

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

COIMBATORE | TUESDAY 25 | AUGUST 2020

## WEATHER



Max: 33°C  
Min: 24°C  
Rainfall: Nil

## ASTROGUIDE

**Sarvari:** Aavani 9  
**Tithi:** Saphthami  
**Star:** Visagam  
**Rahukalam:**  
3 pm to 4.30 pm  
**Yamagandam:**  
9 am to 10.30 am

### PRAYERS

**Fajar:** 4.45 am  
**Zohar:** 12.17 pm  
**Asar:** 3.19 pm  
**Maghrib:** 6.26 pm  
**Isha:** 7.39 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.24 PM

SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.58 AM

MOONRISE TODAY 11.48 AM

MOONSET TOMORROW 11.39 PM

## CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+59,323)	(+851)
31,64,508	58,543

covid19india.org

### STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+5,967)  
TN: 3,85,352 6,614

### WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

2,36,88,377

DEATHS  
8,14,284

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES  
213

worldometers.info

## First case of Covid-19 re-infection reported in Hong Kong

**Hong Kong:** A man in Hong Kong has become the first confirmed patient to be infected with the coronavirus a second time, with a different strain of the virus, according to researchers at the University of Hong Kong. The finding, according to reports, might suggest that people may have only short-lived immunity from re-infection.

The case is likely to be significant for scientists who have been working on treatments using antibodies from recovered coronavirus patients, and those who have been developing a safe and effective vaccine.

A UK microbiologist called it a “rare example” while saying that it’s not unusual to find different virus strains as the pandemic evolves. — *Agencies*

## COUNTER POINT



Don't worry, we are far away in the terrorist hierarchy... at the 800 level!

## HC asks Raj Speaker to decide BJP MLA's plea against merger of BSP MLAs

**Jaipur, Aug 24:** The Rajasthan High Court Monday asked the state assembly speaker to decide on merit a writ petition filed by BJP MLA Madan Dilawar against the merger of six BSP MLAs with the ruling Congress.

The court asked the speaker to decide on the matter within three months. A single-judge bench of Justice Mahendra Kumar Goyal, while disposing of the writ petition filed by Dilawar, asked him to approach the assembly speaker. The court asked the speaker to decide the complaint, which was filed by Dilawar on March 16,



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**S.Ve. Shekher seeks advance bail**



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**TN is number one state in healthcare, says CM**

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**Ashwin bats for free ball if batsman leaves crease**



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### CONTEMPT OF COURT CASE

## Prashant won't apologise for tweets against judiciary

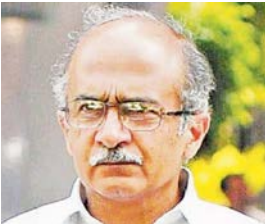
**PARMOD KUMAR | DC NEW DELHI, AUG. 24**

Activist lawyer Prashant Bhushan on Monday refused to apologise for his two tweets for which he was convicted by the Supreme Court for criminal contempt as he told the judges that an apology would be “insincere” and would amount to “contempt of conscience”.

Reiterating that his two tweets were an expression of his belief which he holds even today, Mr Bhushan said: “Therefore, an apology for the expression of these beliefs, conditional or unconditional, would be insincere”. Standing firm, he said: “An apology cannot be a mere incantation and any apology has to, as the court has itself put it, be sincerely made.”

“If I retract a statement before this court that I otherwise believe to be true or offer an insincere apology, that in my eyes would amount to the contempt of my conscience and of an institution I hold in the highest esteem.”

● **“If I retract a statement before this court that I otherwise believe to be true or offer an insincere apology, that in my eyes would amount to the contempt of my conscience and of an institution I hold in the highest esteem”**



— Prashant Bhushan

Mr Bhushan said this in his supplementary statement filed on Monday as the bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra in its August 20 order had fixed August 24 for him to offer an unconditional apology if he so felt.

“We have given time to the contemnor to submit unconditional apology if he so desires,” said the order by the bench, which also comprised Justices B.R. Gavai and Krishna Murari. Mr Bhushan’s statement was filed by lawyer Kamini Jaiswal.

The suo motu contempt petition is now listed for hearing on Tuesday.

Besides this, the 2009 criminal contempt of court matter is also listed for Tuesday. In that, the court will examine whether the allegations of corruption against sitting or former judges could be made in public, the circumstances in which the allegations were made and the procedure in tackling such matters.

Mr Bhushan on Monday declared his tweets represented “bona fide beliefs I continue to hold” and their public expression is “in line with my higher obligation as a citizen and a loyal officer of this court”.

## India has military options against China: CDS Rawat

**DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, AUG. 24**

In a strong message, Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat on Monday said that India has “military options” to deal with the Chinese transgressions in Eastern Ladakh if talks between both the countries at the military and diplomatic level don’t yield any results.

“The military option to deal with transgressions by the Chinese Army in Ladakh are on but it will be exercised only if talks at the military and the diplomatic level fail,” Gen Rawat was quoted by a news agency.

However, he refused to discuss in detail the military options that India could exercise to push back the transgressions by the Chinese Army in Ladakh sector, said the news agency report.



● **“The military option to deal with transgressions by the Chinese Army in Ladakh are on but it will be exercised only if talks at the military and the diplomatic level fail,” Gen Rawat was quoted by a news agency**

The military stand-off between India and China is now nearing four months with no prospect of a resolution in near future.

The talks between the two sides have been going on for the last three months including five Lieutenant General-level talks but have failed to yield any results, so far.

In fact it seems that China has only used this period of negotiations with India to further consolidate its position in areas where it has violat-

ed the line of actual control.

This makes an option of using military against China now more difficult than when these violations were first detected in May.

There are some reports which suggest that China has stated laying down optical fiber in Pangong Tso to consolidate its position. Indian and Chinese troops are engaged in a stand-off in Pangong Tso, Gogra Post, and Depsang-DBO sectors in Ladakh.

## Miss my friend a lot: PM on Arun Jaitley's death anniversary

**New Delhi, Aug. 24:** The BJP paid rich tributes to party stalwart Arun Jaitley on his first death anniversary on Monday, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi saying that he misses his friend a lot and that his late Cabinet colleague diligently served India.

Top BJP leaders, including Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister

Rajnath Singh and party president J P Nadda, fondly remembered Jaitley, who was the voice of the party on various issues for decades and was seen as its main trouble shooter.

The prime minister tweeted, “On this day, last year, we lost Shri Arun Jaitley Ji. I miss my friend a lot. Arun Ji diligently served India. His wit, intellect, legal acumen and warm

personality were legendary. Here is what I had said during a prayer meeting in his memory.”

He posted a video of his speech at the condolence meeting held here for Jaitley last year. Remembering Jaitley, Shah said he was an outstanding politician, prolific orator and a great human being who had “no parallels” in Indian polity.

**SREEPARNA CHAKRABARTY | DC NEW DELHI, AUG. 24**

Notwithstanding the open rebellion by a section of its senior leadership, the Congress Working Committee (CWC) on Monday decided that Sonia Gandhi would remain the party’s interim president for the next six months during which time an AICC session would be called and a new chief would be elected.

Mrs Gandhi, however, said that she bore no “ill-will” towards anybody, referring to more than 23 leaders, including stalwarts like Ghulam Nabi Azad and Anand Sharma, who were signatories to the letter which complained about a drift in the party, called for sweeping changes to the AICC and the election of a permanent president, someone who is “full-time, visible. Ending the meeting on an emotional note, Mrs Gandhi said, “I am hurt but they are my colleagues. Bygones are bygones, let us work together.”

In the seven-hour long meeting of the CWC, the leaking and timing of the letter was discussed more than its content. However, what the letter and the subsequent acrimonious and often emotional discussion did manage to achieve was in effect stalling the return of Rahul Gandhi as the president for another six months or till an AICC session is called. Asking his mother Sonia Gandhi to continue as the interim president instead, a resolution passed at the end of the CWC meet said: “The CWC has extensively deliberated on the letters... The CWC makes it clear that no one will be or can be permitted to undermine or weaken the party and its leadership at this juncture. The responsibility of every Congress worker and leader today is to fight the pernicious assault on India’s democracy, pluralism and diversity by the Modi government”.

## INSIDE

■ **CITY.. P2**  
**Quarantine rule forces flyers to skip city airport**  
■ **STATE.. P3**  
**Stalin wants Neet, JEE put off**

## NEW CONGRESS CHIEF IN SIX MONTHS



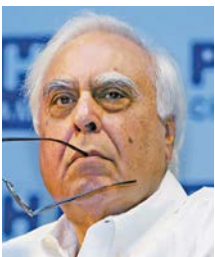
■ **Party seniors back Sonia while younger brigade wants Rahul back as Prez**

■ **Generation rift in party leads to lively CWC meet**  
■ **Rahul criticises letter writers for timing of message**

■ **I am hurt but they are my colleagues. Bygones are bygones, let us work together”**  
— **Sonia Gandhi**



■ **Kapil Sibal, one of those who signed the letter, but is not part of the CWC, tweeted: “Rahul says ‘we are colluding with BJP’. Succeeded in Rajasthan High Court defending the Congress Party. Defending party in Manipur to bring down BJP government. Last 30 years have never made a statement in favour of BJP on any issue. Yet ‘we are colluding with the BJP!’”**



## Growing dissent traced to backdoor control

**ASHHAR KHAN | DC NEW DELHI, AUG. 24**

Dissent within the Congress Party has been growing for almost a year. But the recent tipping point came when Rahul Gandhi began election meetings for Bihar earlier this month without having any official position in the party. Many leaders felt that if alliances are sewn properly, the party may just have an outside chance at power in the state.

The genesis of the problem, in fact, lies in the backdoor control of the party by Mr Gandhi, his office and leaders supposedly close to

him, even after demitting office as the party chief. Trouble started before Haryana Assembly elections last year when the then state unit chief, Ashok Tanwar, publicly hit out at the former Haryana chief minister, Bhupinder Singh Hooda. Mr Tanwar, known to be close to Mr Gandhi, even protested outside the residence of Mrs Sonia Gandhi and was removed from the party. This internal sabotage just before the Assembly elections ensured that the Congress was just six seats less than the BJP after the result came out. Many believe that had the state unit been united, the

party would have formed the government in the state.

In the last eight months, several leaders have sought time with Mr Gandhi but he has not met anybody. There were several grievances that leaders wanted to brief him about, but he remained unavailable. Insiders claim that during the Madhya Pradesh crisis whenever senior leaders tried to reach out to former Congress leader Jyotiraditya Scindia, he categorically told them that he would speak with Mr Gandhi. The end result was that Mr Scindia staged a coup, resulting in the fall of the state government.

## BJP chief Nadda targets DMK, Stalin hits back

**DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, AUG. 24:**

Launching a virulent attack on the DMK, BJP national president JP Nadda on Monday said that party was protecting people who were not working for the nation and were inciting the feelings of others against the spirit of the nation.

Addressing the BJP State executive meeting via video conference, Nadda urged the people to not vote for the DMK in the next election as the party did not allow the assimilation into the national mainstream and was confident that the BJP would win more seats in the local body and Assembly elections.

M K Stalin hit back at



BJP chief Nadda for targeting the DMK, instead of giving constructive advice to his party members, while addressing his party’s State executive through video conference on Monday. BJP was the party that stood against Tamil culture and national integration, Stalin said in a statement, recalling an earlier undemocratic remark by BJP leader Muralidhar Rao that the BJP would not allow M K Stalin to become the Chief Minister. ■ **P3**

## No relief from 6K virus cases per day in TN

**DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, AUG. 24**

Coronavirus infection continued unabated across the State with 5967 cases reported on Monday when there were 97 fatalities that took the total number of deaths since the beginning of the outbreak to 6614.

Chennai had 1278 new cases and 23 deaths while Chengalpattu with 306 cases, Coimbatore with 387, Cuddalore 370, Salem 273 and Tiruvallur with 320 were the districts that reported high numbers in infection.

Meanwhile, the government was looking into the possibility of the removal of the e-pass system completely. Follo-wing central government regulations and also taking into consideration the local reality through field studies and field, a decision would be taken, Revenue Minister R B Udhayakumar told the media.

Speaking after reviewing a fever camp at Thiru Vi Ka Nagar, he said the Chief Minister would announce the government decision on the e-pass after the Chief Secretary discussed the matter with the district collectors and other officials concerned. In Monday’s meeting with the district collectors, the Chief Secretary along with top officials like the Health Secretary and DGP, Commissioner of Police looked into the issue of isolating the people coming into Chennai in large numbers.

## HC reduces Kenyan student's sentence to 10 years

**J. STALIN | DC CHENNAI, AUG. 24**

A Kenyan national, who visited India to pursue his higher studies but landed in jail for raping his friend, also Kenyan and doing her PG course in India, got some relief with the Madras high court reducing his life sentence to that of 10 years Rigorous Imprisonment.

Showing leniency to the student on considering his age, a division bench comprising Justices R.Subbiah and R.Pongiappan partly allowed the appeal filed by the accused, challenging

the April 2, 2019 order of the Sessions Judge, Mahila Court, Salem, convicting and sentencing the accused to life imprisonment.

Both the Kenyans visited India and did their UG in Maharashtra during 2012 and became friends. Subsequently, they moved to Salem to do their PG courses and they continued to be friends but living separately. According to the victim, on December 2, 2016, the boy came to her house at Salem and insisted that she have sexual relationship with him. On her refusal, the boy allegedly



raped her, she added. On her complaint, a case of rape was registered against him and the trial court awarded life sentence to him.

Confirming the judgment of the trial court and the conviction awarded to the

accused, the bench however modified the sentence of life imprisonment imposed by the trial court against the accused/appellant for the offence under section 376 (1) of IPC into ten years of rigorous imprisonment.

Confirming the judgment, the bench said, “We are of the view that a futile attempt had been made by the counsel for the appellant/accused to compare the contents of complaint and the deposition of the victim during trial and contend that the version of the prosecutrix was exaggerated. The prosecutrix cannot

be expected to make a parrot-like repetition of the contents of the complaint during her deposition before the trial court. The complaint was written soon after the prosecutrix was subjected to a sexual assault and therefore, there are every possibility that out of trauma and mental disturbance, she could not narrate every minuscule particulars in the complaint. However, during her deposition as PW1, she had clearly narrated the events and provided each and every minute particular to strengthen her case.



## SHORT TAKES

## Sembakkam lake conservation gets a boost

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, AUG 24

The efforts for conserving the Sembakkam lake, a water body in the city bordering Sembakkam, Chitlapakkam and Hasthinapuram, has got a major boost with Cognizant, a professional services company, and Grundfos, a global leader in advanced pump solutions and water technology, on Monday announcing Rs 4.4 crore financial support. Cognizant will contribute Rs 2.7 crore while Grundfos will chip in Rs 1.7 crore.

The new project, to be completed in a year, will help in clearing the solid wastes, silt and invasive plant species from the lake by improving its storage capacity, groundwater table and water quality.

Muthu Kumaran, head of Cognizant's Chennai operations, said the project is part of the company's commitment to a greener and healthier environment. The revival of Sembakkam lake is critical to the city's water security and resilience to floods and drought', he said.

"Our support towards restoration of the Sembakkam Lake is part of our motto to provide quality life to all. Being part of restoration efforts of this lake, we are not only strengthening its ecosystem, but also connecting people with nature", said Poul Due Jensen, executive vice-president, Grundfos.

