

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

VIJAYAWADA | SUNDAY | 9 AUGUST 2020

WEATHER

Max: 36.0°C
Min: 26°C
RH: 32%
Rainfall: 23.7 mm
Forecast: Cloudy.
Max/Min temp.
36/26 °C

COVID-19 CUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+65,788)	(+892)
21,50,912	43,446

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+2,256)	(+14)
TS: 77,513	615
(+10,080)	(+97)
AP: 2,17,040	1,939

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

1,96,89,332

DEATHS

7,26,809

COUNTRIES AREAS WITH CASES

213

worldometers.info/coronavirus

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Rahukalam: 4.30 pm to 6 pm
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Zulhijja 18,1441 AH
PRAYERS
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Zohar: 1.30 pm
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NATION | 5

**Rahul slams govt over
Asha workers stir**



WORLD | 7

**Rajapaksa sworn-in as
Lanka PM for fourth time**

SPORTS | 8

**Indian spinner
Yuzi is engaged**



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₹1.5 lakh/month, 15-day work fail to attract Docs skip Covid care despite large perks

V.K.L. GAYATRI | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, AUG. 8

Though the government is offering a handful of sops like Rs.1.5 lakh monthly salary, 15-day eight-hour work each month and postings at their preferred places, qualified doctors are reluctant to report for duties at Covid hospitals in the state.

Even though Indian Medical Association (IMA), government officials and superintendents of Covid hospitals are repeatedly urging them, doctors are not reporting for work even after receiving appointment letters.

Even more ironic is that some doctors are not even responding to phone calls for emergency medical services.

After the severe medical emergency, the state government has directed the district administrations to recruit staff nurses, para-medical staff, class IV employees and doctors immediately and as per their requirements.

Though the district administrations have cleared hurdles in recruitment of nurses, para-medical staff, and class IV employees on outsourcing basis, every district is facing a crisis when it comes to recruiting doctors for Covid hospitals.

AP sees 10,080 cases, 97 deaths

SAMPAT G.
SAMRITAN | DC
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 8

Andhra Pradesh continues to witness a rise in Coronavirus infections as 10,080 new Covid-19 positive cases have been registered, taking the overall tally to 2,17,040. The state also witnessed a single day high of 97 deaths, raising the death toll to 1,939 during the last 24 hours.

According to Covid-19 bulletin released by the state health authorities here on Saturday, out of 30,342 samples tested, 10,080 patients have been found infected with Coronavirus. Out of

24,24,393 samples tested so far in the state, 1,29,615 infected patients have been discharged after recovery, while 85,486 are undergoing treatment at various hospitals in the state. Among new cases, Kurnool has been badly affected with 1,353 cases, followed by 1,310 in East Godavari, 998 in Visakhapatnam, 976 in Anantapur, 963 in Chittoor, 878 in Nellore, 681 in West Godavari, 601 in Guntur, 525 in Kadapa, 512 in Prakasam, 450 in Vizianagaram, 442 in Srikakulam and 391 in Krishna.

■ **Page 3: E.Godavari tops in cumulative infections**

Recently, after IMA AP Chapter's negotiations with the state government, all the district chapters have swung into action and started massive exercises to recruit doctors in the government and private hospitals to attend to Covid patients.

In a first, Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy directed the administrations to recruit doctors by

giving government salaries and to also deploy them to private hospitals.

One of the Joint Collectors, Principal of Andhra Medical College, and a group of senior officials in association with the IMA, Visakhapatnam Chapter identified 1,800 qualified doctors in the districts.

■ **Page 3: 1,800 doctors called to join duty**

Heavy inflows into AP reservoirs due to rains

D. SIVA RAMI REDDY/
NAGABHUSHANAM
HOSKOTE | DC
KURNOOL/ANANTAPUR,
AUG. 8

With heavy rains lashing Maharashtra, Srisaillam reservoir received 2,22,406 cusecs of water from Jurla project. As on Saturday, it had 78.0365 tmc ft of water as against its total capacity of 215.81 tmc ft.

With copious water supply, Telangana government is drawing 1,600 cusecs of water from Srisaillam dam through the Mahatma Gandhi Kalvakurti Lift Irrigation (MGKLI) and 38,140 cusecs of water for power generation, while AP is drawing 1,688 cusecs from Malyala lift irrigation scheme and 1,000 cusecs from Pothireddypadu head regulator for irrigation purposes.

As a result of heavy inflows from the upstream of the river Krishna, 28 crest gates of Jurla project in Telangana were opened to let out 2,22,406 cusecs of water on Saturday. Presently, there is 8.222

● **WITH COPIOUS** water supply, Telangana government is drawing 1,600 cusecs of water from Srisaillam dam through the Mahatma Gandhi Kalvakurti Lift Irrigation (MGKLI) and 38,140 cusecs of water for power generation, while AP is drawing 1,688 cusecs from Malyala lift irrigation scheme and 1,000 cusecs from Pothireddypadu head regulator for irrigation.

● **HEAVY RAINS** in Karnataka and Maharashtra raised hopes of heavy inflows into irrigation project in AP and TS and put to rest any fears of water shortage for drinking and irrigation needs this year.

TMC of water in the reservoir as against its full storage capacity of 9.657 TMC.

Officials said 22,634 cusecs of water is being used for power generation at Jurla project.

Meanwhile, incessant rains in Karnataka and Maharashtra for the last

couple of days have raised the hopes of heavy inflows into irrigation project in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana and put to rest any fears of water shortage for drinking and irrigation needs this year.

Both Telugu states can bury the hatchet at least for some time over sharing of Krishna water as there is plenty of water for both AP and Telangana.

The inflow into Krishna river is many times more than that of previous years and Telugu states can draw enough water for their needs.

Almatil reservoir in Karnataka received 98.81 TMC ft with constant inflows of 1.51 lakh cusecs and the authorities discharged 1.75 lakh cusecs down steam on Saturday.

Narayanapur reservoir also received 31 TMC ft with 1.79 lakh cusecs inflows and 1.81 cusecs outflows.

Similarly, Tungabhadra reservoir received more than six TMC ft within a day and authorities expect the reservoir to get full capacity in a week.

EDUCATION | TRUNCATED

Revised syllabus to be finalised by reopening

School syllabus to be slashed

MD ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, AUG 8

The syllabus in AP schools is to be reduced. The revised syllabus will be finalised by the re-opening of the schools on September 5 and parents are divided about it.

The schools usually work for 222 days every year but this year the schools have been closed from March 22 due to the pandemic.

The government decided to cut 30-40 per cent of the

SHORT TAKES

28 INSPECTORS PROMOTED AS DSPs IN AP

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 8

AP Director General of Police Goutam Sawang has issued orders promoting 28 circle inspectors throughout the state as deputy superintendents of police.

According to a circular from the DGP office on Saturday, the Police Establishment Board had met recently and after going through the records and service particulars, decided to recommend that the 28 circle inspectors be promoted as DSPs. The orders will come into force with immediate effect.

The promoted circle inspectors are Md Shareef, V. V. Appa Rao, G. Seetharama Rao, S. Raghavulu, N. Kalidas, B. Srinivas, J. Siva Narayana Swamy, P. Kanjakshan, Raghuvver Vishnu, V. Subba Raju, B. Janardhana Rao, T. V. V. Pratap Kumar, P. Sarath Babu, Singuluri Venkateswara Rao, G. Bali Reddy, T. Ashok Vardhan, S. Rambabu, Ch. Ravi Kanth, Ch. Srinivasa Rao, B. Venkata Siva Reddy, T. Dilip Kumar, P. Srinivasulu, R. G. Jayasurya, S. S. Bhaskara Rao, K. T. T. V. Ramana Rao, T. Venkateswarlu, V. Giridhar and G. Ravi Kumar.

KVPS DEMANDS JUSTICE FOR DALITS

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 8

The Kulavivaksha Vyatireka Porata Sangham (KVPS) expressed concern over increased attacks on Dalits and sought the immediate appointment of a chairperson and members to the SC/ST Commission.

KVPS leaders lamented that nearly 150 attacks were registered on Dalits during the coronavirus lockdown period which is a big concern and demanded that Chief Minister, Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, initiate measures to fill SC/ST Commission posts to help Dalits.

GOVERNOR GREETES TRIBALS ON WORLD ADIVASI DAY

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 8

Governor Biswa Bhushan Harichandan greeted the tribals on Saturday to mark World Adivasi Day to be observed on August 9.

In a release, the Governor said, "I convey my greetings to the people of Adivasi communities in Andhra Pradesh. I am happy to learn that the state government is contemplating to distribute land pattas to tribals under the Recognition of Forest Rights Act, 2006 to eligible persons to mark the International Day of Indigenous People."

COVID SYMPTOMS? RUSH TO HOSPITAL, SAYS OFFICIAL

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 8

Special chief secretary (health) K.S. Jawahar Reddy called upon people to be on high alert and seek medical help in case they suffer from Covid-19 symptoms like high fever, breathlessness and fall in oxygen saturation to below 94 per cent, by calling helpline 104 or by contacting local ANM or health volunteers to get medical attention.

He told media persons here on Saturday that the government had set up control rooms at village and district level and call centre with phone No. 14410 to access telemedicine.

GOVT URGED TO PAY SALARY OF EMPLOYEES

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 8

The AP Government Employees Association (APGEA) demanded that the government pay salary arrears to the employees of women and child welfare, medical and health departments.

APGEA president K. Surayanarayana said that the employees working under Centrally sponsored schemes were not getting salaries for the past three months.

He said that waiting for central grants to pay the salaries of these employees was wrong.

Survey to update land records

Government, patta lands being re-surveyed after eight decades

PATHRI RAJASEKHAR |
DC
NELLORE, AUG. 8

The Survey Department is gearing up to launch a state-wide survey to update land survey records throughout Andhra Pradesh in a scientific manner, so as to remove all discrepancies currently existing in the records. The re-survey will cover all government and patta lands, while forest lands will be out of purview.

Re-survey of lands should actually be conducted once in every 70 years. But the last survey was carried out 81 years ago in 1939.

The Survey Department

in SPSR Nellore district has already hired 463 out of total 665 civil engineering graduates required for the survey. It is taking steps to fill up the remaining posts shortly. Engineers are being trained in batches and sent to the five divisions of the district to work under supervision of senior officers.

Sharing this information with *Deccan Chronicle*, joint collector V. Vinod Kumar said they are using both traditional chains and cross staff method in addition to modern gadgets to ensure that the survey is accurate.

Assistant director of survey A. Hanuman Prasad said they are also using

● Re-survey of lands should actually be conducted once in every 70 years. But the last survey was carried out 81 years ago in 1939.

● The survey reports and sketches prepared by engineers will be verified on the field by senior officers at mandal, division and district levels. Deputy inspectors at revenue division level will inspect 75 per cent of the survey reports prepared.

Electronic Total Station, an electronic/optical instrument, to measure both vertical and horizontal angles and slope dis-

tance from up to 2.5 kilometres in one go. The new recruits will further be trained in DGPS (Digital Global Positioning System) to precisely measure each survey number with the help of satellite images. In addition, they will train in Autocad to prepare sketches for every survey number.

The survey reports and sketches prepared by engineers will be verified on the field by senior officers at mandal, division and district levels. Deputy inspectors at revenue division level will inspect 75 per cent of the survey reports prepared. Similarly, 50 per cent of the survey work will come under the scrutiny of dis-

trict inspectors and 20 per cent of the work will be checked by assistant directors at the district level to rule out any errors.

"All these exercises are meant to prevent farmers from running behind surveyors for measuring their lands in future," Hanuman Prasad states. For accuracy, the Continuously Operating Reference Station (CORS) System is also being used in addition to DGPS and traditional survey methods.

The final diagrams will be displayed on notice boards at village secretariats for raising objections, if any, before the records are updated, Prasad added.

Covid test



A child reacts while a Medical staff collects her swab for Covid testing in the presence of her parents at GVMC Model Primary School at Chinnawalai in Visakhapatnam on Saturday.

— K. MURALIKRISHNA

Boston group to set up centre at Vizag

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 8

After the clearance of all decks for three capitals in Andhra Pradesh, Vizag has begun to forge ahead in attracting new investments.

On 5th August 2020, the state government signed an MoU with The Boston Group, in the presence of Rathnakar Pandugayala, special representative to AP government for North America and Subu Kota, chairman of The Boston Group and People Prime Worldwide. This move is expected to create more than 250 jobs in the information technology (IT) sector of the state.

A native of Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, Subu Kota is an Indian-American entrepreneur and philanthropist who has established nearly 50 companies in the last 50 years that he has lived in the United States of America. His broad expe-

● IT minister, has come up with a new IT policy with many incentives to encourage IT investments in AP and it will help to attract investments.

rience ranges from IT consulting, e-learning Services, to pharmaceuticals research and manufacturing.

Speaking on the occasion, Kota said "I am delighted to be signing this MoU to strengthen our relationship with the Andhra Pradesh government. Vizag has a huge potential for growth and is becoming one of the most attractive investment destinations in India. Collaborations like these are crucial at this time while the world is fighting a pandemic. This new centre will deploy its employees in R&D on learning platforms and leverage advanced technologies like artificial intelligence (AI), machine

learning (ML), cyber security and human resources. We believe there is immense potential in tier two cities like Vizag with the talent pool comprising of graduates and post-graduate professionals."

Ravi Aleti, CEO of People Prime Worldwide, a subsidiary of The Boston Group, said "Vizag is an upcoming city with its own advantages such as connectivity, cosmopolitan population, top educational institutes and universities, as well as medical and support services. We would work with the state's ministry of information technology in opening our office in SEZ zones in Vizag."

Pandugayala added that Mekapati Gowtham Reddy, state IT minister, has come up with a new IT policy (2020-2025) with many incentives to encourage IT investments in Andhra Pradesh and it will surely help to attract investments.

