 12 disciplines, 16 athletes have been shortlisted in athletics, 34 in archery, 27 in badminton, four in cycling, seven in table tennis, 70 in shooting, 14 in swimming, 11 in judo, 36 in boxing, 16 in weightlifting, five in rowing and 18 in wrestling. — PTI

## ZIDANE LEAVES OUT BALE FOR CITY CLASH

**Madrid:** Gareth Bale has not been included in the Real Madrid squad for the Champions League match against Manchester City. Coach Zinedine Zidane left the Wales forward out of the list of 24 players who will travel for the round-of-16 match in England on Friday. Bale didn't get many playing minutes under Zidane in the final stage of the Spanish league, a competition Madrid won. His last appearance was on June 24. Colombian midfielder James Rodriguez also won't make the trip. Madrid lost the first leg 1-2 at home. — AP

**LIVE ON TV:** Champions League Round of 16, second leg: Juventus vs Lyon from 12.30 am (Saturday) on Sony TEN 2; Manchester City vs Real Madrid from 12.30 am (Saturday) on Sony TEN 1.

## TIGHT ROPE WALK

## BCCI sets strict guidelines for IPL teams

**New Delhi, Aug. 6:** Eight different hotels for the eight participating teams, two mandatory negative Covid-19 test reports before flying to the UAE and punishment for any breach of the bio-secure protocol are part of the BCCI's SOP for the IPL that was handed over to the franchisees on Wednesday.

The document, accessed states that every franchisee's medical team should obtain the "medical and travel history of all players and support staff" since March 1 this year.

"All Indian players and team support staff must undergo two Covid-19 PCR tests, 24 hours apart, in the week before assembling in the franchisees' city of choice," it states.

"This will help reduce the risk of cross infection within the group before flying to the UAE."

"Breach of any Bio-Secure Environment protocols by players and team support staff will be punishable under the IPL Code of Conduct Rules."

Anyone testing positive for Covid-19 will be quarantined and after completion of a 14-day period, the individual will have to undergo two Covid-19 tests, 24 hours apart.

"...if both test reports are negative, he/she may be allowed to fly out to the UAE."

"After arrival in UAE, there will be tests on Day 1, 3 and 6 with testing every fifth day throughout the tournament."

The SOP states that all "franchise teams will be put up in different hotels."

"Team members must be allotted rooms in a separate wing of the hotel that has a separate centralised air conditioning (AC) unit than the rest of the hotel," it adds.

"After the third negative test, team members may be allowed to meet each other within the Bio-Secure Environment. However, wearing a face mask and social distancing protocols must be followed at all times."

The SOP also requires teams to order food in individual rooms and avoid use of common dining areas "to prevent cross infection."

— PTI



Royal Challengers Bangalore's captain Virat Kohli (left) and coach Gary Kirsten look on during a training session in this file photo.

## Empty stands extended room

**New Delhi, Aug. 6:** The BCCI's Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the upcoming IPL recommends that teams use "empty stands" as extended dressing rooms for training and matches while strategy meetings can now be held outdoors in order to maintain social distancing.

The IPL, to be held from September 19 in the UAE, won't feature any toss mascot.

While players and support staff's families can join them, they won't be allowed to travel in the team bus and can't leave the bio bubble.

According to the SOP which was handed to the franchisees the teams will be encouraged to use the stands for dressing room purpose which helps in maintaining social distancing.

"The Bio-Secure Environment means only essential staff will be on site and no members of the public will be allowed. Therefore there will be more vacant areas at the

## BCCI, VIVO OFFICIALLY PUT OFF DEAL FOR THE SEASON

**New Delhi, Aug. 6:** The BCCI on Thursday suspended the IPL title sponsorship deal with Chinese mobile phone company Vivo for the event's upcoming edition amid the Sino-India border face-off.

The BCCI sent out a one-line statement, without giving any details, to say that Vivo will not be associated with the IPL this year.

"The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and vivo Mobile India Pvt Ltd have decided to suspend their partnership for Indian Premier League in 2020," the press release stated.

"The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and vivo Mobile India Pvt Ltd have mutually decided to pause their partnership for the 2020 season of Indian Premier League," it stated.

— PTI

stadium and hence the dressing room does not have to remain within the traditional area.

"Venue Cricket Operation teams should consider using appropriate areas beyond the normal dressing room," the SOP states.

The SOP also states that franchisees might install "Scalene Hypercharge Corona

(Shycocan), a device that has the ability to neutralise 99.9 per cent of the coronavirus that might be floating in the air in closed spaces."

For the medical team, including physios and masseurs, the SOP recommends that if they need to get in physical contact with the player (massage sessions etc), they have to wear PPE kits.

— PTI

## PAKISTAN ON TOP IN FIRST TEST VS ENG

**Manchester, Aug. 6:** Shan Masood joined a select group of Pakistan batsmen to have scored hundreds in three successive Test innings as his excellent century led the tourists to 326 all out against England on the second day of the series opener at Old Trafford.

Left-handed opener Masood batted for nearly eight hours in largely bowler-friendly conditions for a Test-best 156. He received excellent support from Shadab Khan (45) in a sixth-wicket stand of 105 that turned the tide after Pakistan had been struggling at 176-5.

— PTI

**Brief scores:** Pakistan 326 in 109.3 overs (B. Azam 69, Shan Masood 150, S. Khan 45, S. Board 3/54, J. Archer 3/59) vs England.

## WOMEN'S TENNIS

## Errani rallies for win at Palermo

**Palermo, Aug. 6:** Former French Open finalist Sara Errani showed signs of reviving her clay-court prowess by rallying past Kristina Pliskova 3-6, 6-4, 6-3 Wednesday to reach the Palermo Ladies Open quarterfinals.

It was the second consecutive three-set win for Errani, who received a wild-card entry for the first tour-level tournament — for men or women — following a five-month break due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Errani will next face rising French player Fiona Ferro, who beat eighth-seeded Ekaterina Alexandrova 7-5, 6-2.

Also, qualifier Aliaksandra Sasnovich eased past Jasmine Paolini 6-0, 6-2 for her fifth win in five days; and 19-year-old Italian wild-card entry Elisabetta Cocciaretto eliminated sixth-seeded Donna Vekic in straight sets 6-2, 6-4.

Players and officials for the tournament are being

● **Italian Sara Errani showed signs of reviving her clay-court prowess by rallying past Kristina Pliskova in a hard-fought 3-6, 6-4, 6-3 match to make the quarterfinals.**

tested every four days for Covid-19 and one player who tested positive withdrew over the weekend. New protocols include fewer ball kids, a limited number of fans and no post-match handshakes between opponents.

Errani, who lost the 2012 French Open final to Maria Sharapova, had struggled to regain her form after serving a two-month ban in 2017 due to an anti-doping violation. Her ranking is down from a career-high of No. 5 in 2013 to No. 169.

Palermo brings back good memories for Errani, who won the Sicilian tournament twice.

— AP



Sara Errani returns to Kristina Pliskova during their women's singles quarterfinal match at the Palermo Open tennis tournament on Thursday. Errani won 3-6, 6-4, 6-3.

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