

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
NELLORE | TUESDAY | 25 AUGUST 2020

WEATHER

Max: 29.9°C
Min: 24.0°C
RH: 84%
Rainfall: Nil
Forecast: clear.
Max/Min temp. 29/24°C

COVID-19 COUNTER

CASES	DEATHS
(+59,492)	(+852)
31,64,508	58,543

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+1,842)	(+6)
TS: 1,06,091	761
(+8,601)	(+86)
AP: 3,61,712	3,368

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

2,36,88,377

DEATHS

8,14,284

COUNTRIES AREAS WITH CASES

213

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Bhadrapada Shuddha Saptami till 12.24 pm
Star: Vishakha till 2.01 pm
Varjyam: 5.52 pm to 7.24 pm
Durmuhurtam: 8.33 am to 9.23 am; 11.08 pm to 11.54 pm
Rahukalam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm

HJRI CALENDAR

Muharram 5,1442 AH

PRAYERS (SHAHI MASJID)

Fajar: 4.45 am
Zohar: 12.11 pm
Asar: 4.35 pm
Maghrib: 6.27 pm
Isha: 7.39 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.26 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.57 AM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 12.50 PM
MOONSET TODAY —

COUNTER POINT

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

IN BRIEF

AP edu minister tests Covid +ve

Vijaywada: Minister for Education Adimulapu Suresh tested Covid-19 positive. The minister himself declared about his Covid-19 infection on his Twitter handle by saying that when he underwent a test after finding out some symptoms related to Covid-19, he tested positive to the virus. The minister had attended the Cabinet meet on August 19. Meanwhile, AP registered 8,601 new Covid-19 cases scaling up the overall tally to 3,61,712 and 86 deaths taking the toll to 3,368 in the last 24 hours.

Nitrates store had no NoC till Beirut blast

K.M.P PATNAIK | DC VISAKHAPATNAM, AUG. 24

The transit warehouse run by Shravan Shipping Services Pvt Ltd, which stores around 30,000 tonnes of ammonium nitrate at any given point of time, had no fire NoC till the blast at Beirut. The ISO 9001-2008 certified company applied for NoC only after the explosion on August 4.

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Professional tax up for many categories

N. VAMSI SRINIVAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 24

The cash-strapped Andhra Pradesh government has enhanced professional tax on several categories of professions, apart from bringing in new ones into the tax net.

AP registration wing says 10,000 wills registered

V.K.L. GAYATRI | DC VISAKHAPATNAM, AUG. 24

A fallout of increasing number of deaths due to Covid-19 pandemic is that more and more people, particularly those with assets, legal or illegal, are writing their wills to avoid complications in the event of their demise due to Coronavirus.

Scared, they draw up Covid wills

V.K.L. GAYATRI | DC VISAKHAPATNAM, AUG. 24

People are sharing information with close kin about their financial dealings, assets and properties. They include mainly business people and entrepreneurs, apart from senior officials as well as employees. They are executing wills in favour of their spouse, children or loved ones, as the case may be. Most of the people registering their wills are those aged 50 years and above, particularly those will co-morbid conditions. They are bringing to attention of their trusted people details of investments made, mutual funds, long-term capital portfolios,

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NATION | 4
CBI yet to summon Rhea and family



BUSINESS | 7
Bharti hints at hike in rates for mobile services

SPORTS | 8
Covid may have caught up with sprinter Bolt



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Vol. 18 No. 49 Established 1938 | 16 pages | ₹6.00

Rahul stalled for 6 more months

As seniors rebel openly, Congress retains Sonia as interim chief, AICC to pick next party president

SREEPARNA CHAKRABARTY | DC NEW DELHI, AUG. 24

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

Mrs Gandhi, however, said that she bore no "ill-will" towards anybody, referring to more than 23 leaders, including stalwarts like Ghulam Nabi Azad and Anand Sharma, who were signatories to the letter which complained about a drift in the party, called for sweeping changes to the AICC and the election of a permanent president, someone who is "full-time, visible."

Ending the meeting on an emotional note, Mrs Gandhi said, "I am hurt but they are my colleagues. Bygones are bygones, let us work together."

In the seven-hour long meeting of the CWC, the leaking and timing of the letter was discussed more than its content. However, what the letter and the subsequent acrimonious and often emotional discussion did manage to achieve was in effect stalling the return of Rahul Gandhi as the president for another six months or till an AICC session is called. This would be a dampener for "Team Rahul" who have been clamouring for his return as the party president.

Mr Gandhi had resigned from his post after the party's massive defeat in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls in



Congress workers raise slogans outside the AICC headquarters, demanding that the party president should be from the Gandhi family, in New Delhi on Monday. — PTI

which he lost even his family bastion of Amethi.

Asking his mother Sonia Gandhi to continue as the interim president instead, a resolution passed at the end of the CWC meet said: "The CWC has extensively deliberated on the letters... The CWC makes it clear that no one will be or can be permitted to undermine or weaken the party and its leadership now. The responsibility of every Congress worker and leader today is to fight the assault on India's democracy, pluralism and diversity by Modi government".

It said that the voices of "our two leaders" (Sonia and Rahul) have inspired a generation of Indians, both within and outside of the Congress, to rise and demand answers from this government which seeks to desperately distract the people through shallow and manufactured issues.

Congress in AP, TS supports Gandhis

S.A. ISHAQUI and SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC HYDERABAD, VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 24

The Congress in the Telugu states firmly backed the Gandhi family after about 23 party leaders pressed for leadership change ahead of Monday's Congress Working Committee meeting.

TPCC chief Uttam Kumar Reddy said he was happy that Congress president Sonia Gandhi had agreed to continue in the post for six months, while APCC chief Dr Sake Sailajanath said the party unit had unanimously

resolved that she should continue to helm the party. Most leaders in the TPCC have written to the AICC and issued statements supporting Sonia Gandhi's leadership and her legacy, to be followed by party leader Rahul Gandhi.

Uttam Kumar Reddy said Sonia Gandhi and her family have a special place in the hearts of Telangana state cadres and all sections of society. "Besides the huge sacrifices the Gandhi family has made, the contribution they have made in building modern India is huge."

■ Page 2: AP leaders want Sonia to continue

Dissent brewing for over a year, Cong ignored it

ASHHAR KHAN | DC NEW DELHI, AUG. 24

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

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

In the last eight months, several leaders have sought time with Mr Gandhi but he has not met

CONGRESS DENIES RAHUL 'COLLUSION WITH BJP' TALK

New Delhi, Aug. 24: The Congress on Monday denied that Rahul Gandhi had accused any party leader of "colluding with the BJP", saying he "has not said" a word of that nature nor alluded to it. Sources present at the meeting said Gandhi was furious about the timing of the letter and it being leaked to the media, and appeared to suggest whether these leaders were "colluding with the BJP".

At the CWC meeting, Rahul Gandhi lashed out at the party leaders who had written to Sonia Gandhi seeking organisational reforms. — PTI

■ Report on Page 4

SIBAL DELETES TWEET AS RAHUL CLARIFIES STAND

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

Sibal tweeted, "Rahul says 'we are colluding with BJP'. Succeeded in Rajasthan High Court defending the Congress Party. Defending party in Manipur to bring down BJP government. 'Last 30 years have never made a statement in favour of BJP on any issue. Yet 'we are colluding with the BJP'!"

■ Report on Page 4

anybody. There were several grievances that leaders wanted to brief him about, but he was unavailable. Insiders claim that during the MP crisis when ever senior leaders tried to reach out to former Congress leader Jyotiraditya Scindia, he categorically told them that he would speak with Mr Gandhi. The end result was that Mr Scindia staged a coup.

During the Covid-19 lockdown, the Congress constituted a team to give sug-

gestions on how to tackle the pandemic. Former Union health minister Ghulam Nabi Azad was a member of the team. But the very next day he was unceremoniously dropped. This led to major resentment amongst seniors.

At various other levels also senior and junior leaders were slighted by those close to Mr Gandhi. This was visible in a meeting of RS MPs with Mrs Gandhi when Rajeev Satav slammed seniors for the situation in the party.

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IN BRIEF

CERTIFICATE
ISSUED AFTER
CHECK

FROM PAGE 1

Reddy told this correspondent on Monday that they issued the certificate after a team of fire service personnel thoroughly checked the facilities at the warehouse.

The AP Pollution Control Board in addition to this NoC also found several inadequacies for which they asked the Visakhapatnam Port Trust authorities not to allow ships carrying ammonium nitrate to enter Vizag port.

For this reason, one vessel carrying approximately 20,000 tonnes of nitrate has been stranded on the road in its anchorage and another vessel, expected to arrive on August 29, is also struggling to get permission from Visakhapatnam Port authorities.

M.V. Krasezewsaki carrying Cyprus flag with 20,000 tonnes of ammonium nitrate was anchored on the high seas on August 11 after Visakhapatnam Port Trust refused permission on the instructions of AP Pollution Control Board.

While the management of the warehouse is struggling to meet all the requirements, another vessel MV East Ayuthaya carrying Thailand flag with 18,000 tonnes of ammonium nitrate is heading for Visakhapatnam Port which sent its ETA on August 29. For both the vessels, the load port is Ukraine. Another vessel carrying an equal quantity, whose details are still to be known, is also heading for Vizag port.

Chairman of Visakhapatnam Port Trust K Rama Mohan Rao told this correspondent that APCCB officials had sent him a letter stating that since the warehouse designated to store ammonium nitrate in transit has inadequate facilities and some need to be improved, all vessels carrying ammonium nitrate should not be allowed to berth until further orders.

According to Ammonium Nitrate rules-2012, ports in India are not allowed to store ammonium nitrate and should be quickly evacuated on arrival. The rules were framed after the Mumbai terror attack in 2008.

“The AP Pollution Control Board has raised objections to the storage facility at the warehouses being run by stevedores Shraavan Shipping Pvt Ltd. The Board said it still needs improvement of its facility to store the ammonium nitrate,” Port chairman K Rama Mohan Rao said.