Sec 144 in Tadipatri after Prabhakar's arrest

NAGABHUSHANAM
HOSKOTE | DC
ANANTAPUR, AUG. 8

Tadipatri town was placed under a security blanket and Section 144 imposed following arrest of former

MLA J.C. Prahakar Reddy for abusing a police inspector and violating Disaster Management Act. Poli-

ce produced him before the Gooty court and secured his judicial custody before shifting him to Kadapa central prison on Friday.

Cases were also registered against his son Asmith Reddy, nephew Pavan Reddy and several others by Kadapa police for mobilising a large

number of followers to accompany Mr Prabhakar Reddy and Asmith to Tadipatri after release from the Kadapa central prison on Thursday.

Police blocked all roads towards Tadipatri to prevent the entry of close aides of JC brothers from villages. Tadipatri DSP A. Srinivasulu said cases we-

re registered against Mr Prabhakar Reddy for abusing police officer at Bondaladinne in Tadipatri rural mandal. "We advised family members of Mr Prabhakar Reddy to avoid unnecessary trouble after he was granted bail on Friday. But, he abused the police officer who was on duty," the DSP said.

Yanamala counters Speaker's stand on judicial interference

MD ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 8

Telugu Desam senior leader Yanamala Ramakrishnudu on Saturday clarified his stand on Assembly speaker Tammineni Sitaram's statement on judicial interference in legislative decisions. He asserted that as speaker of Assembly in undivided AP in 1997, he had stated that courts could not interfere as far as proceedings in the House were concerned. He did not mean that courts had no role when decisions taken in legislative bodies were unconstitutional, he maintained.

Sitaram on Saturday said that courts should not interfere in legislative decisions and, in support of his stand, quoted Ramakrishnudu as saying the same thing.

In a counter to the Assembly speaker's statement, Mr Ramakrishnudu said that he stood by his statement as speaker in undivided AP and explained, "The courts shall not interfere in the functioning or debates or rulings of the House. Illegality involved in the decisions of the House can be questioned. But, irregularity is different from illegality. If there are irregularities in conducting debates in the House, it cannot be

● Sitaram on Saturday said that courts should not interfere in legislative decisions

questioned in the courts. If the House makes any legislation violating the Constitution or law, it can be questioned in the court of law."

Mr Ramakrishnudu asserted that the decisions of the Assembly or that of the speaker taken inside the House were different from those taken outside. He explained that statements with mala fide intention against the Assembly or members made outside the House would amount to breach of privilege and contempt of the House. He further explained that any utterances by the presiding officer or members outside would not be part of the House proceedings.

Mr Ramakrishnudu pointed out that the advocate general made a submission to the High Court that the three capitals and APCRDA (repeal) Bills were pending with the Select Committee. "It was unwarranted and unconstitutional on the part of the government to introduce the two Bills for a second time," he said and defended Opposition MLs' decision to question the same in the court of law.

TD failed to ensure hiring

FROM PAGE 1

Sources privy to developments in the state higher education council say that, earlier, executive councils in all universities in the state entered into an agreement with the Andhra Pradesh Service Commission (APPSC) to conduct screening tests in the form of a written test and submit a merit list and based on it. The selection committees in respective universities will then conduct an interview and select the candidates for recruitment as assistant professors on a regular basis in sanctioned posts.

However, for varied reasons, the previous Telugu Desam government failed to prevail upon the universities to complete the recruitment drive. This resulted in candidates who qualified the APPSC screening test, approaching the High Court seeking direction to expedite the process of recruitment.

On the other hand, assistant professors who are working on a contract basis in sanctioned posts due to vacancy on a temporary basis, also petitioned the High Court seeking direction to ensure job security to them while filling up all vacant posts on a permanent basis.

The sources say that as the executive councils in universities have not revoked their agreement with APPSC. A fresh screening test in the form of a written test may be conducted again to select the candidates and based on the merit list, selection committees in universities will conduct inter-

views and recruit the eligible candidates as assistant professors.

The other option being considered by authorities is that apart from a fresh merit list by conducting the screening test afresh, they may also consider the previous merit list from APPSC and go ahead with recruitment of assistant professors.

With regard to the contention of aspirants that following UGC norms, there is no role for APPSC to conduct a screening test and prepare a merit list, the higher education authorities maintain that there is no bar by the UGC to avail the services of APPSC to screen candidates for merit as all executive councils in the universities entered into agreement with APPSC to do so and the universities will have the final say in selection and recruitment of candidates for the posts.

AP higher education council chairman, Prof. K. Hemachandra Reddy, said, "The state government is of the opinion to expedite recruitment of 1,100 posts of assistant professors in all universities by approaching the High Court and requesting it to deliver a final judgement on all petitions. There are plans to go for a fresh screening test involving APPSC to infuse high quality in teaching in higher education. We have a couple of plans on the recruitment drive subject to the final verdict from the High Court. However, by December, notification for recruitment will be issued and recruitment process is expected to be completed in two months."

WATER | WAR

The seven projects objected to by Andhra Pradesh include Kaleshwaram AP, TS told to put on hold new river projects

D. SIVA RAMI REDDY | DC
KURNOOL, AUG. 8

Union minister for Jal Shakti, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat prevailed upon the Chief Ministers of Telangana State and Andhra Pradesh not to go ahead with projects on Krishna and Godavari rivers, which are being objected to by respective governments.

Expressing concern over the inordinate delay in convening the Apex Council constituted under Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act 2014,

Mr Shekawat in a letter dated August 7, said that the Apex Council meeting was overdue and asked the respective governments to attend the meeting at a convenient time.

On its part, the Telangana state government suggested it was ready to convene a meet by August 20.

Stressing that one of the functions of the Apex Council was supervision of the functioning of Godavari River Management Board (GRMB) and Krishna River Management Board

● Expressing concern over the inordinate delay in convening the Apex Council constituted under Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act 2014, Mr Shekawat in a letter dated August 7, said that the Apex Council meeting was overdue and asked the respective governments to attend the meeting at a convenient time.

● Stressing that one of the functions of the Apex Council was supervision of the functioning of Godavari River Management Board (GRMB) and Krishna River Management Board

(KRMB), he pointed out that so far only one meeting of Apex Council was held in September 2016.

In a letter addressed to the Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao, he

referred to the objection raised by the government of Andhra Pradesh in its letter dated May 14 of this year to RMB on the new projects taken up by Telangana in Godavari Basin in violation of relevant provisions of AP reorganisation Act 2014.

The seven projects objected to by Andhra Pradesh include Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation scheme, GLIS phase 3, Seetarama LIS, Tupakulagudem, Telangana drinking water supply project, barrages on lower Penganga river

and Ramappa Lake to Pakhal Lake division.

The minister also stated that the draft project report of Kaleshwaram LIS was accepted by the advisory committee of the ministry in June 2018. But Telangana has subsequently changed the scope and gone for enhancement of lifting of Godavari waters without submitting the DPR to GMRB and Central Water Commission for appraisal. Any change in scope or cost of the project needs to be duly appraised, he stated.

IN BRIEF

Plasma therapy effective

Nellore: Two of the four Covid-19 patients undergoing plasma therapy at the hospital in Nellore are showing signs of considerable improvement. Plasma donated by seven convalescent Coronavirus patients has come in handy to provide treatment to the patients. Collector K.V.N. Chakradhar Babu disclosed this during an interaction with senior officials of medical and health department and representatives of private hospitals here on Saturday. He advised the medical and health department to contact the persons who recovered from Covid in July and convince them to donate plasma. "Enlighten them how each one of them can save the lives of two patients by donating plasma" the collector suggested to the officials.

Collector tells 145 docs to join duty

Kurnool: As the spread of Coronavirus continues unabated in Kurnool district, collector G. Veerapandian on Saturday invoked the Epidemic Diseases Act to engage the services of Indian Medical Association (IMA) registered doctors in government hospitals. About 145 doctors were directed to report to the principal of the Kurnool Medical College to be posted in various hospitals of the district. As many as 1,353 positive cases were reported in the district on Saturday, taking the total to 26,000. Kurnool registered 238 deaths so far, the highest in the state. Invoking section 3 of the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 and section 17 of government order RT No.189, the collector said that any person, institution, organisation found violating any order of the district administration regarding the Covid-19 pandemic shall be deemed to have committed an offence punishable under section 188 of Indian Penal Code.

Prisoners found with Covid in jail

Rajahmundry: As many as 10 prisoners in Central Jail were detected with Covid-19 positive on Saturday and the number of infected persons rose to 275 in the jail so far. Over 32 jail personnel also got the virus till now. According to jail authorities, there are 1675 prisoners in the jail and the prisoners are afraid of the covid-19. However, due to security reasons, the infected prisoners are being given treatment in jail. One week back, a prisoner escaped from the covid care hospital at Rajanagar.



Gade Sai Krishna Priya

Kakinada girl is 'Miss Talented'

Kakinada: Gade Sai Krishna Priya, an electronics and Communication Graduate was awarded as 'Miss Talented-2020' in 'Soundaryalahari' Beauty Pageant, conducted by World Telugu Cultural Festival-2020 recently. Sai Krishna Priya, belongs to Kakinada, won the award amidst a stiff online contest in the last week of July. According to Krishna Priya, nearly 1000 participants from 40 Telugu Organizations from all over the world have taken part in the event out of which 25 have been selected and 11 participants were awarded the Miss Talented 2020. She learnt Classical Dance-Kuchipudi and performed classical dance in Gachibowli stadium in Hyderabad in the presence of ex-President Prathibha Patil and placed in Guinness Book of World Records.

CurvyFlyover



A view of 'S' curve of Kanakadurga Flyover from Bhavanipuram in Vijayawada on Saturday. — C. NARAYANA RAO

Mantri for restrictions, officials say not possible

Cases booked against those who violated Covid protocols

V.K.L. GAYATRI | DC VISAKHAPATNAM, AUG. 8

Economics takes precedence over Covid-19 concerns? Yes! This is what district collector V. Vinay Chand underlined on Saturday in Visakhapatnam, when minister for tourism M. Srinivasa Rao suggested certain stringent measures to control the spread of the virus.

At a reviewing meeting with officials of various departments here, the minister asked the collector to consider measures to prevent huge gatherings at markets and on certain auspicious days. He said he was receiving representations from the public, associations as well as trade bodies for minimizing business hours and preventing gatherings to check the deadly virus.

Responding to this, Mr Vinay Chand categorically ruled out such steps citing the Unlock-3 guidelines issued by the Union government.

He reasoned that imposing 'lockdown' even at some select timings would

All top officials monitor treatment

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, AUG. 8

Minister for tourism M. Srinivasa Rao said that using technology, the administration was notifying vacant bed positions at the Covid-19 hospitals and the Command Control Centre was guiding the needy to rush positive patients to the hospitals.

All the senior officials including collector, commissioner, GVMC, joint collectors, Andhra Medical College principal and superintendents of the Covid-19 hospitals are monitoring every two hours the bed vacancy position and new patients arriving for treatment in

the hospitals.

Addressing a media conference on the government's Covid preparedness, the minister said that directions were issued to every Covid-19 hospital to keep ready at least two beds for emergency patients. Collector V. Vinay Chand said that the Covid treatment was streamlined and every patient would get a bed at the Covid hospitals. The collector further said every Covid patient need not worry about their health and rush to hospital.

"They can recover easily in home quarantine. There are no categories among the hospitals. Every Covid-19 hospital is providing the same med-

ever, assured the minister that the administration would take appropriate measures to prevent mass gatherings.

DCP, Visakhapatnam city, Aishwarya Rastogi said that implementation of lockdown was not the part of policing.

If the administration issued the directions in this regard, the police would take the responsibility to implement them, he said. The DCP informed the minister that they had taken several steps including deployment of police at liquor shops to prevent crowding, the DCP added.

What with the limited manpower police department would not be in a position to deploy personnel at all the places, the DCP added.

Mr Rastogi said cases had been booked against those who violated Covid-19 regulations on community gatherings, marriages and funerals.

They officials said wearing face masks and maintaining social distance were the only ideal methods to check virus spread.

EG district tops in cumulative infections

From Page 1

With regard to cumulative infections, East Godavari has emerged on top with 30,160 cases, followed by 26,032 in Kurnool, 23,249 in Anantapur, 20,837 in Guntur, 18,532 in Visakhapatnam, 17,015 in West Godavari, 16,249 in Chittoor, 12,614 in Kadapa, 12,524 in Nellore, 10,527 in Srikakulam, 9,853 in Krishna, 8,448 in Vizianagaram, 8,105 in Prakasam, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

Among the total active cases where the patients are taking treatment, East Godavari has recorded 13,794 cases, followed by 9,480 in Kurnool, 8,694 in Visakhapatnam, 7,588 in Guntur, 6,925 in Anantapur, 6,919 in Chittoor, 6,251 in Nellore, 6,065 in Kadapa, 5,026 in Vizianagaram, 4,510 in Srikakulam, 3,715 in West Godavari, 3,398 in Krishna and 3,121 in Prakasam.

The rate of recovery has been good in Kurnool with 16,314 infected patients recovering, followed by 16,162 in Anantapur, 16,148 in East Godavari, 13,164 in West Godavari, 13,038 in Guntur, 9,681 in Visakhapatnam, 9,169 in Chittoor, 6,486 in Kadapa, 6,247 in Krishna, 6,182 in Nellore, 5,903 in Srikakulam, 4,884 in

Prakasam, 3,342 in Vizianagaram, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

The state has witnessed the highest number of 97 deaths on a single day. Guntur registered the highest deaths of 14, followed by 11 in Anantapur, 10 each in Kurnool and West Godavari, eight each in Chittoor and Nellore, seven in Prakasam, six in East Godavari, five each in Visakhapatnam and Vizianagaram, four in Krishna and two in Kadapa.

AP has carried out 45,401 Covid-19 tests per million population and registered Covid-19 positive rate at 8.95, followed by 19.04 in Maharashtra and 13.27 in Telangana.

