

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

COIMBATORE | MONDAY 17 | AUGUST 2020

WEATHER



Max: 31°C
Min: 23°C
Rainfall: Nil

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Aavani 1
Tithi: Thrayodashi
Star: Pusam
Rahukalam:
7.30 am to 9 am
Yamagandam:
10.30 am to 12 noon

PRAYERS

Fajar: 4.43 am
Zohar: 12.19 pm
Asar: 3.21 pm
Maghrib: 6.30 pm
Isha: 7.44 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.29 PM

SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.57 AM

MOONRISE TODAY 3.57 AM

MOONSET TOMORROW 5.11 PM

CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+57,375)	(+940)
26,46,583	51,025

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+5,950)
TN: 3,38,055 5,766

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

2,17,31,123

DEATHS

7,71,033

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES 213

worldometers.info

One lakh cadets to be inducted into NCC

New Delhi: Defence minister Rajnath Singh has approved a proposal of the National Cadet Corps (NCC) for a major expansion scheme to meet the aspirations of youth in all the border and coastal districts. A total of one lakh cadets from 173 border and coastal districts will be inducted in the NCC. One-third of the cadets would be girl cadets. More than 1,000 schools and colleges have been identified in border and coastal districts where NCC will be introduced.

Teenager raped, killed in UP

Lakhimpur Kheri/Lucknow: A 13-year-old girl was raped and strangled to death in Uttar Pradesh's Lakhimpur Kheri district, police said on Sunday. Two men have been arrested for the crime that took place on Friday. The post-mortem report stated that the death was due to strangulation after rape.

COUNTER

POINT



The retirement time was not good... all our photos have gone into the inside pages!

STATE | 2

Don't cover up doctors' deaths: Stalin



WORLD | 5

Climate change could expose new epidemics

SPORT | 8

Crivellaro extends Chennaiyin deal



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India averages 60k virus cases per day

SANJAY KAW | DC
NEW DELHI, AUG. 16

Coronavirus cases in India continue to race ahead, with over one lakh new infections being added every two days in the world's third-worst affected country. The country reported 63,489 fresh cases in the past 24 hours, taking the total tally to nearly 26.34 lakhs. Given the daily rise of nearly 1,000 deaths, India on Sunday surpassed the grim 50,000-mark in the total number of fatalities due to the deadly virus.

The country has also been reporting over 60,000 coronavirus cases daily since August 7, barring August 11, when it registered 53,601 cases. India is the third worst-affected nation due to the pandemic after the United States and Brazil. It has been reporting a higher daily surge in cases for the past 12 days, according to World Health Organisation data.

In India, Mizoram is reportedly the only state with fewer than 1,000 cases, besides Lakshadweep, which continues to be coronavirus-free, with no cases having been detected in the islands so far.

With 944 deaths reported in the last 24 hours, the total fatalities due to the virus in India have gone up to 50,845. The country's coronavirus fatality rate has, however, dropped to 1.93 per cent, one of the lowest globally. The United States crossed 50,000 deaths in 23 days, Brazil in 95 days and Mexico in 141 days. India took 156 days to reach this figure.

The government said the mortality rate is low in India "because of aggressive testing and early detection coupled with quick isolation and effective treatment protocols".

THE CORONAVIRUS DEATH TOLL

in Maharashtra breached the **20,000-mark** on Sunday after **288 patients** succumbed to the infection, a state health official said. The state reported **11,111 new positive** cases during the day, which pushed its overall tally to **5,95,865**.

Deputy Chief Minister O Pannarselvam prayed to Lord Almighty for the speedy recovery of famous playback singer S P Balasubrahmanyam, who has been admitted to a private hospital with Coronavirus infection. He should return home at the earliest and start singing for films, Pannarselvam said in a statement, recalling that the song 'Aairam Nilave Vaa' (Come, thousand moons) for the film Adimai Penn of MGR was the turning point in SPB's career as a playback singer.

Shri Chetan Chauhan Ji distinguished himself as a wonderful cricketer and later as a diligent political leader. He made effective contributions to public service and strengthening the BJP in UP. Anguished by his passing away. Condolences to his family and supporters. Om Shanti"

— Modi



CRICKETER AND U.P. MIN CHAUHAN DIES

New Delhi, Aug 16: Former cricketer and UP cabinet minister Chetan Chauhan died on Sunday due to Covid-19 related complications, his brother Pushpendra Chauhan said.

Chauhan, who played 40 Tests for India, was 73 and is survived by his wife and son Vinayak, who is on his way from Melbourne. Due to kidney related ailments, his health had deteriorated and he was shifted to Medanta hospital in Gurgaon where he had been put on life support for nearly 36 hours.

Chauhan, who was Sunil Gavaskar's longest serving opening partner, was earlier admitted to Sanjay Gandhi PGI in Lucknow on July 12 after being found Covid positive. On Friday night, he had a multi-organ failure and was put on ventilator support.

— PTI

‘SPB breathing comfortably’

Chennai, Aug 16: Veteran playback singer S P Balasubrahmanyam being treated for Covid-19 is able to recognise people around him and is breathing a little more comfortably than before, his son and filmmaker S P Charan said on Sunday. Posting an update on his father's health condition on his Facebook page, he said Balasubrahmanyam has been shifted to a sixth floor facility from the third floor Intensive Care Unit of MGM Healthcare .

"The pleasant news is...he showed the thumbs up sign to the doctors, he is able to recognise doc-

tors, people (around)...he is still on life support. He is breathing a little more comfortably than a few days back," he said. Doctors treating him find it as a very good sign towards getting better, he said.

"There is a lot of effort from the medical team. It will take a long time for recovery. But we are all hopeful. This (recovery) is not going to happen in one or two days or even a week may be. But surely he is definitely going to heal, recover and get back to us as early as possible," Charan said.

— PTI

Chennai records 1,000 cases again

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG 16

Fatalities due to Coronavirus continued to shoot as 125 persons succumbed to the disease taking the total number of deaths since the beginning of the pandemic to 5,766.

Fresh infections were also on the high at 5950 in the State on Sunday with Chennai reporting 1196 cases.

The districts around Chennai, too, had high rate of infections – Chengalpattu 436, Kancheepuram 307 and Thiruvallur 488. Other than that, Coimbatore district had 395 new cases and 14 deaths. Recoveries outnumbered the new cases with 6,019 people getting discharged taking the total number of those dis-

TN fatalities 125

Chennai 1,196

charged to 2.78 lakh till date. The number of active cases including those in isolation was at 54,019, the health department bulletin said.

Chennai recorded 1,196 new cases today, pushing the tally to 1.16 lakh so far. Since August 3, the state has been reporting three digit fatalities.

With testing being ramped up, 70,450 samples were tested by government authorised and privately run laboratories today, totalling to 37.11 lakh so far.

Cong accuses BJP of using Facebook to spread hatred

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG 16

Congress on Sunday accused the BJP and the RSS of spreading "fake news and hatred" through Facebook and using it to influence voters.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi posted and article by a US media House which alleged social media manipulation by the BJP. The article claimed that Facebook looks the other way in cases of hate speech and objectionable content from leaders and workers of the ruling BJP.

The Journal also reported that an executive of the social media giant had said punishing violations by BJP workers "would



damage the company's business prospects in the country".

Tagging the article, Mr Gandhi tweeted in Hindi: "BJP and RSS control Facebook and Wassap in India. Through these mediums they spread Fake news and influence voters. At last American media has brought this to the fore".

Senior Congress leader

BJP and RSS control Facebook and Wassap in India. — Rahul Gandhi

Shashi Tharoor also flagged the issue. "The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Information Technology would certainly wish to hear from @Facebook about these reports & what they propose to do about hate-speech in India," he tweeted.

The BJP on its part was quick to point out the three-year old Cambridge Analytica data scandal and said the Congress should not point fingers. Union Information

Technology Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said: "Losers who cannot influence people even in their own party keep cribbing that the entire world is controlled by BJP & RSS. You were caught red-handed in alliance with Cambridge Analytica & Facebook to weaponise data before the elections & now have the gall to question us?"

BJP leader Kapil Mishra also made the same point. "Seems Congress is black-mailing Facebook to hide some serious crimes... Cambridge Analytica scam is just tip of the iceberg of Congress manipulating opinions and freedom of expression in India," he tweeted.

ECOLOGICAL DISASTER

JAPANESE SHIP INVOLVED IN MAURITIUS OIL SPILL BREAKS APART

A Japanese bulk carrier that ran aground on a reef in Mauritius last month threatening a marine ecological disaster around the Indian Ocean island has broken apart, authorities said on Saturday.

■ REPORT ON PAGE 5

PIL filed in top court for uniform divorce law

New Delhi, Aug 16: A PIL seeking 'uniform grounds of divorce' for all citizens throughout India in spirit of the Constitution and international conventions has been filed in the Supreme Court.

The plea filed by BJP leader and advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay sought directions to the Centre to take steps to remove anomalies in divorce laws and make them uniform for all citizens without prejudice on the basis of religion, race, cast, sex or place of birth.

"The Court may declare that the discriminatory grounds of divorce are violative of Articles 14, 15, 21 and frame guidelines for 'Uniform Grounds of Divorce' for all citizens. Alternatively, this Court may direct the Law Commission to examine the laws of divorce & suggest 'Uniform Grounds of Divorce' for all citizens in spirit of Articles 14, 15, 21, 44 within 3 months, while considering international laws and international conventions," the plea said.

LIQUOR SHOPS TO OPEN IN CHENNAI FROM TUESDAY

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG 16

Liquor shops in Greater Chennai limits would open on Tuesday, August 18, and function between 10 am and 7 pm, TAS-MAC announced on Sunday.

Though the liquor shops in places outside the Greater Chennai limits were opened on May 7 after the lockdown was announced, the outlets in the city remained closed in view of an increased threat in the spread of Coronavirus.

■ TURN ON PAGE 3

Mom instilled love for good idlis in Kamala Harris

Washington, Aug 16: Democratic vice-presidential nominee Senator Kamala Harris, during her maiden address to the Indian-American community, reflected on her proud Indian heritage and recalled how her mother always wanted to instil in her a "love for good idli".

Harris, 55, who is the first black to be selected as a vice-presidential candidate of a major party, took a trip down the memory lane, mentioning her "long walks" in Chennai

(then Madras) with her grandfather who would tell her about the "heroes" responsible for the birth of the world's largest democracy. Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden, 77, scripted history by selecting Harris, an Indian-American and an African-American, as his running mate in the presidential election on November 3.

Born to a Jamaican father and an Indian mother, California senator Harris, if

elected, would be second in line of succession after Biden. "Today on August 15, 2020. I stand before you as the first candidate for vice president of the United States of South Asian descent," Harris said in her address organised by Indians for Biden National Council.

Joined by Biden, she greeted Indian Americans on the occasion of India's Independence Day. "To the people of India and to Indian Americans all across the US, I want

to wish you a happy Indian Independence Day. On August 15, 1947, men and women all over India rejoiced in the declaration of the independence of the country of India," Harris said during the virtual inaugural meet of the council.

Harris was born on October 20 in 1964, at Oakland in California. Her mother Shyamala Gopalan migrated to the US from Tamil Nadu in India, while her father, Donald J Harris, moved to the

US from Jamaica.

"When my mother, Shyamala stepped off the plane in California as a 19-year-old, she didn't have much in the way of belongings. But she carried with her lessons from back home, including ones she learned from her parents, my grandmother Rajan, and her father, my grandfather P V Gopalan. They taught her that when you see injustice in the world, you have an obligation to do something about it," Harris said.

