

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

COIMBATORE | SATURDAY 29 | AUGUST 2020

## WEATHER



**Max:** 34°C  
**Min:** 23°C  
**Rainfall:** 1mm

## ASTROGUIDE

**Sarvari:** Aavani 13  
**Tithi:** Dwadashi  
**Star:** Puradam  
**Rahukalam:**  
9 am to 10.30 am  
**Yamagandam:**  
7.30 am to 9 pm

### PRAYERS

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

**SUNSET TODAY 6.22 PM**

**SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.58 AM**

**MOONRISE TODAY 3.39 PM**

**MOONSET TOMORROW 4.11 AM**

## CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+76,444)	(+1,018)
34,61,020	62,713

covid19india.org

### STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+5,996)  
**TN:** 4,09,238 7,050

### WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

2,47,74,593

### DEATHS

8,38,343

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES 215

worldometers.info

## Four militants killed in encounter in J&K

**DC CORRESPONDENT SRINAGAR, AUG. 28**

Four militants were killed in a gunbattle with the security forces in J&K's Shopian district on Friday afternoon. Their fifth associate, however, surrendered, officials said. Police and Army officials said the J&K police's Special Operations Group with the Army's 44 Rashtriya Rifles and the CRPF began a cordon-and-search operation in Shopian's Kiloora village after a tipoff on the presence of militants. A police spokesman said four gunmen believed to be cadres of Al-Barq Mujahedin were killed. "The fighting is still on and it is believed another militant is trapped in the area," a senior police officer said.

## Left targets govt over 'act of God' remark

**New Delhi:** Left parties on Friday hit out at the government over its "act of God" remark on the shortfall in GST revenue and accused it of passing its burden on states. The Centre on Thursday had placed before the GST Council two options for borrowing by states to meet the shortfall in Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenues pegged at Rs 2.35 lakh crore in the current fiscal. Briefing reporters after the 41st meeting of the GST Council, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had said that the economy has been hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, which is an 'act of God', and it will see a contraction in the current financial year. — PTI

## COUNTER

## POINT



**I need a big loan to buy a computer and the net package for my daughter, she is in LKG!**

## NATION | 5

**Tharoor 'guest artiste' in Cong: KPCC chief**



## WORLD | 7

**China destabilising Indo-Pacific: US def chief**

## SPORT | 8

**Khel Ratna Vinesh is Covid positive**



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# CM: AIADMK will lead coalition as always

■ Talks on with Telangana, AP to link Cauvery, Godavari

**G. SRINIVASAN | DC THANJAVUR, AUG 28**

The Tamil Nadu government is making all possible efforts to link rivers Godavari and Cauvery, said Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami, here on Friday.

Speaking to mediapersons here, the Chief Minister said that he had already sent two ministers to discuss the issue with the government of Andhra Pradesh, since the river passes through Andhra Pradesh, to which the Andhra Pradesh government had responded positively.

"Similarly, I sent two ministers including fisheries minister Jayakumar to Telangana to discuss the issue with that government. When all chief ministers of the southern states join together, the project can be implemented," added the Chief



Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami on Friday interacting with women farm hands working in a roadside agricultural land in Kovilvenni near Adhanur village in Tiruvallur district. Food minister R. Kamaraj also seen.

Minister.

Taking a question from mediapersons on whether AIADMK would head the alliance or the BJP, the Chief Minister said that electoral alliance in the state, whether for Lok Sabha or state assembly, from the time of former chief ministers like M.G. Ramachandran, J. Jayalalithaa, were headed by only the AIADMK. Now

also, only the AIADMK would head the alliance.

Regarding the Cauvery water issue, the chief minister said, "The Supreme Court order has clearly stipulated the quantum of water to be received from Karnataka by Tamil Nadu every month. Accordingly, we are asking for it, and are getting it. Every month, the Cauvery Water Management Authority

holds a meeting, where we demand our share of water."

Earlier at an official meeting, Edappadi K Palaniswami said that it was the AIADMK government led by former chief minister J. Jayalalithaa (Amma) that established Tamil Nadu's rights on Cauvery through legal means.

■ More on P4

# Covid strikes CSK camp

**SANTHOSH KUMAR | DC CHENNAI, AUG. 28**

In what could be a big blow to their IPL preparations, at least 10 members of the Chennai Super Kings have tested positive for Covid-19 in Dubai. Super Kings, who landed in the UAE on August 21, were supposed to begin their training session on Friday, but have now been forced to extend their room quarantine till September 1.

IPL is scheduled to start on September 19 with Mumbai Indians taking on CSK in the opener.

Neither CSK nor BCCI have issued an official

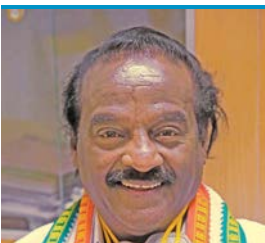
statement, but it's learnt that Indian fast bowler Deepak Chahar, a top franchise official's wife, a few net bowlers and a couple of members of the social media team are among those infected. The franchise is expected to reveal the list on Saturday after the results of the fourth test are out.

As per IPL's Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), those who test positive will be isolated and allowed to return to the bio-bubble only after, at least, two weeks of quarantine and two negative tests.

CSK were the only team to have a pre-departure

conditioning camp in Chennai where they had created a 'mini bubble' at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium. According to sources, a net bowler and a member of the social media team had to be dropped from the contingent after they tested positive in Chennai.

CSK have travelled with a contingent of 55 members. All of them were tested upon arrival at the Dubai airport followed by three more tests on days 1, 3 and 6 at the hotel. "The infection could have been picked up either from those left out from the squad or the airport," said the team source.



## Congress MP Vasanthakumar dies of Covid

**Chennai, Aug 28:** Congress MP from Kanyakumari H. Vasanthakumar died of Covid-19 at a hospital here on Friday, the party said. The 70-year-old first time MP, who was admitted to the Apollo Hospitals on August 10 after he tested positive for coronavirus, succumbed to the illness, a party spokesperson said. Earlier, Apollo Hospitals said the MP was in critical condition. ■ **Obit:** P4

# Highest single day spike: 77, 266 cases

**DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, AUG. 28**

■ In TN, infections continue to hover just below 6,000 mark

■ Ordinance to levy heavy fines on violators soon: Report on P4

India once again recorded a single-day spike of 77,266 coronavirus cases taking the country's overall infections till now to 33,87,500, out of which 25.84 lakh people have recovered. Such high numbers are emerging as the government plans to restart metro train services, call the Monsoon Session of Parliament, hold medical and engineering entrance exams as well as university exams.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Friday held a meeting to discuss the ways to hold the session during which it was decided that all MPs will undergo a RT-PCR test to check their Covid-19 status

before the session starts from September 10. It is learnt the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha may either function on alternate days or have staggered timings.

Maharashtra, with close to 15,000 fresh cases, saw a new high while Andhra Pradesh (10,621) and Karnataka (9,386) too registered large numbers of cases in the last 24 hours. The total deaths due to the deadly virus in one day was 1,057, taking the overall fatalities to 61,529, going by the Union health ministry.

**Washington, Aug 28:** US President Donald Trump castigated his Democratic rival Joe Biden as "the destroyer of American greatness" and assured voters that he will end the raging coronavirus pandemic that has ravaged the economy and quell the civil unrest, as he accepted the Republican nomination for a second term in office. "This election will decide whether we save the American dream" or

whether "we allow a socialist agenda to demolish our cherished destiny," Trump, 74, said on Thursday amidst cheers from some 1,500 ardent supporters who were mostly without masks. "My fellow Americans, tonight, with a heart full of gratitude and boundless optimism, I proudly accept this nomination for President of the United States," he said in his 70-minute address from the

South Lawn of the White House as hundreds of protesters staged a noisy demonstration outside against his policies. "I stand before you tonight honoured by your support. Proud of the extraordinary progress we have made together over the last four incredible years, and brimming with confidence in the bright future, we will build for America over the next four years," Trump said. "In a new



term as President, we will again build the greatest economy in history — quickly returning to full employment, soaring

incomes, and record prosperity!" he said. "We will defeat the virus, end the pandemic, and emerge stronger than ever before," he told the Americans as the country has witnessed over 180,000 deaths and over five million Covid-19 infections, making the the US the worst-hit nation. Party's delegates from across the country at Republican National Convention, which has been drastically scaled

down at its original venue of Charlotte in North Carolina, on Monday re-nominated Trump and Vice President Mike Pence as its presidential and vice-presidential candidates respectively. This is for the first time in recent memory that a presidential candidate has delivered his acceptance speech from the White House. Trump and Pence are being challenged in the Nov. 3 elections. —PTI

# Covid no excuse to put off Bihar polls, says top court

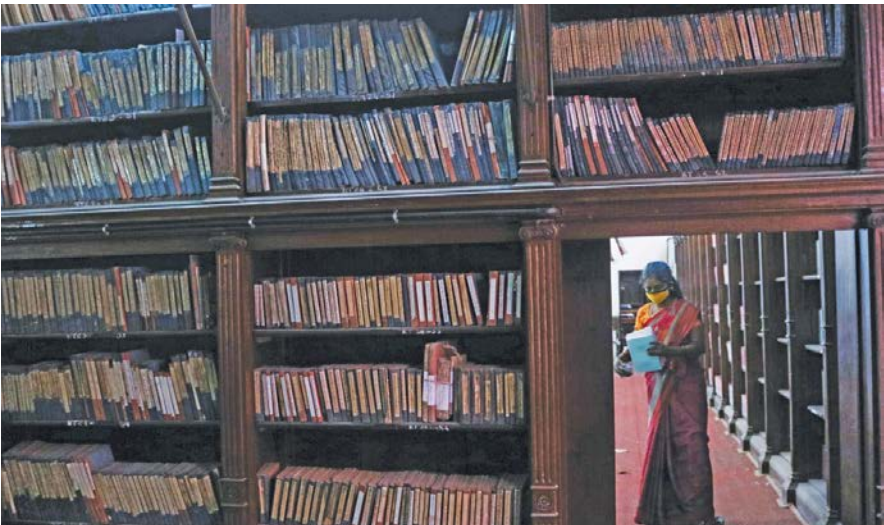
**New Delhi, Aug 28:** Stating that Covid-19 cannot be a ground for postponing elections, the Supreme Court on Friday dismissed a PIL seeking to defer the Bihar assembly polls till the state is free of the novel coronavirus. The Election Commission of India will consider everything, a bench headed by Justice Ashok

Bhushan said.

The bench, also comprising Justices R S Reddy and M R Shah, said it is a premature petition as no notification for the assembly polls has been issued till now. The petitioner, Avinash Thakur, had sought a direction to the Chief Election Commissioner to postpone the polls due to the Covid-19 pan-

demic on the ground that the Representation of the People Act provides for the deferment of polls in extraordinary situations. "How can we ask the Election Commission of India (ECI) to not hold elections? Covid cannot be a valid ground for postponement of elections," the bench stated. —PTI

## Walk into Connemara library from Tuesday



Public libraries in TN will be partially opened with the lending, reference and own book reading sections functioning from September 1. (Above) Employees are getting Connemara public library ready for students and book lovers. ■ **Report on P4** —DC

# Trump accepts Republican nomination, slams Biden



## SHORT TAKES

## NLCIL gets Union coal ministry award

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, AUG. 28

NLC India Limited has bagged the award instituted by the Union coal ministry for implementing the 'Swachhta Hi Seva Programme' by transforming entire Neyveli into a plastic-free, clean and green campus.

The NLC India Limited will set up an Industrial Training Institute at a cost of Rs 6.50 crore in Neyveli township in Cuddalore district. R. Vikraman, director, human resources, NLCIL laid the foundation stone in Neyveli on Friday.

## You can be 'High Commissioner for a Day'

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, AUG. 28

The British High Commission (BHC) has invited applications from women aged 18-23 to be 'High Commissioner for a Day'. The winner will experience a wide range of UK-India works, meet with senior stakeholders and partners to discuss the collective response to Covid-19, and launch a new BHC Gender Charter reaffirming the commitment to gender equality.

In a release, British High Commission, New Delhi requested women applicants to record and upload a one-minute video on 'what global challenges and opportunities do you see for gender equality in the age of Covid-19'. The video must be shared on either Twitter, Facebook or Instagram by tagging 'UKinIndia' and using the hashtag '#DayoftheGirl'. The last day to apply for the competition is September 13, 2020.

## Sterlite probe report may be ready by Jan.

DC CORRESPONDENT  
THOOTHUKUDI, AUG. 28

The one-man panel probing the situation leading to the May 22, 2018 police firing that resulted in the death of 13 anti-sterlite protesters, is expected to submit its report to the government by coming January, said sources.

The panel headed by retired high court Judge Aruna Jegadeesan, constituted on May 24, immediately after the tragedy in 2018, has been extended twice. Having held 21 phases of enquiry till Friday (August 28) here, the panel questioned 517 witnesses including activists, political leaders, journalists and photographers, since its first phase of enquiry on June 4, 2018 and submitted 676 documents.

The next phase scheduled on September 3, will have revenue officials and fire personnel who were present at the riot spot, said a commission source. As the enquiry is delayed by five months due to the pandemic, the commission is said to speed up the probe process, and finalise its report by January 2021.

The probe into the tragedy, initially said to be completed in six months, dragged on to more than two years by getting two extensions. The Covid spread also further delayed it.