At the Rajahmundry Central Prison, 10 prisoners have been found infected with Covid-19, raising the tally of infected prisoners to 275 so far. Thirty-two police personnel in the prison have also been infected with the virus.

Dad's death prompts two girls to end life

NAGESWARA RAO BALLEDA | DC KADAPA, AUG. 8

In a tragic turn of events, a 53-year-old electrician, Dhanireddy Babu Reddy, allegedly died by suicide over family issues, and, unable to bear the shock, his two daughters also ended their lives.

The atmosphere in YMR Colony in Proddatur, where they lived, was poignant with relatives and neighbours consoling Babu Reddy's wife Vijaya Bharathi, 49, who fell unconscious on hearing of three deaths in the family.

The two daughters were Swetha, 26, who was married to Suresh Kumar Reddy, 30, of Tallamapuram in Proddatur Rural mandal and Sai Preethi, 21, a second year engineering student.

According to Proddatur Rural inspector Sattaru Viswanatha Reddy, Babu Reddy had spent around ₹20 lakh on his elder daughter's marriage.

He believed that his son-in-law had a job and would take good care of his wife.

However, he realised that the boy had no job and his family was harassing his daughter. Unable to bear it any longer, he recorded a video in which he alleged that his son-in-law was harassing his daughter for more dowry and left home Friday evening. He ended his life on the outskirts of the town and his body was found on Saturday morning. Hearing the news, Swetha and Sai Preethi ended their lives on the railway track on the Tippalur-Yerraguntla route.

The Proddatur police sub-divisional officer Losari Sudhakar, inspector Viswanatha Reddy, sub-inspector D. Sunil Kumar Reddy reached the spot and inspected the scene. After inquest, they shifted the bodies to Proddatur hospital for autopsy.

The police filed a case against Suresh Kumar Reddy and arrested him.

PROPERTY OFFENDER HELD AFTER HOT CHASE

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, AUG. 8

The Santhanuthalapadu police have apprehended a property offender after a hot chase and recovered ₹1.50 lakh worth of property from him on Saturday.

The accused identified as Shai Rahul, 20, belongs to Peerlamayam, Arunodaya colony, Perumittu village of SN Padu mandal. He attempted to speed away on a bike when police stopped him during vehicular checks at Endlurudonka in SN Padu mandal on Saturday. He confessed to the police that he was addicted to bad vices and committing thefts to get money to meet his luxuries. He was involved in burglaries and also mortgaged stolen motorcycles. There are cases against him at Ongole I Town, Ongole II Town, Ongole Taluka, Podili, Markapur and Singarayakonda police stations.

He was arrested and sent to remand on Jun. 6. He resumed his illegal activities after being released from the jail.

The police seized a gold black beads chain weighing about two sovereigns, a Hero Honda Splendor motorcycle, a mobile phone and ₹3,000 cash, all worth ₹1,50,000 from the accused.

PVT HOSPITALS ROPED IN FOR COVID CARE

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, AUG. 8

The district administration has roped in several private hospitals in Nellore City and other parts of the district to treat Covid and non-Covid cases with immediate effect.

Government General Hospital, Narayana General Hospital and Dr G. Vijayakumar; Memorial Hospital, Area Hospital in Kavali continue to extend their services only Covid patients. The private hospitals that are going to treat both Covid and non-Covid patients Medcover Hospital, Apollo Specialty Hospital, Anasuya Institute of Medical Sciences, Jayabharat Hospital, Lotus Hospital, Vijayakrishna Hospital and Rich Hospital.

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1. SHAHEEN D/o. ALL KHAN. R/o. D.No.12-34, Cheruvu Sarai Chandra. Bose Enclave, Indira Nagar-2, Tadigadapa Donka Road, Yanamalakuduru, Penamaluru Mandal, Vijayawada, Krishna Dist. - 520007. A.P. After marriage my name was changed to SHAHEEN SHAIK W/o NAZEER HUSSAIN SHAIK. In my Passport application, Aadhar card and all ID Proofs my name was mentioned as SHAHEEN SHAIK. In my SSC my name was mentioned as SHAHEENA. Both names are one and the same, belongs to me.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, MOHAMMED KISHORE KHAN S/o GOUSE MOHAMMED (Old Name) R/o D.No.11-11-17/1, Valluruvu Street, Near Ramanaiah Coldrink Centre, Vijayawada-1, Krishna Dist., A.P. My name has been changed to GULLAPALLI KISHORE S/o GULLAPALLI NARASIMHA RAO (New Name). Hereafter my name known & called as GULLAPALLI KISHORE.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, MOHAMMED RANI W/o MOHAMMED KISHORE KHAN (Old Name) R/o D.No.11-11-17/1, Valluruvu Street, Near Ramanaiah Coldrink Centre, Vijayawada-1, Krishna Dist., A.P. My name has been changed to GULLAPALLI RANI W/o GULLAPALLI KISHORE (New Name). Hereafter my name known & called as GULLAPALLI RANI.

1,800 doctors called to join duty, 403 given appointment orders

From Page 1

The officials' called all the 1,800 doctors over telephone and urged them to join in emergency medical aid. Finally, the administration gave appointment orders to 403 doctors. "I myself signed on the appointment orders but a majority of the selected doctors are reluctant to join Covid-19 services. This is despite handsome salary and a posting of their choice, lamented District Collector V. Vinay Chand. Visakhapatnam district has

■ IMA efforts and sops of government are going in vain

■ In a first-of-its-kind initiative in the country, the state government is recruiting doctors and placing them in private hospitals to attend to Covid patients.

■ Despite ₹1.50 lakh salary, 15-day work per month, posting at their convenient places, doctors are reluctant to join duties

■ 1,800 doctors identified in Vizag. Appointment letters issued to 403 doctors but a majority of them yet to join duties

recruited the highest number of doctors while the response has been poor in all other districts. While responding to the

issue, Minister Srinivasa Rao said that a meeting would be convened with all short-listed doctors and senior officials.

SHORT TAKES

AAI CHIEF: WILL TAKE ACTION AFTER PROBE REPORT

New Delhi, Aug. 8: Airports Authority of India (AAI) Chairman Arvind Singh on Saturday said "corrective action" will be taken after receiving the probe report on the Air India Express plane crash at Kozhikode airport on Friday.

The airport in Kerala, which has a tabletop runway, is operated by state-owned AAI.

Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) is probing the accident at the Kozhikode airport that has left at least 18 people dead, including the two pilots of the plane. The Digital Flight Data Recorder (DFDR) and the Cockpit Voice Recorder (CVR) have been recovered at the crash site.

Singh said rescue work is over and reasons for the crash would be known once the AAIB report comes.

"This report will tell us about all the issues... we are awaiting the inquiry report and then we will take corrective action," he said.

On whether there were any safety issues had come to the notice of the AAI in recent times, Singh replied in the negative.

AI EXPRESS SAYS 3 RELIEF FLIGHTS SET UP FOR PEOPLE

New Delhi, Aug. 8: Air India Express said on Saturday that three relief flights had been arranged to Kozhikode in Kerala to assist passengers and their family members affected by the plane crash a day ago.

Officials said Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri would go to Kozhikode on Saturday.

The Air India Express flight from Dubai with 190 on board overshot the tabletop runway at Kozhikode airport on Friday night while landing in heavy rains and fell into a valley 35 feet below and broke into two, killing at least 18 people.

Air India Chairman and Managing Director Rajiv Bansal, and Air India Express Chief Executive Officer K Shyam Sundar have already reached Kozhikode, according to a statement.

Bansal, along with senior airline officials, "rushed" to the accident site "to take stock of the situation and are being briefed by experts", Air India tweeted.

Two special relief flights have been arranged from Delhi and one from Mumbai for rendering humanitarian assistance to all the passengers and the family members, Air India Express, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the national carrier, said.

INDIAN CONSULATE TO BE OPEN FOR INFO ON AI CRASH

Dubai, Aug. 8: The Indian Consulate in Dubai will remain open on Saturday to help those who need assistance to travel to Kerala and provide information about the crash of the Air India Express flight that skidded off a hilltop runway and split in two while landing in heavy rain at an airport in Kozhikode, killing at least 17 people.

According to the Civil Aviation Ministry, the Boeing 737 aircraft on a flight from Dubai to Kozhikode overshot the runway at Kozhikode airport at 7.41 PM on Friday. There were 184 passengers including 10 infants, 2 pilots and 4 cabin crew on board the aircraft, the ministry added.

Captain Deepak Sathe, the pilot-in-command, and his co-pilot Akhilesh Kumar were among those who died, police and airline officials said on Friday.

AIR ASIA ABORTS TAKE OFF AT RANCHI AFTER BIRD HIT

Ranchi, Aug. 8: An Air Asia India aircraft departing for Mumbai on Saturday morning aborted its take-off at Ranchi airport after encountering a bird hit, said the airline spokesperson. This incident occurred a day after an Air India Express flight from Dubai with 190 people onboard overshot the runway at Kozhikode airport in rainy conditions and went down 35 feet into a slope before breaking up into two pieces, killing at least 18 people.

"AirAsia India aircraft VT-HKG operating from Ranchi to Mumbai as flight 15-632 encountered a bird hit during scheduled departure at 11.50 am, today, 8th August 2020," stated the airline spokesperson.

Plane shook, there was loud noise

Survivors scrambled out of plane, saw heaps of twisted metal; many passengers were bleeding

Kozhikode, Aug. 8: Several injured passengers of the ill-fated Air India Express flight from Dubai which overshot the runway and crashed at the airport here are yet to get over the horror moments that took them close to death. "We did not realise what really happened other than the flight was shaking," said Ramshad, who was injured.

Ramshad's wife Sufaira and four-year old daughter Saidasherin escaped without any serious wounds.

Similar is the experience of Ashraf, a native of east Kozhikode, now under treatment at the Medical College Hospital here, who said he was yet to recover from the shock.

"As soon the flight crashed, the emergency door was opened and people jumped out to safety, another survivor said. Ashik, undergoing treatment at a hospital here, said the fire force personnel reached immediately and shifted the injured to hospital soon.

Vijaymohan, who escaped with minor injuries and is recovering in a private hospital, said he thought it was a nightmare, unsure whether he was dreaming it all or living through it.

"I could see heaps of twisted metal spread around when I opened my eyes after the initial shock of the impact, said Vijaymohan, a resident of nearby Malaparamba.

His wife Jameema is admitted in the ICU. The couple had gone to Dubai in December to join their son but got held up due to the Covid-19 induced lockdown.

Describing the horrific minutes that stretched into what seemed like hours, Riyas said the flight went around the airport twice before attempting to land.

"I was in the back seat. There was a big noise and I don't know what happened after that," he told a media channel after he was rescued.

Fathima, another passenger, said the flight landed with heavy force and mo-

Ashraf, a native of east Kozhikode, now under treatment at the Medical College Hospital here, who said he was yet to recover from the shock. Describing the horrific minutes that stretched into what seemed like hours, Riyas said the flight went around the airport twice before attempting to land.

ved forward.

Ashik, undergoing treatment at a hospital here, was thankful to the fire personnel who reached immediately and moved the injured to safety.

In a telephone interview from his hospital bed, Renjith Panangad, a plumber who was returning home for the first time in three years after losing his job at a construction company in Dubai, said the plane swayed before the crash and everything went dark.

He said he followed other passengers who crawled their way out of the fuselage through the emergency exit.

"A lot of passengers were bleeding," said Panangad, who escaped without major injuries. "I still can't comprehend what happened. As I am trying to recall what happened, my body is shivering."

He said the pilot made a regular announcement before landing, and moments after the plane hit the runway, it nosedived. "There was a big noise during the impact and people started screaming," he said.

— PTI, AFP



The mangled remains of the Air India Express flight, en route from Dubai, after it skidded off the runway while landing on Friday night, at Karippur in Kozhikode, Saturday.

PASSENGER TESTS +VE, RESCUERS ASKED TO GO INTO QUARANTINE

DC CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, AUG. 8

One of the passengers in Air India Express aircraft tested positive for Covid-19 while three others were suspected to have the infection.

Health minister K.K. Shailaja has asked all persons who took part in the rescue operations to report to their nearest health authorities and if required go into self quarantine as a precautionary measure.

"All persons who took part in the rescue will be tested," she added.

Around 50 CISF personnel who took part in the rescue work and their family members have been asked to go into preventive quarantine.

Rescue operation by locals brings down casualties

DC CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, AUG. 8

The massive rescue operations carried out by the local people of Kondotty taluk soon after the Air India Express aircraft accident has come in for huge applause. The CISF, state police, fire, rescue services staff and agencies did a commendable job in carrying out the rescue operations in record time.

'Back home' selfie goes viral, but passenger dead

Kozhikode, Aug. 8: A selfie taken by Sharufudheen Pillassery, along with his wife and three-year-old daughter, in PPE kits inside the Air India Express flight from Dubai that crashed here, has gone viral as reports emerged that the journey turned out to be his last trip.

Before take off, Pillassery had posted the selfie, on his Facebook page with the caption "Back Home". However, he did not make it. While Sharufudheen succumbed to his injuries, his wife is seriously injured and undergoing treatment in a Kozhikode hospital. Their daughter, who suffered minor injuries, has been handed over to her grandparents.

Another tragic case is that of 29-year-old Sahira Banu's

● WHILE SHARUFUDHEEN succumbed to his injuries, his wife is seriously injured and undergoing treatment in a Kozhikode hospital.

whose dream was to get a government job for herself and though married with three children, that yearning never left her.

She had gone to Dubai hardly 10 months ago and had taken the AIE flight to pursue her dream, a relative said. Her three minor children were also with her.

While two of her children, who survived, are undergoing treatment in two private hospitals, her youngest 10-month-old son died along with his mother in the crash. — PTI

AMID COVID, PEOPLE QUEUED UP TO DONATE BLOOD

DC CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, AUG. 8

Soon after Friday night's aircraft crash, people from Kozhikode, Malappuram and even Kannur thronged blood banks in various hospitals to donate blood for the injured. All this happened within minutes of the hospital authorities sending out an SOS for blood requirement including that of rare groups.