— PTI



In this 2007 photograph Kamala Harris (right) and her mother Shyamala are at a Chinese New Year celebration in New York. —AP

SHORT TAKES

City women's college begins admission process

Chennai, Aug. 16: Dr MGR-Janaki College of Arts & Science for Women, Chennai has kickstarted the admission process for its UG and PG courses by issuing application forms online for all 14 undergraduate programmes, 5 post graduate programmes and a five-year integrated programme. The college, adhering to recent guidelines of the Centre and State governments, informs prospective students to make use of the online forms, and avoid visiting the college. The application forms can be downloaded for free from www.mgrjanaki.ac.in. The college offers courses in two shifts: 8.15 am to 1.10 pm, and 1.10 pm to 5.40 pm

Over 610 Indian evacuees arrive

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG. 16

As many as 318 Indians stranded in Saudi Arabia due to Coronavirus -induced restrictions landed in Chennai by a chartered flight on Sunday. The employers of the Indian workers had arranged the repatriation flight. Two more AI flights with 116 passengers on board from US and 176 from Sharjah had landed on Saturday night.

Liberation Day celebrated sans festivity due to corona

Puducherry, Aug. 16: The celebration of the 58th Liberation Day of Puducherry was held Sunday without festivity because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Chief Minister V Narayanasamy unfurled the tri-colour at a memorial at Kizhoor, near here.

Kishoor was the venue for the referendum through which the four regions of Puducherry, Karaikal, Mahe and Yanam under the French regime merged de facto with the Indian Union in 1954. Narayanasamy recalled the role of freedom fighters in getting Puducherry the freedom from the foreign rule.

"The Central government has also issued the guidelines to the territorial administration to hold the celebration in a simple manner..." he said. Territorial Speaker V P Sivakolundhu and Secretary to Information and Publicity S D Sundaresan were among those who were present.

A select number of freedom fighters were felicitated. Puducherry first became free de facto in 1954 and the Treaty of Cession inked then between the French and Indian governments was ratified in French parliament leading to de jure transfer of the French establishments in India to the Indian Union in 1962. All the Indian legislations were extended to Puducherry in 1963.

— PTI

4 more deaths take Covid-19 toll to 110, 384 cases reported

Puducherry, Aug. 16: Four more people, including a 75-year-old woman, succumbed to COVID-19 in Puducherry, taking the total number of fatalities to 110, while 384 fresh cases took the tally to 7,732 in the Union territory.

The four deceased were aged between 43 to 75 years.

The total number of active cases was 3,179, while 4,443 patients had been discharged from various hospitals so far. Director of Health and Family Welfare S Mohan Kumar said in a release.

The positivity rate in the union territory was 37.94 per cent, while the fatality rate was 1.42 per cent, he said.

During the last 24 hours ended at 10 am, 384 fresh infections were reported after 1,012 samples were tested.

A total of 183 patients were discharged during this period. Of the 3,179 total active cases, 1,583 were in home quarantine, the Director said.

The overall number of COVID-19 cases in the UT stood at 7,732, the release quoted him as having said.

The recovery percentage in Puducherry was 57.46 per cent. A total of 54,852 samples have been tested so far, out of which 45,803 samples were negative.

The results of the remaining samples are awaited, it said.

— PTI

Another Sunday lockdown



Kathipara flyover looks deserted following the complete lockdown on Sunday. — DC

Four injured by manja thread in one day in city

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG. 16

The menace of kites flown with the deadly manja thread injured at least four persons including a woman motorist in separate incidents on Saturday.

The first incident was reported in Madhavaram in which the victim, identified as Madhavan (32) of Chintadripet, was returning home on his two-wheeler from work. While he was on the GNT road, a manja thread dangling in the air slit his neck. He was rushed to the Stanley government hospital where he is being treated for the injury with more than 10 stitches to his neck, police sources revealed.

In another incident, a

woman motorist suffered a deep cut injury on her neck and a fracture on her right hand and has been admitted in critical condition at Stanley Government Hospital.

Ramani, a resident of Ennore who works at a textile shop in the locality, was returning home with her friend Revathi on a two-wheeler, when a manja thread slit her neck near the Ennore Express Road.

Another victim, Purushotaman from Madhavaram was also injured when he was riding his two-wheeler to Tiruvottiyur to purchase fish on Saturday evening. In another incident, a person identified as Pandiarajan was injured while riding on Ennore Expressway and has been

admitted to a private hospital.

Following the incidents, the city police conducted surprise checks at the M a d h a v a r a m, Washermenpet and Flower bazaar police districts and rounded up 55 persons in possession of kites and manja thread. The raid led to the seizure of about 200 kites and five spools of manja thread. Most of the persons were under 18, police said adding that they were booked and allowed to go.

Though the usage of manja thread is banned, it is used by kite enthusiasts across the city. Manja is a thread specially prepared by coating it with sharp glass pieces. Low hanging manja threads pose a serious threat to two-wheeler riders.

2 CISF officials suspended over security breach

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG. 16

The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) has suspended two of its officials in connection with a security breach incident at the Chennai Airport on Friday where a man entered the Chennai Airport's domestic terminal allegedly without a valid ticket when the airport was on a high alert on Independence Day. Official sources said that suspended officers were ASI and SI who were in charge of the security at the gate number one of the airport terminal on that day.

According to the police, Muralirajan (28) of Old Pallavaram walked into the corridor through gate number 1 by showing a cancelled ticket and kept loitering inside the premises. When the officials approached him, he asked them where he could buy

an air ticket to Delhi. First, he was warned and let off.

However, at around 7: 30 pm on the same day, the man was found again roaming outside the airport security gate. He was picked up by the officials and handed over to the Airport Police to probe for 'breach of security and fraud.'

Police questioned Muralirajan and a team enquired with his family through phone about who had boarded a flight from the Chennai Airport on Friday as he had told them that he had come to send off his family.

Out of IPL, Chinese co steps up into premium phone segment

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG. 16

The friction at India's border has been of national concern since May-June when skirmishes were first reported. The backlash may have hit China with apps banned and the working of Chinese firms in India questioned. The call for a boycott of Chinese goods has been in the air for a couple of months now.

As a consequence of diplomatic tensions, the Chinese phone maker Vivo pulled out of IPL 2020 costing the game about Rs 440 crore in revenue, a part of which will be made up as bidders gather to take the title rights.

In the meanwhile, Vivo has been quietly making its presence felt as a maker of quality mobile phones, with its assembly lines busy in India making a phone in India for Indians. In fact, the firm has upped the ante in its foray into the premium smartphone segment with



its X50 range of smart-phone and pro models.

Marketing executives of Chinese brands said it was business as usual at major online sales by retailers like Amazon and Flipkart in August, with stocks of phones running out within minutes of the opening of sale on the popular online platforms. Brick-and-mortar retailers also reported brisk sales of Chinese mobiles whose price points make them a compelling buy for the Indian public.

TN leaders sing Dhoni's praise

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG. 16

With the kind of cult status that M.S. Dhoni enjoys in Chennai, the Super Kings skipper could easily walk into Fort St. George if he decided to join the poll battle. Dhoni's own fortress -- the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium -- is just a stone's throw away from the MLA hostel. Chepauk is the hotspot of political rallies and protests, but the chants of 'Dhoni, Dhoni' emanating from the stadium on IPL match days are music to the ears of residents here.

Dhoni's massive popularity is enviable. Cutting across age and gender, he is universally adored and admired. As the entire country went into Dhoni tribute mode, politicians, too, joined the bandwagon.

Tamil Nadu chief minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami led the tribute by calling him the "best role model for youth in India's new generation."

"#MSDhoni's name will be etched in history for leading the Indian cricket team in 331 international matches and for being the only #captaincool to win 3



Mahendra Singh Dhoni greets former Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi.

— File Photo

championships for the nation," Palaniswami said. He had met and interacted with Dhoni during an India Cements Coffee Table book launch in December, 2018.

N. Srinivasan, MD of India Cements, had promised earlier this year that Dhoni and Co. would play a match at the newly-constructed cricket ground in Salem -- Palaniswami's hometown -- in the near

future. DMK president M K Stalin retweeted a photo of Dhoni with former Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi. "The era of #MSDhoni will be missed. Thank you for your exceptional contributions to cricket and agile leadership, Captain Cool. Wish you the best for the next innings," he tweeted.

Actor and Makkal Nee-

san highlighted Dhoni's love affair with Chennai in his tribute. "Dear @msdhoni. Thank you for demonstrating how self-belief can help achieve in sports and life. Rising from a small town to being the hero of the nation, your calculated risks and calm demeanour will be missed by Team India. Glad that your love story with Chennai continues," he said.

Proposal to raise women's marriage age welcomed

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG. 16

DMK MP Kanimozhi Karunanidhi and PMK founder Dr S Ramadoss were among those who welcomed the proposal to increase the marriage age for women from 18 to 21, which was mentioned by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his Independence Day address.

"In the same note, the PM should also take steps to pass 33 per cent reservation for women in Parliament and Legislatures to empower Indian women," tweeted Kanimozhi.

She said the announce-



ment on raising the minimum age for marriage for women was 'a welcome step in the right direction to empower women.'

Dr Ramadoss said the announcement should be welcomed by all as it would help address the issue of malnutrition in Indian society.

In a statement, he said that Indian women were malnourished because they were married off at an early age, passing on the malnourishment to the children, too.

Though some Indian women had made rapid strides in various fields, coming out with flying colours, the opportunity was not open to all women. Romance and marriage at a young age were impediments to women progressing in life. So the marriage age should be immediately increased after getting the recommendation from the committee that was examining it, Ramadoss said.

Safety kits for mechanics

Chennai: To make mechanics aware of the necessary safety guidelines after the lockdown is lifted, Valvoline Cummins Pvt Ltd, a company supplying lubricants and automotive services, is supply them a 'Suraksha kit' containing 4 masks, 100 ml sanitizer and a cap. The company has distributed more than 70,000 kits in about 100 markets, including Chennai.

The CSR initiative also appraise the mechanics on how to keep their workplace safe in-line with the government advisories, updating them on the risks and encouraging them to download and use AarogyaSetu App.

'Restricted gym atmosphere won't help the workouts'

Fitness freaks sore over SOPs in gyms

T. SUDHEESH | DC
CHENNAI, AUG 16

Though it has been a week since private gymnasiums across the state were allowed to operate with tight Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), fitness freaks are still not a wee bit enthused, as the Covid-19 virus spread continues unabated.

With prolonged demand from gym owners, the government had from August 10 allowed gymnasiums to operate. Gym owners in Chennai, about 2,000 in number, say even old clients have shown interest to return to the daily workout at the centre.

V Raja, treasurer, Tamil Nadu Gym Owners Association, said, "It would take at least a couple of months to return to normalcy, as clients are hesitant because of the continuing virus spread. Though we tried to convince members about the current strict SOPs in gyms, many are still reluctant. We hope the situation changes soon," he said.

According to the state government, the guidelines are issued aiming at minimising all possible physical contacts between staff members and visitors, which includes social distancing and adopting other Corona preventive and safety measures.

Currently, only gymnasiums located outside containment zones are permitted to operate. They are not permitted to admit people above 50 years, persons with comorbidities, pregnant women and children aged below 15 years. Participants are required to compulsorily wear face masks, wash hands regularly with soap or alcohol-based hand sanitizers

within the gym premises and also maintain at least a minimum of six-feet from each other.

N Hari, a gym owner in the city, said he opened his gymnasium in compliance with all specific measures issued by the authorities, but clients are reluctant to join. "We have introduced contactless payment system, set the equipment on floors with stipulated distance, and created specific pathways for entering and exiting the exercise area. It's hard to convince even old clients, because most of them have started enjoying home workouts. This apart, many clients find it uncomfortable to workout wearing a mask or face shield. Many of our clients have returned home, as their employers have given them work-from-home option. Hence, we hope they would join the gym when life turns normal," he added.

