

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

HYDERABAD | WEDNESDAY | 19 AUGUST 2020



## WEATHER

Max: 29.5°C  
Min: 22.6°C  
RH: 70%  
Rainfall: 0.9 mm  
Forecast: Cloudy sky. Light to moderate rains likely  
Max/Min temp. 29/23 °C

## COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+63,054)	(+1,096)
27,63,985	53,018
covid19india.org	

## STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+1,682)	(+8)
TS: 93,937	711
(+9,652)	(+88)
AP: 3,06,261	2,820

## CASES AROUND THE WORLD

2,21,74,684	DEATHS
7,79,999	
COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES	213
worldometers.info/coronavirus	

## ASTROGUIDE

Sawari: Dakshinayana  
Tithi: Shravana Bahula Amavasya till 8.09 am and then Bhadrapada Shuddha Padyam till 5.18 am (Thursday)

Star: Magha till 2.05 am (Thursday)

Varjyam: 3.05 pm to 4.33 pm

Durmuhurtam: 11.54 am to 12.45 pm

Rahukalam: 12 noon to 1.30 pm

HJRI CALENDAR

Zulhijja 28,1441 AH

## PRAYERS

Fajar: 4.56 am  
Zohar: 12.30 pm  
Asar: 4.44 pm  
Magrib: 6.46 pm  
Isha: 7.56 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.39 PM

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.00 AM

MOONRISE TODAY 5.59 AM

MOONSET TOMORROW 7.08 PM

## COUNTER POINT



Stop playing games... the party has given us these phones only to spread fake news!

## IN BRIEF

## Shah fatigued, joins AIIMS

New Delhi: Union home minister Amit Shah has been admitted to AIIMS here for post-Covid care after complaining of fatigue and body ache. According to a statement issued by AIIMS, he is comfortable and is continuing his work from hospital. Home ministry officials said

Amit Shah was working from AIIMS. He had undergone treatment for Covid-19 at Medanta Hospital.

Meanwhile UP minister of state Atul Garg has tested positive. Garg is hypertensive and a diabetic.

## BIG HONOUR

## Sports ministry picks badminton duo for award

MOSES KONDETY | DC HYDERABAD, AUG. 18

Badminton player Rankireddy Satwiksairaj continues to be a smash hit. He has been recommended for the prestigious Arjuna Award along with men's doubles partner Chirag Shetty by the sports ministry's selection committee on Tuesday. "I just cannot believe this!" Satwik shrieked when Deccan Chronicle broke the news of his selection.

"Ever since I got nominated (in June), there have been so many calls... my father must've got more than 500 of them, wishing



me well. Our phones were flooded with messages. It just hit us," the 20-year-old said from his home in Amarapuram, AP.

"This was just the kind of motivation we needed in these days of lockdown. The Arjuna Award will spur us to do a lot more for the country," the six-footer, who

trains at the Pullela Gopichand Badminton Academy in Hyderabad, said.

"Ahead of the scrutiny, talk in our circles was that it was rare for two players from the same sport to get the Arjuna and so we were not quite sure. I was thinking it wouldn't be fair if only one of us was picked for the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna."

Full coverage on Page 11

award, for we are a team. Thankfully, both of us have been named," Satwik, who shares eight international trophies with Chirag and four in mixed doubles with erstwhile partner K. Maneesha, explained.

Meanwhile, in a first, the committee proposed five — cricketer Rohit Sharma, wrestler Vinesh Phogat, women's hockey captain Rani Rampal, table tennis player Manika Batra and Rio Paralympic gold-winning high jumper Mariyappan Thangavelu — for the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna.

Full coverage on Page 11



## WORLD | 9

Trump slaps new curbs on Huawei



## SPORTS | 12

Dream XI wins IPL title bid at ₹222 crore



## TABLOID

Prabhas as Adipurush

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## Too close



Water in the river Godavari flows very close to the road-cum-rail bridge in Rajahmundry on Tuesday. The water in the river has increased because of heavy inflows from upstream areas.

— A. MANIKANTA KUMAR

## NHRC orders TS to pay ₹5L to kin of Alair encounter victims

ATHER MOIN | DC HYDERABAD, AUG. 18

● **THE ORDER** dated July 29 was received last week, but was lying in the office of advocate Mohammed Osman Shaheed, who had presented the case before the commission.

The court dismissed a PIL by an NGO, the CPIL, seeking a direction for the transfer of money contributed to PM-CARES in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic to the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF).

Reacting to the judgment, lawyer Prashant Bhushan said, "Unfortunate that the Supreme Court allows the non-transparent & unaccountable PM-CARES Fund set-up as a secret trust to garner money."

The order dated July 29 was received last week, but was lying in the office of advocate Mohammed Osman Shaheed, who had presented the case before the commission. The adv-

ocate, who is also president of the All India Minorities Defence Council, is ailing, and he saw it only this week.

Izhar Khan, Syed Amjad Ali, Mohammed Haneef, Mohammed Zakeer and Vikar Ahmed were allegedly shot dead on the outskirts of Tanguturu vil-

lage in Nalgonda district while they were being shifted to the Hyderabad Metropolitan Courts from the Warangal Central Prison.

Vikar and his associates were facing trial for mur-

dering a home guard.

Three other associates of

Vikar Ahmed — Riyaz Khan, Mohammed Abdul Sayeed and Vinod Kumar Sahu — were acquitted by a Metropolitan Session Judge on September 14, 2016.

Advocate Mohammed Osman while presenting the case before the National Human Rights Commission had demand-

ed monetary compensa-

tion and departmental disciplinary action against the police personnel involved in the alleged encounter.

The NHRC intimated Mohammed Osman that the Chief Secretary of Telangana state had been directed to ensure that monetary compensation of ₹5 lakh each is paid to next of kin of the deceased persons within four weeks.

The commission said it had sought a compliance report along with proof of payment.

● Page 2: TS didn't comply with NHRC award in 2018

## Cong asks FB boss to probe bias

Accuses Facebook of being complicit in hate speeches

DC CORRESPONDENT  
with agency inputs  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 18

dent Rahul Gandhi shared the letter on his Twitter handle and said Facebook needs to be questioned by all Indians. "We cannot allow any manipulation of our hard-earned democracy through bias, fake news and hate speech. As exposed by WSJ, Facebook's involvement in peddling fake and hate news needs to be questioned by all Indians," he said.

Facebook had said on Monday that the company's social media platform prohibits hate speech and content that incites violence, adding these policies are enforced globally without regard to political affiliation.

However, Facebook, which counts India among its largest markets globally, acknowledged that "there is more to do".

Hitting back at the Congress, Union IT minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said former Congress president Rahul Gandhi believes that any organisation that does not work to his liking is acting under the pressure of the BJP and the RSS.

"If the platform is public, then every Indian regardless of his ideology and commitment has got the right to convey his view. It is a hard fact we need to know that people whose political base has shrunk seek to dominate discourse on these platforms," Prasad said.

## MP bars employment of outsiders in state service

RABINDRA NATH CHOURHURY | DC BHOPAL, AUG. 18

In a major decision, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Tuesday announced a bar on 'outsiders' joining government services by reserving state jobs for residents of the state.

In a video statement, Chouhan indicated that necessary amendments to the law would be made to bring into force the decision.

"The state government has taken a major decision today. Government jobs in the state will only be open for people from the state. We are taking necessary legal steps to enforce the decision. Residents of MP will have sole rights of resources of the state,"

Chouhan said. MP government jobs used to attract candidates from Hindi-speaking states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar and also Maharashtra.

Chouhan said. MP government jobs used to attract candidates from Hindi-speaking states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar and also Maharashtra. MP had so far shunned 'son of the soil' policy in government jobs since the state never faced issues of insider and outsider like Gujarat and Maharashtra.

The announcement came three days after Chouhan indicated in his Independence Day address that people of MP would be given preference in government jobs. It comes ahead of the byelections to

27 Assembly constituencies, scheduled to be held by the end of September. This was the second time; Chouhan has proposed to introduce 'son of the soil' policy in recruitment in various government jobs in the state.

In 2009, Chouhan had broached a similar idea. But, the proposal made no headway.

Former chief minister Kamal Nath had in July 2019 had made it mandatory for private sector companies which set up their business in the state to reserve 70 per cent jobs for locals to qualify for government incentives.

"I hope the announcement by the chief minister to reserve all government jobs in the state for locals will not remain only in announcement," Nath quipped.

The Governor said she wanted to "re-stress view of WHO unless adequate numbers of testing done, our efforts to eradicate Covid-19 in Telangana will be difficult."

She said the degree of difficulty will be "more so amidst rains & floods in this season."

On several occasions in the past, the Governor had pointed out how the government was not putting its best foot forward when it comes to Covid-19 diagnosis and control measures.

In addition to raising the issue of increased testing to identify Covid-19 cases and tracking them and tracing contacts of the people identified as positive for the disease, she had also written several letters to the state government in the past, attempting to bring its focus on the Covid situation.

## GOV. RETWEETS W.H.O. POLICY: TEST, TEST, TEST

BALU PULIPAKA | DC HYDERABAD, AUG. 18

Governor Dr Tammisai Soundararajan on Tuesday has warned that the state government might find the going difficult in eradicating Covid-19.

Dr Soundararajan, took to Twitter, a platform she is active on, to point out what is wrong with the government's approach to Covid-19 control.

"(1) Testing Testing Testing 2) Tracking 3) Treating," the Governor said, was the World Health Organisation's mantra.

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● Page 2: Govt. retweets WHO's COVID-19 policy

**SHORT TAKES****Man held for indecent pics**

**Hyderabad:** A 45-year-old from Mallapur was arrested by the Nacharam police for allegedly taking the pictures of the private parts of his step-daughter. She came home after her marriage some months ago, and saw the pictures of her in the laptop, which were taken during her teenage years.

She approached the Nacharam police, who arrested the accused.

**BOYS SPORTS COMPANY, AOC TO HIRE STAFF**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 18

The Boys Sports Company, AOC Centre, Secunderabad, will be hiring administrative staff in the categories of teacher, clerk, housekeeper, masalchi and chef. The interview will be conducted by a board of officers between September 15 and 17 at Thapar Stadium, AOC Centre from 9 am. There is no age restriction to apply for the mentioned trades.

Teachers should have minimum graduate with BE/BED qualification to educate students of Classes VIII to X (CBSE syllabus) and clerks should be ex-servicemen having knowledge of accounts.

For further details, candidates can contact Officer Commanding, Boys Sports Company, AOC Centre, Secunderabad.

**8-YEAR-OLD FEMALE CHEETAH DIES IN HYD ZOO**

**T.S.S. SIDDHARTH | DC**  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 18

An eight-year-old female African cheetah, Hiba, passed away due to paraplegia at the Nehru Zoological Park on Tuesday. The zoo is left with one African cheetah, Abdullah, aged about eight years and is in good health.

According to officials of the Nehru Zoological Park, Hiba was received from Saudi Arabia, and was suffering from lameness for the last three years.

The post-mortem was conducted by Dr Laxman, Professor of Pathology, PVNR College of Veterinary Sciences, Rajendranagar, Hyderabad, along with veterinary team of the Nehru Zoo in presence of Dr M.A. Hakeem, deputy director (Vet).

Samples were collected and sent to Veterinary Biological Research Institute (VBR), Shantinagar; PVNR College of Veterinary Sciences, Rajendranagar, for further investigation.

**GUDUR PLANS COVID-19 PLASMA BANK**

**IREDY SRINIVAS REDDY | DC**  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 18

Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) treasurer Gudur Narayana Reddy, who is also the president of Telangana Plasma Donors Association, on Tuesday offered to set up a Covid-19 plasma bank if the government provides necessary permission and space.

Narayana Reddy made the offer through his Twitter handle in response to an earlier post by IT minister K.T. Rama Rao on April 6. Rama Rao had posted, "Yesterday good friend @kiranshaw called me and suggested that we set up a 'Covid blood bank' in Telangana; with antibody-rich plasma from patients who had recovered from Covid. Have requested Health Secretary & Commissioner to explore further (sic)."

Responding to the post, Narayana Reddy wrote: "Dear dynamic @KTRRTRS where is the rich Covid-19 plasma bank in Telangana? It's been more than 4 months since you made this tweet, govt has not set it up yet! If govt gives me permission and space, I am ready to set it up in 48 hours with my own funds! (sic)"

The senior Congress leader informed that the Telangana Plasma Donors Association, which he floated, after he himself had recovered from Covid-19, has been rendering great service to the people by motivating hundreds of people who recovered from Covid-19 to donate their plasma.

Narayana Reddy also said that the Plasma Bank was a good idea and it should be implemented immediately in Telangana without wasting any time.

# Low testing, few cases is TS trick

TS lags behind other states in terms of testing

**BALU PULIPAKA | DC**  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 18

For long, Telangana state has been an island of sorts amidst the Coronavirus storm that has been ravaging some of its neighbours. Compared to Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka that Telangana state shares its borders with, the Telugu state has had the fewest Covid-19 cases so far.

Even a quick study of the testing numbers vis-à-vis the number of cases between August 15 and August 17, as well as the numbers from the first two Sundays of this month, shows that on days when the tests were low, so were the number of Covid-19 cases found in the state, indicating that low testing can artificially suppress the true extent of the disease.

On August 15, Telangana state conducted 12,120 tests and found 1,102 positive cases, on August 16 there were 8,794 tests with 894 new cases while on August 17, the number of tests was 19,579 that resulted in 1,682 new cases being found. On two Sundays this month, when typically the testing numbers are lower, Telangana state conducted 9,443 tests on August 2 with 983 cases being found while it conducted 11,609 tests on August 9 and found 1,256 cases.

It may be recalled that low testing rates had been an issue for long. The state found itself being clubbed with nine others as the poorest performing states on this front and those contributing most Covid-19 cases in the country by Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently.

It may be recalled that Modi, during a videoconference on August 11, made it clear that Telangana state, along with the other states, needs to step up and do much more to increase testing, tracing and tracking to contain Covid-19. Though Telangana state

## TS reports 1,682 new Covid cases

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 18

Testing has again resumed for Covid-19 with 19,579 samples tested on August 17 and 1,682 persons were positive on Monday, according to data released by the state health department on Tuesday. There were eight deaths, taking the toll to 711.

The total number of cases in the GHMC area stood at 235. Medchal-Malkajgiri saw a surge

with 106 cases, Ranga Reddy 166 and Warangal Urban 107.

The numbers in districts are rising and many small and private hospitals have to be set up as Covid-19 centres as beds in the local government hospitals are full.

Patients in a serious condition in the districts are being shifted to Gandhi Hospital as there is lack of specialists locally. Positive cases in men continue to be high at 65.10 per cent in the state.

STATE-WISE REPORT			
State	First case	Tests	Cases
Telangana	March 2	7,72928	93,937
Tamil Nadu	March 7	37 lakh-plus	3,43,945
Karnataka	March 9	20 lakh plus	2,33,283
Maharashtra	March 9	32 lakh plus	6,04,358
AP	March 12	29 lakh plus	2,96,609

● **THOUGH TELANGANA state lags behind in terms of number of tests it has conducted to detect Covid-19 cases compared to Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh, it was the first in this group of states to find a Covid-19 case.**

lags severely behind in terms of number of tests it has conducted to detect Covid-19 cases compared to Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh, it was the first in this group of states to find a Covid-19 case. This was on March 2. Tamil Nadu found its first Covid-19 patient on March 7, while it was on March 9 that Maharashtra and

Karnataka discovered their first cases, and in Andhra Pradesh the first case was discovered on March 12.

The total tests conducted by these states also shows just how suppressed the real Covid-19 cases in Telangana state could be when viewed against the number of cases found. Tamil Nadu till August 17 conducted 37,87,778 tests (significantly, TN only conducts the gold standard RT-PCR tests and has rejected using Rapid Antigen Tests as being unreliable but have found great favour in Telangana state), while Maharashtra has till August 18 conducted 32,64,384 tests. Andhra Pradesh has conducted 29,61,611 tests till August 17 while Karnataka hit the 21-lakh mark in testing. Lagging way behind is Telangana with 7,72,928 tests till August 17.

## OGH old building didn't leak, open it, say doctors

**SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL | DC**  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 18

The Osmania Medical College alumni and doctors from the Osmania General Hospital demanded that the heritage building, which was closed, to be re-opened for patient treatment.

Because of the rainwater entering the wards during the rains on July 20 and 21, the government took the decision of sealing the old building. The patients were shifted out to new buildings. The 1,200-bed hospital building fitted with oxygen pipe lines is a heritage construction.

However, despite incessant rain for the last three days in the city, there has been no waterlogging or flooding in the old building. Pointing this out, doctors have asked why at this point of time when the pandemic is spreading the old building, which would serve a lot of people, is closed.

● **HUNDREDS OF**

**alumni of Osmania Medical College and who worked in the OGH want that the heritage building to be used for patient care.**

indicates a strong answer to our doubt about a man-made block in the storm water drains passing from Begum Bazaar to the Musi river behind the heritage building which led to the flooding of the ground floor." Dr Iqbal wants the heritage building to be brought back into service.

There has always been a demand from the doctors to restore the building. Hundreds of doctors who are the alumni of Osmania Medical College and who worked in the OGH want that the heritage building to be used for patient care. One among them is Dr Sudhir Naik, who retired from the as superintendent. He strongly condemned the closure of the heritage building.

"This building has oxygen pipelines connected to the beds. At this time of pandemic, it will be useful to many patients," he said. "The Secretariat building could have served as a Covid-19 hospital till this pandemic is over, then later they could have gone ahead with its demolition. The government should be focusing on delivering treatment to the common people. This government's decisions on health are beyond my understanding," said a frustrated Dr Naik. Comparisons were drawn with the Moazzam Jahi market, too.

**SLIDING HONOUR**

**Ranked fourth in 2019, the varsity drops 6 positions this year**

## UoH again among top 10 institutes

**HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC**  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 18

The University of Hyderabad (UoH) held on to its place in the Top 10 list of Institutes of National Importance and Central Universities in the Union education ministry's Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA) 2020.

Compared to the 2019 rankings, during which it stood fourth, the

**IIT-HYDERABAD** that had secured the eighth position last year on the Top 10 Engineering Colleges list, dropped out this year.

Importance, followed by the IITs at Mumbai and Delhi. The Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in Bengaluru stood in fourth place, while IIT Kharagpur ranked fifth. The University of

## Where are the tiles, GHMC?



Due to sheer neglect of the civic authorities, the tiles on the pavement along the GHMC head office in Hyderabad, go missing causing grave danger to pedestrians.

— S. SURENDER REDDY

## One-third nation faces mental health problems due to Covid

**KANIZA GARARI | DC**  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 18

One in three persons in India suffer from mental health problems due to the pandemic but they are not able to understand their anxiety, panic, depression, anger, stress and

shattered. She has started staying aloof, has constant crying spells, restlessness and talks about dying. She was brought on time and had to be put on anti-anxiety medication and consultation.

Most affected are frontline healthcare workers, of which doctors and police officials have a lot of stress. The stress of managing Covid-19 patients, post-Covid-19 complications, fears of contracting of the disease and seeing their colleagues and patients suffer has caused a lot of anxiety and panic-related stress, especially in doctors.

Doctors are finding themselves at the forefront of fighting the virus but the support from the society as a whole is lacking.