People braving heavy rains and the Covid-19 threat queued up to donate blood which proved crucial for saving critically injured passengers.

Most hospitals were facing shortage of blood due to Covid. The donors kept arriving in the hospitals till the early hours of Saturday and waited in the queues.

Capt Sathe was to meet mom today

Pune / Kozhikode, Aug. 8: Captain Deepak Sathe, pilot of the ill-fated Air India Express flight, who died along with 17 others after the mishap at Kozhikode airport, had planned to pay a surprise visit to Nagpur to greet his mother on her 84th birthday on Saturday, his relative said.

"He had last met his parents in March and was constantly in touch with them over phone. They had last spoken a day before yesterday," his nephew Dr Yashodhan Sathe said on Saturday. Captain Sathe lived with his wife in Mumbai. His mother Neela Sathe lives with her husband Vasant Sathe, a retired Colonel, in Bharatnagar locality of the city.

Sathe was a former Wing Commander of the Indian Air Force (IAF) and had served at the flight testing establishment. A passout of the National Defence Academy (NDA), Pune, topper in the 58th course and an awardee of 'Sword of Honour', Deepak served in the IAF for 21 years before joining as a commercial pilot with Air India in 2005.

Dr Yashodhan said that the body of Captain Sathe is yet to be handed over to

2 INDIAN EXPATS STOPPED FROM FLYING SAVED

Dubai, Aug. 8: One may call it good luck, but for two Indian expats it was God who prevented them at the last minute from boarding the Air India Express plane that crashed in Kerala, killing at least 18 people on board.

Noufal Moin Vettan, an Ajman resident working as an office boy in a Sharjah school, was booked to travel on the flight and had checked in as per schedule. Vettan, a resident of Malappuram, Thiruvavaya, whose visa was cancelled a week ago, told Gulf News: I was handed my boarding pass, but when I reached immigration, they told me I had to pay a fine of Dh 1,000 (₹20,430) for overstay. I had only Dh 500 (₹10,215) with me."

"I called my school PRO and he told me to come back. He said they would follow protocols and pay the fines before sending me, he said. "When I heard about the crash, I was saddened for all the passengers. But I'm so relieved I missed it. God has been really merciful."

Afsal Parrakodan, a resident of Abu Dhabi, had a similar stroke of luck. "My work visa was cancelled about a week ago. After getting my boarding pass, I was told I had to pay a fine of Dh1,000 at the immigration counter, but I had only Dh500 on me. I was very keen to board the flight and be with my family. So I called a friend who brought me the additional Dh500, but by then, my baggage had been offloaded and the flight's doors were closed," said Parrakodan. "I was feeling very sad and called my mother to tell her I had missed the flight. But a few hours later, when I learnt of the crash, I couldn't help but feel relieved and thankful to God for saving my life," said an overwhelmed Parrakodan who plans to fly back next week.

— PTI

Govts announce ₹10L compensation

GILVESTER ASSARY I DC
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, AUG. 8

The Centre and Kerala state governments announced ₹10 lakh each for the families of the victims of the Air India Express aircraft mishap at Kozhikode international airport on Friday, even as the civil aviation authorities recovered the black box, digital flight recorder (DFDR) and the

cockpit voice recorder (CVR) from the site. These are critical to find out the cause of the accident that killed 18 people, including the pilot Capt. D.V. Sathe and the co-pilot Akhilesh Kumar.

A team from the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) and experts of the flight safety department of the Director General of Civil Aviation arrived at the airport on Saturday to

● UNION CIVIL AVIATION minister Hardip Singh Puri said weather conditions were unfavourable at the time of the landing because of the monsoon rains.

inspect the site of the mishap and the aircraft wreckage.

The experts will examine the CVR and DFDR to reach a conclusion on what might have led to the tragic accident of Flight AXB1344.

Union civil aviation minister Hardip Singh Puri said weather conditions were unfavourable at the time of the landing because of the monsoon rains. The pilot seems to have tried to bring the aircraft to a halt on the runway but due to slippery conditions the plane skidded away leading, he said. As many as 23 passen-

gers are in a critical condition in various hospitals in Kozhikode.

VIPs made a beeline to Kozhikode on Saturday. Governor Arif Mohammad Khan, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, civil aviation minister Hardeep Singh Puri, Union minister of state V. Muraliedharan visited the site of the accident and families of the victims and the injured in hospitals.

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Captain Deepak Sathe

the family. He has two sons. "Dhananjay lives in Bengaluru and he is trying to reach Kozhikode by road. His second son is in the USA and he won't be able to come," Dr Yashodhan said. Sources said Air India was trying to fly him home.

Capt. Sathe had survived an air crash in the early 1990s when he was in the Air Force and was hospitalised for six months, his cousin Nilesh Sathe, who is adviser, finance, at the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), said in a Facebook post.

Sathe had suffered multiple injuries on his skull. Due to his strong will power and passion he cleared the fitness test and started flying again, Nilesh said.

— PTI



SHORT TAKES

KERALA RECORDS SINGLE-DAY SPIKE IN VIRUS CASES

DC CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, AUG. 8

Even as Kerala struggled to come to terms with the Air India Express aircraft crash in Kozhikode and landslide in Rajamala in Idukki district, there was bad news on the Covid-19 front as well with the state recording biggest single day spike with 1420 cases on Saturday.

Of the people infected, 1216 contracted the infection through contact, 60 came from abroad, 108 from other states, the source of infection among 92 was yet to be known. The state recorded four deaths.

The only relief was that 1715 persons recovered from the infection.

NEDFI EMBARKS PLAN FOR MARKETPLACE

MANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, AUG. 8

The north eastern development finance corporation ltd (NEDFi) has embarked upon an ambitious plan to facilitate the 'marketplace' for entrepreneurs of MSME sectors facing challenges in the northeast region due to the pandemic as much as structural reasons.

The facility that the NEDFi intends to create will be of help especially for entrepreneurs who are located away from Guwahati, the deputy general manager of the NEDFi, Ashim Kumar Das said, adding that product categories will include handloom and handicraft products, non-perishable food products as well as MSME products.

JAIPUR COPS TOLD TO PROBE PHONE TAPPING RUMOURS

Jaipur, Aug. 8: Rajasthan DGP Bhupendra Singh on Saturday instructed the Jaipur police to investigate the complaint lodged against the "rumours" that phone numbers of six MLAs holed up in a Jaisalmer hotel are being tapped, according to a statement.

The DGP said the information is "utterly baseless, false and misleading" and asked Jaipur Police Commissioner Anand Srivastava to take immediate action in this regard, the statement said.

Amid a political crisis triggered by the revolt of dissident Congress leader Sachin Pilot against Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, the Congress had shifted the MLAs backing the CM to the Jaisalmer's Suryagarh hotel, accusing the BJP of the bid to topple its government in the state.

On Friday, it was claimed in a message circulated on WhatsApp that phone numbers of six MLAs lodged in the Jailsalmer hotel are being tapped. The message was circulated with a list of phone numbers. Reiterating his department's stand over the controversy, the DGP in the statement clarified that the Rajasthan Police did not tap the phone number of any legislator, "neither in the past nor in present".

25-YEAR-OLD FILES RAPE CASE AGAINST ODISHA COP

AKSHAYA KUMAR
SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, AUG. 8

The Odisha police on Saturday faced an embarrassment after a 25-year-old woman alleged that she was raped by a subedar of the 7th Battalion of the Odisha State Armed Police (OSAP) at gunpoint for over four months.

The woman in her complaint lodged at Capital police station alleged that Subedar Debasis Swain on March 28 called her to his government quarters in the pretext of engaging her as a maid and immediately confined her to a room there.

"Subedar Debasis Swain called me to his official quarters in Unit 1 here on March 28 for domestic work with a monthly salary of ₹4,000. He told me that his wife and children have gone to their village due to the lockdown. Hearing this, I told him that I will come to work once his wife and children return from the village. But he confined me to a room in his quarters and threatened to kill me if I made any attempt to escape," the woman told reporters after lodging the police complaint.

She added that the cop used to rape her at gunpoint everyday after returning from duty.

SSR DEATH CASE: RHEA RELEASES TEXT MESSAGES IN HER SUPPORT

DC CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, AUG. 8

In a bid to support her claims, Rhea Chakraborty, girlfriend of late Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput, on Saturday put out some text messages exchanged between them and gratitude notes, which she claimed were written by Rajput. Along with this, she uploaded a picture on social media of the 34-year-old actor's water bottle stating that these three things were the only property of Rajput that were in her possession.

During the Enforcement Directorate (ED) interrogation, Chakraborty claimed that the 500 sq. ft residential property in Khar (East) was bought using her money and that she had not taken any monetary help from Rajput. The ED has not found any direct bank transaction between the two actors and the details of other accounts is now being checked. The probe entails allegations by Rajput's father of Chakraborty taking away ₹15 crore from the deceased actor.

The statement recorded by Chakraborty and her brother Showik will be vetted with the findings in the probe, officials said. The ED will also question bank officials apart from Chakraborty's chartered accountant. The officials are using the case filed by Bihar police as the base of initiating the investigation, which has now been taken over by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

"All angles are being probed and details of the bank accounts of the family members is also being looked into," said investigating officials.

The Maharashtra government meanwhile filed their reply before the Supreme Court stating the case cannot be transferred to the CBI as the Bihar had no locus standi to register a case in connection with the incident that took place in Mumbai.



A vehicle moves slowly through a waterlogged street following heavy rainfall, in Kottayam district, in Kerala on Saturday.

— PTI

Munnar landslide toll rises to 23; 43 trapped

12 out of 81 plantation workers on tea estate were rescued

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC
THIRUVANANTHAURAM, AUG. 9

The death toll in the Munnar landslide rose to 23 even as search operations continued for 43 persons who are feared trapped under the debris at Pettimudi near Rajamala in Idukki district of Kerala on Friday.

There were 81 people, most of them plantation workers of tea estates, in the area at the time of the mishap. Of these 12 were rescued from the spot on Friday. The local people carried out a massive rescue work.

As it took a couple of hours for the security agencies including police and fire force personnel to reach the mishap spot, the locals mainly plantation workers tried to save as many people risking

Karnataka flood toll rises to 12

Bengaluru, Aug. 8: Swollen rivers and flood-like situation continued to threaten lives and property in several parts of rain-ravaged Karnataka, where the death toll reached 12 on Saturday.

Though there has been a respite from the rain in some parts, rivers continue to flow above the danger mark, inundating low-lying areas in several parts of Malnad, coastal and interior Karnataka. There are also reports of continued

landslides in hilly areas of Kodagu and Chikkamagaluru.

Total human loss from August 1 to 6 pm this evening in 12 rain and flood ravaged districts is 12 and five people are missing, according to official data. As many as 70 relief camps are active across the state so far where 1,292 people are taking shelter while 23 animals have died so far. While 276 houses are completely damaged, 1,913 are partially damaged. —PTI

their own lives amid heavy rains. It was a humongous

task since the area was experiencing power cuts for many days and the

telecommunication network had been damaged due to the landslide. The place was cut off from the rest of the world.

Soon after the incident, the locals trekked for several kilometres to reach the nearest forest station and inform them about the mishap. Revenue minister E. Chandrashekhara and power minister M. M. Mani went to the site on Saturday to supervise the rescue operations.

The state government on Friday had dispatched 20 ambulances, medical teams, mobile medical units to provide assistance to the people trapped in the landslide. Meanwhile, heavy rains continued to wreak havoc in Kerala with the Met department sounding red alert in Idukki, Thrissur, Palakkad and Wayanad districts.

J&K chief secy sparks row over 'corrupt' ministers

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR, AUG. 8

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Secretary B.V.R. Subrahmanyam's remarks that its political leaders were "corrupt" and, therefore, not a "single soul had cried" over their detention in August last year has drawn flak from various political parties of the erstwhile state. They have accused him of contravening service rules and breaching propriety.

The CS had on Friday while speaking to a group of visiting mediapersons here said, "J&K was a broken state and there was no system in place due to years of mis-governance, corruption and unbelievable levels of fraud committed by leaders of mainstream parties and separatist organisations." He had added that, therefore, "not a single soul had cried" over their detention on August 5 last year when the state was stripped of its special status and split up into two Union Territories.

He claimed that J&K was "a big Ponzi scheme," when he was sent here in June 2018 and was asked by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, 'Go, clean up the administration, rebuild it and hand over the 'amanat' (precious possession) to the local people'.

Reacting sharply to his remarks, People's

Democratic Party (PDP) said that the CS has committed "gross abuse" of civil service rules and asked him "If no one sheds a tear for them why are the leaders jailed under PSA (Public Safety Act)?" It termed Mr Subrahmanyam's remarks as "uncalled for and utterly flagitious."

The PDP accused him of having come to J&K "with a colonial mindset and being the chief executioner of RSS" in the erstwhile state. "It is ironic that he is finding fault with the entire population of J&K while running the most corrupt administration that the state has ever witnessed. He is, in fact, heading a cabal of officers who are affiliated with RSS and are enforcing their agenda in Kashmir. IAS has never stooped to this low."

The PDP alleged, "His only fame to glory is establishing a culture of impunity, polarised administration, systematic sidelining of local officers, fragmenting of bureaucracy on feudal lines and perpetuating the quid pro quo culture of rewarding incompetence. This is the part of the RSS campaign to destroy the identity of Kashmir and they are now attributing criminal charges on almost everybody in Kashmir in the name of terrorism, separatism and corruption."

Major General-level talks help matters

PAWAN BALI | DC
NEW DELHI, AUG. 8

India and China on Saturday held major general-level talks at Daulat Beg Oldie (DBO) to discuss disengagement at the strategic Depsang plains and other friction points. The talks were held after five rounds of corps commander-level meetings.

