

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

HYDERABAD | MONDAY | 24 AUGUST 2020

WEATHER

Max: 31.8°C
Min: 23.6°C
RH: 67%
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Cloudy sky.
Rain likely. Max/Min
temp. 32/22°C

COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+61,580)	(+845)
31,05,016	57,691
covid19india.org	
(+2,834)	(+11)
TS: 1,04,249	755
(+7,895)	(+93)
AP: 3,53,111	3,282

CASES AROUND THE WORLD	
2,34,77,576	
DEATHS	
8,10,377	
COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES	213
worldometers.info/coronavirus	

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari; Dakshinayana
Tithi: Bhadrapada Shuddha
Shashthi 2:34 pm
Star: Swati till 3:23 pm

Varjyam: 8:40 pm to 10:10 pm
Durmuhurtham: 12:43 pm to
1:33 pm; 3:13 pm to 4:02 pm

Rahukalam: 7:30 am to 9 am

HJRI CALENDAR

Muharram 4, 1442 AH

PRAYERS

Fajr: 4:58 am

Zohar: 12:28 pm

Asar: 4:42 pm

Magrib: 6:40 pm

Isha: 7:52 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6:35 PM

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6:01 AM

MOONRISE TODAY 11:01 AM

MOONSET TOMORROW 10:51 PM



Don't panic! This is a specially designed ball for IPL!

IN BRIEF

AG refuses case against actress

New Delhi: Attorney General K.K. Venugopal has refused his consent for initiating criminal contempt of court proceedings against Bollywood actor Swara Bhaskar for her alleged "derogatory and scandalous" statements against the Supreme Court over the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid case verdict. The consent of either the Attorney General or the Solicitor General is necessary, under section 15 of the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971, for initiating contempt proceedings against a person.

DMK: Ayush staff show Hindi bias

Chennai: Another row over Hindi has erupted in Tamil Nadu with the DMK alleging yoga and naturopathy practitioners from the state were asked to leave a virtual meet held by the Ayush department if they did not understand Hindi and sought action against officials concerned. The episode "exposed" the BJP's agenda of imposing Hindi through its officials, the DMK chief M.K. Stalin alleged while party MP Kanimozhhi wrote to Ayush minister Shridap Yesso Naik seeking an inquiry. Kanimozhhi was recently quizzed by a CISF official for not speaking Hindi.



NATION | 7

Scindia's workers quit Congress, join BJP



SPORTS | 12

Azhar knock keeps England at bay



TABLOID

'IPL will surely test players' fortitude'

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Saving lives



ITBP jawans of the 14th Battalion carry an injured woman on a stretcher in Pithoragarh district on Saturday. They carried her to the nearest road head after covering 40 km in the mountains in 15 hours. She had fallen from a hillside and broken her legs. — PTI

BJP to fight Bihar polls with JD(U), LJP: Nadda

NAYEAR AZAD | DC
PATNA, AUG. 23



BJP president J.P. Nadda said Sunday that the JD(U), LJP and his party will contest the Bihar Assembly polls together and expressed confidence that the NDA will emerge a winner in Bihar under the leadership of chief minister Nitish Kumar.

His remark at a virtual address to the Bihar BJP executive meet comes amid a bitter war of words between the JD(U) and LJP.

Sources said the BJP's announcement would also put to rest all speculation on the NDA's fate in Bihar where Assembly polls are due in October-November.

"The NDA emerged victorious whenever three partners BJP, JD(U) and LJP contested the polls

together. This year also we are confident that under the leadership of Nitish Kumar the NDA in Bihar is going to win", Mr Nadda said.

At Saturday's state executive meeting, BJP state chief Sanjay Jaiswal said the "party has set a target of winning three-fourths seats for the NDA in the Assembly elections".

He said the 76 lakh workers till the panchayat level were the party's strength.

Addressing party workers through video confer-

encing Mr Nadda also directed them to highlight the achievements of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the state government through door-to-door campaigns and small public meetings.

Terminating the Opposition in Bihar as a "spent force", he said that people in the state had been looking at the BJP with hope. "The Opposition lacks ideology, vision and a spirit to serve. They have become a spent force and people are looking at the BJP with great hope," Mr Nadda said.

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TRS aspirants eye 3 vacant MLC seats from Gov quota

S.A. ISHAQUI | DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 23

Aspirants from within the TRS have started lobbying for the three MLC seats which are vacant under the Governor's quota, in view of the talk in party circles that party boss and Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao is certain to be re-nominated.

Narasimha Reddy, who was denied a ticket during the Assembly elections, is likely to fill the seats before the monsoon session of the Legislative Assembly begins on September 7.

The term of senior leader and former minister Nayani Narasimha Reddy ended in June and another seat fell vacant with the disqualification of S. Ramulu Naik after he defected to the Congress before the 2018 Assembly

elections.

The third seat, held by Karne Prabhakar, will become vacant this month. Sources in the party revealed that Prabhakar, government whip in the Legislative Council, is certain to be re-nominated.

Narasimha Reddy, who was denied a ticket during the Assembly elections, is also expecting another term. In case Narasimha Reddy fails to make it, Chandrashekhar Rao will decide between party general secretary Basavaraj Saraiya from Warangal and former MP of Khammam Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, the sources added.

TRS women's wing head G. Sudha Rani, Deshpatti

Srinivas, former TNGO leader G. Devi Prasad and Gattu Ramachandra Rao are in the running for the third seat.

Surprisingly, the name of S. Vani Devi, daughter of former prime minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, has come up for discussion in party circles.

Party leaders are expecting that since the government has taken up Narasimha Rao's birth centenary celebrations, the Chief Minister may propose Vani Devi's name for the MLC seat.

Chandrashekhar Rao is likely to finalise the candidates before the Assembly session and after getting approval from the state Cabinet, the names will be sent to the Governor.

There has been no official announcement on the dropping of these facilities from the Covid-19 care hospitals.

Meanwhile, despite appearing to have launched a battle against

Cong faction demands overhaul in leadership

Party denies Sonia offered to quit, CWC meet today

DC CORRESPONDENTS
NEW DELHI, HYDERABAD,
AUG. 23

The internecine battle being played out within the Congress came to the fore on Sunday, a day before the all-important working committee meeting. Insiders claim that interim party chief Sonia Gandhi has asked her aides to instruct the CWC to find her successor, but chief spokesman Ranjeet Singh Surjewala rubbed all claims about Mrs Gandhi tendering her resignation.

This development comes against the backdrop of several senior leaders writing to Mrs Gandhi demanding a "full-time" and "effective leadership" that will be "visible" and "active" in the field.

Fiery scenes are expected at the "virtual" CWC meet on Monday where the demand for Mrs Gandhi to stay put will be raised.

The letter does not attack either Mrs Sonia Gandhi or Mr Rahul Gandhi but it is being seen as a ploy to stop Mr Gandhi from taking over the party's reins once again. Insiders claim many leaders are upset as Mr Gandhi is still active.

Speaking to this newspaper



and taking decisions, which "creates confusion" and leads to "dual power centres". The latest issue was that Mr Gandhi chaired a meeting on the Bihar elections with state leaders without any specific directions.

Several leaders, including Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, have demanded that Mr Gandhi take over as party chief. Punjab Chief Minister Capt. Amarinder Singh said a strong Opposition was needed and Mrs Gandhi should continue and eventually Mr Rahul Gandhi should take over. Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has also demanded that Mrs Gandhi remain party chief.

In the letter sent a few weeks ago, which was publicly revealed over the weekend, around two dozen Congressmen made some far-reaching suggestions to Mrs Gandhi to revive the organisation, sources said on Sunday. They said over-centralisation of the organisation and micro-management had always proved to be counter-productive, and that uncertainty over the leadership has "demoralised the Congress workers and further weakened the party".

CWC meeting tomorrow, leaking the letter to media is unfortunate, pointing to suspicion about their intentions. The Gandhi family alone can keep party together."

Senior TS Congress leader and former PCC president Ponnala Lakshmaiah said it was not correct on part of leaders to leak the contents of the letter to the media. These developments ensure that even before the CWC meeting a large number of Congressmen have publicly taken on the authors of the letter. In all likelihood, the CWC will pass a resolution on Monday asking Mrs Gandhi to continue as party chief.

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The party units in Haryana, Karnataka, TN, Delhi and Maharashtra backed the Gandhis. In Telangana state, Congress Legis-lature Party chief Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka expressed support for the Gandhis and said it was disheartening to know that a few leaders had made the letter public.

TS Congress leader Marri Shashidhar Reddy said, "the standard procedure is to discuss issues on a party platform. With the

State drops 14 CHCs from Covid care, beds down 484

BALU PULIPAKA | DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 23

The government, after repeatedly urging people seeking treatment for Covid-19 to place their faith in its hospitals with a promise that Covid-19 care has been decentralised down to the Primary Healthcare Centre (PHC) level, has quietly dropped more than a dozen Community Health Centres (CHCs) in nine districts from its list of treatment facilities.

The withdrawal of 14 CHCs from the list of its own Covid-19 care facilities has resulted in the number of beds the government claimed it had available for Coronavirus sufferers going down by 484, down from 8,436 on August 14, to 7,952 on August 15. This resulted in an overnight drop in the number of government hospitals, including its CHCs offering Covid-19 treatment, from 56 to 42.

As a consequence, the number of beds in private hospitals that were listed in the daily Covid-19 bulletin on August 13, which was 7,879, increased to 9,057 on August 22, showing an addition of 1,178 Covid-19 beds — nearly 2.5 times the number of beds the government withdrew from Covid-19 services — in private hospitals.

Even as these developments have been quietly put in place by the health department, there has been no progress on the government claim that it will take over 50 per cent

COVID INFRA IN HOSPITALS			
	GOVERNMENT SECTOR	PRIVATE SECTOR	
AUG. 13	56 hosp	8,436 beds	118 hosp
AUG. 14	42 hosp	7,862 beds	119 hosp
AUG. 22	42 hosp	7,952 beds	170 hosp

private and corporately run hospitals treating Covid-19 patients, the government, since August 13, has allowed them to add more than twice the number of beds it had dropped from its own resources.

The number of private hospitals allowed to treat Covid-19 patients rose from 118 on August 13 to 170 on August 22.

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Water supply is irregular, drains overflow

On the street

Noise pollution caused due to almirah work

In Hashamabad, Chandrayangutta, a unit working on almirahs has come up. This is causing a lot of noise pollution. My sister is a heart patient. I have complained to the officials but no action has been taken so far. Nobody is there to listen, what to do?

Ali Hashamabad,
Chandrayangutta
Ph: 9885113569

Stray dog menace worries Muradnagar

I live in Muradnagar Hyderabad. There are more than 15 dogs in this area and the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation is not taking action. The dogs once chased me and my father. I will be happy if the GHMC takes action.

SMD Hussain
Muradnagar, Hyderabad

Streetlights at Red Hills not working

Residents of the lane near David Primary School in Red Hills would like to draw the attention of officials towards the poor upkeep of streetlights. The streetlights have not been repaired for quite a while. The wiring mechanism has suffered wear and tear. The streets are dark and there is an increased risk of accidents. Women and children feel scared to move out of their houses at night. I request the officials concerned to repair the streetlights.

Syed Shamsuddin
Maghrabi
Red Hills

Ticket was not issued, SCR hasn't refunded

My SBI savings account (3549xxx6413) was debited ₹2,470 on November 11, 2018, while booking a train ticket at the Lingampalli railway counter. SBI confirmed the transaction of the amount to SCR through my debit card but the ticket was not issued. The IRCTC replied that in case of non-issue of ticket, the refund will be granted by SCR as per circular No. 12 of 2017 of the Railway Board, after verification. I have personally represented the matter six times at the CCO's Office, Rail Nilayam. The OS of CCO sent my representation to the official concerned in May 2019. This needs urgent action by the General Manager, South Central Railway.

G. Ravi Kumar
Ph: 9441188391

Stamp papers sold in black at Sec'bad offices

The registration offices at Bowenpally and Marredpally are located adjacent to each other at the Cafe Centre Point crossroads in the Secunderabad Cantonment. The staff there are not justifying their duties with regard to the sale of non-judicial stamp papers of all denominations. The officials say they have no stock of the papers and are directing people who need them to private stamp vendors located around their offices. The stamp vendors are selling the papers at double the rate. This fact was brought to the notice to the minister concerned and the IG of stamps and registration department but it is all in vain.

Vanam Ravinder Reddy
Bowenpally

Dear Readers, We at Deccan Chronicle request you to kindly send all your complaints, issues, grievances, feedback and suggestions to our government and all its departments by writing to Speak Out, the voice of the people, to our email ID **DCSpeakOut@gmail.com**

— Editor

Garbage menace



Unattended garbage bins at Singada basti are a nuisance

The dustbins placed near Mustafa Masjid at Singada Basti between Banjara Hills Road Nos. 10 and 12 have been left uncleared for weeks, posing a serious health threat to residents. The dustbins used to be cleared twice or thrice a week earlier.

With incessant rains for days and garbage overflowing, it has now become a challenge for road users and

residents.

Khalid Ahmed
Singada Basti,
Road No. 10,
Banjara Hills



Drainage problems

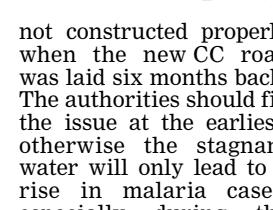
Roads in Reddy Colony are in a mess, need to be repaired now



I would like to request the GHMC on behalf of the residents at Road No. 5, near the dead end, Reddy Colony, Chandanagar, to protect us from the bad smell, mosquito menace and unhygienic conditions on the CC road. The road is in a horrible condition and no one can walk there at normal times and especially when it rains. Authorities have never taken the time to check the drainage in front of our houses which results in regular overflowing of drainage and depositing of waste on the CC road. Recently the manholes were cleaned but the workers left the sludge on the road. request the GHMC to remove the

Krushna Bheemani
Reddy Colony,
Chandanagar

Stagnant water at Old Bowenpally poses health risk



I would like to bring out to the notice of GHMC that in Sri Sai Enclave, Old Bowenpally, in 121 Division, the water stagnates whenever there is rain. It becomes very difficult for us to cross the lane because the slope was not constructed properly when the new CC road was laid six months back.

The authorities should fix the issue at the earliest, otherwise the stagnant water will only lead to a rise in malaria cases, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. I request the authorities concerned to look into the matter and resolve the issue quickly and bring relief to the citizens.

Mohammed Wasif Ali
Old Bowenpally,
Secunderabad

HMWS&SB hasn't cleaned Citizen Colony



Water frequently stagnates on the road opposite my house (1-5-1009, Plot No. 1, Road No. 3, Citizen Colony, Old Alwal). Several complaints and reminders to the Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWS&SB) have been ignored. The colony residents, welfare committee and road users ignore the issue. Is there anyone who can look into this perennial problem of water stagnation and find a solution to it?

Noel Nogueiro,
Old Alwal

Gulshan Nagar drains always overflow

In the slums of Gulshannagar at Bholakpur, Musheerabad, the drainage has been overflowing for the last 15 days. Representations and intimations have been given to the Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board but the authorities have not taken any action. This is the area where 14 people had died due to water contamination in 2009. People are facing a lot of hardships due to the drainage overflow. Please help

Gulshan Nagar
Welfare Association
Bholakpur;
Musheerabad

Water Board does not supply 50 litres a day but issues full bill

Drinking water supply is only a trickle at my tap (CAN 06234736) at Kalyannagar Venture III, Erragadda. I do not get even 50 litres of drinking water on alternate days, or 150 litres per month. A bill of ₹469.30 is served each month to my email ID and registered mobile without taking the meter reading. No meter reader has visited the place for over a year-and-a-half but I am billed for 29 kilolitres every month. In such a situation, I suggest that the HMWS&SB provide the mobile phone number and email ID of the billing agency so that paying consumer can express their real problems. The HMWS&SB

may also consider deputing a responsible official to know the problems of consumers periodically. That will create a cordial relationship between the departments and consumers which will also avoid huge accumulation of bill arrears. Earlier, department employees used to visit every month, take meter readings, serve the bill and collect the money. This system was working very well but I do not understand why it has been discontinued. I also suggest that the HMWS&SB restore it at the earliest.