Vinod Kumar, a fitness enthusiast, said he was happy to continue workout at home till the situation turned normal. "I don't want to take risks at this point of time though my fitness centre has opened. I am told that the centre has opened with strict SOPs. But I don't think that fitness centres will be able to create a relaxing vibe with these restrictions. So I opt to remain at home and pursue workouts," he said.

Meanwhile, fitness experts point out that it's important to operate gymnasiums with strict SOPs because there are many who suffer from diabetes and obesity. Staying healthy is the key in the fight against Covid-19. Maintaining a fitness regime at home would not be effective, since there is no supervision and motivation by trainers," they added.

SHORT TAKES

Eye care hospital's relief project

Chennai: The Covid Slum Relief Project, initiated by Rajan Eye Care Hospital and Chennai Vision Charitable Trust in May 2020, has been providing relief to all slum dwellers in and around Chennai with 5 kgs rice, 1 kg wheat, dhal, bread, vegetables, detergent, soaps, masks, Sanitisers, sanitary napkins, medicines and 3M goggles & face shields. The project, which also runs medical and eye check-ups, has in the last six weeks covered more than 25 slums to help more than 6000 families. Goggles, sanitisers, N95 masks and face shields have been given to more than 2,000 Chennai City Police personnel. Hospitals have received Nitrile gloves while masks have been given to RIGGH, ICH and Corporation dispensaries. Provisions have been given to Corporation and sanitary workers besides food to Metro Water drivers and staff. (Donations can be made to Account 430991295 with IFSC Code IDIB000N033, MICR Code 600019037 and SWIFT Code IDIBINBBTSY.)

VIT among top institutions in Shanghai univ's ranking

Vellore: In the 2020 Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) by Shanghai Ranking Consultancy released, Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT) has been ranked 801-900 this year (2020) moving up from last year's 901-1000 among world universities. VIT is the only private Institution of India ranked in the Top 1000 where it is ranked as one among the top 9 out of 15 institutions of India this year. VIT Chancellor Dr. G. Viswanathan praised the commitment of VIT faculty, research scholars and students. Shanghai Ranking is recognised as one of the Ranking agencies by the Government of India for Institution of Eminence (IoEs).

'Shops will not be opened at malls, containment zones'

From P1

Now the shops located in containment zones and in the malls, however, would not be opened on August 18, Tasmac said in a statement. Only 500 tokens would be issued in a shop for a day and customers had been advised to strictly adhere to Coronavirus prevention norms like wearing of face-masks and maintaining social distancing.

Two killed in elephant attack, villagers stage road roko

SANJEEVI ANANDAN | DC KRISHNAGIRI, AUG. 16

One person died on the spot and another in the government hospital after being attacked by a lone elephant that entered their village on Sunday.

Police said, Muniraj (28) and Rajenderan (43), both belonging to Puliarasi village near Berigai of Krishnagiri district, were attacked by an elephant.

The wild animal attacked them when the duo was moving towards their farmland to answer

Angered over the deaths, Puliarasi villagers staged a road roko with the body of Muniraj, upon which Berigai police rushed to the spot and held talks with them

nature's call. Muniraj was the first to be attacked by the jumbo, and Rajenderan was brutally injured by the animal when he tried to save Muniraj.

Muniraj died on the spot and Rajenderan died after

he was admitted to the Krishnagiri government hospital.

Angered over the deaths, Puliarasi villagers staged a road roko with the body of Muniraj, upon which Berigai police rushed to the spot and held talks with them. The protest was withdrawn as police and forest officials promised them to make arrangements to stop wild elephants from moving out of the forests.

According to sources, the lone elephant belonged to a herd that

moved into the Krishnagiri district reserve forest from neighbouring Karnataka. The elephant which got separated from its herd had moved towards Berigai, allegedly in search of its herd. Hence, it stayed in the reserve forest at Puliarasi village.

The deaths could have been avoided if the locals would have heeded to advice of forest officials who constantly ask them not to venture into places where single elephants are seen.

Police complaint against Stalin

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, AUG. 16

An AIADMK functionary has filed a police complaint against DMK President M K Stalin for allegedly disrespecting the national flag while hoisting it at the Anna Arivalayam on the occasion of Independence Day.

The charge of R M Babu Murugavel, who is the joint secretary of the legal wing of the AIADMK, is that Stalin, after hoisting the national flag with gloves in his hands, left the stage without 'honouring or saluting' the flag.

Murugavel, in his complaint to the Commissioner of Police, Greater Chennai, said 'his voluntary and wilful acts attract indignity, disrespect and disdain to the flag and our nation.'

So, he wants the police to book Stalin under the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971.'

Aadi celebration



Kids have traditional 'Koozh' as part of Aadi celebration, at Manimangalam village near Tambaram.

— DC

Three babies undergo liver transplant in 3 days

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, AUG. 16

The virus pandemic may have put a halt to many aspects of daily lives but not medical emergencies. When parents of three less than 1-year old babies, weighing between 3.5 to 5.5 kgs from Nellore, Bangalore and Delhi, were told that only liver transplantation could save their children amidst pandemic, they were ready to defy the odds to save their little ones.

With travel restrictions and logistic difficulties, they made it to Chennai to Dr Rela Institute and Medical Centre for Liver transplantation.

Biliary atresia is a condition which affects 1 in

"All these three children were diagnosed with biliary atresia with progressive jaundice and liver failure and their condition started to deteriorate, and parents did not have any option but to wait"

10,000 children, where the bile ducts that drain bile from the liver to the intestine isn't properly formed. Dr Naresh Shanmugam, Children Liver specialist said, "All these three children were diagnosed with biliary atresia with progressive jaundice and liver failure and their condition started to deteriorate, and parents did not have any option but to wait. All these three children were less than a year old and less than 6 Kg and there

was a greater need to implement strict infection control policies on the staff and parents to make sure both the children and donors to be safe"

Dr Mohamed Rela, CMD of Dr Rela Institute and Medical Centre said. "All these children had surgery on consecutive days, and I am happy that they have cleared jaundice and heading towards discharge in just two weeks after a complex major surgery".

Coronavirus cases cross 1,000-mark in Nilgiris

B.RAVICHANDRAN | DC OOTY, AUG.16

Covid-19 positive count in Nilgiris has just crossed the 1,000 mark that is indicative of the slow yet steady spread of the corona infection across the hills here. While the infection rate is continuing to be more in rural Nilgiris, the fast recovery rate is also astonishing in the hills of Nilgiris.

The hill district of Nilgiris maintained an enviable Covid-19 management record till mid-June as only 14 cases were reported till then. But, things began to change for the worse since then that saw little over 1,000 positive cases

The hill district of Nilgiris maintained an enviable Covid-19 management record till mid-June as only 14 cases were reported till then

emerge in the span of eight weeks. Though, comparatively this figure looks to be small, it shows that steady spread of infection across the hills post-May.

In recent weeks, the clusters in village limits such as Yellanalli, Thangadu Oranalli, Kenthorai, Thoraihatti, M a n j a c o m b a i, Kuruthukuli and Denad proved to be worrisome. In the past few days the

increase in positive cases in Annikorai village limits and also in Karikalvalai village limits near here has raised alarm bells as the health department has been lifting samples from the residents in these villages and monitoring the situation.

However, what is most encouraging is the fast recovery rate in the hills. Out of the total 1,057 positive cases till date, 933 cases were discharged from hospitals after treatment. This shows the recovery rate in the hills is around 88 percent. As on date there are only 121 active cases in the Nilgiris, of which 81 cases tested positive in the past four days alone.

Rise in water level



Thanks to recent rain for raising the water capacity at Chembarambakkam lake.

— DC

Enact law to keep criminals out of politics, says HC

J. STALIN | DC CHENNAI, AUG. 16

In an attempt to cleanse the system, the Madras high court has asked the Central Government to enact a law to prohibit candidates with criminal background contesting elections to Parliament as suggested by the Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court. The court directed the Centre to explain in two weeks why it should not enact such a law.

A division bench comprising Justices N.Kirubakaran and V.M.Velumani passed the interim order on a habeas corpus petition filed by Jamuna, which sought a direction to the Puducherry police to produce her husband Jana alias Janarthanan, aged 30 years, who was detained under the Puducherry Prevention of Anti-Social Activities Act, before the court and set him at liberty.

The bench said it is appearing in the media that rowdy gangs are operated by many politicians, communal and religious leaders throughout the country. There seems to be a syndicate of the police force, political leaders and rowdy gangs and the safety and security of the people are



jeopardised. Further it is reported that persons with criminal background are becoming policy makers in many parts of the country and the same has to be prevented and the system has to be cleansed. This is possible, only if the top leaders of our political parties are firm in not admitting the criminals in their political parties. The leaders should have a vision for decriminalisation of politics.

If criminals are accommodated in political parties and given tickets to contest elections and elected as MLAs, MPs and made as Ministers, a wrong message would be sent to the people.

"Persons with criminal background should not become policy makers. Association for Democratic Reforms released a report "Lok Sabha Elections 2019-Analysis of Background, Financial, Education, Gender and other details of the winners" and it revealed

that 43 percent (233 out of 539) elected MPs have declared their criminal cases. Out of that, 29 percent have serious criminal cases pending against them. The Central Government has to come out with a comprehensive legislation to prohibit persons with criminal background from contesting elections to Parliament, State Legislatures and local bodies as observed by the Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court in Public Interest Foundation and others Vs Union of India and another on September 25, 2018", the bench added.

Pointing out that 19 cases have been registered against the detainee, and only in one case he was acquitted and the remaining were pending, the bench said it was evident from media reports that criminal elements in Puducherry have close connection and support of political parties.

"Court is justified to observe that three years delay in granting sanction for the case registered in the year 2017 is only due to political support enjoyed by the accused. In 2015 case, not even investigation is over for the past 5 years. This would speak about his clout with political parties, espe-

cially ruling parties and police. But for political interference, police would have filed charge sheets," the bench added.

The bench said many murders were committed cruelly by throwing country made bombs. In three cases registered against the detainee, the detainee and other accused had used country made bombs for committing murders. In 2018, former Speaker of Puducherry, Sivakumar was murdered by a gang in the same fashion, by hurling country bombs.

It was reported in the media that even some of the Ministers and legislators were being given security by rowdy gangs. It was submitted by the Public Prosecutor that in most of the cases, accused would be more than ten persons and they will not cooperate with the trial and cases were pending because of the Non-Bailable Warrant issued against the accused. Since the cases were pending for a long time, the courts were compelled to split up the matters and thereafter conduct trials. This has to be taken into consideration by the lower courts while granting bail, as the accused violate the bail conditions, the bench added.

Integrated farming system mooted at Pudukkottai

DC CORRESPONDENT PUDUKKOTTAI, AUG 16

The integrated farming system under the National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture Scheme is proposed to be implemented in over a 100 hectare area in Viralimalai block in Pudukkottai district during the current fiscal, said R M Shivakumar, joint director, Agriculture, Pudukkottai.

In a release here on Sunday, assistant director,

agriculture, T Ramu, said Shivakumar made this announcement while inaugurating the farmers training programme on the integrated farming system for rain-fed area at Viralimalai block, on Friday.

He also informed that 100 beneficiaries each having one hectare of land in rain-fed areas have been selected from six villages namely Sooriyur, Perambur, Neerpalani, Kathalur, Paiyur and Pakudi, in Viralimalai

block. Deputy director, agriculture, Pudukkottai, Government of India scheme, M Surulimalai, senior veterinary assistant surgeon V Ganapathy, horticulture officer, Nisha, addressed the beneficiaries, creating an awareness on the importance of integrated farming activities in rain-fed area as sustainable method of generating income and employment throughout the year, added Ramu.