The meeting started at 11 am and ended at 7:30 pm and was held on the Chinese side of the LAC.

Depsang plains and Pangong Tso emerged as the major sticking points in the disengagement process.

Till now, military talks had mainly concentrated on disengagement at Galwanvalley, Pangong Tso, Hot Springs and Gogra post.

In Depsang Plains, Chinese troops have been

preventing Indian army patrols from going to patrolling points 10-13. In Depsang plains, the Chinese are concentrated at a place which is around 20-25 kilometres from a strategic airstrip: the Daulat Beg Oldie advanced landing ground (ALG). This is one of the world's highest airstrips, built in 1962 and re-activated in 2008.

There has been a huge build-up of troops, tanks, armoured vehicles and artillery at the Depsang and DBO sector by both India and China.

There are estimates that India has deployed around 15,000 troops and Russian T-90 tanks at the Depsang-DBO sector. Unlike other friction points in Ladakh, the Depsang plains, situated at an altitude of over 15,000 feet, are flat and suitable for tank action.

Rahul hits out at govt over Asha workers' strike

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 8

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday hit out at the Centre over the ASHA health workers' strike demanding better service conditions and benefits, saying the government was "mute" already, but now maybe "blind and deaf" also.

"ASHA workers take

health protection to homes across the country. They are truly health warriors, but today they are forced to go on strike for their own rights," Mr Gandhi tweeted in Hindi.

"The government was mute already, but now maybe blind and deaf also," the former Congress president said tagging a media report about workers under the ASHA

● **THE STRIKE** by almost six lakh Asha workers has been called by central trade unions against the Centre for not providing adequate assistance — lack of safety equipment, delay in pittance — amid the Coronavirus pandemic.

(Accredited Social Health Activist), anganwadi, and National Health Mission

being on a two-day nationwide strike from Friday.

The strike by almost six lakh Asha workers has been called by central trade unions against the Centre for not providing adequate assistance — lack of safety equipment, delay in pittance — amid the Coronavirus pandemic.

Asha workers have played a significant role in contact-tracing, carrying

out surveys and organising awareness schemes for the Coronavirus in India.

They want better and timely pay, and a legal status that ensures minimum wages, to sustain their work of helping Indian officials track down high-risk contacts of Covid-19 patients across slums and hard-to-reach rural parts of the country.

States told to focus on recoveries

SHASHI BHUSHAN DC
NEW DELHI, AUG. 8

As the fatality rate has declined to 2.04 per cent, the Union Government on Saturday directed state governments to focus on efforts to further reduce the Covid-19 mortality due.

The Union Health ministry, meanwhile, pointed that focused efforts have resulted in the recovery rate rising to 68.32 per cent.

With a single-day rise of 61,537 cases, the country's coronavirus tally has reached 20,88,611 while the death toll rose to 42,518 with 933 fresh fatalities being reported in a day.

According to the Health ministry, India has one of the lowest cases per million at 1,469 as against the global average of 2,425.

"With focused efforts to reduce mortalities, India has registered one of the lowest deaths per million at 30 as compared to the global average of 91 deaths per million," said the health ministry.

There has been a sharp increase in Covid-19 recoveries. With 48,900 patients discharged in the last 24 hours, the country's total recoveries has reached 14,27,005. The recovery rate, on a steady upward rise, stands at 68.32 per

cent. The active cases, which are the actual case load for India at 6,19,088 account for 29.64 per cent of the total positive cases.

Union Health Secretary, Rajesh Bhushan chaired two high-level virtual meetings on Friday and Saturday to engage with the states reporting with high case load and higher Case Fatality Rate (CFR) than the national average.

Saturday's meeting focused on 13 districts concentrated in eight States or Union Territories.

"These districts account for nearly 9 per cent of India's active cases and about 14 per cent of deaths.

They also report low tests per million and high confirmation percentage," it said.

The Centre advised those states to address the issues of low lab utilisation, less than 100 tests per day for RT-PCR and 10 for others; low tests per million population; decrease in absolute tests from last week; delay in test results; and high confirmation percentage among the health care workers.

They were advised to ensure timely referral and hospitalization in view of reports from some districts of patients dying within 48 hours of admission.

CHANGING I ROLE

New jobs opened for weaker sections in govt as old political leaders lose voice

Most of J&K adjusted to Art 370 abrogation

Harsh V. Pant

It was a year back on August 5, 2019, that the abrogation of Article 370 and 35A was announced in Parliament, which led to the bifurcation of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories — Ladakh without a legislature, and Jammu and Kashmir with a legislature. It was a bold move, one which resulted in national and global rever-

berations as it came into effect on October 31, 2019.

We have grown so used to the status quo that a change of this magnitude challenges our intellectual faculties. But it is also a reality that much as many of us would like to ignore it, the status quo on Kashmir had become unsustainable long back. It was only the political and policy inertia that was keeping Indian policymakers from challenging it.

A year on, despite the challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic, things are beginning to settle down

in both Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. With the development and empowerment process underway in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, this is likely to become even stronger in the future.

At the domestic level, there has been a big change in the way governance has been ramped up and has started benefiting those who were not really part of the national and intellectual discourse — the under-privileged and marginalised communities like Valmikies, Gorkhas and Dalits.

With the new administrative arrangements ushered in last year, it is that silent majority that is regaining its voice and role in the regional and national matrix as central laws are starting to be implemented. New job opportunities have been opened up for weaker sections in the government.

This is also being reflected in the manner in which development projects which have been languishing have been energised. As of 2018, projects worth over ₹7,000 crore were stuck at various stages.

Even Prime Minister's relief package for socio-economic infrastructure announced in 2015 had not got the traction it deserved but in the last year various investments in infrastructure and other sectors has gathered momentum.

It is remarkable that while the critics continue to harp on a seeming lack of democracy in Jammu and Kashmir, grassroots democracy has actually been thriving with Panchayati Raj elections of 2018 witnessing a voter turnout of 74.1 per cent followed by elections to the

Block Development Councils held for the first time in the history of Jammu and Kashmir in October 2019 with a record 98.3 per cent voter turnout. This has brought in new voices and new actors into the political arena, away from the stranglehold of a few families who dominated local politics.

No wonder that few are calling for the restoration of Article 370 today.

The writer is a distinguished fellow at the Observer Research Foundation (ORF).



Arjun Ram Meghwal

UNION MINISTER WHO ENDORSED 'BHABHI JI PAPAD' POSITIVE

New Delhi, Aug. 8: Union Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal, who had recently endorsed 'Bhabhi ji papad' claiming that the snack will help prevent Coronavirus, himself tested positive for the deadly contagion on Saturday. As per reports, Union Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs he currently admitted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in New Delhi. With this, Meghwal becomes the fourth Union minister to have tested positive for coronavirus. Earlier in the day, Union Minister of State for Agriculture Kailash Chaudhary also tested positive for Covid-19 and is currently undergoing treatment at a hospital in Jodhpur. — Agencies

DECCAN
Chronicle

9 AUGUST 2020



Shashi Warriar

Off the beaten track

My first brush with a
'Madras autowallah'

These days, when I have time on my hands, my mind drifts back to old times, and to surprises, of which there are many. Back in the 1970s, my elder brother went off to college, to a hostel and to what I thought was freedom. Envious, I nagged my parents into allowing me to go on a longish train ride from our home in Trivandrum to Madras, some twenty hours away by the metre-gauge line that was, in those days, the sole direct rail route between those cities.

My parents saw me off with ₹50/- for expenses, tickets both ways, instructions on what not to eat on the train, and written instructions on how to get to my cousin's place in Besant Nagar from Egmore railway station. Also, for emergency use, I had the phone number of a friend of Dad's, and one final instruction relayed from my Madras cousin: *Don't ever take an autorickshaw in Madras because the drivers are all cheats!*

The train left Trivandrum in the afternoon, and I managed to follow Mom's instructions on food until dinner-time, when I succumbed to temptation and polished off a fragrant but forbidden chicken biryani. The night was pleasant and I slept well enough, even though the berth was merely a plank, and the ride was bumpy as it always was on metre-gauge railway lines.

I came awake to sunlight, a queue for the toilets, which I wanted desperately to use, and the sight of fellow passengers packing their bags, preparing to get off. I asked one of them how long it would take to get to Madras, and he replied, "Less than ten minutes." No hope, evidently, of making it to the toilet before that. I asked him about the buses my cousin had written about, and he replied, "Oh! No problem. There's one every twenty minutes. You'll get to Besant Nagar in an hour."

That roiling stomach made an hour look like an eternity. Dad's colleague lived in Adyar. "What about Adyar?" I asked. "Is that closer?"

"Yes," he said. "About half the distance."

By now the train was drawing up at the platform and there was a surge to the door. Larger passengers loaded with luggage shoved me out of the way in their rush to get wherever they were going. Perhaps they, too, needed a toilet, I thought, and waited for my turn to step off the coach. Saving half an hour seemed important enough, I thought, to justify calling Dad's friend to ask if I could go straight to his place.

There were coin telephones in the concourse of the station. In those days the coin telephone system worked as follows: you got your coins ready and dialled the number you wanted to call. When the connection was made, you would be able to hear whatever the person you called said, but he or she wouldn't be able to hear you until the coin slotted into place. The phone wanted a ten-paisa coin, which I had, but what I didn't know was that it required a "new" or aluminium ten-paisa coin, not the steel ones I had. When I dialled Dad's friend, he couldn't hear me: all he knew was that some stranger was trying to get through to him.

I gave up after the second attempt and decided that my internal situation had now become an emergency, and so, against my cousin's emphatic advice, I took an auto, the first in a queue. The driver was a tall, lean, barefooted man in an orange lungi and a khaki shirt, with frizzy hair, a drooping moustache, and red eyes. I distrusted him on sight, but since the queue was rigorously enforced, I had no choice.

When I got into the vehicle and tried to tell him where I wanted to go, we discovered that he knew just enough Malayalam and I knew just enough Tamil for us to communicate basics. I remembered Mom telling me that the auto fare to Besant Nagar would be eight to ten rupees. This being my first time alone in a strange city, I kept my eyes glued to the meter as, in a very short while, it went up to what I thought was ₹13. I swallowed, collected my scattered wits, and told the driver there was something wrong with the meter. He stopped and got out of the vehicle to look at the meter, and burst out laughing, saying that it was showing only ₹1.30... While I shrank back into the passenger seat, he resumed the ride, his mood vastly uplifted by my display of foolishness.

When we got to the Besant Nagar bus stop, I couldn't find the sheet of instructions I'd been given, and had no idea how to get where I wanted. My emergency was now compelling, and I needed to find my cousin's house before things broke loose. The driver saw that I was in doubt, and asked me where I wanted to go. I told him my cousin's name, that she lived somewhere in the neighbourhood, and I didn't know exactly where. He knew that I was a stranger, a kid, didn't know the language, and was in some kind of trouble. He parked his vehicle, and told me in simple Tamil to follow him. He asked a couple of passers-by where so-and-so lived, and, in a couple of minutes, found their street. As we entered it, I saw my cousin at a second floor balcony watching our progress... Jackpot!

There was just enough time to hand the driver a ten-rupee note before rushing up the staircase: I've never climbed four flights of stairs that fast, and I'll probably never forget the relief that followed. But the enduring memory is of that evil-looking auto man who turned out a gem...

Shashi Warriar has written fairy tales, thrillers, a semi-fictional biography, satires, and a love story. Besides writing, he teaches strategic communication at a business school.

Subhani

Jaishankar's new vision
may face a reality check

K.C. Singh

Come September, external affairs minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar's book *The India Way* will be out. His intention, stated on record, is to encourage "an honest conversation among Indians, without discouraging the world from eavesdropping". An excerpt published recently from the book's introduction outlines his worldview. It raises a number of interesting points.

First, serving foreign ministers generally avoid treatises on challenges and policy options of a government, constrained by the need for secrecy over real thought processes within a government. Henry Kissinger penned his four experience-based books — *White House Years* (1979), *Diplomacy* (1994), *On China* (2011) and *World Order* (2014) — after he left office. Similarly, other US secretaries of state like Madeleine Albright, Condoleezza Rice and Hillary Clinton have penned their thoughts only after retirement. Thus, unable to write with candour about the diplomatic choices before the Narendra Modi government, Mr Jaishankar has chosen to provide broad perspective on the evolving geopolitics. In any case, he realises that in the current politically surcharged atmosphere, when the public wants answers on how the government proposes to counter the Chinese intrusions, it is best to play professor.

He expounds that the bipolar world is now gone and we are headed towards "multipolarity and less multilateralism". He ignores 50 years of Indian foreign policy after Independence when the non-aligned movement was born to defy the bipolar world and did provide, however fitfully, a third leg. India's alliance of convenience with the Soviet Union in 1971 enabled it to stymie America's support for Pakistan, its treaty ally, France under then Presi-

dent Charles de Gaulle pulled French forces out of Nato in 1966 to pursue more independent policies, reversed finally in 2009 as benefit was seen in coordinating action with European allies. So, the bipolar world of the Cold War era also had middle powers creating space for independent action. The world is now headed towards two looser alliances, as China extends its reach through the Belt and Road Initiative continentally and via maritime domain. The proposed 25-year agreement between China and Iran and the Myanmar-China re-engagement after President Xi Jinping's January 2020 visit to that country will extensively extend China's reach, through ports and overland via Central Asia. Likewise, India has no option but to work with its Quad partners — United States, Japan and Australia — and other Asean members willing to join hands to balance Chinese assertiveness. Rather than multiple poles, multiple groupings of the willing are emerging to create a new balance and put China back on the guard rails. Critical to the shape the future will take will be the outcome of America's November election, but Mr Jaishankar dodges that issue, as PM Modi has already moved too deeply into the Donald Trump corner.

