

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

COIMBATORE | THURSDAY 27 | AUGUST 2020

WEATHER



Max: 33°C
Min: 23°C
Rainfall: 1mm

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Aavani 11
Tithi: Navami
Star: Kettai
Rahukalam:
1.30 pm to 3 pm
Yamagandam:
6 am to 7.30 am

PRAYERS

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

SUNSET TODAY 6.34 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.12 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 1.55 PM
MOONSET TOMORROW 2.38 AM

CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+71,827)	(+980)
33,03,581	60,592

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+5,958)	
TN: 3,97,261	6,839

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

2,41,89,413

DEATHS

8,26,135

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES
215

worldometers.info

Vedanta moves SC on Sterlite copper plant

New Delhi: Mining giant Vedanta moved the Supreme Court on Wednesday against the Madras High Court order refusing to allow reopening of its Sterlite copper unit at Tuticorin in Tamil Nadu, which has been closed since May 2018 over pollution concerns. The Tamil Nadu government has already filed a caveat in the top court seeking to be heard in the matter, before any order is passed in the matter.

23 Punjab ministers, MLAs test Covid +ve

Chandigarh: Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Wednesday said 23 MLAs and ministers are coronavirus positive with just two days to go before the state assembly session. Three of the 23 MLAs are cabinet ministers. Another minister who had tested positive earlier has recovered.

COUNTER

POINT



Thanks for the warship, Mr Jinping. Please give a loan also to maintain it!

CITY | 2

SPB stable, conscious: Hospital



NATION | 4

‘BSY’s son is functioning as Super CM’

SPORT | 8

Messi wants to quit Barcelona



STUDENTS PROTEST JEE-NEET



Police detain Indian Youth Congress workers who were staging a protest outside the HRD Ministry for organising JEE-NEET Examination amid COVID-19 pandemic, in New Delhi, Wednesday.

— PTI

TN students exempted from exam arrears

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG 26

Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami has exempted all college and university students in the State from clearing the arrear papers that they might have been waiting to appear for after paying the examination fee. Students of higher education would have to sit for examinations only for the final semester papers. Already the government had exempted students other than those in the final year of their courses from writing their examinations.

Now, based on the guidelines of the UGC and AICTE the exemption has been extended to those having arrears also.

CM said he has directed the Higher Education Department to issue a detailed Government Order on the matter. UG students in their first and second year pursuing polytechnic, arts and science and those in first, second and third year of their engineering courses were exempted from writing their semester exams and allowed to move on to



the next academic year by an order on July 23.

Similarly, first year post-graduate students of arts, science and engineering streams and first and second year MCA students were also given the exemption and allowed to advance to the next year.

Do away with NEET: health minister

Meanwhile, Health minister C. Vijayabaskar requested Union health minister Harsh Vardhan to do away with Neet for admissions to medical and dental courses and allow the state to follow the earlier pattern of taking into consideration marks obtained in the plus-2 examinations.

In a letter to the Union minister on Wednesday,

Vijayabaskar referred to Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami writing to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and also the Union health minister on the issue of doing away with Neet in view of the pandemic situation and how conducting the medical entrance examination would endanger the lives of students.

Vijayabaskar wanted Harsh Vardhan to direct his ministry to promulgate an ordinance to facilitate the admission to medical and dental courses on the basis of plus-2 marks. Earlier in the day, DMK president M. K. Stalin asked the government if it would join the seven states that have decided to move the Supreme Court seeking postponement of Neet and JEE this year in view of the coronavirus crisis.

Welcoming the move by the states of Punjab, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Puducherry, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Maharashtra to approach the Supreme Court, Stalin, in a statement, thanked Congress chief Sonia Gandhi for taking the initiative.

At 118, fatalities high in State

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG 26

Coronavirus claimed 118 lives on Wednesday when fresh infections were also at a high of 5,958 in the State while in Chennai there were 20 deaths and 1,290 new cases. The districts that had high rates of infection were Chengalpattu 294, Coimbatore 484, Cuddalore 286, Kanchipuram 329, Salem 451 and Thiruvallur 280. Health Minister C Vijayabaskar claimed that the recovery rate in the State was high at 85 per cent and that the govern-

ment was working hard on preventing deaths due to the virus. Introducing a new scheme at the Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital where those who undergo tests for Covid-19 would be informed of the results through SMS in a day's time, he said that there were 141 laboratories that conduct tests for the virus all over the State and so far 43,46,861 persons had been tested.

● **External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar says the number of forces on two sides of LAC is unprecedented**

ly Galwan valley clash in mid-June between troops of the two sides in the Ladakh sector as a “brief moment from the perspective of history”.

In an interview to a news

website ahead of the formal launch of his book—“The India Way: Strategies for an Uncertain World”, EAM Jaishankar said, “This is surely the most serious situation after 1962. In fact, after 45 years, we have had military casualties on this border. The quantum of forces currently deployed by both sides at the LAC is also unprecedented.”

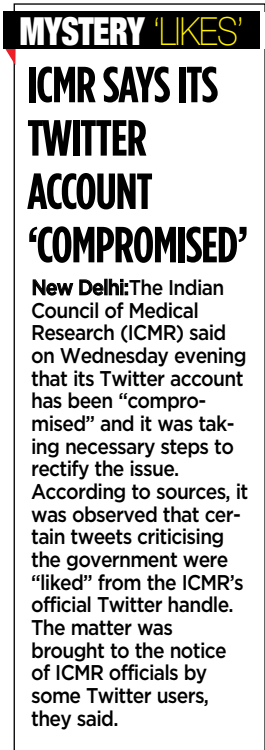
Mr. Jaishankar added, “I am not minimising either the seriousness or the com-

plex nature of the current situation. Naturally, we have to do what it takes to secure our borders. ... But when it comes to finding a solution, this must be predicated on honouring all agreements and understandings. And not attempting to alter the status quo unilaterally. ... That is why we tell the Chinese side clearly that peace and tranquillity in the border areas are the basis for the relationship.”

MYSTERY ‘LIKES’

ICMR SAYS ITS TWITTER ACCOUNT ‘COMPROMISED’

New Delhi: The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) said on Wednesday evening that its Twitter account has been “compromised” and it was taking necessary steps to rectify the issue. According to sources, it was observed that certain tweets criticising the government were “liked” from the ICMR’s official Twitter handle. The matter was brought to the notice of ICMR officials by some Twitter users, they said.



NEW CASES IN CHENNAI - 1,290

TODAY'S DEATHS IN CHENNAI - 20

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We must fight together against Centre: Sonia

■ GST and dates of JEE-NEET unite opposition

DCCORRESPONDENT
with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, AUG. 26

The chief ministers of seven non-BJP-ruled states hit out at the Centre on its decision to hold the Joint Entrance Exam (JEE) and the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET), and decided to jointly move a review petition in the Supreme Court urging it to reconsider its recent order rejecting the deferral of the exams due to the raging coronavirus pandemic.

This was decided at a virtual meeting called by Congress president Sonia Gandhi and West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee. Parties like the DMK and the AAP, who were not part of the meeting, also joined the growing chorus against the holding of the JEE and NEET.

Ms Banerjee said: “Let us go to the Supreme Court. Let us talk about this matter. This is mental agony for students. I have not seen so many atrocities in a democracy. The situation is very serious. We have to speak up for the children.”

At the meeting which she had convened to discuss a range of issues ahead of Parliament’s Monsoon Session, due to begin on September 14, Mrs Gandhi raised the subject of Centre-state relations and also the GST compensation issue.

She said: “I thought we should have an interaction so that we can have a coordinated approach. GST compensation seems to be a big issue. GST compensation being paid to the states on time according to laws passed by Parliament is crucial. But it is not happening. Dues have accumulated and the finances of all the states are badly affected.”

Maharashtra CM



Refusal to compensate states on GST is nothing short of betrayal by Modi govt of states, people. We have to work and fight together against Central government:

—Sonia Gandhi, Congress President

This will be my request to all the state governments, let us do it together, let us go to the Supreme Court and postpone the exam for the time being until and unless the situation allows students to appear for the exams. — Mamata



We should decide whether we have to fight or fear the Central govt: —Uddhav Thackeray, Maharashtra CM



All chief ministers should collectively approach the PM and apprise him of the revenue situation in states: —Amarinder Singh, Punjab CM

Seven non-BJP CMs plan to move Supreme Court against Centre's decision to hold JEE (Sept 1), NEET

Uddhav Thackeray said: “We have to decide whether we want to fear or fight the government. The people who elected the BJP at the Centre also elected all of us. But if we do something it is paap (sin) and if they do anything then it is punya (virtuous)?” He also noted while his state was gradually emerging from the lockdown, schools were shut.

Four Congress CMs -- Amarinder Singh (Punjab), Bhupesh Baghel (Chhattisgarh), Ashok Gehlot (Rajasthan) and V. Narayana Sanyal (Puducherry) -- who attended the meeting claimed several of them had written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi but there was no response. Even Ms Banerjee said she had written to the PM. Jharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren was, however, of the view that a meeting should first be sought with the Prime Minister before moving the court.

The Congress president reportedly wanted to invite Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan to the meeting, but there was strong oppo-

sition from the Congress in Kerala. An invitation did go to Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal, but sources said he had declined. The JEE is due to be held September 1 to 6 and the NEET exam is to be held on September 13. The Supreme Court had last week rejected a petition by 11 students from 11 states who had asked for the exams to be deferred. Mrs Gandhi requested the West Bengal chief minister, who had first proposed a joint appeal by the states in the Supreme Court, to work out with Capt. Amarinder Singh and other CMs on the legal issues. She said whatever steps had to be taken in the interest of students should be taken unitedly.

Batting for the students demanding postponement of the exams due to Covid-19, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi urged the Centre to listen to their grievances and find an amicable solution. “NEET-JEE aspirants are worried about their health and future. They have genuine concerns: fear of Covid-19 infection, transport and lodging during the pandemic and the flood may-

hem in Assam and Bihar,” Mr Gandhi said on Twitter.

The Congress also announced protests by its state units on August 28 in front of Central government offices at state and district headquarters, besides a nationwide online campaign, #SpeakUpForStudentSafty.

Delhi deputy CM Manish Sisodia separately said that the NEET and JEE exams should be postponed and the Centre should work on alternative methods for selecting students. “They (Centre) are saying protocols will be followed. Following the same protocols that the Centre wants 28 lakh students to follow, lakhs of Indians have tested positive,” the AAP leader told reporters.

“How can we take the risk of sending 28 lakh students to exam centres and be assured they will not be infected,” Mr Sisodia asked.

DMK chief M.K. Stalin welcomed the decision of the seven CMs to appeal to the Supreme Court and thanked Mrs Gandhi for her efforts.

Crucial GST meeting today on States’ share

New Delhi, Aug 26: The GST Council meeting on Thursday is likely to be a stormy affair as opposition-ruled states unite to pressure the Centre to give them the promised compensation for loss of revenue arising from the implementation of GST.

The 41st meeting of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council, to be held via video conferencing, has just one agenda for

discussion -- making up for shortfall in states’ revenues, sources said.

The options being explored are market borrowing, raising cess rate or increasing the number of items for levy of compensation cess. Discussion on correction in inverted duty on certain goods like textiles and footwear is also likely, they said.

The COVID-19 crisis has further compounded the

state’s fiscal problems. In a tweet, Kerala Finance Minister Thomas Isaac said, “The solution to GST embroglio is Central Govt to empower GST Council to borrow for meeting the compensation requirement, if necessary through an ordinance, on the strength of future receipts of an extended levy of compensation cess beyond 5 years by an appropriate notification.”

INTEREST WAIVER

Don’t hide behind RBI: SC

PARMOD KUMAR
NEW DELHI, AUG. 26

The Supreme Court on Wednesday asked the Centre to clearly state its position on waiving interest on loans during the lockdown-related moratorium, starting from March 1 to August 31, 2020, while saying that it “cannot hide” behind the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) when the Centre, through solicitor general Tushar Mehta, submitted that its stand is not different from that of the Central bank.

The court, while giving the government time till September 1 to respond,

reacted sharply to the Centre’s comment that the move to waive interest on loans would hit businesses and banks.

“You cannot be interested only in business and not sufferings of the people... The problem has been created by your (Centre’s) lockdown. This is also not the time to consider about the business. The plight of people has to be considered also. You have to tell us your stand on two things: Disaster Management Act and if the interest on interest will be accounted for,” said Justice Ashok Bhushan who is heading

a three-judge bench also comprising Justice R. Subhash Reddy and Justice M.R. Shah.

The court said the Centre has “ample powers” under the Disaster Management Act to grant the waiver.

The top court’s direction to the Centre came in the course of the hearing of a PIL by one Gajendra Sharma who has sought waiver of interest on loans for the six-month moratorium period, including the lockdown period, as every activity — commercial and otherwise — has been affected adversely.

‘China crisis most serious since 1962’

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI
NEW DELHI, AUG 26

The current crisis in Sino-Indian relations “is surely the most serious situation after 1962”, External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar has told a news website, while acknowledging that “the quantum of forces currently deployed by both sides at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) is also unprecedented”. The EAM also said that the “difficul-

ties” in Sino-Indian ties “may well undermine” the Asian Century.

The two countries had fought a border war in 1962. The EAM’s comments come amid continued Chinese military intransigence in withdrawing to the positions of April this year in the Ladakh sector. The EAM’s remarks also seems at odds with recent comments made by Chinese Ambassador Sun Weidong who had described the dead-

● **External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar says the number of forces on two sides of LAC is unprecedented**

SHORT TAKES

Head constable dies of Covid

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG. 26

A 45-year-old head constable, tested positive for coronavirus a couple of days ago and was undergoing treatment, died on Wednesday, police said.

The deceased Sathish Kumar, 45, a head constable attached to the Tirukazhukundram police station, was undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Chromepet, where he died on Wednesday morning. Police said the officer joined the police force on 1997 and is survived by wife and two sons.

ASI circle in Tiruchy

New Delhi, Aug. 26: Minister of tourism and culture Prahlad Patel on Wednesday announced seven new ASI circles in Tiruchy, Raiganj, Rajkot, Jabalpur, Jhansi and Meerut and another in Hampi, which was earlier a mini circle, saying this will provide a massive boost to the development and maintenance of ancient sites in these regions.