## Kidnapped 15-yr-old boy rescued within 6 hours

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, AUG. 28

The police on Friday rescued the 15-year-old son of a businessman kidnapped from near his house at Madhanapuram in Mudichur near Tambaram.

The police cracked the case within six hours and arrested three suspects from near Maraimalai Nagar.

According to police, the boy, Nava Jeevan, son of Thangaraj and a student of a private school in Tambaram, went missing at around 9:26 am on

**Police said the boy went to a nearby shop on a two-wheeler when a car intercepted him. The occupants of the car reportedly kidnapped him and drove away**

Friday, from near his house. Police said the boy went to a nearby shop on a two-wheeler when a car intercepted him. The occupants of the car reportedly kidnapped him and drove away. As Nava Jeevan did not return

home for an hour, his parents lodged a complaint with the Peerankaranai police. ADSP Ashokan and the Peerankaranai police formed a special team to trace the boy and nab the kidnappers.

The team with technical assistance tracked the mobile number of the kidnapped boy. The CCTV footages from the spot were also recovered to identify the car used by the abductors. On scanning the CCTV footages, police trailed the car to Maraimalai Nagar on the city outskirts. The Peerankaranai police

team rushed there and secured the suspects at 2.30 pm.

Police said that one of the suspects, Hariharan, 21, was a former employee of Thangaraj, the boy's father. Thangaraj runs a hotel in Mudichur. Hariharan was sacked recently for his bad behaviour. To seek vengeance, Hariharan kidnapped Nava Jeevan with the help of his friend, Vignesh, 20. Police rescued the boy and seized the car used for kidnapping and its driver Sarath Kumar, 29 has been arrested. Investigation is under way.

## Transmission of corona virus in womb a challenge

T. SUDHEESH | DC  
CHENNAI, AUG. 28

While Tamil Nadu continues to register over 5,000 Covid-19 cases every day, the vertical transmission of virus from mother to baby has become a challenge as a coronavirus-related miscarriage was reported in the country.

The other day, a young Mumbai woman suffered a miscarriage due to Covid-19 while there is no proper study on corona-related complications in pregnancy. The doctors have cautioned that it would be important to take utmost care to prevent miscarriage if a pregnant woman is infected by virus.

The Mumbai woman was infected when she was eight weeks pregnant, but had no symptoms. Four weeks later, a second test showed no trace of the virus in her nasopharyngeal tract. She was healthy, but a week later on August 22 a routine ultrasound test found that the foetus had died.

Dr Vijaya, in-charge, Women's Hospital, Egmore, who assisted as many as 526 infected mothers to deliver suc-

cessfully so far, said that they were carrying out a study on the vertical transmission of virus from mother to baby. "Though no case of miscarriage was reported at the hospital, there could be chance of transmission of virus from mother to baby as the placenta has abundant 'S protein proteases' and 'ACE2' (Angiotensin-converting enzyme 2) that can act as an entry point in the cell for SARS-Cov-2. There is a possibility of the virus travelling towards the womb. It would be a cause for miscarriage despite she testing negative. The replication of virus in the placenta, amniotic fluid and the foetal membrane could lead to the death of unborn babies. The unborn baby could also suffer from a condition called 'hydrops fetalis',

which is the abnormal accumulation of fluid in the body. But there is no detailed study about this," she said.

Dr Kavya Krishna Kumar, gynaecologist, Motherhood Hospital, said that though there was no official study on the relation between Covid-19 and miscarriage, pregnant women who tested positive should be careful and take necessary steps to avoid complications. They should take Vitamin-C without fail and drink plenty of water. If you feel breathlessness, please get admitted. Once tested negative or asymptomatic, pregnant women should strictly avoid unnecessary travelling and babyshowering parties. They have to care if they require consultation with doctors, try video conferencing or phone calls. It will help avoid unnecessary complications," she advised.

However, some early studies by ICMR-National Institute for Research in Reproductive Health (NIRRH) had found that the placenta, supposed to protect the foetus from infections, can act as a reservoir for SARS-CoV-2.



Passengers aboard a bus to Kerala at Koyambedu bus terminus on Friday arranged by Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation for Onam celebrations.

— DC

## Saving waterbodies



Volunteers of Korattur lake protection movement clean Korattur lake on Friday.

— DC

## New president for SICCI

**Chennai:** Ar Rm Arun was unanimously elected as president of the Southern India Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SICCI) at its 110th annual general meeting held online on Aug. 24.

Arun, who is the Chairman of Valingro Group and Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic in Chennai, said: "While Covid has caused significant hardships worldwide, we have to be able to collect ourselves and ensure progress with the available resources at hand. Within SICCI, we have started the planning and a good amount of our way forward has been identified." V.N. Shiva Sankar, the founder of VNS Legal, was elected as VP.



Vengaivasal lake renovation has begun. A view of the lake's eastern fringes.

— DC

## Gold worth ₹64 lakh seized at airport, two arrested

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, AUG. 28

The Air Customs officials at the Chennai international airport have arrested a gold smuggler, who flew in from Sharjah, and the receiver who was meant to collect the gold from him. Gold weighing 1.16-kilogram and worth ₹64 lakh was seized during the operation.

Based on a tip-off, a special alert was maintained to nab the smuggler who was expected to arrive on an Air India Express flight

from Sharjah.

On observing a passenger who appeared to be hurriedly rushing towards the exit with a carton box, officials intercepted the individual and checked his belongings.

The carton box had clothes, household items and a toolkit. Inside the toolkit, an 'electric wrench' machine used for opening nuts and bolts was found which appeared to be unusually heavy. On unscrawling the machine one cylindrical metal piece painted black was found

concealed inside. The gold assayer removed the black paint and certified the metal cylinder to be made of gold of weighing 1.16 kg of 24 K purity valued at ₹64 lakh. The same was recovered and seized under the Customs Act, 1962.

The passenger who carried it was identified as Jahir Hussain, (54) a native of Thiruvallur in Tamil Nadu. He stated that he was handed over the tool kit by an unknown person at the Sharjah airport, with an instruction to hand it over

after reaching his quarantine facility, which is not far from the airport.

In a swift operation after getting his swab test done, an AIU team boarded the bus along with the passenger, with another team following the bus. On reaching the hotel, the passenger contacted the receiver, in order to proceed with the handover. At the time of handover, the receiver and smuggler were arrested. The receiver was identified as Mohammad Asif (33), a Chennai resident. Further investigation is under way.

## Annamalai booked for lockdown violation

DC CORRESPONDENT  
COIMBATORE, AUG. 28

Police has booked a case against district BJP functionaries for violating Covid-19 rules and conducting a meeting in the party office without maintaining social distancing. Sources said, former IPS

officer-cum-BJP party cadre, Annamalai, arrived at the BJP party office at the VKK Menon road near Gandhipuram here, on Thursday evening. As many as 50 party workers assembled in front of the party office here to invite him with a band of musicians, and greeted him

with garlands.

Traffic in the stretch was affected for a while, party's state general secretary G K Selva Kumar, treasurer S R Sekar, vice-president Kanagasabapathy, district president Nandha Kumar, presided over the felicitation function.

Kattoor police, on know-

ing about the meeting held in defiance of social distancing norms and without police permission, booked a case on Friday under IPC Sections 143, 341, 269 and 285 against the top functionaries of the party, including the guest of honour, former IPS official, Annamalai.

## Examinations during Covid: Marks over life?



Sanjay Pinto

The Supreme Court may have tried to play King Solomon in Praneeth & Others Vs University Grants Commission (2020) on the conduct of examinations during the Covid pandemic. By granting liberty to state governments to seek postponement of final exams that were to be held by September 30, but refusing to allow the award of the overall performance during the academic year, the court may have disappointed upcoming graduates.

I respectfully disagree with the verdict. No one has a clue about when the vaccine will be available or when the situation will be brought under control. Postponement will effectively mean the loss of an academic year, missed placement opportunities and admission for higher stud-

ies in India or abroad.

The finding that the practical suggestion or decision of state governments "to promote the students in the terminal semester on the basis of previous performance and internal assessment" is "beyond the jurisdiction of the Disaster Management Act, 2005" in my opinion, reduces State Disaster Management Authorities to paper tigers. Section 18(1) confers on it the "responsibility for laying down policies and plans for disaster management in the state". Section 24 (a) and (b) of the Act empowers the executive authority to "control and restrict vehicular traffic" and the "entry" of people from "vulnerable or affected areas." Should they not have the power to take steps to avert potential cluster spread of the deadly virus at examination halls? Of what use is the overriding effect of Section 72 if decisions of State Disaster Management Authorities in public interest cannot prevail over a central educational regulatory body? At this juncture shouldn't public health come first?



The judgment also does not reflect a holistic view of provisions of the UGC Act, 1956 and the UGC (Minimum Standards of Instruction for the Grant of the First Degree through Formal Education) Regulations, 2003. Section 12 of the UGC Act makes it mandatory for it to consult Universities and other bodies for the "promotion and coordination" of education and for the "determination and maintenance of standards of teaching, examination and research." Clause 6.2 of the Regulations refers to "evaluation" with due "weightage" given to "tests, seminars, presentations,

class performance, field work." Clause 6.4 provides for "continuous sessional evaluation." Clause 6.8 mentions "the student's ability to recall information memorised, but also understanding of the subject and the ability to synthesise scattered bits of information into a meaningful whole." There is also reference to "analytical and original thinking." Clause 8.1 stipulates attendance and "minimum number of credits prescribed by the University for the award of the degree." With a mandated overall assessment, what explains the UGC's obsession with a final exam during this dangerous period?

The Covid scenario is not uniform across the country. Some states have more positive cases. So instead of passing all final year students in the country, as examinations will now have to be held based on the condition in different States, wouldn't this lead to a locational advantage or disadvantage? Wouldn't this fly in the face of Article 14 of the Constitution on equality? Lives matter more than

marks. The Right to Life under Article 21 includes the Right To Precautions like 'staying at home' during a steadily escalating public health emergency. Should students be made to choose between their personal safety and their future? Examination Centres will be the biggest tinder box. Exposing them during this peak stage of transmission of a lethal virus is fraught with a serious risk and danger to their own health, that of their families and the community as they run the risk of spreading it back home to their parents or grandparents who may be at greater risk with comorbidities like hypertension or diabetes. The State has a primary duty to not just improve but also protect Public Health under Article 47 of the Constitution.

By the time examinations are conducted, a sizeable chunk of the population may be asymptomatic carriers of the virus. The Standard Operating Procedure at examination halls, will involve thermal screening of students, teachers and support staff.

Remember how many air passengers had taken paracetamol tablets to lower their body temperature before landing to beat the tests? Are we set to use a failed protocol again, this time for a much larger volume of people? Keeping students together for a few hours for many days is bound to spread the infection, especially with the inevitable use of public toilets.

Our legislative assemblies and Parliament are yet to convene. The re-opening of educational institutions has been indefinitely deferred. Even our courts are hearing cases through video conferencing and some slated to partially resume physical hearing in a careful and phased manner.

Why should final year students be forced to take a risk? Doesn't it create two classes of citizens and is discriminatory and violative of Article 15 of the Constitution? You need to be alive to have a career.

*(The writer is an advocate at the Madras high court, columnist & author)*

## Indians detained in Malaysia repatriated to Chennai

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, AUG. 28

In all, 142 Indian nationals released from immigration detention camps in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, were flown back to Chennai on Thursday morning, by the Indian high commission in Malaysia, in collaboration with the Malaysian government. The group of Indians arrived on a special flight of Malaysian airline Malindo Air organised by the Malaysian government from Kuala Lumpur. Sources said the citizens were detained for allegedly overstaying their visa. In some cases, the agents have cheated them, and in some cases, the sponsors have abandoned them on arrival and in some cases, travel documents had been lost.

Upon arrival, they were interrogated by the Immigration Officers at the Chennai airport for more than 12 hours, after which they were sent to the VIT campus in

Sources said the citizens were detained for allegedly overstaying their visa. In some cases, the agents had cheated them, and in other cases, the sponsors had abandoned them on arrival. Some of them had lost their travel documents

Melakottaiyur, for mandatory quarantine as per rules specified by the Centre.

This is the third-largest number of Indians sent back to India by the Malaysian government since July 11 when 367 Indians were deported to India on two special flights. A group of 219 Indian detainees, mostly from Punjab, were flown to Amritsar and the second group of 148, mostly from southern states, were flown to Chennai.





# TEARFUL HOMAGE



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with profound grief & sorrow

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## SHORT TAKES

Condolences to  
O. S. ManianDC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, AUG. 28

Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami and Deputy Chief Minister O Pannerselvam were among those who conveyed their condolences to Handloom and Textiles Minister O S Manian, whose wife M Kalaiselvi passed away in Chennai on Friday following a bout of illness.

In the joint statement from the AIADMK, Palaniswami and Pannerselvam expressed their grief to the party's Nagapattinam district secretary, saying that Kalaiselvi was supportive of Manian's public life.

DMK President M K Stalin, a Facebook post, said that he spoke to Manian over the phone and consoled him.

PMK Founder Dr S Ramadoss also expressed his condolences to Manian and the other family members.