Prime Minister Modi handpicked Mr Jaishankar, first as foreign secretary, days after he handled President Barack Obama's visit to India in January 2015, by displacing an incumbent. Then he plucked him from retirement to make him external affairs minister. So, the book is meant to provide intellectual clothing to global convergence between right-wing populist leaders. Mr Jaishankar notes three seminal events constraining India's strategic options. One is Partition, which diminished India territorially and demographically,

enabling China to manipulate Pakistan and others in the Indian periphery. Two, delayed economic reforms. Three, the reluctance to espouse nuclear weapons, leaving India stranded between the signatories of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the five nuclear weapon powers, with differential powers and obligations.

Mr Jaishankar is right about the last point as India did have the knowhow and fissile material for a possible nuclear test before the 1967 cut-off date, which would have enabled it to sign the NPT as a nuclear weapon power. It has been speculated that after 1965 India-Pakistan war, PM Lal Bahadur Shastri may have authorised such a test had not he and Dr Homi Bhabha, the custodian of India's nuclear programme, died tragically within days of each other in January 1966. However, it must be contextualised that India was then in a defensive mode after the demoralising defeat in 1962 at Chinese hands and Jawaharlal Nehru's death in 1964.

Mr Jaishankar, in an article published recently, traces contemporary global dilemmas to differences over the "relationship between the State, politics, society, business, faith and the markets". This omnibus conclusion and his remark on Partition as India's strategic burden deserve a riposte. Ironically, the minister's own party would be the first to contradict him on Partition. Were roughly 400 million Muslims of Pakistan and Bangladesh to join India's Muslims in an imagined undivided India, the demographics would be the BJP's electoral nightmare. After attaining a dominant position in South Asia, following the 1971 victory, India's gains were frittered away as the nation went into a decade of internal strife, the Emergency, the rise of the Congress fam-

Partition didn't stymie India. It was a historical inevitability due to irreversible communal polarisation, exacerbated by Muslims' fear of marginalisation in a democracy.

ily heir, etc. Pakistan, on the other hand, got a lucky break with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979, rekindling their US alliance and gaining protection for their clandestine nuclear weapons programme. Ignoring Pakistan's weapons programme was a strategic mistake. Thus, Partition didn't stymie India. It was a historical inevitability due to irreversible communal polarisation, exacerbated by Muslims' fear of marginalisation in a democracy. Mr Jaishankar's party is today proving those fears correct by their majoritarian agenda. The malaise afflicting India today is this uninhibited pursuit of the BJP's core agenda, in line with similar democratic regression towards illiberalism in many democracies like the United States, Brazil and others.

Foreign policy thus can't be conducted in isolation from domestic politics. Mr Jaishankar is in receipt of a bipartisan letter from the US Congress on the situation in Jammu and Kashmir. If the November election produces a Joe Biden victory, and particularly if the Democrats capture both Houses, the Modi government's domestic politics will come under more scrutiny. President Barack Obama too had engaged the Modi government cautiously. He ended his 2015 state visit with a Siri Fort speech reminding India of its constitutional pledge to uphold the "dignity of the individual", respect for religious diversity and freedom of faith. The Modi government's second term has mainstreamed majoritarian politics, ranging from Ayodhya, the Ram Mandir to the discriminatory Citizenship Amendment Act and the abolition of Jammu and Kashmir's special status.

The lesson from the past is that a united India is a stronger India. An India distracted by partisan politics loses its edge, regionally and globally. Intellectual hair-splitting and bandying about of geopolitical terms cannot change that.

The writer is a former secretary in the external affairs ministry. He tweets at @ambkcsingh.

LETTERS

KERALA CALAMITY

It was the worst Friday for Kerala battling Covid-19 and influx of migrants from Middle East Virus, nature's fury and the accident caused huge economic loss to the vulnerable population. The Centre must come to the aid of Kerala in tiding over these critical times.

Parthasarathy Mandadi
Tirupati

The accident could easily have been avoided by diverting the aircraft to another airport nearby instead of permitting it to land in unsafe weather conditions at Kozhikode. No one at the helm of affairs at that time thought of diverting flights as they were probably worried about upsetting the remaining flight schedules. Quick thinking would have saved lives which was more important than the business requirements. Now, Air India lost its aircraft, a pilot and what not.

Govardhana Myneedu
Vijayawada

I-DAY FLAG HOISTING

Now that the HC's consent for the Executive capital will be finalised after August 14, 2020, Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy had already committed to hoist the national flag at Visakhapatnam. It will be pertinent for the CM to hoist the flag at Kurnool, Amaravati and Visakhapatnam one after the other as it will not be impossible to take a sojourn by Helicopter.

N.S. Sharma
Visakhapatnam

EDUCATION POLICY

The Prime Minister has rightly opined that education system has focused on 'what to learn' rather than 'how to learn' leading to herd mentality. So the New Education Policy is intended to unlearn the old system and revolutionise learning. He is right in diagnosing ailments. His prescription is also looking rational. But the result will solely depend on execution of the proposed plan. The sector needs a great deal of funding. It should be at least six per cent of GDP.

Dr D.V.G. Sankararao
Vizianagaram

Email your letters to info@deccanmail.com, editor@deccanmail.com. You can also send them to Editor, Deccan Chronicle, 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad-500 003.

Furore in Lok Sabha
over Soviet maps

NEW DELHI, August 8

Barring the two Communist parties and the DMK, the entire Opposition in the Lok Sabha today walked out of the House to protest against Speaker G.S. Dhillon's rejection of their request for the admission of an adjournment motion.

Opposition members sought to move the adjournment motion to discuss inclusion of large chunks of India territory as Chinese in the maps in the Great Soviet encyclopedia.

The DMK also joined the other parties in their demand for the admission of the adjournment motion in place of the call attention motion on the subject which stood in the name of Mrs. Tarkeshwari Sinha and four others. But, Mr. Era Sezhiyan who was the only DMK member present, stayed behind.

When Somen Mitra shoved Amar Singh out of Kolkata

Miffed Uma turns up

The Ram Janmabhoomi temple *bhoomi puja* at Ayodhya was a grand affair where everything went as per plan. But behind the scenes was disquiet within both the BJP and the Congress. Uma Bharti, a key figure during 1980s-1990s Ram Janmabhoomi movement, first said she would stay away and then landed up on the banks of river Saryu. Uma was reportedly miffed that she was not formally invited at the first instance. The firebrand *sanyasin* has not been keeping well so the Covid-19 scare is said to have also played on her mind while initially declining to be there.

In the Congress, the leftist lobby worked hard to oppose Ram Janmabhoomi temple inauguration but pressure from party MPs worked. Rahul Gandhi took a nuanced position while Priyanka Gandhi, Amarinder Singh and Kamal Nath took a pro-temple stand. Nath organised *Hanuman Chalisa* at his Bhopal residence and posted a picture of him in a saffron robe on twitter. Not to be left behind, Mani Shankar Aiyar wrote a newspaper article pro-

fessing Congress faith in secularism.

Pilot intractable

There are no signs of truce in the Rajasthan Congress. The Ashok Gehlot government has dropped its charges, but rebel Sachin Pilot is reportedly still insisting upon the removal of Gehlot as Chief Minister. Peacemakers want Rahul, Sonia and Priyanka Gandhi to draft either Gehlot or Pilot into the AICC secretariat but both are unwilling. Rahul, who is set to return as AICC chief, is in particular opposed to the idea of jettisoning Gehlot as a pre-condition.

A quiet goodbye

It was a sad and quiet exit for Amar Singh who for most of his life remained boisterous and flamboyant. Defence minister Rajnath Singh, Jyotiraditya Scindia and Jayaprada were prominent persons who paid their respects at Singh's Chhattarpur farmhouse in Delhi minutes before his mortal



By WAQYANAWIS

remains were consigned to flames. Amar's political journey began in Kolkata with Subrata Mukherjee and against Somen

Mitra who died recently. During a Kolkata corporation election, the Amar-Somen animosity turned so intense that Amar had to flee Kolkata. He could only return to the city after giving an undertaking that he would not indulge in Kolkata's municipal politics. The initial setback in politics made Amar turn to the Birla and Bhartiya households that gave him a big foothold in Delhi.

Celluloid patriotism

Have you heard of a Patriotic Film Festival? Well, everything is possible in New India. The National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) is organising an online patriotic film festival as part of the Independence Day Celebrations 2020 by the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

Shyam Benegal's 1996 *Gandhi Se Mahatma Tak*, Bimal Roy's 1944 acclaimed Bengali film *Udayar Pathay*, Mani Ratnam's Tamil hit *Raja* (1992) and Rajkumar Santoshi's 2002 drama, *The Legend of Bhagat Singh* are some

of the acclaimed films which can be watched on www.cinemasofindia.com.

Just good neighbours

Love in the time of Covid: Nanavati Hospital, Mumbai, has been insisting that megastar Amitabh Bachchan is not a shareholder in Radiant Life Care, the private company that manages the hospital. However, an interesting development has come to light. Abhay Soi, the promoter and managing director of Radiant, and the Bachchans are soon going to be neighbours. Both families reportedly have bought apartments in the Uber luxury development Three Sixty West at Worli, which will be serviced by the Ritz Carlton Hotel chain. In the spirit of friendship and loving neighbourliness, we expect many more lyrical tweets in praise of the hospital from you know who.

The writer is a keen observer of the goings-on in backrooms of power

IN BRIEF

8 soldiers die in Somalia blast

Nairobi: A Somali police officer says at least eight soldiers are dead and more than 14 others wounded after a suicide bomber detonated an explosives-laden vehicle at the gates of a military base in Somalia's capital. Captain Mohamed Hussein says the toll is expected to rise. Police Colonel Ahmed Muse says the bomber struck the 12th April Army Brigade base near the newly reopened sports stadium in Warta-Nabadda district. Witnesses say ambulance sirens can be heard as police cordon off the scene. Huge clouds of smoke are billowing. The al-Qaida-linked al-Shabab extremist group often targets military sites in Mogadishu.

2 Lebanese shot dead in Tehran

Tehran: An unknown gunman has killed two Lebanese nationals on the streets of the Iranian capital, local media reported on Saturday. The semiofficial Mehr news agency said the assailant, riding a motorcycle, shot dead Maryam Dawood and her father Habib Dawood in northern Tehran. The report said Habib Dawood was a history professor and his daughter Maryam was 27 year old. The report did not provide further details but said the case is under investigation. Many Lebanese, usually Shiites, work and live in Tehran. Iran is the main supporter of the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah. Such incidents are rare in Iran, though a series of bombings targeted several Iranian nuclear scientists between 2010-2012.

20 gunned down in Burkino Faso

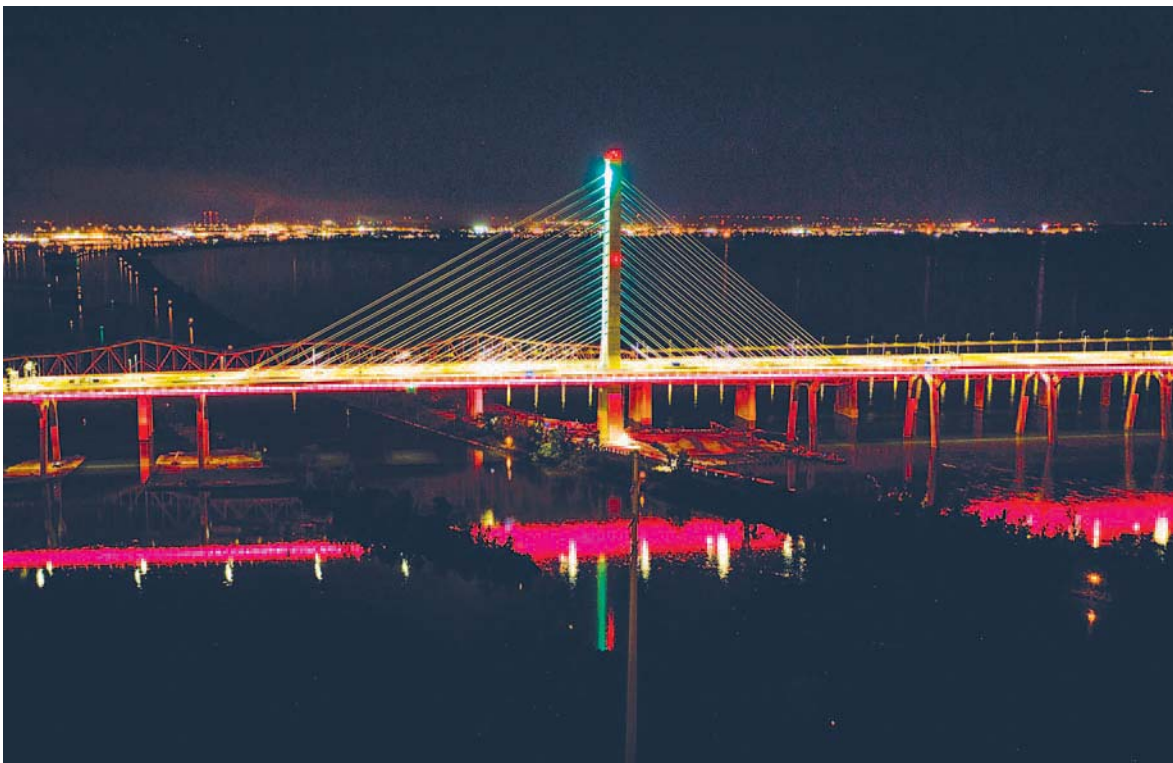
Ouagadougou: Gunmen stormed a cattle market and opened fire in an eastern Burkina Faso village on Friday, killing at least 20 people and injuring many others, a local government official said. The attack in Namoungou village is being investigated, said Saidou Sanou, the governor of the eastern region, who urged people to be vigilant and to closely collaborate with the army. Violence linked to Islamic militants and local defense militias killed nearly 2,000 people in Burkina Faso last year and displaced almost 1 million. Violence in the once peaceful West African nation is on track this year to surpass that of last year, Sahel researcher Heni Nsaibia says. The eastern region has been particularly hard hit, with attacks increasing almost 75 per cent this year compared with last, the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project says. Eleven clashes have already taken place during the first week of August, according to an internal security report for aid workers seen by The Associated Press.