Basava Reddy Mogili
Kalyannagar Venture
III, Erragadda

Drinking water woes

Since 21 days, Barkatpura residents struggle without drinking water

It is disgusting that houses in Barkatpura Masjid lane opposite the Telangana Yuvathi Mandali function hall have gone without drinking water supply for more than 21 days due to the indifferent attitude of the HMWS&SB officials. Fed up with their attitude, I went to the HMWS&SB office at YMCA, Narayanguda, where the staff said that the old pipeline was damaged due to some tree roots and it can't be repaired. The residents should individually give requests along with a copy of the water bill to the board to anything to be done. I gave a complaint and was ready to pay the fee but the staff said payment should be

made after their inspection. The inspection happened after a week and I paid the fee of ₹1,500 for change of the pipeline and am still waiting for any action. I would like to question the HMWS&SB that when the main pipeline is damaged is it not their duty to repair it or give connection to a new pipeline without any fee? A few residents have got the new pipeline connection by paying heavy additional amounts to a private contractor who was referred to by the Narayanguda YMCA HMWS&SB manager Mahender Reddy and his assistant Venkatesh.

T. Kailash Ditya
3-4-871/A, Barkatpura

Low pressure water supply at Nandanarnagar Colony

Nandanarnagar colony in Tukaramgate Secunderabad, is getting water supply with very low pressure for six months. We get water on alternate days but the pressure is so low that we have to collect water from the pipeline three feet below the floor level. We have to purchase water from tankers for a single family. The problem was brought to the notice of the general manager but he directed it to the

Secretary,
SC Co-op Housing
Society
Nandanarnagar

deputy general manager who told his junior officers to look into the issue.

In spite of meeting the officials, written and online complaints, the problem of low pressure water supply has not been solved. It is requested that higher authorities instruct officers to solve the water problems of citizens.

The

HMWS&SB to issue the water bill every month. If it fails to do so, the amount should be waived. The HMWS&SB has given a deadline for payment of bills, it should take stringent action against the bill collector for not issuing bills.

Mohd Zaheer Ahmed
Masab Tank

No water supply at Wahabnagar since last week

I am a resident of Plot 17, Wahabnagar, Secunderabad Cantonment. Since last Monday, there has been no water supply to my house. I have lodged complaints, spoken to the officials concerned including the Secunderabad Cantonment Board Chief Executive Officer but the problem has not been resolved. All of them have been making false promises about getting the job done. I am absolutely frustrated and even ashamed of repeatedly calling up the officials hence this letter to Speak Out with the hope that at least after reading this they may wake up from their slumber.

Sunil Srivastava
Wahabnagar,
Staff Road
Ph: 9849013327

Grievances

Trains not running but vehicles make railway station their 'home'

There are no train services as of now, but does it mean that a vehicle can be parked inside the railway station? This is the situation at Shadnagar railway station.

R.K.Thomas
Shadnagar



Despite ban on plastic bags city markets continue to sell them

The ban on polythene bags is being violated in the city markets. It is a matter of concern that the GHMC is not taking necessary measures to stop the use of polythene covers. Even dairy farms is selling milk in plastic polythene covers. While the government is stopping people from using plastic bags, it is allowing dairies to supply milk in

Thanks DC, GHMC cleared tree branches

We residents of Venkat Rao Nagar Colony thank Deccan Chronicle for helping us by publishing our complaint in Speak Out (Heaps of tree branches scattered all over PG Road, Aug. 17), which resulted in immediate resolution. After the publication of our problem, the Disaster Response Force was deployed in our colony and pruned tree branches were cleared to our fullest satisfaction. We also thank the relevant department for taking up issue.

Alpesh Gandhi
Venkat Rao Nagar
Colony PG Road.

Streetlights in Janakpuri fixed, thanks DC

Thanks to the impact of Speak Out, streetlights which were not functioning for over three months were repaired on August 17, the day my letter was published (Streetlights down since 3 months in Janakpuri) in Deccan Chronicle.

Veneshya Kumar
Janakpuri,
Secunderabad

Thanks DC, GHMC clears manholes

Following the publication of my complaint (Manholes overflow at Reddy Colony, August 10) in Speak Out, the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation cleaned the manholes. I wish to thank the GHMC for the job and Deccan Chronicle for highlighting the issue.

Krushna Bheemani
Chandanagar

made after their inspection. The inspection happened after a week and I paid the fee of ₹1,500 for change of the pipeline and am still waiting for any action. I would like to question the HMWS&SB that when the main pipeline is damaged is it not their duty to repair it or give connection to a new pipeline without any fee? A few residents have got the new pipeline connection by paying heavy additional amounts to a private contractor who was referred to by the Narayanguda YMCA HMWS&SB manager Mahender Reddy and his assistant Venkatesh.

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Sunil Srivastava
Wahabnagar,
Staff Road
Ph: 9849013327

Roads dug up, power bill woes continue

Power bill issues

TSSPDCL, check meters by 1st week of every month

The TSSPDCL must instruct the meter readers to prepare the bills on the fifth or sixth of every month. This way, the slab will be normal and will not jump to the next level.

J. Ravi Varma
Vanasthalipuram

Power dept issues bill of ₹24,226, please resolve

My usual monthly electricity bill is between ₹1,500 and ₹2,000. But, during the lockdown, we got a bill for ₹24,226 from March to May for a period of 67 days. We want to raise our voice through Speak Out to take this matter to the notice of the government.

S. Ramesh
Ph: 9701453767

After 3 months, TSSPDCL doesn't give cost estimate

Three months ago, we gave a letter to the TSSPDCL assistant engineer, Motinagar, Sanathnagar, for estimation of cost for providing a bunch cable in SPR Hills, T. Anjaiah Nagar, Yousufguda, Borabanda. Till date we have not received any kind of response from the assistant engineer. We have tried call him many times but he is not responding. I request TSSPDCL to kindly oblige.

Farhee Begum
SPR Hills, T. Anjaiah Nagar
Yousufguda, Borabanda



Municipal officials refuse to fix the pipelines which they broke

The Malkajgiri municipal officials dug up Shaktinagar Road No. 1, SV Officers' Colony, Ramakrishnapuram, to lay a new road a week ago but in the process they damaged the drainage pipelines of some houses. This has led to drain water flooding the dug-up road and spreading a stink in the colony. When contacted, civic officials said that a sub-contractor had dug up the stretch and they

are not to be blamed for the damaged pipelines. They said the residents themselves have to get the pipelines repaired. This is very unfair on the part of the municipality. Why must residents pay or get the drainage pipelines repaired for no fault of theirs? The municipality must take up the issue on top priority and repair the damaged pipelines.

Irfana
Ramakrishnapuram

Potholes filled with sewage at Saibabanagar endangers health

The road at Saibabanagar, Shivampally railway station road, Kattedan, has huge potholes. They are filled with drainage water from a broken line. It has become a big health hazard for people living around the area. Even after posting requests online to the GHMC many times, no action has been by the officials till now. I hope publication of this complaint in Speak Out will take this problem to the notice of higher officials of the GHMC

Ashish Sirigiri
Ph: 9966402888



Road problems

Due to GHMC negligence traffic jams witnessed near Cafe Bahar

A few months back, new road was laid from MLA Quarters to Basheerbagh but it was dug up for pipeline work and then left unprepared. Now, this road, specially at Cafe Bahar, is full of big potholes. Thousands

of vehicles pass daily on this road. Apart from vehicle damage, traffic jams are witnessed on this road due to the potholes. Will the authorities look into this matter?

G.D. Bajaj
Himayatnagar



Nimboliadda Road not repaired, pedestrians, motorists troubled

GHMC authorities have not started re-laying the road that was dug up more than two months ago, opposite the Branch Library and Mahakali temple at Nimboliadda. The Nimboliadda cross-roads is a busy place and local residents, two-wheel-

er riders and pedestrians are facing a lot of trouble in crossing it. I request the GHMC commissioner to take action immediately.

Rahul Raj Vikram Raj
K.N.
Nimboliadda,
Hyderabad

Unsurfaced road, lying cables choke up traffic at Saket Road

The main road from Radhika signal to Dammaiguda, popularly called Saket Road, was dug up at three different places to carry out work on the 220kw cable two months ago. However, the road has not been resurfaced yet. Road users travel on the wrong side of the road to avoid these patches, which leads to traffic choking up. Not clear

who will fix this and when.

Barhadath D.
Dammaiguda



Calling trouble

BSNL staff turns up, fails to rectify landline service

My BSNL broadband internet service on my landline telephone 23731037 has not been working for the last 15 days. I have been complaining to the designated number 18003451500 from my mobile phone and also 1500 from the landline.

Every time I get an assurance in response but the complaint has not been attended to. The technicians responded a few times and inquired about the problem but no action was taken. Two technicians visited my house but the problem was not rectified. Now the landline too is not working. I am writing to Speak Out with the hope that my grievance will be redressed soon. Early action in the matter will be highly appreciated.

Hariharan
Ph: 23731037

Alwal Rythu Bazaar in worst state

In Alwal is in a worst condition ever since it was inaugurated more than 15 years ago. Vendors sit on both sides at the entrance as the number of platforms is insufficient.

The pathway inside is very narrow and during rains it becomes difficult to walk as the market is filled with muddy water. Parking vehicles is another cumbersome task due to the uneven muddy ground.

Autorickshaws and minivans enter the market in a haphazard manner to unload vegetables. The ATM in the market not easily accessible.

What is required is a total facelift with conveniently elevated platforms, spacious aisles, vacating unauthorised vendors, cementing the parking area and providing a good concrete slab on the market. It should be a replica of the Kushaguda market.

N.S.R. Murthy
Doveton, Bolaram

Gave up BSNL connection 3 years ago, security deposit not received

It has been almost two years since I surrendered my BSNL FTH (29880819). Till date, BSNL has not been refunded my security deposit which I had paid initially, of around ₹5,000. I have written many representations to the BSNL grievance cell and visited the

M. Malleswara Rao
Ph: 9492024811

I am shifting house, BSNL must disconnect landline immediately

I have made several requests to the BSNL call centre and the departments concerned to discontinue the services on my landline phone (29709957) immediately as I have to vacate my rented apartment. Despite my requests since four

months, no action has been taken regarding this matter. The bill is unnecessarily piling up even though the connection has been disconnected from our end.

Shahid Khan
Attapur

Ph: 9393515777

Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited
(A Govt. of India Enterprise)

NOTICE FOR ENGAGEMENT OF SERVICE PROVIDER FOR ITS CORPORATION OWNED AND CORPORATION OPERATED RETAIL OUTLETS (COCO)

Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited proposes to engage Service Provider for providing manpower and various services at its Corporation Owned Corporation Operated Retail Outlets at various locations in the State of ANDHRA PRADESH and TELANGANA.

The detailed advertisement, guidelines / brochure and application form are available in our website <https://www.bharatpetroleum.in/bharat-petroleum-for-business-associates/coco.aspx> and the same can also be downloaded.

Completed application forms should reach the office as indicated in the detailed advertisement latest by **22/09/2020, 1700 hrs.** Corrigendum, if any, will be hosted on the above website.

HAR EK KAAM DESH KE NAAM

Amid Covid pandemic

All details filled, but application for PF withdrawal is turned down

I had applied for advance PF withdrawal of my sister's name Hymavathi Gajula, EPFO UAN 1011 XXXX 8378, owing to the prevailing financial conditions and fulfilled all the requirements. The application was rejected citing the reason 'Name not printed on cancelled cheque'. HDFC Bank issues cheques to its

Ashok Kumar
Ph: 9246392288

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-TENDER NOTICE

ई-पीएस-जी-एस-ए-कॉन-उत्तर-ई-रियार्ड-26-20-21 दिनांक 20.08.2020 E-Tender Notice No. ECR-CAO-CON-NORTH-E-TEN-26-20-21. E-Tender is invited on behalf of the President of India for the under mentioned work.

1. Name of work : Transportation assembling erection launching girders of Major bridges, 322 (5x30.5 m OWG), 325(4x12.2m composite girder), 329 (2x30.5 M OWG), 332 (3x6.1 M PSC slab), 341(3x6.1 M PSC slab), 346(3x6.10m span PSC slab), 347 (1x18.3M PG), 349 (3x30.5 OWG), 351 (4x6.1m span PSC slab), 352 (2x30.5M OWG) of HIR-VKNR section and Br. No. 7, 781 of NKE-GAH section and its allied works in connection with doubling of NKE-VKNR and GC of NKE GAH section. 2. Approx cost of the work : ₹9,29,24,708.11. 3. Earnest Money: ₹6,14,600/- 4. Date and time for closing of tender : 11.09.2020 at 14.30 hrs. 5. Website particular, Notice board location where complete details of tender can be seen and addressed of the office from where the tender form be purchased etc. : The above E-Tender, E-Tendering document alongwith full information is available on website i.e. <http://www.ireps.gov.in> and also can see in the office of CAO/Con/ECR/MHX/Patha. Note : Tenderers are requested to visit the website <http://www.ireps.gov.in> atleast 15 days before last date of closing for latest corrigendum/corrections etc in response to this e-tender. CAO/Con/North/ECR/Mahendraghat, Patna - 800001 Chief Mechanical Engineer/WP/PR/0548/WPO/Mech/T/20-21/44

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-TENDER NOTICE

e-Tender No. 2020/WP/Mech/SSL/ROH/WT-09 (Open). e-Tender (open) are invited on behalf of the President of India with following details.

1. Name of the work with its location : "Composite Work (Civil, Electrical & Mechanical) involving Extension of sheds, Construction of store building, Heavy duty concrete flooring, Track Work, Electrification and illumination works, Procurement and commissioning of specified Mechanical Machineries & Plant and other associated Civil & Electrical works in connection with "Augmentation of ROH capacity and improvement of existing maintenance facilities and infrastructure of ROH depot at Bhusingh Central Railway." 2. Approximate cost of the work : ₹23,96,44,496.99. 3. Earnest Money to be deposited : ₹13,48,200/- 4. Date & Time for closing of e-tender : 21.09.2020 up to 13.00 hrs. 5. Website particulars and notice board location where complete details of tender can be seen and downloaded : Tender can only be down loaded and Bidding from IREPS website : www.ireps.gov.in. For any other information please contact office of Chief Mechanical Engineer/Workshop Projects, Indian Railways, Chamber Bawan, 3rd floor (Mech. Deptt.), J.C. Road, Patna - 800001

Chief Mechanical Engineer/WP/ECR/Patha

PR/0548/WPO/Mech/T/20-21/40

RAIL COACH FACTORY

KAPURTHALA

On-line tenders are invited by PCMF, RCF on behalf of President of India for following items:-

Sr. No.	Tender No. & Due Date	Description	Qty.	EMD (₹)
1.	17201300 17.09.2020	Set of roof panels & corner panels for LHB SLR with Divyangan Passenger Compartment Coaches	101 Set	263570/-
2.	17201350 18.09.2020	Entrance Hand Rail Complete	6903 Set	72480/-
3.	17201366 21.09.2020	Hand Rail Assembly	2003 Nos.	69590/-
4.	17201396 21.09.2020	Set of Pillar Assembly for Hot Buffet LHB Coach	29 Set	NIL
5.	17201422 21.09.2020	Marking Diagram for LHB Garib Rath AC-3 Tier Coaches	45 Set	50900/-
6.	14201265 22.09.2020	(1) Fleet Graphic Film for Exterior of LHB Chair Car (1) 39 Nos. Coaches to pl No. 33660274 (2) Fleet Graphic Film for Exterior of Antodaya Coaches to pl No. 33660712 (3) Fleet Graphic Film for Exterior of LHB Garib Rath Coaches to pl No. 33660931	104 Nos.	2000000/-
7.	17201402 22.09.2020	Luggage Rack Mounting for SLR LHB Coach	111 Set	201150/-
8.	02201142A 14.09.2020	Eight Types of Harness for LHB Coaches	173 Sets + 285 Sets + 18 Sets + 80 Sets + 137 Sets	5000000/-
9.	05201285 15.09.2020	Front Sheet, Front Sheet	231 Nos., 1020 Nos.	258750/-
10.	05201286 18.09.2020	Front Part	658 Set	200000/-
11.	07201213 14.09.2020	Composite Pipe PL No. 62130079, 62130080	20615 Mtr.	4655 Mtr.
12.	02201142A 18.09.2020	Battery Fuse Box-VE/VE (2 Items)	1	NIL

1. For details and making On-line tenders visit website <http://ireps.gov.in> Drawings/specifications, wherever required can be downloaded from RCF website <http://www.rcf.indianrailways.gov.in>. Class III digital signature certificate required for on-line biddings, can be obtained from licensed certifying agencies listed at <http://www.cesec.gov.in>. 2. Tenders will close at 14.25 hrs. on due date and will be opened at 14.30 hrs. Tenders Sl. No. 1 to 7 will be opened at RCF, Kapurthala and Sl. No. 8 to 12 will be opened at Ttak Bridge, New Delhi. 3. For queries, contact IREPS helpdesk at 011-24102855, 011-24102857 or RCF helpdesk at 011-23370897.