Neet stir by  
Congress cadreDC CORRESPONDENT  
KARUR, AUG. 28

Members of the district unit of the Congress committee led by district president Chinnasamy staged a demonstration in front of the RMS office here on Friday to condemn the Centre for holding NEET despite the present pandemic. They urged the Centre to withdraw NEET. As part of its nation-wide agitation, similar demonstrations were also held in parts of Tiruchy, Perambalur, Ariyalur, Pudukottai, Tiruvavur and Nagapattinam districts.

Plea to  
withdraw NEPDC CORRESPONDENT  
TIRUCHY, AUG. 28

Members of the district unit of the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI) led by district president, Imam Hassan Faigi, staged a demonstration here on Friday, urging the Centre to withdraw its new education policy, amendment in EIA-2020, and other anti-people acts. Speaking on the occasion, Faigi said the SDPI is holding demonstrations across the country from August 25 to August 31, and appealed to the Centre to withdraw its anti-people notifications.



Saidapet MLA Ma. Subramanian kickstarts the desilting work at Kothandaramar temple tank being carried out by the Chennai Corporation on Friday.

— DC

CM's impromptu meet  
with farm womenDC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, AUG. 28

In an impromptu meeting with women agricultural workers, Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami confirmed for himself if all the relief measures taken by his government in the last five months had reached the expected beneficiaries.

Driving from Thiruvavur to Thanjavur on Friday, Palaniswami spotted about 15 women working in the paddy fields at a village called Kovilvenni Athanur in Thiruvavur district and asked for the car to be stopped.

He walked into the paddy fields and found the women, plucking weeds, to be without facemasks. So he asked for the facemasks in his car to be brought and distributed them to the women.

When he asked them if they had received the Rs 1000 cash relief given by the government and also the free supply of essential goods like rice, dhal, oil and sugar in the last five months, the women replied in the affirmative and were profusely grateful to him for his concerns.

Palaniswami also checked with the women if they were being paid

Record 30 lakh tonnes of paddy  
procured from farmers, says CM

FROM P1

The Chief Minister also told presspersons that 48 work at a cost of ₹944 crore was progressing under the 'Smart City' scheme in the Thanjavur city corporation area.

Earlier, at an official meeting, Edappadi K Palaniswami said that the AIADMK government declared Cauvery delta as a protected agro zone, and stressed that organic farming would be given importance.

On the corona situation, Edappadi said, "With the efforts made by the district administration, the infection has been contained in Thanjavur district. Due to the dedicated efforts made by the district administration, doctors and other Corona warriors, recovery of patients is good in the district. Death rate was also less. Out of 6,108 patients in the district so far, 5,209 were cured."

As many as 1,25,414 persons have so far undertaken corona tests in the district. "Good treatment is

minimum wages and if they had to work all the

given and guidelines by the WHO, ICMR, union health ministry and medical expert teams, are being sincerely followed," he added.

In a discussion held with farmers, members demanded ₹2,500 per quintal as procurement price for paddy, more mobile procurement units and also stressed on importance to be given to organic farming. The government has created a record of sorts this year by procuring 30 lakh tonnes of paddy from farmers, he said. He also held discussions with women's self-help groups and representatives of small and medium industries.

State agriculture minister R Duraikannu, MP R Vaithilingam, district collector M. Govinda Rao, participated in the meetings.

The Chief Minister laid the foundation stones for 11 development works, inaugurated 36 completed projects and distributed welfare measures to 8,357 beneficiaries

days of the week in the field.

Ordinance to levy heavy  
fines on violators soonDC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, AUG. 28

Covid-19 infections continued to be high at 5,996 with 102 fatalities on Friday though health secretary J. Radhakrishnan claimed that active cases in the state had come down.

Speaking to the media after a review meeting in Ripon Buildings, Radhakrishnan sought to dispel 'rumours' spread through social media on corporation workers having targets to achieve in taking people for tests.

He said action would be taken against those who spread such rumours and denied that there was any such target fixed.

**So now the government was monitoring the people if they were abiding by the norms like wearing of facemasks, maintaining social distancing and using of sanitizers**

However, he regretted that people were reluctant to go for tests and urged them not to avoid the tests.

He said that he had travelled all over the state, at the behest of Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami, and found the situation improving.

Everyday 75,000 to 80,000 tests were being done, he

said adding that it was a tragedy that many people continued to violate norms relating to the prevention of the spread of coronavirus.

So now the government was monitoring the people if they were abiding by the norms like wearing of facemasks, maintaining social distancing and using of sanitizers.

An ordinance to levy heavy fines on those breaking the norms was in the anvil, Radhakrishnan said and added that once it was brought violators would have to pay more.

Corporation commissioner G. Prakash said the relaxation on the issuing

of e-passes had led to 40,000 people coming into Chennai every day. They were being closely monitored and quarantined, he said.

Over 3.25 lakh people had come to Chennai after the passes were issued to all who applied for it, he said.

Since the monsoon season has started the corporation was also concerned about the spread of other diseases like dengue and malaria, he said and added that the authorities were monitoring it also. He warned against water stagnation, particularly in the vacant plots, and said that the owners would be fined heavily.

Assault on  
activist: Residents  
stage stirANANTH MATHIVANAN  
DC  
COIMBATORE, AUG. 28

Residents of Madhukkarai in the city's suburbs besieged a police station on Friday demanding the arrest of three persons who attacked a woman activist who led a pollution protest recently against ACC cement factory, functioning with the human habitat.

Police said, a group of over 100 residents of Madhukkarai area besieged the ACC cement factory office a couple of days back alleging pollution, and also staged a protest urging the district administration to take action to stop the smoke and pollution caused by the factory. The protest was withdrawn as police pacified the protestors, promising action.

Meanwhile, Gayathri, resident of Kurumbapalayam, who allegedly led the protest was attacked by a gang of three men identified as Yuvaraj, Ganesan and Rajaji. They had entered the house of Gayathri and verbally abused and attacked her.

Public libraries to open  
from September 1DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, AUG. 28

For the benefit of students and those preparing for competitive examinations, public libraries in the state, which have remained closed since March following the lockdown, will be partially opened with only the lending, reference and own book reading sections functioning from Tuesday, September 1.

An official notification on Friday said village and branch libraries will only

lend books while part-time libraries that do not have the three sections would remain closed.

There are totally 4,636 public libraries in the state. Apart from the Connemara Library and Anna Centenary Library, there are 32 district central libraries, 1,926 branch libraries (314 of them full time), 14 mobile libraries and 749 part-time libraries, according to the notification.

All except branch and village libraries will be

open from 8 am to 2 pm on all working days, while the branch and village libraries will function in their usual working hours (before 2 pm) on all working days.

The government has also issued Standard Operating Procedures to be followed in the libraries with a view to prevent the spread of coronavirus, which include wearing of facemask by staff and visitors to the libraries, social distancing and use of sanitizers.

## Rail overbridge sought

DC CORRESPONDENT  
TIRUVARUR, AUG. 28

Mannargudi MLA TRB Raja has appealed to Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami to immediately commence work on the proposed rail overbridge at Needamangalam, which was proposed a long time back. On meeting Palaniswami, Raja submitted a detailed memorandum to him on the issue at Tiruvavur on Friday. Speaking to presspersons, Raja said he was not given proper invitation to attend the review meeting chaired by the Chief minister. Speaking about the memorandum he submitted to the Chief

Minister, Raja said he had sought for new schemes to be taken in the Mannargudi assembly constituency including underground drainage for Mannargudi town and to expedite the proposed road bridge across Pamani river at Karthanathapuram. He had also sought for a new building for the primary health centre at Paravakkottai, and suitably compensation paid to the affected farmers of Vaduvur, caused due to road extension work between Thanjavur and Mannargudi highway. He said, the chief minister assured him that suitable action would be taken on his memorandum.

## A suave businessman and a politician

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR | DC  
CHENNAI, AUG. 28

Congress MP from Kanyakumari, H Vasanthakumar, who passed away due to Covid-19 on Friday evening at the age of 70, was not just a successful entrepreneur who made it big by starting from the scratch, but a familiar face in Tamil Nadu.

His smiling and cheerful visage greeted people from each and every advertisement of his eponymous company, Vasanth and Co, which he launched in 1978 as a home appliances showroom in Chennai. Today it has 71 stores spread across the southern States and is a pop-

ular go-to brand for domestic needs.

Hailing from a family of politicians - his elder brother Kumari Anandan is a veteran Congress leader who had served as MLA and MP and his niece Tamilisai Soundararajan is the present governor of Telangana - he is also survived by his wife Tamil Selvi, two sons and a daughter. His elder son Vijay Vasanth is a Tamil film

actor who has appeared in several films since 2007.

The first Member of Parliament from Tamil Nadu to succumb to Coronavirus after 18 days of treatment at the Apollo Hospitals in Grems Road, Chennai, Vasanthakumar was born in Agastheeswaram in Kanyakumari district to Hari Krishna Nadar and Thangamma Ammal.

He started his career by working as a salesman in the 1970s before venturing out on his own. His hard work, sagacity, business acumen and courage saw him through in the trade and he went on to open branch after branch. He also decided to

be the brand ambassador of his enterprise and appeared in the advertisements for the promotion of his showroom, thus endearing himself to the people.

Despite the phenomenal growth of his business, Vasanthakumar always wanted to be in politics, perhaps inspired by his elder brother Kumari Anandan, and was associated with the Congress. He launched a satellite television channel, also called Vasanth TV in 2008, though it did take off in the popularity stakes.

His major foray into electoral politics happened in 2006 when he contested the Assembly elections from

Nanguneri Constituency, which is closer to the place of his birth. Again he contested from the same seat in 2016 and won but had to give it up following his triumph from the Kanyakumari Lok Sabha seat in the 2019 general elections. He defeated his BJP rival Pon Radhakrishnan, a locally active politician and former Union Minister, by a margin of 2.5 lakh votes.

Though based in Chennai, he was regularly visiting his constituency and home district and taking part in the activities of the Congress. He is also the Vice President of the Tamil Nadu Congress and chairman of the TNCC Traders Cell.

## HC comes to rescue of people living in Kannagi Nagar, Perumbakkam, Pallikaranai

J. STALIN | DC  
CHENNAI, AUG. 28

In order to streamline the lives of the people residing in Kannagi Nagar, Perumbakkam, Thuraipakkam, Pallikaranai, Semmanchery, Taramani and other adjacent areas in the Slum Clearance Board's tenements, who have been deprived of their jobs and livelihood and they are unable to lead a normal life, the Madras high court has posed twelve queries to be answered by the DGP and the State government.

A division bench comprising Justices N.Kirubakaran and V.M.Velumani passed the order while quashing a detention order under the Goondas Act slapped against a 50-year-old woman of Kannagi Nagar by the state government.

The bench however kept the Habeas corpus petition filed by Saranya, daughter of the detainee, pending for the purpose of visiting the reasons for commission of grave offences by the people living in Kannagi Nagar and surrounding areas. "This court would like to go into the issue in detail so that the residents of that area, who are already indulging in criminal activities are eased out of their

life of crime and are made to lead a normal life any other citizen", the bench added.

Pointing out that similar sentiments have been expressed by another division bench comprising Justices M.Sathyanarayanan and M.Nirmal Kumar, the present bench headed by Justice Kirubakaran said, "It is brought to the notice of this court that majority of the residents living in Kannagi Nagar, Perumbakkam, Thuraipakkam, Pallikaranai, Semmanchery, Taramani and other adjacent areas in the Slum Clearance Board's tenements, are people who have been moved out of City of Chennai and relocated in those areas as they were found to be encroachers upon water bodies and public properties. These people had been earning their livelihood by taking up jobs in the city and subsequent to their relocation and rehabilitation in the tenements of Slum Clearance Board, approximately about 20 to 22 kms away from the city, it seems they have been deprived of their jobs and livelihood and they are unable to lead a normal life. Probably, that is the reason why these people have been lured into a life of crime by anti-social elements. It

appears many people living in these areas have taken to crime as a way of life including drug peddling, as evident from the number of cases coming up before this court. Therefore, to streamline their lives, to ease them out from the life of crime and to create job opportunities and to enable their children to undertake school education and higher studies, this court deems it fit, for the proper adjudication of the issue involved, to suo motu implead the DGP, Secretary, Department of Social Welfare and School Education secretary as party Respondents".

After additional public prosecutor R.Prathap Kumar took notice on behalf of the newly impleaded respondents, the bench posed 12 queries to be answered by the respondents within two weeks.

The bench said this order should not be misunderstood, in the sense, that the entire residents of that area were involved in criminal activities. As it was evident from cases coming up before this court that many of the detainees hail from these areas, especially, Kannagi Nagar, it has become necessary for this court to raise the above queries.

## PIL to translate draft notification in Tamil

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, AUG. 28

A Public Interest Litigation has been filed in the Madras high court, seeking a direction to the Union government to publish the translation of the draft notification issued by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in Tamil and grant further time of 60 days from the date of such publication for making objections or suggestions on the proposal contained in the said draft notification.

A division bench comprising Justices Vineet Kothari and Krishnan Ramasamy before whom the PIL filed by G.Sundarrajan came up for hearing, ordered notice to the Union of India and posted after two weeks further hearing of the case.