Some of them are not able to cope with medical problems caused by virus and circumstances raised by society.

Policemen who have been at the forefront controlling crowds during lockdown and post-lockdown and failing prey to the virus are also facing mental health problems. They too are suffering from panic and anxiety attacks as they have seen their colleagues, friends and near and dear ones succumb to the virus.

These close encounters have left a mark on many of them who are trying to cope and come back to their old selves but are unable to understand why it seems impossible.

Dr Preeti Swaroop, president of Hyderabad Psychiatric Society, explains, "To accept that you are having a mental health issue is very difficult for 95 per cent of the people. The pandemic has got each and every segment, class and creed of people stressed. Everyone is suffering but to agree that you are suffering and seek help is not acceptable to many.

Professionals top the list as they have been hurt the most. What we find is that instead of immediately seeking help, there is denial and resorting to escape routes like alcohol. When there is no solution, only then are they opting for consultants. The numbers that

approach us are very low."

While guidelines by the central government on mental health issues during the pandemic have been issued, the state government has not been able to reach out with information. Information to people on mental health problems, symptoms, signs to look out for and steps to seek help are missing.

### CASE STUDIES

**EXAMPLE 1:** The death of her 49-year-old father due to Covid-19 left his 17-year-old daughter shattered. She has started staying aloof, has constant crying spells, restlessness and talks about dying. She was brought on time and had to be put on anti-anxiety medication and consultation.

**EXAMPLE 2:** A 40-year-old man suddenly died at home and his wife could not accept that he was no more. She would behave like a married woman and call out for her husband every day. Severe psychotic behaviour set in and family members brought her to the hospital as it was difficult to handle her at home. She had to be put on strong medication and again and again told that her husband is no more as she has to accept that and move on.

- Keep yourself occupied by inculcating new hobbies like gardening, cooking, music, singing, painting or anything you like.
- Eat healthy food.
- Bond with your family as this is the best time to spend quality time with them.
- Try to maintain your original schedule of day and night as you were working as the biological clock must be healthy.
- Keep away from negative influences where panic, anxiety and stress are noted.
- Continue with your regular routine of exercise by opting for home exercise schedules and group online meditation programmes.

● If sadness, worry, bad dreams, sleeplessness, getting up in the middle of night and panic is observed for more than two weeks, consult a mental health specialist immediately.

● Inputs by Dr Minhaj Nasirabadi, general secretary of Indian psychiatric society, Telangana state branch.

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 18

High levels of anxiety leading to sleeplessness, weight loss, irritation, anger and mood swings are being noted in people who are well but worried about getting Covid-19. These people are suffering from worry leading to 'worried well syndrome.'

A large number of people who are constantly reading updates on virus, new findings on the disease and also the manner in which it is spreading

are also unconsciously inculcating fear and panic, of which they are not aware.

When they see a case around them, they are so scared that they are socially isolating themselves and not connecting or emoting.

Some of them have even gone so far as to get a full body check-up done twice in the last six months to rule out the presence of the virus.

This excessive worry and fear is also taking a toll on their health with

weight loss and sleeplessness noted as symptoms of this syndrome.

Several experts state that this segment also requires counselling and they have to re-connect with their near and dear ones to cope in these times.

This is the toughest as their unwillingness to accept that they are suffering from a mental health problem is high and that is a major challenge in identifying and treating them, say mental health professionals.

● **WHILE GUIDELINES** by the centre on mental health issues during the pandemic have been issued, the state government has not been able to reach out with information. Information to people on mental health problems, symptoms, signs to look out for and steps to seek help are missing.

## From Page 1

It directed that the video cassette/CD of the autopsy, if any, may be sent to the competent authority for orders and the same is awaited which may take some time.

A prayer was made to grant three months time for taking necessary action in the matter. On several reminders of the commission, the Chief Secretary submitted that the recommenda-

## SHORT TAKES

JUBILEE HILLS  
RESIDENTS MOVE  
SHRC ON PARKSHARLEEN MINOCHA | DC  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 18

The Residents Welfare Association of Jubilee Hills Roads No. 86 and 87 on Tuesday filed a complaint before the Telangana State Human Rights Commission alleging improper maintenance of two government parks by the GHMC and lack of protection from encroachers.

One of the parks is the 30-acre Rock Garden and the other is two acres abutting Road No. 87. They also alleged non-maintenance of an old drainage pipeline on Road No. 86, despite several requests.

The commission admitted the petition and issued notice to the GHMC commissioner seeking a detailed report with regard to encroachment and non-maintenance of the parks and the old drainage line.

COPS ARREST MAN  
FOR BID TO KILL  
WIFE'S 'LOVER'DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 18

The KPHB police arrested three persons for attempting to kill a 24-year-old man who had warned one of the accused maintaining an illicit relationship with his wife.

Accused Shaik Asif, 22, an autorickshaw driver, Shaik Anwar, 18, mechanic, and Md Aslam, 19, residents of Borabanda were arrested on Tuesday.

According to the police, Asif, about three months ago developed intimacy with the wife of Md Abdul Sameer, 24, an autorickshaw driver. On learning of this, Sameer warned Asif against contacting his wife. Angered over that, Asif decided to kill Sameer and asked his friends to join him.

On the night of August 14, the accused trio went to Sameer's house and took him to the 100 Feet Road at Madhapur, where they consumed liquor and then quarrelled over the issue.

When the trio attempted to strangle him with a rope, Sameer managed to escape and ran towards the KPHB. The trio intercepted him in an autorickshaw and stabbed him and escaped. He was taken to hospital.

A case was registered and arrested the accused persons along with an auto and a knife used in the offence, said the police on Tuesday.

**ON THE NIGHT** of August 14, the accused trio went to Sameer's house and took him to the 100 Feet Road at Madhapur, where they consumed liquor and then quarrelled over the issue.

## Wakf Board seeks compensation

ATHER MOIN | DC  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 18

The Telangana State Wakf Board asked the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) to release the compensation amount towards acquired Wakf lands amounting to ₹300 crore. The GHMC has not paid the amount awarded by the acquisition authorities in major Wakf properties for several years.

A high-level meeting of officials of the Wakf Board and GHMC was held on Tuesday. GHMC Mayor Bonthu Rammohan, and Wakf Board chairperson Mohammed Saleem, discussed the matter of land acquisition.

Wakf Board officials stated that part of the land of Dargah Rajdhari Sahab has been acquired for laying a flyover at the ORR junction at Gachibowli and the GHMC paid the compensation amount to other parties. Likewise, land attached to Qutub Shahi Masjid situated at Malkamcheru, Manikonda jagir, has been affected in road-widening. The GHMC has demolished the mosque's boundary wall. GHMC officers assured that the damaged boundary wall will be reconstructed and

## HC slams Wakf for no FIRs against 63 encroachers

Terms Board report vague, asks if it is hand-in-glove with grabbers

VUJJINI  
VAMSHIDHARA | DC  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 18

The Telangana High Court on Tuesday was enraged that the Telangana State Wakf Board and its chairman Mohammed Saleem had not registered FIRs against 63 encroachers who had grabbed large extents of land belonging to Muslim burial grounds in the state, particularly in the GHMC limits.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Raghavendra Singh Chauhan and Justice Bollam Vijayen Reddy observed that it appeared that the Wakf Board was hand in glove with the encroachers.

The bench was dealing with the two PILs related to kabristanah and inaction by the Wakf Board over mutavallis who were

**CHIEF JUSTICE**  
Chauhan asked Mirza Saifulla Baig, counsel for the Wakf Board, to inform the chairman to appear by the next hearing so that the court could ask him about the inaction.

allowing the grabbing of the land and other issues.

The bench questioned the dedication of the Wakf Board chairman and asked whether he was aware that the lands had been given to the Almighty, that they were to be protected and that he was the trustee with the responsibility of protecting the land.

"Whether the Wakf Board is in clarity or not we do not know. But, this court has the clarity that these lands were dedicat-

ed to the Almighty and they were to be safeguarded. The Wakf Board is the trustee to shield the lands. If it does not fulfil its responsibilities, who will," the Bench asked.

Chief Justice Chauhan asked Mirza Saifulla Baig, counsel for the Wakf Board, to inform the chairman to appear by the next hearing so that the court could ask him about the inaction.

The Chief Justice observed: "I am sorry to say that the chairman in the interest of the Wakf Board. If anybody's personal property is encroached, then an FIR will get registered. Here, no case was registered against the 63 encroachers and it seems no effort was initiated to file the FIRs. What restrained the Wakf Board from giving a complaint under Section 447 of IPC for trespass into bur-

ial grounds? It might be hand in glove with the encroachers."

The court also expressed dissatisfaction over the vague report by the Board on burial grounds lands being occupied. The report was furnished following the earlier directions of the High Court.

When counsel for the Wakf Board tried to submit that they did not have the staff to protect the lands and no budget was available to set up the protection measures around the burial grounds, the Chief Justice said, "Why don't you ask the minister for Wakf about the budget, so that he can get the funds from the government?"

The court directed the board to submit elaborate and precise data about the extent of burial grounds and how much was encroached.

## SCB residents approach SC over road closures by LMA

T.S.S. SIDDHARTH | DC  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 18

Some residents of Secunderabad Cantonment Board are hoping that the issue of road closures by the Local Military Authority (LMA) in the cantonment would be resolved soon. They are hoping that an email complaint they sent to the Supreme Court of India may result in some action on the issue.

According to Anoop Kumar, a resident in the Cantonment, he had sent a complaint via email to the Supreme Court of India. "We received an acknowledgment and hope that there will be some action on this front," he said.

In his complaint, Anoop Kumar, who is part of Open Secunderabad All Roads (Oscar), said: "The local military authority at

sure of public roads is huge and unimaginable. Yet, the military authorities are adamant, indifferent and insensitive to the mass public suffering," Anoop Kumar wrote.

He said, "The roads are closed without any clarity in reason. Sometimes it is security, sometimes it is security, sometimes it is Independence Day or Republic Day arrangements, sometimes it's just for no reason. Now they are using the Covid-19 pandemic. We as civilians pass through the main roads, which are acting as life-lines connecting northeasterly colonies with the main city through all the laws into the gutter."

"These are public roads used by the public for over a hundred years and are not unit lines. The inconvenience caused to millions of ordinary people due to such arbitrary closure and are well guarded."

The epidemic, he said, is now spread all over the city and all parts of the country which did not force the authorities to close down the city or the country.

3 ATTEMPT TO  
ENTER MEDICO'S  
ROOM, ARRESTEDJAYENDRA  
CHAITHANYA T. | DC  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 18

Three young businessmen from Nandyal who attempted to forcibly enter the room of a woman medico at a hotel in Shamshabad were arrested by the RGI Airport police on Tuesday.

The accused, Vijay Kumar, Purandhar Kumar and Praveen Kumar are natives of Nandyal in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh and had come to Shamshabad on Monday. The father of one of the accused had recovered from Covid-19 and had come for a check-up, and stayed at a hotel.

On Monday, a woman, who is pursuing her medicine in Ukraine arrived at Shamshabad. As she has a flight on Tuesday, she stayed at the same hotel in which the accused trio stayed. The woman, a native of Bengaluru sought help from the accused as she was not aware of the area. Taking advantage, Vijay, Purandhar, and Praveen tried to misbehave with her, the police said.

"The accused persons who were in a drunken condition tried to enter the woman's room forcibly on Monday night. She called the police and complained. A team reached the hotel and apprehended the accused. They have been remanded," said RGI Airport inspector P. Vijay Kumar.

**THE ACCUSED**, Vijay Kumar, Purandhar Kumar and Praveen Kumar are natives of Nandyal in Kurnool district of AP.

NTR marg opened  
for restricted trafficBALU PULIPAKA | DC  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 18

After a four-day shutdown, the Khairatabad flyover that connects the busy Khairatabad intersection with NTR Marg has been opened for traffic, albeit in a restricted manner. Also opened for traffic was the Telugu Talli flyover that stretches from the now non-existent Secretariat complex to Lower Tank Bund.

The Khairatabad flyover, NTR Marg and Necklace Road were closed, as was the Telugu Talli flyover, suddenly and without any notice to the citizens by the state government which had mounted a midnight

operation on July 6 to raze all the buildings in the Secretariat complex.

The state Cabinet recently approved the designs for a brand new Secretariat building to be built at the same location.

On Tuesday, the authorities opened the Khairatabad flyover and NTR Marg for traffic going towards Tank Bund. The other side of the road, abutting the demolished Secretariat and NTR Gardens remains closed for traffic. Traffic on the Khairatabad flyover, however, will not be allowed to take the Necklace Road as access to the popular road stretch is still shut by the traffic police.

On Monday, a woman, who is pursuing her medicine in Ukraine arrived at Shamshabad. As she has a flight on Tuesday, she stayed at the same hotel in which the accused trio stayed. The woman, a native of Bengaluru sought help from the accused as she was not aware of the area. Taking advantage, Vijay, Purandhar, and Praveen tried to misbehave with her, the police said.

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**THE ACCUSED**, Vijay Kumar, Purandhar Kumar and Praveen Kumar are natives of Nandyal in Kurnool district of AP.

Man kills wife, 22,  
tries to end his lifeDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 18

failed relationship. Due to the pressure of his parents, he married his elder sister Aruna.

On Tuesday morning, the neighbours of the couple alerted the police who on reaching the spot found Aruna dead and her husband with a wrist injury. He was taken to a hospital for treatment and booked for murder.

Yagantaiah was not interested in living with his wife due to which he throttled her and he attempted suicide. His condition is said to be stable.

According to Miyapur police, Yagantaiah and the victim, Aruna, 22, natives of Patancheruvu in Guntakal mandal of Anantapur district, had married in May and were living in a rented house at Goluk Flats in Miyapur.

Yagantaiah, an electrician, was in love with another woman and had a

failed relationship. Due to the pressure of his parents, he married his elder sister Aruna.

On Tuesday morning, the neighbours of the couple alerted the police who on reaching the spot found Aruna dead and her husband with a wrist injury. He was taken to a hospital for treatment and booked for murder.

Yagantaiah was not interested in living with his wife due to which he throttled her and he attempted suicide. His condition is said to be stable.

After discharge from the hospital, the accused will be arrested," said Miyapur SI Ravi Kiran.



Rashi Agarwal, Marketing Head, Bajaj Electronics, Actress Bhanushree and Neha Gupta pose with the winning coupons of Bajaj Electronics Bumper Draw of ₹50 lakh cash prize and 23 Alto cars. Coupon Nos. 590817, 1091593, 717509, 501894 and 951901 won ₹10 lakh each while 23 other customers won an Alto car each at the Bumper Draw held at Bajaj Electronics, Corp Office at Punjagutta, Hyderabad, on Monday.

## Bajaj Electronics holds lucky draw

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 18

Bajaj Electronics has announced the winners of its bumper draw of ₹50 lakh cash prize and 23 Alto cars. The lucky winners were picked actress Bhanushree.

The winners of the cash prize were those with coupon numbers 1091593, 717509, 501894, 951901 and 590817 who each won ₹10 lakh.

winners, said "a promise is a promise. We believe in our customers and their trust and in spite of all the difficulties that have arisen from the current pandemic, we at Bajaj Electronics stand by with our commitment to conduct the draw of ₹50 lakh cash prize & 23 Alto cars to the lucky winners."

**THE WINNERS** of the cash prize were those with coupon numbers 1091593, 717509, 501894, 951901 and 590817 who each won ₹10 lakh. Twenty three others, from Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, were picked as winners and will receive an Alto car each.

On the occasion of the bumper draw, CEO of Bajaj Electronics Karan Bajaj, congratulating the

If you are planning to buy a plot for residential purposes around Hyderabad up to ORR limits, you must necessarily look for:

- 1. HMDA approval details (L.P. Number) of the layout
- 2. RERA Registration number of the layout
- 3. Check HMDA website <https://dprms.hmda.gov.in/AutoDCR.Common2/CitizenSearch/publicsearch.aspx> to ascertain layout details genuinity.

**DO NOT BUY IF THESE DETAILS ARE NOT AVAILABLE**

All such plots must be part of a layout which must be necessarily approved by HMDA under Section 19 & 20 of HMDA Act 2008.

By owning a plot in an HMDA approved layout, you are assured of these facilities/amenities:

- Sufficient open spaces
- Green cover
- Street electricity
- Space for parks
- Proper internal road network within layout
- Water supply
- Sewerage processing facility

**Unapproved layouts won't provide for any amenities/facilities.**

All such layouts become unauthorised and illegal.

- Owning a plot in such unauthorized layouts automatically makes your plot an unauthorized one and
- Liable for action under Section 23 of HMDA Act 2008 treating them as unauthorized and illegal layout plots.

**Do not put in your hard-earned money in something which is unauthorized and illegal.**

Government advises that you must purchase a plot ONLY in HMDA approved layouts.

Once approved by HMDA, the layout developer has to get the layout registered with TS RERA under Section 5 of RERA Act 2016 and each layout thus must carry the RERA registration number.

Therefore, before you buy a plot - whether its first buy or buying on a resale, you must check whether it's a part of HMDA approved layout.

**Verify Before You Buy**

Are you planning to own a plot around Hyderabad in HMDA limits?

Verify Before You Buy

Sri K. Chandrashekhar Rao  
Chief Minister, Government of Telangana

Sri K T Rama Rao  
Hon'ble Minister for MA & UD  
Industries & Commerce, IT & C

Don't buy plots in layouts without verifying details from HMDA website.

Details of all approved layouts are available at HMDA website : [www.hmda.gov.in](http://www.hmda.gov.in)

For right guidance, please contact [advisory@hmda.gov.in](mailto:advisory@hmda.gov.in) or for further clarifications message at 73311 85149.

**Issued in public interest by  
Metropolitan Commissioner, HMDA**

**SHORT TAKES**  
**3 ARRESTED FOR KIDNAP, RAPE OF MINOR GIRL**

MD ILYAS | DC  
 VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 18

The kidnap and repeated rape of a minor girl came to light on Tuesday in Guntur district.

According to the police, Nutalapati Navin Kumar, alias Naveen, of Karlapalem, kidnapped a 14-year-old girl from Mutiyamsettipalem of Tenali and raped her. The minor went to her friend's house to take shelter but was raped again by home guard Ashok Chakravarthy and Durga Rao.

Addressing a press conference at Tenali on Tuesday, deputy superintendent of police K. Srilakshmi said that the police arrested the accused Naveen, home guard Chakravarthy and his friend Rao based on the complaint of the minor girl.

The minor was married and she was living with her husband at Kattavada village of Karlapalem mandal. Naveen lured her on July 27, took her on his motorbike from the village and raped her in the fields near Yerravagu.

He left the girl at Vykuntapuram on the outskirts of Tenali and gave her ₹200. The survivor went to Phercherla to meet her friend and to take shelter for the night. She was standing at the bus stand at Phercherla waiting for her friend when home guard Chakravarthy and his friend Rao observed her standing alone. Ashok introduced himself to the victim and inquired about her friend's address. He promised that he was taking her to the police station to stay with a woman constable without any fear.

The victim believed his words and went along with him. He took her along with his friend Rao to a room in Phercherla where the duo raped her for two weeks.

The girl escaped from the room on August 13 and narrated her ordeal to her mother. She lodged a complaint against the three persons. The police registered a case and arrested three accused on Tuesday and are conducting further investigations.