The warehouse had over 30,000 tonnes of ammonium nitrate when just 2,750 tonnes ripped through Beirut city killing 100 people and destroying half the city. The blast prompted the authorities to check the storage facility across the ports in the country. Shraavan Shipping Pvt Ltd, which manages the six warehouses, drew the attention of the government as it stores more than 30,000 tonnes at any given point.

“We have all the prerequisite permissions from the government to store the nitrate. The cargo is evacuated soon after arrival. At this moment we have only 5,000 tonnes of ammonium nitrate,” said managing director of Shraavan Shipping G. Sambasiva Rao.

The people in Vizag have expressed fears over storage of ammonium nitrate in the city after the Beirut blast, particularly after a streak of industrial mishaps since May this year.

A common chemical ingredient of agricultural fertilisers, the nitrogen-rich compound is also the main component of the explosive composition known as ANFO — ammonium nitrate fuel oil commonly used in commercial explosives used in mining and construction.

NAIDU ALLEGES
JAGAN IS
'DESTROYING' APDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 24

The Telugu Desam supreme and former chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu slammed the Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy for adopting politically motivated and evil-intended plans to destroy all regions in the state including the capital city Amaravati.

The TD chief castigated the CM for taking up destructive and conspiratorial strategies to virtually reducing the entire state as a burial ground while addressing the media on Monday.

Referring to 15-month long rule, he alleged that the CM had failed to take up any developmental works.

PADDY FIELDS SUBMERGED

Floods recede in Godavari, the second warning may be withdrawn

VADREVU SRINIVAS | DC
KAKINADA, AUG. 24

More than 200 acres of paddy fields were submerged after a gate in Lingannathumu of Kesannakurrapalem village of I. Polavaram mandal got struck. Farmers from the mandal are tense because of the weakening of embankment.

Three days back, there was a breach due to damage of canal gates at Pasuvullanka village. Officials temporarily arrested the breach with patch-works. Meanwhile, floods started receding in Godavari on Monday.

Irrigation officials released 12.97 cusecs of water into sea at Sir Arthur Cotton Barrage in Dowleswaram by 8 pm and a second warning is in force.

It is said that on Tuesday, the second warning may be withdrawn.

As the Godavari floods are receding from the tribal villages in Devipatnam mandal, the residents, both tribal and non-tribal are facing new problems. Their houses are filled with sediment. Normally, after floods they go home to remove the sediment of up to two to three feet. However, now with Section 144 (1) in place, the villagers have to stay back in the relief camps or hillock areas.

Therefore if the water fully recedes, the sediment will solidify in the houses and it will become expensive for them to remove it. They are appealing to the authorities to lift the prohibitory orders and allow them to clean their houses.

Meanwhile, Ch. Pentaiah was not found in Sabari waters in Chinturu agency area. Pentaiah went missing in the waters when the launch hit a pillar of the bridge and capsized four days back. Sources said that officials could not undertake search operations on Monday due to the river's swift current.

Agriculture, horticulture, AP TRANSCO, Roads and Buildings, Panchayat Raju and Housing Corporation officials have started enumeration of losses and damages to properties and crops because of floods.

AP LEADERS
WANT SONIA
TO CONTINUE

FROM PAGE 1

AP Congress leaders want Sonia Gandhi to continue as the party's president and, in case change is inevitable, Rahul Gandhi must take charge.

In a letter addressed to Sonia Gandhi, APCC president Dr Sallajanath said that they had unanimously resolved that the incumbent should continue to lead the Congress at this crucial juncture where a fierce fight was the need of the hour to save democracy in the country. He said that history proved that Sonia Gandhi had taken several challenges head-on and succeeded.

Sallajanath said that in case Sonia Gandhi had decided to make way, Rahul Gandhi should shoulder the responsibility. He opined that no leader in the Congress could provide such a strong leadership and cautioned that any move to deprive the party of such a visionary and courageous leader would give advantage to divisive and dictatorial forces. He asserted that Rahul Gandhi had already proved that he had the daring to take on the 'treacherous' forces.

PCC vice-president N. Tulasi Reddy said, “We want our Congress president Sonia Gandhi to continue to lead the party. Both she and Rahul Gandhi have time and again proved that they are the leaders who could be relied upon. Whether they are in power or not they remain committed to serve the nation and we all had seen the capability of Sonia Gandhi when she led the party to power in 2004 and 2009.”



Palm trees get uprooted after high tide erodes sand on the Ramakrishna beach in Visakhapatnam on Monday. The condition at the sea was rough due to recent rains across the sea coast.

— P. NARAYAN MURTY

Minister Anil confident of all
reservoirs in state getting fullDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 24

Given the incessant rainfall under the influence of south west monsoon in several parts of the state in the last few days, water resources minister P. Anil Kumar Yadav has exuded confidence that all reservoirs in the state will be getting filled to their full capacity this year.

The minister said on Monday that it will be for the second consecutive year that all reservoirs in the state would be getting full after Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has taken charge as Chief Minister of the state.

Mr Anil Kumar said Somasila reservoir received 78 tmc ft of water last year for the first time in its history. He expressed confidence that the same will get repeated this year too. He said water is also releasing water to Kandaleru reser-

FARMERS WILL
PROSPER WITH
ENOUGH WATERNAGESWARA RAO
BALLEDA | DC
KADAPA, AUG. 24

Chief whip Srikanth Reddy said groundnut crop is being cultivated over 25 thousand acres in the constituency like never before. Paddy, red gram and other pulses are being cultivated in about 7,000 hectares. He said the government has provided a support price of ₹2,500 for groundnut crop. The same will be displayed at all Rythu Bharosa Kendrams (RBK).

voir to fill it up.

Drawing comparison on filling up of reservoirs in the state, the minister

It will be for the second consecutive year that all reservoirs in the state would be getting full after Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has taken charge as Chief Minister of the state.

said during the regime of late CM Y. S. Rajasekhara Reddy, AP witnessed filling up of reservoirs to their full capacity. The same is happening again under the regime of current CM Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy. He assured that water will be supplied for cultivation of two crops this year.

The minister said the government is purchasing paddy at remunerative prices from various purchase centres. He advised farmers not to worry about the change in colour of paddy due to incessant rains. He reassured farmers that the government will procure entire paddy from them.

WATER BEING
RELEASED TO
DOWNSTREAMPATHRI RAJASEKHAR |
DC
NELLORE, AUG. 24

Following sizable increase in inflows into the Somasila dam, Chief Engineer of Telugu Ganga Harinarayana Reddy released 4,000 cusecs from Somasila to fill the Kandaleru reservoir on Monday. Kandaleru dam, which is part of the Telugu Ganga project, is the main source for supplying drinking water to Chennai City, apart from Tirupati and Tirumala en route. There is also an outflow of 2.50 lakh acres under this dam.

Somasila has been receiving 22,228 cusecs of Krishna water from Pothireddypadu through the upstream Penna River since the last two days. The present storage level in Somasila is 34.420 tmc ft. The outflow is 5,120 cusecs, including 4,000 cusecs to Kandaleru.

‘Guesthouse not under Buddhist area’

V.K.L. GAYATRI | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, AUG. 24

The minister for tourism M.Srinivasa Rao pointing out Narasapuram MP Raghurama Krishnam Raju's comments, said that the state guesthouse to be constructed on the beachfront near Bheemili does not come under the jurisdiction of the Thotlakonda Buddhist monument area.

Without knowledge about the Thotlakonda area, the Narasapuram MP has pelting stones on the government, Mr Srinivasa Rao pointed out.

Addressing a media conference on Monday, the minister said that the Thotlakonda monument was spread to the extent of about 6 acres.

However, the government has laid a fence, covering 120 acres for the monument. The state government has issued orders for the construction of the state guesthouses in Tirupati, Vijayawada, Kakinada and Visakhapatnam. The proposed site is over one kilometre away from the Buddhist monument. The

HEARING OF
BAIL PLEA OF
RAMESH HOSP
OFFICIALS

COVID | FIGHT

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN |
DC
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 24

A good number of people from four districts have developed community immunity for Covid-19 due to antibodies in their body after getting exposed to coronavirus in the state.

The state government has carried out sero surveillance by picking up persons who were never tested for Covid-19 earlier and also those who never showed any symptoms of infection. Their blood samples were collected and tested to find out whether they developed antibodies in their body. Accordingly, some of those

Thotlakonda monument was under the survey numbers 314, 275, and 296, whereas the proposed guesthouse is under 416 survey number, the minister detailed.

The minister stated the opposition leader N. Chandrababu Naidu, Jana Sena president Pawan Kalyan and Narasapuram MP Raghurama Krishnam Raju, unable to digest the popularity of Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy and YSR Congress government are pelting stones to create confusion among people.

To develop all the three regions in the state, the government has proposed three capitals.

However, Pawan Kalyan and Mr Naidu, with their vested interests, are spoiling the development of the state.

The minister questioned Mr Kalyan's interests in Amaravati and commented about his election from the Gajuwaka district. He added that Mr Naidu and Mr Kalyan wish to grab the votes from the North Andhra region, but they want to develop Amaravati merely.

court here on Monday.

Following the arrest of three officials from the Ramesh Hospitals and moving them to judicial remand, they filed a bail petition in the court. The court held the hearing and

it may give direction on Tuesday.

Ramesh Hospitals managing director Dr P. Ramesh Babu's petition for anticipatory bail has been posted for hearing on Friday.

Sero-surveillance carried out in in Anantapur, EG, Krishna and Nellore districts

Study: Many develop immunity against virus

Health authorities picked up 3,000 persons from the general population and 750 from high-risk people like health care professions, police personnel and carried out sero-surveillance for Covid-19 in each district

Around 70 per cent from rural areas and 30 per cent from urban areas were selected.