Petitioner's counsel M.Radhakrishnan submitted that the Union of India issued a draft notification dated March 23, 2020 for imposing certain

restrictions and prohibition on the undertaking of some projects or expansion or modernization of such existing projects entailing capacity addition, in any part of India, in supersession of the Environment Impact Assessment Notification dated September 14, 2006 and its subsequent amendments as required under sub-rule 3 of rule 5 of the Environment Protection Rules, 1986 for the information of the public. Rule 5 (3) © the Environment Protection Rules, 1986 reads, "Any person interested in filing an objection against the imposition of the prohibition or restrictions on carrying on of the processes or operations as notified under clause (a) may do so in writing to the central government within 60 days from the date of publication of the notification in the official gazette".

The said draft notification dated March 23, 2020 was published on April 11, 2020 in the Gazette of India. The period of

60 days was over on June 11, 2020.

However, on May 8, 2020, the Union of India extended the said time limit for a further period of 60 days by a notification dated May 8, 2020. As per the said notification the time limit fixed by the Union of India for filing the objections or suggestions expires on August 11, 2020, he added.

Radhakrishnan said a mere glance at the draft notification would reveal that drastic changes would be effected in the matter of Prior Environment Clearance and Prior Environment Permission as could be seen from Clause 4 of the draft notification. Clause 26 of the draft notification mentions 40 cases which shall not require Prior Environment Clearance or Prior Environment Permission. Many provisions in the draft notification need a deeper study by the environmental experts and activists. It was incumbent upon the Union of India to afford a reasonable

opportunity to the people to make objections and suggestions in respect of the proposals contained in the draft notification.

Only when the people understand the notification, they would be in a position to make their objections or suggestions. When the draft notification was in English, majority of the people likely to be affected in Tamil Nadu, who know only Tamil, would not be in a position to make their objections or suggestions. Unless the entire notification was translated in Tamil and was published for the information of the people of Tamil Nadu and unless sufficient time was given to them after such publication, it will not be possible for them to make their objections or suggestions. The failure of the Union of India to publish the said notification in Tamil for the information of the people of Tamil Nadu would be violative of Article 14 and 21 of the Constitution of India, he added.



## IN BRIEFS

## HC dismisses Choksi's plea

**New Delhi:** The Delhi High Court on Friday dismissed a plea by Mehul Choksi, an accused in the nearly \$2 billion PNB scam, to conduct pre-screening of Netflix documentary, *Bad Boy Billionaires*. Justice Navin Chawla, after hearing the matter for over two hours, declined to grant relief to Choksi saying a writ petition for enforcement of a private right cannot be maintainable. The court said his remedy lies in a civil suit and granted him the liberty to raise the issue in a civil suit.

## HC stays telecast by Sudarshan TV

**New Delhi:** The Delhi High Court on Friday restrained Sudarshan TV from telecasting its programme titled *Bindas Bol*, whose latest promo claimed that the channel was all set to broadcast a 'big expose on conspiracy to infiltrate Muslims in government service'. The show was scheduled to air on Friday at 8 pm. Justice Navin Chawla issued notice and sought responses of Central government, the Union Public Service Commission, Sudarshan TV, and its Editor-in-Chief, Suresh Chavhanke on a petition filed by former and present students of Jamia Millia Islamia University.

## Pandemic care now part of MBBS course

**New Delhi:** Medical students will now learn about pandemic management along with its social, legal and other aspects in the MBBS course with India's apex medical education regulator introducing a new module to better prepare doctors for challenges posed by pandemics like Covid-19.

## BJP WELCOMES SC's VERDICT ON BIHAR ELECTIONS

NAYEAR AZAD | DC  
PATNA, AUG. 28

The BJP on Friday welcomed the Supreme Court's decision to dismiss the petition seeking deferment of Assembly elections slated to be held this year.

"We welcome the Supreme Court's decision to reject the petition seeking a stay on the Bihar assembly elections. It's the prerogative of the election commission to decide when and how to hold elections. We also welcome the way the election commission is working hard to conduct fair and safe elections during the pandemic," BJP spokesperson Nikhil Anand told this newspaper.

During the hearing, the Supreme Court observed that "Covid-19 cannot be a valid ground to postpone elections." Opposition parties, Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) and Congress, have been expressing strong reservations against holding Assembly polls in the middle of a pandemic. Jamui MP and Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) chief Chirag Paswan joined the opposition in demanding the postponement of elections in Bihar.

The Bihar Assembly completes its current tenure on November 19. In the event of the postponement of elections, the state will be placed under President's rule.

## NATH'S FARM LOAN WAIVER CLAIM A SHAM: SHIVRAJ

RABINDRA NATH  
CHOUDHURY | DC  
BHOPAL, AUG. 28

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Friday called senior Congress leader Kamal Nath's claim that crop loans of 26 lakh farmers in the state had been waived during his regime, a sham.

Reacting to Nath's claim, Chouhan said the farm loan waiver scheme was implemented only in papers.

"The Kamal Nath government gave only loan waiver certificates to the farmers, but did not give money to the concerned banks. This has caused miseries to the farmers since they failed to secure fresh crop loans from banks since their loans were not written off", the Chief Minister told reporters here. The Nath government had failed to pay the premiums of crop insurances of the farmers, he said.

## Shiite mourners detained



Policemen detain Shiite mourners trying to take out a Muharram procession during restrictions under section 144 at Abi Guzar at Batamalo in Srinagar on Friday. Authorities imposed restrictions in Lal Chowk and adjoining areas to foil the Muharram procession. This year, to stop the spread of Covid-19, different parties of Shiite Muslims had given a call to pay heed to the administration and not participate in any large congregations. Meanwhile, the Bombay High Court granted permission for a Muharram procession in Mumbai with stringent restrictions in place. — PTI

## Oppn stages nationwide stir against holding of NEET, JEE

Demand that exams be deferred due to Covid-19 pandemic, floods

**Chandigarh, Aug. 28:** The Congress and its youth wing on Friday staged nationwide protests against holding JEE and NEET amid the Covid-pandemic.

Protests were held in Haryana, Punjab and their joint capital Chandigarh, Rajasthan, Goa, Uttarakhand, and Bengaluru.

Various Opposition parties, including the Congress, have demanded that the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) and the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) be deferred due to the Covid-19 pandemic and floods in parts of the country, even as the Union government has made it clear that they will be held as per schedule with due precautions.

In Haryana, Congress leaders and workers held protests at many places including Karnal, Kaithal, Bhiwani and Sirsa. Congress workers in

Bhiwani burnt an effigy of the Union education minister and demanded that the exams be deferred keeping in view the present Covid-19 situation. In Sirsa, Congress workers, during a protest, demanded that the exams be deferred for now. "What is the urgency of holding these exams when cases are increasing. Why are lives of thousands of students and their families being put at risk," a Congress leader said.

Members of the Chandigarh Territorial Congress, led by its president Pradeep Chhabra, staged a protest against holding of these exams, with him saying this is not the time to "endanger the lives of students". "Don't play with the lives of students," read a placard at the protest in Chandigarh. At many places in Punjab, the Youth Congress submitted memorandums addressed to the Centre

through the district administrations on the issue. It demanded that these exams be put off for the time being.

In Rajasthan, Transport minister Pratap Singh Khachariyawas, chief whip Mahesh Joshi, former Pradesh Congress Committee president Sachin Pilot and other leaders took part in the agitation at the main gate of Malviya National Institute of Technology (MNIT) on JLN Marg. "The Centre is adamant on holding the examinations while ignoring the plight of lakhs of students and putting their lives at stake. Congress will intensify the agitation if the exams are not postponed," Khachariyawas said while addressing the protesters.

Meanwhile, Chhattisgarh CM Bhupesh Baghel strongly opposed the Centre's decision to hold NEET and JEE exams amid the Covid-19 pandemic. — PTI

## Students raise safety concerns on Twitter

**New Delhi, Aug. 28:** Many students have taken to Twitter to express their concern over holding of JEE and NEET during the Covid-19 pandemic, amid a plea by Opposition leaders on Friday seeking review of the Supreme Court's order allowing the Centre to conduct the entrance exams in September.

The hashtag 'speakupforstudentsafety' has been trending since Friday morning with at least 2.25 million posts on the microblogging site.

While many students in their tweets pointed out the challenges of making it to examination centres under the present circumstances, others talked about their inability to

cope with the stress of having to appear for the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) and the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE), especially when Coronavirus cases are on the rise.

"500 cases: Complete lockdown. 75000 cases: Students forced for exams! #SpeakUpForStudentSafety," a Twitter user posted. "#SpeakUpForStudentSafety government really need to look at psychological conditions of the candidates, should give proper instructions about how the students who affected by flood or Covid will be giving exams. SC really needs to reconsider its decision," posted another user.

— PTI

## CBI questions Rhea for 10 hrs in Sushant case

DC CORRESPONDENT  
with agency inputs  
MUMBAI, AUG. 28

A week after taking over the probe of Sushant Singh Rajput suicide, the Central Bureau of Investigation grilled his girlfriend and prime accused Rhea Chakraborty on Friday for over 10 hours.

The questioning comes a day after the agency questioned her brother Showik in the case. The officials also grilled Rajput's flatmate Siddharth Pithani and house manager Samuel Miranda apart from Chakraborty on Friday.

The investigating team began questioning shortly after 10.30 am at their DRDO guest house base. She was asked to provide her financial details which she produced after arriving. The officials are in the process of getting clarity on the allegation raised against her by Rajput's father.

"Chakraborty's family will be questioned at a later stage and if needed they will be grilled together," said an officer privy to the investigation.

Before questioning Chakraborty, the CBI grilled Rajput's flat mate Pithani, cook Neeraj Singh and domestic help Deepesh Sawant. The suicide probe is also being simultaneously followed up by the money laundering probe by the Enforcement Directorate and drugs

## CONG DEMANDS PROBE INTO 'BJP's ANGLE'

SONU  
SHRIVASTAVA | DC  
MUMBAI, AUG. 28

The Maharashtra unit of the Congress on Friday demanded that the "BJP angle" in the Sushant Singh Rajput suicide case should be probed.

Congress spokesperson Sachin Sawant claimed that the CBI was going to question Sandeep Singh, who was producer of the biopic *PM Narendra Modi*, with regard to the drugs aspect of the case.

He also alleged that the BJP demanded a CBI probe to shield Sandeep from Mumbai police's lens.

The Congress' demand came a day after saffron party leader Ram Kadam demanded a thorough probe in the drug nexus prevailing in Bollywood.

probe by the Narcotics Control Bureau, which registered a fresh case.

The FIR was filed based on alleged findings of drug consumption and peddling at his Bandra residence, where he was found hanging on June 14.

## J&amp;K: Four militants killed in encounter

DC CORRESPONDENT  
SRINAGAR, Aug. 28

Four militants were killed in a gunfight with security forces in Jammu and Kashmir's southern Shopian district on Friday afternoon. Their fifth associate, however, surrendered before the security forces, the officials said.

The police and Army officials said that J&K police's counterinsurgency Special Operations Group (SOG) along with the Army's 44 Rashtriya Rifles and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) launched a cordon-and-search operation

in Shopian's Kiloora village following a tip off on the presence of militants.

"As the joint team encircled the suspected spot, the hiding militants fired upon them. The fire was retaliated by the joint team, triggering off an encounter", a police spokesman said.

However, defence spokesman, Colonel Rajesh Kalra, said that the fifth militant "surrendered" before the security forces. He also said that two AK assault rifles and three pistols were recovered from the scene of the clash and that the identities of the slain militants are being ascertained.

## MPs TO GET COVID TESTS; AIRLINES TO SERVE FOOD

DC CORRESPONDENT  
with agency inputs  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 28

India once again recorded a single-day spike of 75,778 Coronavirus cases taking the country's overall infections till now to 34,59,295, out of which 26.40 lakh people have recovered. Such high numbers are emerging as the government plans to restart Metro train services, call the Monsoon Session of Parliament, hold medical and engineering entrance exams as well as university exams.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Friday held a meeting to discuss the ways to hold the session during which it was decided that all MPs will undergo a RT-PCR test to check their Covid-19 status before the session starts from September 10. It is learnt the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha may either function on alternate days or have staggered timings.

The government has, meanwhile, allowed airlines to serve pre-packed meals and beverages on domestic flights and hot meals on international flights depending on the duration of the flight.

The civil aviation ministry has said only single-use disposable trays, plates and cutlery should be used while serving food or beverages in domestic and overseas flights and the crew shall wear a fresh set of gloves for every meal/beverage service.

## 7 killed, 2 missing as Odisha battles floods

AKSHAYA KUMAR  
SAHOO | DC  
BHUBANESWAR, AUG. 28

At least seven people were killed and two others went missing in Odisha since Wednesday due to floods triggered due to continuous rainfall.

According to Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) Pradeep Kumar Jena, majority of the victims were swept away while passing submerged roads.

"We have received reports regarding the death of seven people in the flood. Two others are missing. Two teams of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF)

and equal number of Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force (ODRAF) have been sent to north Odisha districts to carry out rescue and evacuation work," said the SRC.

He added that several thousand people were evacuated from low lying areas and accommodated in cyclone-shelters and other buildings.

Major rivers such as Mahanadi, Baitarani, Brahmani, Subarnarekha and Budhabalanga were in spate with their water flowing above the danger marks, submerging low-lying areas and paddy fields in several districts, disaster management minister Sudam Marndi said.