**PARENT POSTS**  
**PORN ON SCHOOL WHATSAPP GROUP**

D. SIVA RAMI REDDI | DC  
 KURNOOL, AUG. 18

The parent of a student shared a porn video on a WhatsApp group created for eighth class children of Pathikonda Zilla Parisath Girls High School in Kurnool district, leading to protests from students, school teachers as well as other parents. The video that had gone viral caused embarrassing moments for everybody who was on the group to educate children online in view of schools being closed due to Corona pandemic.

Pathikonda police have registered a case against the parent accused of putting the porn video on the group.

According to Pathikonda circle inspector Adi Narayana Reddy, the WhatsApp group had been created to educate eight class students of Pathikonda Zilla Parisath Girls High School. Teachers would interact with children in the group and clear their doubts. A few parents were also included in the group to help their children. Meanwhile, the parent of a girl student shared a porn video in this group, which remained viral on other groups of the town for two days. The administrators of the eighth class group deleted the video and zeroed in on the sender, who accepted to sharing the video.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
 The public in general is hereby informed that my client Mr. P. Vishwanath Reddy has filed a suit for specific performance of contract against Smt. Kureli Manemma W/o, Late K. Balakrishna in respect of Agricultural Land situated in Sy.No.114, admeasuring Ac.0.12 gts., Sy.No.130, admeasuring Ac.0.39 gts. and Sy.No.227 admeasuring Ac.2.12 gts. total extent Ac.3.25 gts. of Village Gowelli, Abdullaummal Mandal, Ibrahimpatnam Division, R.R.Dist., and its said S.N.O.369/2016 is pending on the file of the Court of the Hon'ble XIV Addl. Dist. Judge, R.R. Dist., further during the pendency of the suit, Smt. Kureli Manemma executed Regd. Gift Settlement Deed in respect of Suit Schedule Property in favour of her son K. Venkatesh and her Grand Sons namely K. Harshvardh Goud, K. Devi Prasad Goud, K. Naveen Chandru Goud, and K. Balakrishna Goud. My client further informs that he is the absolute owner and possessor of Agricultural land in Sy.Nos.114 and 227 admeasuring Ac.0.12 gts. and Ac.2.12 gts., respectively of Village Gowelli, Abdullaummal Mandal, Ibrahimpatnam Division, R.R.Dist., by virtue of Pass Book No.105010070304 (having purchased the same from Kureli Sudharshan Goud, through Regd. Sale Deed vide Doc. No.10229/2011 of J.S.R.I. R.P.Dist.)

My client states that the said persons are trying to alienate the aforesaid properties and the public in general is hereby cautioned NOT TO enter into any Agreement whatsoever in respect of aforesaid land with the said persons and irrespective of this notice, if anybody chooses to enter into any agreement whatsoever, in respect of said land with the said persons, he/she shall be doing at his/her risk and consequences.

(B. Sanjay Kumar Saxena Advocate  
 Xerox No. 23-6-789 to 791,  
 Near Sudha Cinemax, Chandul Bela,  
 Hyderabad - 500 065, T.S. Ph. No. 9505690999)

## CMs' meet on Aug. 25

Centre announces fresh dates for Apex Council meet

S.A. ISHAQUI | DC  
 HYDERABAD, AUG. 18

The Union Jal Shakti ministry has proposed to hold the Apex Council meeting with the Chief Minister of Telangana state and AP on August 25 to resolve disputes between the two states pertaining to the sharing of waters of the Krishna and Godavari rivers.

The Union ministry is said to have informed both the state governments about the proposed date of the meeting of the Apex Council and sought a response from the Chief Ministers.

Union minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat will chair the meeting which will be convened with the Chief Ministers through videoconference.

It may be recalled that the earlier proposed meeting of the Council on August 5 was postponed on the request of Telangana state Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao. While asking for the postponement, the TS government had asked the Union minister to convene the meeting any day after August 20.

The meeting gains significance in view of the complaints of both state governments to the Krishna and Godavari river boards and the letter written to the two CMs by the Centre.

● **THE MEETING** gains significance in view of the complaints of both state governments to the Krishna and Godavari river boards and the letter written to the two CMs by the Centre.

Rayalaseema lift irrigation project.

Despite letters from the Union minister, the AP government has finalised the tenders for the project.

The Apex Council was constituted under the AP Reorganisation Act to resolve water disputes between Andhra Pradesh and Telangana state. The first meeting of the Council was held in September 2016.

In the backdrop of the proposed second meeting of the Apex Council, Sriram Vedire, adviser to the minister for Jal Shakti on Monday held a review meeting with the chairmen of the Godavari River Water Management Board and the Krishna River Water Management Board and their officers at Jalasoudha in the city.

### Pandemic precaution



Above: Muslims offer flowers at Langer Houg Dargah main gate during the Urs on Tuesday as security personnel did not allow them inside the shrine in view of the protocols in place to control the spread of Covid-19.

— R. PAVAN



Left: The historic Baadshahi Ashoorkhana is being spruced up ahead of Muharram on Tuesday.

— P. SURENDRA

## Co-option polls: Cross voting by 2 councillors gives jolt to TRS

PULI SHARAT KUMAR | IDC  
 PEDDAPALLI, AUG. 18

The Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) received a shock in the co-option elections of the Sultanabad municipality when two of its councillors voted against the party's decision.

Out of the four co-option posts, the TRS won three and Congress bagged the other seat in the elections held here on Monday in accordance with the new Panchayat Raj Act under supervision of municipal chairperson Mutiyam Sunitha.

The MLA proposed the candidature of Mongani Radha and Alenki Srinivas in the general category and Fathima and Syed Sajid in the minority category. The Congress nominated Gottam Mallaiah in the

general category and Mobin in minority category.

During counting, it was found that Radha and Fathima had got all the 16 votes. Srinivas and Sajid of TRS and Mallaiah and Mobin of the Congress got eight votes each.

This was because the Congress, under the leadership of former MLA Vijayaramana Rao, gained the support of municipal vice chairperson Birudu Samatha and councillor Gajula Lakshmi of the TRS, who are against their MLA Manohar Reddy. Further, Vijayaramana Rao promised that the Congress members will

vote for both the women TRS candidates, if they voted in favour of Congress nominees.

As both male candidates had got eight votes each, officials decided to go for a toss to pick the winner. In the toss, Congress candidate Mallaiah won the general category seat while Sajid of the TRS won in the minority category.

The TRS is shocked that even though it had complete majority, it was unable to win all the four seats. Further, had TRS MLA Manohar Reddy not used his vote as ex-officio member, the Congress party could have taken another co-option post.

— INN

## HC blames Centre for cadre division delay

VUJJINI VAMSHIDHARA | DC  
 HYDERABAD, AUG. 18

Pointing out the flaws in the approach of the Union of India, such as keeping quiet and only advising Andhra Pradesh and Telangana state to settle issues related to bifurcation, the Telangana High Court faulted the Centre for not taking a proactive role in settling issues like final allocation of employees of the home department of composite Andhra Pradesh between the two states.

A division bench comprising Justice M.S. Ramachander Rao and Justice T. Amarnath Goud on Tuesday issued a writ of mandamus to the Union of India to make the final allocation of officers belonging to the cadre of deputy superintendent of police, additional superintendent of police and superintendent of police (NC) of the erstwhile combined state to one or other successor state, under Sections 77 (2) and 81 of the Re-organisation Act 2014. The exercise is to be

completed within six weeks and the Andhra Pradesh and Telangana state governments and the AP Director General of Police were directed to abide by the directions of the Centre.

The court was hearing a petition filed by G. Naganna, assistant commissioner of police (now retired), who worked in Telangana state even though he had requested allocation to Andhra Pradesh. His contention was that he superannuated in Telangana state after attaining the age of 58, while the retirement

age in Andhra Pradesh is 60.

The bench pointed out that the AP Reorganisation Act had specified that the process be completed "as soon as possible" after 2 June, 2014, (the appointed day) and said: "Is it that you merely give 'advise' and then keep quiet when the successor states have differences of opinion? Do you not have the responsibility to play a proactive role in the matter, particularly when the employees concerned are officers of the police, a force necessary to maintain law and order in both states and also to carry out investigation of crimes, duties which are undoubtedly in public interest?"

The bench of Justice Ramachandra Rao and Justice Amarnath Goud said that in the event the petitioner is allocated to AP, it shall take him back into service and continue him till he attains the age of 60 years. Costs of ₹5,000 each were imposed on Telangana state and the Union of India, which should be paid to the petitioner within four weeks.

### INCREASE QUOTA OF FERTILISER, CENTRE TOLD

JAYENDRA CHAITHANYA T. | DC  
 HYDERABAD, AUG. 18

The Telangana state government on Tuesday requested the Centre to increase the fertiliser quota for the state to meet the demand from the farming community.

Agriculture minister S. Niranjana Reddy along with principal secretary, agriculture, B. Janardhan Reddy called on Union minister for chemicals and fertilisers Sadananda Gowda at New Delhi on Tuesday.

Nirjanan Reddy explained to the Union minister that due to increased irrigation, about 1.41 crore acres including 8.5 lakh acres of horticulture crops, were being cultivated across the state for the Kharif (Vanakalam) season.

He told the minister that with the increase of cultivated area in the state the usage of fertilisers including urea had also increased considerably.

Nirjanan Reddy brought to the notice of the Union minister that about 14.48 lakh tonnes of fertilisers had been consumed during the Kharif season last year and this year the officials have estimated the demand to hit 22.30 lakh tonnes.

Explaining that about seven lakh tonnes of urea has been used in the state till date during the season against 3.5 lakh tonnes used during the corresponding period last year, the minister said that about 10.5 lakh tonnes of urea was allocated to Telangana state for the monsoon season of which seven lakh tonnes have been already supplied and distributed to farmers.

He informed Sadananda Gowda that though 2.5 lakh tonnes of urea was allocated to the state for August, only 80,000 tonnes had been supplied so far. The minister requested that the remaining urea supplies be sent at the earliest, as there was a dire need for additional fertiliser supplies.

### TRANSPORTERS ASK GOV FOR MV TAX EXEMPTION

Hyderabad, Aug. 18: Transport operators on Tuesday sought the intervention of Governor Dr. Tamilisai Soundararajan to get exemption from payment of Motor Vehicle Tax for the lockdown period.

"Hundreds of transport operators have lost their business while nearly 5-6 lakh people employed by them are about to lose their livelihood. While the country is under Unlock-3, transport operators in TS are still under undeclared lockdown," TS Cabs and Bus Operators Association president Syed Nizamuddin and other leaders said in their representation to the Governor.

Nizamuddin said the travel industry had suffered losses due to lack of regular business.

He said the operators had approached the Regional Transport Authority for exemption of MV tax for the lockdown period for contract carriage vehicles and maxi cabs. The government rejected the demand and levied penalty for non-payment. — INN

## 60-yr-old found dead at home, limbs tied

JAYENDRA CHAITHANYA T. | DC  
 HYDERABAD, AUG. 18

The decomposed body of a 60-year-old man with limbs tied to a rope was found at his house in Vanasthalipuram on Tuesday. The police registered a case of murder and sent the body to Osmania General Hospital for the autopsy.

Mujeebuddin last saw his father on August 15, he told the police. Investigation is on to find who visited the old man and murdered him, a police official said.

alone at his house in Hakimabad in Mansoorabad area. His son Mujeebuddin lives in Madhuranganagar.

On Tuesday noon, Mujeebuddin came home and found his father dead with his limbs and neck tied to a rope, and the body in a decomposed condition.

Mujeebuddin last saw his father on August 15, he told the police. Investigation is on to find who visited the old man and murdered him, a police official said.

**In loving memory of**  
**Sri K. Ashok Rao**  
 Founder Member, Sridevi Education Society  
 (D.O.B.: 23.09.1937 D.O.B.: 19.08.2015)  
 Our Former Chairman

It is now five years... Your memories of strong leadership and hard work continue to guide and inspire us.

Sponsored Institutions:  
 MVS Engineering College, Nadergul, Hyderabad.  
 Matrusri Engineering College, Saidabad, Hyderabad.  
 Matrusri Institute of Post Graduate Studies, Saidabad, Hyderabad.

**OBITUARY**  
 Deeply saddened by the untimely demise of our mother  
**GUNDABOENA HEMALATHA**  
 W/o Gundaboena Venugopal.  
 Date of Death: 18.08.2020  
 Inserted by:-  
 Karthik and Tarini  
 9052003523 - Karthik  
 9490623322 - Venugopal

**PAGDI/CHAUTHA**  
  
 With profound grief we announce the sad demise of our beloved **Mrs. USHA HINDUJA**  
 on 17th August 2020. Prayer Meeting will be held on 19th August 2020, i.e. Wednesday between 4.30 p.m. to 5.00 p.m. Venue for the Prayer Meet will be their residence at Jal Vayu Towers, Lower Tank Bund Road. Zoom Link for viewing will be shared via message.  
 In Grief we Stand Hinduja,  
 Mr. Sudhir Hinduja  
 Mr. Mohit Hinduja, Malikaani Family  
 Katara Family, Narang Family  
 "Near and Dear Ones."

**OBITUARY**  
  
**AR. AVALA BUCHI REDDY**  
 Past Chairman - I.I.A (AP Chapter)  
 (07-09-1947 - 18-08-2020)  
 Your contributions to Our Profession and to Our Institute are Laudable.  
 Our heartfelt condolences to the bereaving family.  
 Indian Institute of Architects  
 Telangana Chapter

**SAD DEMISE**  
  
**ANIL KUMAR JOSHI**  
 CGM (Retd) APCPDCL  
 DOB: 26-6-1947 DOD: 17-8-2020  
 You are an inspiration and guide to all of us  
 May your soul rest in peace.  
 Kularki & Joshi Family  
 (S/2021/D00457)

**SHRADDJALI**  
  
**RAMAKRISHNA UGDE**  
 M.A. (Hindi Pandit)  
 DOB: 10-6-1950 DOD: 9-7-2020  
 41 Days Ceremony held at our residence at 7-2-255/256, Ashoknagar, Monda Main Road  
 Inserted by: Shyam Sunder Ugde  
 Santosh Ugde, Ajay Ugde  
 Ph: 9866123814, 808715492, 8639496010  
 (S/2021/D00446)

**1st Death Anniversary**  
 The memory of the righteous is blessed - Prov. 10:7  
  
**SOLOMON ARTHUR**  
 DOB: 24.05.1972 - DOD: 19.08.2019  
 Your sweet memories will remain in our hearts forever and ever.  
 Inserted by: Wife: Amaravathi  
 Sons: Emerald & Enosh  
 Badangpet, Hyderabad  
 Mobile: 9705337450

**OBITUARY**  
  
**NALINI PALLATH**  
 Passed away on 16-8-2020  
 W/o Sri. M. Madhavan  
 Ex. South Central Railway  
 Deep Mourning  
 Jayan

**IN BRIEF**  
**Bhadradri former chief priest dead**

Bhadradalam: Koti Ramakrishnamacharyulu, a former chief priest at the Sitaramachandhra Swamy temple in Bhadradalam, died of Covid-19 on Tuesday. He was 80. Sitaramachandru, who worked at the temple from 1958 to 2008, was an ardent devotee of Lord Rama. He had organised the Sitarama Kalyanam 50 times. He was the chief priest for the Srirama Pattabhishekam that is done once in 60 years in the temple. Ramakrishnamacharyulu dedicated his life to Lord Rama and used to chant 'Sriramayana' every time. Temple authorities and other priests paid tributes to him. He tested Covid-19 positive 15 days back and was admitted to the Gandhi hospital in Hyderabad for treatment. After his death, the body was brought to Bhadradalam and the last rites were performed.

**SIGH OF RELIEF AS GODAVARI WATER RECEDES**

A. RAVINDRA SESHU | DC BHADRADALAM, AUG 18

People and officials heaved a sigh of relief after the water level in the Godavari at Bhadradalam came down to 52 feet on Tuesday.

The water that had touched 61 feet started falling from Monday night. Floodwater from the Indravathi, Talipera, Palenwagu, Gubbala, Gundlalavagu, Cheekupallavagu and Lottipittalagundi joining in Godavari witnessed also receded on Tuesday.

The floodwater from Medigadda reservoir came down to 7.70 lakh cusecs from 9.70 lakh cusecs on Monday. The present discharge of flood water at Bhadradalam is 13 lakh cusecs at present. Floodwater in 40 villages in seven mandals in Bhadradalam division is also receding.

The 34 rehabilitation centres opened by the government will continue for a couple of days. The Godavari is still flowing above the second warning of 48 feet. Officials were asked to concentrate on checking epidemics and Covid-19 spreading after the waters recede.

Collector M. V. Reddy asked officials to open health camps in flood-affected villages and take up sanitation programmes. "Bleaching powder and sodium hypochloride should be sprayed in all streets in the affected villages. The proactive plan of the government worked well and the officials were able to shift people in affected villages in advance," he said.

Additional collectors were deputed as special officers for each of the three mandals to monitor the flood situation, he said.

The Godavari has crossed the 60-feet mark in Bhadradalam only seven times in the last 50 years. It was 63.9 feet on June 22, 1976; 63.5 feet on August 17, 1983; 75.6 feet on August 18, 1986; 70.8 on August 24, 1990; 66.9 on August 6, 2006; 61.6 on August 3, 2013 and 61 feet on August 17, 2020.

**ADDITIONAL COLLECTORS** were deputed as special officers for each of the three mandals to monitor the flood situation, he said.

**DISASTER STRIKES**

**Drainage to carry out rainwater not built for ₹36 cr building**

PULI SHARATH KUMAR | DC SIRCILLA, AUG 18

The new collectorate complex constructed with advanced and modern facilities at a cost of ₹36 crore on about 30 acres of land was inundated due to heavy rains over the past few days in Rajanna Sircilla district.

The officials who prepared a plan for the construction of a complex for the collectorate, and along with all other offices of various departments, had forgotten to construct a drainage canal to release the water. While they chose the place where a lake existed to construct the building, they did not take any steps after filling the lake to divert the water that would enter the lake during heavy rains.

They laid one canal tem-

# Police checks if two Chinese scamsters worked together

Hao ran betting firm disguised as payment aggregator, Sang was in import-export

VIKRAM SHARMA | DC HYDERABAD AUG 18

Luo Sang and Yah Hao have a lot in common. The Chinese nationals were operating from Gurgoan in Haryana, had multiple bank accounts, were smooth talkers who spoke fluent English and appeared every bit of suave executives of top multinationals.

If Sang used import export of medical and electronic goods and other items as a front for running a hawala network, Hao's company went about their online gaming racket by masquerading as payment aggregators — both dealing in thousands of crores.

Sang is even suspected to be a spy for the Chinese Intelligence agency.

While it is widely believed that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China has a major role to play, either directly or indirectly, in Chinese nationals setting up shop in other countries as a front for carrying out what various agencies refer to as "economic terrorism," suspicions that the two Chinese nationals — arrested in separate cases — could be two

## KEY FACTS OF HAWALA'S PRIME ACCUSED



After his arrest by Delhi police in 2018, he was granted bail by a Delhi court in 2019. Once out, he engaged in hawala trade.

sides of the same coin has led investigating agencies to launch a probe to ascertain if the two are linked in some way.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) had on Monday registered a money laundering case against Sang for allegedly running a hawala racket worth over ₹1,000 crore using shell or dubious companies. Hao, head of operations for southeast Asia for Beijing T Power, was arrested by the Hyderabad police for online gaming fraud. He also goes by the alias Charlie Peng — a

Luo Sang is said to have entered India illegally from Nepal in 2014. He married a woman from Mizoram and obtained a fake passport from Manipur.