For instance, Krishna district has a population of 45.17 lakh as per 2011 census and with 21.7 per cent of them having developed community immunity, there is a major relief for the government as they

require no Covid-19 tests and no treatment as long as the infection does not recur. As they turned out to be Covid-19 warriors, they can also donate their plasma to conduct plasma therapy on relatively young and moderately infected patients. The surveillance report also discloses the people covered under various categories, including containment zones, non-containment zones, high-risk popula-

AP to come up
with legislation
to curb graftDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 24

Andhra Pradesh government will shortly come up with a legislation to curb graft in a time-bound manner within the state. The law will be along the lines of Disha Act dealing with sexual offences against children, which provides for stern punishments.

Presiding over a review meeting with officials on various subjects, including functioning of 14400 call centre, report on good governance from IIM, Ahmedabad, reverse tendering and matters under judicial review on Monday, Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy directed officials to link ACB's call centre number 14400 with the government's toll-free helpline number 1902, so that complaints of graft could be receiving even from the level of village/ward secretariats.

Incidentally, IIM, Ahmedabad professor Sundaravalli Narayana Swamy submitted a report on good governance to CM Jagan, explaining the scope of graft in various government departments and measures to curb the practice.

The Chief Minister felt the need for strengthening the complaints' monitoring system and ordered authorities to link it with offices of district collectors. He maintained that the system should be so streamlined that graft vanishes from offices like town planning, sub-registrar, tahsildar and mandal parishad development officer. He said, “We should develop the monitoring system in such a way that officials should fear seeking a bribe. In case anyone is caught red-handed accepting bribe, such official should get punishment in a fixed time, similar on lines of Disha Act. It is painful to learn that in some cases of graft, investigation has been

On Bhogapuram project too, he said when they negotiated with the company, it helped reduce the area given for developing the airport to 2,203 acres from 2,703 acres. The government thus saved ₹1,500 crore, as each acre cost ₹3 crore.

The Chief Minister directed officials to take up reverse tendering in every government department in case the amount involved is more than ₹1 crore.

He made it clear that even Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams should adopt the same practice.

On judicial review, officials informed the CM that so far 45 projects involving an amount of ₹14,285 crore are under judicial review since August, 2019 to August, 2020.

Kadapa may get
Apple, Redmi unitsNAGESWARA RAO
BALLEDA | DC
KADAPA, AUG. 24

Kopparthi Industrial Estate (KIE), which is close to Kadapa city, is abuzz with excitement with the keenness being shown by Taiwan mobile phone maker Foxconn and Apple to set up Redmi and Iphone manufacturing units in the estate's Electronic Manufacturing Cluster (EMC) and their talks with government officials.

Around 6,553 acres of land has been developed by the AP Industrial Infrastructure Corporation limited (APIIC) in KIE.

There has been a good response from potential promoters to establish units as all required facilities are in place. Currently, about 10 small and medium scale indus-

tries are functional at the KIE, while the APIIC is in the process of setting up an Electronic Manufacturing Cluster (EMC) over 500 acres.

Recently, Foxconn announced its readiness to set up two more manufacturing units to Andhra Pradesh. The company has mobile phone manufacturing units at Sri City near Tirupati and Sriperumbudur in Tamil Nadu. Negotiations are underway to set up units at the Kopparthi EMC. The state Cabinet has approved the EMC. Top sources in the state government told *Deccan Chronicle* that the discussions are in progress.

Then Chief Minister Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy had proposed the mega industrial estate with the idea of developing Kadapa as an industrial hub for Rayalaseema.

A senior health official at Covid-19 Command Centre said, “We have got good results from sero-surveillance as a very good number of people developed community immunity for Covid-19, which is contrary to our below 10 per cent of total population estimate. The state government will shortly take a call on taking up the surveillance in other districts.”

10.7 per cent in high risk population, 17.2 per cent among males, 15.8 per cent among females, 28.8 per cent in urban areas, 12.3 per cent in rural areas and 99.5 per cent among positive patients found to be asymptomatic.

Similarly, in Anantapur district, the prevalence is 19.9 per cent among general population in containment zones, 14 per cent in non-containment zones, 14.8 per cent in males, 24.8 per cent in females, 35.2 per cent in urban area, 14.8 per cent in rural areas and 99.4 per cent among positive patients found to be asymptomatic.

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IN BRIEF

Mobile incinerator for Covid bodies

Nellore: The district authorities have obtained a mobile incinerator to cremate the unclaimed bodies of COVID-19 victims starting from Sunday in Nellore. District Collector K.V.N. Chakradhar Babu has disclosed this while speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*. He said that they have been planning to handover the mobile incinerator to the Indian Red Cross Society unit in Nellore for effective utilisation. "We intend to use it for the bodies which are not claimed by the relatives. This will also be useful for communities with a tradition to cremate the bodies," Mr Chakradhar Babu said. He said that there is no need for any land to carry out the funeral since only ash will be left after the cremation.

Ensure MSP to paddy: Minister

Nellore: The Water Resources Minister Dr P. Anil Kumar Yadav has directed the revenue and civil supplies officials to ensure Minimum Support Price (MSP) to the paddy being procured from the farmers during the ongoing harvest season. He was talking to the officials concerned during a review at his camp office on Monday. The YSRC legislators Nallapareddy Prasannakumar Reddy, Kiliveti Sanjeevaiah and Ramireddy Pratapkumar Reddy, were also present with the Minister. Dr Anil Kumar has instructed the officials to depute the agriculture officer as well as a Tahsildar of every mandal to supervise the paddy procurement process and sort out the issues bothering the farming community on the spot.

Sundarakanda Akhanda Pathana

Tirupati: The third phase of Sundarakanda Akhanda Pathanam is all set to be performed at the Nada Neerajanam platform in Tirumala on Thursday this week. Being performed for the third time, TTD is conducting the Akhanda Sundarakanda Pathanam. At the same time, on 7 July, the first feat was achieved wherein 211 shlokas from Prathama Sarga (first chapter) were recited followed by a rendition of 227 shlokas from Dwitiya Sarga (second chapter) to Saptha Sarga (seventh chapter) for the second time on August 6. During the third phase, which is going to be held on Thursday, 182 shlokas from Ashtama Sarga to Ekadasa Sarga (eighth to eleventh chapters) will be rendered.

PRIVATE COVID HOSPITALS COME UNDER FIRE

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, AUG. 24

Prakasam district collector Pola Bhaskar warned the private hospitals with stringent action if they are found treating Covid-19 patients without permission from the government.

During an emergency meeting with the managements of private hospitals in Ongole on Monday, he said that both the government and private hospitals should offer services for Covid-19 patients as per the guidelines under the ambit of ICMR.

While eliciting information on the allegations over some private hospitals treating Covid-19 patients ignoring the rules, he advised such hospitals to obtain prior permission from the government to treat the infected.

Mr Bhaskar gathered information on private and corporate hospitals misguiding the Covid-19 patients by offering treatment and shifting them to government hospitals whenever their condition turned critical.

Pointing to 27 private hospitals implementing the Arogyasri scheme in the district, he said that those interested among them could apply for permission to admit Covid-19 patients.

Expressing concern over self-medication by some Covid-19 patients under home isolation resulting in complications, he advised the officials to create awareness on treatment facilities at the government hospitals and Covid Care Centres. He instructed the field level staff to keep a tab on those in home isolation and also speed up identification of primary, secondary contacts of infected persons.

■ Pointing to 27 private hospitals implementing the Arogyasri scheme in the district, he said that those interested among them could apply for permission to admit Covid-19 patients

■ Expressing concern over self-medication by Covid patients under home isolation resulting in complications, he advised officials to create awareness

Test for Coronavirus

People queue up in a huge line to get tested for Covid-19 at a community hall at Aarilova in Visakhapatnam on Monday.

— K. MURALI KRISHNA

AP records 86 deaths

Of the 8,601 new cases, EG continues to lead with 1,441

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 24

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

State health authorities released Covid-19 bulletin here on Monday reporting that out of 54,463 samples tested, 8,601 individuals have tested coronavirus positive. Out of 32,92,501 samples tested so far in the state, 2,68,828 patients have been discharged after recovery while 89,516 patients are undergoing treatment.

Among the new confirmed infections, East Godavari continues to lead with 1,441 followed by 965 in Nellore, 933 in Anantapur, 911 in Visakhapatnam, 639 in Kadapa, 589 in Prakasam, 572 in Vizianagaram, 495

■ AP has carried out Covid-19 test on 61,657 samples per one million population and has registered Covid-19 positive rate at 10.99 while Maharashtra conducted tests on 28,994 samples with positive rate at 18.84

in Chittoor, 485 in Srikakulam, 484 in Kurnool, 467 in Guntur, 466 in West Godavari and 154 in Krishna.

East Godavari has been severely affected with regard to cumulative Covid-19 cases as 50,686 have been reported so far followed by 39,319 in Kurnool, 35,726 in Anantapur, 30,859 in Guntur, 30,715 in Visakhapatnam, 30,326 in West Godavari, 30,325 in Chittoor, 23,326 in Nellore, 21,162 in Kadapa, 18,934 in Srikakulam, 17,170 in Prakasam,

16,240 in Vizianagaram, 14,029 in Krishna, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

Rate of recovery from the infection has been good in East Godavari with 32,811 cases followed by 32,437 in Kurnool, 29,238 in Anantapur, 24,515 in West Godavari, 24,274 in Visakhapatnam, 24,059 in Guntur, 21,288 in Chittoor, 17,938 in Nellore, 15,604 in Kadapa, 13,026 in Srikakulam, 11,754 in Krishna, 9,989 in Prakasam, 9,000 in Vizianagaram, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

Nellore and Prakasam have recorded ten deaths each followed nine each in East Godavari and Guntur, eight each in Chittoor and Kadapa, seven each in Srikakulam and Visakhapatnam, six in Anantapur, five in Krishna, four in Vizianagaram, two in

Kurnool and one in West Godavari.