NOTE: GST Number of RCF is 03AAAGM0289C1ZT. All the suppliers are advised to quote this in their bid documents for the supplies made by them. "All above mentioned tenders are e-tenders and all tenders are requested to submit their bids on-line through the IREPS website: <http://www.ireps.gov.in>. For more details regarding the above mentioned tenders and other supply tenders please visit IREPS website.

PCMF

CORRIGENDUM : (1) The following amendment is authorized against Tender No. 17201226 for the supply of Set of FRP Side wall Panels for LHB Coaches due date may be read as 31.08.2020 instead of 19.08.2020. (2) This office Tender No. 02201142 due on 28.08.2020 for eight type of harness is treated as DROPPED.

PCMF

No. G-122-01/PCMF/055/2020-21 Dated 22/08/2020

**RDSO INVITES
INDIAN INDUSTRIES
TO REGISTER AS
RDSO APPROVED
SUPPLIER**</p

SHORT TAKES

'GODMAN' HELD FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT

JAYENDRA CHAITHANYA T. | DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 23

A self-proclaimed godman who sexually assaulted a woman under the guise of curing her of 'unusual behaviour' was arrested in Karnataka by the Rajendranagar police on Sunday. The accused has been absconding for the last two years.

A case was registered against F.S. Jalaluddin Arshad Khundmir alias Arshad Kunjavi, 44, a native of Channapatna in Karnataka, in October 2018 at the Rajendranagar police station following a complaint from a woman. She along with her husband had visited Arshad, who claimed he could pray for people suffering from ailments and make their lives better. Arshad visited the house of the woman, took her inside a room and sexually assaulted after making her unconscious by intoxicating her.

The couple lodged a complaint and Arshad went absconding.

GREEN NGO INVITES ARTICLES ON UN SDGs

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, AUG. 23

The Council for Green Revolution (CGR), a non-profit organisation, invited articles on achieving UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for medics, paramedics, journalists and educationists.

CGR in association with Family Planning Association of India, Hyderabad, has invited articles on rural primary health with respect to present and future health services from medical community participants. The articles are to be written in English, in 1,000 to 1,200 words. The deadline is September 30 and articles can be sent to ruralprimaryhealth@gmail.com.

The competition for articles on holistic school education is open to educationists, academicians, journalists, social activists, public representatives, parents' committee members etc. Topics include enrollment and dropouts, curriculum, ensuring minimum learning abilities, infrastructure, students to teacher ratio, pedagogy and the challenges, school administration and management, leadership skills of the principals/ headmasters, nutrition and health of students, role of civil society, government policies and funding for school education, inclusion of SDS in the proposed National Education, Policy, teaching-learning practices, as curriculum in the textbooks.

The national level essay competition being organised in association with Faculty of Law, University of Delhi, will follow the broad theme of environment protection in the post-Covid-19 era: Strengthening environmental laws and avoiding dilution, along with sub-themes. The authors may choose one or more sub-themes. The last date is September 15. They can be emailed to lawnforsd@gmail.com. The best three essays will be awarded ₹30,000, ₹20,000 and ₹10,000.

Back home



Unsold Lord Ganesha idols being taken back by traders from other cities and towns as there was a sharp decrease in sales in view of the pandemic. The police had also denied permission to set up pandals for the festival.

— P. SURENDRA

Fund delay stalls work on 51,000 2BHK units

Only 26,000 likely to be completed before GHMC polls

MADDY DEEKSHITH | DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 23

Funds crunch has hit implementation of the two-bedroom house scheme within the GHMC limits. Delay by the housing department in releasing about ₹4,000 crore funds has brought the construction of 51,000 double bedroom houses to a grinding halt. Moreover, the corporation is yet to start construction of sewerage lines and sewage treatment plants (STPs) at the 52 locations where the construction of 2BHK houses is going on. It is estimated that only about 26,000 houses will be ready prior to the GHMC polls.

According to corporation officials, due to delay in release of funds by housing department, construction of these houses is only at a snail's pace. Since five years, the department has released ₹5,706.71 crore of the total ₹9,714.59 crore. The civic body is now hoping for immediate release of ₹50 crore, so that final touches could be given to 26,420

dwelling units by December, before the scheduled GHMC polls. Despite bills worth ₹4,007.86 crore piling up, the corporation has set an immediate target to complete 23,076 2BHK houses by August, 25,093 houses by September and 11,026 houses by March next year. However, a senior GHMC official, requesting anonymity, told Deccan Chronicle that these deadlines are only on paper. If there is any delay in sanctioning of funds, the project will drag on for another year.

City mayor Bonthu Rammohan asserted that construction of one lakh 2BHK houses is going on

at a brisk pace. Seventy to 80 per cent of the houses are in final stages of completion, he maintained. He visited Rampally to inspect the progress of house construction and infrastructure works where 6,240 2BHK houses are to be completed.

The construction of 2BHK is expected to be on par with gated communities, consisting of all facilities like roads, electricity, sewerage plant, water park, greenery, walking track, and bus terminal. The construction cost of each flat is ₹7.9 lakh. With amenities, the total cost will be ₹8.65 lakh, all borne by the state government.

2 AUTO DRIVERS ARRESTED FOR ROBBERY

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, AUG. 23

Two autorickshaw drivers were arrested by the KPHB police for allegedly robbing a pedestrian. The police recovered a stolen phone and is searching for another accused.

On August 4, at around 1 am, the trio travelling in an autorickshaw waylaid T. Balagangadhara Tilak, a private employee, who was walking home at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Nagar and took away his mobilephone and face shield. Based on the complaint lodged by Tilak, the KPHB police registered a case.

Treat kids early: Doctor

From Page 1

Dr Satish Ghanta, director at Little Stars Children's Hospital, said, "The presence of the virus in the body creates an immune response to fight (the virus), hence there is production of antibodies. Since the virus is out of the body, it is not understood why the immune system is turning against the body. It is very important for parents to be aware that if their children have high fever, rashes, conjunctivitis and it is persisting for more than three days they must come to the hospitals for treatment. The earlier they arrive better will be the outcome."

Children brought to Hyderabad hospitals in the last one month came with severe complications. In some children, the heart shape had changed and a part of the heart muscle was dead, explained a senior doctor on condition of anonymity. These post-Covid 19 complications in children is a cause of concern and experts state that they have to be geared up to get them earlier so that there

CASE STUDIES

● The grandfather of a seven-year-old girl died of Covid-19 two months ago. She was not infected, but developed high fever after a month and had rashes on the body. She was brought to the hospital in time and treated.

● A 20-year-old died due to high fever and multi-organ failure a month after the family was diagnosed as Covid-19 positive. The family lost three senior citizens to Covid-19 and the young man died a month later.

are no fatalities. Pediatricians are holding e-meetings for medical education in their fraternity to understand these new emerging symptoms so that they can be managed properly on time.

CHILDREN BROUGHT TO HOSPITALS IN THE LAST ONE MONTH CAME WITH SEVERE COMPLICATIONS.

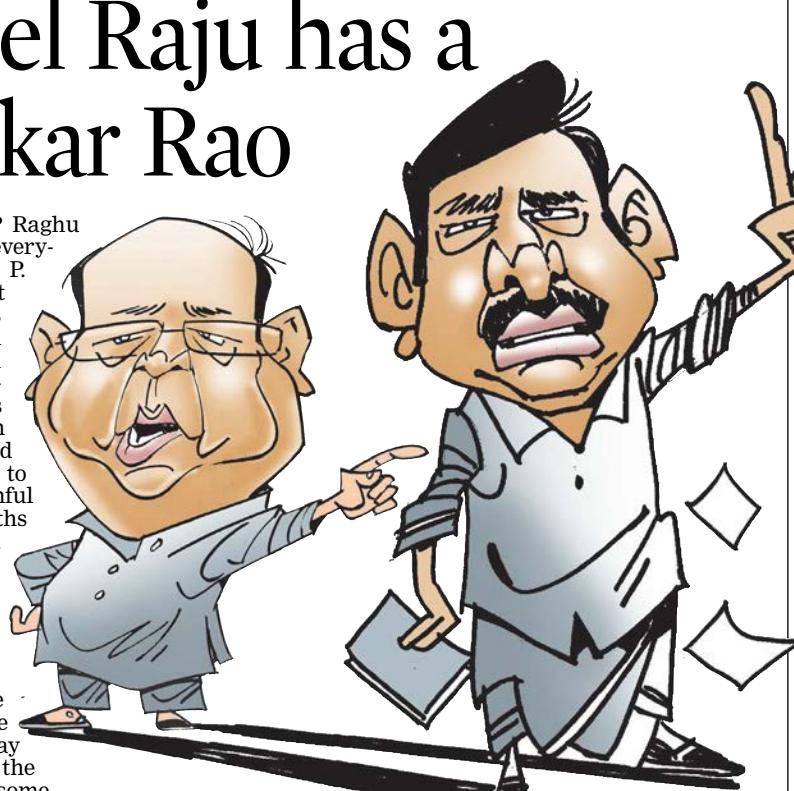
Timber depot owner Vivek Patel along with his brother who went to see the place on Saturday found the body and alerted the police.

LB Nagar inspector V. Ashok Reddy said that the victim who could be in his mid-20s.

NETA'S NATTER

YSRC's rebel Raju has a model: Sankar Rao

The histrionics of Narsapuram MP Raghu Ramakrishna Raju are reminding everyone of veteran Congress leader P. Sankar Rao. Sankar Rao suddenly shot into the limelight when the Congress wanted to trouble Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, present CM of Andhra Pradesh and a rebel at that time. For strong political and social reasons, the Congress picked Rao to file a case against Jagan which eventually led to the CBI probe and the latter's prolonged imprisonment due to the high command strategy and its faithful implementation by the local CBI sleuths headed by then joint director V.V. Lakshminarayana. Mediahouses traditionally opposed to the YSR family and loyal to TD supremo N. Chandrababu Naidu made Sankar Rao a hero. He was all over their TV channels and newspapers. He was even inducted into the Cabinet of Kiran Kumar Reddy only to be dropped like a hot potato. Now it's the turn of Raju to grab headlines and to stay in the limelight, doing something or the other almost every day, be it making some constructive suggestion or just hurling abuses against his critics. After all, these are Raju's days!



Congress suddenly backs TS Governor

As the saying goes, an enemy's enemy is a friend. The Congress of Telangana state has found a sudden love for Governor Dr T. S. Soundararajan. She did not mince words highlighting the gross failure of the K. Chandrashekhar Rao government in the Coronavirus pandemic management. Be it testing, containing, reporting or providing treatment, the state government, according to the Governor, had miserably failed. As the TRS and BJP are busy with their slugfest, obviously the former dubbing her as a BJP agent and the latter hailing as a saviour of the state, the Congress did not want to miss the buzz. There were statements praising the Governor and demands to dismiss the TRS government. For the moment, Congress appears to have seen a common agenda of exposing the TRS government while ignoring the politics involved.

Testing crosses 40,000, TS cases mark records

KANIZA GARARI | DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 23

The state reported 2,384 new cases of Covid-19 on Saturday, according to the state health department bulletin issued on Sunday. The caseload now stands at 1,04,249. Eleven persons died on August 22, taking the toll to 755.

The state crossed the one lakh mark on Friday, when it recorded the highest-ever 2,474 cases in a single day. Testing has been ramped up, data in the bulletin showed. A total of 43,095 tests were conducted on

Friday and 40,666 on Saturday. The number used to stay below the 30,000-mark earlier. So far, 9,31,839 samples have been tested.

With the rains easing in the districts, people were returning to hospitals to get tested for the Coronavirus. There were reports of severe cases in the districts who could not come to the testing centres due to the rains.

According to the health bulletin, the highest number of patients are in the age-group of 31 to 40 years.

A rise in the number of

cases has been noted in Jagtial with 105 cases, Suryapet with 110 and Nalgonda apart from 131 in Ranga Reddy 120 in Khammam. Serious cases from districts are being sent to Gandhi Hospital or private hospitals as there are very few specialists in districts to manage the patients.

Reports said that in violation of government instructions to keep away, crowds thronged the Srisailam dam to watch the release of water. Social distancing norms went for a toss.

Kishan launches plasma bank for Covid patients

IREDDY SRINIVAS REDDY | DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 23

Union minister of state for home G. Kishan Reddy on Sunday inaugurated the Rotary Plasma Bank here at Challa Blood Bank, Ameerpet.

Addressing the media after the inauguration, Kishan Reddy said Prime Minister Narendra Modi had been constantly interacting with Chief Ministers and all stakeholders to contain the spread of the Coronavirus in the country.

The Union home ministry, which has administrative control over Delhi, was successful in the Covid-19 control measures, he said. The spread of the virus was effectively managed in Delhi and it stands as a model state in managing the virus spread. Today, Delhi has 20,000 empty beds, he said.

Coronavirus cases have been on the rise in five states which have to improve their testing and Telangana state is among them, Kishan Reddy said. Telangana state was lagging behind other states in terms of testing. "When we see the data of 36 cities or regions across the country, Telangana state stands at the seventh position from the bottom," he said.

The minister stated that the Union government was helping Telangana state in every possible way and had so far supplied 14 lakh N-95 masks, 2.35 lakh PPE Kits, 42.5 lakh hydrochloroquine tablets and 1,400 ventilators. If needed, the Centre



Union minister of state for home affairs G. Kishan Reddy inaugurates the plasma bank of Rotary Club of Hyderabad on Sunday.

— S. SURENDER REDDY

PARTIALLY BURNT BODY OF MAN FOUND

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, AUG. 23

The partially burnt body of a man with multiple injuries was found in an abandoned timber depot at LB Nagar, Hollywood Timber Depot near Sagar crossroads in LB Nagar, where the body was found, was not functional for the last month and had been demolished.

Timber depot owner Vivek Patel along with his brother who went to see the place on Saturday found the body and alerted the police.

LB Nagar inspector V. Ashok Reddy said that the victim who could be in his mid-20s.

ESI Hosp gets AI attendance system

BALU PULIPAKA | DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 23

A state-of-the-art facial recognition attendance system was launched at the ESIC Medical College Hospital at Sanatnagar on Sunday. The new facility, based on an artificial intelligence-enabled system, provides a non-touch, low cost, robust, and foolproof system for marking attendance with real-time analytics and reports, according to the hospital authorities.

The manual attendance paper registers at the Covid-19 hospital are a source of infection and the new technology prevents the risk of Covid-19 infection among doctors,

nurses and other staff. The new system was inaugurated by Union minister of state for home G. Kishan Reddy who visited the Covid-19 isolation ward at the hospital and witnessed the demonstration of several innovations that the hospital has put in place for Covid-19 treatment. He was also shown various equipment being used by the staff.

The minister during his visit to the Covid-19 ward at the ESI Hospital also interacted with the patients and later presented mementos to plasma donors and appreciated the efforts by the hospital to treat Covid-19 patients.

Secret behind Swamy Goud's sudden ire

Former Legislative Council Chairman K. Swamy Goud who slipped out of active politics after the completion of his term sometime ago suddenly returned to the headlines last week with his remarks on caste politics. On Thursday, he participated in a programme organised to mark the birth anniversary of Narayan Guru, a social reformer in the city. He said that a few castes were ruining democracy in the state and power was limited to a very few people. A few castes were calling

the shots not only at the national level but also in the state. These comments understandably have stirred the hornet's nest.

After his retirement from the Council, Goud, who is

from the BC community,

had tried to get a ticket

for the 2019 general elec-

tions from the

Chevella Lok Sabha

constituency. It was

not be.