9 KIDS KILLED IN YEMENI AIRSTRIKES

Sanaa, Aug. 8: Airstrikes in northern Yemen killed as many as nine children, a United Nations official said on Friday, making it the third such attack with significant child deaths in that rebel-controlled region this month. Lise Grande, the UN humanitarian coordinator for Yemen, said in a statement that a group of mostly women and children were hit while they were traveling by road on Thursday. She said it was "shocking and completely, totally unacceptable." The statement said at least seven more children and two women were injured, but added that the casualty figures were only preliminary and still under investigation. The health ministry for the Houthi rebels, who control the area where the incident happened, had said on coalition supporting Yemen's government conducted six airstrikes in the mountainous northern Yemeni province of Jawf. It said a rough early count indicated more than 20 dead, mostly women and children. Limited access to Houthi-controlled areas for aid workers and journalists often makes details of attacks difficult to confirm. A spokesman for the Saudi-led coalition, Turki al-Maliki, told the Saudi newspaper Al-Sharq Al-Awsat paper on Friday that the coalition was "seriously looking into" the recent allegations of civilian casualties.

Beirut in protest mode, grief turns to rage

For fourth day, Lebanese capital woke up to sound of broken glasses being swept on the streets



This aerial picture shows the Samuel De Champlain Bridge illuminated with the colours of the Lebanese flag as a tribute to the victims of Beirut's blast and in solidarity with the people of Lebanon in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, on Saturday.

Israel's Lebanon aid offer unlikely to find takers

Jerusalem, Aug. 8: For some it's a gesture of goodwill, to others sheer hypocrisy: Israel's offer of humanitarian aid to Lebanon after the massive Beirut blast is unlikely to be taken up. The two neighbours are still technically at war, have no diplomatic ties and mutual suspicion, even animosity, defines their relations. As Beirut reeled Tuesday after the monster blast at the port ripped across the city, many eyes were on Israel. The military initially offered a traditional "no comment" to queries about the possible source of the explosion, until later a government source added: "Israel has nothing to do with this incident." Hours later the government offered humanitarian aid to Lebanon. "Israel has turned to Lebanon through interna-

● **GOVERNMENT AND diplomatic sources in Jerusalem say Israel has tried unsuccessfully since Tuesday to send medical equipment to Lebanon via the United Nations, which monitors a buffer zone between the two countries.**

tional security and political contacts to offer humanitarian and medical aid to the Lebanese government," a statement said. As Beirut hospitals became overwhelmed by the influx of thousands of injured, Lebanon's government did not comment. Aid has been streaming in from elsewhere, including from former power France and Iran, an ally of Lebanon's powerful Hezbollah movement and key Israeli rival. Israel and Hezbollah last fought a 33-day war in the summer of 2006 that dev-

astated parts of the Lebanese capital and killed hundreds. Government and diplomatic sources in Jerusalem say Israel has tried unsuccessfully since Tuesday to send medical equipment to Lebanon via the United Nations, which monitors a buffer zone between the two countries. Israel even sought to dispatch medical personnel to Cyprus, where Beirut victims could be treated, according to the sources. "It is a very human gesture," Amos Yadlin, former head of Israeli military intelligence, told reporters. "It is a gesture that can bring the two nations together." Yadlin blamed Hezbollah's backers in Tehran for the continuing air of hostility between Israel and Lebanon, insisting there was "no real dispute" between the neighbours. — AFP

EMBASSY: OVER 40 SYRIANS KILLED IN BEIRUT BLAST

Beirut, Aug. 8: More than 40 Syrians were among those killed in the massive blast that devastated the Lebanese capital this week, the Syrian embassy said Saturday. The embassy did not specify if the Syrian fatalities were included in the 154 death toll announced by Lebanese authorities. "The confirmed number we have of Syrian martyrs so far is 43," it said. "The embassy is offering all services to facilitate the transfer some corpses back to Syria and is helping bury others in Lebanon," it added. Lebanon's health ministry has said more than 60 people are still missing after Tuesday's blast at Beirut port. Some of the Syrians killed were crewmen on cargo ships docked at the port, according to AFP correspondents at the scene. — AFP

Dutch envoy's wife dies in Beirut blast

The Hague, Aug. 8: The wife of Dutch ambassador to Lebanon Jan Waltmans has died of wounds sustained in the Beirut bomb explosion, the Netherlands' foreign ministry said on Saturday. "It is with dismay and great sadness that we report the death of our colleague Hedwig Waltmans-Molier. She succumbed to injuries sustained in the massive explosion in Beirut," a ministry statement said. Waltmans-Molier was hit by debris from the explosion shortly after returning back to Lebanon from holiday with her husband of 38 years. "Hedwig was standing in her living room next to her husband when she was hit, sheerly by bad luck, by the explosion," the ministry said.

● **IT IS** with dismay and great sadness that we report the death of our colleague Hedwig Waltmans-Molier. She succumbed to injuries sustained in the massive explosion in Beirut, a ministry statement said.

● **WALTMANS-MOLIER** was hit by debris from the explosion shortly after returning back to Lebanon from holiday with her husband of 38 years.

The 55-year-old was the only Dutch citizen reported to have died from the explosion that rocket Beirut on Tuesday, killing at least 154 and devastating swathes of the capital. Five other Dutch citizens were slightly injured, the ministry said. — AP

MPs resign after Beirut explosion

Beirut, Aug. 8: A three-member Lebanese parliamentary bloc resigned on Saturday in protest at the Beirut blast widely blamed on government negligence and corruption, bringing to five the number of MPs to quit since the disaster. In an emotional speech during a funeral service for one of his top party officials who died in Tuesday's blast, Samy Gemayel announced his resignation and that of the two other MPs from his Kataeb party. "Your comrades took the decision to resign from parliament," Gemayel said, addressing Kataeb secretary-general Nazar Najarian, one of the 154 confirmed victims of the explosion at Beirut port. Gemayel criticised the reactions of several top politicians who argued

the international aid effort following the disaster would be an opportunity to break the diplomatic isolation of Lebanon. "A new Lebanon must be born on the ruins of the old one, which you represent," he said, addressing the authorities at large and their clan leaders. The Christian party's three resignations from the 128-seat parliament come after those of Marwan Hamade from the party of Druze leader Walid Jumblatt and independent MP Paula Yacoubian. Yacoubian told the CNN news channel that she was urging the entire parliament to stand down. "As the MP of Beirut, I took the decision of resigning because I feel I'm a false witness in this parliament," she said. — AP

Mauritius declares crisis over oil spill

Johannesburg, Aug. 8: Anxious residents of the Indian Ocean island nation of Mauritius stuffed fabric sacks with sugar cane leaves on Saturday to create makeshift oil spill barriers as tons of fuel leaking from a grounded ship put endangered wildlife in further peril. The government has declared an environmental emergency and France said it was sending help from its nearby Reunion island. Satellite images showed a dark slick spreading in the turquoise waters near wetlands that the government called "very sensitive." "When biodiversity is in peril, there is urgency to act," French President Emmanuel Macron tweeted Saturday. Wildlife workers and volunteers ferried dozens of baby tortoises and rare plants from an island near the spill, Ile aux Aigrettes, to the mainland as fears grew that worsening weather on Sunday could tear the Japanese-owned ship apart along its cracked hull. A French statement from Reunion on Saturday said a military

● **THE GOVERNMENT** has declared an environmental emergency and France said it was sending help from its nearby Reunion island.

● **WILDLIFE WORKERS** and volunteers ferried dozens of baby tortoises and rare plants from an island near the spill,

transport aircraft was carrying pollution control equipment to Mauritius and a navy vessel with additional material would set sail for the island nation. Residents and environmentalists alike wondered why authorities didn't act more quickly after the ship ran aground July 25 on a reef. Mauritius says the ship, the MV Wakashio, was carrying nearly 4,000 tons of fuel. "That's the big question," Jean Hugues Gardenne with the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation told The Associated Press. "Why that ship has been sitting for long on that coral reef and nothing being done." — AP

Rajapaksa takes oath as Lanka PM after landslide

Colombo, Aug. 8: Mahinda Rajapaksa will be sworn in as Sri Lanka's prime minister at a historic Buddhist temple on Sunday, allowing the powerful Rajapaksa clan to consolidate their grip on power in the island nation. The 74-year-old Sri Lanka People's Party (SLPP) leader, who polled over 500,000 individual preference votes — the highest ever recorded by a candidate in the country's history of elections — will take the oath of office for the ninth Parliament at the sacred Rajamaha Viharaya in Kelaniya, a north Colombo suburb, according to an official statement. The SLPP, led by Mahinda, registered a landslide victory in the general election, securing two-thirds majority in Parliament needed to amend the Constitution to further consolidate the family's firm grip on power for the next five years. The party won in 145 constituencies, bagging a total of 150 seats with its allies, a two-thirds majority in the 225-member Parliament. It polled 6.8 million votes (59.9 per cent).

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On Saturday, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, 71, congratulated his elder brother Mahinda for winning the General Election. "I extend my warmest congratulations to Prime Minister @PresRajapaksa and all the candidates of the @PodujanaParty, who contested the recent General Elections and was elected to Parliament by popular vote and the National List," the president tweeted ahead of the swearing-in ceremony on Sunday morning. The Cabinet will be sworn-in on Monday. — PTI

Canada's last intact ice shelf collapses due to warming

Toronto, Aug. 8: Much of Canada's remaining intact ice shelf has broken apart into hulking icebergs thanks to a hot summer and global warming, scientists said. Canada's 4,000-year-old Milne Ice Shelf on the northwestern edge of Ellesmere Island had been

the country's last intact ice shelf until the end of July when ice analyst Adrienne White of the Canadian Ice Service noticed that satellite photos showed that about 43 per cent of it had broken off. She said it happened around July 30 or 31. Two giant icebergs

formed along with lots of smaller ones, and they have already started drifting away, White said. The biggest is nearly the size of Manhattan — 21 square miles (55 square kilometers) and 7 miles long (11.5 kilometers). They are 230 to 260 feet (70 to 80 meters) thick. — AFP

THREAT OF MELTING GLACIER TO ITALIAN RESORT EASING, SAYS MAYOR

Courmayeur, Italy, Aug. 8: The threat that a massive chunk of glacier loosened by soaring temperatures could collapse near an alpine resort on the Italian side of the Mont Blanc mountain range has slightly eased, a local mayor said on Saturday. Climate change has been increasingly melting the world's glaciers, creating a new danger for the town of Courmayeur,

a resort community in Italy's Aosta Valley region, near the French border. The town was put on high alert on Wednesday as a block of ice estimated at about 5,000 cubic metres — the size of the Milan cathedral, one official said — from the Planpincieux glacier risked falling and threatening homes. — AP

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Did you think the SU♦DO♦KU on the left was easy? Try this. Check the solution tomorrow. Tips available at www.sudoku-xyz.com DC-AGE SU DO KU FORUM: Discuss the SU DO KU puzzles printed and contribute mini teasers of your own at www.sudex-el.com/forum

SHORT TAKES

Svitolina, Bertens
out of US Open

New York: Two more top-10 women — Elina Svitolina and Kiki Bertens — will miss the U.S. Open, joining No. 1-ranked Ash Barty in skipping the Grand Slam tennis tournament during the Coronavirus pandemic. The U.S. Tennis Association also announced on Friday that Barbora Krejčíková withdrew. The fifth-ranked Svitolina, a Ukrainian who was a semifinalist at Flushing Meadows a year ago, posted Friday on social media that she doesn't "feel comfortable to travel to US without putting my team and myself at high risk."

No.7 Bertens, who is Dutch, wrote on Instagram that one of her concerns is the need to be quarantined upon returning to Europe after the U.S. Open, which runs from Aug. 31 to Sept. 13 and will not have any spectators.

The French Open — where Bertens reached the semifinals in 2016 — is scheduled to begin Sept. 27. She also wants to play on the clay-court tournament in Rome before heading to Paris for the Grand Slam.

— AP

Tokyo Olympics
OC member +ve

Tokyo: Two employees of the Tokyo Olympic organizing committee have tested positive for Covid-19, officials said Saturday. That brings to three the number of employees of the committee who have tested positive since the pandemic began. Organisers said a man and a woman had tested positive but gave few details. They said the man was in his 20s and the woman in her 30s, and that both were now working from home rather than at the headquarters located near Tokyo Bay.

Many of the organizing committee's employees have been working remotely though some have returned to office work in the last few months. The organising committee has a staff of 3,500. The 2020 Tokyo Olympics have been put back to July 23, 2021 due to the pandemic. The original closing ceremony was to have been Sunday, August 9. Japan has reported just over 1,000 deaths from Covid-19. Like the country, Tokyo has been largely spared.

— AP

Shakib all set to
resume training

Dhaka: Premier Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan is set to start training at the BKSP facility at Savar near here from next month, ahead of his return to competitive cricket. The southpaw was banned for two years, one year of it suspended, for failing to report corrupt approaches by an alleged Indian bookie during the Indian Premier League. His ban ends on October 29 this year.

"Shakib will come to the BKSP next month where he will have coaches and trainers available," Shakib's mentor Nazmul Abedeen was quoted as saying by *ESPNCricInfo*.

"We are functional as the coaches are all residing within the campus, so we can work with him well. Shakib will have everything at his disposal," he added.

Abedeen, who was the Bangladesh Cricket Board's game development manager for many years, is one of Shakib's earliest coaches.

— PTI

TESTING DAY
FOR REPSOL
HONDA TEAM

Brno: One lap pace eludes Alex Marquez in Brno as Stefan Bradl gains more speed during a busy day, the Repsol Honda Team pair ready to fight forward on Sunday.