Both Sang and Yah Hao had employed several locals to run their illegal trades.

Sang held over 40 bank accounts while the Hyderabad police has found 31 bank accounts operated by Hao and his firm.

company's bank accounts is to the tune of ₹1,100 crore and counting.

Informed sources told *Deccan Chronicle* that as investigation is progressing into the two cases, various agencies involved in the probe are now focused on finding out if Sang and Hao are part of a larger conspiracy to destabilise India economically. Sang was previously arrested by the Special Cell of the Delhi police in September 2018 on charges of fraud and forgery. He also goes by the alias Charlie Peng — a

name on which he held a fake passport. While the ED and the income-tax department are trying to connect the dots of Sang's shady dealings, the Hyderabad police has written to the ED and I-T department to look into the money laundering angle and taxation issues pertaining to Hao's company.

Sleuths of the Central Crime Station of the Hyderabad police are awaiting the nod from a local court to get custody of Hao for a thorough interrogation. One of the key aspects of the ques-

tioning will be to ascertain whether he is linked to Sang, even remotely. The zonal office of ED in Hyderabad too will be questioning Hao separately at a later stage. Hao claimed he arrived in the country in January this year as a replacement for his colleague who went back home to China for the Spring festival. But Hao, who would travel to several countries relating to his work, including Pakistan over the last two years, had visited India on an earlier occasion as well.

Sources said that around the time Sang was raided by the I-T sleuths earlier this month after stumbling upon his "suspicious travels" and financial activities, central agencies had an inkling about Hao and his company's fraud. In between, the Hyderabad police swiftly picked up Hao from New Delhi airport.

Investigators believe that both Sang and Hao are concealing a lot of information which led to the suspicion if both are well trained in doing so. Born in Tibet, Sang grew up in the Nanjing region of China while Hao belongs to Heilongjiang province.

## Oppn leaders put under house arrest during KTR's visit

DC CORRESPONDENT  
WARANGAL, AUG. 18

In view of IT minister K.T. Rama Rao's visit to Warangal, police put under house arrest several Opposition party leaders, including BJP Warangal Urban district president Rao Padma and district Congress president Naini Rajender Reddy.

Police landed at these leaders' homes on Tuesday morning and advised them not to move out. Police was stationed outside their houses to prevent them from venturing out.

Condemning the move, Rao Padma said the TRS was running the government with the help of police and muzzling the voices of Opposition leaders.

"Several colonies of Warangal got inundated because of heavy rains. Police arrested us even before KTR's arrival. They did not even allowed us to explain the situation to the minister. This government has become worse than the tyrant

Razakar rule," the district BJP chief said.

She said, "Even after the city has gone through such trauma, Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao has sent only his son. That is because KCR made several promises to people of the city during the municipal corporation elections, like ₹300 crore special funds in the Budget and ₹3,000 crore for the city in three years. He has not fulfilled these promises. He is afraid, people will question him. Today, KTR too will make promises and leave. The government is being run on empty promises," she stated.

Padma warned that people of Warangal city will give a befitting reply to the TRS, as the ruling party has failed them twice.

DCC president Rajender Reddy called the arrest of Opposition leaders undemocratic, as it stopped them from questioning the government. "The TRS is running away from providing answers to people," he said.

**DCC PRESIDENT**  
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**OPPONITION LEADERS** put under house arrest during KTR's visit



Minister K.T. Rama Rao inspects the flood-affected areas in Peddammagadda.

## KTR: Floods in Warangal due to illegal constructions

ANUDEEP  
CEREMILLA | DC  
WARANGAL, AUG. 18

Municipal administration minister K. T. Rama Rao on Tuesday inspected flood-affected areas of Warangal, including Nayyemmagar nala and observed that the floods were due to illegal structures built along the nala.

He asked municipal officials to take permanent steps, so that such a situation does not arise in future. All illegal structures in the city should be demolished and public must cooperate in this regard, he said.

Rama Rao was accompanied by health minister Etala Rajendar, panchayat raj minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao, tribal welfare minister Satyavathi Rathod and chief

ministers inspected several flood-hit areas including Sammaianagar, Peddammagadda, Waddepalli 100 feet road and Bhadrakali Lake. The municipal administration minister announced ₹10 crore for constructing drainages in the city.

Earlier, Rama Rao made an aerial survey of the city to see for himself the extent of damage due to floods. He subsequently inspected the city in a bus along with other ministers and public representatives. He made it a point to interact with locals.

People affected by the floods told Rama Rao that they have lost all their belongings including their essential commodities. The minister asked district adminis-

tration and corporation officials to help people in this regard.

Inspecting the Bhadrakali lake, the minister said more sluice gates are required as the existing two have failed in letting out the floodwater quickly. He asked district collector Rajeev Gandhi Hanumanthu to give him a report on the quantity of water that had flowed into the Bhadrakali lake.

GWMC commissioner Pamela Satapathy said the two sluice gates had been set up based on previous rainfall of 180 cm. But this time, the rainfall recorded was 270 cm.

The minister later reviewed with officials and public representatives steps being taken to deal with floods as well as Covid-19.

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The minister later reviewed with officials and public representatives steps being taken to deal with floods as well as Covid-19.

He asked municipal officials to take permanent steps, so that such a situation does not arise in future. All illegal

# DECCAN Chronicle

19 AUGUST 2020

## Let them skip JEE, for their own good

**W**ith the Supreme Court's indiscriminate status quo on the JEE and NEET entrances taking effect, a logistical nightmare stares at the authorities. Parents are happy that their children will not "lose" a year and will be availing of the best opportunities. They forgot that the rules of both the NEET and JEE allow students to take it multiple times and it is commonplace for many to give up a year anyway in order to take it twice. In these unprecedented circumstances of a Covid year, should not the health of their children have been the parents' priority? But then, the deadly virus has so far only been known to hit other people. Denial is comforting.

So the governments at the Centre and in the states must now be seen working to ensure that the examinations do not become another source of the spread. For this, they have to plumb the best practices from around the world and then adapt them here. Sadly, given our high population and low per capita income leading to anxiety for our children's future financial security, the emphasis on a job-oriented STEM education is paramount leading to a manic make-or-break college entrance system unparalleled in the world. Hence not many examples of these practices exist. While 17 lakh students have registered for NEET, 11 lakh youngsters will be writing the JEE. Only a limited number of exam centres are present in a state. Not every district has an exam centre. The students will be accompanied by their parents on these outstation trips where they will arrange for overnight stays in hotels and at relatives' residences, raising infection chances.

As far as holding of exams is concerned, so far it has been seen that the level of precautions taken and screening done at centres are dismal. The World Health Organisation now holds that the Coronavirus is airborne. Patients, too, may be asymptomatic. Asymptomatic patients will inevitably be seated in the exam hall next to uninfected for three hours. More alarmingly, there will be cases of students coming to take the exam with a light fever, sparked by stress or common cold, and they will be made to take the exam in isolation alongside those who may be having the virus. An online exam would have solved this crisis, but neither the government nor the court displayed the requisite pro-activity. The only option that remains now is for parents, themselves, to let their child skip the exam. The government, which can still step in, is unlikely to, seeing as it has consistently opposed the entrance postponements.

So that relief is available to all, 11 students from various parts of the country had moved a petition in the Supreme Court. But god forbid, if the student "wastes" their year frivolously, studying science or engineering/medicine in less prestigious colleges and institutes or, in the worst case scenario, in pursuits other than the most heavy-duty academics. "These students are all 21-22-year-olds. Can you believe they will not be going out," solicitor general Tushar Mehta submitted before the court. The government had also cited, not so accurately, that the entire country is "working".

The court, therefore, in its uncontested wisdom, declined the students' prayer. After all, is there a precedent that the esteemed Indian judiciary took into account a child's argument? Even if, in the process, it has jeopardised the child's right to health and their right to life. For their own good.

## Flashpoint in Belarus

Over three decades after the Berlin Wall fell and the Soviet Union disintegrated shortly afterwards, Belarus' embattled President Alexander Lukashenko, who ruled his country — once part of the Soviet empire — with an iron hand for over a quarter century, is being taught a lesson on the meaning of "people power". After claiming victory in the August 9 election, he faced nine days of continuous protests demanding he leave for rigging the results, with even some police and intelligence personnel deserting him. Mr Lukashenko, described by many as "Europe's last dictator", stood firm at the outset, but after open heckling by factory workers in Minsk on Monday, who demanded he "step down", seemed to indicate he might be open to sharing power. He suggested a referendum be held to change constitutional provisions so that a fresh election could take place, but this concession seems to have come too late, with the demonstrators demanding that he just go. Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, the Opposition leader who fled into exile in neighbouring Lithuania two days after the election, claims that she won by a 60-70 per cent margin, and said she is ready to take over and lead the country, but Mr Lukashenko vowed he won't quit "under pressure". He even said: "Until you kill me, there will be no other elections." One hopes he hasn't forgotten the fate of Romania's Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife Elena.

The embattled leader may have hoped Russia, Belarus' powerful eastern neighbour, might come to his rescue and he spoke to President Vladimir Putin several times, but Moscow's intervention seems unlikely. President Putin promised help in case Belarus faces an external threat, but the threats Mr Lukashenko faces are internal. There is little anti-Russian sentiment in Belarus, and most people speak Russian, so rather than prop up the unpopular President, Mr Putin might try to "manage" the transition. An invasion, like in Ukraine some years ago, would also trigger fresh Western sanctions, something Russia might wish to avoid. The European Union has called an emergency virtual summit on Wednesday, as it explores how to help Belarus in its hour of need.

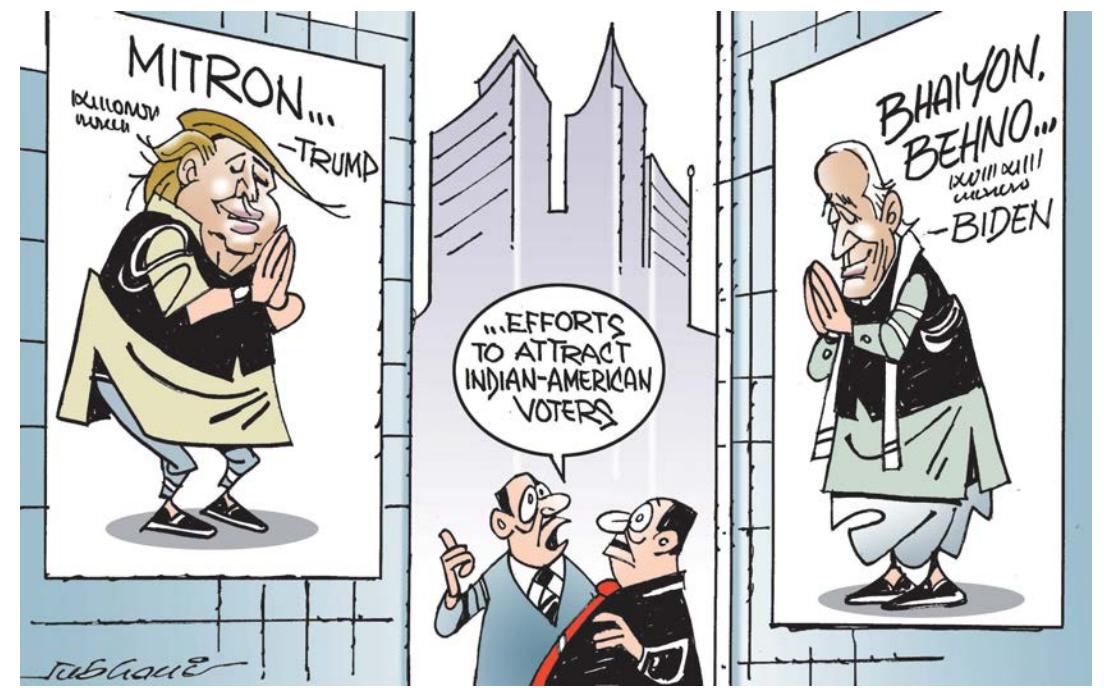
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Subhani



## Polls at 73: More women voters, 'criminal' leaders



Sanjay Kumar

**T**he seven-decade-long journey of electoral politics in India has been both sweet and sour memories. The sweet memories of India's electoral journey could be documented as the increasing participation of Indian voters in the numerous elections held so far to form governments at three levels — central, municipal/panchayat and state. The sweet memories could also be remembered as an upsurge in electoral participation of the marginalised. It can also manifest as a reasonably high degree of trust shown by Indians in institutions vital for the functioning of the government. But in this journey of sweet memories have also existed some bitter experiences — elections being violent at times, an expanding role of muscle (*dabang*) and the role of money power. Though trust in institutions remains high, the trust in elected representatives (MPs, MLAs and sarpanches) has declined over the last few decades. This is largely due to frequent defections of leaders from one party to another, signalled the declining role of ideology in Indian politics.

Since Independence, Indians have exercised their franchise 17 times to elect the national government. These elections over the years have witnessed increasing participation of voters. The first Lok Sabha elections witnessed a high turnout of 61.1 per cent and the second in 1952 witnessed a higher turnout of 62.2 per cent. But after that, for a very long time, the turnout at Lok Sabha elections remained below 60 per cent, barring exceptions. It increased to 66 per cent during the 2014 Lok Sabha elections and touched 67 per cent during the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. The state Assembly election witnessed a much higher

turnout compared to the Lok Sabha election and the last few decades witnessed a significant increase in this parameter. Due to constituencies being much smaller and campaigns being personalised, local body elections have witnessed a much higher turnout compared to the other two levels of elections. Although women got their voting rights along with men, they lagged far behind men in exercising it. Earlier, many of them did not come out to vote resulting in a big gender gap in turnout. But turnout amongst women has increased significantly during the last few Lok Sabha elections. The gap between male and female turnout that used to be 9-10 per cent got narrowed down to 1.6 per cent during the 2014 Lok Sabha elections and during the 2019 Lok Sabha election men and women voted in equal proportions — shoulder to shoulder — the biggest story of the Indian elections so far. Youth, too, have begun to participate much more actively in elections now. Dalit and adivasi voters, who were earlier missing from the long queues on the voting day up until the mid-1990s, have also started voting in much bigger numbers.

The beauty of Indian elections has been that all its verdicts have been acceptable to both the winner and the loser. Some elections resulted in the incumbent getting re-elected, while there have been other instances when the ruling party lost the receiving end all the time. In election after election, both at the national and state levels, Indian voters have shown a great deal of maturity, voting back only the government that worked for the people. Were it not the case, the government would not have changed eight times at the national level. Between 1952 and 2019, of the 363 Assembly elections held, the ruling party got re-elected 188 times and was defeated 175 times.

But unfortunately, this is not the whole story of the Indian elections.

**Based on their own declaration of pending cases, 43 per cent of the current Parliament has criminal cases pending against them. In the previous Parliament, this number was 34 per cent.**

**The gap between male and female turnout that used to be 9-10 per cent got narrowed down to 1.6 per cent in the 2014 elections and in the 2019 elections men and women voted in equal proportions**

This trend has been visible in all the three types of elections. There have been contestations and counter-contestations about how free and fair the elections were, especially in the 1990s when elections, including many state Assembly elections, were marred by violence, but in spite of all that, results were accepted gracefully. There has been discomfort about the use of the electronic voting machine (EVM). Political parties suspected these machines could be tinkered with, but all these issues come to a rest once results are declared. Unlike in many countries where there are major disputes around election results, in India we never had any similar dispute and government formation has never been held up due to controversy over election results. Political parties have shown a great deal of maturity in this respect, but the credit should also go to the Election Commission of India.

Question have been asked about the EVMs, but results have gone in favour of and against all political parties at some point of time — no party can complain of being at the receiving end all the time. In election after election, both at the national and state levels, Indian voters have shown a great deal of maturity, voting back only the government that worked for the people. Were it not the case, the government would not have changed eight times at the national level. Between 1952 and 2019, of the 363 Assembly elections held, the ruling party got re-elected 188 times and was defeated 175 times.

The writer is a professor at Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) and a political analyst. Views expressed are personal.

**Unlike in many countries where there are major disputes around election results, in India we never had any similar dispute and government formation has never been held up due to controversy**

The aim of being in politics has almost entirely shifted from serving the people (*seva bhava*) to be in power to make money by using political position and political pressure. Elections have become far more expensive now compared to the past. An ordinary man has no place in present-day politics. Not that one can win election only by using money power, but the importance of money for contesting an election has increased enormously. A very large number (almost 30 per cent) of all contestants during the 2019 Lok Sabha election owned property worth more than ₹1 crore. It is important to note that 86 per cent of elected MPs have assets worth more than ₹1 crore. The story remains the same for the state Assembly elections.

Even more disturbing to note is that a large number of elected representatives both in Parliament and the state Assemblies have criminal cases pending against them. Based on their own declaration of pending cases, 43 per cent of the current Parliament has criminal cases pending against them. This is not unique of the current Parliament, 34 per cent MPs of the earlier Parliament had criminal cases pending against them, too. This number stood at 24 per cent and 39 per cent, respectively, for the Lok Sabhas of 2004 and 2009. If women's turnout is the biggest success story of the Indian elections, criminalisation of politics is its darkest.

**WELL DONE, DHONI**  
I feel that the performances of veterans like Sunil Gavaskar, Gundappa Vishwanath, Rahul Dravid and Sachin Tendulkar are like pieces of poetry — some short and some long. But the performance of M.S. Dhoni is like classical poetry. When he was on the cricket field he looked like Arjuna in the field of Kurukshetra, the Pandava who could fight with both hands just like Savyasachi. Unfortunately, his live classical performance has come to an end. Good luck, dear Dhoni.

B.K. Satyanarayana  
Hyderabad

### Scooter plant in public sector soon

NEW DELHI, Aug. 18  
The Government has decided to set up a Public sector unit for manufacturing 100,000 scooters annually with foreign collaboration because 50 YEARS AGO IN no indigenous design of a scooter was readily available. This was informed by Industrial Development Minister Dinesh Singh to both the Houses of Parliament today.

Dilip Cherian  
**Dilli Ka Babu**

## India builds UN team ahead of 2021-22 stint at Security Council

**I**ndia will take over as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council (UNSC) in January 2021. The government has begun preparations by deciding to upgrade India's diplomatic presence at the UN. The Indian delegation is being strengthened with the appointment of an additional deputy permanent representative and a counsellor to solely handle Security Council matters.

According to sources, 1999-batch Indian Foreign Service officer R. Ravindran, who is joint secretary (Central and West Africa) will join the Indian Permanent Mission in New York in the rank of additional deputy representative. He served in the office earlier under Hardeep Singh Puri, who is now minister for civil aviation, urban development and commerce, but who headed the mission when India was a non-permanent mem-

ber in 2011-2012. Ravindran's colleague Pratik Mathur, who is from the 2007 batch, and is deputy secretary in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), will be a counsellor. Both IFS officers will join the mission before the 75th UN General Assembly opens next month. The India mission is currently headed by T.S. Tirumurthi, with Nagaraj Naidu as deputy permanent representative.

It is also said that external affairs minister S. Jaishankar will be keenly following India's stint at the Security Council with regular monthly reviews.