His sudden out-

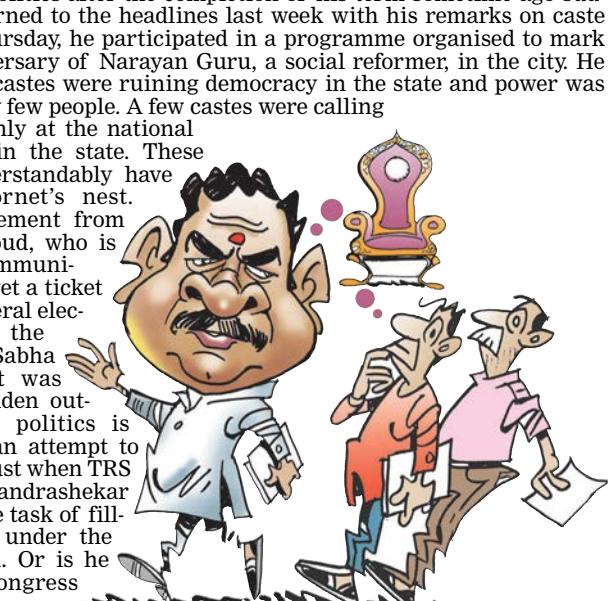
burst on caste politics is

being seen as an attempt

to seek attention just when TRS

president K. Chandrashekhar

Rao takes up the task of filling MLC seats under the Governor's quota. Or is he headed the Congress way?



DECCAN Chronicle

24 AUGUST 2020

J&K's riposte shows failure of repression

The August 22 resolution of the entire collectivity of non-separatist political parties in Jammu and Kashmir, bar the BJP, to strive for the restoration of the former state with the constitutionally mandated guarantee of built-in autonomy that had prevailed since Independence, is a politically formidable sign of a peaceful fight-back by the people of J&K. It is noteworthy that two national parties — the Congress and the CPI(M) — are a part of this resolve. This makes it a supra-regional aspiration and confers a wider recognition on the resolve.

On August 4 last year, a day before the Centre cracked down on J&K by denuding it of its constitutionally-mandated autonomy without discussion in a coup like manoeuvre, and laid siege to Kashmir valley with troops as though there was a war on, the valley politicians showed acuity in passing what has come to be known as the Gupkar Declaration.

Perhaps they had their suspicions looking at the goings-on, and did not take at face value the false assurance given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi just days earlier in New Delhi that no new moves were being contemplated in respect of J&K. At the residence of former CM and Srinagar MP Farooq Abdullah, the traditional mainstream parties gathered to underline that they would remain united in upholding Kashmir's identity and its constitutional status. Regional parties that were rivals for power came together on a common platform, most notably Mehbooba Mufti of the PDP, also a former CM.

It is these very parties that re-assembled once again at Dr Abdullah's residence on Srinagar's Gupkar Road last Saturday to re-affirm their allegiance to the Gupkar Declaration and to underline that their politics henceforth would be "subservient" to the cause of restoration of J&K's autonomy and its statehood, in effect the undoing of Article 370 and jettisoning of Article 35A. Ms Mufti is still in detention and could not be present but is thought to endorse this step.

The unity of the J&K parties to endeavour to turn the clock back has come at a time when the separatist camp is in disarray after the evidently voluntary withdrawal from the political space of the nonagenarian Syed Ali Shah Geelani. The people of Kashmir went into a state of shock and acute depression after the dismantling of Kashmir's special status on August 5, 2019. It is in that state that they were given a stiff dose of military-style repression by the Centre, with thousands, including the entire mainline political leadership put in jail. The Centre appeared determined to create a new politics in Kashmir through the artificially devised Apni Party, which seems to have vanished into the blue. The new turn in events suggests that the obituary of mainstream politics (since they too had been jailed, like the separatists, under the RSS-BJP dispensation) was premature.

It is evident that repression has not worked as a tactic in J&K. Kashmir's riposte has come through a show of peace and unity. If that resolve is sustained, New Delhi has a problem on its hands unless it can show wisdom in the changed situation.

Rebuke for media, govt

The order of the Aurangabad bench of the Bombay High Court quashing the first information reports against 36 members of Tablighi Jamaat, an Islamic organisation, in connection with its meet in Delhi in March this year offers serious food for thought for both the government and the media of all hues. While 29 of the foreigners were charged with violating provisions in the Foreigners Act and Epidemic Act, the six Indians were booked for sheltering them.

As the pandemic Covid-19 started spreading all over India immediately after the meet, a vilification campaign targeting its attendees, and the larger Muslim community, gained currency. Campaigns that the virus spread was part of a plan to destabilise India were carried not only on social media but the mass media as well. "Corana Jihad" was the worst form of such campaigns.

Turning the tables, the court said the government made scapegoats of the Tablighis during the pandemic and an attempt was made by others to create such an atmosphere against them. The court chastised the media, too, for its big, unwarranted propaganda, calling it an attempt to create a picture that the foreigners were responsible for spreading the virus in India.

More than exonerating the Muslim community from the stigma, the court went on to offer its explanation why the idea of secularism and religious harmony are in the interest of all. Social and religious tolerance is a practical necessity for unity and integrity of India, the court pointed out and reminded the state that all the stakeholders of the republic that it is made compulsory by the Indian Constitution.

This celebration of India's plurality and affirmation of the constitutional principles through a judicial pronouncement happen at a time when even lip service to them is hard to find, especially by those in the seats of power. A timely reminder, indeed.

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Visakhapatnam: Survey No.1/3A Beach Road, Near Kailasagiri Ropeway, Sector-9 MVP Colony, Visakhapatnam - 530 017 (A.P.), Ph: 0891-2552333/2552344; Fax: 0891-2755285

Rajahmundry: Venagari, Dhawaleswaram Rd, Rajahmundry, Ph: 0883-2417618/2417208; Telefax: 0883-2417208

Anantapur: Thapovan colony, Bangalore By-Pass Road, Anantapur - 515004, Ph: 08554-276903; Fax: 08554-276904

Karimnagar: Survey No.1341, Vavilalapally Colony, Jagityala Road, Karimnagar - 505 001, Ph: 0878-2228908; Telefax: 0878-2220433

Nellore: Survey No.52/2, Burrampur Village, Venkatachalam (M), Chemmudugunta Panchayat, Nellore, Ph: 0861-2348581/82; Telefax: 0861-2348580

Chennai: SP-3 Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, Ph: 044-22254747/48/50/51; Advt. Fax: 22254765/22254766/42305325

Bengaluru: 5th Floor, BMTC Commercial Complex, 80 Feet Road, Koramangala, Bengaluru-560 095 Ph: 080-43460500; Fax: 080-22960552

Cochin: 77, Vivekananda Road, Rammagaz, Coimbatore - 641 009, Ph: 0422 2231255

Kochi: No.3-B, 3rd Floor of DD TRADE TOWER, Kaloor-Kadavathara Road, Ernakulam, Ph: 0484-4039408

Thiruvananthapuram: St Joseph's Press, TC 15/1040, Cotton Hill, Thiruvananthapuram - 695 014

Kozhikode: Door No 6/1002 E, First Floor of City Mall, Opp. YMCA, Kannur Road, Kozhikode - 673 001, Ph: 0495 4019 018

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Anita Katyal
Political Gup-Shup

Scindia, pick your loyalties; what's holding up BJP work

Former Union minister Ajay Maken's return to the Congress organisation as general secre-

tary has clearly not gone down with a large section of party leaders. Those unhappy with his appointment constantly point out that Mr Maken, a two-time MP from New Delhi constituency, had refused to contest the recent Delhi Assembly elections because of health reasons even though Congress president Sonia Gandhi had personally asked senior leaders to pitch in. While the other leaders agreed, Mr Maken declined. After failing to revive the party in the capital, Mr Maken had stepped down as Delhi Congress chief also on health grounds. In fact, Mr Maken was virtually off the radar till he was picked up by the Congress leadership (read Rahul Gandhi) to head to Jaipur along with other party colleagues to handle the crisis in Rajasthan. He was further rewarded last week when he replaced Avinash Pandey as general secretary in charge of Rajasthan. Mr Maken's quick rehabilitation has raised questions about Rahul Gandhi's lament about the lack of accountability in the party.

Meanwhile, Haryana former chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda has created a

bit of a stir in his home state. The Congress party's Haryana unit is abuzz with reports about how Mr Hooda has been cozying up to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar. This has made it difficult for the Congress to mount an effective offensive against the Khattar regime, which is frustrating the local leaders. But Mr Hooda is unfazed. According to the grapevine, when confronted about reports about his proximity to the BJP leaders, Mr Hooda admitted to the fact that he enjoyed a good rapport with them and even proclaimed proudly that he had met Mr Modi recently. It's the same story with the Haryana chief minister and Mr Hooda as the latter is in constant touch with Mr Khattar. It must be remembered that Mr Hooda is facing multiple CBI inquiries into land deals undertaken during his regime. So it makes sense to befriend those who are in power.

Now that he has joined the BJP, Jyotiraditya Scindia has been forced to rework his relations with leaders in his new

party. For instance, Mr Scindia has to now befriend BJP national general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya, an important leader from Indore, even though the two have been mutually antagonistic to each other for years. Their animosity scaled fresh heights when Mr Scindia defeated Mr Vijayvargiya in a high-voltage election to the prestigious Madhya Pradesh Cricket Association a decade ago. The fact that Mr Scindia has a warm relationship with senior BJP leader and former Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan also made him a suspect in the eyes of Mr Vijayvargiya. For the record, Mr Mahajan and Mr Vijayvargiya are bitter political rivals. When Mr Scindia visited Indore recently, he had no choice but to meet Mr Vijayvargiya as the two have to work together for the coming by-elections in Madhya Pradesh. But Mr Vijayvargiya's camp followers are not happy because Mr Scindia also called on Mr Mahajan. They are insisting the new recruit to the BJP decide where his loyalties lie. This balancing act will not do, they say.

In an unusual gesture, Prime Minister Narendra Modi penned a two-page letter to cricketer hero Mahendra Singh Dhoni who recently announced his retirement on Instagram. This immediately sparked off speculation in the cricketer's hometown Ranchi that Dhoni could be joining the ranks of his colleagues like Navjot Singh Sidhu and Gautam Gambhir, who switched to politics after retirement. Mr Modi's letter, heaping praise on the cricketer, was viewed as an invitation to Dhoni to join public life. After all, the Bihar Assembly polls are round the corner. Apparently, BJP leaders had sent feelers to Dhoni before last year's Jharkhand elections for an endorsement for their party but it did not materialise. Since the BJP has a special preference for drafting sportspersons, the people of Jharkhand can hardly be blamed for thinking their "local hero" could be heading to the saffron camp.

Anita Katyal is a Delhi-based journalist

Subhani



Contempt, sedition: We need a more open mind



Pavan K. Varma

Chanakya's View

At the end of this month, Ashok Lavasa, one of India's election commissioners, will prepare to depart for the sunny shores of Manila to join the Asian Development Bank. His term at the Election Commission was not over. In fact, he would have become, by virtue of seniority, the chief election commissioner, and oversee the conduct of the 2024 parliamentary elections. Why is he then leaving one of the most responsible and prestigious assignments in his own country, and the prospect of eventually heading the EC, for the nondescript anonymity of a job in a multinational organisation outside India?

Perhaps he wanted a change. Perhaps, the heat and dust of New Delhi was not to his liking. Perhaps he wanted a bigger pay package, and the opportunity to save some money. But, perhaps, this unprecedented easing out of a serving election commissioner had also something to do with his having made the cardinal "mistake" of being critical of the conduct of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and home minister Amit Shah during the last general election in 2019. Reportedly, ever since then, government agencies began a series of investigations into his finances and those of his wife and other members of his family. Perhaps something was "discovered" that could embarrass him. Either way, a convenient modus vivendi was found. He was offered an "attractive" exit route, which apparently he had no objections in accepting. Perhaps, the EC will now be a more "well behaved" institution.

On another front, the honourable Supreme Court has convicted lawyer-activist Prashant Bhushan, holding him guilty of criminal contempt, for two tweets that he had sent which raised questions on the functioning and integrity of the highest court of the land. Perhaps, the honourable judges were genuinely "scandalised" by what he had said. The law of contempt in our country says, inter alia, that "words, written or spoken, signs and actions that scandalise or tend to scandalise" the court are tantamount to contempt. The word "scandalise" is a curious one. It implies a subjectivity of interpretation entirely with the person claiming to be scandalised. The Constitution of India guarantees freedom of speech as a fundamental right. Democracy by definition means that an ordinary citizen has the right to express his views, dissent, critique, and interrogate. But, where the Supreme Court is concerned, there is the real worry that anything that questions its functionality may "scandalise" the honourable judges. What is the dividing line between well-intentioned criticism, and the interpretation that it could

Yes, there should certainly be, to strengthen the perception of impartiality, a law that prevents Supreme Court judges from being given fresh assignments by the government or the party in power after they retire

be "scandalous" the judiciary, and thus be treated as contempt. Incidentally, the contempt law has been inherited by us from the British. However, although the judiciary there has often come under relentless attack, the last conviction in the United Kingdom took place as far back as 1931.

It is also rather confusing what amounts to contempt. When, on a sunny morning in January 2018, the four then seniormost judges of the Supreme Court — Kurian Joseph, J. Chamleshwar, Ranjan Gogoi and Madan B. Lokur — took the unprecedented step for the first time in our history of publicly holding a press conference, in which they said that the "administration of the court is not in order" and "many things which are less than desirable have happened in the last few months... that have raised questions and further doubts about the integrity of the nation", were they not "scandalising" the Chief Justice of India? I think the Supreme Court needs to take a more generous and democratic view of comments about itself. And, yes, there should certainly be, to strengthen the perception of impartiality, a law that prevents Supreme Court judges from being given fresh assignments by the government or the party in power after they retire.

A third area that is worrying is the misuse of the law of sedition. Thomas Babington Macaulay, who drafted this law in 1870, may not have known where

One must give it to Macaulay for a remarkable act of drafting in insulating the colonial government against any attack. But we are a sovereign, democratic republic. Surely, laws like this... erode the very democracy...

The writer, an author, is a former diplomat and in politics

LETTERS

FIRE IN SRISAILAM

The death of nine people at the Srisailam power station was shocking (9 die fighting fire at Srisailam power plant, DC, Aug. 22). Those responsible for maintenance of power plant seem to have not done their job. They should have checked the equipment regularly. May the families who lost their dear ones find strength to endure this loss.

Syed Amjad Ali
Secunderabad

Those who laid down their lives for Srisailam power plant are the real heroes. In a bid to save the plant and mitigate a grave national disaster, they sacrificed their lives. The Central and state governments should stand by their families and compensate them adequately.

A. Sudhakar Rao
Ramagiri, Nalgonda

400-YR PROCESSION

The government has not stated its position on the Shia community's Muharram procession yet and I request it to issue orders at the earliest. The procession will be simple with no more than 50 persons allowed with the Alams carried on an elephant. The procession can stop at reception platforms and be completed in two hours. In this 400-year-old procession, one can see the city's Ganga-Yamuna culture.

S.M. Jawad
Hyderabad

NCERT BOOKS

The demand for the print edition of NCERT books, when they can be downloaded free, only shows the Centre's inability to meet the demand. Taking action on a private printer — whose action was illegal on paper — is counterproductive.

R.K. Sarma
Secunderabad

Bid to grab PM's farm foiled: 40 held

NEW DELHI, August 23 With the arrest of 40 persons, including two MPs, the Delhi police today foiled all attempts of the Samyukta Socialist Party volunteers to 'grab' the four-acre farm of the Prime Minister

Mrs. Indira Gandhi.

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

made a mile from the farm house in Chhattarpur village about 18 miles off here. Strong contingent of policemen guarded all approaches to the farm house. Senior police and district officers were present.

SHORT TAKES
SPECIALLY-ABLED PERSONS PUT UNDER FOOD LAW

New Delhi, Aug. 23: The Union food ministry on Sunday said it has written to all state governments and Union Territories to provide subsidised foodgrains to all eligible disabled persons under the National Food Security Act (NFSAs).

States have also been asked to issue fresh ration cards to eligible disabled persons not covered under the NFSAs. They have been asked to cover disabled persons who do not have ration cards under the Atma Nirbhara Bharat Package scheme, it said.

Under the NFSAs, the Central government distributes highly subsidised foodgrains to more than 81 crore beneficiaries in the country. Each beneficiary is entitled for 5 kg foodgrains at a rate of ₹1.3 per kg.

"The department advised all states/UTs to ensure that all disabled persons, who are eligible as per identification criteria of beneficiaries under the NFSAs, are covered under the NFSAs, 2013," the ministry said in a statement.

The states have been asked to provide entitled quota of foodgrains to eligible disabled persons not only under the NFSAs but also under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY), it said.