Maintenance of ancient monuments, archaeological sites and remains of national importance is the prime concern of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and for this, the entire country is divided into 29 circles and three mini-circles. "The Ministry of Culture has taken this step in accordance with the prime minister's call to facilitate and strengthen the process of preservation and registration of archaeological monuments along with registration of artefacts with self declaration," the minister said while announcing the new circles. The minister informed that new circles have been created in Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, West Bengal and Gujarat. "Trichy, Raiganj, Rajkot, Jabalpur, Jhansi and Meerut have been announced as new circles. — PTI

Pondy records 511 fresh cases; tally inches closer to 12K

Puducherry, Aug. 26: With Puducherry logging 511 new coronavirus cases on Wednesday, the aggregate number of those infected by the viral infection shot up to 11,930. Eight more people succumbed to the virus, taking the toll to 180. A release from Director of Health and Family Welfare S Mohan Kumar said out of the 11,930 cases 4,264 were active and taking treatment in hospitals or home quarantine, while the number of patients treated and discharged was 7,486.

He said 213 patients were discharged during last 24 hours.

The fresh cases today were identified after examination of 1,296 samples. The fatality rate was 1.51 percent while recovery rate was 62.75 percent.

The Department of Health tested so far 67,301 samples and found 53,950 out of them to be negative. Results of examination of remaining samples were awaited, the Director said.

While the hospitals in Puducherry region had 425 fresh cases out of the total 511 cases, Karaikal had 28, Yanam 53 and Mahe five cases. — PTI

ENGG

ADMISSION



Higher education minister K.P. Anbazhagan releases Tamil Nadu engineering admission random numbers on Wednesday.

— DC

Resume Chennai metro services with SOPs: Experts

T. SUDHEESH | DC
CHENNAI, AUG. 26

While the Union ministry of home affairs on Monday indicated allowing the state governments to resume metro rail services from September 1, the experts and passenger forums have demanded resumption of Chennai Metro rail services with strict Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). It has been more than four months since the Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) suspended its services due to the pandemic.

The state government, it seems, has not made up its mind on recommencing metro service so far despite the CMRL making arrangements, including disinfecting stations and floor markers for physical distancing, to resume the services at any time.

Shreya Gadepalli, South Asia Programme Lead, Institute of Transportation and Development Policy, said that many cities world-wide had resumed public

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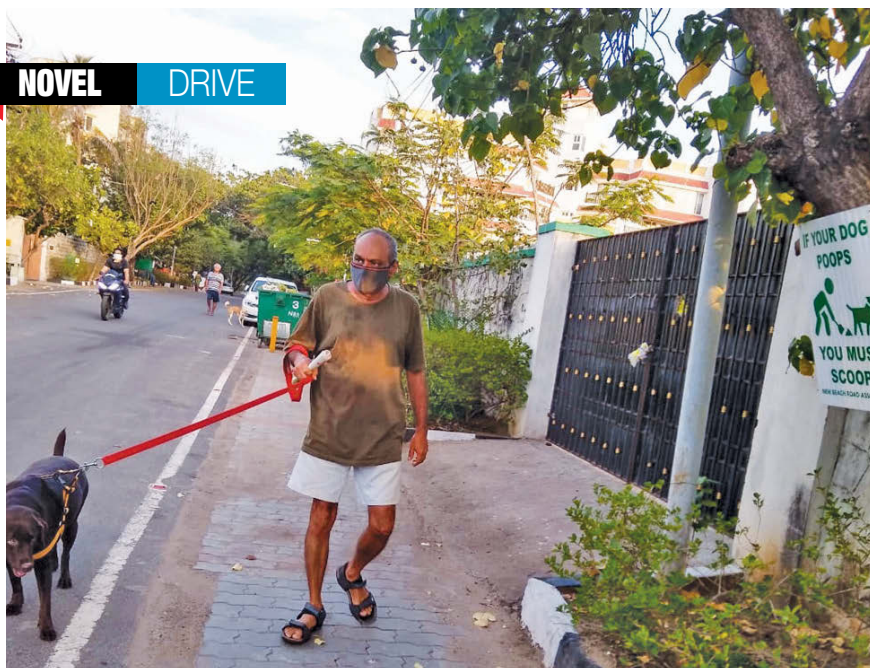
transport services with appropriate safety measures. Metro should sanitise coaches regularly and display such information to build public trust', she said.

V. Rama Rao, director, Traffic and Transportation Forum, has also urged the state government to take steps to resume the metro services, but cautioned that suburban rail services should not be allowed to recommence as it will be very difficult to control the crowd in the trains. "What we got to know is that CMRL is ready to

resume services with SOP. We urge the state government should allow them to try the services with low frequency, reducing the number of passengers and services. Temperature checks should be made mandatory at all stations', he said.

According to CMRL officials, all 32 stations have been made ready for operation. If we are given permission by the state government to run the trains, we will arrange all safety measures. We have already placed CCTVs and disinfectants in all stations.

"We had started precautionary activities even before the national lockdown was announced. As part of the programme, precautionary messages had been sent as SMS to the cell phones of metro commuters. Dos and don'ts are published at all metro stations along with the announcements which are regularly made for the benefit of the passengers. So monitoring and controlling the crowd will not be a difficult task", said the officials.



NOVEL DRIVE

45-year-old woman 'killed by quarry mafia'

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG. 26

A 45-year-old woman was killed after the two-wheeler she was riding pillion with her husband was hit by a speeding truck near Thirumukkudal in Kanchipuram district on Tuesday evening. It is suspected that the incident was pre-planned.

The deceased has been identified as Maheshwari, 45, a resident of Thirumukkudal in Uthiramerur. She was riding pillion with her husband, Pandidurai, 53.

According to sources, Pandidurai and a few other residents of Thirumukkudal village recently staged a protest against the frequent acci-

Based on the information, Salavakkam police in the early hours of Tuesday took Pandidurai for an investigation. As he did not return home till the afternoon, Maheshwari went to the police station.

dents caused by lorries that carry stones from Mathur and Siruthamur stone quarries. During the protest, Pandidurai reportedly raised slogans against the stone quarries and their alleged connection with the police. He accused police of acting in favour of stone quarries and did not respond to the complaint filed by the public to divert the heavy

vehicles on a different route far from the village.

Based on the information, Salavakkam police in the early hours of Tuesday took Pandidurai for an investigation. As he did not return home till the afternoon, Maheshwari went to the police station. According to sources, Pandidurai was beaten up by the cops at the station. He was allowed to go only in the evening after he assured the police.

According to police, the couple was heading towards their house in Thirumukkudal when a speeding truck hit the two-wheeler. In a head-on collision, Maheshwari fell on the road and was crushed under the wheels of the

truck. She died on the spot while Pandidurai escaped with minor injuries.

After the accident, residents of the village gathered at the accident site and staged a protest. They refused to send the body of the deceased for post-mortem. The residents said they suspect the accident was planned prior to eliminating Pandidurai as he raised voice against the atrocities. Though the Salavakkam police rushed to the spot and tried to pacify the protesters, the public refused to disperse. They demanded immediate action against the driver. The protesters dispersed on assurance from the senior police officers and the district revenue department officials.

Two killed in road accidents in Thanjavur

DC CORRESPONDENT
THANJAVUR, AUG. 26

Two persons were killed in road accidents at two different places near here on Tuesday evening.

V. Revathy (43), a noon meal staff, was killed when the two-wheeler in which she was travelling collided head-on with another two-wheeler, driven by one Thamizharasi (45), at Vengarayan-kudikadu. An injured Thamizharasi is taking treatment at Thanjavur medical college hospital.

Revathy was returning in the two-wheeler along with her son Santhosh, while Thjamizharasi was coming from Eachankottai. Santhosh was also injured and admitted to TMCH.

In another incident, Thenpandirajan (34), of Thennamanadu, was killed when a car hit his two-wheeler on the Pudukottai road.

New beach association members and residents of Thiruvannmiyur have initiated a clean drive in their area. They have put up sign boards with the message "If ur pet poops. You must scoop".

— DC



D. Karthikeyan, member secretary CMDA, along with officials., inspects ongoing work at Koyambedu wholesale market in Chennai on Wednesday.

— DC

Over 399 Indian evacuees land in city by 3 rescue flights

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG. 26

As many as 399 Indians, stranded in the US, Oman and Dubai due to coronavirus-induced restrictions, landed in Chennai by three repatriation flights on Wednesday.

A flight with 46 passengers from Chicago via Delhi landed here. Sources said at least 60 passengers got down in Delhi due to the stringent quarantine rules in the state. Two Air India repa-

triation flights from Oman and Dubai brought around 353 Indians home. As per the Health Ministry guidelines for international arrivals, the passengers will undergo mandatory quarantine for 14 days at a facility followed by 7 days home quarantine.

The passengers can be exempted from institutional quarantine based on Covid-negative test result taken 96 hours before undertaking the journey. However, the pro-

col was not implemented in the state due to the increasing virus cases. Nearly 100 passengers who arrived in the three flights with corona-negative certificates were not allowed to quarantine themselves at home. Later, 197 were quarantined at a government quarantine facility in the city. In all, 180 passengers opted to quarantine at Chennai hotels at their own cost and 10 persons will quarantine themselves at their houses.

Polytechnic student held for 'sexually assaulting' minor

Coimbatore, Aug. 26: A 13-year-old girl has been allegedly sexually assaulted by a student of a polytechnic college here, following which he was

arrested, police said on Wednesday.

The 17-year-old boy took the victim, a class nine student, to an isolated spot near Peelamedu in the

city and 'raped' her on August 24. The matter came to light after the girl told her parents about her plight, following which a complaint was lodged,

they said. A case under Pocco Act was registered against the accused and he was arrested on Wednesday, they added.

— PTI

Pondy min briefs experts from Chennai on pandemic

Puducherry, Aug. 26: A team of three scientists from Chennai was on Wednesday briefed by the Puducherry Health Department and a Minister on COVID-19 management here.

The team from the National Institute of Epidemiology was deputised to the Union Territory by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).

The visit by the team fol-

lows Lieutenant Governor Kiran Bedi's request to strengthen the measures taken to combat the pandemic as she had said the steps taken by the territorial administration were not enough. Officials of the Health Department and Health Minister Malladi Krishna Rao briefed the visiting team on the steps taken. Meanwhile, the Chief Minister V Narayanasamy

handed over COVID-19 equipment such as ventilators, masks and PPE kits, donated by Tata Foundation-Chennai, to the Indira Gandhi Government Medical College Hospital through the Health Minister.

The Union Territory recorded 511 new coronavirus cases today with the aggregate number of those infected by the virus shooting upto 11,930. — PTI

Man, son arrested for running finance racket

DC CORRESPONDENT
KARUR, AUG. 26

The police arrested a man and his son and are also looking after another person in connection with fraudulently collecting ₹65 lakh as deposit from the public with a fake assurance of giving more interest, at Lalapet near Karur on Wednesday.

Police said the arrested Sethuraman (59) and his

son Hariharasudhan (35) along with Krishnamoorthy jointly ran a finance company and collected a huge amount as deposits from the public of Karur and Tiruchy districts.

In the meantime, Ponnaiahpillai (83) of Tiruchy during 2018 went to Lalapet to get back his deposit of ₹5 lakh along with interest. But he was shocked to find the

finance company locked. When he approached the financiers and sought refund of his deposit with interest, they refused to do so, besides threatening him.

Based on a complaint of Ponnaiahpillai, the Karur district economic offence wing of police arrested Sethuraman and his son Hariharasudhan and are on the lookout for Krishnamoorthy.



"Balasubrahmanya m, admitted for Covid, continues to be on ventilator and ECMO support in the Intensive Care Unit," hospital's Assistant Director of Medical Services, Dr Anuradha Baskaran said in a statement

Hosp: SPB stable and conscious

Chennai, Aug 26: Singer S. P. Balasubrahmanya is stable, conscious and continues to be on ventilator and Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation support, a heart-lung assistance machine, the hospital treating him for Covid-19 infection said here on Wednesday.

The veteran playback singer's "current clinical condition is stable. He is conscious and responsive and continues to be closely monitored by our multidisciplinary clinical team," MGM Healthcare

said. "Balasubrahmanya, admitted for Covid, continues to be on ventilator and ECMO support in the Intensive Care Unit," the hospital's Assistant Director of Medical Services, Dr Anuradha Baskaran said in a statement.

The 74-year old singer was admitted on August 5 after he tested positive for coronavirus. Following a setback in his health, he was put on ventilator and then on ECMO support.

— PTI

TN No. 3 in Niti Aayog's Export Preparedness Index 2020

New Delhi, Aug 26: Gujarat has topped the Niti Aayog's Export Preparedness Index 2020 followed by Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu in the second and third place respectively, according to the government think tank's report released on Wednesday.

According to the report, six coastal states – Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu,

Odisha, Karnataka and Kerala – feature in the top ten rankings, indicating the presence of strong enabling and facilitating factors to promote exports.

Among the landlocked states, Rajasthan has performed the best, followed by Telangana and Haryana. Among the Himalayan states, Uttarakhand topped the chart, followed by Tripura and Himachal

Pradesh, the report said adding that across Union Territories, Delhi has performed the best, followed by Goa and Chandigarh.

The report noted that Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand are two landlocked states that had initiated several measures to promote exports.

Speaking at the launch of the report, Niti Aayog Vice

Chairman Rajiv Kumar said exports are an integral part of Aatmanirbhar Bharat and the country will have to keep striving to increase the share of exports in GDP and world trade.

"We will try to double India's share in world trade in the coming years," he said.

On policy parameters, Maharashtra topped the index followed by Gujarat

and Jharkhand, while on business ecosystem parameter, Gujarat was ranked number one followed by Delhi and Tamil Nadu.

In the export ecosystem parameter, Maharashtra topped the Index followed by Odisha and Rajasthan and on the export performance parameter, Mizoram led the index, followed by Gujarat and Maharashtra.

The report pointed out that at present, 70 per cent of India's export has been dominated by five states – Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Telangana.

It also said that most Indian states performed well on average across the sub-pillars of exports diversification, transport connectivity, and infrastructure.

— PTI

SHORT TAKES

Man kills wife, immolates himself

DC CORRESPONDENT
THANJAVUR, AUG. 26

Vijayan (55) of Thoppu Street in Kumbakonam, a worker at a drug store, on Wednesday allegedly killed his wife Sabitha (44) by hitting her head with a grinder stone and later immolated himself by pouring kerosene on him. According to police, the couple who married 27 years ago used to quarrel over not having children. The police have registered a case and are investigating.