Guntur has been worst affected by recording the highest number of cumulative deaths so far with 340 followed by 337 in Kurnool, 336 in Chittoor, 335 in East Godavari, 282 in Anantapur, 256 in West Godavari, 251 each in Krishna and Visakhapatnam, 233 in Prakasam, 227 in Nellore, 210 in Srikakulam, 167 in Kadapa and 143 in Vizianagaram.

Approximately, 8,741 patients have been discharged after recovery in the last 24 hours.

AP has carried out Covid-19 test on 61,657 samples per one million population and has registered Covid-19 positive rate at 10.99 while Maharashtra conducted tests on 28,994 samples with positive rate at 18.84 and Telangana State on 23,711 samples with the positive rate at 11.19.

SI suspended for booking murder as death case

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, AUG. 24

Sending clear signals to the police force that he would not tolerate corruption and irregularities, Prakasam district SP Siddharth Kaushal suspended Vetapalem sub-inspector V. Ajay Babu on Monday. The SI registered a clear-cut murder case (302 IPC) as a suspicious murder case (174 Cr.Pc) recently.

It is the second incident related to the suspension of police officers for dereliction of duties within one week. It may be recalled that the SP

had suspended Ongole Taluka police station inspector Lakshman two days back for his interference in civil disputes which led to the suicide of an aged man.

In a statement on Monday, Mr Siddharth Kaushal said there is close surveillance on writers and police constables, who are involved in settlements in police stations, by the special branch.

The SP said that he would take action after the inquiry report of the department men involved in irregularities. The SP maintained

that this surveillance would continue on police personnel involved in corruption and irregularities.

He advised the public and the press to bring to the notice of the police control room through the WhatsApp number 9121102266 if they come across any police personnel involved in corrupt practices.

The SP assured that the details of the informer would not be disclosed under any circumstances and that stringent action will be taken on corrupt police officers after an inquiry.

₹6.14 CR INCENTIVE TO 92 INDUSTRIAL UNITS

DC CORRESPONDENT
KADAPA, AUG. 24

District collector Chevuri Hari Kiran directed the officials to make more efforts for the development of industries as a priority for the economic progress of the district.

The district collector

presided over a meeting of the district industries promotion committee in his chamber at the collectorate on Monday.

According to the Industrial Development Policy, 2015-20, the Andhra Pradesh government has released a total of ₹6.14 crore by category for a total of 92 units in

Kadapa district as per the eligibility of MSMEs who have applied for the incentive.

The state government is taking special measures for industrial development in the state.

He wanted to encourage aspiring entrepreneurs to employ the youth in the district.

Suicide bid by Covid-hit family

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, AUG. 24

Three of a family attempted suicide by consuming sanitiser after the head of the family died from Covid-19. The incident took place in Prakasraopeta area under Mharanipeta police station limits in Vizag city on Monday, a day after the head of the family succumbed to the virus.

The police said that a 42-year-old woman, her two daughters aged 20 and 14, consumed sanitiser to end their lives after they learnt

the death of her 53-year-old husband, P. Ramesh Kumar. Reportedly, he runs a medical store in the city where he contracted the virus a few days ago and was admitted to a hospital, and lost his life during the treatment, on Sunday.

Inspector of Police station, Somasekar said that the relatives of Ramesh Kumar initially informed that Ramesh was alive and availing treatment and did not inform about the death to his wife and daughters.

However, Ramesh's wife Sivalakshmi, and daughters came to know that Ramesh

died of Covid-19 on Monday morning.

Somasekar said that all three women were admitted to King George Hospital in Vizag city.

While the daughters are out of danger, the mother is said to be stable and under goring treatment.

A mother along with her son and daughter jumped into River Godavari near Kovvuru of WG district after the head of the family succumbed to Covid-19.

The social activists are demanding the government to take steps to prevent suicides related to Covid-19.

Covid hospital lacks nurses

PATHRI RAJASEKHAR | DC
NELLORE, AUG. 24

With nearly 200 odd paramedical staff including nursing students leaving to their native states, management of COVID District Hospital (Narayana General Hospital) in Nellore is in a fix over handling more than 500 odd COVID-19 patients undergoing treatment in the hospital.

According to sources in the hospital, 90 per cent of the students pursuing nurs-

ing belong to Kerala, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Odisha and Manipur.

All of them left to their hometowns following directions from the authorities after the outbreak of the pandemic, and the situation is being handled with remaining 10 per cent students.

Though the district administration attempted to hire students pursuing last year of nursing to fill the gap in Narayana Hospital, there were hardly

any new joiners. However, there was the sizable turnout for the interviews.

The situation is being attributed to the discouragement from the family members of the nurses to work in the COVID-19 hospitals.

Under the condition of anonymity, an official said Narayana Hospital got an adequate number of doctors, but they are running short of nurses, lab technicians and even CT scan technicians.

Tirupati to get e-Power push for smart city

AVINASH P. SUBRAMANYAM | DC
TIRUPATI, AUG. 24

The advisory committee of Tirupati Smart City Corporation Limited (TSCCL) has approved several eco-friendly projects to develop the temple town as a smart city.

The corporation is scouting for agencies to execute these initiatives, including setting up of battery charging stations, modular toilets, dormitories for RTC commuters, and modernisation of the graveyard.

A major eco-friendly project is setting up of battery recharging stations at 13 points across Tirupati. These will enable e-bikes, e-cars and e-auto rickshaws, which are already operating in the temple city, to recharge their vehicles more easily.

e-Bikes have become popular in recent times with municipal workers using them widely as a means of transport. Similarly, e-cars are being used by most of officials of APSPDCL as well as some private organisations.

The number of e-autos in the city has also increased in recent times.

TSCCL proposes to purchase 40 e-bikes for police to patrol the city. These bikes will have advanced equipment like GPS tracking, apart from siren and floodlights. The advisory committee has suggested that these e-bikes be procured from a reputed electric motorcycle company.

The smart city corporation further wants to create amenities like modular toilets, dormitories, and multi-level car parking facilities for convenience of RTC commuters.

In addition, it is proposing to start a gas-based crematorium at the Harishchandra Smanasa Vatika. Work on this crematorium has already commenced and it is expected to be completed on or before September 10.

The other plans of TSCCL include building a 25 MLD sewage treatment plant in the city, laying new cement concrete roads and creating an additional sports facility on the Nehru municipal high school grounds.

Cop suspended for seeking sexual favour

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC
SRIKAKULAM, AUG. 24

The district superintendent of police suspended a sub-inspector allegedly seeking sexual favours from a woman who was caught selling liquor illegally along with her father. The SP also sought a comprehensive report from the senior police officials in this regard.

According to a report, the police searched the house of the woman's father on August 22 in Tungapeta in Ponduru of Srikakulam district and seized 48 liquor bottles.

However, sub-inspector Kollu Ramakrishna did not register a case against the woman and her father. On Sunday, Ramakrishna made a phone call to the woman and asked her to come to his

residence in Ponduru to discuss the case. He indirectly sought sexual favours from her to help her in the case.

Though she requested him that she wouldn't offer any such favour, the sub-inspector repeatedly insisted on his demand from her.

Disappointed with the attitude of the sub-inspector, she lodged a complaint with the same police station along with the recordings of her conversation with the SI as proof.

Inspector of Ponduru police station Malleswara Rao said that the enquiry is currently underway in the incident.

However, SP, Srikakulam, Amit Bardhar suspended the sub-inspector Ramakrishna and asked the police personnel to submit a comprehensive report on the incident.

SPRING | PROJECT

■ Research on eliminating pollution from canals

Bhimavaram municipality on board

VADREVU SRINIVAS | DC
KAKINADA, AUG. 24

Bhimavaram municipality is one of the partners in "SPRING Project" for making joint research on eliminating pollution from canals and purifying the water.

Two more institutions in West Godavari, Sagi Rama Krishnam Raju Engineering College at Bhimavaram and Elixir Ecobiotech have been selected for making joint researches with 14 educational institutions like IITs and also foreign universities on eliminating pollution from canals and purify-

ing the water content.

This is the only college in Andhra Pradesh to make joint research on the SPRING project (Strategic Planning for Water Resources and Implementation). The total project cost is ₹31.1 crore out of which Rs.6.1 crore has been sanctioned by the Department of Biotechnology of Union Government to Indian Educational Institutions and remaining ₹25 crore sanctioned by European Union.

College Secretary and Correspondent Sagi Vithal Rangaraju said that the

overall aim of the SPRING project is to present an integrated water resource management for reliable water supply for all needs that involve developing innovative simple to operate bio-oxidation systems for treatment of polluted water bodies (stagnant and flowing), cost-effective real time monitoring tools and implementation of good practices in water planning for treatment, supply and usage.

He said that SPRING aims to both improve and develop technologies for the elimination of pollutants from water using a bio-remediation approach. The SPRING Project has

14 partners based in Europe and eight in India. The University of Tromsø of Norway, University of Pecs in Hungary, Northern Research Institute Narvik in Norway, Finnish Water Forum, Finland, Institute of Systems and Computer Engineering Technology and Science INESC, TEC-Portugal and ENVIRO INVEST in Hungary. The Indian partners include IIT Guwahati, Kharagpur, BHU-Varanasi, SRKR Engineering College Bhimavaram, Dr D.Y. Patil School of Engineering in Pune, Bhimavaram Municipality and Palavi Trust in Pune.

Professional tax for partners in firms has been enhanced from ₹1,250 to ₹2,500. The government has deleted STD, ISD and PCO operators, who are now non-existent, from the tax net.

■ Contractors with annual turnover of ₹10 lakh or below are exempt from professional tax. A tax of ₹1,250 has been collected till now for turnover between ₹10 lakh and ₹50 lakh and ₹2,500 for turnover of ₹50 lakh and above. Now, the government will levy ₹2,000 for turnover between ₹10 lakh and ₹25 lakh and ₹2,500 for turnover between ₹25 lakh and above turnover.