Man held under Pocso Act

DC CORRESPONDENT NAGAPATTINAM, AUG. 16

The All women police here arrested a man for allegedly sexually assaulting his sister-in-law's 13-year-old daughter at Velankanni, near here last September.

Police said Saravanan of Bhudalur in Thanjavur district came on a pilgrimage to Velankanni along with wife, daughter and his sister-in-law and her husband, Gopinath. They had stayed in a private lodge where Gopinath had sexually assaulted the girl.

Based on a complaint from the girl's mother, Thiruvaiyaru police registered a case against Gopinath, and subsequently transferred the case to AWPS, Nagapattinam. They registered a fresh case under Pocso Act, but the accused was at large for the past one year.

On information that the accused was hiding in his native place, and AWPS team from Nagapattinam scooped down on him and besides arrest, remanded him to judicial custody, on Saturday, police sources added.

SHORT TAKES

PAWAR FAMILY
HOLDS MEET TO
PACIFY PARTHSONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC
MUMBAI, AUG. 16

As Pawar family is trying to pacify disgruntled Parth Pawar, son of Deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar, the Opposition BJP took advantage of the situation and termed Parth, a mature leader. According to reports, a meeting was held in Baramati at Shrinivas Pawar's bungalow to speak to Parth regarding Sharad Pawar's public reprimand. Few days ago, NCP chief Sharad Pawar had openly called Parth 'immature' and said that he gives absolutely no importance to his grand-nephew's demand for a CBI probe in Sushant Singh Rajput's death case.

The meeting in Baramati was attended by father Ajit Pawar, mother Sunetra Pawar, Uncle Shrinivas Pawar and Aunt Sharmila Pawar on Saturday night.

On August 13, Parth had gone to meet NCP chief Sharad Pawar at the latter's residence Silver Oak in South Mumbai. However, he could not meet the NCP chief but had over two-hour long discussion with paternal aunt Supriya Sule.

According to the media reports, Sharad Pawar was scheduled to go to Baramati on Sunday but cancelled the visit after a telephonic conversation with Ajit Pawar, who was in Baramati, and returned back to Mumbai from Pune.

Meanwhile, BJP leader and Rajya Sabha member Narayan Rane said, "Parth is above 18 years and is mature enough. There must be a reason why he demanded a CBI probe in Rajput's death case."

PVT OPERATORS
FREE TO CHOOSE
HALT STATIONS

New Delhi, Aug. 16: Private operators who will be handed over 150 trains to ply on 109 routes by the Railways will have the freedom to choose halt stations of the trains they operate, documents released by the national transporter have shown.

However, the private operators have to submit in advance to the Railways the list of such intermediate stations on the trains' paths where they are proposing halts.

The private operators also have to provide the time in and time out at the intermediate railway stations, which shall form part of the train operation plan. This has to be submitted in advance and will be in place for at least a year, after which it can be revised, a draft of the Concession Agreement has said. "The Concessionaire shall have the flexibility in deciding the stops/ halts in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Concession Agreement," the Railways has said in reply to a query by one of the private players who attended the pre-application meetings.

The Railways has also said the number of such halts of the private trains will not be more than the number of existing halts of the fastest train of the Railways operating in that route.

KAHEEL KHAN'S
DETENTION
EXTENDED

Lucknow, Aug. 16: The Uttar Pradesh government has extended by three months the detention of physician Kafeel Khan under the National Security Act for his alleged provocative speech during the anti-Citizenship Amendment Act protests.

Khan was arrested in January for delivering the speech at Aligarh Muslim University on December 10, 2019. It is the second time his detention under the stringent law has been extended by another three months, this time beyond August 13.

Under the National Security Act (NSA), people can be detained without a charge for up to 12 months if authorities are satisfied that they are threat to the national security or law and order.

In an order dated August 4, 2020, the UP Home Department said the NSA was invoked against Khan on February 13, 2020, on the orders of the Aligarh District Magistrate. "The matter was then sent to the advisory council, which in its report, said there are 'enough reasons' to keep Khan in jail following which orders were given on May 6, 2020, to extend his detention under the NSA by three months, that is till August 13, 2020," the order said.

New normal



Devotees stand in a queue outside Mata Vaishno Devi cave in Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday. The shrine along with other religious places across the Union Territory reopened for devotees on Sunday after remaining closed for almost five months due to the Covid-19 outbreak. — PTI

Raj Bhavan under surveillance
of Mamata, alleges Dhankhar

He also claimed that Maoism is now returning with support of state actors

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC
KOLKATA, AUG. 16

West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar on Sunday alleged that Raj Bhavan is under the surveillance of the Mamata Banerjee government. He also observed the return of Maoism in the state.

"The Raj Bhavan is under surveillance. This should not happen. It undermines the sanctity of the Raj Bhavan. I will do everything to protect its sanctity. How can an office of the Constitution be under surveillance? I will take legal steps once our inquiry is over. Public servants should not get into political mode.

Nobody is above the law," the Governor told the media at an event to mark former prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's second death anniversary in Raj Bhavan.

Dhankhar claimed, "Important documents, which should not go out of Raj Bhavan without my sanction, are getting leaked outside. Documents are procured. I have initiated a very serious probe into it. Those, who have done this, have to pay a heavy price. On 14 August, a document was electronically shared using an app from here. That document came back to me from the highest authority of the govern-

ment."

Dhankhar noted, "The dangerous ado of Maoism is now getting visible with the support of state actors. West Bengal needs peace, tranquility and law and order."

His latest salvo came hours after he expressed his strong displeasure over the Chief Minister's absence at the 'at home' function at Raj Bhavan on Saturday.

Dhankhar tweeted, "Absence of CM and officials @MamataOfficial on occasion of Independence Day celebration at Raj Bhavan has like many startled and stunned me. We need to rise to occasion as respect to freedom fighters who gave their all to secure for us freedom and democracy. I am at loss of words (sic)."

Sharing a picture of the empty chair, he said, "The vacant seat meant for CM @MamataOfficial at celebration of Independence

Day at Raj Bhavan speaks volumes — has created unwholesome situation that is not in sync with rich culture and ethos of WB. There is just no rationale for this unbecoming stance. CM and executive @MamataOfficial set bad precedent by not attending. Another painful instance of distancing from Constitution (sic)."

On Saturday morning, Mamata Banerjee visited Raj Bhavan and greeted Jagdeep Dhankhar on the occasion of the Independence Day in what appeared to be a "cordial meeting" after hoisting the National Flag on Red Road.

NCC to go in for
major expansionDC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 16

Defence minister Rajnath Singh has approved a proposal by the National Cadet Corps (NCC) for a major expansion scheme to meet the aspirations of young people in all the border and coastal districts of the country.

Under the plan, a total of one lakh cadets from 173 border and coastal districts will be inducted into the NCC. One third of all cadets will be girl cadets. More than 1,000 schools and colleges have been identified in border and coastal districts where the NCC will be introduced.

These proposals had been announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his Independence Day address from the Red Fort on Saturday morning.

As part of the expansion plan, a total of 83 NCC units will be upgraded (Army 53, Navy 20, Air Force 10), to impart NCC training to the cadets in the border and coastal areas.

The Army will provide training and administrative support to the NCC units located in the border areas, the Navy shall provide support to NCC units in the coastal areas and similarly the Air Force will provide support to NCC units located close to Air Force stations.

This will not only provide exposure to the youth in border and coastal areas to military training and a disciplined way of life but might also motivate them to join the armed forces.

The NCC expansion plan will be implemented in partnership with the state governments.

GPR TO BE USED
TO LOCATE
BODIES IN IDUKKIDC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 16

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Telangana has
more recoveries
than new casesDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, AUG. 16.

Telangana state on Sunday reported more people recovering from pandemic Covid-19 than falling ill. As per the health department data, 1,102 new cases were reported in the state even as 1,930 persons were discharged from various hospitals after their recovery from the disease.

The department said the state also saw nine more people losing their lives to the disease, taking the number of dead from Covid-19 in Telangana to 693, and inching towards the 700 mark.

8,012 new cases
in Andhra Pradesh

Vijayawada: Andhra Pradesh on Sunday recorded 8,012 new Corona positive cases, significantly lower than the 10,000 cases it reported on many days last week. At present, the state has reported a total of 2,86,934 cases of which 85,945 cases. Ten deaths each registered in Chittoor and East Godavari districts, followed by nine in Kurnool, eight each in Nellore and Anantapur and West Godavari.

Karnataka reports
124 deaths

Bengaluru: Over 7,000 fresh coronavirus cases and 124 deaths took the tally to 2.27 lakh and the toll to 3,947 in Karnataka on Sunday, the health department said. The state's total rose to 2,26,966 with the addition of 7,040 cases while 6,680 people were discharged, taking the cumulative recoveries to 1,41,491.

Kerala CM, mins
test negative

Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala on Sunday reported over 1,500 COVID-19 cases for the fourth straight day, taking the tally to 44,415 while Chief Minister Pinarayi

MONSOON
SESSION TO SEE
COVID-PROOF
MEASURES

New Delhi, Aug. 16: Hectic preparations are underway for the Monsoon Session of Parliament with several first-time measures in view of the Covid-19 pandemic such as staggered sitting of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha and use of both chambers and galleries to accommodate members while following physical distancing norms, officials said.

The Monsoon Session is likely to begin in the last week of August or early September. According to the Rajya Sabha Secretariat, members of the Upper House will be seated in both chambers and galleries during the session. This is the first time in the history of Indian Parliament since 1952 that such an arrangement will be in place, where 60 members will be seated in the chamber and 51 in the galleries of Rajya Sabha and the remaining 132 in the chamber of Lok Sabha. Similar seating arrangements are being worked out by the Lok Sabha Secretariat as well.

For the first time, large display screens and consoles for participation from galleries, ultraviolet germicidal irradiation, special cables between the two Houses and polycarbonate separators will be in place.

Vijayan and seven of his cabinet colleagues along with top officials tested negative, several of them for the second time. As many as 53 health workers were among the 1,530 fresh cases, 1,351 of them through contacts, and ten COVID-19 deaths took the toll due to the disease to 156, health minister K.K. Shailaja said in a health department release.

Most Telangana
rivers in spateS.A. ISHAQUI | DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 16

At least three persons were killed and normal life was severely disrupted across the state on the third day of incessant rains on Saturday. Several thousands of acres of standing crop and paddy nurseries were lost in floodwaters.

Two women, one about 80 years old and her 50-year-old daughter died after their house in Nagarkurnool district collapsed. Bandi Venkatesh, 30, was swept away while fishing in Nakkavagu, which was in spate, on the outskirts of Matindla village in Chinnakodur of Siddipet district on Sunday. The police is searching for his body.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Sunday forecast light to moderate rains or thundershowers in many parts of the state at least till Thursday. The IMD also warned that a

fresh low-pressure area was likely to form over the north Bay of Bengal around Wednesday which might result in continuation of the ongoing heavy rains beyond Thursday.

The disaster management department has advised people not to venture out except in emergencies in view of the forecast of more rains. In Hyderabad, the GHMC has advised people to vacate dilapidated residential buildings.

Many villages were submerged with seasonal streams and rivulets overflowing on the roads and causeways.

Major rivers were in spate forcing the water resources department to lift gates to discharge massive amounts of floodwater, resulting in the inundation of low-lying areas.

As many as 87 rain-dampened houses collapsed in Sangareddy. In Nalgonda district, over 50 irrigation tanks are overflowing.