## Held for watching woman bathe

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, AUG 24

A 38-year-old man was arrested on Sunday for allegedly watching a woman bathe at Nagalkeni in Chromepet.

According to police, the incident took place on Sunday afternoon, when a 26-year-old woman was taking bath at her residence. While bathing, she found a man was watching her through the ventilator. She rushed outside and informed her husband, who caught the accused, Moorthy(38) of Villupuram district who was working in a construction site near the woman's house. He was beaten up by the family and the residents before being handed over to the police.

The Shankar Nagar police registered a case and remanded him to judicial custody.

Governor Purohit on Monday congratulated paralympian Mariyappan Thangavelu on his selection for the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award this year, saying "we are proud of him."

## Quarantine rule forces flyers to skip city airport

P.A. JEBARAJ | DC  
CHENNAI, AUG 24

The Chennai airport, known for high passenger traffic, looks nearly empty now as the Indian-Tamil passengers who arrive by the Vande Bharat Mission flights from abroad opt to land at airports in other cities in the country to avoid the mandatory seven-day institutional quarantine. This happens because the state government has not implemented the new standard operating procedure formulated by the Union Ministry of health. The new protocol allows home quarantine for those with a Covid-19 negative certificate.

According to airport sources, an Air India flight under the Vande Bharat Mission from Abu Dhabi landed at the Chennai airport on Sunday night with no pas-

## THIS ABSENCE OF UNIFORMITY IN POLICY IS IMPACTING MANY INTERNATIONAL FLYERS

sengers. The flight departed from Abu Dhabi with 110 passengers. However, all the flyers got down at Vijayawada and reached Tamil Nadu by domestic flight or by road, fearing the mandatory institutional quarantine in the state.

Similarly, four flights departed from different countries with 408 passengers. However, only 139 passengers landed at Chennai airport, while 269 passengers got down at Delhi, Vijayawada and Hyderabad airports.

Earlier this month, the Union Health Ministry issued a set of revised guidelines for international arrivals wherein passengers flying to India from August 8 can skip the

institutional quarantine if they submit Covid-19 negative test report. According to the guidelines, the test should be conducted within 96 hours before undertaking the journey. On providing the test result on arrival, international flyers can seek exemption from institutional quarantine.

Earlier, all international passengers had to undergo mandatory seven days of institutional quarantine at their own cost, followed by seven days of isolation at home. However, as per the revised guidelines, from August 8, if a passenger gets exemption based on the Covid-19 negative test result as mentioned above, he or she will need to undergo home quaran-

time for 14 days.

However, the protocol was not implemented in the state due to the increasing Covid-19 cases. The TN Government said that there will be no change in the quarantine rules yet. Though passengers have negative certificates, they will still be quarantined at institutional facilities.

This absence of uniformity in policy is impacting many international flyers. Some are forced to get down at different airports in the country to avoid state quarantine and several other passengers who did not know that the state government is not following the new SOP by the Centre are spending money to get Covid-19 negative tests abroad to avoid institutional quarantine, only to find they will have to undergo institutional quarantine upon arrival.

## NOTED FILMMAKER RAJ NO MORE

Kochi/Chennai, Aug 24 Noted Malayalam filmmaker A. B. Raj, also known as A. Bhaskar Raj, who had been active in the world of movies for over three decades since 1951, died at his residence in Chennai on Sunday, film industry sources said.

The 95-year-old director died of cardiac arrest, according to his son-in-law Ponvannan. Raj is survived by three children, including noted actor Saranya Ponvannan.

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan condoled his death.

Born in Madurai in 1925, Raj started his film career in the late 1940s under the guidance of T R Sundaram. He went to Sri Lanka in 1951 and during his 10-year-long stay in the island nation, directed 11 Sinhalese movies, FEFFA (Film Employees Federation of Kerala) Directors' Union said in a statement. Condoling his demise, FEFFA Directors' Union said the veteran filmmaker parents belonged to Alappuzha. — PTI

## GOLD WORTH ₹36.8 L SEIZED

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, AUG 24

The Chennai air customs at the airport seized gold worth ₹36.8 lakh on Monday. According to a statement from the department, three passengers belonging to Andhra Pradesh who arrived from Riyadh by Indigo flight 6E-8762 were intercepted at the exit of customs arrival hall on suspicion of carrying gold. On search two gold bars, each weighing 116 grams of 24k purity, were recovered from their trouser pockets. Total six gold bars weighing 696 grams valued Rs. 36.8 lakhs were recovered and seized under the Customs Act 1962. Further investigation is under way.

## Honour for HM



R. C. Saraswathi, headmistress of Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Ashok Nagar, distributes free textbooks to class 11 students on Monday. She has bagged the national award 2020.

—DC

## Centre's hearing on NEP an eyewash: Kani

M. ARULOLI | DC  
THOOTHUKUDI, AUG 24

Union education minister Ramesh Pokhriyal inviting suggestions from teachers on the implementation of the New Education Policy - 2020 is merely an eye wash, said DMK MP Kanimozhi Karunanidhi.

Complaining that not even a single suggestion of the Opposition parties, especially the DMK was considered, Kanimozhi said that the Union ministry seeking suggestion from teachers and school principals on the implementation of NEP was just a hood-winking exercise.

She also said that NEP - 2020 was against social justice and the three-language formula proposed in the new education policy, aimed at imposing Hindi on non-Hindi speaking states, which is an infringement of the rights of the states.

Kanimozhi also found fault with the state government's approach to contain Corona spread. Complaining that the elected representatives of the Opposition parties in the state were deliberately

## 'Union secy's letter on NEP violation of law'

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, AUG 24

Slamming the secretary, Union department of school education and literacy, for sending letter to the school education secretary of all states/union territories inviting suggestions from school teachers / principals on NEP 2020 implementation, an educational expert in the state has stated that the letter was a clear violation of federal principles enshrined in the Constitution and it will make many laws with regard to education, enacted by the state legislatures, infructuous.

P. B. Prince Gajendra Babu, State Platform for

Common School System-Tamil Nadu (SPCSS-TN), general secretary, has warned that the NEP will deprive the right of state governments to frame its policies or enact laws concerning education. He added that the secretary had bypassed the state government. NEP 2020 was released without tabling in the Parliament, said Babu.

He said the Tamil Nadu government has not made its stand on NEP 2020 so far. Even before the state government decides on the policy issue, teachers who are the employees of the state government, were asked to give suggestions for the policy implementation.

prevented from participating in the Chief Minister Edappadi K Palanisami's review meetings in the districts on anti-corona measures, Kanimozhi questioned, if the chief

minister was discussing ways and means to check corona infection in the review meetings, or if he was launching his party's campaign for the 2021 assembly elections.

## IIT: Co-composting methods developed

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, AUG 24

The researchers of Indian Institute of Technology-Madras (IIT-M) and a German university have developed 'co-composting' methods that can be used for safe disposal of toxic pharmaceutical wastewater sludge.

The research team was led by Prof. Ligy Philip, Department of Civil Engineering, Ms. Anu Rachel Thomas and Prof. Martin Kranert from the Germany-based Institute for Sanitary Engineering, Water Quality and Solid Waste Management, Stuttgart University.

They have already established composting facilities in various villages across India based on their method through which stabilized compost can be obtained within 20 days.

The research team, whose study paper was published recently in the prestigious peer-reviewed

journal 'Waste Management', is also in discussion with the Government of India for setting up more such facilities for septage management.

Prof. Philip said that even though pharmaceuticals and personal care products were less susceptible to biodegradation, the addition of mixed organic waste and coir pith (bulking agent) during septage composting provided an appropriate conducive environment for significant carbamazepine removal. "Therefore, in-vessel 'co-composting' of septage can be considered as a resource recovery option for septage treatment. Our study reveals that more than 80 percent of triclosan and carbamazepine removal occurred during both single and multiple pollutant degradation at an environmental concentration of 5 mg per kg of dry weight," she said.

## SHEKHAR SEEKS ADVANCE BAIL

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, AUG 24

Apprehending arrest in connection with a case registered for insulting and dishonoring the national flag through his speech via YouTube on August 3, 2020, actor-turned-politician S.Ve.Shekhar has approached the Madras high court, seeking anticipatory bail.

Justice A.D.Jagdish Chandra before whom the petition filed by S.Ve.Shekhar came up for hearing, adjourned it to August 28, 2020, after state public prosecutor A.Natarajan vehemently opposed the same.

When the case came up for hearing on Monday, state public prosecutor A.Natarajan submitted that Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami had condemned only the act of putting saffron cloth on the statue of former Chief Minister M.G. Ramachandran. But whereas S.Ve.Shekhar is giving a different picture and also giving a different meaning to the tricolor national flag as if saffron colour denotes Hindus, while white colour denotes Christian and green colour denotes Muslims. The constitutional meaning of our tricolor flag is not as if S.Ve.Shekhar stated but the saffron colour denotes the strength and courage of the country, white colour denotes peace and truth and green colour denotes the growth and auspiciousness of the land. 41A notice has been issued to the accused and he also appeared before the police today. He was asked to come for enquiry once again on August 28 and further enquiry was needed in this matter. Insulting our national flag is amounting to criminal act, Natarajan added.

— DC

## Post IAS officer in non-sensitive post: HC

J. STALIN | DC  
CHENNAI, AUG 24

Deprecating the incorrect statement made by an IAS officer before the court in the matter relating to compassionate appointment, the Madras high court has said though it is a fit case to impose costs of not less than ₹10,000 on the then commissioner (Chennai corporation), namely R.Lalitha, IAS, this court refrains itself from doing so, instead it is directed that she shall be posted only in non-sensitive post.

Allowing the petition filed by K.Padmanabhan, who was denied compassionate appointment by the Chennai corporation, Justice S.Vaidyanathan directed the Chennai corporation to provide employment to him on compassionate ground on or before the end of November 2020 and in case, the petitioner is not provided employment on or before the expiry date, he is deemed to have entered in service from September 1, 2020, and he is entitled to the salary of last grade employee, which could be recovered from the Officer responsible to comply with the order.

According to petitioner, his mother, who had been working as a sweeper in Chennai corporation had died in harness on August 27, 2002 and at that time, the petitioner was 24 years old. When he had approached the authorities for compassionate appointment on account of his mother's death while in service, he was informed that pursuant to the ban for new recruitment by the government, he cannot be



appointed. Subsequent to the lifting of ban, he sent several petitions with the request for providing government employment on compassionate grounds, in response to which, the assistant commissioner, Zone-V, Chennai corporation, by his letter asked the petitioner to produce required documents for consideration. Despite production of all documents, there was no response from the authorities and finally his request was rejected, he added.

The commissioner, Corporation of Chennai, filed a counter affidavit stating that after the death of the father of the petitioner, his mother was given employment and after her demise on August 27, 2002, the petitioner submitted his representation in September and November 2008, which were not within three years from the date of death of his mother as per G.O dated April 11, 2008. It was further stated that the assistant executive engineer, Unit-15, addressed a letter to the tahsildar, Mylapore, for production of details with regard to the petitioner's property and family, which has not been received either from the tahsildar or from the petitioner. Hence, since the petitioner

failed to submit his representation in time and also to produce the certificate sought for by the authorities, his request was declined, the counter added.

The judge said it was no doubt true that the compassionate appointment cannot be demanded as a matter of right and only to safeguard the family, which was in distress on account of demise of the employee/earning member of the family and to come out from the indigenous circumstances, such appointments were widely made, though it was construed to be a back door entry. However, a reading of the averments made in the affidavit as well as in the counter affidavit projects that this case stands on a different footing. The petitioner was 32 years of age at the time of filing the petition and the plea taken by the authorities that he was 42 years now and his request cannot be considered at this distant point of time cannot be accepted, as he cannot alone be blamed for the pendency of the matter for such long years. Admittedly, the petitioner lost his father, when he was young and his mother was given compassionate appointment and after her death, he made an application in the year 2008. Though the argument put forth by the counsel for the authorities that there was a ban only for recruitment and the petitioner should have sent the application at least within three years of her demise, sounds good, it was not known as to why the assistant commissioner sent a communication to the petitioner in the year 2008 for

ing the EMI till now, despite several other expenses.

Recently, I suffered a fracture on my left leg also and was admitted to a private hospital, adding to the debt pile up of my younger son."

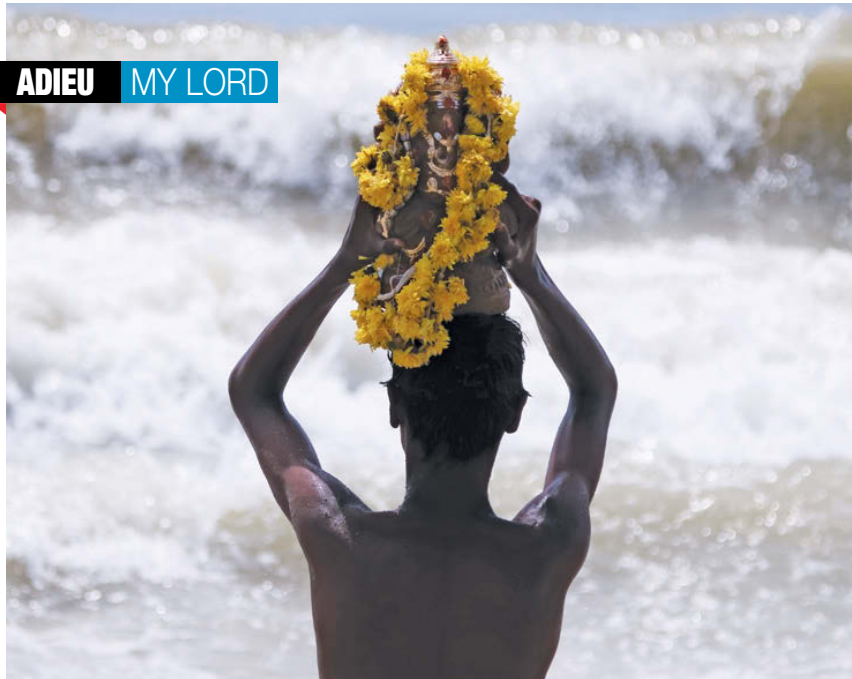
My elder son, Manikam, had prepared fake documents with the help of a notary and received advance money from 22 persons against the land. Knowing about his illegal efforts, I have handed over a petition to the collector seeking action against Manikam," she added.

production of various documents apart from directly addressing a letter to the tahsildar on January 30, 2009, to verify and report as to whether the petitioner's family was really in indigenous circumstances. In response to the said letter, the tahsildar also sent a communication along with a certificate to the corporation, explaining the indigenous circumstances. Therefore, the rejection mainly on the ground of non production of the certificate as could be seen from the counter affidavit, cannot stand in the eye of law, the judge added.

The judge said in the typed set of papers, the petitioner has annexed the certificate forwarded by the tahsildar directly to the assistant executive engineer, Unit-15, and having duly received the same by the corporation, the contra statement made by the commissioner, Corporation of Chennai in the counter affidavit was highly deprecated. "M/s R.Latha, IAS, who was the then commissioner I/c made such an incorrect statement in the counter affidavit.

Of course, though the counter affidavit would have been drafted by her subordinate with the assistance of the counsel for the corporation, being an IAS officer, it was her bounden duty to ascertain the entire facts before ascribing her signature.

Therefore, this court is of the view that for no fault of the petitioner, he cannot be made to languish for more than a decade and he is entitled to be appointed on compassionate ground," the judge added.