### DISCRIMINATORY RETIREMENT PRACTICES?

At a time when the Covid pandemic has forced states to tighten their finances, the Tamil Nadu government has decided to increase

retirement benefits for retired senior officials. Citing petitions from the IAS Officers' Association and senior bureaucrats, it has permitted an additional ₹10,000 monthly servant allowance to all retired chief secretaries and additional chief secretaries.

The move is bound to raise eyebrows since many other states with strained finances have forced to hold back the dearness allowance of government officials and pushed back pension grants. Barely two months ago, the government had increased the retirement age of babus from 58 to 59 years, ostensibly to postpone the huge pension burden it would face. More recently, the government has given retiring chief secretary K. Shanmugam a three-month extension.

According to sources, the state government has based the order on

a similar order by neighbouring Karnataka, in 2015. Then Karnataka had allowed chief secretaries and additional chief secretaries a servant allowance of ₹6,000 plus telephone and medical allowances over and above the pension and other benefits of the retired babus.

### BITTER MEDICINE

Manipur has a qualified doctor as the state's new chief secretary. Senior IAS officer of the Manipur cadre, Rajesh Kumar who was additional chief secretary, has succeeded J. Suresh Babu who superannuated from government service. Incidentally, Babu was also a doctor who became a civil servant.

Mr Kumar's appointment comes in the backdrop of a demand from several student organisations in

the state to appoint a "qualified state native" to the post of chief secretary. Kumar, who is an IAS officer of the 1988 batch, is not. Once Mr Kumar's appointment was announced, some organizations are now demanding that the decision be reviewed. The state government, however, has shown no sign of acknowledging this demand.

With the students upset over what they term as "denial of rights of the native communities" by the state government, Mr Kumar as the new chief secretary may have to apply a healing balm to the "hurt" sentiments of the student community first, besides getting down to discharging his own considerable administrative duties.

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

**SHORT TAKES**  
**RLYS JUSTIFIES  
 HIKE IN PLATFORM  
 TICKET RATES**

DC CORRESPONDENT  
 NEW DELHI, AUG. 18

The Railways on Tuesday tried to justify a hike in platform ticket rates by saying this move is to control crowd at the stations in view of Covid-19 and the hike will be reviewed post-pandemic.

"Instructions have been issued to divisional Railway managers to take local decision to increase platform ticket fare to desist non serious persons from entering stations and maintain social distancing at the stations during Covid-19 pandemic. This decision will be reviewed post pandemic," said a Railway official.

The justification came following a tweet by Congress leader Digvijay Singh in which he posted photographs of two platform tickets — one during 2011 when the Congress-led UPA government was in power, and another of this month. "The cost of platform ticket that was ₹3 in Congress regime has now become ₹50. During Congress, Railways was under government while now under BJP it is privatised," Digvijay Singh tweeted. (sic)

**DOCTORS REMARK  
 AIMED AT W.H.O.,  
 CLARIFIES RAUT**

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC  
 MUMBAI, AUG. 18

After being condemned over remarks on doctors, Shiv Sena leader and party spokesperson Sanjay Raut on Tuesday said that he did not intend to insult doctors, his statement was in reference to the WHO. Last week, Raut had said that he prefers consulting compounders as they are more knowledgeable than the doctors. Following this, the Indian Medical Association (Thane branch) has written a letter to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray demanding Raut's resignation.

According to the letter, they are looking up to government and politicians to stand with them during the pandemic. "The healthcare workers are working at great risk not only to themselves but also risking their dependents, spouses, children and aged senior citizen parents. At this critical time, we would look up to the government and senior politicians to stand with the frontline workers," the letter said.

It further added, "We are aghast that a senior politician like Sanjay Rautji would say that compounders know more than doctors. We condemn this behavior and ask for his resignation." Replying to the doctors, Raut said, in a clarification, that his comments were misconstrued and that his remarks were in reference to the WHO.

**ASSAM TO GIFT  
 SCOOTY TO 22,000  
 GIRL STUDENTS**

MANOJ ANAND | DC  
 GUWAHATI, AUG. 18

Assam government on Tuesday announced to gift a scooter to 22,000 girls who passed class 12 examination with first division from the state board this year under the Pragyan Bharati scheme of the state government.

Announcing that each scooter will cost something in between ₹50,000 and ₹55,000, Assam education minister Himanta Biswa Sarma told reporters that they had announced this scheme in the state budget to which they are going to implement now.

"22,000 girl students had secured first division marks in the higher secondary examination and we will now gift a scooter to every single one of them so that they can travel to their respective colleges," said the education minister clarifying that students will not be able to sell the gift for next three years.

Informing that department has decided to hand over the scooter to the students by October 15, the minister said that the government, however, will not provide the cost for registering the vehicles and helmets.

He also announced that each teacher, professor, and every other employee associated with the educational institutions of the state government will have to go for the compulsory Covid-19 test from August 21.

"From the Aug. 21 of this month till Aug. 30, all the employees associated with the education sector shall be compulsorily tested for the Covid-19 for the well-being of the students," he said.

**Back to work**



Guest workers, returning from their native places, wait to get tested for Covid-19 as they arrive at Anand Vihar in New Delhi on Tuesday during Unlock 3.0. Meanwhile, workers cured of the virus have been inducted by the West Bengal government as members of "Covid-19 warriors club" to provide a healing touch to patients undergoing treatment for the infection in different hospitals in the state. — PTI

**Sterlite: Madras HC upholds govt's order**

J. STALIN | DC  
 with agency inputs  
 CHENNAI, AUG. 18

Vedanta to suspend the operation of the order for two weeks to enable it to file SLP in the Supreme Court.

The Madras high court has upheld an order of the Tamil Nadu government, directing permanent closure of Sterlite Plant in Thoothukudi district over pollution concerns.

The company described the verdict as "temporary setback" and said it would look into all legal options available to it while political leaders and others welcomed the judgement.

A division bench comprising Justices T.S. Sivagnanam and V. Bhavani Subbarao dismissed the petitions filed by Vedanta Limited, which sought a direction to the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board to facilitate the immediate opening of its Sterlite Plant in Thoothukudi after violent protests against the unit that left 13 people dead in police firing on May 21 and 22.

It had filed the petition in the high court as suggested by the Supreme Court which had on February 18, 2019 set aside the National Green Tribunal order that allowed opening of the Sterlite Plant.

Several people hailed the high court judgment in Tuticorin in southern Tamil Nadu by distributing sweets and bursting fire crackers.

Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam welcomed the ruling, saying it reflected the thoughts of crores of people.

The bench also declined to entertain a plea from

**ED records statement of Sushant's father**

DC CORRESPONDENT  
 MUMBAI, AUG. 18

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Tuesday recorded statement of K.K. Singh, father of actor Sushant Singh Rajput in connection with the money laundering probe in the backdrop of the actor's untimely death.

The officials sought details of the actor's finances and relation with the family and his girlfriend Rhea Chakraborty.

Chakraborty's lawyer Satish Maneshinde meanwhile put out a statement alleging that the actor's

sister groped her following a party in April 2019, straining relations between her and the actor's family.

The 74-year-old father was sent a questionnaire at his Patna residence and the officials said that further questions could be asked if needed. The ED till now has recorded statement of Rhea Chakraborty, her brother Showik, father Indrajit Chakraborty, Rajput's business managers, chartered accountants, house helps and Rajput's flat mate Siddharth Pithani in connection with the sui-

cide. The officials said that they would also record statements of other family members of Rajput.

Maneshinde's statement meanwhile mentioned, "Rhea's financial documents which clearly shows the falsity of allegations, has been handed over to the ED. She has not received a single transfer from Sushant's account. The IT returns have been examined by the police as well as the ED. Neither of them have found anything incriminating."

The probe is getting murkier by the day with a series of sensational alle-

gements being made by the actor's family and Chakraborty against each other. The row hit a new low after Maneshinde's statement mentioned Chakraborty having been groped by Rajput's sister Priyanka.

"In the initial months of their relationship, when Rhea had visited Sushant's house, his sister Priyanka and her husband Siddharth were living with him. On one night around April 2019, Rhea and Priyanka had gone out to a party. Priyanka consumed copious amounts of alcohol

and was behaving inappropriately with men as well as women at that party."

"Upon returning, Sushant and his sister continued drinking alcohol while Rhea retired for the night as she had a shoot the next morning. Rhea was asleep in Sushant's room when she suddenly awoke to find Priyanka had got into bed with her and was groping her. Rhea was extremely shocked and demanded that she leave the room immediately. Subsequently, Rhea herself left the house," the statement said.

**Swapna, UAE officials got ₹3.60cr commission: ED**

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC  
 THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, AUG. 18

Gold smuggling case accused Swapna Suresh and top officials of UAE consulates here received ₹3.60 crore as commission from a construction firm for a Life Mission project in Vadakkanchery in Palakkad district of Kerala.

This was disclosed by the Enforcement Directorate which had earlier questioned Swapna Suresh. The Life Mission project costing ₹18 crore was meant for providing flats to those families which lost their homes in floods.

The ED said of the ₹18 cr for the project, ₹3.60 cr was given as commission which was shared by Swapna, top brass of UAE consulate and an Egyptian national at the consulate.

The deal was to pay 20 per cent of the project cost as commission for getting the funding sanctioned for the project.

The commission issue has come as a major embarrassment for the ruling Left Democratic Front government as the Life Mission is its flagship programme aimed at providing homes to landless and homeless families in the state.

**Man arrested for ₹712cr fake invoices scam**

AKSHAYA KUMAR  
 SAHOO | DC  
 BHUBANESWAR, AUG. 18

The GST Enforcement Squad in Odisha has busted a racket involved in generating fake invoices worth ₹712 crore and passing bogus Input Tax Credit of ₹129 crore over multiple transactions routed through different chains.

The squad arrested the kingpin of the racket, Kashmir Kumar Agrawal, director of Madhumita Steels Industries Private Limited, from Sambalpur. Sources said Agrawal was under the scanner of state GST Enforcement Squad for a very long time but he used to change his address frequently from Rourkela to Haryana to Sambalpur.

Some of the accused involved in the racket were arrested earlier.

Subsequently, by tracking the chain of fraudulent transactions followed by the scrutiny of suspected e-bill transactions and collection of intelligence, physical inspections, Agrawal was

arrested. Proprietors of these fake firms admitted that they were neither doing any business nor making any purchases/sales in the name of these firms. They said the transactions reflected in their returns were only paper transactions without any actual receipt and supply of goods.

"All of the accused categorically admitted that they had neither deposited nor withdrawn any amount from the bank account opened in the name of their firm. The banking transactions in the name of the firms had been undertaken by the mastermind by misutilising the signed cheque book and RTGS forms taken from persons in whose name registration had been taken fraudulently and in some cases by forging their signature," a member of the squad said.

It was also revealed following the investigation that the accused has transferred a huge amount of money to different firms without having any business transactions with them.

**Sends resignation to Rashtrapati Bhavan, requests to be relieved on Aug. 31**



● **LAVASA**, WHO would have retired in October 2022 had he become the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC), is the second election commissioner to step down from the poll panel before the completion of his term.

● **HIS PREMATURE EXIT** puts his colleague Sushil Chandra next in the line of succession.

Sabha elections when he gave a dissenting note to the Election Commission of India (ECI) giving a clean chit to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and former BJP president Amit Shah on allegations of violating the Model Code of Conduct.

Three members of the Lavasa family including his wife had come under the scanner of the Income Tax Department for alleged non-declaration of income and disproportionate assets.

The family members had denied the allegations.

An MBA degree holder from Southern Cross University in Australia, and MPHil in Defence and Strategic Studies degree from the University of Madras, Lavasa, a 1980 batch IAS officer of Haryana cadre, also worked as Finance Secretary.

— PTI

**Ashok Lavasa resigns as EC, to join ADB as vice president**

Arora ends.

Lavasa still has over two years left in his term at the Election Commission of India and as CEC, he would have conducted Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Manipur, and Goa, among other states.

His premature exit puts his colleague Sushil Chandra next in the line of succession.

The family members had denied the allegations.

According to the provisions of the Election Commission (Conditions of Service of Election Commissioners and Transaction of Business) Act, 1991, an EC or the CEC can tender his or her resignation addressed to the President.

Lavasa had made headlines during the 2019 Lok

**FESTIVE SPIRIT CM issues do's and don'ts; strict safety measures to be in place**

**Malayalis gear up to celebrate Onam**

DC CORRESPONDENT  
 THIRUVANNAHAPURAM, AUG. 18

With Malayalis biggest annual festival Onam round the corner, the government has directed the district collectors and SPs in Kerala to take adequate safety measures in the wake of unprecedented increase in Covid-19 cases in the state.

Onam festive season will begin on August 22. The auspicious main festival known as "Thiru Onam" will be on August 30. All the nine days leading to Thiru Onam are celebrated by Malayalis.

Kerala had the biggest single day spike in Covid-

19 with 1,725 cases on Monday. The total number of cases reported in the state so far stands at 46,140 as on Monday.

Against this backdrop, the district collectors have been asked to convene meetings of traders and businessmen to ensure that strict safety measures are enforced to check Onam rush. The Malayalis go on a shopping spree during Onam festival season.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has listed a few dos and don'ts for Onam celebrations. No individual or groups will be permitted to organise Onam festivities in public places or offer Onam feast in the open.

The shops will not remain open for shopping till 10 pm-11 pm as in the past. There will be no late night shopping with shops and business establishments downing their shutters by 7 pm.

Some of the hotels and restaurants will be allowed to function till 9 pm complying with safety norms. However, the government will encourage home delivery of food items including Onam feast.

The government has given strict directions to flower traders to take adequate measures while bringing in consignments. Flowers are an integral part of the festival as peo-

ple, communities, residents associations and various organisations make *athapoo* or floral carpets marking the arrival of Onam festival.

Arrangements are also being made to test people arriving in the state for Onam festival season. The strict restrictions imposed by the government may lead to the scaling down of the celebrations this time, but people here say safety measures will not dampen the Onam spirit of Malayalis in any way.

Meanwhile, as many as 10 persons who took part in the rescue operations after the air crash at Kozhikode international airport have tested positive for Covid-19.

More than 200 people from Kondotty who took part in the relief and rescue work were subjected to tests. Earlier, 20 officials of the Malappuram district administration including collector, assistant collector and district SP tested positive. These officials had supervised the relief, rescue operations besides treatment of injured in hospitals.

Soon after the mishap and rescue operations, health minister K.K. Shailaja had appealed to all officials, security personnel and local residents who took part in the rescue work to get tested.

The commission issue has come as a major embarrassment for the ruling Left Democratic Front government as the Life Mission is its flagship programme aimed at providing homes to landless and homeless families in the state.

According to ED, Swapna had also received ₹70 lakh in 2019 from a company which was awarded the contract for visa stamping at the consulate.

Besides she reportedly used to get 1000 dollars for every kg of gold smuggled through her.

Meanwhile, the Congress-led Opposition UDF has demanded a high-level probe into the commission issue.

At a press conference here, Opposition leader Ramesh Chennithala said that the Chief Minister cannot shy away from his responsibility as commission was sought for a government sponsored project.

He said the Chief Minister needs to give an explanation to the people as to how Swapna Suresh became part of official delegations headed by him to foreign countries.

**SHORT TAKES**  
**SATYA PAL MALIK IS MEGHALAYA GOVERNOR**

New Delhi, Aug. 18: Satya Pal Malik was on Tuesday transferred as Governor of the northeastern state of Meghalaya, replacing Tathagata Roy who completed his five-year tenure on the gubernatorial post.

A Rashtrapati Bhavan communique said Malik has been shifted to Meghalaya, and Governor of Maharashtra Bhagat Singh Koshyari has been asked to discharge the functions of Goa governor in addition to his own duties.

There was, however, no mention of Roy, who completed his five-year tenure by serving as governor of Tripura for three years and the remaining in Meghalaya.

There is no fixed tenure for governors, but conventionally it is considered for a period of five years. There have been examples in the past where governors have served for a longer period like that of E.S. L. Narasimhan, who served continuously for 12 years in Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh (undivided) and later in Telangana.

Roy, who would turn 75 next month, had stoked a controversy last year when he supported a tweet by a retired army official calling for banning of Kashmiri goods in the aftermath of an attack on the CRPF convoy that killed 40 security personnel.

As the news of the new appointment reached Shillong, Roy tweeted, "Upon receipt of news from Rashtrapati Bhawan I spoke to Shri Satyapal Malikji, the new Governor-Designate and welcomed him to Shillong. It may take him a little time to come here."

"I was supposed to have been relieved on 20th May. Now the end of the road is in sight!" he said.

**NO CHANGE IN MUKHERJEE'S CONDITION**

New Delhi, Aug. 18: There is no change in the condition of former President Pranab Mukherjee who continues to be on ventilator support, the Army's Research and Referral hospital said on Tuesday.

Doctors attending on him said his vital parameters are stable.

The 84-year-old former president was admitted to the hospital in Delhi Cantonment on August 10.

He was operated for removal of a clot in the brain and has been in a coma ever since. He also tested positive for Covid-19.

"There is no change in the medical condition of Shri Pranab Mukherjee. He continues to be on ventilator support and his vital parameters are stable," a statement from the hospital said. Mukherjee was the 13th President of India from 2012 to 2017.

**SHRINGLA CALLS ON SHEIKH HASINA**

**SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC**  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 18

In a major step towards further strengthening India's ties with eastern neighbour and close friend Bangladesh, sources confirmed late on Tuesday evening that India's Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla called on Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in Dhaka in an "excellent meeting", with both countries moving towards convening in virtual format a Joint Consultative Commission at the Foreign Ministerial level to oversee the bilateral relationship, especially projects being carried out for the welfare of Bangladesh with Indian assistance.

The Foreign Secretary had begun a two-day visit on Tuesday "to discuss and take forward cooperation on matters of mutual interest".

Sources said the fact that Shringla was granted a meeting with Sheikh Hasina was extremely significant since the Bangladesh Prime Minister — amid the Covid pandemic — has reportedly not met anyone from abroad and very few in the country in the past few months.

Sheikh Hasina "greatly appreciated" Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "gesture in sending someone to touch base, convey message and see how the two sides could take relationship forward". Security related issues of mutual interest were also discussed during the meeting.

**J&K ENCOUNTER ENDS AFTER 30 HOURS**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
SRINAGAR, AUG. 18

The encounter in Kreeri area, 38-km north of Srinagar, ended on Tuesday afternoon after the security forces bombed the edifice where one of the three militants involved in a deadly sneak attack on a police party a day ago had been holed up.

However, the search operation in the area was still underway as reports last came in. "The joint operation is still on. So far, two AK assault rifles and three pistols have been recovered," said defence spokesman Colonel Rajesh Kalia.

The officials confirmed that the remaining LeT militant, probably a Pakistani national, too was killed in the security forces' final assault, ending the nearly 30-hour-long gunfight.

IGP (Kashmir) Vijay Kumar said that the third militant Usman killed on Tuesday was involved in the murder of local BJP leader Sheikh Waseem Bari along with his father and brother in northern Bandipora town on July 8. Two other militants were killed on Monday within hours of their together targeting a joint party of the J&K police and Central Reserve Police Force manning a makeshift checkpoint set up on a road running parallel to a shallow stream in Kreeri's Watragam hamlet with rifle and pistol fire.