Under PMGKAY, the government is providing additional 5 kg foodgrains to each NFSAs beneficiary and 1 kg pulses to beneficiary families free of cost. Initially it was implemented for three months till June and later extended till November. — PTI

EX GRATIA FOR TRIBALS 14 YEARS AFTER MASSACRE

DC CORRESPONDENT
BHOPAL, AUG. 23

Exactly 14 years and one month after Maoists massacred 32 tribals after raiding a relief camp set up for members of Salwa Judum, the now-disbanded anti-Naxal vigilante force, in Errabore in south Bastar district of Dantewada in 2006, the Chhattisgarh government has announced compensation for families of the deceased.

The State Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, on Saturday approved the proposal to give a compensation of ₹4 lakh each to families of the 32 tribals slain in the ghastly incident, according to minister Ravindra Chouhan.

Armed Maoist guerrillas had raided the Salwa Judum camp, set up by Chhattisgarh government, in Errabore late in the night of July 19 in 2006 and murdered the tribals, including women and children in cold blood. At least a dozen others were abducted and later released by the Maoists.

The incident that triggered public outrage then had escalated conflict between Salwa Judum and Maoists in Chhattisgarh's insurgency-hit Bastar. The then Chhattisgarh government had given compensation of ₹1 lakh each.

LOCALS DEMAND DETAINED MEN BE FREED, CANED

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, AUG. 23

Odisha police on Sunday lathi-charged locals in Kolidaspur village to disperse a protest in front of Hinjili police station seeking the immediate release of five villagers who were detained in connection with the torching of vehicles engaged in illegal sand mining.

According to villagers, over a dozen residents were injured, some of them seriously, in the brutal lathi-charge. The police, however, denied the charge of any injury of villagers.

"There is no injury among the villagers. Instead, three of our staff members have been injured in stone-pelting by the unruly mob. We showed utmost leniency while handling the crowd," Abhimanyu Das, inspector of Hinjili police station, told Deccan Chronicle.

Sources said the conflict between the police and the locals started when a team of officials, accompanied by police, reached the village on Saturday after receiving information that villagers had torched three trucks engaged in illegal transportation of sand from Rushikulya river.

The police took five villagers into custody. As there was a delay on the part of the police in releasing the arrested persons on personal bonds from the police station, the villagers turned violent.

Cinemas may reopen soon

Centre lists out do's, don'ts for theatres; announces SOPs for TV, film shootings

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 23

The Centre on Sunday announced standard operating procedures (SOPs) for resuming film and television shooting, including measures like social distancing and mandatory use of face covers/masks for cast and crew, except for actors in front of the camera.

The guiding principles and SOPs on preventive measures for media production to contain the spread of Covid-19 were announced by I&B minister Prakash Javadekar.

He said these measures will facilitate resumption of shooting and give employment to scores of people impacted due to the film industry being hit due to the Covid-19 pan-

demic. The SOPs were finalised after consulting the health and home ministries, Mr Javadekar said. Shooting of films and TV serials can be started using these SOPs, said Mr Javadekar, sharing details.

Also, in an indication that cinemas and theatres could reopen soon as part of easing the lockdown norms, the SOPs included

some do's and don'ts, like online booking of tickets in theatres using QR codes, physical distancing to be followed while marking seating arrangements in cinema halls, and minimum crowding to be ensured in all the parking areas.

While the government has not yet allowed opening of cinema halls, there are some indications they

may be allowed under strict social distancing norms.

The guiding principles also said employees at higher risk — older, pregnant or with underlying medical conditions — should avoid contact with others. Some veteran TV and film actors above 65 raised concerns over not being able to work due to lockdown norms.

MASSIVE HAUL OF BOMBS FROM I.S. OPERATIVE

New Delhi/Lucknow, Aug. 23: The Delhi Police has recovered a large quantity of explosives and an IS flag from the house of Mohammad Mustakim Khan in Uttar Pradesh's Balrampur two days after he was arrested in the national capital, officials said on Sunday.

An alleged IS operative, Khan, armed with two pressure cooker IEDs, was arrested in central Delhi's Ridge Road area on Friday night following a brief exchange of fire.

A Delhi Police Special Cell team took him to his Badhiya Bhaisaahi village in Balrampur district. A brown jacket containing three explosive packets and a blue-check jacket containing four explosive packets were recovered from his house, a senior Delhi Police officer said.

"Each explosives packet, removed from the jackets, was wrapped with transparent tape which contained explosives and cardboard sheet pasted with ball bearings, and electric wires were coming out from it," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) P.S. Kushwah said in Delhi.

Police on Sunday conducted raids at several places. Two bicycle shop owners were among those questioned in Uttar Pradesh, possibly over the origin of the ball bearings found by police.

Khan's father Kafeel Ahmed and wife Ayesha were also questioned, an official said. Ayesha told a television channel that she had told Khan not to indulge in "wrong activities" but he did not listen to her. She appeared to be referring to activities that indicated he was radicalised. — PTI

70,000 new cases in India, deaths cross 60,000

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 23

Currently at 1.86 per cent, India's case fatality Rate (CFR) is one of the lowest globally. The higher number of recoveries and declining mortality rate among Covid-19 patients have shown that India's graded and proactive strategies are delivering results in the field," officials added.

According to health economist Rijo M. John, Covid-19 cases are growing at the rate of 2.4 per cent and active cases are now going up (growth 1.1 per cent).

He said such high numbers can stress the country's health infrastructure. He added that although the country has a relatively low mortality rate (MR) at 1.9 per cent, the variation across states and high-burden states such as Maharashtra and Gujarat are worrying. Mortality rates are extremely low in almost the whole of Northeast and many eastern states and Kerala also is very low, John said.

Officials said India exceeded cumulative tests of close to 3.53 crore on Sunday and for the last six days, there have been more than eight lakh tests daily.

New rules for more lockdowns in offing

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 23

district administration were affecting the movement of goods and trucks of even essential commodities and this in turn was impacting the supply chain.

It is being anticipated that in the coming days some other states could also impose lockdowns. The need for uniform guidelines was felt and these are now being prepared to help a better coordination between Centre and states.

"The idea is to ensure that both health and economy are not ignored. We need to ensure that economic activity also continues without being careless about health of the common people. We will strike a balance between both health protocols and economic activities and come out with some norms," a senior ministry official explained.

A pond for Ganesha



An idol of Lord Ganesha is immersed in an artificial pond built for the ongoing Ganesh Chaturthi at Dadar on Sunday. — RAJESH JADHAV

PC urges J&K parties to stand firm on restoration of spl status

New Delhi, Aug. 23: Former Union minister and senior Congress leader P. Chidambaram on Sunday welcomed a joint resolution of six national and regional parties in Jammu and Kashmir, and appealed to them to stand "resolutely" behind their demand for restoration of special status of the erstwhile state.

Salute the unity and courage of six mainstream Opposition parties who came together yesterday (Saturday) to fight the repeal of Article 370," tweeted the former Union minister, who held portfolios like home and finance. Six political parties,

including the National Conference and its arch rival the PDP, issued the resolution making clear that there can be "nothing about us without us", a statement which clearly indicated that the Centre has to take into confidence the people of Jammu and Kashmir before implementing any constitutional change.

The political parties termed the abrogation of special status of the erstwhile state under Article 370 of the Constitution as a "spitefully shortsighted" and "grossly unconstitutional" move and pledged a combined effort for restoration of the pre-

August 5 position of last year.

In a series of tweets in both English and Hindi, Chidambaram said, "I appeal to them to stand resolutely behind their demand. Ignore the uninformed criticism of self-styled nationalists who do not read history but try to re-write history."

Stating that the Constitution contained many examples of special provisions for states and asymmetric distribution of power, he said, "How will the government resolve the Naga issues if it is against making Special Provisions?"

The Saturday's resolu-

tion, termed Gupkar Declaration-II, was circulated in the media. It was signed by National Conference president Farooq Abdullah, PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti, J&K Congress chief G.A. Mir, People's Conference leader Sajjad Lone, state CPM leader M.Y. Tarigami, and Jammu and Kashmir Awami National Conference senior vice-president Muzaffar Shah.

This is the first combined statement issued by the political parties after more than a year.

Political parties termed the changes made in the state in August last year as "unfortunate". — PTI

Sushant's cook, help, flatmate grilled for hours by CBI team

DC CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, AUG. 23

doctors and the staffers of Cooper Hospital, where Sushant's body was taken after his demise for conducting autopsy. The statement of those who conducted autopsy on the actor will be recorded on the spot in presence of the former's cook Neeraj Singh, house help Deepesh Sawant and flatmate Siddharth Pithani.

The trio was first grilled for hours at the CBI team's base at the DRDO guesthouse in Santacruz before being whisked to Bandra and their family soon in connection with the suicide. The DRDO and Indian Air Force guesthouses in Santacruz is where the visiting team has set up the base. The CBI will grill Rhea Chakraborty and her family soon in connection with the suicide. They have been named as main accused in the case filed by the Bihar police, the probe of which has been taken over by the CBI.

A team of forensic doctors also arrived at the IAF DRDO guesthouse to examine the details of Saturday's findings from the late actor's flat and the doctors of Cooper hospital where his post-mortem was conducted on June 15. The ED on the other hand is probing into the alleged money laundering that the actor's father has accused Rhea of. The family alleged that at least ₹15 crore was fraudulently transferred from his bank account. The ED is investigating the companies that were floated with the actor, Rhea and her brother Showik being appointed directors.

"Others will be questioned in connection with the incident soon after the spot probe gathers requisite clarity," said an officer privy to the probe.

The investigators also communicated with the

Mass desertion of Congress by its workers in Gwalior-Chambal region of Madhya Pradesh, triggered by senior BJP leader Jyotiraditya Scindia, who severed ties with the Congress in March, has dealt a big jolt to the party ahead of by-elections to 27 Assembly constituencies in the state, scheduled to be held by September-end.

Around 20,000 Scindia loyalists have resigned

from the party and joined BJP during the three-day membership drive launched by the saffron party in Gwalior-Chambal on Saturday. At least 35,000 from the Congress cadre in the region were expected to join BJP during the membership drive, BJP spokesman Rajneesh Agrawal said and added that the response has been god from even non-Congress people.

The membership drive was launched in Gwalior in the presence of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh

Chouhan, state BJP president V.D. Sharma, BJP national vice-president Prabhat Jha and Scindia.

"By the end of the drive's second day, as many as 38,843 people hailing from 14 of 18 Assembly constituencies in the have joined BJP," a press release issued by the party BJP here said.

Meanwhile, the Congress launched a rally on Sunday and called the deserters as "gaddars".

Chouhan, however, said it was the Congress that failed to fulfill its promises

and this gave birth to a revolt and unseated the Kamal Nath government.

"Should Motilal Nehru and Netaji Subhash Bose also be termed as traitors for leaving the Congress owing to differences of opinion with the party leadership," he asked the Congress leadership.

Congress MLA V.D. Satheshan will move the motion. The Opposition has been attacking the government on various issues, including the gold smuggling case and housing project for the poor. — PTI

20K Scindia workers from Gwalior, Chambal quit Congress, join BJP

RABINDRA NATH CHOWDHURY | DC Bhopal, AUG. 23

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1-DAY SESSION FOR KERALA TO BE STORMY

Thiruvananthapuram, Aug. 23: The Kerala Assembly, which will convene for a day on Monday, is expected to be stormy. The Opposition Congress-led UDF will move a no-confidence motion against the LDF government, alleging graft charges.

Congress MLA V.D. Satheshan will move the motion. The Opposition has been attacking the government on various issues, including the gold smuggling case and housing project for the poor.

MEDICAL CARE NBE says new courses to provide manpower for district hospitals

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 23

The National Board of Examinations (NBE), an autonomous body under the Union health ministry, has launched post-MBBS two-year diploma courses in eight specialities.

The Medical Council of India (MCI) had converted its ongoing diploma courses into degree courses in 2019 to overcome the shortfall of teaching faculty in the country.

To fill the void created by the discontinuation of MCI diploma courses, the health ministry had asked NBE to look into the possibility of launching the diploma courses under its

egis. The NBE governing body under the chairmanship of Dr Abhijit Sheth and executive director Prof Pawanendra Lal took up the challenge of reviving the diploma courses in the country.

During the Covid-19 pandemic the weakness and shortcomings of the primary and the secondary healthcare delivery system were obvious thereby putting an extra burden on the tertiary care health centres with medical colleges being converted into dedicated Covid Care/Treatment centres.

It was, therefore, imperative to augment the manpower of the hospitals catering to the population in rural, semi urban

areas and tier-II & III cities.

The NBE

IN BRIEF

Navalny visited by wife, aide

Berlin: Alexi Navalny's wife and a top aide visited him Sunday in a Berlin hospital where the comatose Russian dissident is being treated by German doctors after a suspected poisoning. Navalny was flown to Germany on Saturday from Siberia after doctors determined he was stable enough to be brought to the capital's Charité hospital for treatment. After his arrival, hospital spokeswoman Manuela Zingl said the 44-year-old would be undergoing extensive diagnostic tests and that doctors wouldn't comment on his illness or treatment until they were able to evaluate the results. On Sunday, Navalny's wife, Yulia Navalnaya, and aide Leonid Volkov visited the Russian opposition leader in the hospital, making no comments to reporters. Navalny was admitted to an intensive care unit in the Siberian city of Omsk on Thursday.

Bomb kills 7 in Afghanistan

Kabul: A roadside bombing on Sunday in eastern Afghanistan killed seven civilians, a provincial official said, the latest in relentless deadly violence in the country amid new uncertainties over the start of talks between the Taliban and the Kabul government. No one immediately claimed responsibility for the bombing in Ghazni province's Jaghato district. Three women, two children and two men died when their vehicle struck the roadside bomb, said Wahidullah Jumazada, a spokesman for the provincial governor. Afghan civilians continue to bear the brunt of the war across their country despite efforts to launch peace talks and find a road map for post-war Afghanistan. According to a United Nations report released in July, 1,282 people were killed in violence in the first six months of 2020 and hundreds were wounded. Women and children continue to be affected by the armed conflict.

13 suffocate in Peru party

Lima: At least 13 people suffocated in a crush during a raid on a nightclub in Peru's capital where a party was being held despite a Coronavirus ban on such gatherings, police said. Latin America has been badly hit by the pandemic, and this month Peru reimposed stricter restrictions on movement. The illegal birthday party on Saturday was organised on social media and drew a crowd of around 120 at the Thomas Restobar, the interior ministry said in a statement confirming the 13 deaths. "Faced with the police operation, which did not use any type of weapon or tear gas, those attending the party tried to escape through the single exit, trampling each other and getting trapped in the stairway," the ministry said. Some who were at the party and others living near the nightclub in Lima's Los Olivos district disputed the ministry's version. "It appears that police entered and threw tear gas canisters at them, and boxed them in," a local said.

MEMORIAL: U.S. ENVOY JOINS TAIWAN PREZ

Kinmen (Taiwan), Aug. 23: The US envoy to Taiwan joined President Tsai Ing-wen at a military memorial service Sunday in a fresh show of warming relations that threatened to add to irritants in Washington's relations with Beijing. Neither the director of the American Institute in Taiwan, William Brent Christensen, nor Tsai spoke at the annual event for soldiers killed by Chinese bombing in 1958 on Kinmen, a Taiwanese-controlled island near the mainland coast.

Attenders, wearing masks as a precaution against the Coronavirus, observed one minute of silence. Military personnel lit incense at soldiers' graves. Washington has no official relations with Taiwan, which split with the Communist-ruled mainland in 1949 following a civil war. The Trump administration has made gestures toward Taiwan as relations with Beijing soured.

This month, Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar became the highest-ranking US official to visit, prompting a Chinese protest. Despite that lack of official ties, the United States is Taiwan's most important ally and weapons supplier. The AIT is a non-profit corporation instead of an embassy.

Protests rage on in Belarus

Protesters unveil historical flag of Belarus as thousands of people gather for a protest at the Independence square in Minsk, Belarus, on Sunday. More than 100,000 protesters demanding the resignation of authoritarian president Alexander Lukashenko rallied in a vast square in the capital, keeping up the massive outburst of dissent that has shaken the country since a disputed presidential election two weeks ago. Dozens of police prisoner transport vehicles were parked on the fringes, but police made no immediate efforts to break up the gathering. Earlier this month, some 7,000 people were arrested, many of them beaten with clubs or wounded by rubber bullets, in the protests after the August 9 election that officials say handed Lukashenko a sixth term in office. — AP

Report: Trump's sister calls him 'cruel', 'liar' in secret recordings**NaMo in Don campaign ad for Indo-Americans**

Washington, Aug. 23: President Donald Trump's older sister, a former federal judge, is heard sharply criticising her brother in a series of recordings released Saturday, at one point saying of the president: "He has no principles." Maryanne Trump Barry was secretly recorded by her niece, Mary Trump, who recently released a book denouncing the president, "Too Much and Never Enough: How My Family Created the World's Most Dangerous Man."