A man takes a small idol of Vinayaka for immersion in the Bay on Monday.



## OTHER STORY

## Pondy minister urges Rahul Gandhi to take over AICC leadership

Puducherry, Aug 24: Puducherry PWD Minister and former PCC chief A Namassivayam on Monday appealed to Rahul Gandhi to take over leadership of the Congress party. "Rahul Gandhi has the unparalleled efficiency and capability to guide the destiny of the party and also to effectively question the anti-people rule by the Bharatiya Janata party-led NDA government at the Centre," he said in a press release. He said Rahul Gandhi should become the AICC leader once again in the larger interest of promoting the well-being of the people.

Namassivayam said Rahul Gandhi possessed all the leadership qualities and is an embodiment of the proficiency of great stalwarts of the party who had guided its destiny. "Rahul Gandhi should don the leadership of AICC so that the anti-people style of functioning of the NDA government could be effectively tackled. Rahul Gandhi is an unparalleled and dedicated leader who can run the party with utmost dedication and hence he should don the leadership of the party," he added.

—PTI



## TN's number one state in healthcare, says CM

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, AUG 24

Tamil Nadu, where 99 per cent of the deliveries were conducted in hospitals, was the number one state in various aspects of healthcare, Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami said on Monday.

In his address at the 15th convocation of Saveetha Deemed University, through video conference, Palaniswami said the Chief Minister's Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme was a pioneering scheme in the country.

Listing out the various measures made on the health front, he said the state had been holding the number one position in organ transplant. Even a pair of hands were recently transplanted at the Stanley Medical College Hospital, he said.

His government had added 254 public health centres (PHC) to the medical infrastructure in the State and 165 PHCs had been upgraded with 30 bed and scan facilities. In all government hospitals Linear Accelerator had been installed for Cancer treatment, Palaniswami said.

The state had emerged as the 'medical capital' of India and had thus contributed to the develop-



CM Edappadi K. Palaniswami addressing the Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences' convocation on Monday.

—DC

## 843 STUDENTS CONFERRED DEGREES AT SIMATS' E-CONVOCATION ON MONDAY

ment of medical tourism in view of its wide range of facilities, he said.

He explained the various steps taken by the government in developing medical education in the state, particularly its efforts in bringing one government medical college in every district.

Lauding the Saveetha deemed university and thanking the medical college for extending support to the government in

its fight against the Coronavirus, Palaniswami said what started in 1988 with a model dental college had now grown into a deemed university offering a wide range of courses including medicine, engineering and science.

In all, 843 eligible and meritorious students including 20 Ph.D scholars, 224 medicine, 81 BE/BTech, 358 other health science, 136 den-

istry and 17 law students were conferred degrees at the e-convocation.

Dr N.M.Veerian, chancellor & founder, presided over the convocation function, congratulated the young graduates and delivered the presidential address.

He advised students to rise to the occasion and make their parents and the college proud by achieving greater career prospects.

Prof Dr Rakesh Kumar Sharma, vice chancellor, welcomed the graduates and shared the growth initiatives and achievements of the institution in his annual report.

## Stalin wants Neet, JEE put off

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, AUG 24

DMK president M. K. Stalin urged the Union Minister of Education Ramesh Pokhriyal to postpone the National Eligibility Cum Entrance Test (Neet) and the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) 2020 in view of the difficulties faced by the students appearing for the examinations.

In a letter to Pokhriyal, Stalin urged that no decision should be made in haste putting the lives of students at stake and said the government should act keeping the well-being and future of students in mind and postpone the exams until Covid-19 was brought under control.

'Apart from the havoc wreaked by COVID-19, many parts are yet to recover from the recent floods that ravaged people's livelihoods. Students and parents are under enormous mental stress, trying to cope up with the testing times,' he said.

Stalin said, 'With the present restrictions on public transport, the allotted exam centres are not uniformly accessible to all and it will not be possible for students belonging to rural areas and less-privileged sections to reach the exam centres. They will be put under a great disadvantage against their affluent counterparts.'

## ..hits back at BJP chief

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, AUG 24

DMK president M. K. Stalin lashed out at BJP chief J. P. Nadda for targeting the DMK, instead of giving constructive advice to his party members, while addressing his party's State executive through video conference on Monday.

BJP was the party that stood against Tamil culture and national integration, Stalin said in a statement, recalling an earlier undemocratic remark by BJP leader Muralidhar Rao that the BJP would not allow M K Stalin to become the Chief Minister.

The arrogance of holding power at the Centre had led to the BJP stifling democracy from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and attacking the DMK by riding on the back of the State government, which was just a puppet in its hands, Stalin said.

Taking objection to Nadda's remarks at the

To prove his point he stated that around 35,000 students could not appear for the Higher Secondary Class examination conducted by the Tamil Nadu government on March 24, 2020.

Around 25 lakh students were expected to sit for this year's Neet and JEE and the



meeting that DMK was anti-development and nationalism, Stalin said DMK was a democratic party having deep belief in development and nationalism and striving hard to protect democratic norms and uphold the basic freedom of the people.

He recalled that the party stood up against Emergency and paid a price for it by losing power and said that the BJP had now imposed an undeclared Emergency. States powers were being

National Testing Agency (NTA) had made it mandatory for them to give an undertaking that they were neither Covid-19 positive nor had any symptoms for the same, he said.

"However, in light of the fact that most of the infected population in India remains

taken away, the country's plurality had been defaced, a dominant language was being imposed over others' mother tongue and social justice was being undermined, Stalin said.

Accusing the BJP of locking up political leaders who raise their voice for democracy in their homes and putting in jail under draconian laws social activists, intellectuals who speak in favour of freedom of expression and writers, he said.

The basic duty of democracy was to raise ones' voice against all these and it was the responsibility of the DMK, which was the third largest party in Parliament, he said.

It was a cheap tactic of BJP leaders to term as anti-Indians and anti-nationals all those who speak the truth aloud and ask for their rights and the BJP chief was not an exemption, Stalin said and added that the Constitution described India as an Union of States.

asymptomatic, demanding self-declaration from the students does not seem to be effective in any possible way. If those appearing for the exams contract the virus, there are high possibilities of witnessing another wave of infections across the country," Stalin warned.

## MINS TRYING TO BOOST THEIR IMAGE, SAYS NEHRU

DC CORRESPONDENT  
TIRUCHY, AUG 24

Ministers Sellur K Raju and R B Udhayakumar who often claim that Madurai should be the second capital of the state, are doing so to boost their political image with an eye on the coming LS election, said DMK principal secretary, MLA K N Nehru.

Speaking to newsmen here on Monday on the sidelines of various functions for distributing welfare measures to the needy from his local area development fund, Nehru pointed out that late Chief Minister MGR wanted that Tiruchy to be made second capital of the state.

If we create a new capital, at least Rs 10,000 crore is needed for developing infrastructure facilities, but the AIADMK government will not be able to create a second capital, said Nehru.

On the other hand, if DMK president and leader of Opposition M K Stalin becomes the Chief Minister, he would surely create a second capital for Tamil Nadu, he added.

## NEURO-SURGEON CREMATED

DCCORRESPONDENT  
THANJAVUR, AUG 24

The body of noted neuro-surgeon of Thanjavur, Dr S Vanjilangam (77), who died of Corona in Chennai on Sunday, was cremated at his native village Vikaramam in Pattukottai taluk, on Monday. He had 25 years of experience and was practising in the field of neurology, and was the founder of Dr Vanchilingam hospital and Karthik Scans and Diagnostics.

DC CORRESPONDENT  
THANJAVUR, AUG 24

The Tamil Nadu Vivasaya Thozhilalargal Sangam affiliated to CPI(M) here has appealed to the state government to open government schools and conduct classes in three shifts to help students in rural areas who

## For Udhayanidhi trouble starts with Vinayaka

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR |  
DC  
CHENNAI, AUG 24

The popular belief that Lord Vinayaka is the remover of obstacles notwithstanding, a photograph of a Vinayaka idol opened a Pandora's Box of troubles for Udhayanidhi Stalin, the DMK's youth wing secretary, on Monday.

Social media was abuzz with virulent attacks, sarcasm, jokes and comments for about 16 hours and Udhayanidhi had to return to the same Twitter platform, where it all started, with a detailed explanation on his religious faith and how his mother celebrated Vinayaka Chaturthi.

In what looked like a post midnight tweet, Udhayanidhi carried a close up shot of a clay idol being held by a child whose face was not visible. There was no accompanying comment or caption. But the day broke with a spate of comments from all quarters, particularly DMK supporters expressing their sentiments over their great



leader's grandson being 'a Vinayaka devotee.'

So, after all the social media activists went to town with their running down of the DMK leader, he explained in unequivocal terms that he and his wife were not believers and that the picture of his daughter holding the idol close to her was taken because she was fascinated by the idol.

He said that they had a pooja room in their house where photographs of their ancestors and idols of some of his mother's favourite Gods - that his mother is a believer is a well-known fact - would be placed. For Vinayaka Chaturthi his mother had bought the idol and worshipped it.

Since his daughter wanted the photograph to be taken with it when she was told that it would be



Members of the public welcome the flood waters in Palar river near Vaniyambadi in Tirupattur district with flowers on Monday, following heavy showers in the region.

—K. Senthil Nathan

## Statue opening: DMK men defy curfew norms

B. RAVICHANDRAN | DC  
OOTY, AUG 24

A function organized on Monday at the DMK office here to unveil the bust of party patriarch and late chief minister M Karunanidhi, saw functionaries and cadres flouting curfew and social distancing norms, as they participated in the event.

While DMK president M K Stalin unveiled the bust through video-conferencing from Chennai, the event saw a large array of party cadres thronging the ground floor of the party office premises here, where the bust was

installed.

Though the cadre wore masks, some of them lifted the masks for a while for photographers, flouting social distancing norms and over-crowding in violation of Section 144.

Senior member, Citizens' Forum of Coonoor, S Ananthakrishnan, wanted the DMK leadership to take note of this to initiate action against the party functionaries who failed to heed to the curfew restrictions.

"When DMK president Stalin had been preaching to the government on Corona crisis and criticiz-

ing the government for alleged violations during the curfew all these months, now he owed an answer to the public on why his party cadre in the Nilgiris were not taking his advisory seriously," he said, and added that the government also should question the police here for obviously turning a blind eye to the situation.

Earlier, such a chaos happened in July when "bhoomi puja" was performed for the government medical college construction here, wherein AIADMK cadre and officials breached curfew norms, he noted.

## Give govt jobs for Tamils, say VCK

DC CORRESPONDENT  
ARIYALUR, AUG 24

A section of volunteers of the Viduthalaai Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK) led by party's Ariyalur district secretary, M Selvanambi, staged a demonstration in front of the residence of party president Thol Thirumavalavan at Anaganur village here on Monday, demanding that Tamil Nadu government jobs should be given only to Tamil people. Speaking on the occasion, Thol Thirumavalavan wanted the interference of people from other states in Tamil Nadu government jobs, should be prevented and the entire opportunity should go to the people of

● The interference of people from other states in TN government jobs should be prevented

Tamil Nadu by giving priority to Tamils in TNPSA exams. Later, he told newsmen that the government should ensure that 90 per cent of government jobs are given to Tamil people. He urged the Union government to withdraw its 'One nation - One examination' policy, and ensure avoiding jobs to north Indians in factories like NLC, railways etc., but give priority to job opportunities for Tamil people within the state.

## SBI'S LITERACY CAMPS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
ARIYALUR, AUG 24

The State Bank of India's rural self employment training institutes (RSETIs) Ariyalur and Thoothukudi, recently conducted Virtual Financial Literacy camps through the virtual mode. An SBI release said on Monday that officials of RBI, NABARD and SBI head office explained various bank schemes and government schemes to customers and non-customers, students, self-help group members, in these areas. The RSETIs have been in existence since 2011 and have been conducting regular training sessions since then. Since physical meetings are not possible during Covid-19 days, virtual camps are now being arranged on a regular basis, it added.

● Popular playback singer SPB, fighting Covid, continues to be on ventilator and Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation support and his current condition is stable: Hospital

## BJP prez Nadda attacks DMK

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, AUG 24

Launching a virulent attack on the DMK, BJP national president J. P. Nadda on Monday said that party was protecting people who were not working for the nation and were inciting the feelings of others against the spirit of the nation.

Addressing the BJP state executive meeting via video conference, Nadda urged the people to not vote for the DMK in the next election as the party did not allow the assimilation into the national mainstream and was confident that the BJP would win more seats in the local body and Assembly elections. He cited the construction of the temple for Lord Ram in Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh and the withdrawal of special status for Jammu and Kashmir as two big things that party members should use to highlight the idea that India was one from Kashmir to Kanyakumari.

Calling upon the people to ensure that divisive forces did not become strong in the State, he referred to Karuppar Kootam, the promoters of the Youtube channel that allegedly denigrated the hymns sung in praise



State BJP president L. Murugan addresses the party's executive committee meeting in the city on Monday.

—DC

of Lord Murugan, 'Kantha Shasthi Kavacham.'

Urging the State unit to counter elements like Karuppar Kootam by coming up with matching content, he asked his party members devise mechanisms to win elections, favouring WhatsApp groups at the level of the booth committees to take the speeches of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other BJP leaders

to the people.

The WhatsApp groups should discuss national, regional and local issues, emphasising on youth, women, tribal people, Dalits and people at the grassroots and try to bring them to the mainstream he said.

Tamil Nadu, which had been talking about Tamil language, should know that the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aimed at

encouraging education through one's mother tongue. He regretted that the NEP was being opposed for imposition of Hindi by the DMK and also the ruling AIADMK.

Nadda asked his party members to talk about NEP to the people and also to do a deeper study into it to ensure that the people of the state were brought into the national mainstream.



## SHORT TAKES

PAK VIOLATES  
CEASEFIRE  
AGAINYUSUF JAMEEL | DC  
SRINAGAR, AUG. 24

The Army on Monday said that the Pakistani troops again targeted the Indian forward areas with small arms and mortar guns in Rajouri district along the Line of Control (LoC) earlier during the day.

A defence spokesman in Jammu said that the Indian Army retaliated “befittingly” to the “unprovoked ceasefire violation” by using the same caliber weapons.

The spokesman said that the firing and shelling from across the de facto border in Sunderbani sector of Rajouri started at 1.30 pm and was going on when reports last came in.

“Pakistan initiated the unprovoked ceasefire violation by firing with small arms and shelling with mortars,” he said adding that there was no immediate report of any casualty on the Indian side.

The police sources said that the Army together with J&K police, Border Security Force and various Central armed police forces have beefed the security up in frontier districts of entire Jammu region including Kathua, Samba, Jammu, Poonch and Rajouri to ensure that no militants sneak in these areas from across the LoC or International Border.

'INCLUDE ARABIC  
IN NEP FOREIGN  
LANGUAGE LIST'ATHER MOIN | DC  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 24

The All India Muslim Educational Society has written to Union education minister Dr Ramesh Nishank Pokhriyal expressing surprise over the exclusion of Arabic while mentioning foreign languages in National Education Policy.

Society general secretary M.S. Farooq requested the minister to consider the aspirations of crores of citizens and continue offering Arabic to students as an option and choice at secondary level.