A Special Police Officer of the J&K police and two CRPF jawans were killed in the attack.

During the operation which was resumed at first light on Tuesday after remaining suspended for the night to avoid collateral damage, two Army soldiers were also killed. The Defence spokesman confirmed it and said, "Two soldiers who were critically injured have succumbed."

**YUSUF JAMEEL | DC**  
SRINAGAR, AUG. 18

The Army on Tuesday said that the inquiry into the alleged killing of three labourers in purported fake encounter in Shopian district is underway and assured that due legal process would be followed in an impartial and transparent way.

"As intimated on August 11, a high-level Court of Inquiry into the July 18 Operation at Amshipora in Shopian is under progress. Statements of key witnesses are being recorded and progress is being monitored closely," a statement issued by the Army here said.

It said that additional

civil witnesses are being asked to depose before the Court of Inquiry.

"Concurrently, the DNA samples have been collected from Rajouri under the aegis of J&K Police and sent for matching with the terrorists killed on July 18," it added.

The Army said that it is "committed to ethical conduct of all counter-terrorist operations" and that cases where doubts are raised "are investigated under due process as per the law of the land".

It asserted that since this case is under investigation further details will be shared periodically "as appropriate without affecting due legal process".

It said that additional

HEAD



CRPF personnel carry the coffins of their two colleagues who were martyred in an encounter with militants in Baramulla after their wreath laying ceremony at Humhama on the outskirts of Srinagar on Tuesday. — PTI

## Shopian probe gains pace

**Kin allege that 3 labourers from Rajouri were killed in fake encounter**

**YUSUF JAMEEL | DC**  
SRINAGAR, AUG. 18

The Army on Tuesday said that the inquiry into the alleged killing of three labourers in purported fake encounter in Shopian district is underway and assured that due legal process would be followed in an impartial and transparent way.

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It asserted that since this case is under investigation further details will be shared periodically "as appropriate without affecting due legal process".

IGP (Kashmir range) Vijay Kumar, had last week after the blood samples of the relatives of three labourers from frontier district of Rajouri who went missing in Shopian district last month were collected for DNA testing also assured that no stone will be left unturned in the police's pursuit of the truth.

According to the families of three labourers Muhammad Imtiaz, Abrar Ahmed Khan and Abrar Yusuf they might have been killed in a fake encounter by the troops at Amshipora area on July 18, a day after the trio had arrived there from Rajouri to work in an apple orchard to earn their

livelihood and then passed off as terrorists by the Army.

The IGP had said that the DNA samples were collected in a government-run hospital of Rajouri in presence of a police team sent from Srinagar.

The families of the missing persons had earlier requested the authorities that they be allowed to visit Shopian where a local resident had rented a room out to the trio soon after their arrival there.

As per them, their kin last called them on July 17 to inform they had reached Shopian where they have taken a room on rent. However, it was only earlier this month that the families filed a missing

report with the local police. Explaining the delay, Lal Hussain, a relative of one of the missing persons, said, "We thought there are connectivity problems in Kashmir for one or the other reasons and we were waiting for them to call soon".

The missing persons' kin have also reportedly desired that the bodies of the three alleged militants who, as per the Army's claim, were killed in the July 18 encounter be exhumed for identification. However, the police reiterated that they had provided sufficient time for identification of dead bodies at the Police Control Room Kashmir at Srinagar.

## NIA arrests doctor for alleged links with ISIS

**● ABDUR RAHMAN, 28, working at M S Ramaiah Medical College, was taken into custody in connection with the Islamic State Khorasan Province case**

**● THE ISKP case was initially registered by the Delhi Police Special Cell in March after the arrest of a Kashmiri couple**

subversive and anti-national activities and were in touch with a member of the Abu Dhabi module of the ISIS, Abdulla Basith, who was arrested in a separate NIA case and lodged in Tihar jail.

During interrogation, arrested accused Rahman confessed that he was conspiring with accused Sami and other Syria-based ISIS operatives on secure messaging platforms to further ISIS activities. He was in the process of developing a medical application for helping

the injured ISIS cadres in the conflict zones and a weaponry-related application for the benefit of ISIS fighters," NIA spokesperson Sonia Narang said.

The NIA has found that Rahman allegedly toured Syria and visited an ISIS medical camp in early 2014 for treatment of the terrorists for 10 days and returned to India.

After Rahman's arrest, the NIA carried out searches at three of his premises and seized digital devices, mobile phone, laptop containing incriminating material, Narang said.

Besides Rahman and the Kashmiri couple, the agency had also arrested two Pune residents - Sadiya Anwar Sheikh and Nabeel Siddick Khatri - for allegedly being part of the conspiracy to further the activities of ISIS/ISKP in India and to carry out subversive activities in the garb of a anti-Citizenship Amendment Act protests. - PTI

**Chandigarh, Aug. 18:** Opposing the Sutlej-Yamuna Link canal at a meeting with his Haryana counterpart, Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Tuesday warned that it is an emotive issue in his state and Punjab will burn if asked to share water.

Meeting Haryana CM Manohar Lal Khattar and Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat through a video link, the Punjab CM argued that the SYL canal issue could disturb national security.

Both states stuck to their stands at the meeting convened on the directions of the Supreme Court, which asked the Centre on July 28 to mediate between them on the decades-old issue. But the two CMs described the interaction, the first such meeting between them on the SYL project, as cordial and agreed to talk again.

Punjab is reluctant to share water with Haryana through the SYL canal project, saying it has nothing to spare. Amarinder Singh reiterated the need for a tribunal for a time-bound assessment of river water availability.

You have to look at the issue from the national security perspective, he told Shekhawat, according to a Punjab government statement.

If you decide to go ahead with SYL, Punjab will burn and it will become a national problem, with Haryana and Rajasthan also suffering the impact, he added.

Shekhawat and Khattar joined the video conference from Delhi. Linking the SYL debate with national security, Singh said Punjab remained at risk from all quarters.

He said Pakistan was

continuing with attempts to foment trouble and was trying to revive the separatist movement through the banned Sikhs for Justice organisation.

The water issue could further destabilise the state, he warned, according to the statement.

Singh described the meeting as amicable and cordial. Haryana CM Khattar hoped for an amicable solution to the dispute. We maintained our stand that the SYL should be constructed. The Supreme Court too has said that, he told reporters after the meeting.

SYL has been a contentious issue between the two states with the Punjab portion of the canal still incomplete. The construction began in 1982.

Punjab has been demanding reassessment of the Ravi-Beas river waters volume while Haryana has been seeking completion of the SYL canal to get its share of 3.5 million acre feet of water.

## RUSSIA THROWS ITS WEIGHT BEHIND INDIA AGAIN

**SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC**  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 18

Two months ahead of Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to India for the annual bilateral summit between the two countries, Russia has strongly backed India by reiterating its opposition to any discussion on the Kashmir issue at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and has again supported the Shimla Agreement of 1972 that calls for the Kashmir issue to be discussed bilaterally between India and Pakistan.

India has enjoyed time-tested strategic ties with Russia and the erstwhile Soviet Union before that, spanning decades, especially in the defence sector.

Speaking at a seminar in virtual format organised recently by the Russian Centre of Science and Culture (RCSC) on the subject of "Russia and India: Major Milestones in the History of Relations", Russian Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) in New Delhi Roman Babushkin said, "The Shimla Agreement of 1972 (between India and Pakistan) is the basic legal guidance Russia is following almost for 50 years already, which clearly should prevent any discussion of the Kashmir issue in the UNSC and other platforms. That's why we are of the principled position that no one should interfere in bilateral issues between the two countries (India and Pakistan) unless both of them jointly ask for it".

Mr. Babushkin, who is both DCM and Minister Counsellor at the Russian Embassy in New Delhi, added, "Today we also see that our positions (Indian and Russian) on major global and regional issues are similar and coinciding. It means that our strategic partnership which is crossing the 20th anniversary this year is natural and it is forward looking".

RCSC Director Fedor Rozovskiy hailed the 1971 Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation between India and the erstwhile Soviet Union and described it as a "historical document reflecting the true essence and soul of friendship and cooperation between the two traditional, time-tested friends India and Russia".

## 3-DAY NAVAL COMMANDERS' CONFERENCE BEGINS TODAY

**PAWAN BALI | DC**  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 18

Amid India-China border tensions, Indian Navy's top Commanders will be meeting here on Wednesday for three days naval commanders' conference.

Indian Navy is already at a high alert due to the India-China military stand off in the Ladakh sector and has deployed all its assets in the sea.

Last month Indian Navy had carried out an extensive exercise in Andaman and Nicobar islands which dominate major sea trade route for the Chinese ships.

Indian Navy's P-8I surveillance aircraft are deployed in Ladakh to carry out surveillance and reconnaissance on the Chinese army.

The conference assumes greater significance against the backdrop of recent events on our northern borders, coupled with the unprecedented challenges posed by Covid-19 and would provide the higher naval leadership a forum to discuss conduct of operations, sustenance and maintenance of assets, and procurement issues," said a senior official. The conference is the apex level forum for interaction between commanders.

**FIGHTING | COVID** **India has so far conducted 3,09,41,264 tests; record 8,99,864 tests done in a day**

## SII says trials of Covid vaccine are on course

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 18

number recoveries are up and the mortality rate is reducing.

"We are really happy with the daily testing numbers which is absolutely remarkable. We are in control of the pandemic," he said.

Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said a decline in daily new cases has been noticed from August 13 as new detections have come down from 64,000 plus to 55,000.

He underlined that the number of deaths too are also declining but "there is no room for laxity on containment, testing and surveillance."

"There is a reducing

trend. But five days is a short span in a pandemic. Yet there are satisfying results that are seen of the work states doing under the guidance of the Centre," he said adding in spite of a sustained level of 7 lakh to 8 lakh test a day, the positivity figure has come down from 10.03% to 7.72%.

India has so far conducted 3,09,41,264 tests with a record 8,99,864 tests done in a single day.

The total number of recoveries crossed the 19 lakh with 57,937 patients being cured in the last 24 hours - the highest recorded in a day so far. Active cases now are 6.73 lakh. The recovery rate is 73.18%

per cent and case fatality rate (CFR) has come to 1.92 per cent.

Also, the Serum Institute of India (SII) is expected to start phase II trials of the Oxford vaccine candidate this week.

"The trials are on course," said Dr Paul while talking about all vaccine trials in India.

However, he cautioned that till the time trials are complete one should keep fingers crossed.

"Please do not assume that any vaccine that goes into trial will be successful," Dr Paul said adding there is no room for laxity and all precautions must be taken by people all the time.

"This will increase our control over pandemic. We will not let the virus rule us," he added.

## IN BRIEF

**457 cases linked to church: S. Korea**

**Seoul:** South Korean health officials said Tuesday that they have found 457 Coronavirus cases linked to a huge Seoul church led by a bitter critic of the country's president, driving an alarming surge of infections in the greater capital area. Kwon Jun-wook, director of South

Korea's National Health Institute, said outbreaks at the Sarang Jeil Church and elsewhere have pushed the country into the biggest crisis yet since the emergence of Covid-19. He said a failure to slow transmissions in the densely populated Seoul metropolitan area, home to nearly 26 million people, could create a situation comparable to the "miserable scenes of the United States or European countries."

**2 existing drugs can prevent virus: Study**

**Boston:** Two existing drugs inhibit SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19, from infecting human cells in the lab, a study has found.

According to the study, published in the journal PNAS, both drugs, vacuolin-1 and apilimod, originally developed years ago, target a large enzyme called PIKfyve kinase. Before this study, little was known about this enzyme's role in Covid-19 infection, the researchers said. The work, which will need to be replicated in human trials, suggests a potential new target for Covid-19 therapies, they said. "Our findings show that targeting this kinase through a small-molecule antiviral against SARS-CoV-2 may be an effective strategy to lessen the progression or seriousness of Covid-19," said study co-author Tomas Kirchhausen, a professor at the Harvard Medical School (HMS) in the US. Kirchhausen said he discovered vacuolin-1 16 years ago, while apilimod was developed by a company called LAM Therapeutics.

**Chocolate firm glitch dusts Swiss town**

**Berlin:** Residents of a Swiss town got a bit of a shock when it started snowing particles of a fine cocoa powder after the ventilation system at a chocolate factory malfunctioned. The Lindt & Spruengli company confirmed local reports Tuesday that there was a minor defect in the cooling ventilation for a line for roasted "cocoa nibs" in its factory in Olten, between Zurich and Basel. The nibs, fragments of crushed cocoa beans, are the basis of chocolate. Combined with strong winds on Friday morning, the powder spread around the immediate vicinity of the factory, leaving a fine cocoa dusting. The company says one car was lightly coated, and that it has offered to pay for any cleaning needed — but hasn't yet been taken up on the offer. Factory production was able to continue as normal and the company says the particles were completely harmless to people or the environment.

**CHINA CONSIDERS IMPOSING TARIFFS ON OZZIE WINE**

**Canberra,** Aug. 18: China on Tuesday began investigating whether Australia is dumping wine in a trade dispute that further strains relations between the countries and could shut the biggest export market for Australian wine.

The Chinese Ministry of Commerce said the anti-dumping investigation involved wine in containers of 2 liters (68 fluid ounces) or smaller imported from Australia from Tuesday.

The Australian government denied subsidizing exporters. "We do find this deeply troubling, concerning and perplexing given Australia's wine industry is not subsidized to export and it's certainly not dumping product on the world market," Trade Minister Simon Birmingham said. "Now it's for China and Beijing to explain the rationale behind these actions and why they have moved to that stage of an investigation."

China's only other anti-dumping investigation of Australian products effectively closed the China market to Australian barley in May through crippling tariffs. Australia is appealing that decision.

The investigation of Australian wine exports, which made 1.1 billion Australian dollars (\$795 million) from the Chinese market last year, could take between a year and 18 months.

## Trump govt imposes new Huawei limits

**Washington,** Aug. 18: The Trump administration is further tightening restrictions on China's Huawei, seeking to starve it of crucial components by cutting off all access to US technology.

"We don't want their equipment in the United States because they spy on us," Trump said. "And any country that uses it, we're not going to do anything in terms of sharing intelligence."

The Commerce Department's new rules, rolled out Monday, will further block Huawei from accessing chip technology.

Washington cut off Huawei's access to US components and technology, including Google's music and other smart-phone services, last year.

Those penalties were tightened in May when the White House barred vendors worldwide from using US technology to produce components for Huawei.

A Huawei executive said this month that the company has started running out of processor chips to make smartphones as a result of those sanctions, and may have to stop production of its own advanced chips. But the Commerce Department said Monday that more restrictions were needed because Huawei has "continuously tried to evade" the earlier sanctions by using technology supplied by third parties.

The new rule is designed to block Huawei's access to commercially available chips made with tools acquired from the US. "The new

rule makes it clear than any use of American software or American fabrication equipment to produce things through Huawei is banned, and requires a license," Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross said.

— PTI

### SENATE CONDEMNS CHINA'S HOSTILITY TOWARDS INDIA

**Washington,** Aug. 18: A bipartisan US Senate resolution has condemned China's use of military force to change the status quo at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with India and called for a diplomatic solution to the issue.

Indian and Chinese troops have been locked in a bitter standoff in several areas along the Line of Actual Control in eastern Ladakh since May 5. The situation deteriorated after the June 15 Galwan Valley clashes in which 20 Indian Army personnel were killed.

The Chinese side also suffered casualties but it is yet to give out the details. The resolution, introduced by senators John Cornyn and Mark Warner, commended India for taking steps to secure its telecommunications infrastructure from Chinese security threats and also supported bilateral and multilateral partnerships, such as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD), to promote a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific.

— PTI

Leading the charge was the former first lady Michelle Obama, who described the nation as "deeply divided". "We live in a nation that is deeply divided... If we have any hope of ending this chaos, we have got to vote for Joe Biden like our lives depend on it," Obama said in her video address as she concluded the first day's proceedings of the convention whose theme was 'We the People.'

The four-day convention is being held virtually in view of the Coronavirus that has so far killed over 1,70,000 people and infected 5.4 million in the US. The convention would formally nominate Biden, 77, as the party's presidential candidate and Indian-origin Senator Kamala Harris, 55, as his running mate. Harris, the first-ever woman of colour and first-ever American of Indian and African descent to be nominated as a vice-presidential candidate by a major political party, made a few brief appearances during the first night as part of the former presidential candidates' address.

Why milk tea? The light-hearted name represents a shared passion for sweet tea drinks in Thailand, Hong Kong and Taiwan. — Agencies

## #MilkTeaAlliance to aid Thai protest

**Bangkok/Hong Kong,** Aug. 18: As Hong Kong pro-democracy advocates voiced support for Thai anti-government protests at the weekend, they used the hashtag #MilkTeaAlliance.

In Bangkok, flags representing Hong Kong and independence for Taiwan appeared on a sign bearing the tag at the biggest demonstrations in years.

And in Taipei, dozens of people gathered to back the Thai protests and give weight to a nascent community of cross-border youth movements pushing for democracy at home and uneasy with China's growing regional power.

"This is the first physical expression of the Milk

Tea Alliance," said Thai student Akrawat Siripattanachok, 27, who helped organise the show of solidarity in Taipei joined by Hong Kong activists, a Chinese dissident and Taiwan students.

"We don't want to just talk about it online. We want a pan-Asian alliance for democracy." A hashtag that began in April as a backlash to Chinese nationalist attacks on a Thai celebrity for a perceived slight to China shows signs of turning into a bigger movement uniting like-minded activists.

Why milk tea? The light-hearted name represents a shared passion for sweet tea drinks in Thailand, Hong Kong and Taiwan. — Agencies

## China's swollen river triggers flood alert

**Shanghai,** Aug. 18: China's biggest river, the Yangtze, and several of its tributaries have risen to dangerous levels after days of heavy rain, forcing tens of thousands of people from their homes and triggering an unprecedented emergency response alert.

China has seen unusually high levels of rain this flood season, with southwest and central regions in the Yangtze river basin bearing the brunt of flooding.

The Ministry of Water Resources said on Monday that 38 tributaries on the upper reaches of the Yangtze were now higher

than their warning levels, 19 dangerously so.

The southwestern province of Sichuan, which includes a major upstream section of the Yangtze, has raised its flood emergency response to its highest level, the first time it has ever done so, with its rivers overflowing and villages and farmland inundated.

The Qingyi river, an upper Yangtze tributary, had seen its worst flooding in a century. Sichuan's flood control authority said, with the city of Ya'an forced to evacuate more than 36,000 people as the river burst its banks on Monday. — PTI

describing Sikhs and Hindus in Afghanistan as "endangered minorities", a resolution introduced in the US Congress has sought to resettle these persecuted religious communities from the war-torn country to America. Introduced in the House of Representatives last week by Congresswoman Jackie Speier and co-sponsored by seven others, the resolution sup-

ports refugee protection for Sikhs and Hindus in Afghanistan, noting the "systematic religious persecution, discrimination and existential danger" faced by the members of these communities.

"Sikhs and Hindus are indigenous but endangered minorities in Afghanistan, numbering approximately 700 out of a community that recently included over 8,000 members," the resolution sup-

ported.

The resolution supports resettling Sikhs and Hindus from Afghanistan in the US under the United States Refugee Admissions Programme pursuant to the Immigration and Nationality Act. Expressing concern for the safety of Sikhs and Hindus in Afghanistan, the resolution condemns all terrorist attacks, religious persecution and dis-

crimination against members of these communities in the war-ravaged country.