It was a day of contrasts for MotoGP rookie Alex Marquez, the 2019 Moto2 race-winner was pleased with his race pace but continued to search for one-lap speed. Having cut 1.2 seconds off his best time from Friday to Saturday morning, Alex ended Free Practice 3 just 1.298 seconds off first but down in 19th and would enter Q1 as a result.

Regd. No. H/SD/509/2018-20

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FAST & FURIOUS

Dhoni will retire when he is outrun: Manjrekar

Mumbai, Aug. 8: Former India batsman Sanjay Manjrekar on Saturday revealed Mahendra Singh Dhoni had told him he would consider himself fit for international cricket as long as he is "beating the fastest sprinter in the team."

Manjrekar, a well-known commentator, said he had a chat with the two-time World Cup-winning former captain regarding his future in international cricket during India skipper Virat Kohli's wedding in 2017.

"During Virat Kohli's wedding, I had a little corner time with him and he said as long as 'I am beating the fastest sprinter in the team, I am going to consider myself fit enough to be playing international cricket or playing high-level cricket'," Manjrekar said.

"People like Tendulkar, Dhoni, these are champions on cricketers. Once they are on public stage, you will never see Dhoni ever on a public stage, like a cricket field, looking slightly unfit or unable to sprint or run..." he said on a sports show.

Dhoni's last outing in competitive cricket was the 2019 World Cup semifinal against New Zealand.

Manjrekar also reckoned Dhoni would come good in the IPL, saying the presence of "only four-five" good bowlers in the league is not enough to trouble the seasoned campaigner.

"He is going to be very good and one of the reasons he is so successful and consistent in IPL as a batsman as opposed to international is that he knows that there are about four to five bowlers to handle," Manjrekar said.

"So, as a batter, with MS Dhoni in the IPL, I don't see much difference," he added.

— PTI



Cricketers Hardik Pandya (left) and M. S. Dhoni run during a training session in this file photo.

Biggies off the blocks for kit

● **German sporting brand Puma is one of the frontrunners to bag the kit sponsorship for Indian cricket team. Rival brand Adidas may enter the race while current sponsor Nike is still undecided.**

New Delhi, Aug. 8: German sports apparel and footwear major Puma could be the frontrunner in bagging the Indian cricket team's kit sponsorship rights while rival Adidas could also enter the fray.

However, it couldn't be confirmed whether Nike would re-bid after refusing BCCI's scaled down bid offer from their ₹370 crore (plus 30 crore royalty), which they paid from 2016 to 2020.

"I can confirm you that Puma has bought the ITT (Invitation to Tender) document worth ₹1 lakh. While buying bid document doesn't mean one is bidding, Puma has shown genuine interest in submitting a bid," a senior BCCI official said.

It is learnt that Adidas

too has shown interest but whether it will be bidding for the sponsorship rights is still not known. Even though some feel that the German giant could independently bid for merchandise products, which will be a separate tender.

Selling of exclusive merchandise products depends on how many exclusive stores a company has along with the point of sales (shops that sells your company's products).

While Puma has over 350 exclusive stores, Adidas has more than 450 outlets

which makes these two companies the most sought after.

A senior industry insider explained the whole sponsorship issue in these turbulent times of economic slowdown.

"Don't be surprised if the new rights holder pays something around 200 crore for a five-year deal which will be significantly less than what Nike paid during previous term," the industry veteran explained.

"Look BCCI offered Nike the first right of refusal and that too a scaled down

offer which they declined. This could mean two things. Either they are not interested or may submit a bid which is even more scaled down than what BCCI offered," he said.

As far as Puma is concerned, it has had an increased interest in the Indian market over the years especially through IPL but now it also has India captain Virat Kohli as its brand ambassador along with KL Rahul.

"Puma has been a part of IPL for some years now and with Virat in their roster, it would only enhance their presence in Indian market," he added.

The BCCI in its new bid has kept a base price of Rs 61 lakh per match compared to the Rs 88 lakh during the last cycle.

— PTI

FORMULA | ONE

Bottas barges to pole for top race

Silverstone (United Kingdom), Aug. 8: Valtteri Bottas outpaced his Mercedes teammate and world championship leader Lewis Hamilton by the finest of margins on Saturday to claim a dramatic pole position for the 70th Anniversary Grand Prix.

The Finn clocked a fastest lap in one minute and 25.154 seconds to beat the six-time world champion by only 0.063 in the final seconds of an enthralling qualifying session.

It was the Mercedes team's 67th front row lock-out in Formula One.

"It feels good," said Bottas who was securing the 13th pole of his career 48 hours after signing a new contract to keep him at Mercedes next season.

He added: "We have improved the set-up and the car since last week. Mentally, when you start on pole, you can only aim to win the race — and the starting point is good! It is

so nice to drive this amazing car."

Hamilton explained his unexpected 'slip' to second. "I wasn't that great, but Valtteri did a great job and he deserves pole."

Nico Hulkenberg, standing in for coronavirus victim Sergio Perez with the Racing Point team, was third, securing his spot with an impressive performance only 10 days after receiving a late call-up while eating a pastry in a Cologne caf. "It's been a crazy last week," he said.

He failed to start last Sunday's British Grand Prix at the circuit after an engine problem.

Max Verstappen took fourth for Red Bull ahead of Daniel Ricciardo of Renault, Lance Stroll in the second Force India, Pierre Gasly of Alpha Tauri and down in eighth Charles Leclerc in the leading Ferrari. Alex Albon was ninth in the second Red Bull and Lando Norris 10th for McLaren.

— AFP

CHAMPIONS | LEAGUE

City, Lyon blast big guns away

Manchester, Aug. 8: Manchester City took advantage of two shocking mistakes by Raphael Varane to beat Real Madrid 2-1 in their Champions League last 16 second leg on Friday and advance to the quarterfinals as Pep Guardiola came out on top in his duel with Zinedine Zidane.

But Madrid had been left with a mountain to climb in this tie after throwing away the lead to lose 2-1 in the first leg in Spain in February, before the coronavirus forced the competition into hibernation.

An identical defeat at an empty Etihad Stadium means it is City who advance 4-2 on aggregate.

Varane was dispossessed inside the box in the ninth minute allowing Raheem Sterling to put City ahead, and his poor headed back-pass attempt gifted Gabriel Jesus another goal midway through the second half.

Before that second goal the tie had been in the balance with the in-form Karim Benzema having scored for the visitors just before the half-hour mark.

Meanwhile, Lyon also qualified for the quarterfinals of the Champions League despite losing 1-2 in Turin, on away goal advance.

Lyon squeezed past the Italian champions thanks to Memphis Depay's 12th-minute penalty which put Rudi Garcia's side two goals ahead in the tie and left Juve with a mountain to climb.

Needing to score three unanswered goals in order to go through, Cristiano Ronaldo tried his best to drag the Italian champions over the line.

He levelled the scores on the night with a penalty of his own with two minutes left in the opening period before crashing a second home on the hour mark.

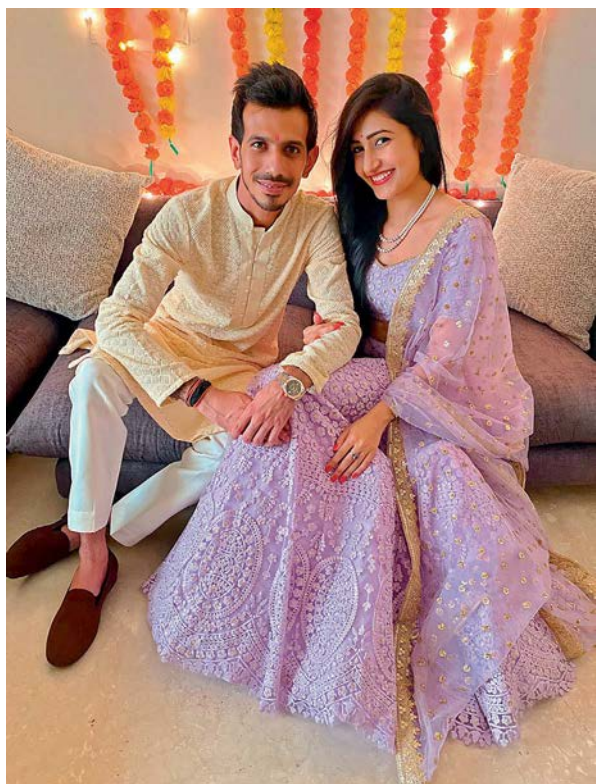
SARRI GETS THE BOOT
AS JUVE MANAGER

Juventus fired coach Maurizio Sarri on Saturday after his first season in charge ended with the team's Champions League exit.

Despite winning the Italian title, Sarri paid the price for the Round-of-16 loss to Lyon on Friday.

Sarri also left Chelsea last year after only one season in charge — despite winning the Europa League with the London club. While he led Juventus to a record-extending ninth straight Italian title, the team never really adapted to his quick-passing style.

— Agencies



Indian cricketer Yuzvendra Chahal is all smiles with his fiancée Dhanshree Verma, a dentist from Mumbai.

Indian spinner
Yuzi is engaged

**BIPIN DANI
MUMBAI, AUG. 8**

Rahul Dravid is not the only Indian cricketer who is married to a dentist. Another Indian cricketer and a chess player Yuzvendra Chahal's fiancée is also a dentist.

Team India's 30-year-old leg spinner Chahal has checkmated Mumbai dentist Dhanshree Verma.

The *roka* ceremony was performed in Mumbai, Chahal's father Krishan Kumar confirmed to this reporter.

"Dhanashree Verma is a dentist in Andheri (West). Both met on social media but met each other person-

ally for the first time today. We all came from Delhi in the afternoon today and performed the *roka* ceremony," Kumar confirmed.

"Engagement will be done one day before the marriage. Because of Covid-19, the marriage will not happen soon", mother Sunita Devi said.

"Yes, my son will head to UAE for the Indian Premier League matches. Dhanshree will not be accompanying him," the mother added.

Chahal's family headed to Dhanshree's grandmother's house in the evening for dinner. Chahal's family will leave for Delhi on Sunday morning.

Buttler leads fightback

Manchester, Aug. 8: Pakistan sparked a top-order collapse before Jos Buttler led an England fightback as the first Test headed for a dramatic finish at Old Trafford on Saturday.

England were 167-5 at Tea on the fourth day, needing a further 110 runs to reach a challenging target of 277.

Only twice has a team chased more than 200 to win in the fourth innings of a Test at Old Trafford, with England making 294-4 against New Zealand in 2008 and 231-3 against the West Indies in 2004.

England, trying to end a run of losing the first Test in each of their last five series, were making

steady progress at 96-1. However, they lost four wickets for 31 runs in slipping to 117-5, with captain Joe Root and Ben Stokes both falling in the collapse.

Brief scores: Pakistan 326 & 169 (Y. Shah 33, A. Shafiq 29, S. Broad 3/37, vs England 219 & 167/5 in 53 overs (J. Buttler 32*, C. Woakes 26*, Y. Shah 2/74).

— AP

Ayaz Memon
Over The Top

The central government last week gave clearance for the IPL to be held, albeit outside India, ending months of suspense. The BCCI had been on tenterhooks since late March, when the league was first indefinitely suspended.

Several lockdowns because of Covid 19 almost scuttled prospects of the tournament being played this year. As weeks flew by, the powers-that-be in the

Indian cricket establishment were left wringing their hands in anxiety.

Finally, it came to the stage where the only possibility for IPL2020 to be played this year was if the T20 World Championship, scheduled in Australia in October this year, was scrapped. Not an easy matter considering the strained relations between the ICC and BCCI.

Strong behind-the-scenes negotiations over a pro-

tracted period of time finally forced the ICC and Cricket Australia to take this decision which opened up the window of opportunity for the IPL between late September and early November.

While the fact that IPL2020 will be played is major relief to the BCCI, it has come accompanied with complications. To conduct a tournament of this magnitude overseas (UAE) in such a short time and in the times of Covid is a logistical nightmare. And that's only one of several problems.

Largely, these are to do with money. Last week, title sponsor Vivo pulled out of the tournament following a backlash in India

over the face-off with China at the LOC in Ladakh. The BCCI was receiving a whopping Rs 440 crore per year from the Chinese cellphone maker over a five-year deal.

Interestingly, the BCCI put out an official release stating Vivo would not be associated with the IPL for this year only. This leaves the gate open for the Chinese company to return as title sponsor next year, which has raised eyebrows in several quarters.

Insiders in the cricket establishment and those from industry claim this was a decision taken jointly by the BCCI and Vivo. Neither wants to lose out. The money is excellent for

the former, while the latter would be loathe to surrender a hot property like the IPL.

Both parties will likely test the waters in the coming months.

If the current acrimony between India and China cools off, Vivo should be back within seven-eight months when the next edition of the IPL is due. For the moment, though, the BCCI has to make a last-minute scramble for finding a title sponsor.

Given the bleak economic outlook which has forced deep financial setbacks to companies, it seems extremely difficult that a substitute sponsor would cough up ₹440 crore. That said, finding a spon-

sor at a discounted rate should not be very difficult considering the allure of the IPL.

Money matters have also made relations between the BCCI and IPL franchisees fraught currently. With the tournament being played in the UAE and in stadia spectatorship either non-existent, or vastly reduced if permitted, gate money will take a big hit.

So too team sponsorships and merchandise sales. Usually, companies would queue up to sponsor IPL teams, but this time around its lukewarm at best: due to the late call to play the tournament, as well as company balance sheets lacking hefty

because of the pandemic.

Lower disposable income will also mean merchandising will take a hit. Taken together, this means less income for the franchisees. This has led to some grievances, and disagreements with the BCCI on share of profits and distribution.

From a wider perspective, however, a recalcitrant approach — on both sides — is unwarranted. The broadcast fee itself is so high that in itself it leaves profit for the BCCI and franchisees. While the overall income will undoubtedly reduce, both parties still stand to make decent money.

In such hard times, this is a big deal!