He said the policy document speaks about multilingualism, diversity, inclusion, flexibility, learning about the cultures of the world to enrich global language and mobility. The NEP lists English and eight foreign languages with the population that speaks the language mentioned in brackets, namely Korean (72 million), Japanese (130 million), Thai (50 million), French (275 million), German (220 million), Spanish (437 million), Portuguese (270 million) and Russian (144 million) at the secondary level for study, excluding Arabic (400 million).

K'TAKA TO BE  
FIRST STATE TO  
IMPLEMENT NEP

**Bengaluru, Aug. 24:** Karnataka would become the first state in the country to implement the new National Education Policy, Deputy Chief Minister Dr. C. N. Ashwath Narayan said on Monday.

“The state government is making all preparations to bring in administrative reforms and amendments to the laws which are essential to implement the national education policy.

The state would become the first state in the country to implement the policy,” Narayan, who holds the portfolio of higher education, said while addressing the inaugural session of a five-day online workshop on “Highlights of the national education policy and its implementation.”

The workshop is being organised by the Bangalore University.

The Deputy Chief Minister said the state government is going ahead with regard to this with specific goals and a clear agenda.

“A high-level task force was constituted immediately after the draft of the policy reached us and this committee has already held several meetings,” he added.

According to him, the committee has already come out with suggestions to implement the policy in a phased manner and only the recommendations of the final stage are awaited.

The administrative and legal steps would be taken as soon as the final recommendations are made, he explained.

The new policy would make high quality education available to all students benefitting the whole system with quality teaching, Narayan said.

## Rahul fumes over timing of the letter

Former Congress chief says leaders should discuss differences in party platforms and not in media

IF RAHUL WANTS,  
WE WILL QUIT  
GOVT: MAHA  
CONG MINISTERDC CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI, AUG. 24

While several Congress leaders from Maha-rashtra expressed their faith in Rahul Gandhi's leadership, state minister Vijay Wadettiwar said that the Congress will even get out of the power in Maharashtra if Mr Gandhi doesn't want to continue alliance with Shiv Sena.

Mr Wadettiwar, who joined the Congress from Shiv Sena in 2005, said the Gandhi family has the capacity to lead the country and that Rahul Gandhi should be reinstated as the party president.

“The Congress party epitomises true democratic values, hence the letter written by some party leaders to Sonia Gandhi over demand for a full-time president should not be seen as opposition to current leadership,” he said.

Asked if Rahul Gandhi asked the Maharashtra Congress to snap ties with the Shiv Sena, Mr Wadettiwar said, “If he asks us to leave the government, we will do it immediately. We will not stay with the government one more day.”

KAMAL NATH  
WANTS SONIA  
AS CONG CHIEFRABINDRA NATH  
CHOUDHURY | DC  
BHOPAL, AUG. 24

Amid ongoing churning in Congress over leadership issue, former chief minister Kamal Nath on Monday threw his weight behind party's interim president Sonia Gandhi unequivocally to continue as the chief.

Mr Nath, without the slightest hesitation, said Ms Gandhi should continue to lead the party, while fielding a question by reporters on the issue.

“I have already made it clear that Ms Gandhi should head the party”, he said.

The Congress veteran, whose proximity to the Nehru-Gandhi family being a ‘buddy’ of late Sanjay Gandhi is well known in Delhi political circles, ran a series of tweets a little past midnight on Sunday, to express his unambiguous support to Ms Gandhi to lead the party at this juncture. “It is nonsense to question Ms Gandhi's leadership and suggest for alternative to her (to head the party). I appeal to her to continue to lead the party to strengthen it”, he tweeted.

17 injured as bldg  
collapses in Maha;  
70 feared trappedDC CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI, AUG. 24

Seventeen persons were injured after a five-storeyed residential building collapsed in Maharashtra's Raigad district on Monday.

Around 70 people are feared trapped in the debris after the building, which was around 10 years old, collapsed at Kajalpura in Mahad tehsil around 7pm.

There were around 45 flats in the building, an official said, adding 25 persons have been rescued and shifted to a local hospital at Mahad, which is around 170 km from Mumbai.

Teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) have been moved to the spot for rescue operations.

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray spoke to the district officials and asked them to expedite



A file photo of senior Congress leaders Kapil Sibal and Ghulam Nabi Azad. Sibal and Azad rebutted after Rahul Gandhi charged that the letter seeking leadership changes was written in cahoots with the BJP, during a CWC meeting on Monday.

-PTI

5 chiefs from Nehru-Gandhi family,  
13 from outside since Independence

**New Delhi, Aug. 24:** As a leadership crisis grips the Congress, experts having chronicled the country's oldest political party said on Monday that it may be theoretically possible for the party to have a president outside the Nehru-Gandhi family, but not practically.

The party's history shows that it has had at least 13 presidents from outside the Nehru-Gandhi clan since Independence as against five from its first family.

However, the family members have been at the helm for a much longer period of time as against the others.

Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi have headed the party for the majority of the period since Independence.

Sonia Gandhi, who has been its longest-serving president, offered to quit at a stormy CWC meeting on Monday after a letter from more than 20 party leaders sought organisational reforms and a collective leadership, but she was urged to stay on as the interim chief till a full-

● **AMONG THE** leaders outside the Nehru-Gandhi family, J. B. Kripalani, B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Purushottam Das Tandon, U. N. Dhebar, N. Sanjiva Reddy, K. Kamaraj, S. Nijalingappa, Jagjivan Ram, Shankar Dayal Sharma, D.K. Barooah, K B Reddy, P.V. Narasimha Rao and Sitaram Kesri among others have headed the party.

time president is appointed.

Among the leaders outside the Nehru-Gandhi family, J. B. Kripalani, B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Purushottam Das Tandon, U. N. Dhebar, N. Sanjiva Reddy, K. Kamaraj, S. Nijalingappa, Jagjivan Ram, Shankar Dayal Sharma, D.K. Barooah, K B Reddy, P.V. Narasimha Rao and Sitaram Kesri have headed the party.

The debate over whether a person from outside the Gandhi family was re-

ignited last week when Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, in a year-old but recently published interview, endorsed her brother Rahul Gandhi's stand on a non-Gandhi president for the Congress, saying there are plenty of people capa-

ble of leading the party.

Rasheed Kidwai, senior journalist and writer of the book *24 Akbar Road*, said the key issue before the party today is about the political leadership which has always been with the Nehru-Gandhi family.

“In the first general election, the slogan was ‘A vote for Nehru is a vote for the Congress’. Even 2004 onwards, Sonia Gandhi wielded the political leadership that now resides with Sonia, Rahul and Priyanka. So the political leadership of the Congress has by and large always been with the Gandhis and even non-Gandhi presidents have owed allegiance to them,” he said.

Asked if a non-Gandhi can run the party with the Gandhi family retaining the overall leadership, he said, “Theoretically yes, practically no.” Sanjay Kumar, Director at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, said the tenure of Gandhi family presidents cannot be compared with non-Gandhi family presidents as there would be stark difference in the quantum

of tenures.

“A person from the Gandhi family is both an asset and a liability for the party. The person would be an asset as he/she acts as a glue for the party which keeps the party together. They are also a liability and that liability is coming to the fore more prominently now as the Gandhi family has not been able to inspire voters and leaders of the party,” Kumar said.

He opined that it is going to be very difficult for a non-Gandhi president to function in the prevailing situation as various factions could emerge and the pulls and pressures would be very high.

Sanjay K. Pandey, a political commentator and a professor at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), echoed similar views, saying it will be very difficult for a non-Gandhi president to work with the family having a dominant imprint on the party.

“Unless the Congress devises a mechanism to deal with such a scenario, the future of the party is not very bright,” he said.

-PTI

TS: No of Covid  
tests comes downDC CORRESPONDENTS  
AUG. 24

**Hyderabad:** The number of tests fell to 36,282 on Sunday, from more than 40,000 in the previous two days, according to data released by the health department in its Covid-19 bulletin on Monday. A total of 9,68,121 tests have been carried out so far.

There were 1,842 new cases and six deaths recorded in the state on August 23, taking the total to 1,06,091 and 761 deaths. Active cases are at 22,919 and those under treatment in home isolation are 16,482.

**AP adds 8,601 more cases, 86 deaths**

**Vijayawada:** Andhra Pradesh on Monday registered 8,601 new Covid-19 cases scaling up tally to 3,61,712 and 86 deaths taking the toll to 3,368 in the last 24 hours.

Among the new confirmed Coronavirus infec-

tions, East Godavari continues to lead with 1,441 followed by 965 in Nellore, 933 in Anantapur and 911 in Visakhapatnam.

**Kerala Covid caseload is close to 60K**

**Thiruvananthapuram:** Kerala added 1,242 new Covid-19 cases on Monday, taking the total number of infections to 59,503, while the death toll climbed to 234 with 11 fatalities. At present 20,323 people are undergoing treatment. The districts which reported over 100 cases include Thiruvananthapuram (182), Malappuram (169), and Ernakulam (165).

**130 deaths, 5,851 new cases in Karnataka**

**Bengaluru:** Karnataka on Monday reported 130 deaths due to Covid-19, pushing the total fatalities to 4,810 even as it saw 5,851 fresh coronavirus cases.

KAPIL SIBAL  
WITHDRAWS  
TWEET  
AGAINST RAHUL

**New Delhi, Aug. 24:** Senior Congress leader Kapil Sibal on Monday withdrew his tweet in which he had hit out at Rahul Gandhi, and said the former party chief had informed him personally that he had never made the “colluding with the BJP” remark.

Sibal is among the 23 party leaders who have written to Sonia Gandhi seeking “full-time” leadership that is active in the field and “visible” in party offices, devolution of powers to state units and revamping of the Congress Working Committee (CWC) in line with the party constitution among other changes.

As the CWC meeting was underway on Monday and it was reported that Rahul Gandhi had lashed out at the letter writers, Sibal tweeted, “Rahul says ‘we are colluding with BJP’. Succeeded in Rajasthan High Court defending the Congress Party. Defending party in Manipur to bring down BJP government.”

“Last 30 years have never made a statement in favour of BJP on any issue. Yet ‘we are colluding with the BJP!’” Sibal said a little later that he was withdrawing the tweet.

“Was informed by Rahul Gandhi personally that he never said what was attributed to him. I therefore withdraw my tweet,” he said. Sibal then deleted his earlier tweet in which he had hit out at Gandhi.

Tagging Sibal's earlier tweet, Congress' chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala also said that Rahul Gandhi hasn't said a word of this nature nor alluded to it.

“Please don't be misled by false media discourse or misinformation being spread. But yes, we all need to work together in fighting the draconian Modi rule rather than fighting & hurting each other and the Congress,” Surjewala tweeted.

Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad said a section of media is “wrongly attributing that, in CWC I told Shri Rahul Gandhi to prove that the letter written by us is in collusion with BJP-let me make it very clear that Shri Rahul Gandhi has neither in CWC nor outside said that this letter was written at the behest of BJP”.

-PTI

● **SIBAL IS** among the 23 party leaders who have written to Sonia Gandhi seeking “full-time” leadership that is active in the field.

CONGRESS IS ‘B’  
TEAM OF BJP,  
SAYS KERALA CM

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,

AUG 24

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Monday hit out at the Congress accusing it of becoming the “B” team of BJP and paving the way for the growth of ‘Hindutva’ forces in the country.

The stinging remarks came during the reply to the no trust motion moved against the CPM-led LDF Government by Congress-led Opposition UDF in Kerala Assembly.

As expected, the no-trust motion was defeated 87 to 40 votes (current strength is 138) after a marathon day-long session which concluded with Mr Vijayan's nearly four-hour long reply, the longest in the history of Kerala Assembly.

Vijayan said the Congress was ganging up with the BJP-RSS to topple the LDF government in Kerala.



## IN BRIEF

## Austria expels Russian diplomat

**Berlin:** Austria said Monday it is expelling a Russian diplomat, a decision that Russia said was “unfounded” and would draw a response from Moscow. The Austrian Foreign Ministry confirmed that a diplomat at the Russian Embassy is being ordered to leave, saying only that his behavior was not compatible with the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, the Austria Press Agency reported. The ministry said it would not give further details. Austrian daily newspaper *Kronen Zeitung* reported that the Russian diplomat has until September 1 to leave and said, without citing sources, that he allegedly had been engaged for years in economic espionage at a technology firm with the help of an Austrian citizen. In a statement posted on its website, the Russian Embassy said it was “appalled by the unfounded decision of Austrian authorities”.

## June '21 set for Iran Prez poll

**Tehran:** Iran's constitutional watchdog on Monday set June 18 as date for the country's next presidential election, a vote that will choose the successor to President Hassan Rouhani who has served two four-year terms in office. The watchdog, the Guardian Council, approved the date, Iranian election headquarters chief Jamal Orf told the official *IRNA* news agency. Candidates hoping to run in the balloting are to apply in early April for approval; the final list is to be announced in early June. Under Iranian law, an incumbent president cannot run for a third term if he has already served for two consecutive terms in office. Rouhani was first elected in 2013 and re-elected four years later. Rouhani has been under increasing pressure from the US sanctions since President Donald Trump two years ago pulled America out of the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers.

## Trump adviser Conway resigns

**Washington:** US President Donald Trump's top adviser Kellyanne Conway has resigned abruptly and will leave the White House this month to focus on her children, giving them “less drama, more mama”. Conway, 53, is among the key speakers on day three of the Republican National Convention (RNC) which begins on Monday, according to a list released by the Trump campaign. Now it is unclear if she would still speak at the convention, which will formally nominate Trump as the party's presidential candidate in the November 3 election, the US media reports said. In a statement, Conway said: “I will be transitioning from the White House at the end of this month. George (her husband) is also making changes”. Her husband George Conway, a vocal critic of President Trump, also made a similar statement on Twitter. “I'm withdrawing from Project Lincoln to devote more time to family matters. And I'll be taking a Twitter hiatus.”

## POMPEO: ARAB WORLD, ISRAEL TIES LIKELY

**Jerusalem, Aug. 24:** US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said he hoped other Arab countries would also establish diplomatic relations with Israel as he kicked off a Mideast tour on Monday to press the momentum of the Trump administration's Arab-Israeli peace push.

Pompeo spoke at a joint press conference with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem, the first stop on a multi-country tour of the region following the August 13 announcement of the historic agreement between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, brokered by Washington, to establish diplomatic ties.

“I am hopeful that we will see other Arab nations join in this,” Pompeo said. “The opportunity for them to work alongside, to recognise the state of Israel and to work alongside them will not only increase Middle East stability, but it will improve the lives for the people of their own countries as well.”

The Israel-UAE agreement delivered a key foreign policy victory to President Donald Trump as he seeks reelection and reflected a changing Middle East in which shared concerns about archenemy Iran have largely overtaken traditional Arab support for the Palestinians.



Police and military secure the site of an explosion in the town of Jolo, Sulu province, Philippines on Monday. — AP

## Philippines bombings: 14 dead, 75 wounded

Twin strikes in island that is stronghold of Islamist militants

**Jolo, Philippines, Aug. 24:** At least 14 people were killed and 75 wounded — including members of the security forces and civilians — in twin bombings Monday involving a suicide attacker on a southern Philippine island that is a stronghold of Islamist militants, officials said.

The apparently coordinated attacks happened in Jolo in Muslim-majority Sulu, where government-backed security forces have long been fighting the Abu Sayyaf group.

Seven soldiers, a police officer, and six civilians were killed in the two bombings, the first at around midday when an improvised explosive device attached to a motorcycle parked outside a supermarket

blew up, Lieutenant General Corleto Vinluan said.