Mary Trump said Saturday she made the recordings in 2018 and 2019. In one recording, Barry, 83, says she had heard a 2018 interview with her brother on Fox News in which he suggested that he would put her on the border to oversee cases of immigrant children separated from their parents. "His base, I mean my God, if you were a religious person, you want to help people. Not do this," Barry says. At another point she says: "His goddamned tweet and lying, oh my God." She adds: "I'm talking too freely, but you know. The change of stories. The lack of preparation. The lying. Holy shit." Barry can also be heard saying that she guesses that her brother has never read her opinions on immigration cases. "What has he read?" Mary Trump asks her aunt. Barry responds: "No. He doesn't read." The recordings were first reported by The Washington Post. The Associated Press then obtained the recordings. The recordings came to light just a day after the late Robert Trump, brother to Maryanne and the president, was memorialised in a service at the White House. Later, the president was dismissive of the recordings. "Every day it's something else, who cares. I miss my brother, and I'll continue to work hard for the American people," Trump said in a statement. — AP

Daniels' legal fees: Prez to pay \$44K

Los Angeles, Aug. 23: A California court ordered President Donald Trump this week to pay \$44,100 in attorney fees to porn actress Stormy Daniels to reimburse Cohen for the money paid to Daniels. Daniels' suit over the non-disclosure agreement was dismissed before going to trial or a settlement because the parties were no longer quiet. Trump's lawyers said Daniels didn't win the case and therefore wasn't entitled to lawyer fees, but Judge Robert Broadbelt III disagreed in his ruling Monday, posted online by Daniels' lawyers.

Trump's lawyers also argued Daniels didn't prove the president was a part of the non-disclosure agreement which was made under the name "David Dennison," but Broadbelt wrote there was a large amount of evidence showing Cohen chose Dennison as a pseudonym for Trump.

After her lawyer announced the decision, Daniels wrote on Twitter: "Yup. Another win." But they haven't all been wins for Daniels.

IN BRIEF

Four killed in Turkey flooding

Ankara: Four people have died in floods caused by heavy rain along Turkey's Black Sea coastline, the interior minister said Sunday. A further 11 people were missing after flooding around the mountain town of Dereli in Giresun province. "So far, 127 of our citizens have been rescued in search and rescue (efforts)," Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu said. One of the dead was a police officer whose vehicle was swept away by the floods. Television footage showed vehicles and debris being carried by floodwater along the main road of Dereli.

Port explosion: 2 bodies found

Corpus Christi: The bodies of two missing crew members of a dredging boat were found Saturday following an explosion a day earlier in the Port of Corpus Christi in Texas, according to the US Coast Guard. Two other crew members of the dredging vessel Waymon L Boyd remain missing, the Coast Guard said in a news release. A Coast Guard helicopter and boats were searching for the missing crew members. The explosion happened at about 8 a.m. Friday when the dredging vessel struck a submerged pipeline, Coast Guard Lt. Marina Lawrence said. The Port of Corpus Christi has said it was a natural gas pipeline. "Our thoughts and prayers go out to the impacted crewmen and their families," Sean Strawbridge, CEO, Port of Corpus Christi, said.

Pipe ruptures: 2K Brazilians flee

Brasilia: About 2,000 people in northeastern Brazil were living away from their homes Saturday after a pipe in a water diversion project ruptured, damaging a dam and flooding the project's power plant, authorities said. Rogério Marinho, minister of regional development, said that the people were told to leave home as a precaution late Friday afternoon after the concrete conduit broke open in the city of Jati, in Ceará state. He said water shooting from the ruptured conduit damaged about 40 metres (130 feet) of a 140-metre (460-foot) wall of the dam holding the reservoir fed by the pipeline. Workers needed about 4 1/2 hours to contain the spill, he said.

2 tropical storms heading for US Gulf Coast

San Juan, Aug. 23: Two tropical storms advanced across the Caribbean on Saturday night as potentially historic threats to the US Gulf Coast, one dumping rain on Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands while the other was pushing through the gap between Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula and Cuba.



A pickup truck drives on a road as Tropical Storm Laura hits Guayama, Puerto Rico on Saturday. — AFP

Tropical Storms Laura and Marco were both projected to approach Louisiana at or close to hurricane force just two days apart next week. A hurricane watch was issued for the New Orleans metro area, which was pummeled by Hurricane Katrina in August 2005.

Two hurricanes have never appeared in the Gulf of Mexico at the same time, according to records going back to at least 1900,

said Colorado State University hurricane researcher Phil Klotzbach. The last time two tropical storms were in the Gulf together was in 1959, he said. The last time two storms made landfall in the United States within 24 hours of each other was in 1933, Klotzbach said. The projected tracks from the US National Hurricane Center on Saturday afternoon pointed to both storms being together in

the Gulf on Monday, with Marco hitting Louisiana and Laura making landfall in the same general area Wednesday. But large uncertainties remain for that time span, and forecasts have varied greatly so far for the two storms.

"We are in unprecedented times," Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves said at a news conference Saturday as he declared a state of emergency. "We are dealing with not only two potential storms in the next few hours, we are also dealing with Covid-19."

He urged residents to prepare for the storms and, if possible, find places to evacuate that are not public shelters. A hurricane watch was issued for Intracoastal City, Louisiana, eastward to the Mississippi-Alabama border.

People in Louisiana headed to stores to stock up on food, water and other supplies. Raymond Monday of Gretna, though, had only a generator on his cart at Sam's Club. "We've got a freezer full of food" at home, along with large containers of water, he said.

Laura flung rain across Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands on Saturday and was expected to drench the Dominican Republic, Haiti and parts of Cuba through Sunday on its westward course.

Puerto Rico Gov. Wanda Vázquez declared a state of emergency and warned that flooding could be worse than what Tropical Storm Isaías unleashed three weeks ago because the ground is now saturated. The storm knocked down trees in the island's

southern region, and left more than 200,000 clients without power and more than 10,000 without water across the US territory. "No one should be out on the streets," she said.

Officials said they were most concerned about the thousands of people in Puerto Rico who still have been living under blue tarps since 2017's Hurricane Maria and the hundreds of families living along the island's southern coast in homes damaged by a string of strong earthquakes this year.

The storm was centered about 85 miles east-southeast of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, on Saturday night, with maximum sustained winds of 50 mph. It was moving west at 18 mph. As the storm approached

Hispaniola, crews in the Dominican Republic began evacuating dozens of families in flood-prone areas. Marco, meanwhile, was strengthening while centered about 75 miles (120 kilometers) west-northwest of Cuba's western tip, headed to the north-northwest at 13 mph (20 kph). It had maximum sustained winds of 65 mph (100 kph) and was expected to become a hurricane later Saturday. Carlos Joaquín González, governor of Mexico's Quintana Roo state, celebrated that Marco's changed trajectory spared his state's beaches, including those in Cancún, the top tourist destination.

The National Hurricane Center said it expected the storms to stay far enough apart to prevent direct interaction. — AP

Unprecedented ice loss in Greenland

Nuuk, Aug. 23: A new analysis says that the scale of the melt was "unprecedented" in records dating back to 1948. High pressure systems that became blocked over Greenland last summer were the immediate cause of the huge losses.

But the authors say ongoing emissions of carbon are pushing Greenland into an era of more extreme melting.

Over the past 30 years, Greenland's contribution to global sea levels has grown significantly as ice losses have increased.

A major international report on Greenland released last December concluded that it was losing ice seven times faster than it was during the 1990s. Today's new study shows that trend is continuing. Using data from the Grace and Grace-FO satellites, as well as climate models, the authors conclude that across the full year Greenland lost 532 gigatonnes of ice — a significant increase on 2012.

"It's expected that something like the 2019 or 2012 years will be repeated. And we don't exactly know how the ice behaves in terms of feedback mechanisms in this vigorous range of melting." There could be... hidden feedbacks that we are not aware about or that are maybe not perfectly described in the models right now. That could lead to some surprises."

According to a calculation by Danish climate scientist Martin Stendel, the 2019 losses would be enough to cover the entire

UK with around 2.5 metres of melt water. Both last year and 2012 were marked by "blocking" events, the researchers say, where disturbances in the jet stream saw high pressure systems become stuck over Greenland, resulting in enhanced melting. "We seem to have entered a realm of more and more extreme melt in Greenland," said lead author Dr. Ingo Sasgen, from the Alfred Wegener Institute in Bremerhaven, Germany.

"It's expected that something like the 2019 or 2012 years will be repeated. And we don't exactly know how the ice behaves in terms of feedback mechanisms in this vigorous range of melting." There could be... hidden feedbacks that we are not aware about or that are maybe not perfectly described in the models right now. That could lead to some surprises."

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Wildfires burn 1 mn acres in California in just a week

Weather change expected that could result in more lightning strikes



Flames from the LNU Lightning Complex fires jump on Interstate 80 in Vacaville, California. The highway was closed in both directions shortly afterward. Fire crews across the region scrambled to contain dozens of wildfires sparked by lightning strikes as a statewide heat wave continues. — AP

Changing weather prompts fear of more fires in Calif.

San Francisco, Aug. 23: An unwelcome change in the weather, with higher winds, temperatures and lightning that threatens to spark new wildfires was coming Sunday to parched Northern California, where firefighters have for nearly a week battled three huge "complexes" of fires that have destroyed hundreds of homes and forced tens of thousands

to Cal Fire.

The National Weather Service issued a red flag warning of high fire danger across the Bay Area and along the Central Coast, beginning from Sunday morning to Monday afternoon.

The worst is not behind us.

We are in a battle rhythm.

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) Chief Thom Porter tweeted.

Since thousands of lightning strikes began on Aug. 15, the state reported 585 wildfires that have burned nearly a million acres, or 1,562 square miles (4,046 square kilometres), according to Cal Fire.

Many were small and remote.

The bulk of damage was from three fire complexes that were ravaging forest and rural areas in and around the San Francisco Bay Area.

They have burned 1,045 square miles (2,700 square kilometres).

The fires have killed five people, torched nearly 700 homes and other structures and forced tens of thousands from their houses.

Most of the damage was

caused by three clusters of fire "complexes" that were

ravaging forest and rural

areas in and around the San Francisco Bay Area. They have burned 1,120 square miles (2,900 square kilometres). Among the casualties were ancient redwood trees at California's oldest state park, Big Basin Redwoods, plus the park's headquarters and campgrounds.

Smoke from the fires

Made the region's air quality dangerous, forcing people to stay inside. Overall, the fires have killed five people, torched nearly 700 homes and other structures and forced tens of thousands from their houses.

"Tuesday night when I went to bed I had a beautiful home on a beautiful ranch," said 81-year-old Hank Hanson of Vacaville. "By Wednesday night, I have nothing but a bunch of ashes."

The storms predicted for

Sunday were expected to

aid those efforts by changing the direction of the wind.

— AP

FLAMES RIP THROUGH U.S. WAREHOUSE

Philadelphia, Aug. 23: Massive flames ripped through a large warehouse early Sunday morning in Philadelphia. More than 200 firefighters were battling the flames, including some on ladder trucks, news outlets reported. There was no immediate cause of the fire. No injuries were reported. Images from the scene showed flames shooting into the sky with large plumes of smoke wafting above.

The fire erupted around 2 a.m., news outlets reported. — AP

GREECE'S MANI PENINSULA: FIRE BURNS ON DAY 2

Athens, Aug. 23: The battle against a wildfire on Greece's southern Mani peninsula continued into a second day Sunday, the fire department said, with 150 firefighters deployed and several villages evacuated. While the blaze could not yet be put out, a fire department spokesman said the situation had "improved" as the fire had been contained to "previously burned areas." Almost 50 fire engines and 10 aircraft were supporting firefighters, while the Greek national observatory said smoke from the fire — believed to have burned through 4,000 acres of forest and agricultural land — was visible from space.

Five villages were evacuated as a precaution on Saturday, but inhabited areas are safe from danger. The fire department could not confirm reports from state broadcaster ERT that two firemen had been injured in the operation. — AFP



Mount Sinabung spews volcanic materials during an eruption, in Karo, Indonesia, on Sunday. Sinabung is among more than 120 active volcanoes in Indonesia, which is prone to seismic upheaval due to its location on the Pacific "Ring of Fire," an arc of volcanoes and fault lines encircling the Pacific Basin.

— AP

Indonesia Sinabung volcano spews new burst of hot ash

Medan (Indonesia), Aug. 23: A rumbling volcano in western Indonesia on Sunday unleashed an avalanche of scorching clouds down its slopes. Authorities are closely monitoring Mount Sinabung on Sumatra, one of Indonesia's main islands, after sensors picked up increasing activity in the past weeks. The volcano in North Sumatra province was shooting smoke and ash more than 1,000 meters (3,280 feet) into the air on Sunday morning, and hot ash clouds travelled 1 kilometer (0.6 mile) southeast, Indonesia's Volcanology and Geological Hazard Mitigation Center said. Villagers were advised to stay 5 kilometers (3.1 miles) from the crater's mouth and should be aware of the peril of lava, the agency said.

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by the ash so far, the Transport Ministry said. There were no casualties from the eruption, said Arman Putra, an official at the

Sinabung monitoring post. He said villages outside the red zone were not in immediate danger.

Some 30,000 people have been forced to leave homes around Sinabung in the past few years. The 2,600-metre (8,530-foot) Sinabung was dormant for four centuries before exploding in 2010, killing two people.

Another eruption in 2014 killed 17 people, while seven died in a 2016 eruption. The volcano, one of two currently erupting in Indonesia, has sporadically come to life since then.

Sinabung is among more than 120 active volcanoes in Indonesia, which is prone to seismic upheaval due to its location on the Pacific "Ring of Fire," an arc of volcanoes and fault lines encircling the Pacific Basin.

When he closes his eyes at night, Hank Hanson hears sirens in his dreams — a byproduct of living nearly 30 years in the wildfire-prone wilderness of Northern California between San Francisco and Sacramento. But about 1 a.m. Wednesday, Hanson knew he wasn't dreaming when he looked to the hills above his home.

The ridge line, where he and his wife in daylight tracked the sun's shifting seasonal paths, was lit up as if someone had strung lights across it and plugged it in. "It started pouring it up like a waterfall," Hanson, 81, said. The fire was one of

the more than 500 wildfires ignited across California this week from what state firefighting officials are calling a "lightning siege" — summer thunderstorms that produce little or no rain but have prompted nearly 12,000 lightning strikes across sun-scorched terrain.

More than 13,700 firefighters are battling the blazes, the most severe of which are focused in Northern California west of the state capital in Sacramento and east of the San Francisco Bay. The extraordinary reach of the flames has pushed firefighting resources to the point "we have not seen in recent history," said Shana Jones, chief of the Sonoma-Lake-Napa unit of the state Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

With firefighting crews stretched thin, there was no evacuation warning for Hanson and his neighbours. Luckily, Hanson was awake because his electricity was out and the stifling 95-degree (35C) temperature prevented him from sleeping. He quickly woke up his wife, and the two raced in their diesel truck down the road. The air rang with car horns as people desperately tried to wake up their neighbours.

Hanson and his wife made it to a hotel room in the nearby community of Fairfield, grateful they were alive.

They found out later that their house was destroyed by the fire. The house was really two houses. The first was a small redwood home originally built in Vacaville in the 1930s but later moved to the property. Hanson, who owned a business that made patio enclosures, bought the property in 1974.

He spent weekends there for the next 17 years, planting walnut, peach, fig and eucalyptus trees. In 1991, he completed a 3,000-square-foot (279-square-metre) addition to that house.

— AP

California 'dream house' in ashes

Vacaville (US), Aug. 23:

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— AP

quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	38,434.72
Nifty 50	11,371.60
S&P 500*	3,397.16
Dollar (\$)	74.83
Pound Sterling (\$)	98.77
Euro (\$)	88.45
Gold (10gm)* (\$)	52,990▼ 94
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	44.35
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.140
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.636
* As of Friday/Saturday	

SBI, PNB, BoB may go for share sale this fiscal

Five large banks, including SBI, PNB, BoB and UBI, are likely to sell shares to institutional investors in the second half of this fiscal as they look to shore up their capital base. QIP would be the preferred way and the banks are likely to take a call on this with their second quarter results, merchant bankers said. The banks would get a better picture about their NPAs, one-time loan restructuring and consequent ratings by end-October.