WOMEN | SAFETY

Move comes amid rise in number of complaints of mental abuse

NCW mulls launch of 24/7 helpline

New Delhi, Aug. 16: The National Commission for Women is planning to launch a 24/7 helpline in view of the rising number of mental harassment complaints since the coronavirus-induced lockdown.

The helpline will be launched in north India first and steadily expanded to the rest of the country. NCW chairperson Rekha Sharma said. The launch date for the helpline hasn't been decided yet, she said. In an interview to PTI, Sharma

said the helpline development project is being carried out in collaboration with the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh.

"The launch date of the helpline has not been finalised yet. It will be launched in north India first and slowly and steadily it will be extended to other parts of the country," she said. The decision comes amid a rise in the number of complaints of emotional and mental abuse received by the com-

mission over the last few months.

According to NCW data, it received 2,320 complaints related to mental harassment and emotional abuse from April, days after the lockdown was imposed in the country, till now.

In contrast, it received 1,550 such complaints between December 2019 and March 2020. Elaborating on the issue, Sharma said mental tension for women increased during the lockdown. "Both men and women faced mental health prob-

lems during the lockdown. Women were working from home and doing all the (household) work and then they were not able to reach out to their parents even if they were getting mentally harassed. In normal circumstances, they were able to reach out to their family and friends and talk to them but (during lockdown) they were locked inside the house. So yes, mental tension increased during the lockdown," she said.

Sharma said the NCW worked 24/7 during the

lockdown to help women. "During the lockdown, we worked 24/7 because we knew women were not able to reach out to any other agency or their relatives and families," she said.

"We launched a WhatsApp number because we knew women were not able to go to the police station, reach us by post and many women do not even know how to send an email. Since the launch of the WhatsApp number, the number of complaints has increased manifold," she said.

— PTI

SHORT TAKES

ARIANE ROCKET PUTS TELECOM SATELLITES

Paris, Aug. 16: A rocket that blasted off from French Guiana successfully placed two communications satellites into orbit on Saturday, launch firm Ariane space said.

The Ariane 5 rocket took off from Kourou, the European Space Agency's space centre in the South American territory, the company said in a statement.

Two satellites on board — belonging to the intergovernmental provider Intelsat and Japan's Broadcasting Satellite System Corporation — were later successfully placed into orbit, Arianespace said.

A servicing vehicle that will dock with other satellites in orbit was also deployed, it added.

The launch — the first for Arianespace since activities at Kourou were halted in March due to the Coronavirus — had originally been scheduled for July 28 but was delayed to allow for more "technical inspections".

Another delay followed due to "the unexpected behaviour of one sensor" for a liquid hydrogen tank.

ITALY GARBAGE DIPS WITH CURBS BUT PLASTICS RISE

Rome, Aug. 16 : Italy produced 10 per cent less garbage during its Coronavirus lockdown, but environmentalists warn that increased reliance on disposable masks and packaging is imperiling efforts to curb single-use plastics that end up in oceans and seas.

Italian researchers estimate that during the peak months of Italy's lockdown in March and April, urban waste production fell by 5,00,000 tons. That decrease is enabling dumps in Italy — where trash collection in major cities has often become a hot-button political issue — to absorb the 3,00,000 tons of extra waste from protective masks and gloves estimated to be used this year, according to the Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research.

"Substantially, the figures will balance each other by the end of this year," Valeria Frittelloni, the institute's head of waste management and circular economy, told The Associated Press. But the pandemic dealt a blow to efforts to move away from single-use plastics in many places where they were just beginning to become mainstream. UN, Greenpeace, Italy's Marevivo environmental organization and other such groups are warning that continued reliance on single-use plastics will pose longer-term risks to the environment.

GREENLAND ICE HAS SHRUNK BEYOND RETURN

Greenland, Aug. 16: Greenland's ice sheet may have shrunk past the point of return, with the ice likely to melt away no matter how quickly the world reduces climate-warming emissions, new research suggests.

Scientists studied data on 234 glaciers across the Arctic territory spanning 34 years through 2018 and found that annual snowfall was no longer enough to replenish glaciers of the snow and ice being lost to summertime melting.

That melting is already causing global seas to rise about a millimeter on average per year. If all of Greenland's ice goes, the water released would push sea levels up by an average of 6 meters — enough to swamp many coastal cities around the world. This process, however, would take decades.

"Greenland is going to be the canary in the coal mine, and the canary is already pretty much dead at this point," said glaciologist Ian Howat at Ohio State University. He and his colleagues published the study Thursday in the Nature Communications Earth & Environment journal.

The Arctic has been warming at least twice as fast as the rest of the world for the last 30 years, an observation referred to as Arctic amplification. The polar sea ice hit its lowest extent for July in 40 years.

The Arctic thaw has brought more water to the region, opening up routes for shipping traffic, as well as increased interest in extracting fossil fuels and other natural resources. Greenland is strategically important for the US military and its ballistic missile early warning system, as the shortest route from Europe to North America goes via the Arctic island.

‘Massive poisonous shock’: Scientists fear lasting impact

Wildlife at risk include the seagrasses blanketing sand in the shallow waters

Nairobi, Aug. 16: Some corals have lived for centuries at the fringes of Mauritius. Now smothered for days in heavy fuel oil spilled from a wrecked Japanese tanker nearby, parts of those reefs may be in trouble.

The full impact of the toxic spill is still unfolding, scientists say. As the Indian Ocean island's residents scramble to mop up the oil slicks and clumps, they are seeing dead eels and fish floating in the water, as fuel-soaked seabirds limp onto shore.

Satellite images also show the 1,000 tonnes of spilled oil spreading northward along the coastline from the spill site in the turquoise waters of Blue Bay Marine Park. The damage, scientists say, could impact Mauritius and its tourism-dependent economy for decades.

"This oil spill occurred in one of, if not the most, sensitive areas in Mauritius," oceanographer and environmental engineer Vassen Kauppaymuthoo said by telephone from the island, where he was surveying the disaster. "We are talking of decades to recover from this damage, and some of it may never recover."

The wildlife at risk include the seagrasses blanketing sand in the shallow waters, clownfish darting around coral reefs, mangrove trees corraling the coastline with their tangled root systems, and the critically endangered Pink Pigeon, endemic to the island.

Giant tortoises slow-walk through a nature reserve on the nearby islet, Ile-aux-Aigrettes, where there is also a scientific research station. Altogether, Blue Bay Marine park counts 38 types of coral and 78 species of fish.

The spill brings "a massive poisonous shock to the system," said Adam Molina, an environmental scientist from Mauritius who lectures at Keele University in Britain. — Agencies



Picture taken near near Blue Bay Marine Park, shows the vessel MV Wakashio, belonging to a Japanese company but Panamanian-flagged, that ran aground near Blue Bay Marine Park off the coast of south-east Mauritius. (R) Workers collect leaked oil at the beach in Riviere des Creoles.

— AFP

India sends 30 tonnes of equipment to Mauritius

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, AUG. 16

In response to a request by Indian Ocean nation Mauritius for assistance in dealing with the environmental crisis due to oil spill on its south-eastern coast caused by a Japanese merchant vessel that struck a coral reef and ran aground there last month, India on Sunday said it has "dispatched over 30 tonnes of technical equipment and material on board an IAF Aircraft to Mauritius" to supplement that country's ongoing oil spill containment measures, has also been

tions.

The specialised equipment, consisting of "Ocean Booms, River Booms, Disc Skimmers, Hell Skimmers, Power packs, Blowers, Salvage barge and Oil absorbent Graphene pads" and other accessories, is specifically designed to contain the oil slick, skim oil from water, and assist in clean up and salvage operations, New Delhi said, in a statement.

A 10-member Technical Response Team, consisting of Indian Coast Guard (ICG) personnel specially trained for dealing with oil spill containment measures, has also been

deployed to Mauritius to extend necessary technical and operational assistance at the site, New Delhi added. India has extremely close ties with Mauritius. New Delhi said the "urgent assistance reflects the close bonds of friendship between India and Mauritius and India's abiding commitment to assist the people of Mauritius in need".

According to international news agency reports, the Japanese merchant vessel MV Wakashio struck a coral reef off Mauritius on July 25, spilling about 1,000 tonnes of fuel oil and endangering corals.

SHIP THAT OOZED OIL OFF IN COAST SPLITS INTO TWO

Tokyo, Aug 16: A Japanese bulk carrier that ran aground on a reef in Mauritius last month threatening a marine ecological disaster around the Indian Ocean island has broken apart, authorities said on Saturday.

The condition of the MV Wakashio was worsening early on Saturday and it split by the afternoon, the Mauritius National Crisis Committee said.

"At around 4.30pm, a major detachment of the vessel's forward section was observed," it said in a statement. "On the basis of the experts' advice, the towing plan is being implemented." — Agencies

Air pollution in China falls 10.8% due to lockdown

Shanghai, Aug. 16: China saw average concentrations of lung-damaging airborne particles known as PM2.5 fall by 10.8% from January to July as industry slowed because of the Coronavirus, data showed on Friday, though levels were still well above WHO recommendations.

Average PM2.5 stood at 33 micrograms per cubic metre over the seven months, according to data collected from monitoring stations in more than 300 cities, the Ministry of Ecology and Environment said. China's national standard is 35 micrograms, though the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends levels of no more than 10.

PM2.5 is caused by the burning of fossil fuels and other industrial processes and is associated with a range of health problems, including respiratory disease and cancer. The environment ministry said the improvement in air quality throughout the country in February and March was "incomparable" after the government

imposed lockdowns to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus, which cut industrial activity and traffic.

But environmental groups have warned that China might turn a blind eye to industrial polluters and rely on energy-intensive processes to try to reverse the economic impact of the pandemic in the second half of the year. "There was a temporary pollution increase in April but it quickly went down in May," said Li Shuo, senior energy and climate analyst with Greenpeace. "We need to see if July represents the beginning of a larger trend." In July, average PM2.5 levels fell 5%, but some regions saw a rebound. The capital, Beijing, saw average PM2.5 rise 10.8% to 41 micrograms. The smog-prone Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region as a whole jumped 5.9% to 36 micrograms.

"Industrial outputs are coming back to pre-Covid levels," said Li.

"Sometimes air quality would correspond with that, sometimes not. Weather and other conditions play a role here too." — Agencies

NYC releases policy to fight climate crisis

New York, Aug 16: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation on Friday released proposed regulations to reduce greenhouse gas emission and to implement the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act.

The proposed regulation will be published in the state register on Aug. 19 and mandates a 40% reduction of methane and other harmful gases by 2030 and an 85% reduction by 2050, according to a statement.

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The regulation also requires the state to achieve a carbon-free electricity system by 2040, the department said in a statement.

Symbol of threat as Brandenburg dries

Seddiner, see , Germany, Aug. 16: After years of summer heatwaves and minimal rainfall, eastern Germany's lakelands are drying out, local scientists say, to the detriment of fish and plant life as well as fishermen.

Seddiner lake, in the state of Brandenburg, south-west of Berlin, has sunk 60 cm annually on average over the past few years, with local geographer Knut Kaiser calling it the beginning of the end for the region's lakes.

"You could say that Seddiner is a symbol of a situation, or to put it more dramatically, it has become a portent for climate change here in Brandenburg," Kaiser, from the German Research Centre for Geosciences, said.

Spanning 218 hectares, it is fed from groundwater, leaving it at the mercy of rainfall and human water usage. At a high point in 2013, the lake was full enough to flow naturally into a smaller neighbouring lake. In 2020, piers along the water's edge stand high and dry.

● THE STATE has the third most lakes in Germany relative to its size, but is the second most arid, according to the German Weather Agency.

The state has the third most lakes in Germany relative to its size, but is the second most arid, according to the German Weather Agency.