That was followed by a second blast a short time later in the same street when a suicide attacker blew herself up as security forces cordoned off the area, Vinluan said.

A soldier had been trying to apprehend the bomber when she detonated her explosives, he added. A total of 48 civilians were also wounded along with 21 soldiers and six police.

A soldier saw a person leave the motorbike outside the grocery store “where there were a lot of people” including members of the military. It immediately detonated, Lieutenant Colonel Ronaldo Mateo said. “Our soldiers are conducting security opera-

tions. That was the time that the improvised explosive device detonated,” he said. Abu Sayyaf was “most probably” behind the double bombing, Mateo said.

Listed by the United States as a terrorist organisation, Abu Sayyaf is a loose network of Islamic militants blamed for the Philippines' worst terror attacks as well as kidnappings of foreign tourists and Christian missionaries.

They also have ties to Islamic State militants seeking to set up a caliphate in Southeast Asia.

Monday's attacks come after the arrest earlier this month of an Abu Sayyaf leader on the southern island of Mindanao.

Security forces had been

on alert for possible reprisal attacks after detaining Abduljihad Susukan, who is accused of kidnapping and beheading several foreigners. He has been charged with 23 murders, five kidnappings and six attempted murders, police have said. President Rodrigo Duterte's spokesman Harry Roque condemned the “dastardly attacks” and issued condolences to the families and loved ones of those killed.

“We call on the residents of Jolo to stay vigilant and report suspicious personalities and unattended items in their areas,” Roque said. The Philippine Coast Guard issued a “red alert” for Sulu and several other areas in the restive south.

— AP

## China launches advanced warship for Pakistan Navy

**Beijing/Islamabad, Aug. 24:** China has launched first of the four advanced naval warships it is building for Pakistan, amid deepening economic and defence ties between the two all-weather allies. The launching ceremony for the first warship was held at the Hudong Zhonghua Shipyard in Shanghai on Sunday.

Pakistan-China defence ties turn a new chapter with the launch of the first ship of Type-054 class frigate, Pakistan's state-run APP news agency reported. The Type-054 class, equipped with the latest surface, subsurface, anti-air weapons, combat management system, and sensors will be one of the technologically advanced surface platforms of the Pakistan Navy fleet, the report said.

Pakistan signed a contract with the China Shipbuilding Trading Company Ltd. (CSTC) for the delivery of two Type-054

A/P frigates in 2017. Last year, the Chinese official media reported that under a major arms deal between the two all-weather allies, China would build four advanced frigates for Pakistan Navy.

The terms of the deal and the price of the ships were not revealed. The launching of the ship coincided with the 2nd strategic dialogue between Foreign Minister of China Wang Yi and his Pakistani counterpart Shah Mahmood Qureshi held at the Chinese holiday resort of Hainan on August 21.

Meanwhile in Islamabad, Foreign Minister Qureshi said on Monday that China and Pakistan were strategic partners.

He said the cooperative relationship between Pakistan and China was an answer to objections regarding the ambitious \$60 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). — PTI

## PAK: S. ARABIA DIDN'T DEMAND MONEY BACK

SHAFQAT ALI | DC ISLAMABAD, AUGUST 24

Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi Monday said that Saudi Arabia had not demanded of Pakistan to return loan neither Riyadh had stopped oil supplies.

Speaking at a news conference here, there was no change in the stance of Saudi Arabia on Kashmir.

“Both Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are discussing different proposals. The OIC (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation) has several times passed unambiguous resolutions in support of the Kashmiri people,” he added.

## Kin confront NZ mosque shooter at sentencing

**Christchurch, Aug. 24:** Families and survivors had their first chance to confront the white supremacist who slaughtered 51 worshippers in a mass shooting at two New Zealand mosques as his four-day sentencing hearing began Monday.

“You killed your own humanity, and I don't think the world will forgive you for your horrible crime,” said a tearful Maysoon Salama, the mother of 33-year-old Atta Elayyan, who was killed in March 2019 attacks.

“You thought you can break us. You failed miserably.” The gunman, 29-year-old Australian Brenton Harrison Tarrant, pleaded

guilty in March to 51 counts of murder, 40 counts of attempted murder and one count of terrorism — the first terrorism conviction in New Zealand's history.

He could become the first person in New Zealand to be sentenced to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole, the toughest sentence available.

Tarrant was brought into the Christchurch High Court shackled and wearing a gray prison outfit. In the dock, unshackled and surrounded by five officers, he showed little emotion throughout the hearing. He occasionally looked around the

room, tapped his fingers, and watched the survivors as they spoke.

The courtroom was only half full due to Coronavirus distancing requirements, while many others watched from adjacent courtrooms where the hearing was streamed. Survivors and family members occasionally wept and comforted each other.

Two dozen victims and family members told the court about the pain of losing husbands, wives, sons and brothers. Some had family members around them for support, others spoke through translators or on pre-recorded videos from abroad. — AP

## POISONING SIGNS FOUND IN NAVALNY: HOSP

**Berlin, Aug. 24:** Tests conducted on Russian dissident Alexei Navalny at a German hospital indicate that he was poisoned, but doctors said Monday they do not believe his life at immediate risk.

The Charité hospital said in a statement that the team of doctors who have been examining Navalny since he was flown from Siberia and admitted Saturday have found the presence of “cholinesterase inhibitors” in his system.

Cholinesterase inhibitors are a broad range of substances that are found in several drugs, but also pesticides and nerve agents. However, doctors at Charité said at the moment the specific substance to which Navalny was exposed is not yet known.

“The patient is in an intensive care unit and is still in an induced coma. His health is serious but there is currently no acute danger to his life,” the hospital said in a statement. Navalny remained in critical but stable condition at the Berlin hospital, with special protection details on hand. — AP

## Protest erupts after Wisconsin police shoot man from behind

## One killed after 3 shot inside Lexington mall

**Lexington (US), Aug. 24:** Three people were shot inside a Kentucky mall Sunday, and one of them was later pronounced dead, police said.

The Lexington Police Department said in a post on social media that the shooting occurred around 4 p.m. outside of a store at the Fayette Mall.

Police said later that the shooting did not appear to be random.

“It appears from the

information that we've gathered thus far that the persons involved knew each other.”

Lexington Police Chief Lawrence Weathers told reporters. “We know at least the intended target may have known the suspect.”

Officers evacuated the mall and checked each store. Three people were taken to a hospital, Weathers said.

— AP

## THREE POLICE OFFICERS SHOT WHILE RESPONDING TO CALL IN MARYLAND

**Hyattsville (US), Aug. 24:** Three police officers were shot while responding to a call Sunday evening in Maryland, police said.

The shooting happened around 6:30 p.m. in Hyattsville, a city about 32 miles (52 kilometres) southwest of Baltimore, the Prince George's

County Police Department said on its Twitter page.

Police returned gunfire, and two men were in custody. The men were not struck, police said. The injured officers have been transported to a hospital for treatment. The conditions of the officers were not known. — AP

## COPS TEAR GAS PROTESTERS IN PORTLAND

**Portland (US), Aug. 24:** Police in Portland used tear gas early Monday to scatter demonstrators who marched on a precinct station in another night of violence — hurling rocks, bottles, commercial-grade fireworks at officers and setting fires in the streets. Twenty three people were arrested, police said in a statement.

The protests have gripped Oregon's largest city for months since the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis and demonstrators in Portland Sunday night who marched to the precinct from a park chanted the name Jacob Blake. Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers identified him as the man who appeared to be Black who was shot in the back by a police officer in the city of Kenosha on Sunday. — AP

## 3 Belarus Oppn activists detained

**Minsk (Belarus), Aug. 24:** Belarusian authorities on Monday detained three leading opposition activists who have helped spearhead a wave of protests demanding the resignation of the country's authoritarian president of 26 years following his reelection that opponents say was rigged.

The Coordination Council established by the opposition to negotiate a transfer of power said police detained members Sergei Dylevsky and Olga Kovalkova in Belarus' capital, Minsk. Later in the day, the opposition also reported the detention of Alexander Lavrinovich, the leader of striking workers at a major industrial plant.

The police actions signal President Alexander Lukashenko's determination to stifle massive post-election demonstrations that have entered their third week. He told an assault rifle in a show of force as he arrived at his residence by helicopter on Sunday while protesters rallied nearby. Last week, he warned that the opposition council's members could face criminal accusations. — AP

## BORDER ROW WITH LITHUANIA OVER BALLOONS

**Vilnius, Aug. 24:** Lithuania and Belarus on Monday traded accusations over their border after the release of balloons during a demonstration in Lithuania in solidarity with Belarusian protesters. Lithuania said a Belarusian military helicopter crossed the European Union and NATO state's border minutes before thousands of people linked hands in a human chain stretching from the capital Vilnius to the border with Belarus on Sunday.

“The Belarusian ambassador was summoned to the foreign ministry and a protest note was handed over the state border violation,” the ministry said in a statement.

The Belarusian defence ministry said it had countered an “attempted violation” of its airspace by “a probe made up of eight balloons with anti-government symbols”. — AFP

## NEW FINDINGS

Instances of people discharged from hospitals and testing positive again reported in China

## HK reports first documented Coronavirus re-infection

**Hong Kong, Aug. 24:** A Hong Kong man who recovered from Covid-19 was infected again four-and-a-half months later in the first documented instance of human re-infection, researchers at the University of Hong Kong said on Monday. The findings indicate the disease, which has killed more than 800,000 people worldwide, may continue to spread amongst the global population despite herd immunity, they said.

The 33-year-old male was cleared of Covid-19 and discharged from a hospital in April, but tested posi-

tive again after returning from Spain via Britain on Aug. 15.

The patient had appeared to be previously healthy, researchers said in the paper, which was accepted by the international medical journal *Clinical Infectious Diseases*.

He was found to have contracted a different Coronavirus strain from the one he had previously contracted and remained asymptomatic for the second infection.

“The finding does not mean taking vaccines will be useless,” Dr. Kai-Wang To, one of the leading

authors of the paper, told *Reuters*. “Immunity induced by vaccination can be different from those induced by natural infection.” To said. “(We) will need to wait for the results of the vaccine trials to see if how effective vaccines are.”

World Health Organisation (WHO) epidemiologist Maria Van Kerkhove said on Monday that there was no need to jump to any conclusions in response to the Hong Kong case.

Instances of people discharged from hospitals and testing positive again for Covid-19 infection have been reported in mainland

China. However, in those cases it was not clear whether they had contracted the virus again after full recovery — as happened to the Hong Kong patient — or still had the virus in their body from the initial infection.

The preliminary number of patients in China who tested positive again once being discharged from hospital was 5%-15%, Wang Guiliang, an infectious disease specialist in China's expert group for Covid-19 treatment, said during a press briefing in May. One explanation was that the virus still existed

in the lungs of patients but was not detected in samples taken from upper parts of the respiratory tract, he said. Other possible causes were low sensitivity of tests and weak immunity that could lead to persistent positive results, he added.

Jeffrey Barrett, an expert and consultant with the Covid-19 Genome Project at Britain's Wellcome Sanger Institute, said in emailed comments to *Reuters* that it was very hard to make any strong inference from a single observation.

— Reuters

## VITALLY IMPORTANT TO GET CHILDREN BACK TO SCHOOL: UK PM TO PARENTS

**London, Aug. 24:** It is vitally important to get children back into schools after the lengthy Covid-19 lockdown as being kept away from classrooms for a longer period would be far more damaging than the deadly virus, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson said in a direct appeal to parents on Monday.

His appeal comes as different parts of the country prepare for the end of the summer break and the sta-

rt of a new school term, with Scotland and Northern Ireland first in line followed by England and Wales from next week.

Reiterating a joint statement issued by England's Chief Medical Officer (CMO) and his counterparts from different parts of the United Kingdom over the weekend, Johnson said the risk posed to children from the deadly virus is very small.

— PTI



# DECCAN Chronicle

25 AUGUST 2020

## Letter a wake-up call to Congress on its future

The serious issues and concerns raised in a letter by a galaxy of senior Congress leaders, including several former Union ministers and former CMs, to Mrs Sonia Gandhi earlier this month are far-reaching, and how the party handles it will be crucial not only to its own future but to the state of our polity. While Mrs Gandhi was quick to call a meeting of the CWC to discuss the matter on Monday, the questions it raised are too wide-ranging to be resolved at one meeting.

The letter flagged the sense of drift in the party that many raised of late, and sought a “full-time” and “effective” leadership that will be “visible” and “active”. To an extent this could be seen as criticism of Mrs Gandhi’s stewardship for the past 12 months as interim president. But it would be wrong to regard her as its target — Mrs Gandhi is hugely respected by all sections of the Congress — and the letter’s primary aim might have been to deter any attempt to reinstall her son Rahul as Congress president, interim or otherwise. Mr Gandhi’s two-year term as chief wasn’t a great success, though he did lead it to a string of Assembly victories, before presiding over the Congress’ second successive Lok Sabha debacle in mid-2019, after which he swiftly resigned. Many Congressmen are unhappy that though not having any formal role, he plays an active role behind the scenes and takes decisions that “create confusion”. Many are upset that he doesn’t listen to them or they don’t have any access to him.

It’s undeniable that the Gandhis — Sonia, Rahul and Priyanka — are the Congress’ only nationally recognisable figures. All others are identified with a state or region. That gives them a unique standing. But that said, the Congress must also accept that if the Gandhis — for whatever reason — want to pass on the mantle, India’s only national Opposition party must make other arrangements. If it showed wisdom, it would be a huge mistake to treat the letter’s signatories as dissenters or rebels — let alone accuse them of playing the BJP’s game. Most have served the Congress for decades, many all their lives. It would do well to treat the letter as a wake-up call, on how to revitalise India’s grand old party so it can take on the BJP as well as several regional rivals.

Six years after it lost power to the Narendra Modi-led BJP, and again last year, the Congress failed to make any honest introspection on the reasons for successive defeats. Any problem cannot be tackled until one acknowledges it in the first place, but the Congress prefers to brush all inconvenient truths under the carpet. That is no solution. In any democracy, dissent, discussion and debate only strengthens a party, not weakens it. Congress leaders could look towards America’s Democratic Party, for instance, on how widely divergent views, freely expressed, built a stronger organisation to focus on the removal of Donald Trump. In India, the issues are many — the government’s handling of the economy, the pandemic, the Chinese intrusion, what stand to take on the Ram Mandir — which the party should discuss in depth before taking on the BJP. A stronger Congress means a stronger Opposition, which is vitally needed in India so that a government with a sweeping parliamentary majority can be kept in check.

## Politics over vaccine race

It’s like a repeat of the space race of the 1960s as the world waits expectantly for the promised silver bullet of a vaccine against the coronavirus. The first nation to produce an effective, mass-produced vaccine could help their people achieve near normality while shedding a morbid fear of the virus. Most governments have failed to contain Covid-19 as evidenced in mounting case-load and their only hope is to get their hands on “the holy grail”, the hunt for which is, however, being driven by politics more than science.

Vladimir Putin of Russia jumped the gun in claiming success first but far from giving Russia another Sputnik moment brought only scepticism and West-inspired rumours that his daughter who got vaccinated had died. For obvious reasons, Donald Trump wants a working vaccine before Election Day (November 3). Narendra Modi had put out a teaser hinting at Independence Day heralding a magic “Made in India” moment. On the other hand, China is already vaccinating thousands of health care and other workers on an urgent basis through a mass programme run by the military.