SHORT TAKES

PAK VIOLATES
CEASEFIRE
AGAIN

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR, AUG. 24

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

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

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

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

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

BIPIN RAWAT
TALKS OF
MILITARY OPTIONS

DC CORRESPONDENT
with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, AUG. 24

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

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

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

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

The talks between the two sides have been going on for the last three months.

K'TAKA TO BE
FIRST STATE TO
IMPLEMENT NEP

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

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

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

The workshop is being organised by the Bangalore University.

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

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

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

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

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

Rahul fumes over timing of the letter

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

IF RAHUL WANTS,
WE WILL QUIT
GOVT: MAHA
CONG MINISTER

DC CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, AUG. 24

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

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

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

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

KAMAL NATH
WANTS SONIA
AS CONG CHIEF

RABINDRA NATH
CHOUDHURY | DC
BHOPAL, AUG. 24

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

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

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

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

17 injured as bldg collapses in Maha; 70 feared trapped

DC CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, AUG. 24

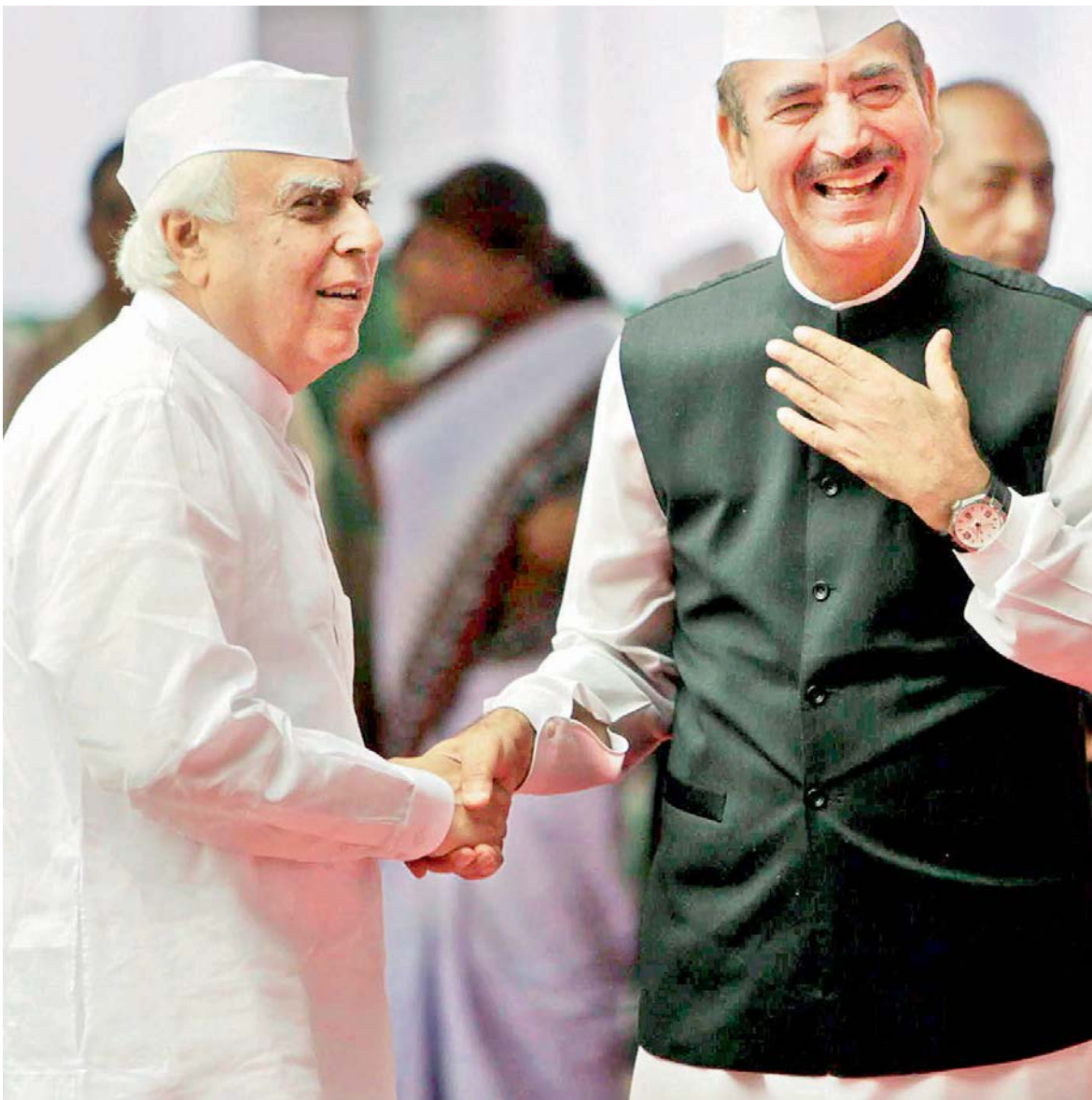
Seventeen persons were injured after a five-storeyed residential building collapsed in Maharashtra’s Raigad district on Monday.

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

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

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

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



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

-PTI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

time president is appointed.

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

The debate over whether a person from outside the Gandhi family was re-ignited last week when Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, in a year-old but recently published interview, endorsed her brother Rahul Gandhi’s stand on a non-Gandhi president for the Congress, saying there are plenty of people capa-

ble of leading the party.

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

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

Asked if a non-Gandhi can run the party with the Gandhi family retaining the overall leadership, he said, “Theoretically yes, practically no.”

Sanjay Kumar, Director at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, said the tenure of Gandhi family presidents cannot be compared with non-Gandhi family presidents as there would be stark difference in the quantum

of tenures.

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

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

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

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

-PTI

KMSS to float political party

MANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, AUG. 24

After AASU and AJYCP, the Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS) has announced to float a new political party to challenge the growth of saffron brigade in Assam.

Regretting that the present government was not allowing its leader - a noted RTI activist Akhil Gogoi to come out of jail by implicating him on various charges, the KMSS president Bhasco D. Saikia said the organisation has already prepared the agenda and constitution of the party.

The party will field candidates in the upcoming elections. Also, the KMSS will hold discussions with all the organisations with which it collaborated during the recent movement against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019.

In 2015 also, the KMSS had launched a political outfit with the name ‘Gana Mukti Sangram

● **IN 2015**, the KMSS had launched a political outfit with the name ‘Gana Mukti Sangram Asom’, which they have decided to dissolve.

Asom’, which they have decided to dissolve.

The new party will have a new name, which the KMSS will make public soon.

The KMSS president said that if their leader Akhil Gogoi comes out of jail by the year end, then the new party will project him as its chief ministerial candidate. “But if he fails in the legal battle, we will chalk out a different strategy,” he added.

Pointing out that the new political outfit will be a regional political force that will represent the people of every caste, religion and tribe of Assam he said, “It will not compromise on any issue related to the interests of Assam and Assamese people.”

KAPIL SIBAL
WITHDRAWS
TWEET
AGAINST RAHUL

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

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

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

“Last 30 years have never made a statement in favour of BJP on any issue. Yet ‘we are colluding with the BJP!’”

Sibal said a little later that he was withdrawing the tweet.

“Was informed by Rahul Gandhi personally that he never said what was attributed to him. I therefore withdraw my tweet,” he said.

Sibal then deleted his earlier tweet in which he had hit out at Gandhi.

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

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

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

-PTI

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

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

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, AUG. 24

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

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

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

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

SHORT TAKES

TURKEY FLOOD: DEATH TOLL RISES TO 7

Ankara: Turkish rescue workers on Monday recovered the body of another victim of severe weekend floods that swept along Turkey's Black Sea coast, raising the death toll to seven, officials said. At least nine other people were reported missing. Helicopters hovered above the town of Dereli and the surrounding region in support of the search-and-rescue mission, which was launched after flooding caused by heavy rain washed away roads and buildings late Saturday. Interior Minister Suleyman Soyulu, who travelled to the region to oversee the rescue operation, said one more body was recovered early Monday. The private *DHA* news agency said the victim was a police officer who was riding inside a vehicle that was swept away by floodwater and fell into a ravine while heading to the disaster area. Two other police officers who were in the vehicle already had been confirmed dead. Two more officers and the operator of a mechanical digger are among the missing. Excavators were seen Monday clearing mud and debris in Dereli, which lies 12 miles (20 kilometres) inland from the Black Sea in Giresun province. — *AP*

CONTAMINATED WATER: 500 FALL ILL IN CHINA

Beijing: Hundreds of people in eastern China have been infected with bacteria which can cause dysentery after drinking contaminated water, state media said Monday, prompting the closure of a local water plant. Nearly 500 people in the rural town of Baoyi — about 550 kilometres (342 miles) west of Shanghai — have developed fever and diarrhoea since late last week. A report by the local government published Sunday found they have been infected with the shigella bacteria — a genus of microbes that can cause dysentery. The town's water supply has been shut down and nearly 300 people have been hospitalised, county officials said. Video footage posted on social media by the state-run *People's Daily* on Monday showed patients sitting in rows of beds in a local hospital. Many of the patients were elderly or children, according to the newspaper. Fears over the safety of drinking water remain a problem for much of China — including its wealthiest cities, where many residents rely on bottled or boiled water. China's Ministry of Water Resources had improved water supply services for 256 million rural residents across the country by the end of July. — *APF*

MANY ALLOWED TO BYPASS CLIMATE RULES

Washington, Aug. 24: Thousands of oil and gas operations, government facilities and other sites have won permission to stop monitoring for hazardous emissions or otherwise bypass rules intended to protect health and the environment because of the Coronavirus outbreak, *The Associated Press* has found. The result: Approval for less environmental monitoring at some Texas refineries and at an army depot dismantling warheads armed with nerve gas in Kentucky, manure piling up and the mass disposal of livestock carcasses at farms in Iowa and Minnesota, and other increased risks to communities as governments eased enforcement over smokestacks, medical waste shipments, sewage plants, oilfields and chemical plants. The Trump administration paved the way for the reduced monitoring March 26 after being pressured by the oil and gas industry, which said lockdowns and social distancing during the pandemic made it difficult to comply with pollution rules.