Speaker enquiry with 11 MLAs today

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG. 26

Assembly Speaker P. Dhanapal will hold an enquiry on Thursday with Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam and 10 of his supporters who had voted against the AIADMK government headed by Edappadi K. Palaniswami in a confidence motion on February 18, 2017, when the party was split into two. Though the two factions of the AIADMK subsequently came together and Panneerselvam was given the Deputy Chief Minister post, the DMK had filed a case demanding the disqualification of the 11 MLAs. Since the Supreme Court had ordered that the Speaker would take a call on the issue, Dhanapal will be holding the enquiry before pronouncing his verdict. The enquiry will be held through a video conference on Thursday.

Fishermen plea to build bait curve

Thanjavur: The fishermen of Peravurani in Thanjavur district have appealed to the state government to construct a bait curve (thoondil valaivu) at Mallipattinam boat jetty to save boats from getting damaged due to sea waves.

In a letter sent to the fisheries minister, A. Tajudeen, general secretary of Tamil Maanila Meenavar Peravai said that Mallipattinam boat jetty was renovated two years back at a cost of Rs 66 crores. At that time it was planned to construct a bait curve at a cost of Rs 6 crores in the jetty. But it has not yet been completed.

Assembly session at Kalaivanar Arangam?

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG. 26

The Legislative Assembly, which should meet before September 24 according to norms, is likely to be convened at the sprawling hall in Kalaivanar Arangam, incidentally located at one end of the Omandur Government Estates where the MLAs hostel is also situated.

Since the Assembly Hall in Fort St George has restricted space, maintaining social distancing would not be possible if the MLAs were to meet there. So the government had been looking for alternative venues to convene the next session.

The visit of Chief Secretary K. Shanmugam and Assembly Secretary K. Srinivasan to Kalaivanar Arangam, along with PWD officials, gave rise to the speculation that the government had zeroed in on the hall there, which has a seating capacity of 1,000 otherwise.

Earlier, Assembly Speaker P. Dhanapal, accompanied by the Assembly Secretary, had inspected the hall a few days back.

The officials would convey their opinion on having the session in Kalaivanar Arangam to Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami, who would take the final call, official sources said.



In view of the Covid-19 situation the next session of the Legislative Assembly is likely to be held in Kalaivanar Arangam on Wallajah Salai in the city to ensure better enforcement of physical distancing norms among legislators' seating arrangement. The House was adjourned sine die on March 24 and the next session is due next month.

— DC

BJP will be key player in next govt formation: Raja

R. VALAYAPATHY | DC
PUDUKKOTTAI, AUG. 26

The BJP will be a major player in forming a government in Tamil Nadu after next year's assembly elections, according to BJP's national secretary H. Raja.

Addressing a press conference at Gandarvakottai near Pudukkottai on Wednesday, he claimed that without BJP no political front can form the new government in the

state. Although the NDA alliance is continuing at the centre, regarding the alliance in Tamil Nadu, he said it will be finalised at the appropriate time, during assembly elections.

Raja said Neet is unavoidable and we should prepare the students to face it. He added that 'boycotting Neet will become a bottleneck for the students' future.

He said the BJP is growing fast in Tamil Nadu

and the people of the state are aware of the political gimmicks in forming a political front against the BJP Government at the centre during the last year's Lok Sabha elections.

He expressed concern over the malpractices in the Union Government's direct assistance to the farmers through its Kisan Vikas Yojana and said the persons behind it should be punished severely.

Sterlite to redeploy staff in other Vedanta firms

DC CORRESPONDENT
THOOTHUKUDI, AUG. 26

The Sterlite Copper, which went for an appeal against the Madras high court order in the Supreme Court on Wednesday as its last chance, has opted to depute its permanent employees in other Vedanta group companies.

According to Sterlite sources, the decision was taken as the administration does not want to pay salary keeping its permanent workforce idle until the apex court gives its final order in the case.

Among around 1,000 permanent employees, when Sterlite was running in full swing till it was shut down by the state government on May 28, 2018, around 200 employees left the company during the two years till date. Further, 20 per cent of the permanent employees were deputed in various other companies in the Vedanta group.

However, as the company got a negative order from the high court last week, the management is of the opinion that it may take few more months for the Supreme Court to

decide on the case.

Hence, the Sterlite administration is said to have formulated a plan of deputing or transferring its permanent employees to companies like Sesa Goa, the company engaged in exploration mining and processing of iron ore in Goa and Karnataka, Vedanta's subsidiary, Bharat Aluminium Company (Balco) in Chhattisgarh and Odisha, to its power generation company, Talwandi Sabo Power Limited (TSPL) in Punjab and to Cairn Oil & Gas company in Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat.

Around 500 permanent employees now with the Sterlite Copper have been asked for their willingness for deputation or transfer to any one of the abovementioned Vedanta group companies as per their project requirement.

Employees sent on deputation, however, will be taken back by the copper major, if the final order comes in its favour, sources said.

But, the fate of more than 1,000 contract employees and the local material suppliers continues to be at stake.

Curbs on pilgrims, visitors to Vailankanni shrine

Nagapattinam, Aug. 26: Pilgrims and visitors will not be allowed to take part in the annual festival at Shrine Basilica in Vailankanni in the district in view of the Covid-19 spread, it has been decided. The festival is to be held between August 29 and September 8, the district Collector Praveen P Nair said. Only 30 members of the church administration would conduct the festival, he said. Superintendent of Police S. Selvanagarethinam said legal action would be taken against those who violate the orders of the district administration. Lodges and households have been instructed not to put up anyone during the festival days. — PTI

DMK's demands to CEO

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG. 26

DMK organisation secretary R. S. Bharathi has sought some clarifications with the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) on the special summary revision of photo electoral roll 2021 for Assembly elections.

In a letter to the CEO, Bharathi urged him to conduct a meet of recognised political parties with regard to the preparation of special summary revision immediately and implement each of the Election Commission of India's directives in a transparent manner sharing electoral rolls and other procedures with the political parties.

He said it was more imperative to attain the Election Commission of India's goal of "No Voter to be Left Behind" as part of free and fair election and demanded among other things the sending of all communication to the DMK party by email immediately apart from sending them by post. He also urged the CEO to direct the District Election Officers to conduct district level political parties (recognized) meetings on the summary revision giving due notice to them.

SHRC notice to Coimbatore police chief on abuse of boy

Coimbatore, Aug. 26: The State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) has issued a notice to the city police commissioner seeking within three weeks his report on a constable who allegedly thrashed a teenager for moving around during the total lockdown.

In its notice to Sumit Saran, the Commission said it had on its own taken cognizance of the matter after going through media reports of the alleged abuse. "In the event of any fault, the Commission

may proceed to take such action as it deems fit and proper," the notice read.

The 13-year-old boy from Ondipudur and two of his friends were found moving around on a two-wheeler on Sunday and failed to stop when the policeman asked them to halt. Constable Durgaraj caught the boy and allegedly hit the latter with a lathi. The boy's mother lodged a complaint seeking action against the policeman.

Photographs of the boy's swollen leg, thigh and knees

went viral on social media.

As part of a departmental probe, the constable was shifted to the control room on Monday and it was said that disciplinary action would follow after inquiry.

Also, the Commission sent a notice to district Collector K Rajamani seeking within three weeks a report on a complaint from a Dalit woman, who was a panchayat president of J Krishnapuram in the district, accusing an AIADMK member of making casteist remarks. — PTI

Mother Teresa remembered on her 110th birth anniv

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG. 26

Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami and Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam were among those who paid tributes to Mother Teresa on her 110th birth anniversary.

Both Palaniswami and Panneerselvam, in their tweets, referred to the special love that former Chief Minister J. Jayalalithaa had for the Mother.

By showing mercy Mother Teresa proved to the world that she could be the mother to a 1000 chil-

dren, the Chief Minister said.

She brought succor to the sick and destitute through her service and following her path let us sow only love, Panneerselvam said, adding 'whomever hates, let's show love.'

Former bureaucrat M. G.

Devasahayam, who had written a book on Mother Teresa, 'A Drop of Love – Memories of Saint Teresa,' said that her motto was 'it is in giving that we receive' and added: 'How aptly these apply to today's world of hate, vengeance and intolerance.'

Stalin's questions on gutka scam

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG. 26

DMK president M. K. Stalin raised a slew of questions on the way in which CBI investigations into the gutka scam were carried out, wondering as to what was uniting the Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami and the BJP government at the Centre in protecting some of the high profile accused in the case.

In the case involving a bribe of over Rs 40 crore, given for alleged evasion of Rs 250 crore tax, the documents presented to



the Chief Secretary by the income tax officials had reportedly gone missing, Stalin said in a statement on Wednesday.

A question raised with regard to the investigations that led to the state government giving permission to the CBI to file cases against two of its

employees, Sivakumar and Senthil Murugan, in July 2020, though the CBI had sought the permission for it in November 2018, was what happened to the other accused.

The Supreme Court had given permission to the CBI to investigate health minister C. Vijaybaskar, two former DGPs T. K. Rajendran and George, which led to raids in 35 premises and the filing of FIR against six persons.

Prior to that, when the Madras High Court had ordered a CBI probe into the scam, it was contested in the Supreme Court by a

Group Four official of the government, Sivakumar. Stalin wanted to know how the government gave permission for the official to engage a lawyer in the Supreme Court for the appeal.

Also he wanted to know why the government took 20 months to give the permission for filing cases against the two. His other questions were how was T. K. Rajendran promoted and allowed to retire when the case was against him and why was ADGP Manjunath who was probing the case initially transferred.

Couple held for smuggling gold in paste form

Coimbatore, Aug. 26: About 2.6 of gold in paste form, worth ₹1.15 crore, has been seized from a couple who arrived here recently from Dubai on a Vandhe Bharat mission flight, the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence said here on Wednesday.

The DRI officials, acting on a tip off, kept a watch on passengers coming on these flights and nabbed the couple after they came out of the green channel as they did not give convincing replies to questions, a release said.

They first denied carrying any gold articles. However a search revealed a few packets stitched on to their inner garments, containing 2.61 kg of gold in paste form, valued at ₹1.15 crore, the release said.

The couple had arrived here two weeks back and were in quarantine after undergoing COVID-19 tests, it said. — PTI

Need for regulating content on social media: Minister

Chennai, Aug. 26: Tamil Nadu revenue minister R B Udayakumar on Wednesday favoured regulation of content posted on social media.

Unlike mainstream media which has in-house mechanisms for ensuring checks and balances and factual reporting, the social media lacked it, he told reporters after attending an event on cyber security here.

When his attention was drawn to a controversial video post that denigrated the 'Kandha Sashti Kavacham,' a spiritual hymn seeking divine pro-

tection from Lord Muruga, the Minister regretted that there was no audit of content found on social media.

Police had taken action against "Karuppar Kootam" for the offensive posts recently following complaints.

The bulk of content on social media - be it Twitter, Whatsapp, Facebook or video sharing platform Youtube - appeared unedited, unregulated and invariably were merely expressions of what a person presumed. — PTI

Unlike mainstream media which has in-house mechanisms for ensuring checks and balances and factual reporting, the social media lacked it, he told reporters after



attending an event on cyber security here

B. RAVICHANDRAN | DC
OOTY, AUG. 26

The robust blooming of Orange Cestrum in clusters, commonly known as 'Night Queen Flower' which is a known for its sweet and high fragrance in dark hours, has begun to bring late southwest monsoon colours as well as its unique 'orangy' scent to the hills from dusk to dawn.

V. Sivadas, managing trustee, Nilgiris Environment and Socio-cultural Trust, said that this exotic plant of Central American origin that made its way to Nilgiris during British era was widely used for bio-fencing in the earlier days in the hills. It grows well in the upper reaches of Nilgiris, especially in Ooty and its suburbs, he added.

"The elegant bell-shaped orange-coloured centrum flowers emit strong fragrance in the night. This apart, its sweet nectar woos the bees and humming birds in good numbers which helps in the pollination of this plant

"The elegant bell-shaped orange-coloured centrum flowers emit strong fragrance in the night. This apart, its sweet nectar woos the bees and humming birds in good numbers which helps in the pollination of this plant which grows as bushes on the roadsides as wells in other parts of the hills," he noted

which grows as bushes on the roadsides as wells in other parts of the hills" he noted.

The cestrum plant is also good in absorption of atmospheric carbon thus acting as a natural carbon sink. Those who rear cattle uses this plant for bedding purpose in the cattle sheds. The cattle urine and the dung mixes well with the leaves of this plant to convert it into a compost to be used as a bio-fertilizer. Some farmers grow this plant as a bio-fencing material to attract bees for beekeeping purposes in the farmlands, he explained.

SHORT TAKES

MUKHERJEE STILL IN DEEP COMA: HOSPITAL

New Delhi, Aug. 26: Former president Pranab Mukherjee continues to be in deep coma and his renal parameters are “slightly deranged”, the hospital treating him said on Wednesday.

Doctors attending to 84-year-old Mukherjee said he continues to be on ventilator support.

He was admitted to the Army’s Research and Referral Hospital in Delhi Cantonment on August 10, where he was operated for removal of a clot in the brain. Thereafter, he developed a lung infection and is being treated for the same.

The former president had also tested positive for Covid-19 at the time of his admission, the hospital said.

“Pranab Mukherjee is being treated for lung infection. His renal parameters are slightly deranged since Tuesday. He continues to be in deep coma and on ventilator support,” a statement from the hospital said.

IIT-D DIRECTOR OPPOSES PUTTING OFF NEET

New Delhi, Aug. 26: Any further delay in conducting entrance exams JEE and NEET will have “serious repercussions” on not only the academic calendar but also career of bright students, IIT Delhi Director V. Ramgopal Rao said.

Rao’s comments come in the wake of growing clamour for postponing the two crucial exams in the wake of rise in Covid-19 cases.

“The consequences of postponing these exams any further can have serious repercussions on IIT academic calendars and for candidates. I fail to see how we can run two batches together. It will become a zero academic year for lakhs of students. Our academic calendars are too packed already and linked to too many other things. The delays can impact the careers of so many bright students.

“We have already lost six months. If we conduct the exams in September, we can at least start the sessions in Indian Institutes of Technology (could be online) in December. Tinkering with the examination pattern or admission processes will also be detrimental and unfair for everyone,” Rao said in a social media post. He said Coronavirus is not going to go away for at least a year.