Authoritarian governments in Russia and China can hand out hurriedly developed vaccines or even placebos to its people. The free world must let science take the lead in passing careful judgment on the 78 vaccines that are confirmed as “active” now. USA’s Moderna with its mRNA-based vaccine and UK’s Oxford University-Jenner Institute with their adenovirus variety are the scientific leaders in developing a vaccine that can be franchised to production lines in record time once third phase clinical trials have evaluated their safety.

Realistically, a vaccine is months away, which gives time for countries to plan on how to achieve an equitable distribution. India is lucky to have the world’s largest vaccine manufacturer and so access should not be a problem. However, given the play of divisive politics, the fear is over how well we will manage the big task of inoculating over 100 crore people.

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Aakar Patel

## Why are we so obsessed about a Bollywood actor’s death?

The Central Bureau of Investigation has deputed five teams to investigate the death of an actor who killed himself. I do not know why the CBI is investigating this case nor do I understand why there is such great public interest in this issue.

I have been told that this is because of some political reason linked to the election in Bihar. If there is, I am not able to understand what it is. Bihar is one of the oldest political entities in India, going back to the time of Chandragupta Maurya and Chanakya.

Are Biharis so naïve as to vote based on this sort of material? Perhaps they are, and I will be disappointed to know if this is the case. Bihar is one of the poorest parts of the world. The state has been governed by two parties that have been in charge for a decade. Will the voter determine whether or not to vote for them based on a Bollywood event? If so, it is amazing. Two other reasons have been put forward as possible reasons for the pushing of this story.

First, that it is targeted at the son of the Maharashtra chief minister. Second, that it is aimed in some fashion

**On Covid-19, the data is clear. We are number three in the world in terms of the number of cases, we are number one in terms of the number of daily cases and we will likely end up with the most infected people in the world sometime soon. This is not the record of a government and a PM who is popular.**

ion at the Muslim actors of Bollywood. That seems to me to be more reasonable given our times. This government is hostile to Muslims and will use any lie to attack them, including this one.

But to return to the question of voter interest, it was written last week by my friend Shekhar Gupta that the Prime Minister would return to power in 2024 unless he inflicted damage on himself. Gupta’s argument so far as I have understood it is that the damage inflicted on the voter is not relevant because

the voter doesn’t care about such things as the collapse in the economy, the record unemployment, the occupation of our land by the Chinese and the inability of this government to contain the Covid-19 pandemic.

Gupta did not explain in detail how he had come to this conclusion, but he said that a survey that had a previously good track record showed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was at the peak of his popularity.

Again, I do not know if this is the case, but it would be quite interesting if this were to be so. Our GDP has been declining since January 2018 for nine successive quarters, based on the Modi government’s own data. Unemployment has been the highest that it has ever been recorded in India, again according to the government’s own data. It is unclear who believes Mr Modi when he says that there has been no Chinese intrusion, I hope it is not the Prime Minister himself because that would be a sign of delusion.

We are currently engaged with the Chinese in trying to get them to withdraw from our land, and our generals have had over half a dozen

meetings with them already. Presumably, these meetings are being held because what Mr Modi says (or believes) is untrue. There is no reason to negotiate with them if they are not on our property.

On Covid-19, the data is clear. We are number three in the world in terms of the number of cases, we are number one in terms of the number of daily cases and we will likely end up with the most infected people in the world sometime soon.

This is not the record of a government and a Prime Minister who is popular.

In another nation, this would be signal disaster politically. Is it the case that for all or most Indian voters, their political affiliation is unrelated to their actual life? Could it be that we vote as we do a Facebook like or Twitter forward? Is our political action through voting and support of a party based not on its performance but on its image? Surely this is not true, and even if it is true for many, it cannot be true for all. Certainly, it is not true for me.

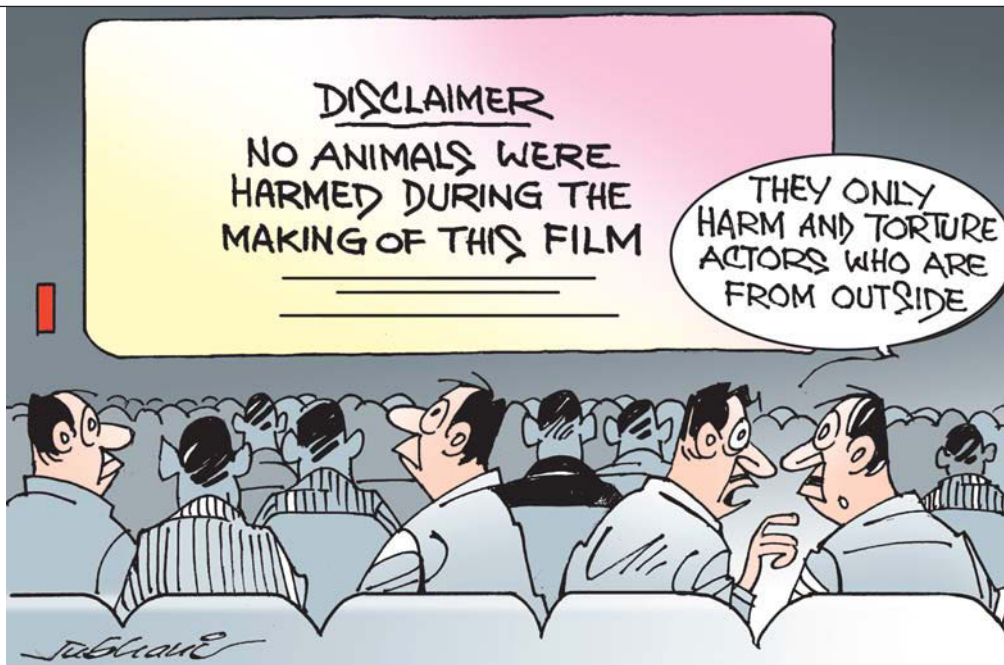
But how many people think normally in this way? If there were many, then we would not have the

circus that we do on a Bollywood actor’s death at a time which is the worst that I can remember, and I am not a young man. I cannot remember a time in my life when we had such economic strife, such levels of unemployment, a national epidemic and the enemy inside our house, and such little interest in these and a focus on Bollywood and temples and such things.

Is this who we really are as citizens, individuals and voters? I should hope not. I do not think that our young generation of this time certainly or the next will be so unconcerned about their politics. The question is whether the current generations of our time do not care about the nation’s security, their health, their employment and their future and whether they are more interested in Bollywood. I do not have the answer to this, but it is an answer that we will know for certain fairly soon.

Aakar Patel is a senior journalist and columnist

Subhani



## India’s eco challenges: A matter of philosophy



Mohan Guruswamy

The divide between the Keynesians and the Chicago School is as intense and often antagonistic as the Sunni-Shia, Catholic-Protestant or Thelakara-Vadakarai-Iyengar divides.

Now the only dispute on national income is how much will be the contraction. The finance ministry hopes there won’t be any. The IMF has officially said it will be 4.5 per cent. The rating agencies predict a contraction of 6.8 per cent, while many are suggesting something closer to 10 per cent. How do we deal with it now? The government tends to be “conservative” in its outlook and has made no serious suggestion on an economic stimulus. What it calls a stimulus isn’t actually one. The problem is more philosophical.

Keynesian economics is a theory that says the government should increase demand to boost growth. Keynesians believe consumer demand is the primary driving force in any economy. As a result, the theory supports expansionary fiscal policy. The Chicago School is a neo-classical economic school of thought that originated at the University of Chicago. Its main tenets are that free markets best allocate resources in an economy and that minimal or zero government intervention is best for economic prosperity. They abhor fiscal deficits.

The only reason why the actual stimulus package is only Rs 63,000 crores is the obsession with fiscal deficits by Chicago economists like Raghuram Rajan and Krishnamurthy Subramanian, now chief economic adviser. They are true disciples of the Washington Consensus to judge countries like India by their fiscal

deficit size. The instruments used to beat countries like India into submission are ratings agencies like Moody’s, which just downgraded India. We shouldn’t lose too much sleep over it. India is a hardly a borrower abroad and is more of a lender, holding \$490 billion as reserves.

That’s why the CEA, asked about a big stimulus, said: “There are no free lunches!” That’s exactly what Milton Friedman said. But they quite happily ignore the fact that America is the biggest deficit financed economy in the world. Dr Rajan told Rahul Gandhi on his videoconference that a stimulus of Rs 65,000 crores would suffice in today’s situation. Nobel laureate Abhijit Banerjee and former CEA Arvind Subramanian suggest a stimulus package like the US or Japan. The US has announced a stimulus of over \$3.5 trillion, or over 15 per cent of GDP. Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s stimulus is just 0.3 per cent of GDP.

Many serious economists see fiscal deficits in a positive way. The great John Maynard Keynes believed deficits help countries climb out of economic recession. Fiscal conservatives, however, feel governments should avoid deficits and ensure balanced budgets.

The fastest growing economies in the world, and its biggest — the United States, China, Japan and most of western Europe — have the highest debt/GDP ratios. Japan’s debt/GDP is over 253 per cent before the latest stimulus of 20 per cent of GDP. China’s debt is over 180 per cent of GDP. America’s debt/GDP is near 105 per cent, yet it is raising \$3 trillion as debt to escape the Covid-19 quagmire. India’s debt/GDP ratio is a modest 62 per cent, but

**Getting money to move India again isn’t a huge problem. What stands in the way are the philosophical blinkers.**

still it intends to pump in just 0.3 per cent of GDP as stimulus?

Pump priming the economy by borrowing is by itself not bad. It’s not putting the debt to good use that is bad. Nations prosper when they use debt for worthwhile capital expenditure with assured returns and social cost benefits. But we in India borrow to give it away as subsidies and to hide the high cost of government. To give an analogy, if a family must make a choice of borrowing money to fund the children’s education or to support a man’s drinking habit, the rational choice is obvious. The children’s education will have a long-term payback, while the booze gives instant gratification. But unfortunately, our governments always make the wrong choices.

If borrowed money is used productively and creates growth and prosperity, it should be welcomed. What we want to hear from the government is not about fiscal deficit targets, but economic growth, value addition, employment and investment targets.

What can Mr Modi do now to get us out of this quagmire? If the government abhors a stimulus financed by deficit financing, there are other options. But the PM is hamstrung with a weak economic management team with novices as the two key players, the finance minister and the RBI governor.

India has over \$490 billion nesting abroad earning ridiculously low interest. Even if a tenth of this is monetised for injection into the nation’s economy, it will mean over ₹3.5 lakh crores. At last count, the RBI had about ₹9.6 lakh crores as reserves. This is money to be used in a financial emergency. We are now in an emergency

like we have never encountered before. Even a third of this is about ₹3.2 lakh crores.

There are other sources of funds too but tapping these will entail political courage and sacrifices. Our cumulative government wages and pension bill amounts to about 11.4 per cent of GDP. After exempting the military/paramilitary, which is mostly under active deployment, we can target one per cent of GDP just by cancelling annual leave and LTC and rolling back a few DA increases.

The government can also sequester a fixed percentage from bank deposits, say five per cent of deposits between ₹10-100 lakhs and 15-20 per cent from bigger deposits for tax-free interest-bearing bonds in exchange. The 10 biggest private companies alone have cash reserves of over ₹10 lakh crores.

There’s money in the trees: all it needs is a good shakeup to pick the fruit. The pain of the lockdown mustn’t be borne by the poor alone. The government can easily target 5-6 per cent of GDP, or around 10-12 lakh crores, for the recovery fund as an immediately achievable goal.

This money can be used to immediately begin a limited basic income scheme, by transferring ₹3,000 monthly into Jan Dhan accounts of BPL people for the financial emergency period; fund GST concessions to move the auto and engineering sectors; begin emergency rural reconstruction projects to generate millions of new jobs and get our core infrastructure sectors like steel, cement and transportation moving again.

Getting money to move India again isn’t a huge problem. What stands in the way are the philosophical blinkers. Call it Chicago economics or the Gujarati mindset.

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

### LETTERS

#### DOUBLE STANDARD

The statement by the Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam instructing his cadres that they have to be loyal to the party and not to the individuals calls for self-introspection. Not only by falling at the feet but putting their heads dangerously close to the vehicle tyre during the time of chief minister J. Jayalalithaa was witnessed by citizens of this state. The culture created by the senior ministers of the party was such that to attract the attention of Jaya or her associate Sasikala, men had to risk their lives. The state has witnessed current ministers using Sasikala as a tool to gain their seats and thereafter became ministers. While this is the past, the statement from the Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Minister now is nothing short of a double standard.

A.P. Thiruvadi  
Chennai

#### PARTY LOYALTY

MR O. PANNEERSELVAM, the Deputy Chief Minister, is reported to have advocated to the party men that they should be more ‘loyal’ to the party than individuals. In making such statements, these leaders often forget their past. Had he been so loyal only to the party, Panneerselvam would never have come up to become the Chief Minister even during the troubled days of Jayalalithaa. He was made the Chief Minister only because of his loyalty to Jayalalithaa. As long as individuals dominate political parties, more than one remaining loyal to the party, one should have a knack of singing hosannas to individuals so as to get plum posts. Loyalty to the party does not make any sense as it is the individuals who eclipse the parties.

V.S. Jayaraman  
Chennai

#### LACK OF ETIQUETTE

THE CONDUCT of the AYUSH secretary at the webinar is unfortunate and shows a lack of etiquette in policy makers and event organisers. There is nothing wrong if an officer is not fluent in English and could not address medical and technical issues clearly in that language. The whole matter could have gone smooth if only the official had announced his intention to speak in Hindi only and announced that a separate session would be held for those not knowing Hindi on some other date. This also could have been made clear to all those attendees well in advance.

S. Nagarajan Iyer  
Coimbatore



quick  
BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	38,799.08	0.95
Nifty 50	11,466.45	0.83
S&P 500*	3,420.46	0.69
Dollar (₹)	74.31	0.71
Pound Sterling (₹)	97.24	1.55
Euro (₹)	87.81	0.72
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	51,668*348	0.67
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	44.99	0.64
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.221	0.082
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.627	-0.013

\* As of 9:30 PM IST

Vietnam tech  
firm sues TikTok  
over copyright

Vietnamese technology firm VNG is suing TikTok saying it does not have adequate licences for the songs being used in its videos, sources said on Monday. VNG is accusing the Chinese company of using audio tracks owned by Zing, a VNG subsidiary, without the company's consent, sources said. A petition seeks damages from TikTok and demands that it ceases use of Zing's music.

— Reuters

Kalyan Jewellers plans  
₹1,000-cr public issue

■ DRHP filed; promoter to offload shares worth ₹250 cr

SANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, AUG. 24

Kalyan Jewellers has filed a draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) with SEBI to raise ₹1,750 crore through an Initial Public Offering, which could be one of the largest IPOs in the jewellery retail segment.

The IPO comprises of equity shares of face value of ₹10 each of Kalyan Jewellers aggregating up to ₹1,750 crore, comprising a fresh issue of ₹1,000 crore and an offer for sale of ₹750 crore, comprising up to Rs 250 crore by promoter T.S. Kalyanaraman and up to ₹500 crore by Highdell Investment, a portfolio company of Warburg Pincus.

The net proceeds from the fresh issue will be utilised towards funding working capital requirements and for general corporate purposes.

The Kerala-based company now has a pan-India presence with 107 showrooms across India as well as 30 showrooms located in the Middle East as of June 30, 2020.