After the drought years of 2018 and 2019, Kaiser said the lake will likely lose a massive amount of water in 2020 for the third year running.

"This is a bad sign! You could put it more starkly: It is a horror story for the region's water landscape," he said.

While scientists agree that the main problems facing Brandenburg's lakes are linked to climate change, human influence also plays a role. Reeds, which clean the lake and act as a place for fish to spawn, have been exposed by low water and are often trampled by people heading to beaches, Kaiser said.

— Agencies

California wildfire burns 21 structures, forces 1,500 to evacuate their houses

Los Angeles, Aug. 16: Firefighters scrambled to protect thousands of homes from a wildfire racing through brush-covered mountains north of Los Angeles on Friday that caused hundreds of evacuations and burned 21 structures.

The blaze, dubbed the Lake Fire, swelled to over 17,000 acres (6,880 hectares), forcing up to 1,500 people from their homes after erupting on Wednesday afternoon in the Angeles National Forest.

Triple digit temperatures and single digit humidity fanned flames on Friday evening, and little let-up was expected over the weekend with an excessive heat warning in effect across Southern California.

"We saw extreme fire conditions," Los Angeles County Fire Department spokesman Frank Garrido said of the operation in steep canyons aided by firefighting helicopters.

The cause of the blaze was under investigation but human activity is likely to blame, said US Forest



A Riverside firefighter stands on top of his truck during the Lake Fire at Pine Canyon Road in the Angeles National Forest, by Lake Hughes, 60 miles north of Los Angeles, California

— AFP

Service spokesman Andrew Mitchell.

No casualties were reported but the blaze threatened 5,420 homes and other structures in communities about 40 miles (65 km) north of downtown Los Angeles where residents have been told to prepare for possible evacuations over the weekend, Garrido said.

Much of the area has not had a fire in 60-100 years, allowing flames to move swiftly through fuel-choked areas.

● TRIPLE DIGIT temperatures and single digit humidity fanned flames on Friday evening, and little let-up was expected over the weekend with an excessive heat warning in effect across Southern California.

Across the United States, fires have been less ferocious so far in 2020, burning around 1.4 million fewer acres than in the same period of 2019.

— AFP

ENVIRONMENT | THREAT

Global warming is emerging as a driver of infectious disease like malaria, dengue to Zika

Climate change could expose new epidemics

Paris, Aug. 16: Long-dormant viruses brought back to life; the resurgence of deadly and disfiguring smallpox; a dengue or Zika "season" in Europe.

These could be disaster movie storylines, but they are also serious and increasingly plausible scenarios of epidemics unleashed by global warming, scientists say.

The Covid-19 pandemic that has swept the globe and claimed over 7,60,000 lives so far almost certainly came from a wild bat, highlighting the danger of

humanity's constant encroachment on the planet's dwindling wild spaces. But the expanding ecological footprint of our species could trigger epidemics in other ways too.

Climate change — already wreaking havoc with one degree Celsius of warming — is also emerging as a driver of infectious disease, whether by expanding the footprint of malaria- and dengue-carrying mosquitoes, or defrosting prehistoric pathogens from the Siberian permafrost.

"In my darkest moments, I see a really horrible future for Homo sapiens because we are an animal, and when we extend our borders things will happen to us," said Birgitta Evengard, a researcher in clinical microbiology at Umea University in Sweden.

"Our biggest enemy is our own ignorance," she added. "Nature is full of microorganisms." Think of permafrost, a climate change time bomb spread across Russia, Canada and Alaska that contains three

times the carbon that has been emitted since the start of industrialisation.

Even if humanity manages to cap global warming at under two degrees Celsius, the cornerstone goal of the 2015 Paris Agreement, the permafrost area will decrease by a quarter by 2100, according to the UN's climate science panel, the IPCC. And then there are the permafrost's hidden treasures.

"Microorganisms can survive in frozen space for a long, long time," said

Vladimir Romanovsky, a professor of geophysics at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks.

As ground thaws, once-frozen soil particles, organic material and microorganisms that had been locked away for millennia are carried toward the surface by water flows, he explained.

"That's how thawing can spread these microorganisms into present day environments." There are already examples of ancient, long-frozen bugs coming to life. — AFP



Representational image

— AP

DECCAN
Chronicle

17 AUGUST 2020

Bhushan ruling: Court in contempt of justice

The Supreme Court of India is perfectly justified when it says the judiciary is considered “the last hope when a citizen fails to get justice anywhere” but its decision to punish one who doubted its ability to deliver justice is problematic. The court’s observation on its own role in the democratic scheme of things came on Friday along with its finding that lawyer and activist Prashant Bhushan is guilty of criminal contempt of the court for his two tweets that were critical of it.

One of Mr Bhushan’s tweets suggested that access to justice was denied during lockdown, and he seemingly attributed the reason to the Chief Justice of India (CJI). In another tweet, he held the Supreme Court, and the last four CJIs in particular, responsible for “the weakening of democracy” in India in the last six years. Those who wonder why a lawyer should hold the judiciary responsible for the denial of access to justice and weakening of democracy may find their answers in the 108-page judgment itself. “The Indian judiciary is not only one of pillars on which the Indian democracy stands but is the central pillar,” insists the judgment. Is it not then fair that a citizen, who feels the structure of democracy is weakened, holds the institution which arrogates to itself the role of the central pillar, responsible? Isn’t he entitled to hold the view that the CJIs, as masters of the roster, have a role in it? The court does not share the view, obviously.

One must stand with the court when it says “the Supreme Court is a protector of the fundamental rights of the citizens, as also is endowed with a duty to keep the other pillars of democracy i.e. the executive and the legislature, within the constitutional bounds”. But has it come to the aid of the people and protected their fundamental rights when it was warranted the most is the moot question. Some of the recent events are not particularly encouraging. We have the SC putting off for months together the hearing on the habeas corpus petitions, a constitutional guarantee against the State’s unauthorised usurpation of people’s liberties, moved by the people of Jammu and Kashmir. It initially refused to act when its intervention was sought to bring relief to the millions of guest workers who were forced to trek home following a government missive. It is yet to hear petitions against the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019, which many fear undermined the very idea of India. The highest court shocked many when it put pre-conditions to hear the students of a university who sought protection from governmental action. It will be a far-fetched claim if someone says such acts added to the dignity of the court and strengthened the people’s belief in the system; the contrary could very well be the truth. Believers in democracy could air their desperation publicly; little purpose will be served by shooting the messengers.

Dhoni made winning a habit

Mahendra Singh Dhoni is a sui generis. Coming as he did from a town in the hinterland and his first job as a railway ticket examiner, his background seemed all wrong and he was run out without scoring on his international debut. As he evolved from a gawky youth with long hair into a suave national icon he also transformed Indian cricket — on the field with his instinctive dynamism and in the selection committee room where he backed the men he saw as match winners.

Leading a bunch of young players, he stunned the world in the T20 World Cup in a format that was thought to be unsuitable for the laid-back temperament of Indian cricketers. Like Kapil’s Devils did in the 1983 World Cup final at Lord’s, Dhoni’s young guns had shown an ability to seize the moment. Indian cricket was a financial powerhouse by then but with few trophies in its cupboard. Dhoni changed that by bringing in his winning ways, leading from the front as one of the best finishers in the game and the safest catcher and alert stumper.

Soaking up the pressures while retaining an essential calmness to bring out the best of sporting skill sets was Dhoni’s forte. He became the only captain in the world to win across formats — T20 World Cup in 2007, World Cup in 2011 and Champions Trophy in 2013 after having first led India to the top rung of the Test ladder of merit, besides three IPLs for his favourite Chennai Super Kings and two Champions League titles.

In handling success with equanimity, Dhoni has become an inspirational national figure with a special place in his heart for men of the armed forces, who see him as an apolitical figure endowed with the ideal fighting spirit. He kept up the element of surprise in timing his retirement announcement, lacing it with the Armed Forces’ 24-hour clock — 1929 hours — in perhaps a hint of what he may like to do as a mentor. Close to 40, he gives up a young man’s international game while leaving Indian cricket in better shape.

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Subhani



Find motive to work out Chinese checkers moves



Manish Tewari

State of the Union

It has been over 100 days now that the Chinese are squatting on Indian territory. They are refusing to move back. Neither the government nor any former official or for that matter any strategic thinker has answered the basic question — Why have the Chinese occupied our land? The Chinese, of course, choose to deny that they are in our territory and profess they are only at best on their perception of the Line of Actual Control.

For the sake of argument even if you buy the Chinese explanation, their behaviour still is in stark contrast to 1962 where the Chinese were tactically successful in the eastern sector. After launching an unprovoked aggression then they still chose to retreat 20 kilometres not from their professed claim line but from the Actual Ground Position as on November 7, 1959. The Chinese ceasefire declaration of November 19, 1962, stated as follows — “Beginning from 21 November 1962, the Chinese frontier guards will cease fire along the entire Sino-Indian border. Beginning from 1 December 1962, the Chinese frontier guards will withdraw to positions 20 kilometres (12 miles) behind the line of actual control, which existed between China and India on 7 November 1959. In the eastern sector, although the Chinese frontier guards have so far been fighting on Chinese territory north of the traditional customary line, they are prepared to withdraw from their present positions to the north of the illegal McMahon Line, and to withdraw twenty kilometers (12 miles) back from that line. In the middle and western sectors, the Chinese frontier guards will withdraw 20

kilometres (12 miles) from the line of actual control.”

What is the salience of November 7, 1959? It was on this date a seminal proposal was made to Pandit Nehru by the then Chinese premier Chou-en-Lai. Excerpts from that letter are worth quoting: “In order to maintain effectively the status quo of the border between the two countries, to ensure the tranquility of the border regions and to create a favourable atmosphere for a friendly settlement of the boundary question, the Chinese government proposes that the armed forces of China and India each withdraw 20 kilometres at once from the so-called McMahon Line in the east, and from the line up to which each side exercises actual control in the west, and that the two sides undertake to refrain from again sending their armed personnel to be stationed in and patrol the zones from which they have evacuated their armed forces, but still maintain civil administrative personnel and unarmed police there for the performance of administrative duties and maintenance of order. This proposal is in effect an extension of the Indian government’s proposal contained in its note dated September 10 that neither side should send its armed personnel to Longju, to the entire border between China and India, and moreover a proposal to separate the troops of the two sides by as great a distance as 40 kilometres. If there is any need to increase this distance, the Chinese government is also willing to give it consideration. In a word, both before and after the formal delimitation of the boundary between our two countries through negotiations, the Chinese government is willing to do its utmost to create the most

peaceful and most secure border zones between our two countries, so that our two countries will never again have apprehensions or come to a clash on account of border issues. If this proposal of the Chinese government is acceptable to the Indian government, concrete measures for its implementation can be discussed and decided upon at once by the two governments through diplomatic channels”.

In his reply on November 16, 1959, Nehru after extensive consultations both in the Congress Working Committee and his Cabinet rejected the proposal for all the right reasons outlined in that letter except insofar it applied to Ladakh. He wrote “I suggest, therefore, that in the Ladakh area, both our governments should agree on the following as an interim measure. The Government of India should withdraw all personnel to the west of the line which the Chinese government have shown as the international boundary in their 1956 maps which, so far as we are aware are their latest maps. Similarly, the Chinese government should withdraw their personnel to the east of the international boundary, which has been described by the Government of India in their earlier notes and correspondence and shown in their official maps. Since the two lines are separated by long distances, there should not be the slightest risk of border clashes between the forces on either side.” One can only speculate that had Nehru accepted Chou’s proposal the trajectory of Sino-Indian relations could have been different.

Did Prime Minister Modi renege on some commitments given to President Xi in Wuhan and Mamallapuram, is it about distance from the US, accepting China’s new hedonistic world order or all of them?