NCB FILES CASE AGAINST RHEA, OTHERS

DC CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, AUG. 26

In yet another twist to the Sushant Singh Rajput suicide probe, now the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has registered a fresh case in connection with allegations of drugs consumption and peddling at his Bandra residence where he was found hanging on June 14. The case has been filed against Rajput’s girlfriend Rhea Chakraborty and some others based on the technical evidence and some text messages that were exchanged between her and alleged suppliers.

The NCB is now the third federal investigative agency probing this case apart from the ED and the CBI. The case has been filed based on some text messages mentioning Chakraborty and Rajput smoking marijuana and some other drugs.

NO IMPORTANT FILE GUTTED, SAYS KERALA MINISTER

DC CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, AUG. 26

The Kerala government on Wednesday reiterated that no important file or documents got destroyed in the fire that broke out in a portion of the protocol wing of the state secretariat in Thiruvananthapuram the other day.

Industry minister E.P. Jayaraajan refuted the opposition allegations that files pertaining to gold smuggling case accused got destroyed in the fire. All the documents, files and CCTV footage demanded by NIA, Enforcement Directorate, Customs and other agencies had already been handed over to them. The documents are in the possession of the agencies so there is no question of these getting destroyed in the fire, he said.

Flood fury continues



A temple is submerged in the flooded Ganga following heavy rainfall at Manikarnika Ghat in Varanasi on Wednesday.



A flooded fire service station after heavy rains in Jammu on Wednesday. Police rescued 15 nomadic people, belonging to different families, after they were caught in flash floods in the Ujh river.

NO END TO ATROCITIES

STUDENT RAPED BY SCHOOL MANAGER IN GORAKHPUR

Gorakhpur, Aug. 26: A Class 7 student was allegedly raped by a manager of her school, who also made a video of her and threatened to post it on social media if she reported the matter to anyone, police said here on Wednesday.

Police said the incident took place on July 30 when school manager Harendra Yadav (38) called the 15-year-old girl to his house.

The accused is on the run and police have registered a case against him.

The police station in-charge of the area was removed from the post and attached to the Police Lines for failing to take the case seriously and not informing high officials regarding it.

According to police, the accused made a video of the student and started blackmailing her. He threatened to post it on social media if she disclosed the incident to anyone, police said.

The manager blackmailed her saying her father would kill her if she told him about the incident. Police said the accused asked the girl to live at his house in the city and study from there.

After a few days, the girl, however, disclosed it to her family. The girl’s father informed the police but the accused could not be nabbed. Later, the girl’s father met SSP Joginder Singh. A case was lodged against the school manager for rape and under provisions of the POCSO Act, but due to the elapse of time after the incident, the accused managed to escape.

Gorakhpur’s Gola Circle Officer Shyamdev said the girl complained to police that she was raped on July 30 by the manager at his home.

Earlier on August 16, a teenage girl was reportedly raped and singled with cigarette butts by two men in the Gola area.

MAN RAPES MINOR, FORCES HER TO MARRY HIM: POLICE

Muzaffarnagar, Aug. 26: A man has been booked by police for allegedly raping a minor sister of his elder brother’s wife and then marrying her by threatening her and her mother before giving her triple talaq.

On a complaint by the victim’s mother, belonging to a village under Budhana police station of Muzaffarnagar district, accused Momin has been booked under section 376 of the Indian Penal Code, sections 3 and 4 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act and Sections 9, 10 and 11 of the Prevention of Child Marriage Act.

After the registration of the case against him, Momin has gone missing but the police have launched a manhunt to nab him, said Budhana police station in-charge K.P. Singh.

In her complaint to the police, the victim’s mother said that her elder son-in-law’s brother Momin had visited their house in January this year and stayed with them for a few days during which he raped her minor daughter, said SHO Singh.

After returning to his home, he along with his parents began threatening the mother-daughter duo to marry the minor girl to him, the SHO said, adding the woman married her daughter to Momin under duress in February this year.

But a few weeks after taking the minor girl to his home, Momin gave her triple talaq and left her back with her mother, said the SHO, after which the fatherless child approached Childcare Helpline, which referred the matter to the police.

The police subsequently got a complaint from the mother of the minor child and booked the accused, he said.

— PTI

Phase 2 human trial of Oxford vaccine begins

25 candidates will be given the vaccine in next seven days

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC
MUMBAI, AUG. 26

The Phase-2 human trial of the Oxford Covid-19 vaccine candidate, being manufactured by the world’s largest vaccine maker Serum Institute of India (SII), began at a medical college and hospital on Wednesday.

Two male volunteers were administered the vaccine at Pune’s Bharti Vidyapeeth Medical College and Hospital at around 1pm.

The SII has selected 15 sites in India to conduct the phase-2 trial of the vaccine. “Doctors at the hospital administered the first shot of the ‘Covishield’ vaccine to a 32-year-old man after his reports of Covid-19 and antibodies tests came out negative,” said medical director of Bharti Vidyapeeth’s Medical College, Hospital and Research Centre, Dr Sanjay Lalwani.

Another 48-year-old male volunteer was also given the vaccine, he added. Five volunteers had enrolled for the trial after the doses were received from the SII on Tuesday. Before administering the vaccine, doctors checked their temperature, blood pressure and heart beats.

“The Covid-19 and antibodies tests were conducted on all the five volunteers. Of them, the reports of three volunteers’ antibodies tests came positive.

AKSHAYA KUMAR
SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, AUG. 26

The Odisha government on Wednesday announced reducing the syllabus of Class 1 to 12 students for 2020-21 academic session by 30 per cent.

The development comes after the Central Board of Secondary Education syllabus for classes 9 to 12 was reduced by 30 per cent this year due to the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

“The decision to rationalise the syllabus has been taken on the recommendation of three syllabus committees of State Council of Education, Research and Training, Board of Secondary Education and Council of Higher Secondary Education, Odisha. The state-specific important subjects which students need to know have not

● **SCHOOLS IN ODISHA** will remain closed till end of the Durga Puja vacation. This was announced by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Wednesday.

● **THE ANNOUNCEMENT** came following a review meeting chaired by the CM.

● **EARLIER, IT** was speculated that the government may open schools from September 1 with strict compliance of the Covid-19 regulations.

been omitted from the syllabus,” state school and mass education minister Samir Dash said.

The minister said that the decision was taken keeping in view the current Covid-19 situation. If the schools open anytime soon, a fresh decision on the syllabus would be taken.

“The district education officers will intimate the headmasters of schools in this regard to teach the students according to the reduced syllabus,” Dash said.

After announcement of syllabus rationalisation, students and educationists expressed mixed feelings of approval and disappointment over the delayed decision.

A student of Rourkela said, “Reduction of syllabus is a welcome step but the delayed decision may hamper our course of studies this year. Had the rationalisation been effected a month or two earlier, it would have benefited us more.”

“The rationalisation of the syllabus is very ambiguous as there is doubt whether students will be able to complete the rest of their courses in due time,” said a teacher in Bhubaneswar.

allowed to go home. They will be monitored by our team. There are no issues so far,” he said, adding that the vaccine dose will be repeated on both the volunteers after one month.

Covid claims 1,059 lives in 24 hrs

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 26

The number of recoveries of Covid-19 patients in the country exceeded active cases by 3.5 times on Wednesday.

India’s Covid-19 tally, meanwhile, rose to 32.34 lakh with 67,151 more people testing positive in the last 24 hours, while the toll climbed to 59,449 with 1,059 new fatalities being reported during the period.

According to the Union health ministry, the single-day recovery figure has been more than 60,000 for many days and the recovery of 63,173 patients in the last 24 hours has resulted in the cumulative recoveries of 24,67,758 people.

“This has contributed to the rapidly widening chasm between the number of percentage recovered and percentage active cases further. As many as 17,60,489 people have

recovered more than the 7,07,267 active cases,” it said. The record high recoveries have ensured that the number of active cases which is the actual caseload, comprises only 21.87 percent of the total cases. The steadily declining Case Fatality Rates stands at 1.84 per cent on Wednesday.

“Early identification of the infections through timely and aggressive testing has played a pivotal role in India’s strategy to

fight the pandemic as the cumulative testing reached 3,76,51,512 with more than 27,000 Tests Per Million. In the last 24 hours 8,23,992 tests were conducted,” said the Union Health Ministry.

The ministry pointed that 7-day average rolling numbers of tests per day indicate the determined, It may be noted that there are a total of 1,540 labs today which includes 992 government labs and 548 private.

PEACE ACCORD AP tally crosses 10K again as Telangana, Kerala report highest ever spike

Sudden surge of Covid positive cases in South

DC CORRESPONDENTS
WITH AGENCY INPUTS
AUG. 26

Vijayawada: Andhra Pradesh registered a single-day spike of 10,830 Covid-19 cases scaling up the overall tally to 3,82,469 and 81 deaths taking the toll to 3,541 in the last 24 hours.

Out of 34,18,690 samples tested so far in the state, 2,86,720 patients have been discharged after recovery while 92,208 patients are undergoing treatment.

Rate of recovery has been good in East Godavari with 35,564 followed by 33,661 in Kurnool, 30,672 in Anantapur, 26,658 in West Godavari.

The State has carried out Covid-19 tests on 64,020 samples for one million population and recorded a positive rate of 11.19.

Highest single day spike of 3,018 in Telangana

Hyderabad: Telangana posted 3,018 fresh coronavirus cases, the highest single day spurt so far, pushing the state’s total infection count to 1.11 lakh.

With 10 more fatalities the toll rose to 780, a state government bulletin said on Wednesday, providing data as of 8 PM on August 25.

The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) registered 475

fresh infections, followed by Rangareddy 247, Medchal Malkajgiri 204, Nalgonda 190, Khammam 161, Warangal Urban 139 and other districts.

All 33 districts in the state reported positive cases in double digits.

While the number of fresh infections has been more or less stable in the GHMC, they are witnessing considerable rise in few districts, including Karimnagar, Warangal Urban and Nizamabad in recent days.

Meanwhile, a senior police officer died of Covid-19 here on Wednesday, just days before his retirement from service. Additional superintendent of police of

Jagtial district, K Dakshina Murthy (58), contracted coronavirus and was admitted to a private hospital here a week ago, police said. He died of a heart attack at about 5.30 am, while undergoing treatment for the viral infection, they said.

Kerala too reports highest surge

Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala on Wednesday reported 2476 Covid-19 cases, the highest ever single day surge, even as 1351 persons recovered from the disease. The active cases in the state has risen to 22,344.

Thirteen deaths were reported in the state on

Wednesday. Of the new cases 2243 got the infection through contact, 64 came from abroad, 99 from other states, source of infection is not known among 175 persons, 69 health workers also got infected.

Thiruvananthapuram district recorded 461 cases followed by Malappuram 352, Kozhikode 215, Thrissur 204. As on Wednesday 1.89 Lakh people were under surveillance of which 1.72 lakh are under home/institution quarantine.

Karnataka tally crosses 3-lakh mark

Bengaluru: Covid-19 infections breached the

three lakh mark in Karnataka, while the death toll crossed 5,000 as the state on Wednesday reported 8,580 new cases and 133 fatalities, the health department said.

The day also saw 7,249 patients getting discharged after recovery Bengaluru Urban accounted for the maximum numbers in fresh cases with 3,284.

As of August 26, cumulatively 3,00,406 Covid-19 positive cases have been confirmed in the state, which includes 5,091 deaths and 2,11,688 discharges, the health department said in its bulletin. Out of 83,608 active cases, 82,848 patients are in isolation at hospitals.



B.S. Yeddyurappa

BJP MLAs SAY BSY’S SON IS FUNCTIONING AS ‘SUPER CM’

SHILPA P. | DC
MYSURU, AUG. 26

The Congress on Wednesday said that a few BJP MLAs have written to the BJP high command levelling serious allegations against the Karnataka Chief Minister’s son.

KPCC spokesperson M. Lakshman released copy of the letter to the media which is reportedly sent by seven BJP MLAs to their party high command. The letter alleges that B.S. Yeddyurappa’s son B.Y. Vijayendra is functioning as “Super CM”.

The BJP MLAs have reportedly accused him of indulging in corruption involving ₹5,000 crore by raising 15 per cent commission or VST (Vijayendra Service Tax) to get government work done.

Lakshman did not reveal the names of those seven BJP MLAs. He, however, released a list of 31 people who are working as B.Y. Vijayendra’s team.

Addressing a press meet in Mysuru, Lakshman said that in that letter, the BJP MLAs have stated, “78-year-old Yeddyurappa has only been a constitutional and “technical” Chief Minister. Taking the advantage of his old age, his son and BJP vice-president Vijayendra is functioning as ‘Super Chief Minister’. Vijayendra and his family members, their children, grand children and others are running a parallel, alternate 4G (fourth generation) state government like a private limited company in corporate style by forming a club of 31-members. And they are getting government work done for commission.”

“Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Amit Shah had termed Congress-led Siddaramaiah government as 10 per cent government, but now Vijayendra is raising 15 per cent commission for getting government work of contractors, brokers, middlemen done. While the Chief Minister says that they are not getting expected GST share to state from the Central government to take up certain developmental works, he has maintained silence on this VST (Vijayendra Service Tax),” he said.

● **THE CONGRESS** released a copy of the letter reportedly written by BJP MLAs to BJP high command levelling serious allegations against Karnataka CM, his son.

IN BRIEF

Probe Navalny case: Johnson

London: Britain will back an independent investigation into the suspected poisoning of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Wednesday. "We need a full, transparent investigation into what happened. The perpetrators must be held accountable and the UK will join international efforts to ensure justice is done," he said. Johnson's intervention comes as the 44-year-old Kremlin critic was being treated in a Berlin hospital after falling ill on a flight in Siberia last week, and mounting concern from Western powers.

NZ mosque attack: Tarrant to be mum

Christchurch: Brenton Harrison Tarrant told a New Zealand judge Wednesday he will not speak in his defence at his sentencing hearing for the mass shooting of worshippers at two Christchurch mosques. Tarrant had the opportunity to speak Thursday, the final day of a hearing which has seen 90 survivors and family members talk about the pain of the March 2019 attacks. Earlier Wednesday, a woman speaking about her beloved father brought many people in the courtroom to tears. Sara Qasem said she wonders if, in his last moments, her father was frightened or in pain, and wishes she could have been there to hold his hand.