## HC judge in Tablighi case disagrees with his colleague on anti-CAA stir

**Mumbai, Aug 28:** Justice M.G. Sewlikar of the Bombay High Court, who was part of a bench that quashed cases against foreign nationals who had attended the Tablighi Jamaat event in Delhi, said on Friday that he disagreed with certain observations in the ruling. He did not agree with remarks made by his colleague, Justice T.V. Nalavade, about action taken against members of the Muslim community over protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and National Register of Citizens (NRC), he said.

A division bench of Justices Nalavade and Sewlikar — part of the

● THE bench had said accused were made 'scapegoats' and baseless allegations were leveled against them.

Aurangabad bench of the HC — had on August 21 quashed FIRs filed against 29 foreigners, who had attended the event in Delhi in March this year, for allegedly violating visa conditions.

The bench had said the accused were made "scapegoats" and baseless allegations were leveled that they were responsible for spreading Coronavirus in the country. It said that the state government acted under "political compulsion", and there was a big propaganda against the foreigners who attended the Tablighi gathering.

"A political government tries to find the scapegoat when there is a pandemic or calamity and the circumstances show that there is probability that these foreigners were chosen to make them a scapegoat," the court had said.

However, Justice Sewlikar had stated on August 21 that while he agreed with the operative part of the order (quashing of FIRs), he did not agree with Justice Nalavade on few of the observations, and would pass a separate order. On Friday, Justice Sewlikar issued a four-page order

saying he did not agree with the remarks made by Justice Nalavade. "I find it difficult to concur with the observations (on CAA and NRC) as allegations in this respect are not made in the petitions nor there is any evidence in this regard. Therefore, in my opinion these observations are outside the scope of the petitions," Justice Sewlikar said.

Justice Nalavade in his order had said that there were largescale protests across the country by members of the Muslim community against CAA and NRC as they believed that citizenship would not be given to Muslim refugees and migrants. — PTI

## LETTER SAGA

TVM MP must understand that he has to work within boundaries: Kodikunnil

## Tharoor 'guest artiste' in Cong: KPCC chief

DC CORRESPONDENT  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,  
AUG. 28

A section of top Congress leaders in Kerala have started targeting Thiruvananthapuram MP Shashi Tharoor ever since he, along with 22 prominent Congress leaders, wrote a letter to party president Sonia Gandhi, seeking ground-breaking changes in the organisation and style of the leadership of the party.

KPCC working president, Kodikunnil Suresh, MP and the party's chief

whip in Lok Sabha, said Tharoor was like a 'guest artiste' in the Congress. "He is definitely not a politician. Tharoor is yet to understand that he has to work within the boundaries of Congress organisation. At times he does things in haste," said Suresh.

Suresh, who represents Mavelikkara constituency in the Lok Sabha, said everyone in the party should function in line with the organisational policies and programmes. "Tharoor may be a global citizen but he should not

take any decision or say anything according to his will. He should comply with the party's policies and programmes," he said, while replying to questions from reporters on the sidelines of social reformer Ayyankali's 150th birth anniversary celebrations in Thiruvananthapuram on Friday.

Tharoor on Thursday had sought to steer clear of any controversy related to the letter issue saying that matter should be put to rest. 'I've been silent for four days on recent events in @INCIndia because

once the Congress president says the issue is behind us, it is the duty of all of us to work together constructively in the interests of the party,' Tharoor tweeted on Thursday. 'I urge all my colleagues to uphold this principle and end the debate,' he added in the tweet.

Earlier, former Kerala chief minister, K. Karunakaran's, son and Vadakara MP K. Muraliedharan, mocked Tharoor saying only the high command can talk against an MP if there is any act of indiscipline on his part.

## RAISING ISSUES DOES NOT AMOUNT TO REBELLION: CONG SPOKESMAN

**Mumbai, Aug. 28:** Congress spokesman Anant Gadgil on Friday said raising issues does not amount to rebellion and dared BJP leaders to speak against their national leadership on issues of Chinese 'intrusion' and "failures" on economic and foreign policy fronts. He said internal democracy certainly exists in the Congress party. "Will BJP leaders speak

out against their national leadership? I challenge the BJP to debate on issues of Chinese intrusion, foreign policy and economy. Will BJP leaders raise voice against their central leadership," Gadgil sought to know, attacking the saffron party. Raising issues does not mean rebellion, he said, referring to over 20 Congress leaders writing a letter to party president Sonia Gandhi. — PTI



# DECCAN Chronicle

29 AUGUST 2020

## GST meet: Has govt failed its citizens?

During the GST Council meeting on August 27, the government of India has invoked the *force majeure* clause (a phrase in French for superior force or the act of God) to renege on its statutory obligation to make good the loss incurred by states on account of switching over to the Goods and Services Tax. The Centre argued that the shortfall in revenue collection was because of an extraordinary situation caused by a pandemic and that it is not bound to make good loss caused by an act of God.

The Central government's argument was based on two factors — one, the promise that it made to states to make good its revenue loss on account of the GST rollout, and two, a contraction that the Indian economy is expected to witness this financial year (FY2020-21). The Narendra Modi government believes that the revenue shortfall would be considerably more because of the Covid-19 drag on the economy and should not be attributed to the GST.

According to the Union finance ministry's estimates, the loss to states on account of GST rollout is ₹97,000 crore, while the overall shortfall in revenue is ₹2.37 lakh crores. Since the overall loss of revenue is more than double the loss caused by the GST rollout, the Centre refused to bail out states using funds from its coffers. This argument, however, glosses over one crucial point. While agreeing to the GST regime, the states had sought compensation for the loss caused to them on account of relinquishing their financial independence. If the states had not acceded to the GST regime, they would have been free to raise revenue depending on their local circumstances. They would not have been forced to stand before the GST Council with a begging bowl.

The Centre also cannot wash its hands of the revenue shortfall because of the decline in the economic growth had started in the last financial year itself. It would, therefore, be entirely wrong to blame God because coronavirus did not emerge in the country suddenly out of blue. Even if we accept that God has sent coronavirus to punish us, he has given enough opportunity for India to take steps to protect itself from the most infectious pathogen. However, it was overconfidence of the Narendra Modi government that was busy in welcoming US President Donald Trump and unseating the Kamal Nath government in Madhya Pradesh which brought the country to this pass.

Since the Narendra Modi government has invoked *force majeure* to escape its responsibility, one wonders if the ordinary citizens too would have an opportunity to escape their contractual responsibility to pay loan instalments without attracting legal action by banks. Why should there be different yardsticks for the Central government and its citizens? After all, the Bhagavad Gita says, "Whatever actions great persons perform, common people follow. Whatever standards they set, all the world pursues". Will Sangh Parivar ideologues advise Prime Minister Narendra Modi and finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman to let citizens follow examples set by them?

## Protect tribes in Andamans

The pandemic figures spelled bad news and worse for Indians on Friday morning. After topping 75,000, the number of daily cases recorded in India rose to 77,500 and counting so that, statistically speaking, now at least one Indian citizen in every random 400 has come in contact with the Covid-19 virus. The virus this week also infected 10 members of the dying Great Andamanese tribe of just 53 people. This calls for urgent action. The government, at the Centre and the Union territory level, is morally bound to protect its citizens. Many among the infected used to travel to Port Blair where they hold government jobs. With a population of around four lakhs, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands has reported 2,268 coronavirus cases so far, with 37 deaths.

The government is obliged to protect the Great Andamanese from the latest epidemic also for historical reasons. The Great Andamanese are an endangered tribe whose numbers have dwindled from 8,000 in 1858 to the paltry figure of the present day. This happened because the British settlers coercively altered their hunter-gatherer lifestyle, in the process introducing diseases among them. Successive epidemics of syphilis, measles, conjunctivitis and other diseases blinded and decimated huge populations. It included the Jangil tribe of Rutland Island, which became extinct in 1931.

Epidemics, in fact, are a major threat to tribes that newly emerge from isolation. This was last witnessed when, three years after they were socialised, in 1999, the Jarawa tribe got almost wiped out by a measles epidemic. The population of Jarawas stands between 250 and 400 today. The Onges number no more than 100. Thus, containing the coronavirus at this stage is vitally important, seeing as the Great Andamanese tribe, along with the Onges, Jarawas and the uncontacted Sentinelese, form part of the Indian chapter of the human genome project. Should these people disappear, the key to solving the mysteries of human evolution will be lost forever.

The administration of Adm. D.K. Joshi (Retd), the formal naval chief who is now lieutenant-governor of the Andamans, should, therefore, swing into patrol, conduct a risk assessment and ensure complete eradication of the disease from one island to the next in a deadline-driven manner before the crisis gets out of hand.

### DECCAN CHRONICLE

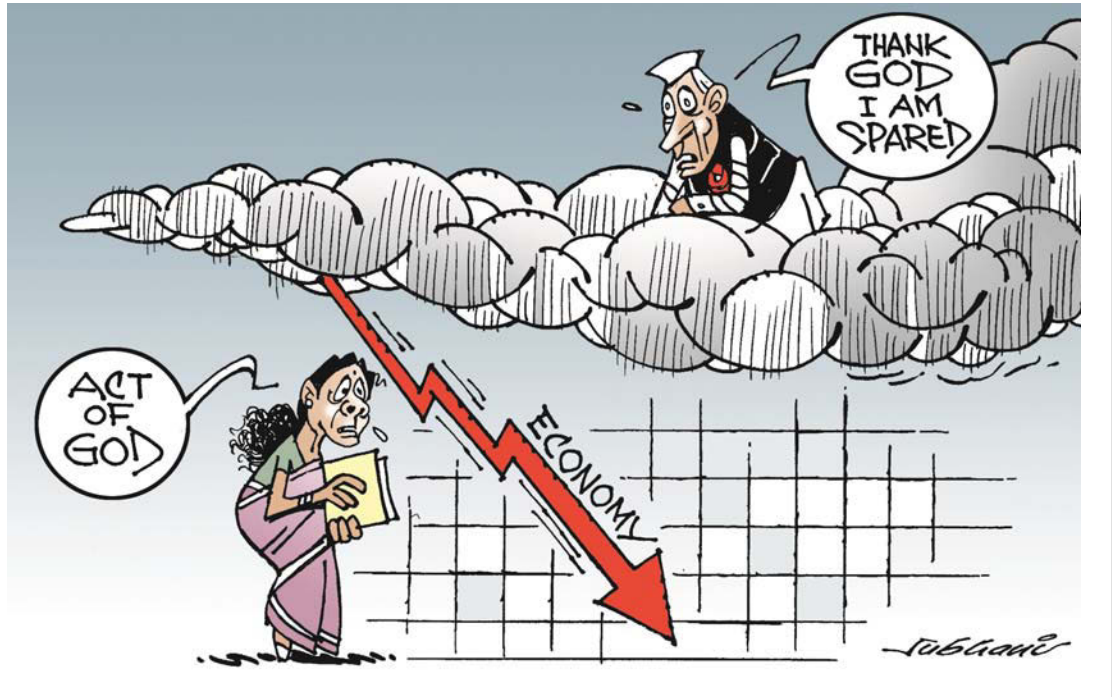
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Subhani



## Chinese mischief likely in Himachal, U'khand



Claude Arpi

After China's People's Liberation Army had crossed the Line of Actual Control, which for years has been considered as the de facto border between the two countries, in Ladakh, China's ambassador to India Sun Weidong had the gall to say that the two countries should be partners, not rivals.

On July 10, he added that the June 15 Galwan Valley clash was a "situation that neither China nor India would like to see... Currently, our frontline troops are disengaging on the ground."

All this does not tally with the facts.

Mr Sun also insisted: "China has all along advocated that peace is of paramount importance. We are neither a warlike state nor an assertive country."

It seems to be a bad joke. While multiple rounds of negotiations have been held between the Indian corps commander and his Chinese counterpart, not much hope remains for a "pre-April" solution before winter sets in. When Beijing suggested that both sides go back equidistantly from the Finger 4 area in Ladakh, this was rejected by New Delhi.

In the meantime, Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Bipin Rawat has declared that the "military option" was on the table if the diplomatic option failed.

But what is far more worrying is the possibility of the PLA opening a second front in the central sector of the 4,056-km Sino-Indian boundary. On May 17, IANS reported that Chinese helicopters had violated Indian airspace twice in Himachal Pradesh in April: "The first intrusion was reported on April 11 and the second on April 20. In both incidents, a Chinese heli-

copter was observed flying on the Indian side of the international border close to Sumdoh in Spiti subdivision," an official was quoted as saying.

Most of the Indian media reported the area was not "disputed" by China, but that isn't the case. This area, called Chuva and Chuje by Beijing, has since the mid-1950s been on China's long list of places selected to extend its territory.

In fact, there are five "disputed" areas in the central sector, which stretches over Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand: Chuva-Chuje, Shipki-la, Nilang-Jadhang, Barahoti-Lapthal and Lipulekh (recently engulfed in Nepal's new maps).

On July 30, 1980, the now-defunct historical division of the external affairs ministry sent a Secret Note to the East Asia division, dealing with China. This was with reference to the claims/occupation by China of some Indian areas in the central sector.

This note described the Sino-Indian boundary in the middle sector. "This sector of the boundary also has natural features of watersheds, mountain passes and river valleys. Its location is as follows: starting from the terminal point of the western sector, it runs southward along the watershed west of the Pare River and Chuva River, passes by the converging point of Pare River and Spiti River, crosses the Sutlej River west of Shipki Pass, continues southward along the watershed."