Promoters currently hold 76 per cent stake in the company while rest of the 24 per cent is held by Warburg Pincus. Warburg Pincus had invested Rs 1200 crore in Kalyan Jewellers in 2014 and had pumped in another Rs 500 crore in 2017.

In FY20, revenue from operations of Kalyan Jewellers stood at ₹10,100 crore, of which 78.19 per cent was from India and 21.81 per cent was from the Middle East.

## PNB to raise funds via market

New Delhi, Aug. 24: The country's second largest state-owned lender Punjab National Bank on Monday said that it does not envisage approaching the government for capital support rather it intends to raise funds from the market, which seems to have appetite for the public sector banking space.

The bank has shareholders' approval for raising ₹14,000 crore, comprising ₹7,000 crore of the equity alone, from the market to meet COVID-related impact and finance growth, Punjab National Bank managing director S.S.

WE ARE confident of going to the market with respect to Tier II and Tier I bonds during Q2 and Q3 while we are looking at the end of Q3 or during Q4 for QIP (qualified institutional placement),"

S.S. MALLIKARJUNA RAO, Chairman, PNB

Mallikarjuna Rao said in a virtual interaction.

"As on today, it does not appear (approach government for capital). If you look at market appetite also there is intent to contribute to public sector space in general," he said.

This is evident from the recent issuance of Tier II bonds of Bank of Baroda and PNB as coupon rates were reasonable, he said.

"There is an appetite in the market. So, unless we test in the market, it would not be appropriate for us to think of government for contribution... We are confident of going to the market with respect to Tier II and Tier I bonds during Q2 and Q3 while we are looking at the end of Q3 or during Q4 for QIP (qualified institutional placement)," he said.

— PTI

## Aug. deals at 10-year high

New York, Aug. 24: Companies raised the most funds in global equity and debt markets for August in a decade as homebound bankers spend their summer fixing deals off the back of trillions of dollars of stimulus worldwide to fight the pandemic.

Companies have raised \$65.5 billion through IPOs and high-yield bond issuances globally so far in August, the highest for that month in at least 10 years, according to Refinitiv data. They raised \$98.6 billion in July

and \$126.5 billion in June, which was the highest in 20 years.

It comes as governments and central banks have made at least \$15 trillion of stimulus available to help economies withstand the fallout of the coronavirus pandemic.

The fact that bankers and investors were working during the traditional August holiday month, due to coronavirus travel restrictions, also made it easier for deals to be executed, corporate advisors said. "The liquidity in

financial markets is the key point driving the number of deals we have seen in August," said Rishi Jalan, Citigroup's co-head of Asia debt syndicate, noting the pandemic had helped speed up the corporate deal process in some ways.

"People have adapted to the current environment. Roadshows have been turned into calls and investors are making themselves available quickly, people are engaging with deals at short notice," he said.

— Reuters

Mittal hints at hike  
in mobile data tariff

New Delhi, Aug. 24: Bharti Airtel chairman Sunil Bharti Mittal on Monday hinted at an increase in mobile services prices in the next six months, saying that data at low rates is not sustainable for the telecom industry.

He said that 16 GB data consumption a month for ₹160 is a tragedy. "You either consume 1.6 GB of capacity per month either at this price point or you may prepare to pay a lot more. We are not wanting \$50-60 like the US or Europe but certainly \$2 for 16 GB a month is not sustainable," Mittal said at an event.

Mittal also said that the average revenue per user (ARPU) is expected to cross ₹200 in six months on digital content consumption. ARPU is the



measure of revenue generated per user for a telco.

"We need a ₹300 ARPU in which you will still have lower end at ₹100 a month with decent amount of data. But if your consumption is largely around watching TV, movies, entertainment and depriving other vital special services networks, then you need to pay for that," Mittal said at the launch of a book written by Bharti Enterprises execu-

tive Akhil Gupta.

Airtel reported an increase in the ARPU to ₹157 in the first quarter ended June 30, 2020. The rise in ARPU came after the tariff hike by Bharti Airtel in December 2019.

Mittal said that while telecom operators have served the nation during the difficult times, the industry needs to invest in 5G, more optical fibres, submarine cables etc.

"Businesses which are not in telecom, also need to adopt digital. You should see solid ARPU building up in the next 5-6 months for the industry to be sustainable. We are down to 2-3 players now. India is a very price conscious market. In six months time, we should be crossing the mark of ₹200 for sure and ₹250 would be ideal," Mittal said.

Kharif season set to see a  
bumper food productionSANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, AUG. 24

Kharif crop output this year is expected to increase by six per cent due to higher sowing acreage as well as increase in productivity. The early onset and good distribution of the south-west monsoon will help a robust kharif output, finds Crisil research.

Better rains will increase both sowing acreage and productivity, which in turn will lead to a Kharif crop, which will

be higher by five to six per cent over last year.

As on August 21, rains were seven per cent above the long-period average. Good spatial and temporal distribution has supported sowing across crops in most states. Crop acreage is expected to inch upwards by 2-3 per cent to 1,090 lakh hectares driven by higher sowing of most crops barring cotton, maize and vegetables.

Cereals will see a two per cent rise in acreage, oil seeds seven per cent and pulses four per cent. Cash

crop acreage will be lower by one per cent and vegetables by two per cent. However, fruits will see acreage going up by two per cent. Area under vegetables, cotton and maize would be lower than the previous season as lower prices had discouraged farmers.

Crop productivity is expected to increase by three per cent over a low base of 2019. Last year excess rains in August-September had led to crop damage in various parts of the country.

## COFFEE-BREAK

Your day today By Dr C.V.B. Subrahmanyam



**Aries:** Your goals are fixed and you'll fulfil them on time. Financial position is normal. Tensions are on the rise; be careful. Expect altercations with your partner.



**Taurus:** Property-related disputes develop; you'll waste time and money. Expect a transfer-promotion to a place you like. Temporary source of income brings a lot of earning.



**Gemini:** You may opt for research or higher studies. Daily problems sort out easily. Postpone important tasks; the time is not favourable for you. Hard work from the past is rewarded.



**Cancer:** Your pending works get completed. You may hear some pleasant news related to your business. You'll find love and romance and enjoy your life thoroughly.



**Leo:** Avoid travelling in fast-moving vehicles. All domestic and outside problems resolve. Some of your near relatives may visit you. You may participate in charity.



**Virgo:** Business journeys prove to be rewarding; you'll recover money. Health of a close family member needs attention. Your economic condition is the same but you'll spend on relatives' medical treatment.

## You share your b'day with

Blake Lively, American actress. She is best known for her roles in *Gossip Girl*, *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*, *Green Lantern*, *The Shallows* and *A Simple Favor* amongst others.



**Libra:** Expect obstructions in ongoing projects, causing a standstill. Job-related tensions remain high. Expect some important information, which enhances your prestige, and money from all sources.



**Scorpio:** You may receive many professional opportunities. You'll succeed in every field and find the desired results. Avoid futile clashes. You'll be making plans for your future.



**Sagittarius:** Beware of your enemies; they're building a conspiracy against you. Work towards making things better — watch what you think. Communication helps.



**Capricorn:** Household gadget expenses increase. Your efforts' outcome may frustrate you. Don't trust friends. Relatives join you for a wonderful evening.

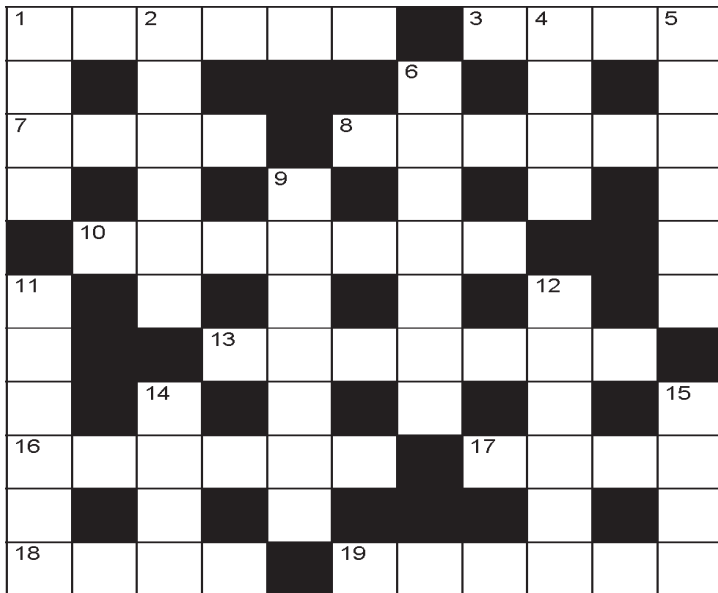


**Aquarius:** Work your strategies and timetable. Lack of will might cause emotional problems. Take frequent work breaks and watch your diet. Be honest with work commitments.



**Pisces:** A good rapport with your partner develops a healthy relationship. Work discussions are fruitful. Today brings a financial boost. Amidst despair, something work-related turns out to be a great blessing. Expect profits from business deals.

## QUICK CROSSWORD



**Across**  
1. Natural fabric (6)  
3. Butt (4)  
7. Double (4)  
8. Covered with trees (6)  
10. Liken (7)  
13. Flanders flowers (7)  
16. Young ferret (6)  
17. Margin (4)  
18. German river (4)  
19. Coiffure (6)

**Down**  
1. Reductions (4)  
2. Camera support (6)  
4. Make neat (4)  
5. Financial plan (6)  
6. Pulling-cable (7)  
9. Was against (7)  
11. Golfer's obstacle (6)  
12. Sex (6)  
14. Hanking (4)  
15. Reminder note (4)

## YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

**Across:** 1. Commuters, 6. Pairs, 7. Rival, 9. Oust, 10. Jigsaw, 12. Expire, 14. Weir, 17. Twice, 18. Hated, 19. Amsterdam.

**Down:** 2. Omits, 3. Miss, 4. Turnip, 5. Raves, 6. Protest, 8. Lowered, 11. Urgent, 13. Prism, 15. Extra, 16. Thor.

## Word Mine

E  
S F H  
L Y L I S

TODAY'S RATINGS: 13 AVERAGE; 15 GOOD; 17 OUTSTANDING

How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown in today's puzzle? In making a word, each letter may be used once only. Each word must contain the letter at the top of the pyramid. There should be at least one nine letter word. Plurals, foreign words and proper names are not allowed.

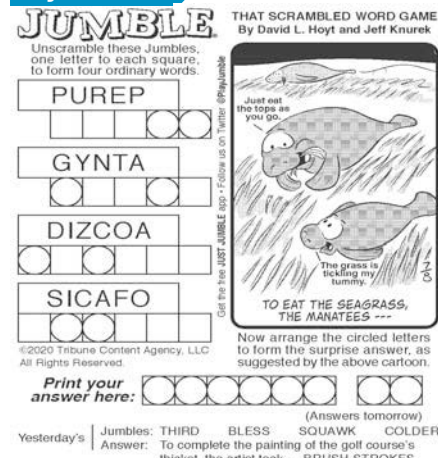
West	North	East
• A 9 5 4 2	• R Q 10	• 8 7
• 8 6	• A K Q 1	• 2
• 10 8	• 10 9	• 7 6 4
• Q 3 5 4		• A 7 6 3 2
	South	
	• 4 6 3	
	• J 9 7 5 4	
	• 2 3 2	
	• 8 5	

Dealer: North Vulnerable: East-West

South Pass 2NT Pass All Pass

Opening lead: ♦ Q

## jumble



(When going third hand high, play the bottom of equal cards.) If declarer has the heart ace as well, the contract is impregnable. So, place the trump ace with East. Then comes the hard part. At the highest level, if East has a singleton spade, verily he should cash the heart ace before leading his spade. (He knows that if South has the spade ace, the contract is unbeatable.) As East didn't do that, West

should assume that East has a doubleton spade. So, West plays an encouraging nine. His trust is verified when East wins the first round of hearts with his ace, leads his second spade to West's ace and receives a ruff for down one.

Do you have that much confidence in your partner's ability? If so, lucky you!

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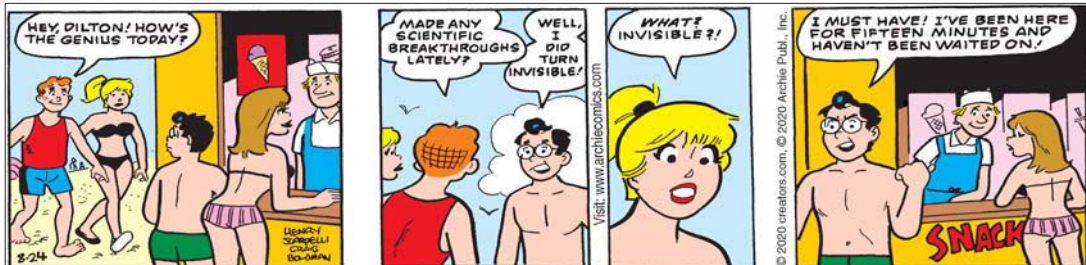
CALVIN AND HOBBS | Bill Watterson



THE WIZARD OF ID | Parker and Hartsd



ARCHIE | Bill Henry Scarpelli &amp; craig boldman



BLONDIE | Dean Young and John Marshall



ANDY CAPP | Reg Smythe



TARZAN | Edgar Rice Burroughs

bridge  
PHILLIP  
ALDERA VALID  
ASSUMPTION  
WITH AN  
EXPERT

John Kenneth Galbraith, writing in 1989 in *The Guardian* newspaper in England, claimed, "In all life one should comfort the afflicted, but verily, also, one should afflict the comfortable, and especially when they are comfortably, contentedly, even happily wrong."

Look only at the West and North hands. Defending against four hearts, West leads the club queen: nine,

ace, eight. East shifts to the spade eight. Should West win with the ace and give him a spade ruff, or should he signal enthusiastically with the nine, playing East for a doubleton spade and a quick trump entry?

This was one of the deals Jeff Rubens set for the 1988 Intercollegiate Championship, in the days before trans-fer bids were ubiquitous. The first trick marked South with the club king.



## SHORT TAKES

## Future Group out as IPL sponsor

**New Delhi:** Retail conglomerate Future Group, which is currently going through a restructuring phase, has pulled out of BCCI's central sponsorship list for the Indian Premier League. Future Group has been forced to pull out as the company is reportedly on the verge of a takeover and has suffered losses due to the prevailing hostile economic climate in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. "Yes, Future Group has pulled out of IPL central sponsorship and that's the reason their logo has been removed from the IPL website. At this point of time, I won't like to elaborate on the development," a BCCI veteran confirmed the development. "Future Group has been in bad shape since the start of Covid-19. It was bound to happen that they wouldn't have been able to spend ₹40 crore to be a part of BCCI's central sponsorship pool. Hence, the pull-out is not a surprise," the source said. — PTI

## Rain halts James' 600-wkt chase

**Southampton:** England pacer Jimmy Anderson was frustrated in his bid to reach 600 Test wickets after seeing another catch spilled off his bowling on the fourth day of the third and final Test against Pakistan on Monday.

Pakistan was 41-0 in its second innings and trailing by 269 runs when more rain arrived at the Rose Bowl, prompting an early lunch to be taken.

The stoppage extended well into the afternoon because of a wet outfield, increasing Pakistan's chances of avoiding defeat.