Noting that Islamic militants attacked a gurdwara in Kabul on March 25, killing 25 worshippers, including a four-year-old girl, the resolution said that the terrorists made further attempts on the lives of the survivors before and after the funeral ceremony held for the victims.

— PTI

## Lukashenko must go



Belarusian opposition supporters gather for a protest rally in Minsk, Belarus. More workers in Belarus joined a widening strike on Tuesday as they press for the resignation of authoritarian President Alexander Lukashenko, who has extended his 26-year rule in an election the opposition says was rigged. — AP

## LITHUANIANS VOTE FOR SANCTIONS AGAINST BELARUS

Vilnius, Aug. 18: Lithuania's parliament voted for economic sanctions against neighboring Belarus on Tuesday, saying the presidential election there mustn't be internationally recognised. "We are sending a strong message to the world today," Lithuanian Foreign Minister Linas Linkevicius said after lawmakers approved the sanctions on a 120-0 vote with two abstentions. Nineteen of the 141 parliament members were absent.

The document adopted by lawmakers in the Seimas, Lithuania's national legislature, also calls for an international rejection of the legitimacy of Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko's reelection. Both the European Union and the US have called the presidential election in Belarus EU foreign ministers have rejected the election results and last week began drawing up a list of officials in Belarus who could face sanctions. — AP

## Democratic Convention kicks off with a call to defeat Trump

**Michelle Obama scorches Don, says 'vote for Biden like our lives depend on it'**



## Don retweets Biden's disputed audio call

**Washington,** Aug. 18: President Donald Trump has retweeted an audio recording that US intelligence officials have described as being part of a Russian campaign to denigrate Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden.

The leaked conversation, purportedly between Biden and former Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, dates from Feb. 18, 2016. The excerpt of it retweeted by Trump centered on the ouster of Ukraine's chief prosecutor, who had previously investigated the owner of a Ukraine energy company where Biden's son, Hunter,

once held a board seat. By amplifying the recording to his more than 85 million Twitter followers, Trump underscored the ease with which pro-Russian narratives can seep into American public discourse ahead of the 2020 election even after being flagged by intelligence officials as the product of a concerted Russian effort.

US President Donald Trump's election campaign has described the Democratic National Convention as a Hollywood-produced infomercial which fails to hide the radical-left takeover of presumptive nominee Joe Biden. — AP

## US PRESIDENT TO PARDON WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE LEADER SUSAN ANTHONY

**Washington,** Aug. 18: President Donald Trump said Tuesday he will pardon Susan B. Anthony, a leader in the women's suffrage movement, who was arrested for voting in 1872 in violation of laws permitting only men to vote.

Anthony is best known for her role in the movement to secure voting rights for women, but she was also a strong anti-slavery and voting rights pioneer. Trump's pardon,

which he said he'll issue later on Tuesday, comes 100 years after the ratification of the 19th Amendment, which ensured women the right to vote. It's also known as the Susan B. Anthony Amendment. His move also comes amid an outcry over Postal Service disruptions that Democrats say endanger the voting rights of millions of Americans who would vote by mail in November amid the pandemic. — AP

## ACCURACY ISSUE WITH COVID-19 TESTS, SAYS FDA

**Washington,** Aug. 18: Potential accuracy issues with a widely used Coronavirus test could lead to false results for patients, US health officials warned. The Food and Drug Administration issued the alert Monday to doctors and laboratory technicians using Thermo Fisher's TaqPath genetic test. Regulators said issues related to laboratory equipment and software used to run the test could lead to inaccuracies. The agency advised technicians to follow updated instructions and software developed by the company to ensure accurate results.

The warning comes nearly a month after Connecticut public health officials first reported that at least 90 people had received false positive results for the Coronavirus. Most of those receiving the false results were residents of nursing homes or assisted living facilities.

A spokeswoman for Thermo Fisher said the company was working with FDA to make sure that laboratory personnel understand the need for strict adherence to the instructions for use." — AP

## Sikhs, Hindus endangered minorities in Afghanistan: US Cong resolution

**Washington,** Aug. 18: Describing Sikhs and Hindus in Afghanistan as "endangered minorities", a resolution introduced in the US Congress has sought to resettle these persecuted religious communities from the war-torn country to America. Introduced in the House of Representatives last week by Congresswoman Jackie Speier and co-sponsored by seven others, the resolution sup-

ports refugee protection for Sikhs and Hindus in Afghanistan, noting the "systematic religious persecution, discrimination and existential danger" faced by the members of these communities.

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— PTI

## 20-year-old apes Samson and Bobby in Java suffer from malnutrition

## 2 captive orangutans rescued in Indonesia

**THERE HERE** are only estimated to be around 1,00,000 Bornean orangutans left in the wild, according to the World Wildlife Fund, with the population crashing by more than 50% over the past 60 years.

**THE ANIMALS** have suffered from illegal poaching, as well as destruction of habitat due to large-scale logging and replacement of forests with cash crops such as palm oil.

been sent to a rehabilitation centre in Ketapang, in West Kalimantan province on Borneo, IAR said.

At the centre, they will be given health checks and

quarantined for two months before being assessed to decide whether they can be returned to the wild. "It's very sad to see individuals like Samson and Boboy who should be living free in their natural habitat but instead have been confined to cages for years," said Karmele L Sanchez, programme director of IAR Indonesia.

"The rehabilitation process for rescued orangutans is long and complicated. It will be extremely difficult for an orangutan that has been locked in a cage all its life to learn how to survive in the wild," said Sanchez.

— Agencies

## quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	38,528.32
Nifty 50	11,385.35
S&P 500*	3,391.16
Dollar (₹)	74.76
Pound Sterling (₹)	98.40
Euro (₹)	88.95
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	54,856▲1,182
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	45.36
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.986
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.669
As of 9:30 PM IST	-0.014

\* As of 9:30 PM IST

## Govt may give MSME status to dealers: Gadkari

The government is considering according MSME status to dealers, as this will enable them to avail of benefits offered to micro, small and medium enterprises, Union minister Nitin Gadkari said. "Regarding MSME, we are thinking now of giving MSME status to dealers," Gadkari said. The minister also reiterated his appeal to major industries to clear the outstanding dues to MSMEs in a timely manner.

## Porsche drives in 718 Spyder, 718 Cayman GT4



The German luxury sports carmaker Porsche said it has launched new 718 Spyder and the 718 Cayman GT4 models in India with a starting price of Rs 1.59 crore and 1.63 crore, respectively. The two super cars get six-speed manual transmission options to retain the genuine flavour of managing shifts. Both cars hit 100-kmph mark in just 4.4 seconds and while its top speeds are hardly road legal, they can hit 301 kmph.

## Data, AI can add up to \$500 bn to GDP: Nasscom

Data and AI could add \$450-500 billion to the GDP by 2025 and drive India's vision of inclusive development, a Nasscom report said. If India acts quickly, it can be a leader in building a holistic data utilisation and AI effort. A coordinated programme across all five building blocks—strategy, data, technology stack, talent and execution—is required to capture the opportunity, the report said.

## Axis Sec. floats platform to trade in US stocks

Axis Securities announced the launch of a platform -- Global Investing -- that will provide an opportunity to its customers to invest in the US stock markets. For this, Axis Securities has partnered with Vested Finance, an online investment platform, the brokerage house said. Investors can buy or sell shares of companies like Facebook, Apple, Netflix and Google or invest in theme-based baskets or ETFs, it added.

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## Job gains in June look like a blip Five million more lose jobs in July

SANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, AUG. 18

An additional five million salaried jobs were lost in July, taking the total job losses for the salaried class since the lockdown that began in late-March to 18.9 million. The job losses among the middle-class would make recovery of the economy harder.

An estimated 17.7 million salaried jobs were lost in April 2020. An additional one lakh jobs were lost in May. However, in June, 3.9 million jobs were re-gained, taking the total job loss to 13.9 at the end of June. But, the recovery was short-lived and another 5 million jobs were lost in July, finds a CMIE report.

On a net basis, the plight of salaried employees has worsened since the lockdown began. By July, their job losses rose to 18.9 million, making the salaried segment the worst affected by the lockdown.

"While salaried jobs are not lost easily, once lost they are also far more difficult to retrieve. Therefore, their ballooning numbers are a source of worry. Salaried jobs were nearly 19 million short of their average in 2019-20. They were 22 per cent lower than their level in the last fiscal year," said Mahesh Vyas, managing director of CMIE.

Aditya Narayan Mishra, director and CEO of CIEL HR Services, said, "Businesses have suffered



losses due to a decline in consumer demand. In order to stay afloat, they have tried to adjust their costs to match the decline. As a result, people in permanent as well as contractual roles have lost jobs. In the current scenario, it is not easy to get the jobs back."

According to Kruti Shah, economist, Emkay Global Financial Services, the job losses among the salaried class will make recovery of private consumption and the economic recovery tougher. "Services had come to a standstill in the three months of lockdown. Though companies have restarted thereafter, MSME and logistics still remain disrupted," she said. According to Mishra, sectors like tourism, hospitality, entertainment and retail are yet to recover and the recovery will take time and the job losses will take another three to four years," said Shah.

Currently, the impact is not visible due to the pent up demand in the market. But the real impact on private consumption will be visible by December-January when the pent-up demand exhausts. "External demand or foreign direct investment or even government stimulus can ease things. Else, a recovery of consumption to its earlier 5 to 6 per cent levels will take another three to four years," said Shah.

to get back to normalcy. The salary growth among listed companies was in low single digits in the past two years. The job losses will further hit urban consumption.

"The premiumisation that has been happening in consumption will come off. Further, the middle-class is the largest consumer of electronic items and appliances and their demand will take a hit," said Shah.

HUL recently dropped the word Fair from its skin creams and renamed the men's skin cream as Glow & Handsome. Emkay claimed that it was the proprietor of this trademark, and was going to launch a skincare cream for men under the same name. "... plaintiff (HUL) prime facie appears to be a prior adopter and user of the mark 'Glow & Handsome,'" the high court said in its order.

HUL had already launched its goods in the market with this trademark while Emkay was still at the stage of adopting a process of launching its goods, the court noted. "Its (Emkay) application for registration of that mark is also of a subsequent date," the order said.

Further, HUL had sufficiently advertised its new brand Glow & Handsome, said the court. —PTI

## HC restrains Emami from using Glow & Handsome

Mumbai, Aug. 18: The Bombay High Court, in a temporary order, has restrained FMCG firm Emami from selling any skincare product under the brandname containing the words "Glow and Handsome", saying that *prima facie* Hindustan Unilever (HUL) has used them first in its brands.

Justice S. C. Gupta passed the order on Monday on an application filed by HUL under the Trade Marks Act, seeking an injunction against Emami from using the trademark Glow & Handsome.

HUL recently dropped the word Fair from its skin creams and renamed the men's skin cream as Glow & Handsome.

Emkay claimed that it was the proprietor of this trademark, and was going to launch a skincare cream for men under the same name.

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HUL had already launched its goods in the market with this trademark while Emkay was still at the stage of adopting a process of launching its goods, the court noted. "Its (Emkay) application for registration of that mark is also of a subsequent date," the order said.

The sources declined to be named as the talks are private. The ministry did not respond to a request for comment.

India, for years, has debated imposing stricter caps on royalty payments, which spiked after 2009 when foreign investment rules were eased and restrictions on such payments were removed.

The country's markets regulator last year sug-

## Auto firms asked to cut royalties to foreign parents

ADITI SHAH  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 18

The Union commerce minister has asked automakers to find ways to reduce royalty payments to foreign parent companies for use of technology or brand names in an effort to boost local investment and reduce outflows, two sources told Reuters.

In the country's competitive auto market, top-selling carmakers Maruti Suzuki and Hyundai Motor's local unit pay millions of dollars in royalties to parent companies in Japan and South Korea for using their technology and brand to build and sell cars.

The minister, Piyush Goyal, in a meeting last week asked officials from groups representing carmakers and auto parts manufacturers to review such payments with a view to reducing the outgo, said people with direct knowledge of the discussions.

"The concern raised during the meeting was that the outflow is high, even for old technologies, and something should be done about it," said one of the sources.

The sources declined to be named as the talks are private. The ministry did not respond to a request for comment.

India, for years, has debated imposing stricter caps on royalty payments, which spiked after 2009 when foreign investment rules were eased and restrictions on such payments were removed.

The country's markets regulator last year sug-



gested imposing curbs on payments exceeding 2 per cent of revenue. The limit was finally set at 5 per cent after complaints from some sectors and fears it may dissuade foreign firms from investing or sharing technology.

Recently, however, the government has made a renewed push to make the country a major manufacturing hub by encouraging domestic production and curbing imports. It also wants to increase local investment and reduce foreign outflows.

While India does not restrict the amount that can be paid as royalty, any payment by a locally listed company exceeding 5 per cent of revenues needs shareholder approval.

Listed companies such as Maruti Suzuki and parts makers including Bosch, Schaeffler India and Wabco India typically pay royalties of 1-5 per cent to their foreign owners.

Maruti Suzuki paid Rs 3,820 crore (\$510 million) as royalty to its Japanese parent Suzuki Motor in the fiscal year ending March 31, 2020, amounting to 5 per cent of its revenue. —Reuters

## Stock market at 5-month high on FPI buying

SUDARSHAN VARADHAN  
CHENNAI, AUG. 18

The high court on Tuesday refused to allow the reopening of Vedanta's copper smelter in Thoothukudi, more than two years after it was closed because of pollution concerns that triggered violent protests.

A fall in fresh Covid-19 cases, further improvement in the recovery rate of infected persons, good monsoon rains and fresh government measures to support the economy were the triggers for the market gain, analysts said.

The Madras High Court on Tuesday dismissed a plea by the company seeking the smelter's reopening. "The doctrine of sustainable development, precautionary principle and the polluter pays principle needs to be applied," the court said.

"If applied, facts speak for themselves, petitioner needs to be closed and permanently sealed."

Tens of thousands of locals stormed the streets of Thoothukudi on May 22, 2018, accusing Vedanta of polluting the environment.

Police said they opened

fire as they were overwhelmed. The subsequent violence claimed 13 lives and injured over a hundred people. No policeman has been charged so far.

Vedanta has denied accusations of pollution, and called the decision to shut its plant a political response to the outrage over the police firing.

But the Madras High Court said in its 815-page judgment on Tuesday the shutdown "cannot be treated as knee-jerk reaction".

The judgment is the latest challenge confronting Vedanta, which has also faced legal action over its operations in Zambia.

C. Aryama Sundaram, a lawyer for Vedanta, said the company plans to challenge the judgment in the Supreme Court, adding the judgment would raise India's copper imports.

The court downplayed this argument. "The petitioner has been consistently stating... requirement of copper in India cannot be met... The courts have held that when it comes to economy pitted against environment, environment will reign supreme," it said.

—Reuters

## Gulf to be focus region for India's food exports

SANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, AUG. 18

The government has identified the Gulf region as a focus area to increase food exports. It will also set up export promotion forums for eight agricultural products, including rice, banana and mango.

As part of the agriculture export strategy, the government will focus on development of "Brand India" to help penetration into new foreign markets as well as export of new products which translates into higher value realisation.

The government has made a product market matrix containing a list of products which could be expanded in new geographies and a list of known markets which can be introduced with newer products.

The Gulf region has been identified as a focus destination to increase the market share. The UAE and Saudi Arabia are among the top 10 export destinations for India's farm produce. The Gulf countries are highly dependent on food

imports and imports make up about 80 to 90 per cent of their total demand. Though the Gulf region is a strong market for India, India caters to only 10-12 per cent of their total imports.

Further, the government has created export promotion forums (EPFs) to improve exports of eight products, including grapes, mango, banana, onion, rice, nutri-cereals, pomegranate and floriculture under the aegis of the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (Apeda). India exports fruit worth Rs 5,638 crore and vegetables worth Rs 5,679 crore annually. However, its share in the \$208-billion world trade of fruit and vegetables is minuscule.

Each EPF will have exporters of the related commodity as its members along with official members representing ministries/departments of the central and state governments. Apeda chairman shall be the chairman of each of these forums.

The forums will meet at least once in every two months to discuss/ make recommendations on related issues.

## Got proposals worth ₹12 L cr under PLI scheme: Prasad

New Delhi, Aug. 18: Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on Tuesday said proposals worth Rs 12 lakh crore have been received under the new PLI scheme to boost electronics manufacturing, and some manufacturing lines have moved from China to India during the pandemic.

The minister for IT and communications, while speaking at an industry event, said, "...All the top mobile manufacturers and their contract manufacturers have applied in that (PLI) scheme, including five global champions and five national champions and collectively, they have promised to make mobile phone and components worth Rs 12 lakh crore in the coming five years, out of which they're going to export Rs 7 lakh crore (worth of items)."

—PTI

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The forums will meet at least once in every two months to discuss/ make recommendations on related issues.

## VIT among top 9 institutions

Hyderabad, Aug. 18: Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT) has moved up the ranks in the 2020 Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) of Shanghai Ranking Consultancy. The ranking, released on Aug. 15, places VIT in the 801-900 grouping this year up from last year's 901-1000, among world universities.

VIT is the only private institution of India figuring in the Top 1000 list of the Shanghai Ranking, which also said VIT is one among the Top 9, out of 15, institutions of India. VIT entered this prestigious ranking in 2019.

VIT's chancellor Dr. G. Viswanathan said this was the result of the commitment of VIT faculty, research scholars and hardworking students towards quality in research.

## CCI may sell cotton to B'desh to trim stock

PRATIK PARIJA  
AUG. 18

India plans to sell cotton to Bangladesh to trim its bulging reserves following a slump in demand from textile mills in the top grower.

State-owned Cotton Corporation of India may export 1.5 million to 2 million bales of the fibre to the neighbouring nation to help reduce India's record surplus before the new crop begins arriving in October, said Pradeep Kumar Agarwal, chairman of the corporation. It generally sells cotton to local mills and traders at market prices, after buying from farmers at government-set minimum rates.

Higher sales from India may potentially increase reserves in top exporters like the US and Brazil and further lower global prices that have fallen about 8 per cent this year as the coronavirus erodes demand for clothing. Global cotton consumption is set to drop about 15 per cent from a year earlier to 22.29 million tonnes in 2019-20, according to the USDA estimates.

Export prices will be decided by the two governments using the Cotlook index, Agarwal said. Industry researcher Cotlook Ltd's benchmark is a daily average of the five cheapest cash prices

in the world. "In any case, I can assure that it won't be lower than domestic prices," which have fallen about 20 per cent since the outbreak of the coronavirus, he said.

Cotton Corp. plans to sell 500,000 to 700,000 bales of 170 kg each to Trading Corporation of Bangladesh in the marketing year ending

## SHORT TAKES

## Asian Boxing event postponed

New Delhi: The Asian Boxing Championship, which was to be held in India in November-December, has been postponed to next year owing to the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the national federation's Secretary General Jay Kowli said on Tuesday.

The decision was taken at the Asian Boxing Confederation's (ASBC) Executive Committee meeting held online on Monday. "A postponement was proposed owing to the conditions prevailing because of the pandemic and it was accepted. India remains the host and the tournament will now happen in 2021," Kowli, who is a member of the ASBC EC, said.