Since 1962, India and China have had a number of standoffs but eventually they were all surmounted some with casualties and others without any loss of life. Even Doklam that persisted for 73 days was eventually cracked through a fortnight of diplomatic negotiations in 2017. However, the current crisis is substantively distinctive for both Chinese belligerence and brazenness. They have killed 20 Indian soldiers and injured numerous more in at least three clashes in Ladakh alone. Ten Indian soldiers were taken hostage and subsequently released by the People’s Liberation Army.

Despite both foreign ministers speaking to each other, Mr Doval confabulating with his special representative equivalent, numerous conferences of the working mechanism for consultation and coordination on India-China borders affairs, five corps commander level exchanges and other tactical level military talks, the Chinese are not budging. In fact, in the July issue of the China-India Review, Ambassador Wei Sun Weidong has squarely blamed India for the current crisis. Unlike this government that pulled documents of the MOD website.

China has effectively moved the Line Actual Control westwards by creating new facts on the ground along the entire LAC in Ladakh. They have instigated Nepal and Pakistan to indulge in cartographic aggression. The question, however, remains, why? Did Prime Minister Modi renege on some commitments given to President Xi in Wuhan and Mamallapuram, is it about distance from the US, accepting China’s new hedonistic world order or all of them? Till the time we do not know what the Chinese want we will not be able to deal with them effectively going forward.

The author is a lawyer, Member of Parliament and former Union information and broadcasting minister. The views expressed are personal.

LETTERS

PROMISES GALORE

Come election time, Indian political parties of all hues and shades start making unbelievable promises to win over the electorate. Surprisingly, the bug seems to have bitten the US leaders, too. In a bid to woo the Indian-Americans, the Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden has promised that, if voted to power in the November election, his administration would reform the H-1B visa system and work towards eliminating the country-quota for Green Cards, Biden promises to reform H-1B visa. Let’s hope that Biden doesn’t follow Indian leaders when it comes to fulfilling the promises made. In 2014, we were promised that ₹15 lakh (out of the black money stashed abroad) would be credited to every citizen’s bank account. Six years have gone by; I’m still coming back from the bank disappointed every day.

P.G. Menon
Chennai

MSD RETIRES

HAILING FROM A middle class family in a small city in Jharkhand, Dhoni’s maiden job was as a Travelling Ticket Examiner in Indian Railways. He had a passion for football in his initial days and later this goal-keeper turned out to be a wicket-keeper and Dhoni landed in cricket stadiums to play his helicopter shots. A man with tons of self-belief set a glorious example for youngsters to emulate irrespective of the fields they are in. Mahi was not just hero-worshipped by fans but also by his team members for his sheer brilliance. Above all, MSD stole the heart of many since his cool head-edness in the finishing stage of the games got him the title of “Captain Cool” which he truly deserves for all his achievements. We will certainly miss one of the great gentlemen who brought so much of joy to the millions of this county.

A.P. Thiruvadi
Chennai

Gautam Moorthy



August 9, 2020, will go down as a red-letter day in India’s history. While the world and India, too, remained largely immobilised owing to the ubiquitous Chinese virus, the defence minister, Rajnath Singh, announced what is arguably the most historic reform ever undertaken by India’s ministry of defence (MoD). It put out a list of 101 major war fighting equipment, platforms and systems whose imports are to be progressively terminated from December 2020 to December 2025. There is supposedly yet another “negative import” list due. This left observers hard put to count the systems/platforms left out for future import.

A quick glance at the list indicates that 69 systems/platforms have the cut-off date of December 2020, 11 with December 2021, four with December 2022, eight with December 2023, eight with December 2024 and one with December 2025. A cursory look at the timelines would indicate to the astute observer that these have been drawn up keeping in mind the indigenised content already incorporated into the system.

With this announcement closing the tap on imports, India’s ranking as the second largest defence importer in the world next only to Saudi Arabia will certainly drop much to the relief of its government and citizens. Besides saving precious foreign exchange, it will also indicate to the world that India is no longer punching below its weight.

While all this is music to the ears of most Indians as it would boost manufacturing, employment and trade, thereby giving a fillip to the economy, how this would be operationalised is the question that needs to be addressed.

There is a lot of apprehension that has been expressed in the media. Some commentators have stated that this is nothing but new wine in old bottles being as it is a reiteration of the Defence Procurement Procedure 2016 (DPP-2016). However, if one examines that document in some detail, it is seen that this is simply not the case, but a logical conclusion of that policy four years down the line.

In the foreword prefacing that document, the then defence minis-

ter, late Manohar Parrikar, very presciently forecasted this conclusion. He had written, “Hence, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) is determined to treat DPP 2016 as a dynamic and an evolving document and is committed to making improvements based on emerging data and anecdotal evidence, to realise the vision of ‘Make in India’ in the defence sector.” It is evident that this import embargo list is neither a reiteration of that policy nor something completely new, but simply a consequence consistent with that policy.

The other apprehension is that India’s military-industrial complex has not matured enough to be standing on its own feet and delivering the goods. This too is fallacious as a number of platforms/systems that are now being manufactured in India is a testimony to the level of expertise achieved. This has taken place either through tie-ups with firms abroad (the strategic partnership model) or through the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) route.

Going forward, how this embargo would be operationalised is the question rightly asked. First,

India’s defence industry complex, tightly controlled by the government, represented by 41 ordnance factories and nine defence PSUs have now to compete with the private sector and can no longer bank on the Armed Forces to bail them out with orders whose pricing in many cases is exorbitant.

Second, within the private sector, there is a humongous scope for medium and small scale industries to rise to the occasion by ramping up capacities and building up a huge defence industry base to cater for ancillaries, sub-systems and components that would be required if India is going solo and not relying on government imports.

This leads us to the third important factor, which is that the private sector and the corporatised Ordnance Factory Board along with the defence PSUs are free to sign MoUs with original equipment manufacturers abroad to also import critical ancillaries, sub-systems and components for manufacture within India with transfer of technology and with proportionate offsets. This single significant step frees the government from getting involved in complex negotiations

with foreign firms and being compelled to adhering to stringent policies and rules laid down in the government financial regulations and the DPP (Defence Procurement Procedure 2020). All such manufacturers will also be free to export their products making India a net exporter of defence products.

The requirement to drastically reduce imports has long been felt but it needed a strong political dispensation and the will to carry it out. The road ahead is not going to be smooth but this single significant step taken by the government to wean itself away from imports in this crucial domain needs to be applauded. That it was in the making since 2016 is known. However, it appears to have been pushed through now because of the combination of a slackening economy, the deleterious effect of Covid-19 and, above all, by China’s transgressions in Eastern Ladakh. How this will play out remains to be seen.

Lt. Gen. Gautam Moorthy (Retd) is a former member of the Armed Forces Tribunal and a former director-general of ordnance services

MoD embargoes: Private sector has to play a key role

SHORT TAKES

Former cricketer
Chetan no more

New Delhi: One of Indian cricket's most well-known batsmen without an international hundred, former opener Chetan Chauhan died on Sunday due to Covid-19 related complications after being put on life support for nearly 36 hours.

Chauhan, who was 73, was serving as the Minister of Sainik Welfare, Home Guards, and Civil Security in the Uttar Pradesh cabinet. He is survived by his wife and son Vinayak.

"My elder brother Shri Chetan Chauhan has left us today after fighting a good battle. I sincerely thank everyone who had prayed for his recovery. His son Vinayak will be reaching anytime and we will then perform last rites," his younger brother Pushpendra said.

Chauhan, who was the legendary Sunil Gavaskar's longest serving opening partner, was admitted to Sanjay Gandhi PGI in Lucknow on July 12 after being testing positive for Covid-19. Due to kidney related ailments, his health deteriorated and he was shifted to Medanta hospital in Gurugram.

— PTI

Lyon roar past
crumbling City

Lisbon: Moussa Dembele broke his Champions League drought in timely fashion in Lisbon on Saturday after Maxwel Cornet again proved a thorn in Manchester City's side with his fourth goal in three games against the Premier League heavyweights.

Quite remarkably, no player has struck more often versus Pep Guardiola's City since the start of the 2018-19 season than the Ivory Coast international, with only Tottenham forward Son Heung-Min breaching their defence as many times.

Converted into a wing-back this season by Lyon coach Rudi Garcia on the left of a 3-5-2 formation, Cornet has adjusted seamlessly to the new role after spending most of his time at the club as a right-sided attacker.

While Cornet's magnificent first-time finish gave Lyon the lead against City on 24 minutes, it wasn't until the introduction of top scorer Dembele that the French side administered the knockout blow to one of the competition's favourites for the title. — AFP

Hamilton claims
Spanish GP

Barcelona: Lewis Hamilton claimed his 88th Formula One career victory and, with it, an outright record 156th podium finish on Sunday when he drove his Mercedes to a masterful victory in the Spanish Grand Prix. It was the world championship leader and six-time champion's fifth win in Spain and his fourth in consecutive years, extending his record run of finishes in the points to 39.

Hamilton came home 24 seconds ahead of nearest title race rival Max Verstappen of Red Bull who finished 20 seconds ahead of Valtteri Bottas in the second Mercedes.

Hamilton had shared a record 155 podium finishes with Michael Schumacher whose other records for championships and wins are in the Briton's sights this year. His victory increased his lead in the drivers' title race to 37 points ahead of Verstappen. Sergio Perez was fourth ahead of his teammate Lance Stroll and Carlos Sainz of McLaren. — AFP

STAGE SET FOR
NBA PLAY OFFS
IN ORLANDO

Miami: An NBA season unlike any other shifts into high gear on Monday with the start of the playoffs in the league's quarantine bubble in Orlando, Florida.

Antetokounmpo's Bucks arrived at the bubble virtually assured of the top seed in the Eastern Conference and own the best record in the league as they head into a first-round meeting with the Orlando Magic. — AFP

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THERE IS ONLY ONE 7

Fans, teammates want BCCI to retire Dhoni's jersey number

New Delhi, Aug. 16: Players and fans Sunday urged India's cricket board to retire Mahendra Singh Dhoni's number seven jersey in a tribute to the two-time World Cup winning captain.

Dhoni, 39, called time on his 16-year-old international career Saturday with a cryptic message on his *Instagram* post that read "From 1929hrs consider me as retired".

The Board of Control for Cricket in India confirmed the news in a statement, saying: "The boy from Ranchi, who made his One-Day International debut in the year 2004, changed the face of Indian cricket with his calm demeanour, sharp understanding of the game and astute leadership qualities."

Dhoni's legions of fans including 7.8 million *Twitter* followers and former teammate Dinesh Karthik said they did not want to see 7 on the back of any other Indian cricketer's jersey.

"I hope the @bcci retire the #7 jersey in white ball cricket Good luck with your second innings in life, I'm sure you'll have a lot of surprises for us there too," Karthik, a wicketkeeper-batsman, tweeted.

Former batsman Mohammad Kaif agreed, writing on *Twitter*: "Can't imagine any one else wearing a Number 7 India jersey again."

There is no provision to retire jerseys in cricket, unlike in football. But the BCCI unofficially retired batting great Sachin Tendulkar's number 10 shirt a few years after his retirement.

Dhoni, a flamboyant wicketkeeper-batsman who led India to win the inaugural Twenty20 World Cup in 2007 and lifted the 50-over showpiece event in 2011, was born on July 7.