Pak rain, Afghan flood: 190 dead

Karachi/Kabul: Three days of monsoon rains have killed at least 90 people and damaged at least a 1,000 homes across Pakistan, the country's national disaster management agency said Tuesday, as another spell of heavy rain lashed the port city of Karachi. Streets and homes were flooded with sewage water in Karachi, where the drainage and sewage systems are outdated. Heavy flooding has killed at least 100 people and injured scores of others as heavy rains drenched northern and eastern Afghanistan. Provincial spokeswoman Wahida Shahkar, said the number of casualties may rise as rescue teams were still working to locate people buried under destroyed houses.

Pak rejects two FATF-linked bills

Islamabad: Pakistan's Opposition-dominated Senate has rejected two bills related to the tough conditions set by the FATF, jeopardising the government's efforts to escape from being blacklisted by the global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog. The move drew a strong reaction from Prime Minister Imran Khan who accused the Opposition leaders of trying to save their illegal money. The Anti-Money Laundering (Second Amendment) Bill and the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Waqf Properties Bill, passed by the National Assembly a day before, were rejected through a voice vote by the Senate on Tuesday.

SUMMERS MAY BE TOO HOT FOR HUMANS

London, Aug. 26: Many live in developing countries, and do jobs that expose them to potentially life threatening conditions. These include being out in the open on farms and building sites or indoors in factories and hospitals. Global warming will increase the chances of summer conditions that may be "too hot for humans" to work in. When we caught up with Dr Jimmy Lee, his goggles were steamed up and there was sweat trickling off his neck. An emergency medic, he's labouring in the stifling heat of tropical Singapore to care for patients with Covid-19. There's no air conditioning — a deliberate choice, to prevent the virus being blown around — and he notices that he and his colleagues become "more irritable, more short with each other".

And his personal protective equipment, essential for avoiding infection, makes things worse by creating a sweltering 'micro-climate' under the multiple layers of plastic. "It really hits you when you first go in there," Dr Lee says, "and it's really uncomfortable over a whole shift of eight hours — it affects morale." One danger, he realises, is that overheating can slow down their ability to do something that's vital for medical staff — make quick decisions.

Belarus summons Nobel Laureate

Nobel Literature Prize winner for 2015 and the opposition's Coordination Council's presidium member Svetlana Alexievich, who was summoned for questioning as a witness in a criminal probe over the setting up of the council that seeks to oversee a peaceful transition of power, arrives at the Investigative Committee in Minsk on Wednesday. Alexievich said she refused to answer investigators' questions. "I am completely calm. I do not feel guilty. Everything we are doing is legal and necessary," she said after arriving at the Committee's headquarters with other members of the presidium. She left shortly afterwards, saying she had invoked her right not to testify against herself and that the council's only goal was "to unite society".

— AFP

Kin laud Don achievements, urge voters to re-elect him

New York, Aug. 26: US President Donald Trump's family took centrestage at the Republican Convention, passionately rallying behind him and highlighting his political, economic and foreign achievements as they urged American voters to re-elect him for a second term.

So far, first lady Melania Trump, president's sons Donald Trump Jr and Eric Trump and daughter Tiffany Trump have addressed the Republican National Convention. His another daughter and senior adviser Ivanka Trump, 38, will speak on Thursday, the last day of the convention.

President Trump and Vice President Mike Pence will be challenged by the Democratic Party's presidential nominee Joe Biden and his Indian-American running mate Senator Kamala Harris.

"Donald is a husband who supports me in all that I do. He has built administration with an unprecedented number of women in leadership roles and has fostered an environment where the American people are always the priority. He welcomes different points of view and encourage thinking outside of the box."

"I know I speak for my husband and the family when I say we are so grateful that you have trusted him to be your president and we will be honoured to serve this incredible country for four more years," the First Lady said in her

Pompeo: Only Prez can tackle China's 'predatory aggression'

Washington, Aug. 26: President Donald Trump is the only person who can take on China and its "predatory aggression", US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has told the American people.

He also said that President Trump has taken bold initiatives in nearly every corner of the world. "In China, he has pulled back the curtain on the predatory aggression of the Chinese Communist Party. The president has held China accountable for covering up the China virus and allowing it to spread death and economic destruction in America and around the world. And he will not rest until justice is done," the top American diplomat said.

In his address to the Rep-

ublican National Convention from Jerusalem, Pompeo, who is leading the Trump administration's vocal attack on China and its aggressive moves in recent times against India and in the strategic Indo-Pacific region, said that President Trump has taken bold initiatives in nearly every corner of the world.

"In China, he has pulled back the curtain on the predatory aggression of the Chinese Communist Party. The president has held China accountable for covering up the China virus and allowing it to spread death and economic destruction in America and around the world. And he will not rest until justice is done," the top American diplomat said.

— PTI

Both Koreas brace for strong typhoon

Seoul, Aug. 26: Hundreds of flights were cancelled in South Korea while North Korea's leader expressed concern about a potential loss of lives and crops as the countries braced for a fast-approaching typhoon forecast as one of the strongest to hit their peninsula this year.

Packing a maximum wind speed of 162 kilometres (100 miles) per hour, Typhoon Bavi was already lashing South Korea's southern resort island of Jeju on Wednesday afternoon, flooding roads, toppling trees, ripping off signboards and knocking down at least one traffic sign as it passed over waters off the island's western shores.

There were no immediate reports of casualties. South Korea's weather agency said the typhoon will start to affect the mainland at night before making landfall in western North Korea early Thursday. The agency warned of possible severe damage caused by very strong winds and heavy rainfall.

More than 460 domestic flights in and out of Jeju were cancelled as of Wednesday afternoon.

— AP

AS HURRICANE LAURA ARRIVES, THOUSANDS FLEE

Galveston (US), Aug. 26: In the largest US evacuation of the pandemic, more than half a million people were ordered to flee the Gulf Coast on Tuesday as Laura strengthened into a hurricane that forecasters said could slam Texas and Louisiana with ferocious winds, heavy flooding and the power to push seawater miles inland.

More than 385,000 residents were told to flee the Texas cities of Beaumont, Galveston and Port Arthur, and another 200,000 were ordered to leave low-lying Calcasieu Parish in southwestern Louisiana, where forecasters said as much as 13 feet (4 meters) of storm surge topped by waves could submerge whole communities. Forecasters Tuesday night expected the storm to increase in strength by 33 per cent, from 90 mph (144 kmh) to 120 mph (193 kmh) in just 24 hours.

— AP

Whether you like it or not, you always know what he's thinking, and that is because he's an authentic person who loves this country and its people, and wants to continue to make it better," she said.

Addressing the Convention's first night on Monday, Donald Trump Jr, 42, said Trump's America is "a land of opportunity, a place of promise."

"I was fortunate enough

POMPEO'S RNC SPEECH: PROBE BY DEMOCRAT

Washington, Aug. 26: A House Democrat has opened an investigation into Mike Pompeo's controversial decision to address the Republican National Convention by breaking the longstanding precedent of sitting US secretaries of state avoiding partisan politics. Representative Joaquin Castro, the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, said in a statement that the "American people deserve a full investigation".

— PTI

to grow up in a family that could afford the best schools and the finest universities, but a great education cannot be the exclusive right of the rich and powerful. It must be accessible to all. And that's why my dad is pro school choice. That's why he's called education access the civil rights issue, not just of our time, but of all time," he said.

— PTI

TRUMP WISE LIKE AN 'ULLU' TWEET GOES VIRAL

Washington, Aug. 26: Language is a funny thing, one thing can have two very different meanings in different cultures.

This was correctly proven by American conservative political TV commentator and presenter Tomi Lahren when she posted a video on Twitter thanking the Indian-American community for supporting Trump.

But this video while showing her support had her say a word in Hindi, as a means to appeal to the Indian-American community and their vote base, kind of backfired on her. Lahren came out to support Trump on Twitter and in her video said that, "Trump 2020 is all about keeping America great. Because President Trump is wise like an owl, or as you guys would say in Hindi — I hope I'm pronouncing this right — President Trump is wise like an 'ullu'. I hope I said that right."

The Indian side of Twitter or at least the Hindi speaking ones were left in splits over this hilarious mistake and many couldn't turn away from the irony of it all.

People jumped to comment and quote tweet it.

— Agencies

2 Oppn lawmakers arrested in Hong Kong

Hong Kong, Aug. 26: Hong Kong police arrested 16 people Wednesday on charges related to anti-government protests last year, including two opposition lawmakers.

Pro-democracy legislators Ted Hui and Lam Cheuk-ting announced their arrests on social media. Posts on Lam's Twitter account said he had been arrested on charges of conspiring with others to damage property and obstructing justice during a protest in July 2019.

The tweets said he has

also been accused of rioting on July 21, 2019. That was the day a group of more than 100 men clad in white attacked protesters and passengers with steel rods and rattan canes in a subway station. Protesters and many from the opposition camp have accused the police of colluding with the attackers, as they arrived late to the scene and did not make arrests that night.

A post on Hui's Facebook page did not make clear the exact charges he was facing. The chairman of

the Democratic Party in Hong Kong, Wu Chi-wai, called the arrests of Lam and Hui "ridiculous". Lawmaker James To said the arrests amounted to political persecution. The two were arrested along with 14 others - aged between 26 and 48 years old — in relation to protests last year, according to a police official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to talk to the press before an official statement had been released.

The semi-autonomous

Oil spill: Japan must wean ships off fossil fuels

the international community in shipping's clean energy transition.

Impossible? Not at all. Most of Japan's largest shipping lines are already members of the Getting to Zero coalition, a global alliance of 110 maritime companies working to get zero-emission, non-fossil fuel, cargo ships into commercial operation by 2030. Mitsui O.S.K. Lines is one of them.

Under the leadership of Kazuyoshi Akaba, Japan's Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism is aiming to launch a zero-emission ship even

Former Indian athlete kills wife, mom in US, held

Washington, Aug. 26: Iqbal Singh, a former Asian Championship bronze medalist for India, has been charged with murder in the US after he chillingly admitted to killing his wife and mother, according to media reports. Singh, 62, from Delaware County in Pennsylvania called police on Sunday morning to admit his crime, The *Philadelphia Inquirer* quoted officials as saying.

When police arrived at Singh's home in Newtown Township, they found Singh covered in blood, suffering from self-inflicted stab wounds. Inside were the bodies of the two women, the report said.

Singh was charged on Monday with first- and third-degree murder, court records show, and remained in custody, denied bail given the nature of the charges.

There was no indication that he had hired an attorney, it said. The former shot-putter won a bronze medal at the 1983 Asian Athletics Championship,

which was held in Kuwait. This remained the biggest achievement of his sporting career before he moved to the US. He was working as a taxicab driver, US media reports said.

Singh was taken to an area hospital for the treatment of self-inflicted injuries, where he remains in police custody, *NBC News* reported. At Singh's home on Rockwood Road, police found his mother, Nasib Kaur, lying unresponsive on the first floor with her throat slit. Singh's wife, Jaspal Kaur, was found upstairs, similarly wounded. Both women were pronounced dead at the scene, according to the affidavit of probable cause for his arrest. The motive in the slayings was unclear.

"At this point, there's been no previous criminal contact with this individual and so the mystery of why this happened is still a mystery." *CBS Local* quoted Delaware County District Attorney Jack Stollsteimer as saying.

— PTI

CAMBRIDGE UNIV'S VACCINE RACE TO FIGHT ALL CORONAVIRUSES

London, Aug. 26: The University of Cambridge on Wednesday confirmed plans to begin trials of a potential new vaccine not only against Covid-19 but all coronaviruses that may spill over from animals to humans in the future. The new vaccine candidate, DIOS-CoVax2, uses banks of genetic sequences of all known coronaviruses, including those from bats, believed to be the natural hosts of many relatives of human coronaviruses.

A vaccine that clears all trials can then be delivered pain-free without a needle into the skin through a spring-powered jet injection.

"Our approach involves 3D computer modelling of the SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19) virus' structure. It uses information on the virus itself as well as its relatives SARS, MERS and other coronaviruses carried by animals that threaten to spill over to humans again to cause future human epidemics," said Professor Jonathan Heeney, head of Laboratory of Viral Zoonotics, University of Cambridge.

"We're looking for chinks in its armour, crucial pieces of the virus that we can use to construct the vaccine to direct the immune response in the right direction," he said.

— PTI

Kenosha shooting: 2 people shot dead

Kenosha, Aug. 26: Two people were shot to death and another was wounded during a third night of protests in Kenosha over the police shooting of a Black man, Jacob Blake, and authorities Wednesday hunted for a possible vigilante seen on cell phone video opening fire in the middle of the street with a rifle.

The gunfire was reported just before midnight, and Sheriff David Beth said one victim was shot in the head and another

in the chest, the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* reported. The third victim's wounds were not believed to life-threatening. He said that investigators had reviewed footage of what happened and that he was confident a man would be arrested soon. Beth told the *Journal Sentinel* that armed people had been patrolling the city's streets in recent nights, but he did not know if the gunman was among them.

— AP

al security law, which has been viewed as an attack on the "one country, two systems" framework under which the city has been governed since its return to China in 1997.

Since the start of the protests in June 2019, Hong Kong police has made more than 9,000 arrests. Prominent pro-democracy figures who have been arrested include activists Joshua Wong and Agnes Chow, as well as media tycoon Jimmy Lai, who is an outspoken advocate for democracy.

— AP

rid using hydrogen generated on board from solar and wind power. The University of Tokyo is leading a project on automated wind-assisted propulsion on cargo ships. And other Japan-based maritime companies are developing solar and wind propulsion, and hydrogen on cargo ships. What's holding back all this private sector innovation from widespread commercialisation is the lack of an ambitious, clear, comprehensive zero-emission shipping regulatory framework from the Japanese government.

— Agencies

DECCAN Chronicle

27 AUGUST 2020

Economy in freefall, govt must act quickly

Ever since the coronavirus pandemic broke out in India, there have been two board suggestions to deal with its economic fallout — one, the government should increase its spending to keep demand alive, and two, a highly indebted government should merely remain a facilitator and let the demand improve gradually. The Narendra Modi government chose the second option and announced debt-based initiatives to provide immediate succour to people.

Economists like Raghuram Rajan and others have suggested the government to open its purse strings to support the demand. Similarly, this newspaper too had argued for immediate cash support to people. An official report released by the Reserve Bank of India on Tuesday lends its weight to the argument for the creation of demand by the government spending as private non-discretionary expenditure has all but collapsed.