FPIs invest over ₹40,200 crore in equities in Aug.



Overseas investors have put in Rs 41,330 crore in Indian markets on a net basis in August. According to the depositories data, foreign portfolio investors (FPI) pumped in Rs 40,226 crore into equities and Rs 1,068 crore in the debt segment during August 3-21. Prior to this, FPIs were net buyers for two consecutive months. They invested Rs 3,301 crore in July and Rs 24,053 crore in June on a net basis.

Balmer Lawrie to close down packaging unit

Diversified PSU Balmer Lawrie and Company Ltd will be closing down its industrial packaging unit in Kolkata, which was making losses for years from low demand, from September 1. All the 40 permanent employees of the unit opted for a separation scheme, Balmer Lawrie CMD Prabal Basu said. The demand for industrial barrels, the main product of the unit, was low and it could not be revived, Basu said. Its main clients were PSUs.

Diageo sold off India wine business at a loss

World's leading spirits maker Diageo incurred a loss of 2 million pounds on sale of its Indian wine business last year. Diageo-owned United Spirits Ltd had sold its entire stake in Four Seasons Wines as well as associated brands to Grover Zampa Vineyards and Quintela Assets for Rs 31.86 crore. "The disposal of the Indian wine business has resulted in an exceptional loss of 2 million pounds," Diageo said in its annual report.

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No major cut in employee expenses Blue chips keep tight leash on spend in Q1

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, AUG. 23



employee benefit expenses were down by less than Rs 100 crore. The same was a tad higher for Tata Consultancy Services (Rs 42 crore), HDFC (Rs 6.48 crore), ITC (Rs 25.88 crore) while Bharti Airtel's employee expenses were higher by Rs 125 crore and Sun Pharma's by Rs 107.15 crore.

Bharti Airtel announced a one-time bonus for all its employees as a token of appreciation for helping the company navigate in these turbulent times. Other operational expenses were down significantly for State Bank of India (by Rs 6,816.17 crore), ICICI Bank (Rs 6,179.24 crore), Tata Steel (Rs 3,800.98 crore), Maruti Suzuki (Rs 1,750.5 crore), ITC (Rs 1,378.4 crore) and

Sun Pharma (Rs 630.9 crore).

For Hero MotoCorp other expenses were down by Rs 483.35 crore.

For Hindustan Unilever advertising and promotion expenses were down by Rs 3,538 crore, for Bharti Airtel by Rs 205.4 crore, for Titan Company by Rs 76 crore.

For software major Infosys travel expenses were down by Rs 551 crore to just Rs 116 crore compared to Rs 667 crore during the previous quarter.

For bulk goods mover Ultratech Cement freight and forwarding expenses were lower by Rs 1,072.72 crore at Rs 1,605.85 crore compared to Rs 2,678.57 crore in the previous quarter.

RINL, Posco to form jt. group to speed up Vizag project

New Delhi, Aug. 23: The Ministry of Steel has asked RINL and South Korean player Posco to form a joint working group to oversee their plans of setting a green-field project in Andhra Pradesh.

The South Korean steel major and state-owned RINL have been in talks for quite some time over their plans to set up a joint venture (JV) for manufacturing value-added special grade of steel.

An MoU between the two players for setting up the plant was signed towards the end of last year, an official said, adding the group would now work on the aspects of the "final agreement as to what will be the share of the players (in the JV), amount of the investment, among others."

In July 2019, senior Posco officials had met the then steel secretary Binoy Kumar and submitted an investment proposal.

Posco's interest in India is not new. Earlier, the company had proposed to set up a 12 MTPA plant at Jagatsinghpur in Odisha at an estimated cost of Rs 52,000 crore.

RINL's 7.3 million tonnes plant in Visakhapatnam is a shore-based integrated steel plant. It has a land of over 22,000 acre of its own and enjoys access to Gangavaram Port. —PTI

Second consolidation wave starts in insurance sector

FALAKNAAZ SYED
MUMBAI, AUG. 23



BIRLA SUN LIFE OPEN TO BUYOUT

New Delhi, Aug. 23: Aditya Birla Sun Life Insurance on Sunday said it is open to opportunities for consolidation as the sector is expected to undergo a churn from Covid-19 related business disruptions.

In an e-mail interview, the firm's MD & CEO Kamlesh Rao said data suggests that in times of socio-economic crisis like this, around 30-35 per cent companies find it difficult to survive, while close to 15-20 per cent firms outshine their peers. "We hope to be in the list of 15-20 per cent companies that outshine their peers. If there are opportunities of consolidation in the market which are worth evaluating, we will explore the same," he said.

Shareholders of Bharti Axa will receive two shares of ICICI Lombard for every 115 shares of Bharti Axa, as per the share exchange ratio recommended by independent valuers.

The companies did not disclose the deal value.

"There is a second round of consolidation

transactions in the general insurance space and some amount of deals in the life insurance space also. Insurers occupying the lower position say 15th to 24th position are eager to consolidate. The medium-sized players with 3 to 5 per cent market share are looking at an IPO," said an insurance expert.

While the sector was opened to private players more than 20 years ago, barring the top five, most players are still struggling to remain afloat with negligible market share, high operating expenses and losses. Sample this, the top five private life insurers today constitute 65 per cent of the private insurance market, while the remaining 19 private insurers have a combined market share of 35 per cent. The Indian insurers offer a return on equity (RoE) of 10-20 per cent compared to their Asian counterparts that offer RoE of 40-60 per cent.

There are now 24 life insurers, 27 non-life insurers and seven standalone health insurers operating in the market. However, despite investing a significant amount of capital in excess of Rs 36,000 crore, many life insurers continue to face headwinds on their future growth prospects and profitability.

In June this year, IDBI Bank said it would offload 27 per cent in IDBI Federal Life Insurance at a combined value of Rs 595 crore.

CHINA SAYS ECONOMY CAN GROW IF JOBS TARGET MET

Aug. 23: China's economy can grow this year if the nation achieves its target of adding 9 million jobs, premier Li Keqiang said in a visit to the western city of Chongqing.

Li called on the nation to step up its efforts and prepare for uncertainties after the economy achieved positive results in recent months, according to a statement posted on the government website on Sunday. China also estimates that smaller companies and business operators could survive this year from the virus outbreak. —Bloomberg

Miner finds 442-carat diamond worth \$18m



THOMAS BIESHEUVEL
AUG. 23

A small diamond miner that has dug some of the world's most valuable gems from a mountainous African kingdom has found another huge stone.

Gem Diamonds Ltd said it had an unearthed a 442-carat diamond at its Letseng mine in Lesotho. While it's hard to establish a price for such stones before cutters can evaluate them, it could sell for as much as \$18 million, Edward Sterck, analyst at BMO Capital Markets, wrote in a note.

Given the rarity of such large stones, demand for big diamonds has traditionally been resilient.

The Letseng mine is famous for the size and quality of the diamonds it produces and has the highest average selling price in the world. Two years ago Gem Diamonds found a 910-carat stone, the size of two golf balls, that sold for \$40 million.

The find comes as the global diamond industry has been brought to its knees by the pandemic. Jewellery stores have closed and India's cutting industry, which handles almost all of the world's stones, has come to a halt. The miners that dominate the industry, De Beers and Russian rival Alrosa PJSC, have seen their rough diamond sales collapse.

The recovery of this remarkable 442-carat diamond, one of the world's largest gem quality diamonds to be recovered this year, is further confirmation of the calibre of the Letseng mine and its ability to consistently produce large, high quality diamonds," Clifford Elphick, Gem's chief executive officer, said in the statement.

—Bloomberg

Don't go by green shoots: Subbarao

BIJAY KUMAR SINGH
NEW DELHI, AUG. 23

Calling 'green shoots' of economic revival as a mechanical rebound, former RBI governor D Subbarao says India's short- and medium-term growth prospects to remain grim and the government should not read too much into the economic activity coming back from the depressed base of lockdown.

Before the Covid-19 crisis, the economy was in a slowdown—its real GDP growth had moderated from 7 per cent in 2017-18 to 6.1 per cent in 2018-19 and to 4.2 per cent in 2019-20.

"I don't believe we should read too much into the green shoots that you refer to. What we've been seeing is just a mechanical rebound from the depressed base of the lockdown; it will be misleading to see it as a signal of a durable recovery," Subbarao told PTI in an interview.

He said the 'short-term as well as medium-term prospects (for the economy) continue to be grim'.

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While perhaps logical given open-ended Federal Reserve support, rampant covering depletes at least one source of support for shares—buying by speculators who sold them short. Virtually every

"The pandemic is still spiralling, the number of daily cases is rising and it is spreading to newer regions," he added.

On India's medium-term growth prospect, the former RBI governor said that the economy was in a troubled state when the Covid-19 crisis hit India.

"When the crisis is behind us, and I hope that is soon enough, these problems are going to be much bigger. Fiscal deficit is going to be much higher, the debt burden much larger and the financial sector in a worse shape," he said.

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Online higher education is a \$5-bn opportunity

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, AUG. 23



Online higher education has an opportunity to grow 10-fold by FY25, benefiting from tailwinds caused by Covid-19 and regulatory developments, including the new education policy. The online higher education space can become a \$5 billion market by then, finds RedSeer Consulting.

Post-Covid, Indian institutions will be allowed to offer up to 40 per cent of their coursework online, up from 20 per cent earlier.

Unbundling of courses and democratisation of access will boost demand for online education.

Moreover, the economic uncertainty will increase the need for continuous learning. While several skills will get redundant, high unemployment and an increasing skills gap will bring in a new urgency to the need for continuous learning in order to stay relevant in the job market. Mismatch between industry requirements and education curriculum also

will see online education bridging the gap.

The government has set an ambitious target to double the enrolment in higher education to 50 per cent under the National Education Policy 2020.

The policy aims for 50 per cent Gross Enrolment Ratio, from 26.3, in higher education, taking total enrolments to 92 million by 2035. Online offerings will play a critical role in enabling supply, innovation and democratising access to education.

The overall online higher education market will benefit from the new

reforms, including the increase in public spending. The recent regulatory developments mark a major shift in higher education and will enable accelerated growth in online higher education. The top 100 universities are permitted to offer online degree courses and ed-tech platforms can now partner with universities to offer online degrees against diplomas earlier. Top Indian institutes are encouraged to build/advance their global presence and vice versa. Better exposure to foreign universities will be enabled by integration with online platforms.

"The new education policy is creating a system of knowledge that is well-rounded and versatile. Students who learn under this new pedagogy will be ready to face the challenges presented by an increasingly complex world. Technology will play a very important role in enabling supply, innovation and democratising access to education."

The overall online higher education market will benefit from the new

Road infra will be on par with US, UK in two years: Gadkari

NAMITA TEWARI
NEW DELHI, AUG. 23

Focus on critical infrastructure building through an integrated approach, right from a number of strategic tunnels and bridges to 22 green expressways, is bound to place India in the league of advanced nations like the US, UK and Australia in the coming two years, Union minister Nitin Gadkari has said.

Apart from a number of strategic tunnels and bridges being built across the length and breadth of the country, 22 green expressways are planned to be executed in the next couple of years, the road transport minister said.

He said talks are in advanced stage for building Rs 8,250 crore Chambal Expressway in Madhya Pradesh, a first of its kind in collaboration of the state government.

To take India's infrastructure to the next level it has been decided to work on it in an integrated manner as per Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision. Plans are afoot to tap full potential while building newer highways by laying optic fibre, transmission line and gas pipe lines," Gadkari told PTI in an interview.

The power ministry will come up with plans for transmission line while the IT ministry will give nod for optical fibre cable network, the minister said adding that similarly gas pipeline can be laid along the big roads being built.

SHORT TAKES

Germanpreet to stay at Chennai FC

Chennai: Two-time ISL champion Chennaiyin FC on Sunday announced that Indian midfielder Germanpreet Singh had extended his stay at the club by signing a multi-year contract.

The 24-year old player from Punjab will be featuring for club for a fourth straight season. Having made 36 appearances in all competitions for Chennaiyin FC since joining the team for the 2017-18 ISL season, he has played a crucial role in the midfield in their title-winning run. "I am incredibly proud to continue playing for Chennaiyin FC.

I have witnessed three great years here already, and the journey so far has been amazing with lots of learning and development," Germanpreet was quoted as saying in a press release.

"But I believe the best is ahead of me. And Chennai is my adopted home with CFC and our passionate fans are my family. I view this as a fresh start of an exciting journey, and I promise to give my 200 percent on the pitch and help bring more success to the club," he added. — PTI

Need to plan for big games: Bhutia

New Delhi: Former captain Bhaichung Bhutia says Indian football teams must strive to regularly qualify for the Asian Cup and FIFA youth World Cups if they are to become a force to reckon with in the continent.

Bhutia stressed on the importance of continuously producing quality players for the national team by focussing on the grassroots.

"For the national team, we need to keep producing good quality players. We do have good players at the moment but if we want to compete with the best in Asia, we need to keep producing bigger and better players," Bhutia told AIFF TV.

"Our target for the national teams should be qualifying for the AFC Asian Cup and the FIFA youth World Cups on a regular basis," the former footballer said.

According to him, an increase in the number of matches and exposure tours has helped the Indian football team improve its ranking in recent years. — PTI

Bezzecchi wins maiden race

Spielberg: The red flag was again brought out in Austria, Alex Marquez taking away more valuable lessons from his debut MotoGP season. Repsol Honda Team remained focused on the task at hand as race day preparations began at the Red Bull Ring. Eyes were again on the sky, but it all remained dry for the Styrian Grand Prix despite threatening clouds.

Marco Bezzecchi crossed the line second but was awarded his first Moto2 victory on Sunday after Jorge Martin was docked a place for straying off the track on the last lap.

A red flag during the race meant that Alex Marquez's strong start was only rewarded with a 13th place grid position.

On the restart, Alex was aggressive off the line and found himself in 11th.

From his strong start, the rookie found himself battling with a number of experienced riders around him and holding on to 16th at the finish. This is the first time in his debut season that Alex has failed to score.

LA GALAXY GO PAST ANGELES IN US LEAGUE

Los Angeles: Ethan Zubak scored his first MLS goal and the LA Galaxy beat Los Angeles 2-0 on Saturday in the short — and, ultimately, disappointing — return of 2019 MLS MVP Carlos Vela.

Vela, who did not compete in the MLS Back Tournament due to family reasons, left the game in the 57th minute after suffering a non-contact injury to his left leg.

Zubak, a 21-year-old Los Angeles native, headed home an entry by Julian Araujo in the 26th, and Sebastian Lletget added a goal in the 54th, bouncing a cross by Araujo past goalkeeper Kenneth Vermeer. The Galaxy (1-3-2) snapped a two-game losing streak against LAFC (2-1-3) and improved to 5-2, including playoffs, in the cross-town rivalry known as El Tráfico.

Pity Martinez scored two goals and Atlanta United broke a scoreless drought of more than five months. — AP

LA leave no trail

James, Davis lead Lakers past Portland



LeBron James (in purple) of the Los Angeles Lakers goes for a basket against the Portland Trail Blazers during their NBA first round playoff game in Lake Buena Vista, Florida, on Saturday. Lakers won 116-108. — AP

minutes on the court, connecting on 12 of 14 shots from the field, including two of three from three-point range.

Khris Middleton added 17 points for Milwaukee after he was limited to two in the Bucks' game-two victory, and Brook Lopez chipped in 16.

The Bucks were already up 53-34 when Marvin Williams of the Bucks and Orlando's James Ennis were ejected after a second-quarter scuffle that began when they tangled under the basket.

Ennis then shoved Williams, who pushed

LeBron James finished with 38 points and Anthony Davis scored 23 of his 29 points in the second half as the Lakers grabbed a 2-1 lead over Portland Trail Blazers in their NBA playoffs.

back and grabbed Ennis's jersey before Ennis appeared to swing a fist in a bid to free himself.

The ejections were likely more costly to the already injury-depleted Magic,

and the Bucks closed the half on a 25-9 scoring run.

MIAMI'S HEAT TOO HOT FOR PACERS

Elsewhere in the East, the Miami Heat pushed Indiana to the brink of elimination, notwithstanding a furious Pacers rally for a 124-115 victory.