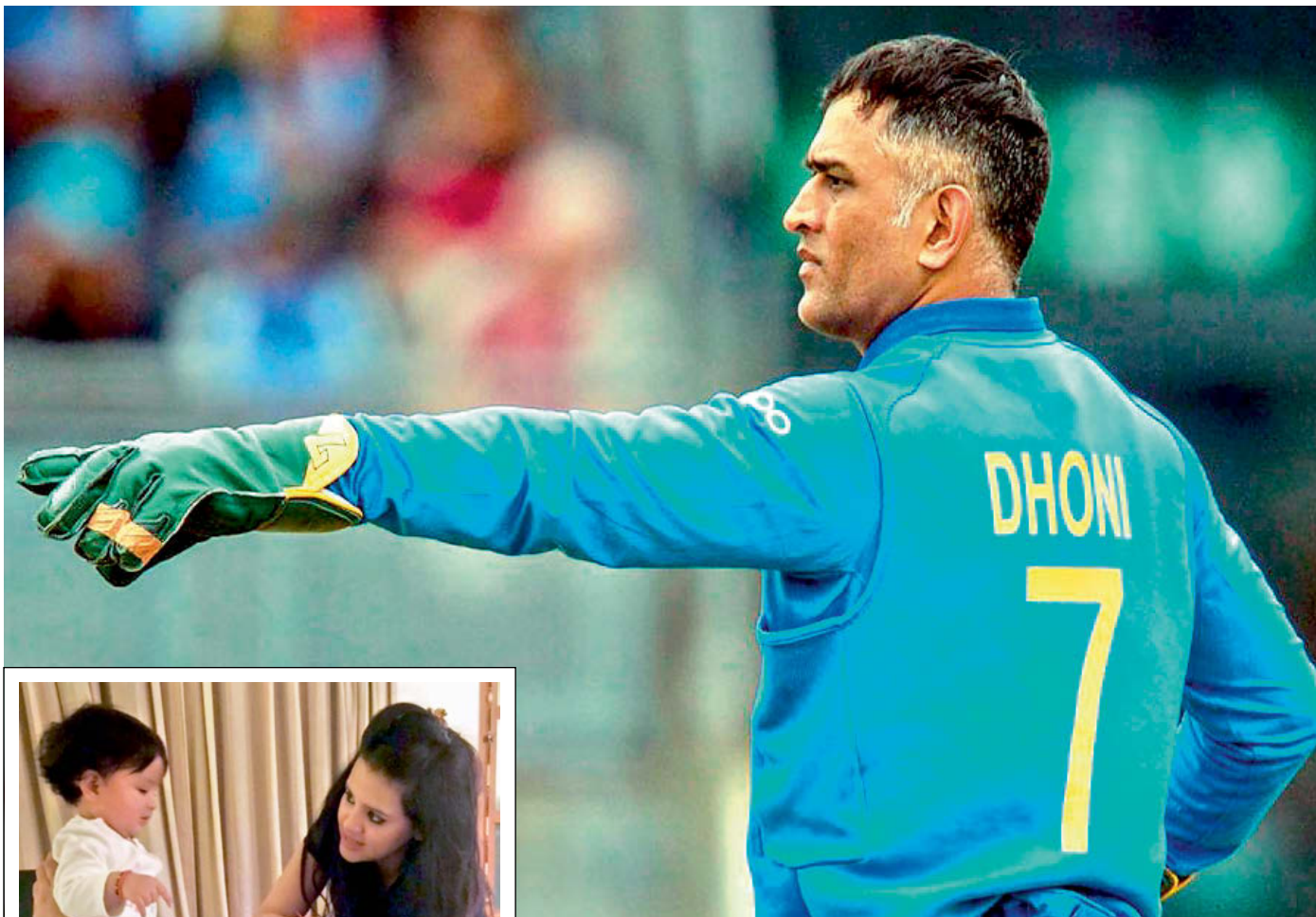
He is a self-confessed fan of Portuguese football megastar Cristiano Ronaldo, who also wears a famous number seven jersey.

"@BCCI should retire 'Jersey Number 7' as a Tribute to Legend MS Dhoni," a fan wrote on *Twitter*.

Dhoni, dubbed 'Captain Cool' because of his unflappable style, will continue to lead his team Chennai Super Kings in the Indian Premier League starting in the United Arab Emirates next month.

The Indian women's team's ODI captain Mithali Raj also congratulated him.

"The man who immortalised jersey no.7, whose sharp mind and a cool head earned him the tag of #CaptionCool, the man who fulfilled billion indian dreams by two World Cup trophies and who bid adieu in his inimitable style. Congratulations #MS Dhoni on an outstanding career," she tweeted. — PTI



Former Indian captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni in this file photo.



Former Indian cricketer Mahendra Singh Dhoni spends some quality time with his daughter Ziva and wife Sakshi in this file photo.

Proud of you,
says Sakshi

New Delhi, Aug. 16: For someone who has the reputation of keeping his emotions in check, Mahendra Singh Dhoni must have held his tears back when he decided to quit international cricket, felt his wife Sakshi while lauding the legend's phenomenal accomplishments.

Sakshi, in a social media post which she shared both on *Instagram* and *Twitter* along with a picture of the former India skipper, congratulated Dhoni on his career. "You should be proud of what you have achieved. Congratulations on giving your best to the game. I am proud of

your accomplishments and the person you are!" wrote Sakshi.

"I am sure you must have held those tears to say goodbye to your passion. Wishing you health, happiness and wonderful things ahead!" she posted.

Called 'Captain Cool' for his calm demeanour and exceptional leadership qualities, Dhoni has etched his name as one of world cricket's great.

Sakshi ended her post with American poet Maya Angelou's quote, "People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." — PTI

WARNE WANTS
MAHI TO PLAY
THE HUNDRED

Melbourne, Aug. 16: Retirement from international cricket done, Australian spin legend Shane Warne now wants Mahendra Singh Dhoni to get on with the game and consider being part of his team London Spirit in next year's The Hundred tournament.

Two-time World Cup-winning former India captain Dhoni retired on Saturday, putting endless speculation about his future to rest.

Spinner Warne said he should give serious consideration The Hundred now. "I just wonder if I could get him down to the London Spirit next year for The Hundred. I might put out a call to see if he wants to play at Lord's. I'll find the money, MS!" Warne told *Skysports*.

The Hundred' is a 100-balls-per-side tournament of the England and Wales Cricket Board which was scheduled to be launched in June this year but had to be postponed to next year due to the prevailing Covid-19 pandemic. — PTI



Former Indian cricketer Mahendra Singh Dhoni (left) poses for a photograph with Indian wicketkeeper Dinesh Karthik after their 2019 World Cup semifinal loss against New Zealand.

DHONI THE WORDSMITH

I thought I should throw the ball to someone who really wants to do well in international cricket.

— ON HANDING JOGINDER SHARMA THE LAST OVER IN 2007 T20 WC FINAL'

God helps those who help themselves. I said God is not coming to save us.

— JOKED LATER ABOUT THE DRESSING ROOM TALK BEFORE THAT TOUGH CHASE AGAINST SRI LANKA IN 2011 WC FINAL, WHICH HE FINISHED WITH A SIX.

You die, you die. You don't see which is the better way to die.

— AFTER HAVING BAD AWAY SERIES' AGAINST ENGLAND AND AUSTRALIA

Actually...Virat used a knife. He stabbed Shikhar, who just recovered out of that then we pushed him to bat. These are all stories...maybe Warner Bros or somebody should pick up this and make a nice a movie out of it.

— ON THE CONTROVERSEY REVOLVING AROUND VIRAT KOHLI AND SHIKHAR DHAWAN

Words fall short a lot of times in life and I think this is one of those moments. All I can say is that you will always be that guy who sat in the last seat of the bus. We have shared a great camaraderie, friendship, understanding because we have always played for the same roles, same goals, which was to make the team win. I have said it before, I will say it again, you will always be my captain.

— VIRAT KOHLI

One of the most influential man in the history of Indian cricket. His impact in and around cricket was massive. Will surely miss him in blue but we have him in yellow. See you on 19th (Sept.) at the toss.

— ROHIT SHARMA

In any list of cricket's greatest, not greats but the greatest, you have to include this man. This man is second to none. And coming from where he did he changed cricket for all times to come. And his beauty is he did it in all formats. I salute you Lieutenant Colonel M. S. Dhoni.

— RAVI SHASTRI

Congrats @msdhoni on a brilliant international career. I loved and enjoyed every contest we had as players and now I still have to find ways to stop you winning games against the @DelhiCapitals. Look forward to saying it in person in a few weeks time.

— RICKY PONTING

Welcome to the retirement club, MSD! What a magical career!

— KEVIN PIETERSEN

Congrats @msdhoni on a fantastic career, he is one of the coolest guys I've played against on the park.

— DAVID WARNER

Crivellaro extends Chennaiyin deal

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG. 16

Chennaiyin FC on Sunday confirmed that Brazilian midfielder Rafael Crivellaro has extended his stay at the two-time Indian Super League champions for the entirety of the 2020-21 season.

The 31-year-old playmaker was the creative spark for Chennaiyin in the run to the 2019-20 ISL final, contributing with seven goals and eight assists in his debut campaign in Indian football. These included crucial strikes against Kerala Blasters and ATK, and arguably the goal of the season against NorthEast United that he struck from 55 yards out near the center-circle in a 2-0 win.

"I am happy to continue with Chennaiyin FC. I



always wanted to continue my journey here after the incredible season we had last time out. It is a privilege to play for these fans, and hopefully we can

deliver more success to them soon enough. We must be positive and optimistic and work hard to achieve our target," said a determined Crivellaro on

renewing his CFC stay. "Rafael (Crivellaro) was one of our standout performers last season and we're delighted to have him continue with us. He has given our fans a lot to cheer about through his quality and brilliance during a memorable campaign. We hope for more of the same and I'm sure he is raring to go again," commented CFC co-owner Vita Dani.

Crivellaro becomes the second Brazilian at CFC to pen an extension for next season, following in the footsteps of compatriot Eli Sabia.

Crivellaro joined CFC ahead of the 2019-20 season and established himself as the fulcrum in midfield, playing the most number of key passes across the league, and linking up well with the

likes of Anirudh Thapa and Edwin Sydney Vanspaul in driving play forward.

His technical intelligence, composure and trickery on the ball proved too much to handle for oppositions as CFC gained momentum with a string of positive results as the season progressed. It will be Crivellaro's aim to pick up from where he left off in the upcoming campaign.

Hailing from the city of Porto Alegre, Crivellaro began his senior professional career in Brazil, followed by a successful four-year spell at Portuguese top-tier side Vitoria Guimaraes. During his time at Vitoria, he won the 2012-13 Taca de Portugal (Portuguese FA Cup) and also featured in the UEFA Europa League.

Team MRF finish
strongly in LatviaDC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG. 16

Team MRF Tyres have taken provisional fifth and sixth positions in Rally Liepaja, the second round of the FIA European Rally Championship.

In the first ERC event for the Team MRF Tyres, Craig Breen & Paul Nagle in the Hyundai i20 R5 showed great pace to take fifth position. The duo had battled dust problems on Saturday's stages and made changes to the car in the overnight service to find additional pace for the six Sunday stages.

The Sunday stages saw six stages in two loops, for a total distance of 87.66 km. The weather was sunny and warm and the dusty gravel

roads meant that the road sweeping effect was in full force.

Meaning the more cars that ran on the road, the more grip there was. Breen/Nagle started the day by taking fifth on SS5 – the longest of the day at 18.11 km.

This was followed by sixth on SS6. Unfortunately, an issue on SS7 meant the crew lost 56 seconds and fell down the leader board. They bounced back on the other side of service taking the second-best time on SS8. The time of 7:55.4 was just 1.5 seconds off the stage winner, Mads Ostberg & Torstein Eriksen. After the short stage nine, they had consolidated their fifth place in their first gravel rally in the ERC with MRF.