According to the RBI, private spending has taken a hit particularly for transport services, hospitality, recreation and cultural activities. Behavioural restraints, the central bank claims, may prevent the normalisation of demand for these activities. Since these sectors contribute in a big way to the job creation, a contraction in private spending in these activities would deprive livelihood of lakhs of people which, in turn, would impact the overall consumption and demand in the country.

While noting that rural demand has fared better, the RBI has attributed it to the government's initiatives like Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan which helps in generating employment in rural areas, and increased wages under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). A similar protective cover, however, was absent for the poor in urban areas, which have been affected the most, both by coronavirus and its economic fallout.

The RBI report also highlighted that a cut in corporate tax announced by the government in September 2019 has also failed to serve its stated purpose. The saving in corporate tax, the central bank said, was utilised by the companies to service debt and build up cash balances rather than restart the capital expenditure cycle. This fear was expressed by many who suggested a cut in income tax instead of corporate tax to address the economic slowdown last year. The government, however, turned a deaf ear to their suggestions. The statements in the RBI report have now come as a vindication for them.

To raise money for crucial public investment, the RBI suggested sale of government assets in steel, coal, power, land, railways and major ports. However, the government's intent to privatise state-run non-strategic enterprises has remained only on paper for various reasons. We must recall that the Jawaharlal Nehru government had entered into business to set up mega-industries because the private sector of the day lacked the wherewithal to fund such projects. Her political motives aside, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had nationalised banks to provide institutional credit to poor — a purpose that is already served. Now it is high time the government reorients its thinking and becomes a catalyst for economic growth 3.0.

Begging to forgive

The Supreme Court judges, hearing the arguments in the contempt case against civil rights lawyer Prashant Bhushan the other day, were at their generous best when they advised the latter to apologise for his tweets critical of the Supreme Court and the Chief Justice of India (CJI), for which he has been found guilty and awaiting his punishment “cheerfully”.

Justice Arun Mishra, heading the bench, suggested to Mr Bhushan that he utter the “magical” word “apology” and go to the category of Mahatma Gandhi. The judge was apparently not satisfied with either of the two statements of Mr Bhushan: in the first, he quoted Mahatma Gandhi and said he sought no mercy and no magnanimity of the court while in the second he said he will be committing contempt of his conscience and the Supreme Court if he tendered an insincere apology.

Ordinary mortals are not supposed to question the judicial wisdom of the learned judges but one wonders if it is true about historical factors, too, and whether Justice Mishra got the traits of the Mahatma and Hindutva icon V.D. Savarkar mixed up when it comes to apologising. Isn't it that Mahatma Gandhi used to go on fasts doing penance not for his sins but for what he thought were the sins of others, as mentioned by Justice B.R. Gavai who sat alongside Justice Mishra and Justice Krishna Murari on the bench? Or did the judge mean that Mr Bhushan must apologise for the sins of perhaps the CJs who, he alleges, watched as Indian democracy got weakened? On the other hand, archival documents show that Savarkar, jailed by the British for his role in the freedom movement, went on an apologising spree and got himself freed from the cellular jail in Andaman. Justice Mishra will hopefully set the record straight while pronouncing the order sentencing Mr Bhushan, for we can't take too many liberties with history.

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Kozhikode: No 6/1002 E, First Floor City Mall, Opp. YMCA Kannur Road, Kozhikode - 673 001 Fax : 0495 4019018
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Bookworm
Prasad
Shrivastav
Book Review

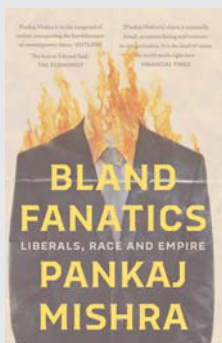


Glib and bland: Liberalism's illiberal legacy

In case you thought that Joe Biden's election — as it looks now — was going to save the world by getting rid of the reckless but also unfocused authoritarian Donald Trump, then you probably need a small dose of reading from the collection of Pankaj Mishra's essays, *Bland Fanatics: Liberals, Race and Empire*. It's pretty clear that despite adoption of some of his party's progressive wing's platforms — on health or on student loans, for instance — Biden and team remain committed to returning to the normalcy of the liberal Anglo-American project, as Mishra might call it. Which means returning to the very normalcy that created our post-liberal tribalism in the first place: a liberalism that deviates far from what John Stuart Mill enunciated in *On Liberty*, and evolved to a globalism that built upon imperialism and slavery (and its descendent modern-day racism) and that demands, in the name of individual freedom, an atomised slave of corporate-capitalist free-marketers. That does not solve the problem, only postpones it till we get a crueller version of Trump or his local counterpart.

This is why it is important to read Mishra, though these 16 essays, written over the decadal span of the 2010s, is not something you can imbibe in the course of a sitting (you'd need 16 sittings, at least). It's an at-times enjoyable intellectual stone-throwing at liberalism and some of its icons since Fukuyama's so-called “end of history”, such as Niall Ferguson or the *Economist*, a 175-year-old weekly that is consistently wrong in its predictions despite its comprehensive Oxonian chronicling of the planet. To be clear, Mishra does not lob his Molotov cocktails at liberalism from the right, even though he is not a communist. Yet if ever a new framework is to arrive, the first step is to dismantle the ideology that pretends to be humanity's saviour at the “centre” of things, and that is liberalism.

The title comes from something that cold warrior and theologian Reinhold Niebuhr wrote in 1957: “Among the lesser culprits of history are the bland fanatics of western civilisation who regard the highly contingent achievements of our culture as the final form and norm of human existence.” Mishra, of course, intends to promote these



By Pankaj
Mishra
Juggernaut
218pp
₹599

“bland fanatics” from the status of lesser culprits.

The first guilty party is Niall Ferguson who, after all, justified the 2003 Iraq War as an effort not just to “make the world safe for capitalism and democracy”, but also proposed an “Anglobalisation” of the world to civilise the natives. “I am a fully paid-up member of the neo-imperialist gang,” Ferguson said, as he called upon the Americans to ensure the sun never set on the Anglo-American empire. It was an intellectual midwifing of the White Supremacy movement — which had been lingering in the shadows for several post-WWII

decades. For his troubles he was given a position at Harvard University.

Then Mishra goes on to eviscerate “intellectual Islamophobia”, a project in which standard-bearers from the *Financial Times* to Martin Amis have participated, constantly raising fears of “Eurabia”, unmindful of the fact that for most Muslims in Europe, choices are dictated not by their readings of the Holy Book, but by their experience of globalised economies and cultures. Mishra asks us to keep remembering that the most meaningful reason for World War I: “the religion of Whiteness”. He eviscerates Salman Rushdie for rejecting, post the publication of *The Satanic Verses*, the very mix of politics and literature that his 1989 novel had exemplified, where “the personal is the geopolitical”.

Mishra writes about Woodrow Wilson, credited with pushing global peace and the creation of the now-defunct League of Nations, and how that US president's ideas were driven by a need to preserve white supremacy both in his own nation and in the globe throughout (ironically his rhetoric spawned many a freedom fighter in Asia). He

decries colonialism and modern globalism for expecting the Third World to adopt the ways and means of Europe and America without experiencing their stages of development.

Mishra loves Katherine Boo's *Behind the Beautiful Forevers* and its depiction of the social darwinism in Mumbai's largest slum; this same social darwinism has now been formalised in India's polity, in the way that White Supremacy has been in the USA's, reminding us that all the social turmoil and cruelty that have horrified us in the past few years are things that were always already there — things we politely, as liberals, shut our eyes to.

There is a well-deserved take-down of Jordan Peterson. And so on, till the essays wind up with “England's Last Roar”: how a moment of reckoning has long been postponed, of an “ex-imperialist country with dwindling material” but “an antique assumption of power and self-sufficiency”, that is broken. Mishra quotes Orwell: “A generation of the unteachable is hanging upon us like a necklace of corpses.” Hmm. Perhaps liberalism is the last revenge of the colonised.

Subhani



After Covid devastation, India to need rebuilding



Sunanda K.
Datta-Ray

Reflections

India Post has just delivered two bank statements posted in late May. This is not the only instance of delay and/or damage caused by the coronavirus pandemic. Its devastation recalls Rabindranath Tagore's deathbed despair about British rule in India: “When the stream of their centuries' administration runs dry at last, what a waste of mud and filth they will leave behind!”

If the pandemic does end in two years, as World Health Organisation director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus predicts, it will leave behind a ramshackle India. This week's suicide of a five-member Madhya Pradesh family is another tragedy highlighting the despondency that grips much of India. Most social and welfare institutions were already creaking on March 25 when India ground to a halt. Everything has deteriorated since then, with the government too busy scoring points against China and Pakistan to bother with ordinary folk. Covid-19 is no respecter of rank, but as Raghuram Rajan, the Reserve Bank's former governor, says, it is “an ‘anti-Robin Hood’ that hits the poor even harder on every front”.

The first charge on the government is to improve a scandalously decrepit healthcare system. Better infrastructure would have mitigated the worst effects of the pandemic. Instead, the suspicion is that the facts have been brushed under the carpet to conceal the derelict state of rural hospitals, the acute shortage of doctors, enlistment of ayahs as nurses and sweepers and

bearers as paramedics. Medicines and equipment are in short supply. No wonder Microsoft's Bill Gates bluntly rejected the official figure for Indian (and African) fatalities, saying: “The true number... is probably much higher.” He expects millions more in India and Africa to die and thinks more than 90 per cent of those deaths will be caused by the knock-on effects.

The reason is that people are expendable for our political masters. They will spend money for the greater glory of what they see as India but not for the ordinary run of Indians. Outsize statues, massive temples, ostentatious religious rituals, state-of-the-art fighters and luxury aircraft for VIPs matter more than the millions of impoverished Indians. Few, if any, good schools are run by the government. The best of them are either Christian missionary institutions or private enterprises.

Understandably, spending on healthcare was low in colonial times; but the colonial norm becomes criminal negligence when governance is by a supposedly nationalistic Bharatiya Janata Party whose leader swears by “Atma Nirbhar Bharat”, or self-reliant India. Within the abysmally small pie of medicare spending, the government's share is a shameful 26 per cent, 74 per cent being provided by private investors who are in it for what they can get out of it. The charges have gone up in a once-smart, expensive and superbly professional foreign-managed nursing home that is now Indian-owned while the food, cleanliness and staff care have deteriorated. Amenities like toi-

let paper and towels are no longer provided. The owners themselves fly to Switzerland or the United States for treatment.

Since much of the investment in healthcare is left to market dynamics, private medical facilities proliferate only where people can pay. State expenditure is confined largely to areas where it can benefit the rich and influential or impress foreigners. The need for a healthcare delivery system that is available, accessible and affordable to all is ignored. So are the need for healthcare infrastructure, healthcare education, manpower, workforce, health insurance and medical equipment.

India's bed density is under one while China, with its much larger population, provides more than three beds per thousand. Despite the highest number of medical colleges, India has the lowest number of doctors per thousand of population and is in the middle - fifth out of seven - in the number of nurses per 1,000 people. India also has the lowest number of care providers — 1.9 per thousand.

Medical equipment is another problem that the pandemic has exposed and highlighted. Personal protective equipment is sometimes charged for without being provided. The government's claim of adequate imports supplemented by a spurt in the domestic manufacture of nearly 4.5 lakh PPE kits per day does not seem to meet the needs of all frontline workers,

while nearly one-third of respondents in a recent survey reported that N-95 masks were not available. “One of the surprising and important findings is the lack of formal training on PPEs”, a leading doctor is quoted as saying. Over half these workers had not received any training at all, while a fifth reported that they had taught themselves.

Of course, many other aspects of decline deserve attention. India has slipped to 150th place in the health and survival list, to 149th in terms of economic participation and opportunity, and to 112th place for educational attainment. It has also fallen four places to 112th in terms of the gender gap, now grovelling among the bottom five in terms of female participation in economic life.

Underlying it all is an erosion of confidence; confidence in the self (*atma-vishwas*), and confidence in the elected government's ability to deliver. A survey shows that 62 per cent of parents will not send their children to schools even if they were to reopen next week. The survey also found that only six per cent of respondents would visit a theatre. There is obviously little faith in the government's ability to check infection in schools and theatres.

The challenges are on a variety of fronts. A beginning can be made with healthcare for that bears closely on the peril that still threatens to decimate the nation. But there can be no cure without official recognition of all that is wrong, of the extent to which policy has fallen short of public expectations. Alas, our leaders remain blissfully complacent that they have not failed the country because the colonial-style culture of governance does not say that the rulers owe anything to the ruled.

The writer is a senior journalist, columnist and author

LETTERS

NAMMA CHENNAI

The historic Madras city is celebrating its 381st birthday. A stretch of no-man's land in 1639, which was rechristened as Chennai in 1996, is now a major industrial, business and cultural metropolis. It was in Madras that virtually everything in modern India began — the first municipality, the first engineering college (Guindy Engineering), the first shopping mall — Spencer's, the first big library — Connemara, and the first major book store — Higginbothams. Five years ago when floods ravaged Chennai, the people of the city showed to the rest of the world what humanity and solidarity are all about. Perhaps, Chennai is the only city in the entire world where everyone claims it as not “mine”, but proudly “ours.”

R. Sivakumar

Chennai

VINAYAKA'S KAMANDAL

ONE OF HIS followers had asked ‘Could not you convince your mother that Vinayaka is not a Tamil god?’ Mr Udhayanidhi's brigade should know that there are Vinayaka temples in every nook and corner of Tamil Nadu. According to puranas, it was Vinayaka who had facilitated the Cauvery river to flow into the then Dravida Desam which was starving for water. The sage Agasthya, in deep *thapas* on the Pothigai hills (Agasthiyar mountain), had kept holy water in his *kamandal*. When the thirsty populace cried for water, the celestials approached sage Narada who told them if anyone could tilt his *Kamandal* the water from it would flow out and become a big river. When the celestials sought Lord Vinayaka's help he had dared, without fear of sage's curse, to tilt the *Kamandal* and water flowed out and it became the holy River Cauvery.