States are responsible for much of the oversight of federal environmental laws, and many followed with their own policies. *AP's* two-month review found that waivers were granted in more than 3,000 cases, representing the overwhelming majority of requests citing the outbreak. Hundreds were approved for oil and gas companies. *AP* reached out to all 50 states citing open-records laws; all but one, New York, provided at least partial information, reporting the data in differing ways and with varying level of detail. Almost all those requesting waivers told regulators they wanted to minimise risks for workers and the public.

4 yrs on, Amatrice remembers Italy's earthquake dead

Rome, Aug. 24: Bells rang out before dawn Monday in the Italian town of Amatrice to honour the nearly 300 people killed four years ago in an earthquake that remains an open sore with so little rebuilt. The 6.0 magnitude quake cost 299 lives when it razed much of Amatrice and pummeled the neighbouring villages of Accumoli and Pescara del Tronto in the rugged, hilly region early on August 24, 2016.

On Monday church bells sounded at exactly 3:36 am, the moment the quake struck the sleeping villages, as the names of the dead were read out, Italian news reports said.

In Rome Italian President Sergio Mattarella voiced his "solidarity with all the victims and their families... on a dramatic night which also displaced more than 40,000" people whose homes, work places or schools were hit.

But Mattarella said "the work of rebuilding the destroyed localities is unfinished and continues with difficulty," particularly because of bureaucracy.

In a press release, he called on the Italian state to "demonstrate determination and efficiency at all levels." The Italian daily *La Repubblica* recently published an official report saying that as little as eight percent of rebuilding work had been done in the last four years.

The majority of work still in the pipeline "is still far from being completed or has not even started," the paper reported.

"To date, only 186 public interventions have been carried out, out of the 2,347 planned, that is to say a miserly 7.92 percent," the paper said.

Private projects, however, were further along, it added. Examples of slow progress include schools, where out of 250 planned projects, 75 have not yet started and 144 others were still in the planning stages. None of the nine hospital projects and none of the 126 municipal projects have begun, the paper added.

Regarding housing, "only seven out of 311 rebuilds have been carried out," it said. — *AFP*

Half of world's oceans hit by climate change

Pacific, Aug. 24: The world's oceans have turned into a veritable sponge for our emissions, and new climate models suggest we've soaked them right through.

Since the 1950s, our planet's vast bodies of water have absorbed roughly 93 percent of the energy entering the climate system, and while most of that heating has been observed near the ocean surface, rising temperatures are now permeating even the deepest parts.

Real-world data on the deep ocean is hard to come by, but a new estimate, based on recent measurements and nearly a dozen climate models, suggests climate change has already impacted up to about half (20 to 55 percent) of the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Ocean basins. What's more, in just six decades, these human-induced changes in temperature and salinity could very well spread to 80 percent of the world's oceans. "We were interested in whether the levels of temperatures and salt were great enough to overcome natural variability in these deeper areas," explains climate scientist Yona Silvy from Sorbonne University in France. "That is, if they had risen or fallen higher than they ever would during the normal peaks and troughs."

Using temperature and salinity measurements

● **SINCE THE 1950s, our planet's vast bodies of water have absorbed roughly 93 percent of the energy entering the climate system, and while most of that heating has been observed near the ocean surface, rising temperatures are now permeating even the deepest parts.**

from the deep ocean and plugging these into 11 current climate models, the team simulated ocean and atmospheric circulation over the years, with and without the contribution of human emissions.

During the second half of the 20th century, Silvy and her colleagues found human-induced warming was responsible for most observed ocean changes — "statistically" and "unambiguously" different from what would occur naturally. Because heat and salt impact ocean density and circulation, this could have widespread implications. "This affects global ocean circulation, sea level rise, and poses a threat to human societies and ecosystems," says Silvy. Most of the time, heat and salt from the surface of the ocean are transported relatively slowly. — *Agencies*

Storm Laura hammers Haiti, Dominican Republic, kills 12

Brought torrential rainfall, flooding, cut off villages, left many in dark

Port-Au-Prince, Aug. 24: Two hurricanes are expected to slam into the US Gulf Coast in the coming days, forecasters said Sunday, as Tropical Storm Laura killed at least 12 people when it struck Haiti and the Dominican Republic. US media said twin hurricanes were unprecedented in the Gulf of Mexico since records began 150 years ago.

Tropical Storm Marco strengthened into a hurricane with winds of 75 miles (120 kilometres) per hour, and is forecast to hit the state of Louisiana on Monday. Tropical Storm Laura hammered Haiti and the Dominican Republic with heavy rain, killing at least 12 people — 9 in Haiti and three in the Dominican Republic.

It was set to become a hurricane on Tuesday that could hit the US coastal region on Wednesday. The US National Hurricane Center said Storm Laura was "bringing torrential rainfall and life-threatening flooding" to Haiti, which shares Hispaniola island with the Dominican Republic. The storm killed three people in the Dominican Republic's capital Santo Domingo, said Juan Manuel Mendez, head of the country's Center of Emergency Operations.

A woman and a child died at home, while a young man died when a tree fell on his home, Mendez said. The storm has flooded houses, cut off remote villages and left more than one million Dominicans in the dark, Mendez added.

In neighbouring Haiti, a 10-year-old girl was among the nine dead, authorities said. They said some homes were flooded and evacuations were underway.

With brown water up to their knees, some residents tried to save what they could from their flooded homes, while street traders saw their goods washed away. "I didn't know there was bad weather forecast. We don't often have electricity in my neighbourhood so I couldn't follow the news on the radio," said Sony Joseph, trembling with cold.

The Atlantic storm season, which runs through November, could be one of the busiest ever this year, with the Hurricane Center predicting as many as 25 named storms. Laura is the 12th so far.

Haiti, a country of 11 million, has seen a relatively low incidence of Covid-19 — with just over 8,000 cases and around 200 deaths to date — but authorities urged caution to prevent further spread in the aftermath of Storm Laura. "Wear your masks and respect distances, especially in temporary shelters," Interior Minister Audain Filis Bernadel said at a briefing Saturday.

"With Covid, we have considerably less capacity in our shelters," Storms pose a serious risk to Haiti



People walk in a flooded street in the neighbourhood of Pétion ville, Haiti, during the passage of Tropical Storm Laura on Sunday. — *AFP*

Offshore oil and gas production crimped by approaching storms

Oil and gas production in the Gulf of Mexico was slowed Sunday by the approach of two storms that led companies to remove workers from more than 100 offshore platforms.

The Interior Department said that based on company reports at midday, 114 platforms had been evacuated. That is 18% of the staffed platforms in the Gulf, but they account for 58% of Gulf oil production and 45% of its natural gas output.

Energy companies are also moving drilling rigs used to explore for oil and gas. Hurricane Marco is closer to the Gulf coast, but forecasters are more concerned about Tropical Storm Laura, which is expected to reach hurri-

● **THE INTERIOR Department said that based on company reports at midday, 114 platforms had been evacuated. That is 18% of the staffed platforms in the Gulf, but they account for 58% of Gulf oil production and 45% of its natural gas output.**

cane status before slamming the coast around midweek.

A spokesman for Norway's Equinor said Sunday that workers were taken off the company's Titan platform, and production was stopped.

every year from June to November. Even a heavy rainfall can threaten the country's poorest residents, many of them living in at-risk zones, near canals or ravines that can be obstructed by debris and quickly overflow.

The Miami-based Hurricane Center said on Sunday that "a slightly stronger Laura was just south of eastern Cuba" after sending "life-threatening flash flooding likely over the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Cuba and Jamaica."

Marco was expected to bring "life-threatening storm surges and hurricane force winds" to parts of the US Gulf coast on Monday and Tuesday, the NHC warned. — *APF*

3 years after Harvey, some in Houston still waiting for help

Houston, Aug. 24: Some Houston residents say they endured difficult, often hazardous living conditions while waiting months, even years for help from the city to fix flood-damaged homes after Hurricane Harvey. Sleeping in a closet because it was the only space that didn't reek of mold.

Dealing with rodents and roaches that would come in through warped or rotted flooring. Couch surfing at 67 years old until patchwork repairs made a home temporarily

habitable. Those were just some of the things people dealt with as they waited for help they say never came, despite submitting — and resubmitting — paperwork.

Three years after Harvey, some Houston residents feel angry and abandoned as their repair efforts were bogged down by a city programme they described as slow and bureaucratic. The programme has finished rebuilding less than 70 homes since it started January 2019. Some residents, like

70-year-old Doris Brown, turned to nonprofits and the state. They also formed a group — the Harvey Forgotten Survivors Caucus — to bring attention to their plight.

"We have a right to be angry. We past angry now. We mad as hell," said Brown, whose home had to be rebuilt because of mold. City officials admit the repair programme's progress has been slow but blame this partly on the Texas General Land Office, or GLO, which oversees the funding. — *AP*

Big Calif. wildfires rage on as death toll reaches 7

Scotts Valley (US), Aug. 24: Three massive wildfires chewed through parched Northern California landscape as firefighters raced to dig breaks and make other preparations ahead of a frightening weather system packing high winds and more of the lightning that sparked the huge blazes. There were hundreds of other wildfires burning Sunday across the state and nearly 250,000 people were under evacuation orders and warnings. The death toll from the fires reached 7 after authorities battling a big fire in the Santa Cruz Mountains south of San Francisco announced the discovery of the body of a 70-year-old man in a remote area called Last Chance. He had been reported missing and police had to use a helicopter to reach the area of about 40 off-the-grid homes at the end of a windy, steep dirt road north of the city of Santa Cruz. The area was under an evacuation order and Santa Cruz Sheriff's Department Chief Deputy Chris Clark said the discovery of the man's body served as a reminder of how



The LNU Lightning Complex fire continues to spread in Fairfield, California. — *AFP*

important it was for residents to evacuate from fire danger zones.