It was a solid morning session for Pakistan openers Shan Masood (13) and Abid Ali (22), except for when Anderson — on 598 career wickets — found the edge of Shan's bat in the fifth over and the ball flew to wicketkeeper Jos Buttler.

Inexplicably, Buttler failed to get a glove on it, the ball hitting his midriff and bouncing to the ground.

The 38-year-old Anderson is looking to become the first fast bowler to reach 600 wickets. — AP

## Bhutia name for Sikkim stadium

**New Delhi:** A floodlit, 15,000-capacity stadium in Sikkim, to be named after Indian football great Bhaichung Bhutia, will be inaugurated once the pandemic subsides. The stadium is in Namchi, which is 25 kilometres away from the maestro's birthplace in Tinkitam.

"It's our tribute to one of the best Indian footballers. Even after hanging his boots, Bhaichung Bhutia has been a role model to many and will continue to inspire footballers of India, let alone Sikkim," Sikkim Football Association president Menia Ethenpa was quoted as saying by the All India Football Federation (AIFF).

"We can't repay for what he has done for Indian football. But a stadium named after him might be a small homage towards the great footballer," he added.

This is going to be the first-ever stadium in the country to be named after any footballer. — PTI

## DONCIC MAKES QUICK WORK OF LA CLIPPERS

**Miami:** Luka Dončić wasn't about to let a sprained ankle slow him down, nailing a game-winning three-pointer at the buzzer to lift the Dallas Mavericks to a 135-133 overtime playoff win over the Los Angeles Clippers on Sunday. The 21-year-old Slovenian phenom, who was playing with a tender ankle and missing his offensive sidekick Kristaps Porzingis, finished with 43 points, 17 rebounds and 13 assists to level the first-round NBA Western Conference playoff series at two games each. — AFP

## MANKAD NOT A JOKE

## Vinoo's name unfairly used for run out, feels Karthik

**Abu Dhabi, Aug 24:** Senior India wicketkeeper-batsman and Kolkata Knight Riders captain Dinesh Karthik finds it extremely unfair that the legendary Vinoo Mankad's name is used in a negative manner for a dismissal which is absolutely legal.

Mankad, during the 1948 Tour of Australia, ran opposition batsman Bill Brown out at the non-striker's end after he backed up too far despite repeated warnings. The Australian media outraged over it and called it "Mankading" even though Sir Don Bradman found the dismissal to be perfectly legal.

"There are two issues I have with this 'Mankad' run out. First is the implementation of it. Second is the name 'Mankad' run out," Karthik said.

"All the way from Don Bradman to Sunil Gavaskar, everyone has said it's completely within the rules. The ICC and MCC have also taken a stand that it is okay. So I don't see the reason why bowlers or any team that does it is looked at in a negative way.

"The person who did it first time was Vinoo Mankad. Interestingly, he was alert enough to do that dismissal. But more importantly, nobody remembers the batsman who got run out. It was Bill Brown," he pointed out.

Karthik's comments have significance because of Delhi Capitals coach Ricky Ponting's recent comments that he would have a chat with Ravichandran Ashwin and advise him that the dismissal is against the 'Spirit of the Game' referring to the India spinner running out of Jos Buttler during the last edition.

Karthik said the dismissal should not be called 'Mankading', especially when the ICC and MCC call it just a run out.

"If Mankad was the first person who did that run out, Bill Brown was the first person who got run out for being silly and walking out of the crease. Why is it that people remember Mankad and not Brown?" he asked.

Karthik suggested that the TV umpire should be called in to check whether the batsman is backing up too far and if so then that particular run should be disallowed. — PTI



Kings XI Punjab's captain Ravichandran Ashwin runs out non-striking batsman Jos Buttler of the Rajasthan Royals in an IPL match last year.

## Ashwin bats for free ball if batsman leaves crease

**New Delhi, Aug 24:** Senior India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin on Monday suggested the introduction of a "free ball" for bowlers if non-strikers back up too far, sticking to his stand that there was nothing wrong with running such batsmen out.

Ashwin ran out Jos Buttler during an IPL match between Kings XI Punjab and Rajasthan Royals in 2019 when the Englishman left the non-striker's end much before the delivery was bowled, triggering an age-old 'spirit of the game' debate.

While what Ashwin did was well within the rules of the game, his new IPL team coach Ricky Ponting of the Delhi Capitals doesn't agree with this particular mode of dismissal.

"Make it a free ball for the bowler. If the batsmen gets out of that ball, the batting team will be

**Make it a free ball for the bowler. If the batsmen gets out of that ball, the batting team will be docked 5 runs. Free hit adds to the drama for a batter, let's give a chance to the bowlers too.**

— R. ASHWIN on Mankad debate

docked 5 runs. Free hit adds to the drama for a batter, let's give a chance to the bowlers too," Ashwin tweeted in response to Dinesh Karthik's assertion that it was unfair to link the dismissal to spirit of the game or call it 'Mankading' as it is permitted by laws of the game.

"As of now everyone watches the game hoping that 'the bowlers will get smacked today'," the off-spinner said.

His suggestion is similar to the concept of free hit, which allows the batsmen to score the maximum without the fear of being dismissed if the bowler delivers a front-foot no ball.

When a Twitter user asserted that the game is primarily for batsmen, Ashwin retorted, "Then take the run out on your chin and stay in!!!!".

What followed after Ashwin's tweet was a discussion on his timeline with former India cricketers W. V. Raman, S. Badrinath, Rohan Gavaskar and commentator Harsha Bhogle providing their opinion on the issue.

"I think the rule should be simple and take away any subjective element like 'normal delivery position' and just say 'non-striker stays in till the ball is released'," Harsha Bhogle said. — PTI

## ONE MISTAKE AND EVENT IS DOOMED, SAYS KOHLI

**Dubai, Aug. 24:** One mistake could "spoil" the entire tournament, Royal Challengers Bangalore captain Virat Kohli on Monday warned his colleagues in the IPL's first virtual team meeting, while imploring them to do all they can to keep the bio-bubble secure.

It was a team meeting like no other but Kohli meant business straightaway as he urged his colleagues to strictly follow the protocols put in place by the authorities in the UAE, the venue of the upcoming edition of IPL, in view of Covid-19 pandemic.

"We have followed what's been told to us and I would expect everyone to be on the same page in terms of securing the bubble at all times and making sure that nothing is compromised," Kohli said.

"...Because I think one mistake by any one of us could literally spoil the whole tournament. And none of us want to do that," he added.

RCB's director of cricket operations Mike Hesson, who was present in the meeting along with head coach Simon Katich, spoke about the consequences of violating the rules after Kohli posed him a question.

"It (violation) will be dealt with very seriously. For accidental breach, players will be removed and sent into isolation for seven days and then come back only after he tests negative. There will be strong consequences if players chose to do that. Players will sign a document which explains the consequences," Hesson said.

The Indian captain stressed on the need to develop a good team culture from the first day.

"I can't wait to get to our first practice session, something that we all are going to cherish. An opportunity to create a good team culture from Day 1," Kohli said. — PTI



Bayern's goalkeeper Manuel Neuer (centre) lifts the trophy after Munich won the Champions League final against Paris Saint-Germain at the Luz Stadium in Lisbon, Portugal, on Sunday. Bayern won 1-0. — AP

## Bayern best PSG, clinch CL trophy

**Lisbon, Aug 24:** Kingsley Coman headed Bayern Munich to a sixth European Cup title, scoring against boyhood club Paris Saint-Germain to seal a 1-0 victory in the first Champions League final to be played without fans.

While Bayern won its first final since 2013 on Sunday, PSG has yet to lift the European Cup despite more than \$1 billion being spent on players in nine years.

More than \$500 million was spent on Neymar, Kylian Mbappe and Angel Di Maria but PSG looked far from formidable or threatening against the Bavarian giants who felt more assured on European club football's biggest stage.

As the costly front three were frustrated in front of goal, it was instead a winger who was born in Paris and started his career at PSG who inflicted the blow.

The 24-year-old Coman ghosted in at the far post unchecked by the PSG defense and was ready to meet a cross from Joshua Kimmich in the 59th minute.

It was Bayern's 43rd goal of a perfect European campaign that has seen Bayern become the first team to win all 11 Champions League matches.

It capped an incredible transformation this season under Hansi Flick, who emerged from the shadows in November, with a promotion to the top coaching job with Bayern fourth in the Bundesliga. — AP

## \$500m STRIKE FORCE NEYMAR, MBAPPE FAILS

**Lisbon, Aug 24:** Neymar and Kylian Mbappe sat side by side on Paris Saint-Germain's bench after the 1-0 loss to Bayern Munich in the Champions League final here.

While Mbappe stared at the field in despair, Neymar cried and covered his face on Sunday.

It wasn't the ending they had hoped for. PSG must go for yet another year without the Champions League title after lackluster performances by Neymar and Mbappe. The French team's biggest stars had disappointing performances after helping PSG to reach the final of the top European club tournament for the first time.

PSG paid big money — a combined 402 million euros (\$474m) on the pair in 2017 — to sign them in its bid to finally win the Champions League, but they couldn't come through in the decisive game.

Both Mbappe and Neymar failed to capitalise on first-half chances that could have changed the story of the game, and neither was effective in the second half when PSG needed to come back from a goal down.

— AP

## BASKETBALL NEEDS A PRO LEAGUE IN INDIA: RIJJU

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, AUG. 24

Union sports minister Kiren Rijiju feels launching a professional league will help popularise basketball in India. "Basketball is a very interesting game. It is not just popular in USA, but also in other parts like China and Europe. It is a global sport. India cannot afford to remain low. We must do certain things to ensure that we produce quality basketball players. For this, we must push to bring professional league in the country," he said.

Rijiju was speaking at an e-conclave organised by Integrated Basketball Players' Association. The webinar was organised in memory of late Harish Sharma, former secretary of Basketball Federation of India.

"The intensity at which basketball is played catches the imagination of the audience. And it is spectator friendly. As a sports minister, I am here to support all kinds of sports. We will have to have leagues and tournaments with participation from international players. NBA has come into India and they have been grooming some players. I am sure India with natural talent will make rapid growth in basketball. All we need to do is to identify the right talent at the right age," Rijiju added.

## Dhoni &amp; Co. bond over virtual gaming

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR | DC  
CHENNAI, AUG. 24

Forced to spend a week inside the four walls of their luxurious hotel rooms upon arrival in Dubai, Chennai Super Kings have found a way to connect with each other — through virtual gaming.

All IPL franchises have landed in the UAE for the 13th edition of the league, starting on September 19, but players and officials are currently on a week-long self-isolation to adhere to the bio-bubble protocols laid out by the

BCCI. During every IPL, Chennai Super Kings set up a 'team room' packed with a TT table, PlayStation and other indoor games, but now that the players can't step out of their individual rooms, virtual games such as PUBG and Call of Duty are keeping them entertained. It's no secret that M.S. Dhoni loves combat games and football.

A CSK official said the players are slowly getting used to the new normal. "The first few days have been really challenging as we have to ensure that players follow all protocol

and at the same time keep themselves occupied. The rooms here don't have balconies which means they are totally cut off from each other," he said.

While a few led by Dhoni and his close friend Monu Kumar Singh connect through online gaming, some others kill time reading books and binge-watching movies and shows on OTT platforms. Shane Watson spends his time planning and shooting content for his vlog — T20 Stars.

The official said all players have been given customised indoor workouts

for the quarantine period. "For the first week, the hotel has provided small workout equipment in every room. Players have to train twice a day. The team trainer gives them feedback through videos," the official added.

Three-time champions Chennai Super Kings are staying at Taj Dubai, overlooking the spectacular Burj Khalifa.

The 55-member contingent, including their marketing and social media teams, are staying in a separate block with no access to outsiders. The BCCI has allotted two offi-

cials from the Anti Corruption and Security Unit (ACSU) per franchise.

With the hotel providing South Indian food throughout the day, CSK are feeling very much at home.

"There is a set menu for breakfast, lunch and dinner. The food tray is left outside their room. The players are also ordering in their choice of food," the CSK official further added.

Senior players and coaches have been allotted suites that come with a fully-equipped kitchen.

## Ageing young, Anderson is a history in making



Hemant Kenkre  
Silly Point

'Pakistan are faced with a mountain to climb,' screamed a news headline post the second day's play of their third and final Test match against England. The mountain in this case referred to the mammoth 583 runs that the hosts had put up thanks to a dedicated effort by Zak Crawley who notched up his first Test hundred (a workmanlike 267 runs) in his eighth Test appearance.

More than the mass of runs that the Pakistanis will face (this is written

before the third day's play) the real mountain they will need to ascend is a tortuous terrain that goes by the name of James Michael Anderson. The 38-year-old Lancastrian is currently standing on an achievement that will further his name in the history of Test cricket. Just four wickets from getting to the mark of 600 Test scalps, the fit, six footer will use every trick in his book to seal his deal with history over the next two days.

Playing in and against

England has been considered a major yardstick that tests a batsman's proficiency. And, over the last decade, playing the team in their back yard with Anderson in the eleven is a different ball game. When India last toured the British Isles in 2018, skipper Virat Kohli was faced with two major tasks. The first being winning the Test series and the second being getting Anderson, his tormentor in the 2014 series, out of his way.

Just four notches from standing tall, atop a major peak, Anderson has come a long way from his rather humble beginnings in international cricket. For someone who was thrown directly into the deep end against Australia to make his debut in a One Day International in 2002,

Anderson has come a long way overcoming many personal hurdles. For starters, the 'Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde' swing, from great to the ordinary on many occasions, had people wondering which avatar will step on to the field earlier in his career.

From starting his journey in international cricket alongside relative unknowns like Robert Kirtley and Craig White as fellow seamers, Anderson's rise to the top, bowling in tandem with current partner Stuart Broad has been remarkable. With 1107 Test wickets between them, this combination has been a major challenge for international batsmen to contend with in the longest format of the game. The impact these two have had

on English cricket over the last decade has been tremendous.

They say fast bowlers hunt in pairs. Anderson and Broad will go down in the annals of cricket as a lethal pair akin to Fred Trueman and Brian Statham of the old. Watching them speak to one another before the start of an over, where they dissect the batsman's weakness and exchange notes goes to show how solid the understanding between the two British homies is. Complementing each other is the hallmark of a great pair.

From Dennis Lillee and Jeff Thomson to Andy Roberts and Micheal Holding, cricket fans have been privileged to watch these greats keep challenging the greatest batsmen of

their time.

When Trueman passed (what was, in August 1964) an unbelievable achievement of 300 Test wickets getting Neil Hawke caught at slip by Colin Cowdrey against Australia at the Oval, he was asked if his record would ever be broken. "Aye, but whoever does it will be bloody tired," quipped the Yorkshireman who was known for his legendary quotes throughout his career.

Just two years away from 40, one wonders for how long Anderson will continue being England's go to man in Test cricket.

The way one is watching him bowl in the current series against Pakistan it looks like Anderson still has the mojo to keep ticking on like a Swiss watch.

The spring in his step is still as sprightly as it was when he started out. So are the tricks with the ball which flummox the best in the business.

His agility in the field is comparable to men much younger to him.

For a fast bowler/seamer, getting past the 600 mark in Test cricket is an amazing achievement.

With the top three slots of maximum Test wickets staying with spinners, Anderson is poised to become the first of his category to get in to the exclusive club. When England tours India (for a five-Test series) in February 2021 one does hope Indian fans will get an opportunity to see this magnificent warrior display his wares in the sub-continent for the last time.

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