Jimmy Butler scored 27 points for the Heat. Goran Dragic finished with 24, including five baskets from beyond the arc, and Bam Adebayo had 22 points and 11 rebounds as Miami took a commanding 3-0 series lead.

Miami forced several

turnovers down the stretch on Saturday to prevent Indiana from leveling the score.

The Heat led by 20 in the first half and by as many as 18 in the third quarter, but the Pacers pulled within two points twice in the final period.

But after the Pacers

made it a one-basket game with four minutes remaining, the Heat closed with a 13-6 scoring run to clinch the victory.

Oklahoma City

Thunder's Chris Paul drained a three-pointer as part of a 12-0 run to begin overtime.

— AFP

Physically, I thought I did pretty well. I moved maybe better than expected to.

— ANDY MURRAY
after defeating Frances Tiafoe 7-6 (6), 3-6, 6-1 in his first match since injury

STAN THE MAN CLAIMS PRAGUE CHALLENGER

Paris, Aug. 23: Former US Open champion Stan Wawrinka on Saturday won the second-tier Challenger tournament in Prague, on his return to action after a six-month break because of the Coronavirus pandemic but admitted: "I'm not at my best yet".

Wawrinka, the 2016 US Open winner, has elected to skip this year's Grand Slam in New York citing the "health situation" in the city and instead focus on Roland Garros which starts on September 27.

World number 17 Wawrinka defeated 253rd-ranked Aslan Karatsev of Russia 7-6 (7/2), 6-4 in the Prague final on clay.

The three-time Grand Slam champion was playing in his first event since reaching the quarter-finals at Acapulco in February.

"It was the best match of the week and the level was good. The focus was there, I was serving well and I'm really happy to get the trophy today" said Wawrinka after winning the title.

— AFP

World number 17 Stan Wawrinka defeated 253rd-ranked Aslan Karatsev of Russia 7-6 (7/2), 6-4 in their men's singles clay court title clash at Prague Challenger.



Andy Murray returns to Frances Tiafoe during their men's singles final at the Western & Southern Open at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Centre in New York City on Saturday.

— AFP

Arjuna will motivate: Dutee



Indian sprinter Dutee Chand in this file photo.

NATL AWARD IS A SURPRISE, SAYS GANDHE

Mumbai, Aug. 23: Set to be conferred with the prestigious Dhyan Chand award, former India shuttler and coach Pradeep Gandhe said he never aspired for awards but expressed gratitude that his contribution to the sport has been recognised.

Gandhe served as a former India coach and also was a double-bronze medallist at the 1982 Asian Games in New Delhi. With Leroy D'souza, Gandhe clinched the bronze medal in the doubles category.

"I feel honoured but I think more than it, the award is recognition of my contribution to the sport as a player, coach and later as an administrator," Gandhe, who also served as an office-bearer of Maharashtra Badminton Association and Badminton Association of India, said.

"I never did any work while aspiring for any award, but now there is a sense of gratitude that my work has been recognised by the government," said Gandhe, who is a contemporary of legendary Prakash Padukone, Syed Modi and Partha Ganguly.

— PTI

I feel honoured but I think more than it, the award is recognition of my contribution to the sport as a player, coach and later as an administrator.

— PRADEEP GANDHE
former Indian badminton coach

Tennis stars miss fans in the stands

New York, Aug. 23: For her or against her, former world number one Victoria Azarenka says fans in the stands are a key part of the tennis experience.

"Sometimes you have the whole stadium against you and you kind of feed off of that, as well," she added.

Players are having to adjust, however, as tennis returns amid the Covid-19 pandemic that brought the sport to a halt in March.

"There isn't really an atmosphere, so that's obviously a little bit tricky," former men's number one Andy Murray said after his first-round victory over American Frances Tiafoe.

— AFP

On the ball



Russian sisters Zoya Prikhodko and Taia Prikhodko in action at Academia Sports Village's tennis training camp at Hyderabad Polo and Riding Club complex in Aziz Nagar. The trainees' parents are IT professionals from St Petersburg who are in Hyderabad on deputation.

SHORT TAKES

India beat China in Chess Olympiad

Chennai: R. Praggnanandhaa and Divya Deshmukh starred with crucial wins as India stunned a formidable China 4-2 in the ninth and final round of the Top Division Pool A in the FIDE Online Chess Olympiad on Sunday. India will play the quarterfinals on August 28.

Four draws and two wins on Under-20 boards helped India pull off the victory.

Praggnanandhaa appeared to be on the ropes, but managed to turn the tables on Liu Yan and finished with a perfect 6/6 score. Divya, a former world under-10 and 12 champion, put it across Jiner Zhu to underline her potential. Vedit Gujrathi, the Indian captain, held world No.3 Ding Liren to a creditable draw on the top board while P. Harikrishna also shared honours with Yangyi Yu. Indian ace Koneru Humpy signed peace with the women's world No.1 Yifan Hou as did D. Harika against the current world champ Wenjun Ju.

India claimed the top spot in Pool A with 17 points and became the first team to qualify for the quarterfinals. — PTI

Players demand Ratna for Chand

New Delhi: Former and current hockey players came together to demand Bharat Ratna, the country's highest civilian award, for the legendary Major Dhyan Chand, a week ahead of his 115th birth anniversary.

With National Sports Day approaching, greats such as Gurbum Singh, Harbindeep Singh, Ashok Kumar and current player Yuvraj Walmiki took part in a virtual discussion on Saturday to celebrate the life and career of the iconic player.

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

The discussion was part of a digital campaign which was launched by former India cricket captain Sourav Ganguly, actors Babushaan Mohanty and Rachel White last year to demand 'Bharat Ratna' for Major Dhyan Chand.

"For us Dhyan Chand was God. We were lucky to travel with him to East Africa and Europe for a month-long tour. It is difficult to find such a nice man and a great player. He was the most complete player ever born," said Gurbum Singh. — PTI

Johnson takes five-shot lead

Norton: Dustin Johnson arrived at the TPC Boston golf this week, headed to the practice range and then looked at his swing coach. "He said, 'Bro, what am I supposed to be working on again?'"

Claude Harmon said on Saturday as he watched his pupil set another personal record in The Northern Trust.

Johnson isn't doing much wrong at the moment, a daunting prospect to the guys trying to chase him. His birdie-eagle finish gave Johnson a 7-under 64 and stretched his lead to five shots over Harris English and Scottie Scheffler.

The finish would have come in handy the day before. Johnson was an astounding 11-under par through 11 holes Friday and had the golf world curious if he would go as low as 57 to set the PGA Tour record. Instead, he finished with seven straight pars for a 60, his best ever but not what it could have been. Johnson put that behind him and looked just as good. — AP

304TH-RANKED SOPHIA WINS BRITISH OPEN

Troon, Scotland: The first professional victory of Sophia Popov's career came at a major championship on Sunday when the 304th-ranked German won the Women's British Open golf at Royal Troon. Popov recovered from a bogey on the first hole by making five birdies for a 3-under 68 in the final round, leaving her 7 under par overall and two strokes clear of Jasmine Suwannapura of Thailand (67).

Wiping tears from her eyes, Popov tapped in a bogey putt at the last to complete one of the most unlikely wins in the tournament's history.

She lost her card on the LPGA Tour at the end of last year and only qualified for the British Open via a top-10 finish two weeks ago at the Marathon Classic, which she was playing only because higher-ranked players couldn't attend due to Covid-19 restrictions. This was Popov's just fourth appearance at a major. The winner's cheque of \$6,75,000 is more than six times her entire career earnings before Sunday. — AP

All set for desert safari

Delhi Capitals, SRH last teams to land in UAE for IPL

Dubai, Aug. 23: Wearing masks and face shields, Delhi Capitals and Sunrisers Hyderabad's Indian players and support staff arrived on Sunday in hot and dry Dubai for the upcoming IPL.

Moved out of India due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the 13th edition of the world's biggest T20 league will be played across the three venues of Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Sharjah in the UAE from September 19 to November 10.

The Hyderabad-based franchise landed in the city first, and was soon followed by the team from the Indian capital, which flew into the UAE via Mumbai.

The players will be undergoing a mandatory six-day quarantine which is in line with the Standard Operating Procedure issued by the BCCI.

RT-PCR tests will be performed on everyone on Day 1, 3 and 6 of the quarantine, after which all the players who return negative for all the three tests will be entering the tournament bio-bubble.

Delhi Capitals chief executive officer Dhiraj Malhotra and assistant coach Mohammad Kaif shared their thoughts, having met their players after a long time.

"We are all really excited that cricket is back, and that the team is together again. It is like meeting your own family, meeting your long lost friends. So it is just a really overwhelming phase for all of us," Malhotra was quoted as saying.

Kaif added, "We will be undergoing three more tests, and hopefully everyone's reports will come out negative, and then we can get back on to the field to start practicing."

Both the franchises shared a number of their players' departure and arrival photos.

Posting a touchdown tweet, Sunrisers' Shreerav Goswami wrote, "Just landed in Dubai and been welcomed by heat wave!"

The players will not be



Delhi Capitals captain Shreyas Iyer poses at the team hotel with the Burj Khalifa — Dubai's iconic skyscraper — in the background on Sunday.



Shikhar Dhawan of Delhi Capitals gets himself tested for Coronavirus before his team's departure for the Indian Premier League, in Mumbai on Saturday.

allowed to venture out of their rooms during the six-day isolation period.

All the Indian players from the star-studded Chennai Super Kings, Royal Challengers Bangalore, Kings XI Punjab, Kolkata Knight Riders and Mumbai

Ilanians landed in the UAE on Friday for the world's biggest T20 league. The players were already tested multiple times before departure.

The players and support staff will be tested every fifth day of the tournament. — PTI

Azhar frustrates England on Day 3

Southampton, Aug. 23: Pakistan captain Azhar Ali kept England at bay with an unbeaten 82 in the third Test here on Sunday. At tea on the third day, Pakistan were 158-5 — still a huge 425 runs behind England's mammoth first innings 583-8 declared.

But Azhar, who had only managed 38 runs in three previous innings this series, was in sight of a hundred, having become just the fifth Pakistan batsman to have scored 6,000 Test runs. Together with wicketkeeper Mohammad Rizwan (22 not out) he had shared an unbroken stand of 83 after Pakistan had collapsed to 75-5.

JAMES EYES 600 WICKETS

The duo also halted England great James

Anderson's charge towards becoming the first pacer to take 600 Test wickets. It looked like the 38-year-old was well on his way with superb lunch figures of 4-21 from 11 overs taking him to 597 Test wickets and leaving Pakistan in the dire position of 41-4.

But Pakistan fought back by scoring 117 runs for the loss of just Fawad Alam in Sunday's second session.

Azhar, in his 81st match at this level, joined an elite Pakistani group featuring Younis Khan, Javed Miandad, Inzamam-ul-Haq and Mohammad Yousuf to have reached the milestone of 6,000 Test runs. — AFP

Brief scores (at Tea):
Pakistan 158/5 in 60 overs (Azhar Ali 82 n.o., M. Rizwan 22 n.o., J. Anderson 4/42) vs England.

Spanish club claim record 6th title

Sevilla's Europa affair continues

Cologne (Germany), Aug. 23: Not even the coronavirus could stop Sevilla's love affair with the Europa League.

Never mind that the final was three months late and without fans, the Spanish club secured a record sixth title in the competition on Friday, beating Inter Milan 3-2 in Cologne.

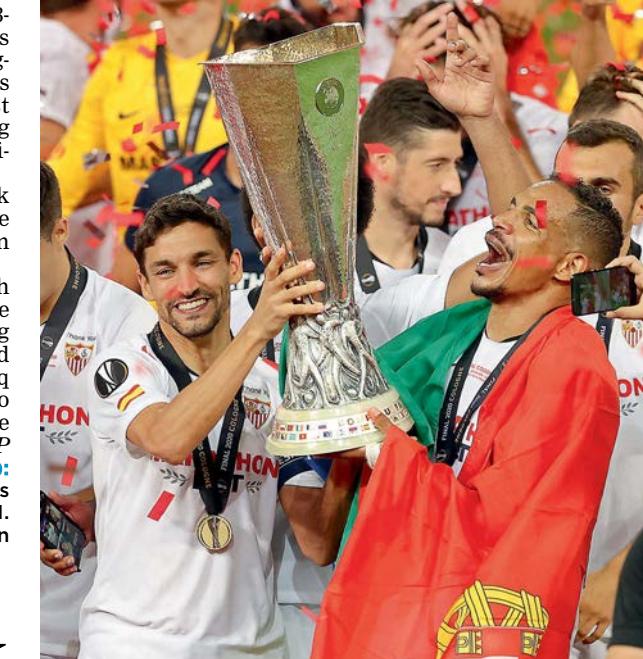
It's a competition made to measure for Sevilla. The club's big enough to have qualified for Europe for the last seven seasons. However, it hasn't come close in that time to breaking Real Madrid and Barcelona's hold on La Liga, let alone challenging for the Champions League.

"It's incredible. We had such tough games, I think, the whole tournament but we played so well as a team, and you could see it during the tournament. We were really a team, like a family," Sevilla forward Luuk de Jong said after scoring with two headers.

"We worked together and it didn't matter who played, who came on the pitch, everyone was working for each other."

Sevilla won't be in next season's Europa League, at least not at first. Their fourth-place finish in Spanish league was good enough to qualify for a Champions League group-stage place, even without the spot on offer for the Europa League winner.

It was the 238th and last Sevilla game for midfielder Ever Banega, who won his third Europa League title and now heads to Saudi Arabia next season. — AP



Sevilla players celebrate with the trophy after defeating Inter Milan 3-2 in their Europa League final in Cologne, Germany, on Friday.

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Editor: Aditya Sinha

Test team under Kohli is best: Sunny

New Delhi, Aug. 23: Legendary batsman Sunil Gavaskar has described the current Indian Test side under Virat Kohli as the best ever, saying that the lethal bowling attack makes it more balanced than the teams of earlier eras. Under Kohli, India reached the top of ICC Test rankings and

the team is currently at number one spot in the World Test Championship standings. The highlight of the team's success is the first Test series win in Australia in 2018-19 tour.

"I believe this team is the best ever Indian Test team in terms of balance, in terms of ability, in

terms of skills, in terms of temperament. Can't think of a better Indian Test team," Gavaskar said.

Gavaskar said what stands out in the current team is the "varied bowling attack" which can win matches on any surface, irrespective of the conditions.

"This team has the attack to win on any surface. It doesn't need any help in conditions... they can win on any surface. Batting-wise there were teams in 1980s that were pretty similar. But they didn't have the bowlers that Virat has," the former captain said.

— PTI

CRICKET CLIPS

India ready to host Eng: Ganguly

India are committed to hosting England in February next year ahead of the 2021 Indian Premier League season, the country's cricket chief Sourav Ganguly said.

According to the International Cricket Council's Future Tours Programme (FTP), India are scheduled to tour Australia in December and host England for their last five world Test championship matches in early 2021.

Ganguly, president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India, said in an email to state associations: "The BCCI and the Indian cricket team will continue to fulfil its FTP commitments."

"The senior Indian men's team will travel to Australia for its series starting in December this year, and will come back to the country for a series against England starting February next year," Ganguly said in the letter.

Kallis, Abbas in ICC Hall of Fame

Legendary South African allrounder Jacques Kallis, Pakistan batting great Zaheer Abbas and Pune-born former Australian captain Lisa Sthalekar were on Sunday inducted into the International Cricket Council's Hall of Fame in a virtual ceremony.

The 44-year-old is Proteas' highest run-getter in Tests and ODIs with 13289 and 11579 runs respectively. Sthalekar is the 27th from Australia and the ninth woman player in the list, which includes five from her country.

Tallawahs go down to Warriors

Andre Russell's quickfire 52 off 37 balls went in vain as Guyana Amazon Warriors defended the lowest ever total in the history of Caribbean Premier League to register a 14-run win over Jamaica Tallawahs.

Brief Scores: St Lucia Zouks 172/6 (A. Fletcher 46, M. Nabi 35 n.o., J. Jaggesar 2/29, S. Tanvir 2/41) bt St Kitts & Nevis Patriots 162/8 (D. Ramdin 46, E. Lewis 29, S. Kuggeleijn 4/33, R. Chase 3/12); Guyana Amazon Warriors 118 (B. King 29, C. Hemraj 2/1, C. Brathwaite 3/14, M. Rahman 3/18, S. Lamichhane 2/8) bt Jamaica Tallawahs 104/7 (A. Russell 52 n.o., C. Green 2/10).

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