The historical division said at the 1960 talks with China, Indian officials brought forward clear and conclusive evidence "to show that the alignment as shown by them in the middle sector had, throughout its length a

It's difficult to talk to China, they always play by their own changeable rules, promoting their own interests

traditional and customary basis reaching back through many centuries, and that, in addition, this boundary had been... confirmed through diplomatic exchanges, treaties and agreements".

However, every year, intrusions are reported in Barahoti, another area "perceived" by China as its territory; even though the small basin is located south of the watershed marked by the Tunjun-la.

Let us remember that in April 1954, India and China signed the infamous "Panchsheel" agreement, with New Delhi giving away its rights in Tibet and getting nothing in return.

It took only two months for India to discover that everything had not been solved. The first Chinese incursion in Barahoti, in today's Chamoli district of Uttarakhand, occurred in June 1954; the ink had hardly dried on the agreement when the Chinese trespassed in the area. The irony is that it was China who complained about the incursion of Indian troops — on Indian territory!

In a way, Barahoti could be explained by the fact that Indian negotiators had omitted to notify Tunjun-la as a border pass in the 1954 Tibet agreement; this gave an opportunity to the Chinese to claim the Barahoti plains, south of the pass.

In April 1958, for the first time, officials of India and China sat together to try and resolve the issue. But as an unnecessary compromise, India agreed that Chinese "unarmed" patrols could visit the place in summer till the matter was solved; Beijing never respected that and repeatedly sent armed soldiers to Barahoti. Today, 62 years later, the Chinese still cross Tunjun-la and walk into the desolate area.

Then there is the area south of Shipki-la (pass) in

Kinnaur district of Himachal Pradesh. This is another tenuous claim from China, with no historical, cartographical or geographical backup. It is now a dormant claim, but with Beijing in the mood to claim Tajikistan's Pamir region and Vladivostok (and Ladakh), it could well be revived. It is a plain violation of Indian territory, without any justification as it was mentioned in the 1954 agreement, which meant that north of the pass was Tibet and south India.

Other places "disputed" by China in the central sector are Nilang (Nelang) and Jadhang, located south of Tsangchok-la. It was the only area disputed by the Tibetan government before independence; but it was a "gentle" dispute between neighbours sharing the same values. No troops were ever involved.

For Tibetans, their claim was based on the fact that the 13th Dalai Lama is supposed to have said the border was located at a bridge on the Gungum nala on the way to Gangotri.

For British India, the principle of the watershed was the prime deciding factor and thus Tsangchok-la was the border (India has since Independence followed the same principle).

During the 1960 talks, China added two more "disputes" — Lapthal and Sangchamalla, areas adjacent to Barahoti.

What is strange is that these claims are not based on any of the principles normally used to demarcate a boundary — watershed, river, customary routes, grazing rights, etc.

That is why it's difficult to talk to China, they always play by their own changeable rules, promoting their own interests.

These claims could indeed be pretexts for China's adventurism in future; and India should be ready to respond.

The writer is based in South India for the past 42 years. He writes on India, China, Tibet and Indo-French relations.

### LETTERS

#### NEET ISSUE!

Apropos the editorial, *Relook at entrances, take a gap year instead.*

It clinically dissects the rationale behind the mulish Centre in conducting competitive exams such as NEET and JEE despite the nation being in the tight grip of the Covid-19 and the ravaging floods in some Northern states throwing life out of gear. As mooted, the parents who are so pig-headed in their wards take the tests have ignored the perils involved in their wards contracting the pandemic virus. It is a million-dollar mystery as to how the Centre and the NTA have miserably failed to see the dangers in stubbornly conducting the exams in the pandemic period. At this juncture, a petition to stop the exam and judicial intervention to defer the exams alone would be good in the larger interest of the student community.

E.S.Chandrasekaran  
Chennai

#### AN EYEWASH

IT IS BECOMING more and more obvious that the RSS and upper-class Hindutva lobby along with the coaching centre system is behind the pressure posed by NEET. The list for this year has in all probability been already prepared, and the exam is just eye-wash to fool the other aspirants. The people should wake up before things get out of hand. The impersonation cases, which were so vociferously debated on TV channels, have gone into oblivion. To say that only students who pass North India based NEET will make good doctors, is an insult to all our practising doctors. If the government is so keen on maintaining a high standard in medical education, the medical council could conduct an All India exam at the end of the five-year course.

Usha Sundar  
Chennai

Ayesha Khaliq



## Marriage age tweak won't meet gender, health goals

The Prime Minister's announcement to raise the legal marriageable age limit for girls from 18 to 21 years has been hailed by advocates as a historic move. Proponents argue that the future law would address serious concerns like population control, early pregnancy and motherhood, maternal mortality, lack of opportunities for higher education, careers and gender injustice. Equally strong views of disagreement are being articulated by scholars, NGOs, activists and opinion-makers, the author included. The opponents hold the view that the proposed law is not likely to succeed in changing the socio-cultural realities at the ground level and the gender barriers against women in achieving its intended goals. The structural inequalities and prejudices of the society that are the root causes of the problem cannot be adequately addressed only through legal interventions.

As per the Unicef, at least 1.5 million girls under the age of 18 are married each year — making India home to the largest number of child brides. The ongoing Covid-19 crisis will further increase the number of child marriages in the country. As seen in the aftermath of Ebola in affected countries, child marriage rates increased drastically, for reasons of

deteriorating economic opportunities and future uncertainties. The sudden and prolonged March lockdown has hit hard a very large section of our country's population; leading to economic deprivation. As a result, poor parents, out of work due to Covid, are marrying off minor daughters to reduce financial burden. The closure of schools has aggravated the problem. Tragically, poor parents see this as an opportunity to get their minor daughters married at a lower cost on ceremonies and dowry. Overall, the current situation will further undermine efforts of past years to combat child marriages in India. Families coming from lower socioeconomic strata, particularly in rural areas, are thus being compelled to marry their offspring early.

Raising the legal age of marriage is not going to make any favourable impact on this section of the society. Thus the proposed law is not a panacea for gender injustice. Though well-intentioned, it will not easily translate into desired outcomes. The law will not effectively target the underlying causes that lead to child marriages, overpopulation, malnutrition and maternal mortality. The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights and the Young Lives in 2018 noted that the high prevalence of child marriages in India is

mainly due to poverty and lack of education. In addition to this, it is equally necessary to address cultural and sociological reasons behind the phenomenon.

The multiple factors that are responsible for child marriages, despite a law prohibiting it, include caste, class, custom, coercion, economy, education and poverty. The most significant factor is gender inequality and the low value associated with girls and women in India. The discrimination against girls starts from the womb and continues to reflect in their access to food, education, employment and other resources. The cultural and patriarchal values ingrained in our society view them as a social and economic burden on the family. Child marriage is also a part of this systematic unfairness. In rural communities, structural inequalities and patriarchy are perpetrated in the guise of custom. Societal pressure forces families into marrying daughters early to prevent them from becoming sexually active before marriage. The low priority assigned to providing resources for a girl's education contributes to their further marginalisation. The families that want to educate their daughters are unable to do so, due to inadequacy of resources and, in many cases, lack of neighbourhood schools.

Instead of raising the legal marriageable age, girls need to be provided with equal opportunities to continue their education. Though the Right to Education Act assures education until the age of 14 years, an incremental move would be to ensure quality education till the age of 18, access to higher education, job opportunities and training. Education provides a stepping stone for girls to move out of inter-generational poverty. This approach will make girls economically independent and strengthen their agency to make informed decisions regarding their career, reproductive health, life, and whether to marry or not.

The existing laws have not so far succeeded in curbing the problem of child marriage. Even though the minimum age of marriage is 18 years, in rural and backward areas, minor girls as young as 12 or 13 get married. The proposal will only lead to a change in the law, but will not change the societal realities. Effectively addressing it requires enormous effort and resources. The state and society together have to challenge gender stereotypes and socio-cultural barriers to women's empowerment. They may act through well-planned interventions and awareness drives with parents and communities. The focus of gov-

ernment policies and advocacy should be on enhancing capabilities, skills, education, and employability of the girls and women. Additionally, advocating and promoting the sexual and reproductive health for girls and women would be an ideal approach to address their overall well-being and achieve desired population control. This will enable them to make informed decisions on contraceptive services, abortion, and family planning. The social empowerment of women is needed foremost to progress towards gender equality and their emancipation. Our society needs to deconstruct existing prejudices and treat women as autonomous individuals, equal at the household and community levels. The focus needs to be oriented towards their empowerment by providing them with education, vocations, and equal opportunities. This approach will help better address the problems related to early marriages, a skewed sex ratio, maternal mortality and population.

The writer is an alumnus of the MSc social policy studies programme at the London School of Economics and the sociology masters programme from Delhi School of Economics. She is currently working with Women Power Connect.



quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	39,467.31	0.90
Nifty 50	11,647.60	0.76
S&P 500*	3,496.22	0.33
Dollar (₹)	73.39	0.58
Pound Sterling (₹)	97.38	0.16
Euro (₹)	87.38	0.00
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	52,155*252	0.40
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	45.03	-0.06
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.097	-0.050
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.721	-0.025

\* As of 9:30 PM IST

NZ probing cyber attacks on stock market



New Zealand's government and its foreign spy agency are getting involved after cyber attacks disrupted trading on the nation's stock market several times this week. The attacks have affected the private company NZX which hosts the market, halting trading for hours at a time. Finance minister Grant Robertson said ministers had asked the Government Communications Security Bureau intelligence agency to help.

Investors regain ₹45 L cr after March dip  
Market back at pre-Covid level

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD  
MUMBAI, AUG. 28

It was a good week for the market, with banks and other financials helping market benchmarks Sensex and Nifty-50 to regain pre-Covid-19 levels. BSE's market capitalisation stood above Rs 1.58 lakh crore compared to the March 2020 low of over Rs 1.13 lakh crore, indicating investors regaining around Rs 45 lakh crore in the sharp recovery so far.

During the week, the Nifty Bank index gained a hefty 9.97 per cent, of which 4.19 per cent gain came on Friday.

On Friday, the Sensex closed at 39,467, up 353 points while the Nifty-50 gained 88 points at 11,647.

The Nifty closed the week up 2.43 per cent.

The key indices held up admirably above the mark buoyed by expectations from the twin verdicts next week which would have an impact on banking stocks, analysts said.

The Supreme Court, during the week, heard a plea seeking interest waiver for six months during the loan moratorium period granted by the Reserve Bank. The apex court adjourned the hearing to September 1 while giving the government one week's time to clarify its position.

The SC may also pronounce order in the matter of adjusted gross revenue dues of the telecom companies next week.

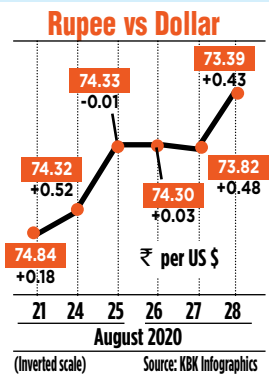
Vikas Jain, senior

Rupee posts biggest weekly gain in 20 months at 73.38

FALAKNAAZ SYED  
MUMBAI, AUG. 28

Weak dollar, sustained foreign fund inflows and absence of currency intervention from the Reserve Bank helped the rupee rise to its highest level in six months and become the best performer in Asia on Friday.

The rupee closed 42 paise up 73.38 against the dollar, up 0.6 per cent compared to its previous close of 73.81. During the session, the rupee rose to 73.28, its highest level since March 5. The rupee has risen nearly 2 per cent for the week, its biggest weekly gain since the week ended December 21, 2018 as the central bank halted dollar purchases, traders said. As a result, the rupee is finally taking cues from the Asian peers, especially the yuan, which is trading at



a seven-month high.

The Dollar Index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, is at a two-year low at 92.50. So far this month foreign portfolio investors have invested Rs 50,000 crore in the domestic market. Analysts said the RBI has probably stepped aside from the dollar buying intervention.

research analyst, Reliance Securities said, "The positive news flow from the domestic and global markets set the ball rolling for banking stocks. The US Federal Reserve's new policy stance to let inflation run higher and unemployment run lower, meaning prolonged low interest

rate, is one of the reasons which created positive sentiments on banking stocks."

The major gainers included Indusind Bank (32 per cent), Tata Motors (18 per cent), Axis Bank (16 per cent), SBI (13.6 per cent) and Shriram Transport (12.6 per cent).

Murugappa all set to bag CG Power

New Delhi, Aug. 28: Exactly a year after founder Gautam Thapar was sacked as its chairman, CG Power and Industrial Solutions Ltd is set to get a new promoter in Murugappa Group after its offer to invest Rs 700 crore in the fraud-hit firm found no challenger.

Chennai-based Murugappa Group firm Tube Investments of India Ltd (TIL) had earlier this month offered to invest Rs 700 crore in CG Power for a 56.6 per cent stake.

Lenders to CG Power, which had defaulted on loan repayments since the fraud was detected in the firm last year, launched a so-called Swiss challenge to explore if any other eligible investor was willing to better the Murugappa's offer.

No counteroffer was received at the close of the bidding on August 26, two sources with direct knowledge of the development said.

Lenders are not evaluating the Murugappa offer and are likely to approve it later in the day, they said.

While CG Power is an established player in industrial motors and power components, Tube Investments is the engineering arm of the Rs 36,900-crore Murugappa Group.