Seshagiri Rao

Chennai

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	39,073.92	0.59
Nifty 50	11,549.60	0.67
S&P 500*	3,468.22	0.71
Dollar (₹)	74.3	0.04
Pound Sterling (₹)	97.68	0.42
Euro (₹)	87.76	0.07
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	51,963.210	0.40
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	45.82	-0.04
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.203	0.047
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.711	0.029

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Premium phones boost Xiaomi's June qtr profit



Xiaomi Corp reported better-than-expected profit after cracking the Chinese market for high-end smartphones and growing its share of overseas markets. The smartphone maker more than doubled net income to 4.49 billion yuan (\$716mn) in the June quarter. Sales rose 3.1 per cent to 53.5 billion yuan. Xiaomi also kept its top position in India in the quarter even though the country's smartphone shipments halved.

Charges only on net liability from Sept. GST: Govt foregoes ₹46K cr in interest

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, AUG. 26

The government has decided to forego Rs 46,000 crore of unpaid interest on delayed GST payment by notifying on Wednesday that the interest will be charged on net tax liability, and not on gross liability, with effect from September 1. Now it will have to be seen whether the government would refund those businesses which have already paid the interest on gross liability for the last three years.

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has notified September 1, 2020 as the date from which interest would be charged on net tax liability. Industry had earlier this year raised concern over the board's directive for recovery of about Rs 46,000 crore of unpaid interest on delayed GST payment, based on gross tax liability.

"... no recoveries shall be made for the past period as well by the Central and State tax administration in

accordance with the decision taken in the 39th Meeting of GST Council. This will ensure full relief to the taxpayers as decided by the GST Council," the CBIC statement had said.

A decision on charging the interest on net tax liability was taken by the 39th GST Council meeting in March. It was then decided that the amendment will be effective from July 1, 2017, and law would be amended retrospectively.

However, the CBIC has now said that the notification has been issued prospectively due to certain technical limitations.

"If the government is not recovering the unpaid interest of some businesses, it becomes imperative to refund to those who have already paid, from an equity point of view.

But we will have to see whether the government will refund the interest already paid or not," said Abhishek Jain, tax partner, EY.

It is possible businesses might seek a refund of the interest paid by them for

the past three years based on the gross tax liability.

"Businesses are expected to approach the courts on this unjustified and illegal demand of interest basis the 'principle of estoppel'," said Rajat Mohan, senior partner, AMRG & Associates.

In 2019, the Telangana High Court had upheld CBIC's stance that the interest was payable on gross tax liability. An interest of 18 per cent is levied on delayed tax payment. Net GST liability is arrived at after deducting input tax credit from gross GST liability. Hence, calculating interest on gross GST liability increases the payout burden on businesses.

According to Jain, the government will have to pay the refund if the court awards a judgement in favour of the businesses.

Rahul Bajoria, chief India economist, Barclays, said the government should look at simplifying the tax system than forcing businesses to take legal recourse for smaller tax components.

Shares of bike-makers ride high on GST cut hope

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, AUG. 26

Auto stocks rallied, led by the two/three-wheeler manufacturers Bajaj Auto, Hero MotoCorp and TVS Motors expecting cut in GST rate as the finance minister acknowledged the need to bring down the goods and services tax rate on two-wheelers, currently at the highest slab rate of 28 per cent.

The largest two-wheeler maker, Hero MotoCorp, gained 6.43 per cent on the BSE. Other gainers included Bajaj Auto (2.42 per cent), TVS Motor (4.88 per cent), Eicher Motors (1.47 per cent), Kinetic Engineering (4.55 per cent) and Atul Auto (2.96 per cent).

On Tuesday while addressing CII members, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman responding to a question about the need for lowering GST rates on two-wheelers, had said that this category is neither a luxury nor a sin good and hence merits a rate revision and this will be taken up with the GST Council.

Rajiv Bajaj, managing director, Bajaj Auto said that if the GST rates are lowered to 18 per cent from 28 per cent, the price of two-wheelers would fall by Rs 8,000 to Rs 10,000.

Overregulation has led to 30-35 per cent increase in price, Bajaj said.

Need to grow at 8.5%, create 90 mn jobs by 2030 to avert stagnation: McKinsey

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, AUG. 26



India's GDP will have to grow by 8 to 8.5 per cent annually and the country should create jobs for 90 million workers by 2030, else will risk a decade of economic stagnation, says a McKinsey Global Institute report.

Over the decade to 2030, India needs to create at least 90 million new non-farm jobs to absorb the 60 million new workers who will enter the workforce based on current demographics. An additional 30 million workers could move from farm work to more productive non-farm sectors.

For that to happen, India's GDP needs to grow by 8 to 8.5 per cent annually over the next decade or about double the 4.2 per cent rate of growth in fiscal year 2020.

If India fails to introduce measures to address pre-pandemic trends of flat employment and slowing economic growth, and does not manage the shock of the crisis adequately, its economy could make a decadal growth of just 5 per cent and absorb only about six million new workers. This will mark a decade of lost opportunity.

In order to recover to a high-growth path, India's sectoral mix would need to move toward higher-productivity sectors that also have the potential to create more jobs. Within individual sectors, a move toward new busi-

ness models that harness global trends could drive productivity and demand.

McKinsey finds that the manufacturing and construction sectors could achieve the largest acceleration in sector GDP growth relative to the past. In the coming decade, manufacturing productivity has the potential to rise by about 7.5 per cent per year, contributing more than one-fifth of the incremental GDP. Construction could add one in four of the incremental gross jobs. Both labour-intensive and knowledge-intensive sectors will have to sustain and improve on their past strong momentum.

India will also have to work now to grab opportunities presented by rising wages in other parts of Asia and trade conflicts to produce and sell more manufactured goods and services.

India would need to raise its competitiveness in high-potential sectors like electronics and capital goods, chemicals, textiles and apparel, auto and auto components, and pharmaceuticals and

medical devices, which contributed to about 56 per cent of global trade in 2018.

It needs to eliminate inefficiency in areas such as power, logistics, financial services, automation, and government services and look at value-creating market-based models. Automation of work and Industry 4.0 could bring greater efficiency.

The country also needs more large companies with revenues exceeding \$500 million that are significant drivers of growth and innovation. India has about 600 such firms.

The government has to introduce sector-specific policies to raise productivity in manufacturing, real estate, agriculture and food processing, retail, and healthcare. India has the potential to reduce land costs by 20 to 25 percent and increase the supply of land available for construction. The government could also consider reviewing the various laws on the books and examine options to improve labor-market flexibility.

COFFEE-BREAK

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

- Aries:** You would be highly benefited by making swimming a part of your routine. Don't forget to follow eye-care tips to alleviate your eyestrain problems.
- Taurus:** You need to be cautious as depression and anxiety could make one prone to other health problems. You might fail to do things that you love doing the most.
- Gemini:** Hurdles at professional front might cause little worries. It is advisable to go for collective team effort rather than working alone to meet deadlines.
- Cancer:** Maintain cool and avoid implementing new ideas. You may get success with little efforts. All your pending plans may get materialised with a little help from friends.
- Leo:** Making money and furthering your career would be the foremost things on your mind now. You may have some sort of differences with a loved one today.
- Virgo:** You should remain careful at work place since someone might try to harm your interests. You would be in a cheerful mood today and try to keep those around you entertained.

You share your b'day with

Jim Sarbh, Bollywood actor. He is best known for his roles in Neeraj, Made in Heaven, Sanju, Padmaavat, A Death in the Gunj, Raabta and Smoke amongst others.

- Libra:** Someone in a position of authority is likely to help you out. You may look forward to go out for a get together today. You might feel to be a bit down and out.
- Scorpio:** The employed are likely to become the target of criticism, dishonesty and displeasure. Misunderstandings and jealousy can mar a budding relationship.
- Sagittarius:** You are likely to become a chapter of gossip and it may affect your social status. New alliances and partnership are in the offing for some.
- Capricorn:** At home, differences could arise between father and son and this if not checked at once, could take an ugly turn later. Your friends and family members will be helpful.
- Aquarius:** Unpredictable behaviour of your superiors may cause anxiety. Avoid unimportant expenses. Think twice before taking any important decisions.
- Pisces:** Backlog at work will require extra efforts and you may have to work overtime. The project you are currently engaged in will prove profitable in the next few days. For entrepreneurs, financial setback is indicated.

QUICK CROSSWORD

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

Across

1. Marvellous (8)
6. Gemstone (4)
7. Burning (6)
9. Hackneyed (5)
11. Thrown weapon (5)
12. Radar impulses (5)
13. Roles (4)
16. Put into cipher (6)
18. Rescue (4)
19. Legendary sunken continent (8)

Down

1. Stereo system component (9)
2. Jewish teacher (5)
3. Level (4)
4. West Indian rhythm (7)
5. Turkish cap (3)
6. With no mistakes (9)
10. Granular pudding (7)
14. Sting (5)
15. Honeycomb compartment (4)
17. Henpeck (3)

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

Across: 6. Lieutenant, 8. Nudge, 10. Spoon, 13. Incinerator, 14. Awash, 17. Robin, 19. Entomology.

Down: 1. Find, 2. Fuse, 3. Lens, 4. Taco, 5. Itinerant, 7. Envisaged, 9. Gains, 11. Plato, 12. Wee, 15. Acts, 16. Hemp, 17. Roll, 18. Begs.

Word Mine

H

I

L

R

B

C

A

N

O

TODAY'S RATINGS: 19 AVERAGE; 22 GOOD; 24 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.

jumble

CTEUA

NYOEH

OEECCR

LIVJAO

As you can see, here are examples of his ability to create unique sculptures ALLOWED HIM TO —

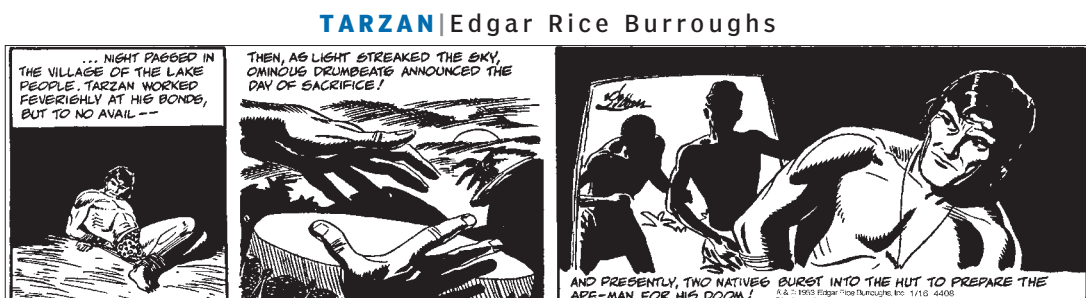
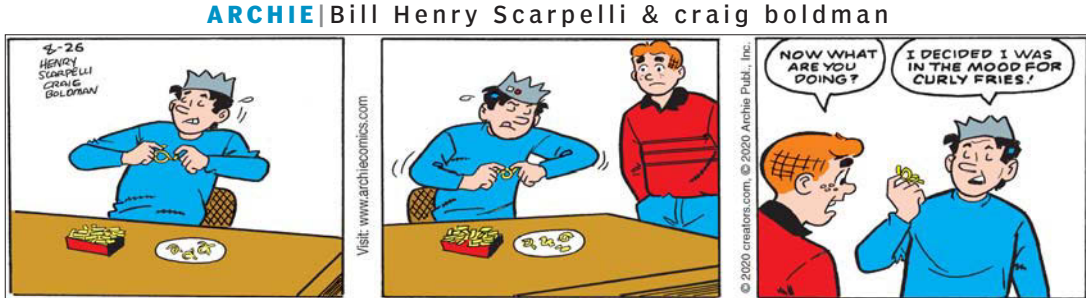
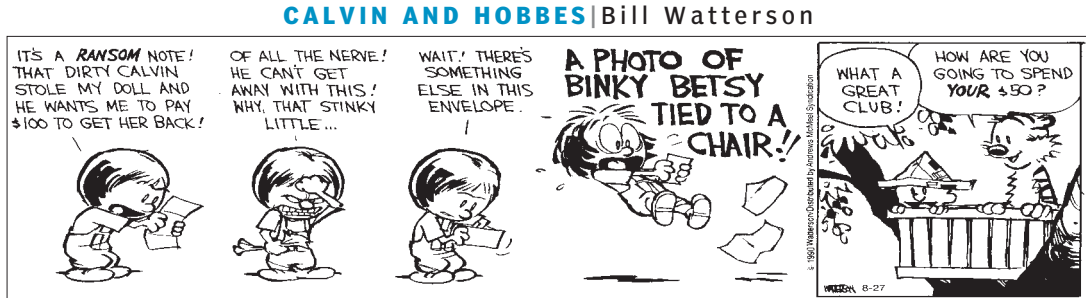
Lincoln seemed to be his specialty.

TO GUTZON BORGLUM'S ABILITY TO CREATE UNIQUE SCULPTURES ALLOWED HIM TO —

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: LINER WALTZ MADDER SERMON
Answer: The doctor had a rough, callous bedside manner, but he — DID MEAN WELL



bridge
PHILLIP ALDER

RUNNING TO THE BRIDGE TABLE

Michel de Montaigne, who was a 16th-century essayist and philosopher, wrote, "When I am attacked by gloomy thoughts, nothing helps me so much as running to my books."

For a bridge player, nothing helps so much as turning to a deck of cards. But you need to think clearly to play well. Just pulling the card nearest your thumb will rarely work.

This deal was declared thoughtfully by Ilana Barnes

North:	♦ 7 3
	♥ A 2
	♠ A 9 7 6
	♣ A K 6
West:	♦ Q 8 6
	♥ Q 8 7
	♠ K
	♣ Q J 4 3
South:	♦ A 10 5 4 2
	♥ 10 9 5 4 3
	♠ 10 5 3
	♣
Dealer: West	East
West	North
Pass	19
Pass	19
Pass	44
Pass	All Pass

Opening lead: ♦ Q

mond on dummy's club king, Barnes continued with the ace and another heart. East returned a club, declarer pitching a second diamond. Now came the spade king, East dropping the jack. Barnes knew that this was more likely to be a singleton than from the doubton queen-jack. So she abandoned trumps. Instead, she cashed dummy's diamond ace, ruffed a club, ruffed a heart, ruffed a club and ruffed a heart. There were three

cards left. West having only trumps. Declarer led a diamond from the dummy and discarded her winning heart 10. West ruffed but had to lead away from her spade queen-nine into declarer's ace-10. The only winning opening lead was the diamond king, but how could West have found that?

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AND PRESENTLY, TWO NATIVES BURST INTO THE HUT TO PREPARE THE APE-MAN FOR HIS DEATH!