"This is one of the darkest periods we've been in with this fire," he said. California over the last week has been hit by 650 wildfires across the state, many sparked by more than 12,000 lightning strikes recorded since August 15.

There are 14,000 firefighters, 2,400 engines and 95 aircraft battling the fires. The Santa Cruz fire is one of three "complexes", or groups of fires, burning on all sides of the San Francisco Bay Area. All were started by lightning.

Fire crew made slow progress battling the blazes over the weekend, which

included a break in the unseasonably warm weather and little wind. But the National Weather Service issued a "red flag" warning through Monday afternoon for the drought-stricken area, meaning extremely dangerous fire conditions including high temperatures, low humidity, lightning and wind

gusts up to 65 mph (105 kph) that officials said "may result in dangerous and unpredictable fire behaviour". A fire in wine country north of San Francisco and another southeast of the city have with-

in a week have grown to be two of the three largest fires in state history, with both burning more than 500 square miles (1,295 square kilometres). The wind countryfire has been the most deadly and destructive blaze, accounting for five deaths and 845 destroyed homes and other buildings. Three of the victims were in a home that was under an evacuation order. Officials surveying maps at command centres are astonished by the sheer size of the fires, said Cal Fire spokesman Brice Bennett. "You could overlay half of one of these fires and it covers the entire city of San Francisco," Bennett said Sunday.

In Southern California, an 11-day-old blaze held steady at just under 50 square miles (106 square kilometres) near Lake Hughes in northern Los Angeles County. — *AP*

Firefighters dig in ahead of high winds

Scotts Valley (US), Aug. 24: Three massive wildfires chewed through parched Northern California landscape Sunday as firefighters raced to dig breaks and make other preparations ahead of a frightening weather system. At the CZU Lightning Complex fire in the Santa Cruz Mountains, south of San Francisco, authorities said their effort was hindered by people who refused to heed evacuation orders and those who were using the chaos to steal.

Santa Cruz County Sheriff Jim Hart said 100 officers were patrolling and anyone not authorised to be in an evacuation zone would be arrested. "What we're hearing from the community is that there's a lot of looting going on," Hart said. He said eight people have been arrested or cited and "there's going to be more".

He and county District Attorney Jeff Rosell expressed anger at what Rosell called the "absolutely soulless" people who seek to victimize those already victimized by the fire. Among the victims was a fire commander who was robbed while helping coordinate efforts on Saturday. Someone entered the commander's fire vehicle and stole personal items, including a wallet and "drained his bank account", said Chief Mark Brunton, a battalion chief for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire).

"I can't imagine a bigger low-life," Hart said, promising to catch him and vowing "the DA is going to hammer him". The Santa Cruz fire is one of the "complexes", or groups of fires, burning on all sides of the San Francisco Bay Area. — *AP*

DECCAN
Chronicle

25 AUGUST 2020

Letter a wake-up call to Congress on its future

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

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

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

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

Politics over vaccine race

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

Vladimir Putin of Russia jumped the gun in claiming success first but far from giving Russia another Sputnik moment brought only scepticism and West-inspired rumours that his daughter who got vaccinated had died. For obvious reasons, Donald Trump wants a working vaccine before Election Day (November 3). Narendra Modi had put out a teaser hinting at Independence Day heralding a magic “Made in India” moment. On the other hand, China is already vaccinating thousands of health care and other workers on an urgent basis through a mass programme run by the military. Authoritarian governments in Russia and China can hand out hurriedly developed vaccines or even placebos to its people. The free world must let science take the lead in passing careful judgment on the 78 vaccines that are confirmed as “active” now. USA’s Moderna with its mRNA-based vaccine and UK’s Oxford University-Jenner Institute with their adenovirus variety are the scientific leaders in developing a vaccine that can be franchised to production lines in record time once third phase clinical trials have evaluated their safety.

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

DECCAN CHRONICLE

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Gram: CHRONICLE Postal registration no: No. H/SD-348/2006-08

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FROM OUTSIDE

India’s eco challenges:
A matter of philosophy

Mohan Guruswamy

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

are now in an emergency like we have never encountered before. Even a third of this is about ₹3.2 lakh crores.

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

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

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

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

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

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

LETTERS

LEADERSHIP VOID

Major political parties have no second rung leadership. They depend on an individual or a family. Even people do not accept new individuals to lead the nation. It becomes difficult for us to sustain as a large democracy. People need to change their perceptions and be in tune with changing times. People in Western and European countries accept young leadership.

D.S.P. Rao
Kakinada

CAPITAL STIR

The agitation ‘sponsored’ by the TD for restoration of AP capital at Amaravati has failed to garner popular support in Krishna and Guntur even a though a particular section of people are agitating over the issue for 250 days. Some ardent supporters of N. Chandrababu Naidu partaking in the said agitation are openly talking about the real estate status in Amaravati area following decentralisation of three capitals. They have thus exposed their leaders about the “real” interest in the agitation.

Govardhana Myneedu
Vijayawada

LOCKDOWN RULES

It is imperative and about time to come out with special guidelines as some states are imposing lockdown at the drop of a hat (*New rules for more lockdown in offing, DC, Aug. 24*). It is affecting our battered economy. Jobs are also ebbing away. It is a good move.

Dr C. Ghanshyam
Visakhapatnam

23 drowned near Armoor: Godavari rising

FROM A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NIZAMABAD, AUGUST 24
Latest reports indicate that the Godavari has started rising again this afternoon in the vicinity of Pochampad.

Reports from Sikkonda revenue circle in Armoor taluk say that 20 persons in the outskirts of

Gadkol village of Armoor were drowned in Kappalavagu in Ramadugu project. Three more bodies were reported to have been sighted in Peddavagu in Armoor taluk by field officers. Traffic in Nizamabad-Karimnagar road continues to be disrupted due to breaches of Peddavagu.

It may take several months for repairs to the bridge. It is suggested that PWD authorities should put up a steel ladder for pedestrians crossing.

Aakar Patel

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

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

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

Are Biharis so naïve as to vote based on this sort of material? Perhaps they are, and I will be disappointed to know if this is the case. Bihar is one of the poorest parts of the world.

The state has been governed by two parties that have been in charge for a decade. Will the voter determine whether or not to vote for them based on a Bollywood event? If so, it is amazing. Two other reasons have been put forward as possible reasons for the pushing of this story.

First, that it is targeted at the son of the Maharashtra chief minister.

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

Second, that it is aimed in some fashion at the Muslim actors of Bollywood.

That seems to me to be more reasonable given our times. This government is hostile to Muslims and will use any lie to attack them, including this one.

But to return to the question of voter interest, it was written last week by my friend Shekhar Gupta that the Prime Minister would return to power in 2024 unless he inflicted damage on himself. Gupta’s

argument so far as I have understood it is that the damage inflicted on the voter is not relevant because the voter doesn’t care about such things as the collapse in the economy, the record unemployment, the occupation of our land by the Chinese and the inability of this government to contain the Covid-19 pandemic.

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

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

We are currently engaged with the

Chinese in trying to get them to withdraw from our land, and our generals have had over half a dozen meetings with them already. Presumably, these meetings are being held because what Mr Modi says (or believes) is untrue. There is no reason to negotiate with them if they are not on our property.

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

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

In another nation, this would be signal disaster politically. Is it the case that for all or most Indian voters, their political affiliation is unrelated to their actual life?

Could it be that we vote as we do a Facebook like or Twitter forward? Is our political action through voting and support of a party based not on its performance but on its image? Surely this is not true, and even if it is true for many, it cannot be true for all. Certainly, it is not true for me.

But how many people think normally in this way? If there were many, then we would not have the circus that we do on a Bollywood actor’s death at a time which is the worst that I can remember, and I am not a young man. I cannot remember a time in my life when we had such economic strife, such levels of unemployment, a national epidemic and the enemy inside our house, and such little interest in these and a focus on Bollywood and temples and such things.

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

Aakar Patel is a senior journalist and columnist

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	38,799.08	0.95
Nifty 50	11,466.45	0.83
S&P 500*	3,420.46	0.69
Dollar (₹)	74.31	0.71
Pound Sterling (₹)	97.24	1.55
Euro (₹)	87.81	0.72
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	51,668.348	0.67
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	44.99	0.64
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.221	0.082
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.627	-0.013

* As of 9:30 PM IST

Happiest Minds Tech proposes ₹110 crore IPO

Bengaluru-based IT services firm Happiest Minds Technologies has received market regulator Sebi's approval to float initial public offer. The offer comprises a fresh issuance of shares worth ₹110 crore and an offer for sale of up to 3.56 crore equity shares, according to the draft red herring prospectus. Its promoter Ashok Soota was also the founding CMD of Mindtree. Prior to this, he was the vice-chairman of Wipro.

Facebook to pay \$118 m to France in back-date tax



Facebook's French subsidiary has agreed to pay more than 100 million euros (\$118 million) in back taxes, including a penalty, after a ten-year audit of its accounts by French tax authorities, the company said on Monday. France, which is pushing hard to overhaul international tax rules on digital companies, has said the big tech groups pay too little tax in the country where they have significant sales.

Centre extends driving licence's validity to Dec. 31

The government has extended the validity of expiring driving licence and other motor vehicle documents until December 31 in view of rising Coronavirus cases in the country. This is the third such extension after the earlier advisories issued on March 30 and June 9. Earlier, the validity was extended till September 30. The government said this step aims to help out the citizens in availing transport-related services.