"The 2021 window for it will be discussed in the next EC meeting in November," he added.

India last hosted the men's Asian meet back in 1980 in Mumbai before conducting the women's event in 2003 in Hissar.

The tournament became a combined event for men and women last year.

"We have to be careful, the cases are on the rise everywhere. Unless it is definitive that there is a decline, it was thought best to put things on hold," Kowli said.

— PTI

## Historic first as 3 Indians at Major

Royal Troon: Indian women's trio of Aditi Ashok, Diksha Dagar and Tvesa Malik will look to write a new chapter in Indian golf when they tee off at the prestigious Women's British Open on Thursday.

This will be the first time that three Indians, men or women, tee up at the same Major.

The young threesome will have family and friends with them at the famed Royal Troon golf course, even though there will be no spectators.

The 22-year-old Aditi, who often has her father on the bag, has her mother, Maheshwari, this time — she was also there at Scottish Open — while 19-year-old Diksha's father, Col Narendra Dagar will as usual do the duty of a caddie.

Tvesa, 24, has a friend and experienced European Tour pro, Kiran Matharu, as her caddie. "I have some experience of playing with the European players, especially at home at the Hero Indian Open, where I had my first Top-10 last year, but a Major in Scotland is a different thing altogether," said Tvesa, who will be making her Major debut here.

When she tees up on Thursday, Aditi will come one step closer to becoming the Indian with most Major starts. — PTI

## Nuggets edge Jazz in overtime

Los Angeles: Jamal Murray scored 36 points, including 10 in overtime, as the Denver Nuggets overcame a 57-point performance from Donovan Mitchell to defeat the Utah Jazz 135-125 in a playoff game on Monday. Nikola Jokic finished with 29 points and 10 rebounds for Denver, who were taken to overtime by the Jazz for the second-straight contest.

"I'm smiling because those are the games you want to be in," Murray said. "Those are the games that are the most fun and most competitive."

Jokic had a chance to ice the victory in regulation, but his hook shot at the buzzer over Utah's Rudy Gobert failed to drop. Murray seized command in overtime, clinching the outcome with a three-point dagger with 46 seconds on the clock to give the Nuggets a 1-0 lead in their first round NBA playoff series. Mitchell has a habit of saving his best for the Nuggets, but it wasn't enough as he was 13-of-13 from the free throw line in scoring a franchise playoff record 57 points. The previous franchise record for most points in a playoff game was 50 by Karl Malone in 2000. It was also the third-highest scoring game in NBA playoff history. — AFP

## Live on TV

## CARIBBEAN PREMIER LEAGUE

Jamaica Tallawahs vs St Lucia Zouks from 7.30 pm; Guyana Amazon Warriors vs St Kitts & Nevis Patriots at 3 am (Thursday). Both matches on Star Sports 1, 2, HD

## NBA PLAYOFFS

Toronto Raptors vs Brooklyn Nets from 11 pm; Boston Celtics vs Philadelphia 76ers from 4 am (Thursday); Los Angeles Clippers vs Dallas Mavericks from 6.30 am (Thursday). All matches on Sony Six, HD

## CHAMPIONS LEAGUE SEMIFINAL

Bayern Munich vs Lyon from 12.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

## RoHIT for Khel Ratna

Vinesh, Rani among 5 recommended for top sports award

New Delhi, Aug. 18: Star cricketer Rohit Sharma, wrestler Vinesh Phogat, and women's hockey captain Rani Rampal were among an unprecedented five picked for the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna, while another unparalleled 29 were recommended for the Arjuna award by the sports ministry's selection committee here on Tuesday.

Paddler Manika Batra and Rio Paralympic gold-winning high jumper Mariyappan Thangavelu were the other two recommended for the country's highest sporting honour by a 12-member selection committee. Rampal was a late addition to the initial list of four.

For the Arjuna, India pacer Ishant Sharma, recurve archer Atanu Das, women's hockey team player Deepika Thakur, kabaddi player Deepak Hooda, and tennis player Divij Sharan were among the 29 short-listed, an official source said after the selection committee's meeting here.

The 31-year-old Ishant has played 97 Tests and 80 ODIs for India, grabbing over 400 international wickets.

This is the first time in the history of awards that five athletes have been recommended for the top sporting accolade with the final decision resting on sports minister Kiren Rijiju.

In 2016, four athletes — star shuttler P. V. Sindhu, gymnast Dipa Karmakar, shooter Jitu Rai, and wrestler Sakshi Malik — were collectively given this award.

Rohit will only be the fourth cricketer after Sachin Tendulkar, just-retired Mahendra Singh Dhoni and current skipper Virat Kohli to be conferred with the Khel Ratna.

The committee, comprising the likes of Virender Sehwag and former hockey captain Sardar Singh, met at the Sports Authority of India headquarters here and finalised the names after deliberations that took up the first half of the day.

While Rohit has been recognised for his ever-rising accomplishments with the bat, Vinesh has been rewarded for her gold medals in the 2018 Commonwealth and Asian Games besides a bronze in the 2019 Asian



Rohit Sharma

## LIST OF AWARDEES

● **Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award:** Rohit Sharma (cricket), Vinesh Phogat (wrestling), Manika Batra (table tennis), Rani Rampal (hockey), Mariyappan Thangavelu (para high-jumper).

● **Arjuna Award:** Atanu Das (archery), Shiva Keshav (luge), Dutee Chand (athletics), Rankireddy Satwicksairaj and Chirag Shetty (badminton), Vishesh Bhargavanshi (basketball), Manish Kaushik and Lovlina Borgohain (boxing), Ishant Sharma and Deepti Sharma (cricket), Ajay Sawant (tent pegging), Sandesh Jhingan (football), Aditi Ashok (golf), Aakashdeep Singh and Deepika Kumari (hockey), Deepak Hooda (kabaddi), Kala Sarika (kho-kho), Dattu Bhokanal (rowing), Manu Bhaker and Saurabh Chaudhary (shooting), Madhurika Patkar (table tennis), Divij Sharan (tennis), Divya Kakran, Rahul Aware and Sakshi Malik (wrestling), Mirabai Chanu (weightlifting), Suyesh JadHAV (para athletics), Sandeep (para athletics) and Manish Narwal (para shooting).

● **Best Player:** Vinesh Phogat (table tennis), Manika Batra (table tennis), Rani Rampal (hockey).



Vinesh Phogat



Manika Batra



Rani Rampal

● This is the first time in the history of awards that five athletes have been recommended for the top sporting accolade with the final decision resting on sports minister.

up to the reputation associated with this award," Vinesh said.

Manika was recommended for her remarkable performance in 2018, a year during which she won the Commonwealth Games gold medal and Asian Games bronze in women's singles. — PTI

## SPORTS AWARDS LIKELY TO BE HELD VIRTUALLY

New Delhi, Aug. 18: In a first, this year's National Sports Awards ceremony is likely to be held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with all the winners logging in from their respective places to hear their names being announced on August 29.

The National Sports Day is celebrated on August 29, the birth anniversary of hockey wizard Dhyan Chand.

"The sports awards function this year is like

ly to be an online function. As per the Government of India instructions, the awardees will also be announced on the morning of the day of the function," a sports ministry source said on Monday.

It also allowed athletes to self-nominate in view of the "difficulties" being faced by them in finding people who can recommend their names amid the lockdown.

— PTI

## Mari inspired to win more medals

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR  
CHENNAI, AUG. 18

It will surely inspire me to go for another medal at the Paralympics to be held in Tokyo next year.

— MARIAPPAN THANGAVELU PARALYMPIAN

conducted an enquiry," he added.

The award announcement, Mariyappan said, has come at a crucial time. "It will surely inspire me to go for another medal at the Paralympics to be held in Tokyo next year. I have been training hard for the Games. My target is to break the 2-metre barrier and I am confident of accomplishing it," he added.

Mariyappan's coach Satyanarayana said his training schedule had been reworked and would resume in September. "Even during the lockdown he was training at SAI centre, Bengaluru. After spending a few weeks at home, Mariyappan will be back to training soon," he added.

At the 2018 Asian Paralympic Games, Mariyappan could only finish third behind compatriots Sharad Kumar and Varun Bhati.

Coach Satyanarayana said Mariyappan had participated at the Asiad despite undergoing an ankle surgery two months before the event.

"He couldn't push hard. In fact, doctors had told him not to compete for six months," he said.

Satyarnayana said Mariyappan getting the highest sporting honour would inspire a lot of youngsters, especially those from rural areas.

Queried about the murder charges, Mariyappan said they had been withdrawn. "There is no case or charge pending against me. I have submitted all the documents to the awards committee. And the sports ministry also



Mariyappan Thangavelu

## Shuttler Satwik strong &amp; steady

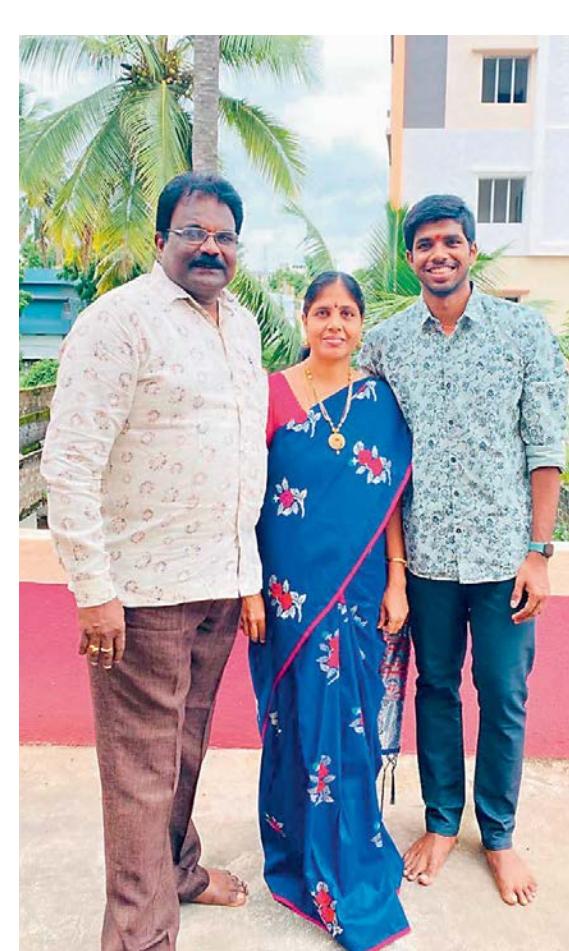
MOSES KONDETY | DC  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 18

Academy in Hyderabad. Gopi Sir had asked us to come back later as the camp for the London Olympics was on. Then I went to Bhaskar Babu's badminton academy in Saroor Nagar, Hyderabad, and trained there for three months before joining PGBA full time," Satwik says.

That was the Under 13 level, and after playing the U-15s he shifted to doubles completely. "In 2016, doubles coach Tan Kim Her of Malaysia paired me up with Chirag (Shetty) on court and we've been together ever since," the 20-year-old says of his men's doubles partner.

They've had their starting problems though. "Communication was a hindrance initially. Gradually we developed an understanding on and off the court as well. We used to go out for dinners, share the room and little things even as we respected each other's personal space. Soon, we gelled well, grew very close and started winning tournaments," he says.

They share eight international trophies now. But he was on seventh heaven when he first donned India colours. "My most memorable moment was when I first wore the India T-shirt at the Asian Junior Championship at Kudus in Indonesia in 2013-14... I was playing in the U-15 category then. It was an emotional moment for our entire family. I



Rankireddy Satwicksairaj (right) with his parents at his home in Amalapuram on his birthday last Thursday.

remember my brother was in tears," he recalls.

The next big feat was when we won the mixed team gold at the 2018 Commonwealth Games at Gold Coast, Australia. "To be on podium with other

teammates gave me goosebumps. That trip (to CWG) was truly special. To see all the great Indian achievers like Mary Kom and interact with them was such a thrill and gave me a high," says the six-footer.

In his moment of triumph, Satwik sums up the support he has received over the years. "My parents (father Kasi Viswanadham and mother Rangamani) have been a huge support to me. They've never let me know the financial difficulties they had to deal with. My duty was to just get on to the court and give my 100 per cent... I knew nothing of the off-court dynamics. I was told we had to spend Rs 3-4 lakh to play tournaments initially to get the required exposure and results that would help me prepare for the Olympics," he says, adding, "More than me, it's been my father's dream that I do well and earn laurels for India."

"I've had his share of lows too, in the form of shoulder and ankle injuries. "They haunted me at the start of every year, since 2018. Being out of action for two-three months at the beginning of the season can be painful I tell you, but when you bounce back, it gives you a kick."

Now, the Olympics are surely on the mind.

"That's something every sportsperson dreams of. We just don't want to be also-rans, but want to perform and earn laurels for the country to prove ourselves," he says.

At No.10 in world rankings, they are well-placed in the race to Tokyo. The top 16 teams get a direct entry into the Olympics.

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Satwik just loves friends, he needs them everywhere he goes. "Just going out into town with them on Sundays, watching movies is quite a wind down," he says. While on tour, he moves with the seniors. He's their favourite. "They all are very nice and so friendly with me. Carolina Marin, reigning Olympic and three-time world champion is so sweet and encourages me so much," he reveals.

He's surely a huge hit.

## COVID IN | THE AIR

## VINESH PULLS OUT OF CAMP DUE TO SCARE

New Delhi, Aug. 18: Vinesh Phogat, the only Indian woman wrestler to have qualified for Tokyo Olympics, has pulled out of the national camp citing health safety concerns amid the Covid-19 pandemic, a decision which has irked the national federation.

The rescheduled national camp for Olympic weight category wrestlers is set to begin from September 1 in Lucknow (women) and Sonepat (men).

However, Vinesh is not comfortable travelling to Lucknow as she is fearful of her health amid the ongoing pandemic.

"I am not going to attend the camp. I am training everyday with coach Om Parkash, who follows the plan which my personal coach Woller Akos sends me every week. The situation is not good to travel to Lucknow," Vinesh said.

The 2019 World Championship bronze-medallist said she "falls sick very easily" so she does not want to take a chance with her health.

The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) is not impressed with the reasons given. "The selection committee will decide if Vinesh will get exemption or not," said a WFI Assistant secretary Vinod Tomar.

— PTI

## SHORT TAKES

## Barca fire coach, director post loss

**Madrid:** Barcelona have sacked Eric Abidal as sporting director, the club announced in a statement on Tuesday, a day after dismissing coach Quique Setien. "FC Barcelona and Eric Abidal have reached an agreement for the ending of the contract that united them," the club said on its website.

Like Setien, Abidal, a former French international defender, has paid the price after Barca ended a season of internal conflict by surrendering the Spanish league title to Real Madrid and then suffering a humiliating 2-8 loss to Bayern Munich in the Champions League.

The decision was announced after an urgent board meeting summoned by president Josep Bartomeu in Barcelona. The club also announced new elections for March 2021 and said profound changes were coming for the first team.

Spanish media said Dutch coach Ronald Koeman was the front-runner to take charge.

— Agencies

## Dortmund report losses of \$52m

**Dortmund:** Borussia Dortmund made a loss of 43.9 million euros (\$52 million) last season as the Coronavirus pandemic took its toll on the German club's financial figures for 2019-20. Dortmund chief executive Hans-Joachim Watzke blamed the results purely on the pandemic, which ended a decade of financial profits for the club between 2011-19.

"Financially we always posted numbers in black for these years. Then corona came," Watzke said.

The pandemic forced the Bundesliga to be suspended in March. It resumed two months later, but no fans have been allowed at games, forcing clubs to do without income from tickets.

"We will only be back in the black again when we have no restrictions on spectators. But we have to be patient. It's very hard to imagine soccer without fans. We have to keep holding out that long. We will hold out that long," Watzke said.

— AP

## MILAN INTER FINAL

Lukaku, Martinez net brace, in Europa title game



Inter Milan's Danilo D'Ambrosio (left) celebrates with teammates after scoring his side's second goal during their Europa League semifinal match against Shakhtar Donetsk at Dusseldorf Arena in Dusseldorf on Monday. Inter won 5-0. — AP

Europa League games and took him to within one of matching Brazilian idol Ronaldo's debut 34-goal season for Inter in 1997/98.

"Only I know what I went through to get him here," Conte said, who had previously tried to lure Lukaku to Chelsea before the striker chose to join United.

Lukaku's double in the closing stages in Dusseldorf on Monday extended his record of scoring in 10 consecutive

matches for putting him in a position to express himself in a way he has never expressed himself in the past," the coach added.

In Martinez, Lukaku has the perfect foil. The pair, nicknamed "LuLa" in the Italian press, quickly forged a deadly partner-

ship to help Inter get back to winning ways.

It was not quite enough to reel in Juventus, but after the lean decade that followed the treble triumph of Jose Mourinho's side in 2010, "LuLa" are leading Inter back among the European elite.

— Agencies

## BAYERN WARY OF PROWLING LYON IN SEMIS

**Lisbon,** Aug. 18:

Corentin Tolisso says trouble-chasing Bayern Munich should be wary of his former club Lyon in Wednesday's Champions League semifinal as the "greedy" Bavarians look to build on their demolition of Barcelona.

"From a German point of view, perhaps Lyon's the least known team. But against Manchester City, we all saw what this team is capable of," warned France midfielder Tolisso, who joined Bayern from Lyon in 2017.

In the wake of their stunning 8-2 thrashing of Barcelona there is an air of determination.

Bayern's average of 4.33 goals per game is a new Champions League record. However, nothing is being taken for granted against Lyon. — AFP

## Live on TV

## CHAMPIONS LEAGUE SEMIS

Bayern Munich vs Lyon from 12.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

## CARIBBEAN PREMIER LEAGUE

Jamaica Tallawahs vs St Lucia Zouks from 7.30 pm; Guyana Amazon Warriors vs St Kitts & Nevis Patriots at 3 am (Thursday). Both matches on Star Sports 1, 2, HD

## NBA PLAYOFFS

Toronto Raptors vs Brooklyn Nets from 11 pm; Boston Celtics vs Philadelphia 76ers from 4 am (Thursday); Los Angeles Clippers vs Dallas Mavericks from 6.30 am (Thursday). All matches on Sony Six, HD

## IPL TITLE SPONSOR

Fantasy platform gets Dream deal

New Delhi, Aug. 18: Fantasy gaming platform Dream11 won the IPL title sponsorship rights with a bid of ₹222 crore, replacing Chinese mobile phone company Vivo for a four and a half month deal.

Dream11 has been one of the IPL sponsors for a couple of years now.

"Dream11 has won the rights with a bid of ₹222 crore," IPL chairman Brijesh Patel said.

There is a possibility that Dream11 can stay till the 2022 IPL in case Vivo doesn't come back next year.

holders, including its founders plus all 400 plus employees, are Indian," a BCCI source said.

"Their Indian investors are Kalaari Capital and Multiples Equity. Even Dream11's product is available exclusively for use only by Indians. Only a single-digit percentage minority stake is held by Tencent," the official added.

However, as recently as last month, the BCCI's Anti Corruption Unit (ACU) had sought an inquiry against the company after it was reported that the platform had links to a fake T20 league which was held in a Punjab town but was live-streamed as a game in Sri Lanka.

The ACU investigations showed that kits used by players in the tournament had the Dream11 logo and the event was live-streamed on FanCode. Both Dream11 and FanCode are part of Dream Sports group.

— PTI

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