A year back, the board of CG Power, erstwhile known as Crompton Greaves, had removed founder Gautam Thapar as the company chairman, citing fraud.—PTI

World Bank suspends ease of business report

Probing irregularities in data; India rankings may be revised

ARCHANA CHAUDHARY  
AUG. 28

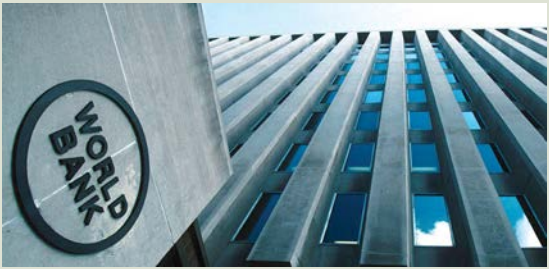
The World Bank has suspended publication of its Doing Business report to probe alleged irregularities in the underlying data.

"A number of irregularities have been reported regarding changes to the data in the Doing Business 2018 and Doing Business 2020 reports, published in October 2017 and 2019. The changes in the data were inconsistent with the Doing Business methodology," the World Bank said in a statement on Thursday. "We will act based on the findings and will retrospectively correct the data of countries that were most affected by the irregularities."

Published since 2003, the report ranks 190 economies based on how easy it is to do business there, taking into account trading regulations, property rights, contract enforcement, investment laws, the availability of credit and a number of other factors.

In recent years, there have been questions about the integrity of the rankings. Paul Romer quit in 2018 as the World Bank's chief economist after questioning changes to Chile's order in the Doing Business report.

Changes to the World Bank's methodology penalised Chile under



INDIA 72ND ON WAGE LIST

New Delhi, Aug. 28: India has been ranked a lowly 72nd among 106 countries in terms of the average wage per month, while Switzerland topped the chart, according to a global ranking of average wages prepared by Picodi.com.

With an average monthly wage of Rs 32,800 (\$437), India has been ranked 72nd among 106 countries surveyed by Picodi.com, an international e-commerce platform which provides discount coupons.

Switzerland, where the average wage converted into rupees comes to Rs 4,49,000 (\$5,989), topped the ranking. —PTI

Socialist governments, even though the underlying indicators barely moved, Justin Sandefur, senior fellow at the Center

for Global Development, wrote in a blog in November. "Similarly in India, where Narendra Modi used India's surge in the Doing Business rankings as a political talking point, we showed that methodological changes, not reform, had pushed India up the rankings," he wrote.

India rose to No. 63 in 2019 from 142 in 2014, when PM Narendra Modi first took office.

"India will continue with our efforts to improve the ease of doing business, irrespective of the World Bank's actions regarding its rankings," Yogesh Bawaja, spokesman for India's trade ministry, said by phone. "Our steps are part of our efforts to ensure ease of working and ease of living for people."

The World Bank is auditing data collection processes and is reviewing changes that occurred after the institutional data review process for the last five Doing Business reports, the multilateral lender said. —Bloomberg

WORLD

IN BRIEF

Aus PM 'open' to repatriate gunman

Sydney: Canberra is open to the idea of New Zealand sending the Australian-born gunman behind the Christchurch mosque massacre back home to serve his life sentence, Prime Minister Scott Morrison said on Friday. White supremacist Brenton Tarrant was sentenced to life without parole on Thursday for the attacks on two mosques last year that killed 51 Muslim worshippers. Soon after the punishment was handed down, New Zealand Deputy Prime Minister Winston Peters said Tarrant, 29, should be transferred to the Australian prison system. "The Islamic community and all of New Zealand has already suffered enough without having to pay astronomical prison costs to keep him safe in our prison system," Peters said.

Turkish lawyer dies on hunger strike

Ankara: A human rights lawyer on hunger strike in a Turkish prison to demand a fair trial for herself and colleagues has died, an attorney's group said. Ebru Timtik, 42, died in an Istanbul hospital late Thursday, the Progressive Lawyers' Association said. She had been fasting for 238 days. The lawyer and 17 of her colleagues were accused of links to the outlawed Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front, or DHKP/C.

Japanese PM Abe ill, to demit office

Leadership race kicks off in third largest economy, Tokyo stocks tumble over 2%

Tokyo, Aug. 28: Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced Friday he will resign, ending his record-breaking tenure in a bombshell development that kicks off a leadership race in the world's third-largest economy.

Abe said he is suffering a recurrence of the ulcerative colitis that forced him to cut short a first term in office and said that he no longer felt able to continue as prime minister.

"There must not be time when I am not able to deliver results," he said, speaking in a calm but sombre voice.

"Now that I am not able to fulfil the mandate from the people with confidence, I have decided that I should no longer occupy the position of the prime minister." While speculation about Abe's political future has been growing in recent weeks, after he twice visited hospital for unspecified health checks, the resignation nonetheless came as a surprise.

Even as recently as Friday morning, the government's spokesman had appeared to dismiss concerns about Abe's health and suggested he would stay on in office.



Who could be next

- Taro Aso, gaffe-prone finance minister
- Shigeru Ishiba, popular ex-defence minister
- Yoshihide Suga, power player and adviser
- Fumio Kishida, favoured successor
- Taro Kono, colourful Twitter user



But Abe made clear that would not be possible, and offered apologies for once again having to cut short his tenure.

"I would like to sincerely apologise to the people of Japan for leaving my post with one year left in my

term of office, and amid the coronavirus woes, while various policies are still in the process of being implemented," he said, bowing deeply.

Abe said he would "firmly execute my duty to the end," and until the next prime minister is appointed, a process that is expected to require a leadership election involving ruling party lawmakers and members.

The resignation shocked the markets, with Tokyo stocks plunging more than two percent towards the end of afternoon trade when reports of Abe's decision first emerged.

"It was a big surprise," said Shinichi Nishikawa, a professor of political science at Meiji University in Tokyo.

"His resignation comes at a time when Japan is facing tough issues, including measures against the Coronavirus," Nishikawa said.

The Kremlin on Friday hailed Shinzo Abe's contribution to bilateral ties between Moscow and Tokyo after the Japanese Prime Minister announced his resignation for health reasons. —AFP

China to unveil bronze statue of Indian doc Kotnis

Beijing, Aug. 28: A bronze statue of Indian doctor Dwarkanath Kotnis, who is revered in China for his contributions during the Chinese revolution headed by its founder Mao Zedong and the World War II, would be unveiled outside a medical school in North China next month, according to the official media here.

Kotnis, who hailed from Sholapur in Maharashtra came to China in 1938 as part of a five-member team of doctors sent by the Indian National Congress to help the Chinese during World War II. He joined the Communist Party of China (CPC) in 1942 and died the same year at the age of 32.

The bronze statue of Kotnis, known in China as Ke Dihua, would be formally unveiled at the medical school at Shijiazhuang in September, state-run Xinhua news agency reported on Thursday.

Kotnis' medical assistance during the difficult days of the Chinese revolution was praised by Chinese leader Mao Zedong. His status and memorials were also set in some of the Chinese cities in recognition of his services. He is married to Chinese national Guo Qinglan, who died in 2012.

Apart from the school named after him as the Shijiazhuang Ke Dihua Medical Science Secondary Specialised School, there are memorials of Kotnis in both Shijiazhuang.

EU FINALISES LIST FROM BELARUS TO BE BLACKLISTED

Berlin, Aug. 28: The European Union has agreed to impose sanctions on up to 20 senior Belarus officials suspected of election fraud and the crackdown on protesters and is likely to put President Alexander Lukashenko on its list at some point, the bloc's foreign ministers said on Friday at a meeting in Berlin.

In Vienna, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe offered to mediate between the two sides in Belarus, with chairman Edi Rama pledging not to "interfere in internal affairs," but at the same time stressing human rights abuses must end.

- A WOMAN of Indian origin dubbed "the spy princess" on Friday gets a new memorial in Britain honouring her espionage work and refusal to betray secrets in World War II.
- ENGLISH HERITAGE is putting up a Blue Plaque honouring Noor Inayat Khan outside 4 Taviton Street in the Bloomsbury area of central London where she lived from 1942-43.

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US def. chief says China destabilising Indo-Pacific

U.S. WARSHIP SAILS NEAR DISPUTED PARACEL ISLANDS IN S. CHINA SEA

Beijing, Aug. 28: An American warship sailed near the disputed Paracel Islands in the South China Sea, the U.S. Navy has said, challenging Beijing's claims on the resource-rich waterway and prompting a warning

from the Chinese military. The Thursday operation came a day after China fired ballistic missiles into the sea as part of ongoing live-fire exercises, inflaming already high tensions between Washington and Beijing.

and prosperity of all nations".

"This is especially important today, as we continue work alongside our allies and partners to pro-



Angela Merkel

MERKEL WARNS OF PANDEMIC DIFFICULTIES

Berlin, Aug. 28: Coping with the Coronavirus will become more challenging in the coming autumn and winter months, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said in her annual summer press conference on Friday.

"Some things are likely to be more difficult over the next few months than they are in the summer," Merkel said.

"We have all enjoyed the freedoms and relative protection from aerosols in the summer, which is possible, through life outdoors," she said, referring to micro-particles that are thought to spread through the air, especially in enclosed spaces.

ALLOWING SHARIF TO LEAVE PAK WAS A MISTAKE: IMRAN

Islamabad, Aug. 28: Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has said that allowing his predecessor Nawaz Sharif to leave the country was a "mistake" and that his government "regretted" the decision.

In a wide-ranging interview to ARY News on Thursday night, Khan hinted that he was pressurised into sending Sharif abroad, saying that the reports presented to his government suggested that the Pakistani Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) supremo was severely ill, reports Dawn news. The federal cabinet, he said, had held a long debate over whether the government should let Sharif leave on humanitarian grounds.

The Prime minister further said the court had declared that the government would be responsible, should anything happen to Sharif.



Japan's 'flying car' has successful flight

Tokyo, Aug. 28: The decades-old dream of zipping around in the sky as simply as driving on highways may be becoming less illusory.

Japan's SkyDrive Inc., among the myriads of "flying car" projects around the world, has carried out a successful though modest test flight with one person aboard. In a video shown to reporters on Friday, a contraption that looked like a slick motorcycle

with propellers lifted several feet (1-2 meters) off the ground, and hovered in a netted area for four minutes.

Tomohiro Fukuzawa, who heads the SkyDrive effort, said he hopes "the flying car" can be made into a real-life product by 2023, but he acknowledged that making it safe was critical. "Of the world's more than 100 flying car projects, only a handful has succeeded with a person

on board," he said.

"I hope many people will want to ride it and feel safe." The machine so far can fly for just five to 10 minutes but if that can become 30 minutes, it will have more potential, including exports to places like China, Fukuzawa said.

Unlike airplanes and helicopters, eVTOL, or "electric vertical takeoff and landing," vehicles offer quick point-to-point personal travel, at least

in principle. They could do away with the hassle of airports and traffic jams and the cost of hiring pilots, they could fly automatically.

Battery sizes, air traffic control and other infrastructure issues are among the many potential challenges to commercializing them. "Many things have to happen," said Sanjiv Singh, professor at the Robotics Institute at Carnegie Mellon University.



## SHORT TAKES



Vinesh Phogat

## Khel Ratna Vinesh is Covid positive

**New Delhi:** India's top woman wrestler Vinesh Phogat on Friday said she has tested positive for Covid-19. Selected for this year's Khel Ratna award, the Asian and Commonwealth Games gold-medallist, had been training at her village in Sonapat with coach Om Prakash. "Yes, I have tested positive for Covid-19 when my sample was taken in Sonapat before the dress rehearsal for the awards ceremony," Vinesh said. I will recover soon, God willing. I am in isolation at home," she further added. The 26-year-old will skip Saturday's virtual ceremony for the National Sports Awards distribution. She is one among five athletes chosen for the country's highest sporting honour this year. — PTI

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**Left:** Mumbai Indians captain Rohit Sharma spends time with his family in their hotel room in Abu Dhabi. **Right:** Royal Challengers Bangalore's South African batsman AB de Villiers poses with his cricket kit and face shield in these photos posted by MI and RCB teams respectively.



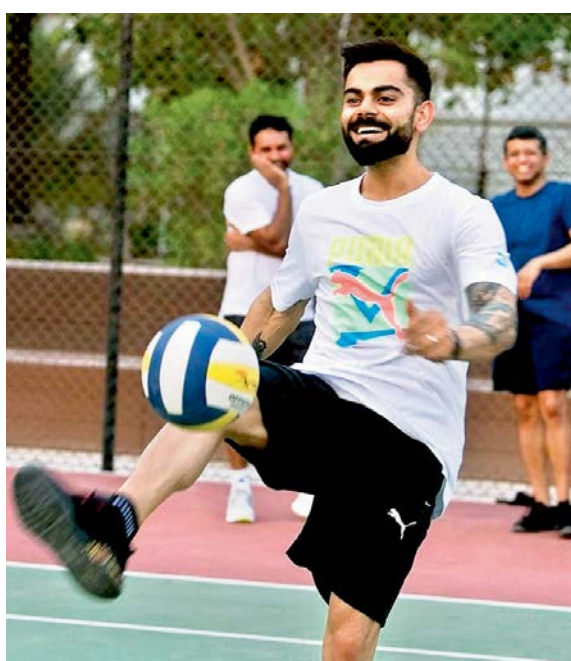
# Shaken sides train

## IPL teams begin practice amid Covid scare

**New Delhi, Aug. 28:** With just 22 days left before the start of the 13th edition of the Indian Premier League, an India T20 specialist is among multiple members of the Chennai Super Kings contingent who have tested positive for Covid-19, forcing the IPL franchise to extend its quarantine period — upto September 1 — in Dubai and causing upheaval ahead of the event starting September 19.