Vietnam tech firm sues TikTok for copyright

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

— Reuters



Kalyan Jewellers plans ₹1,000-cr public issue

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

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, AUG. 24

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

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

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

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

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

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

PNB to raise funds via market

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

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

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

S.S. MALLIKARJUNA RAO, Chairman, PNB

Mallikarjuna Rao said in a virtual interaction.

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

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

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

— PTI

Aug. deals at 10-year high

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

— Reuters

Stamp duty cut to boost realty

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, AUG. 24

In order to boost real estate transactions during the festive season, some of the states are planning to cut stamp duty rates and registration charges.

Maharashtra and Karnataka are mulling a reduction in stamp duty and registration charges this festive season beginning with Ganesh Chaturthi, according to Anarock Property Consultants.

Stamp duty charges in Karnataka are five per

cent for properties costing more than ₹35 lakh, 3 per cent for properties priced between ₹21 lakh to ₹35 lakh and two per cent for properties up to ₹20 lakh. A lower stamp duty for affordable properties was announced in the last state budget and it might be extended to properties above ₹35 lakh as well.

In Maharashtra, stamp duty charges are five per cent in key cities like Mumbai, Pune, Nagpur and Nashik and six per cent in others. A 2-3 per cent reduction in rates

will result in significant savings for homebuyers.

Stamp duty rates in other major states largely hover anywhere between 5-8 per cent, but states like Delhi, UP, Rajasthan, Punjab and Haryana offer relaxation of 1-2 per cent in stamp duty for women buyers.

"To ease inventory pile-up and cost overruns, many players have already topped off discounts with added incentives such as booking amount refunds, statutory fees waivers, cash-back

Four SBI MDs vie for bank's chairman post

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO NEW DELHI, AUG. 24

With the tenure of incumbent chairman of State Bank of India (SBI) Rajnish Kumar ending on October 7, the government has reportedly scheduled a virtual interview for the post on August 28.

As per a top source in the finance ministry, all the four managing directors (MDs) of the bank will appear for the interview on August 28.

"Earlier, three candidates — the bank's managing directors Arijit Basu, Dinesh Khara and SC Setty — were asked to attend the interview. After Ashwani Bhatia, who has

recently resigned as SBI MF MD, took over as fourth SBI MD on August 24, he was also told to appear for the interview," the source said.

"Although all the aspiring candidates have been intimidated by the concerned authority over telephone, no official communication for the inter-

Mittal hints at hike in mobile data tariff

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

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

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



measure of revenue generated per user for a telco.

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

tive Akhil Gupta.

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

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

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

Markets get boost from global cues

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, AUG. 24

Despite a higher number of new Covid-19 cases being reported across the world, market indices in the country moved up to a six-month-high owing to positive global cues, government announcement providing GST relief to smaller businesses, measures for unlocking of the economy and measures to protect domestic chemicals industry.

The Sensex gained 0.95 per cent or 364.36 per cent to close at 38,799.08 and the Nifty-50 gained 0.83 per cent or 94.85 points to close at 11,466.45. Nifty Bank index gained 2.39 per cent due large gains for HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank both of which rose more than 2.5 per cent.

Shrikant Chouhan, executive vice-president, Equity Technical Research, Kotak Securities said, "Global cues helped the Indian market to close in positive territory with the exceptional strength shown in US futures, Hong Kong and European markets. News of a stimulus package later in the week helped boost the overall sentiment."

The FDA approved the emergency use of anti-

● CONTINUING RALLY in the broader market has brought midcap and small-cap indices closer to their one-year high.

● BSE SMALL-cap index gained 1.57 per cent closing at 14,855.09 while the 52-week high is 14,946.21. BSE Mid-cap index gained 0.44 per cent to close at 15,019.07 while the 52-week high is 15,930.78.

body-rich blood plasma from recovered patients on Covid-19 patients which had a positive impact on global markets.

Continuing rally in the broader market has brought midcap and small-cap indices closer to their 52-week high levels.

BSE Small-cap index gained 1.57 per cent closing at 14,855.09 while the 52-week high is 14,946.21. BSE Mid-cap index gained 0.44 per cent to close at 15,019.07 while the 52-week high is 15,930.78.

"Farm prospects have soared with rains most well-spread in three years. Early onset and good distribution of the south-west monsoon has paved the way for robust kharif output, raising hopes in hinterland."

MS to train faculty in quantum space

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, AUG. 24

Microsoft Corp. on Monday said that it will train the Indian teaching faculty in quantum computing skills through a training programme called 'Train the Trainer'.

The programme would be organised by Microsoft Garage in collaboration with Electronics and ICT Academies at Malaviya National Institute of Technology, Jaipur, and National Institute of Technology, Patna.

"This programme will train 900 faculty from universities and institutes across India through E&ICT Academies at

Insti-tutes of National Importance such as IIT Kanpur, IIT Guwahati, IIT Roorkee, MNIT Jaipur, NIT Patna, IIIT-D Jabalpur, and NIT Warangal, equipping academics with the required skills to start building their quantum future," Microsoft said.

Quantum computing applies the properties of quantum physics to process information.

Quantum computers will enable new discoveries in healthcare, energy, environmental systems, smart materials, and beyond.

Microsoft is bringing the capabilities to develop for this quantum future, to the cloud with Azure Quantum.

PwC. "What Covid has accelerated is the sophistication of SWFs trying to build diversification and resilience into their portfolio — and hence looking for other asset classes."

Sovereign funds have been more bearish on property than public pension funds, another big investor in the sector, Global SWF found. While they have outstripped the pension funds in overall investment across most industries and assets this year, by two to one, that ratio is reversed for real estate.

— Reuters



SHORT TAKES

Future Group out as IPL sponsor

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

— PTI

Rain halts James' 600-wkt chase

Southampton: England pacer Jimmy Anderson was frustrated in his bid to reach 600 Test wickets after seeing another catch spilled off his bowling on the fourth day of the third and final Test against Pakistan on Monday. Pakistan was 41-0 in its second innings and trailing by 269 runs when more rain arrived at the Rose Bowl, prompting an early lunch to be taken. The stoppage extended well into the afternoon because of a wet outfield, increasing Pakistan's chances of avoiding defeat.

It was a solid morning session for Pakistan openers Shan Masood (13) and Abid Ali (22), except for when Anderson — on 598 career wickets — found the edge of Shan's bat in the fifth over and the ball flew to wicketkeeper Jos Buttler. Inexplicably, Buttler failed to get a glove on it, the ball hitting his midriff and bouncing to the ground. The 38-year-old Anderson is looking to become the first fast bowler to reach 600 wickets. — AP

Dustin Johnson wins British Open

New York: Dustin Johnson seized the World No.1 ranking in emphatic style on Sunday, firing an eight-under par final-round 63 to win the US PGA Northern Trust by 11 strokes. Johnson finished with a 30-under par total of 254 at TPC Boston, with Harris English a distant second on 265 after a closing 69. Johnson's 22-under third-round total had given him the largest 54-hole lead on tour this season — five strokes — and he was quick to build on it on Sunday. He set the tone with an eight-foot eagle putt at the second, set up by a magnificent seven-iron over the water. He tapped in for birdie at the fourth and rolled in a four-foot birdie at the fifth. Birdie putts of 10 and 13 feet at the seventh and eighth saw him make the turn five-under for the day, and he rolled in another four-foot birdie at the 12th. The only thing that slowed him was a weather delay. — AFP

DONCIC MAKES QUICK WORK OF LA CLIPPERS

Miami: Luka Dončić wasn't about to let a sprained ankle slow him down, nailing a game-winning three-pointer at the buzzer to lift the Dallas Mavericks to a 135-133 overtime playoff win over the Los Angeles Clippers on Sunday. The 21-year old, who was playing with a tender ankle and missing his offensive sidekick Kristaps Porziņģis, finished with 43 points, 17 rebounds and 13 assists to level the first-round NBA Western Conference playoff series at two games each. "This game was from another planet," said Mavericks coach Rick Carlisle. Dončić made a basket with 50 seconds left to tie the score 130-130 then gave Dallas a two-point lead with a spinning move to the basket with 19 seconds remaining. — AFP

Regd. No. H/SD/509/2018-20
Printed and Published by
K. Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited. Printed at Deccan Chronicle Press situated at Plot No. 9 Alwal Village, Vallabh Nagar Taluk, Medchal Malkajgiri Dist. Telangana and Published at 36, S.D. Road, Secunderabad-3. RNI Registration No. 3081/1957. Editor: Aditya Sinha

MANKAD NOT A JOKE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

Ashwin bats for free ball if batsman leaves crease

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

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

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

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

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

— R. ASHWIN on Mankad debate

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

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

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

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

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

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

ONE MISTAKE AND EVENT IS DOOMED, SAYS KOHLI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

Bayern best PSG, clinch CL trophy

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The European Cup joins the Bundesliga trophy — won for an eighth successive season and the German Cup. Bayern join Liverpool as six-time champions of Europe, only

\$500m STRIKE FORCE NEYMAR, MBAPPE FAILS

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

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

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

PSG paid big money — a combined 402 million euros (\$474m) on the pair in 2017 — to sign them in its bid to finally win the Champions League, but they couldn't come through in the decisive game. Both Mbappe and Neymar failed to capitalise on first-half chances that could have changed the story of the game, and neither was effective in the second half when PSG needed to come back from a goal down. — AP

behind AC Milan (seven) and Real Madrid (13). It was the first final to end 1-0 since Real Madrid beat Juventus in 1998 which was also the last final to feature teams who qualified as domestic champions. — AP

Dhoni & Co. bond over virtual gaming

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR | DC CHENNAI, AUG. 24

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

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

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

A CSK official said the players are slowly getting used to the new normal.

"The first few days have been really challenging as we have to ensure that players follow all protocol

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

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

The official said all players have been given customised indoor workouts

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ageing young, Anderson is a history in making



Hemant Kenkre
Silly Point

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

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

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

Playing in and against

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

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

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

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

on English cricket over the last decade has been tremendous.

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

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

their time.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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