SHORT TAKES

Maguire found guilty, suspended

Manchester: Manchester United defender Harry Maguire has been found guilty of assault at a trial and handed a 21-month suspended sentence following his arrest after a brawl last week on the island of Mykonos, court officials in Greece said. Manchester United defender Harry Maguire was found guilty of assault at a trial on Tuesday and handed a 21-month suspended sentence following his arrest after a brawl last week on the island of Mykonos, court officials in Greece said. Two other defendants — including Maguire's brother Joe — were also found guilty on similar charges and handed 13-month sentences. The sentences for all three defendants were suspended for three years. Maguire issued a statement saying he will appeal. "I remain strong and confident regarding our innocence in this matter," Maguire said. "If anything, myself, family, and friends are the victims," he added. — AP

Serena succumbs, Djoker in quarters

New York: An out-of-gas Serena Williams crashed out of the Western & Southern Open on Tuesday, losing in three sets to 13th seeded Maria Sakkari 5-7, 7-6 (7/5), 6-1 in New York. The 23-time Grand Slam winner finished with a whimper at the end of the two-hour, 17-minute match as Sakkari clinched the victory with a backhand down the line. Sakkari, of Greece, advances to the quarterfinals of the no-spectator event where she will face Johanna Konta who cruised past Vera Zvonareva in straight sets 6-4, 6-2. Meanwhile, on the men's side, world No. 1 Novak Djokovic won his 20th straight match of 2020 with a hard-fought 6-2, 6-4 victory over Tennyis Sandgren. Djokovic, who captured the Australian Open in February, needed six match points to tough out the straight sets victory and reach the quarterfinals of the hardcourt tournament. Djokovic breezed through the final game by winning four straight points. — AFP

Phil extends lead in his PGA debut

Ridgedale, USA: The hole Phil Mickelson considered the most important in the second round of his PGA Tour Champions career was not any of the eight he birdied but rather the only one on which he made bogey. He was 5 under after the front nine Tuesday at Ozarks National when he hit driver at the par-4 10th. The ball wound up in such heavy rough that Mickelson couldn't find it, forcing him to take a penalty stroke. He still wound up making a long putt to salvage bogey, and that gave him some momentum for the rest of the round. I was able to get right back to even par on the back side with a birdie on the next hole, and then I made a couple more coming in," said Mickelson, whose 7-under 64 left him 17 under. That was good for a four-shot lead over Tim Petrovic and Rod Pampling, who will be his playing partners for the final round. — AP

PAUL TOWERS HIGH TO MAUL MAVERICKS

Los Angeles: Paul George says his struggles are over as he scored a team-high 35 points on Tuesday to lead the Los Angeles Clippers to a dominating 154-111 playoff victory over the Dallas Mavericks. George rebounded from three sub-par performances to combine offensively with Kawhi Leonard and give the Clippers a 3-2 series lead. George opened up after the game about his struggles with coping inside the NBA's quarantine bubble in Orlando, Florida where the players have to adhere to strict health and safety measures and no spectators are allowed into the arena. — AFP

MESSY AFFAIR

Lionel says enough, wants to quit Barcelona

Barcelona, Aug. 26: After dozens of titles, hundreds of goals and countless records, Lionel Messi's spectacular career at Barcelona could be coming to an abrupt end. The divorce may turn ugly, too.

Messi told Barcelona on Tuesday that he wants to leave after nearly two decades at the club, having grown unhappy after a trophy-less season ended with a humiliating loss to Bayern Munich in the Champions League.

Barcelona confirmed that Messi sent the club a document expressing his desire to leave. But the club hinted that a legal battle could be coming and said it won't automatically grant the Argentina great his wishes.

Barcelona said it told Messi in response that it wants him to stay and finish his career at the club.

The dispute centers around a clause in Messi's contract.

Barcelona said the document sent by Messi referenced a clause allowing him to leave for free at the end of the season. However, the club said the deadline for triggering that clause expired in June and that it would seek legal advice.

Messi's contract also includes a 700 million euro (\$826 million) buyout clause.

"If Messi is to leave Barcelona by activating a release clause, then I hope the club (tries) to help, not hinder him," former England and Barcelona striker Gary Lineker said on Twitter.

If Messi can leave for free, he will have no shortage of suitors. However, only a handful of clubs could realistically afford to pay his wages even without a transfer fee with mega-rich Paris Saint-Germain and Manchester City widely seen as perhaps the most likely destinations.

The 33-year-old Messi has won a record six Ballon d'Or awards during his time at Barcelona as the top player in the world, and has helped the club win 10 Spanish league titles and four Champions League



Barcelona's Argentinian forward Lionel Messi waves before the 54th Joan Gamper Trophy friendly football match against Arsenal at the Camp Nou stadium in Barcelona in this file photo taken on August 4, 2019.

— AFP

crowns. Messi's announcement came 11 days after Barcelona's humiliating 8-2 loss to Bayern in the Champions League quarterfinals, one of the worst defeats in the player's career and in the club's history.

The defeat capped a difficult season for Barcelona the first without a title since 2007-08 and ignited one of its worst crises ever.

Messi had been outspoken about his dissatisfaction with some of Barcelona's decisions this season, talking about the team's problems and contesting club directors. Sporting director Eric Abidal, who was criticised by Messi, left the club last

week. Messi had been silent since the loss to Bayern, though, raising doubts about his future. The defeat may have been the tipping point for the playmaker. He and his teammates faced furious Barcelona fans who confronted them and criticised the team at the club's training centre after the squad returned from Portugal.

Club president Josep Bartomeu had said he was confident that Messi would finish his career with Barcelona, and that he was a crucial part of incoming coach Ronald Koeman's plans for the team. Koeman met with Messi last week and the

player reportedly told the Dutchman that he saw himself more out than in at the club at that moment.

The coach reportedly had already told other key pieces of the squad that they were not in his plans, including Luis Suarez, Arturo Vidal, Samuel Umtiti and Ivan Rakitic.

After the loss to Bayern, Barcelona announced it would make profound changes to the first team and a wide-ranging restructuring of the club. The changes began with the firing of coach Quique Setin a few days after the Champions League defeat in Lisbon, and new presidential elections were called for March. — AP

MIFFED MESSI SAYS NO TO TRAINING

Madrid, Aug. 26: Lionel Messi informed Barcelona coaches he was not going to turn up to training on Wednesday, according to Barcelona's newly-appointed sporting director Ramon Planes.

Messi asked Barca Tuesday to leave the club he has been with for 20 seasons, since he was 13 years old.

"Messi informed us that he was not going to show up to training," Planes said during the official unveiling of Portuguese striker Joao Trincao.

"Messi, Planes insisted, in the first official club reaction to the Argentinian's want-away demand, was "important news. But what we think, and we've said it many times, is that we see Messi as a Barca player."

"Today Trincao arrives and we hope he will triumph alongside Messi," he added. — AFP

CLUB FROM DOWN UNDER WANTS LIONEL

Sydney, Aug. 26: Footballing minnows Adelaide United issued a long-shot bid to entice superstar Lionel Messi to join its ranks Wednesday, touting the remote South Australian city as a coronavirus safe haven for playing and raising his family.

Writing a "Dear Lionel" letter Adelaide United Director Ian Smith cited his state's "brilliant" schools, tourist attractions and world-class wines as reasons the Argentine should head Down Under. He also noted South Australia's success in containing the pandemic saying the state would be "safe for your young family". — AFP

Can Jimmy reach the 700-mark?

Southampton, Aug. 26: James Anderson is far from being done after becoming the first pacer to amass 600 Test wickets and he sees no reason why he can't enter the 700-club alongside Shane Warne and Muttiah Muralitharan even though he has hit 38.

Anderson is the fourth-highest wicket-taker in Tests and reached the 600-wicket milestone by dismissing Pakistan captain Azhar Ali in the third Test here on Tuesday.

Indian spin great Anil Kumble has 619 wickets to his name behind Muralitharan (800) and Warne (708). Speaking after the drawn game, the 38-year-old made his intentions clear.

"I've chatted to Joe about this a little bit and he has said he would like me to be in Australia (for the Ashes next year). I don't see any reason why I can't be. I'm working hard on my fitness all the time. I'm working hard on my game," he

was quoted as saying by 'ESPNCricinfo'.

"I didn't bowl as well as I'd have liked for the whole summer. But in this Test I was really on it and I feel like I've still got stuff to offer this team. As long as I still feel like that I think I'll keep going. I don't think I've won my last Test matches as an England cricketer yet. Can I reach 700? Why not?"

Anderson claimed his 29th five-wicket haul in the third Test and only the great Richard Hadlee has more among seam bowlers.

He said his hunger to perform has not diminished and that is what keeps him going. "We're still in the Test championship. There are still series ahead of us and Test matches to win. That's all I'm really interested in. I still love turning up every day at training, putting in the hard yards and being in the dressing room with the lads trying to forge a win for England. — PTI



England's James Anderson celebrates after taking the wicket of Pakistan's Azhar Ali, his 600th Test match wicket, on the fifth day of the third Test match at the Ageas Bowl in Southampton, Southern England, on Wednesday.

— AFP

Cricketers rain praise on James

New Delhi, Aug. 26: "Welcome to the club," said Anil Kumble, while Sourav Ganguly marvelled at the "greatness" as English pacer James Anderson's 600 Test wickets earned him a unanimous round of applause from some of the biggest names in Indian cricket.

Anderson touched the milestone on the fifth day of the drawn third Test against Pakistan when the 38-year-old dismissed rival skipper Azhar Ali.

"Congratulations @jimmy9 on your 600 wickets! Massive effort from a great fast bowler. Welcome to the club," Kumble tweeted.

Anderson, speaking after the match, said he is bullish about crossing the 700-wicket mark.

Former India skipper and BCCI President Ganguly was among the stalwarts to laud Anderson's achievement, calling it an inspiration for younger fast bowlers.

"Well done James Anderson @jimmy9.. this milestone is just greatness ..156 test matches as fast bowler is just unthinkable..u will make every young fast bowler believe that greatness is achievable," he tweeted.

India skipper Virat Kohli joined his illustrious compatriots to praise Anderson.

"Congratulations @jimmy9 for this outstanding achievement of 600 wickets. Definitely one of the best bowlers I've faced," he tweeted.

Anderson also claimed his 29th five-wicket haul in the third Test in Southampton and only the great Richard Hadlee has more among seam bowlers.

Talking about his 600 wickets, Anderson said: "I have worked really hard with my skills over the years and I am fortunate enough that I get to do it at the top level playing for my country."

— PTI



Messi joined Barcelona as a 16-year-old.

Lionel Messi was the teenage prodigy who blossomed into Barcelona's record scorer and is still operating at the highest level at 33. Here are the career highlights of one of football's all-time greats.

Barca academy

Messi, from Rosario in Argentina, was a diminutive 13-year-old and suffering from growth hormone deficiency when he joined the academy at Barcelona, who agreed to pay for his \$1,000-a-month treatment. Despite severe homesickness at the outset, Messi rose through the ranks and made his first-team debut aged 17 in 2004, becoming Barcelona's youngest goal-scorer later that season.

Olympic gold

Messi helped Argentina to their second straight men's football gold at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, winning all six of their games and conceding just two goals.

A FOX IN THE BOX

Messi, playing in a team that included Javier Mascherano and Angel di Maria, later described it as his most cherished title. The Olympic title remain's Messi's biggest achievement with Argentina, despite being their all-time top-scorer with 70 goals.

Ballon d'Or

Messi eclipsed Cristiano Ronaldo, then newly arrived at Real Madrid, to be named the world's best footballer by a record margin in 2009.

It capped a brilliant campaign where he inspired Barcelona to the Champions League trophy, scoring nine goals and sealing the 2-0 final victory over Manchester United with Barca's second goal. Guardiola's Barcelona also won the Copa del Rey and

La Liga, claiming the first treble in Spanish history. Messi picked up his sixth Ballon d'Or, another record, last December.

Muller time

Messi enjoyed a sensational 2011-12, setting a La Liga record of 50 goals in a season and scoring 73 in all competitions, breaking Gerd Muller's European record of 67.

Goals, goals, goals

Messi was just 24 when he broke Cesar Rodriguez's 57-year-old club record of 232 goals, smashing a hat-trick past Granada in March 2012.

He has gone on to amass 634 for his club, including a record 444 and unsurpassed 36 hat-tricks in La Liga. Messi also scored his 700th goal for club and country in June.

However, highlights have been in short supply this season for Messi and Barcelona, who finished without a trophy for the first time since 2007. — AFP



A hero returns to shade barehanded

Madrid, Aug. 26: When Lionel Messi won an unprecedented sixth Ballon d'Or in December last year, the speculation had already begun over his career at Barcelona.

The 33-year-old Argentine footballing genius was increasingly unable single-handedly to rescue his imploding club, as he had done so often in the past.

Barcelona, despite lifting the La Liga title, had collapsed at the end of the 2018-19 season, losing a 3-0 semifinal lead, including two Messi goals, to Liverpool in the Champions League.

They then dropped the Copa del Rey final 2-1 to Valencia, where the Argentine was again on the scoresheet, this time though just a late consolation.

But all that paled in comparison to Barca's barren 2020, capped by a shocking humilia-

tion in Lisbon.

BAYERN EMBARRASSMENT

The abject 8-2 quarterfinal embarrassment against Bayern Munich in Lisbon 12 days ago meant a first season since 2007 without a trophy for Barcelona.

It marked the first time Barca had conceded eight goals in a game since losing to Sevilla 8-0 in the 1946 Spanish Cup.

But far more significant than that, it convinced the twinkled talisman his final footballing years lay elsewhere.

The fallout was immediate. Coach Quique Setien was sacked after barely six months in charge while sporting director Eric Abidal was also dismissed.

Even the appointment of former Camp Nou fan favourite Ronald Koeman as head coach last week could not convince

Messi to stay. The Dutchman has indicated he will embark on a clear-out and, as 33 years old, Messi must feel he doesn't have time to wait.

SIMPLY IRREPLACEABLE

Barcelona have insisted in the past they had plans for coping with Messi's retirement, whenever it came, but the truth is their number 10 is irreplaceable.

He has spent his entire professional career with Barcelona, winning a club-record 33 trophies, including 10 La Ligas, four UEFA Champions Leagues, three Club World Cups and six Spanish Cups. Almost a decade on, Messi still harbours unfulfilled ambitions, including another Champions League crown and an elusive major trophy with Argentina to add to his 2008 Olympic gold. — AFP