The franchise is yet to issue a formal statement, as per reports, the number of positive cases could be between 10 and 12.

Meanwhile, after completing a mandatory seven-day quarantine period in Abu Dhabi, Mumbai Indians, Royal Challengers Bangalore and Rajasthan Royals were the latest set of teams to come out of their



RCB captain Virat Kohli shares a light moment during a training session.

isolation and shake the rust off in their first practice session at various ICC Academies on Thursday.

RCB and India captain Virat Kohli appeared cheerful as he kicked about a volleyball and shared some light moments with teammates. Meanwhile, the Delhi Capitals have signed Australian all-rounder Daniel Sams to replace England's Jason Roy.

Run-blasting Roy was on Thursday ruled out of England's T20 series against Pakistan after sustaining a side strain. However the Delhi Capitals said he had opted out of the IPL "for personal reasons".

Billed as a rising star after his recent call-up to the national squad, Sams will join fellow Australians Marcus Stoinis and Alex Carey at the Delhi

Capitals, coached by compatriot Ricky Ponting.

"The IPL is a huge platform for any cricketer, and back home, we all follow the tournament extremely closely every year," said Sams, 27.

"I feel fortunate to be a part of it this year... I can't wait to join the rest of the players in the UAE," he was quoted as saying in a statement by the franchise late Thursday.

South Africa-born opener Roy suffered the injury this week during England's preparations at Emirates Old Trafford where the Pakistan series starts later Friday.

Ahead of the tournament's start on September 19, all eight IPL teams have reached the UAE where they are required to undergo a period of quarantine in their hotels. — PTI

# Serena handed tough US draw

**New York, Aug. 28:** Serena Williams could see plenty of fellow Americans in her US Open quest for a 24th career Grand Slam title, including Australian Open champion Sofia Kenin in a semifinal match.

The women's draw unveiled Thursday ahead of Monday's start of the Flushing Meadows fortnight in a spectator-less Covid-19 quarantine bubble offers some challenges for the 38-year-old third seed. Williams, one Slam singles crown shy of matching Margaret Court's all-time record, could meet 2017 US Open champion Sloane Stephens in the third round and 2017 US Open runner-up and seventh seed Madison Keys in a quarterfinal before a chance at Kenin in the semis and potentially Czech top seed Karolina Pliskova in the final.

And that's not even counting a possible fourth-round matchup against Greek 15th seed Maria Sakkari, who ousted Williams from this week's US Open tuneup event in New York.

Williams lost in the US

## DJOKOVIC GETS A RELATIVELY EASY RIDE

**New York, Aug. 28:** World No.1 Novak Djokovic's path to a 2020 US Open title could include a semifinal against Stefanos Tsitsipas or Alexander Zverev under the tournament draw unveiled on Thursday.

The 33-year-old Serbian star, a 17-time Grand Slam winner who has captured five of the past seven men's singles Slam crowns, begins his quest for a fourth US Open title against Bosnia and Herzegovina's 107th-ranked Damir Dzumhur.

Open and Wimbledon finals each of the past two years, and with the England grass event wiped off the schedule by the pandemic, the US Open marks a chance to break through and claim a seventh title on the same courts where she captured her first Slam crown in 1999. — AFP

## CHENNAIYN HAND CONTRACTS TO AIMOL, SAMIK AND AMAN

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, AUG. 28

Chennaiyin FC announce on Thursday that defender Reamsochung 'Remi' Aimol (20), goalkeeper Samik Mitra (19) and forward Aman Chetri (19) have each signed new multi-year contracts. The club also confirmed that the trio of youngsters will be included in the 25-man CFC squad for the 2020-21 Indian Super League season.

While Samik and Aman are being promoted from the CFC B team to the first-team, Remi already has two senior CFC appearances to his name, one apiece in the ISL and AFC Cup. This means CFC's ISL roster will feature five developmental players (those born on or after January 1, 2000), with the trio joining forward Rahim Ali and midfielder Abhijit Sarkar who also meet the eligibility criteria.

# COFFEE-BREAK

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



**Aries:** Your partner will inspire you. You may have to attend to a few problems carried forward from the previous day. They may have to do with work.



**Taurus:** You will be sent on an outstation assignment. This will help you to analyse your present situation in solitude. You have to strategize more to succeed.



**Gemini:** You may decide to set up an independent practice or business. Money prospects are not great. Speculative deals will be helpful to an extent.



**Cancer:** Expenditure on children and health may rise. New deals may not match expectations. Litigation is likely in real estate. Take care of your health.



**Leo:** You may be involved in an ugly incident. Your plans to exhibit your academic or writing skills will succeed. Illness of children/spouse are likely.



**Virgo:** Working women may find the period troublesome. Heavy borrowing is likely. A spouse's illness may prove expensive. Revenues from real estate will decrease. Help from friends or relatives is likely.

### You share your b'day with

Nagarjuna, actor. He is best known for his films *Geethanjali*, *Siva*, *Criminal*, *Annamayya*, *Santosham*, *Oopiri*, *Soggade Chinni Nayana*, *Manmadhudu* and *Shivamani* amongst others.



**Libra:** Those looking to start a career may succeed. Your contacts with members of the opposite gender may cause trouble. A short journey for an auspicious event is likely. Love and financial gain are indicated.



**Scorpio:** Your stomach is sensitive, so take care of your diet. Income and expenses are both likely to rise. You may get involved in community activity.



**Sagittarius:** Your confidence will increase, and a salary hike is expected. An old love is likely to come into your life. The performance of children may disappoint.



**Capricorn:** You are likely to have a good day with your partner. Bad news related to performance of your children may spoil your contentment.

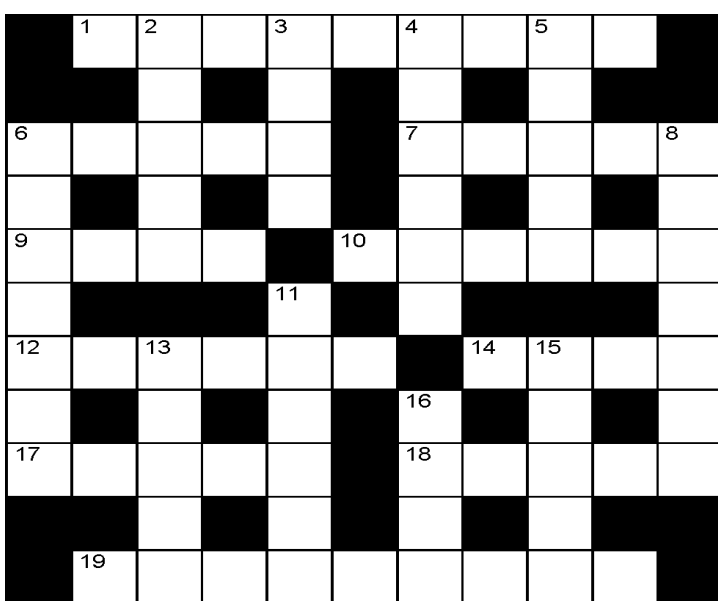


**Aquarius:** A stomach disorder is likely. Trouble from authorities is indicated. Try to be patient and flexible with your partner. Spare time for friends and family amidst your busy schedule.



**Pisces:** Your abilities may be assessed, so make every effort to exhibit them. It's a good time to sort out differences with your spouse. Your self-confidence and determination will pay off at work. Appreciate your juniors.

## QUICK CROSSWORD



**Across**  
1. Bad dream (9)  
6. Sung drama (5)  
7. Partially melted snow (5)  
9. Dancer's skirt (4)  
10. Factory second (6)  
12. Confesses (4,2)  
14. Foolhardy (4)  
17. Measured against the clock (5)  
18. Separately (5)  
19. He natters (anag) (9)

**Down**  
2. Bungling (5)  
3. Practical joke (4)  
4. Become proficient in (6)  
5. Awaken (5)  
6. Remote settlement (7)  
8. Small axe (7)  
11. Tiny lake (6)  
13. Immature dragonfly (5)  
15. Once more (5)  
16. Plaster bandage (4)

**YESTERDAY'S ANSWER**  
Across: 1. Leggings, 7. Ulcer, 8. Chile, 9. Temple, 10. Glue, 12. Most, 14. Judged, 17. Rules, 18. Brain, 19. Pedigree.  
Down: 1. Locum, 2. Girdle, 3. Inch, 4. Grill, 5. Customary, 6. Defending, 11. Number, 13. Solve, 15. Grate, 16. Asti.

## Word Mine

C  
E E O  
T N D T I

TODAY'S RATINGS: 23 AVERAGE: 25  
GOOD: 28 OUTSTANDING

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

Dealer: South  
Vulnerable: Both  
West: 1NT  
East: 1NT  
South: 6  
West: 6  
East: 6  
South: 6  
West: 6  
East: 6  
Opening lead: 4-3

## jumble

VIDLI  
NFTOR  
SOPMIE  
HITIWN

Print your answer here: \_\_\_\_\_

Answers tomorrow

Saturday's | Jumble: COACH HOUSE STENCH FATTEN

Answer: When they started charging a toll to use the bridge, it was a — "FEE-ASCO"

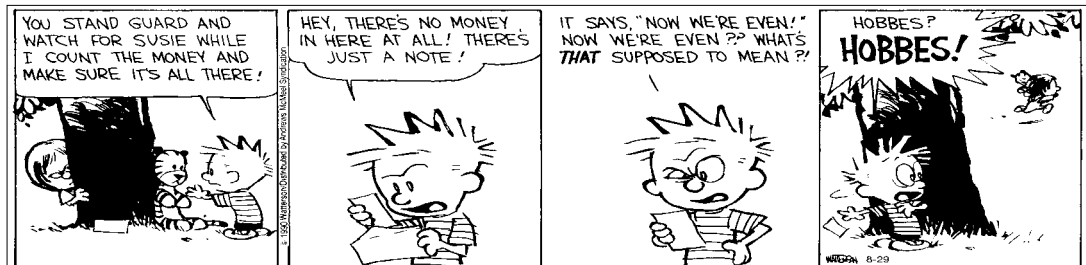
East did well to retain his spade jack at trick one, but you lead the spade king and overtake with the ace, hoping the jack will appear now, which would create another dummy entry with the spade nine.

Unlucky — the jack lives. Now declarer leads the heart king and ruffs away East's ace. After drawing the last trump, what should South do next? With no dummy entry, he has

only one hope left: He leads the diamond king from his hand. Finally some luck — the diamond queen is a singleton. The diamond 10 becomes a guaranteed dummy entry, and the slam is home. Afterward, West says that next time he will lead the diamond ace and another diamond. Yeah, right!

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CALVIN AND HOBBS | Bill Watterson



THE WIZARD OF ID | Parker and Hartsd



ARCHIE | Bill Henry Scarpelli & craig boldman



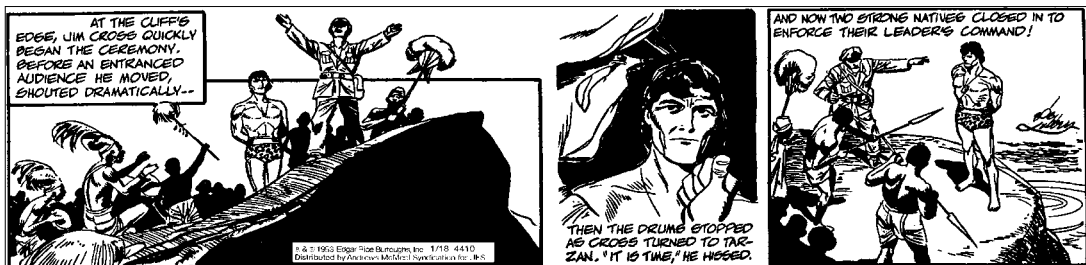
BLONDIE | Dean Young and John Marshall



ANDY CAPP | Reg Smythe



TARZAN | Edgar Rice Burroughs



## HOW TO ESCAPE WITH YOUR TRICKS

An expert's rate of play is inversely proportional to the chances of his contract. If he is doomed to defeat, he slows down, often to a standstill. (Sistill?) But if the contract has some chance, the expert gets on with the game. Cover the East-West hands in today's diagram. South is in six spades. West leads the trump three: seven, eight, 10. How should declarer continue?

North's one-no-trump response was forcing for one round. His subsequent jump to four spades showed a limit raise in spades (about 11 support points) with three trumps. South decided that was sufficient to bid a slam. Things look grim. Dummy has all of those heart honors that would have been much more useful in diamonds. South must concede at least one diamond, and also has a potential club loser.

North: A 9 7, K Q J, 10 4 3 2, J 6 4  
East: J 8 4, A 9 8 3 4 3, Q 10 7  
South: K Q 10 6 2, K J 9 8 6, A K 9  
Dealer: South  
Vulnerable: Both  
West: 1NT  
East: 1NT  
South: 6  
West: 6  
East: 6  
South: 6  
West: 6  
East: 6  
Opening lead: 4-3