THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

VISAKHAPATNAM | TUESDAY | 18 AUGUST 2020



Forecast: Mist. Max/Min temp.

COVID-19 **C** UNT

CASES DEATHS (+897)(+54,348)51,922 27,00,931

covid19india.org STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+894)(+10)TS: 92,255 703 (+6,780)(+82)

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

AP: 2,96,609



worldometers.info/ coronavirus

2,732

Sarvari; Dakshinayana Tithi: Shravana Bahula Chaturdasi **Star:** Ashlesha till 4.06 am (Wednesday) Varjyam: 5.39 pm to 7.09 pm Durmuhurtam: 8.34 am to 9.24 am; 11.11 pm to 11.57 pm Rahukalam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm **HIJRI CALENDAR** Zulhijja 27,1441 AH

PRAYERS Fajar: 5.50 am **Zohar:** 1.30 pm Asar: 4.45 pm Maghrib: 6.15 pm Isha: 8.15 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.21 PM SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.40 AM MOONRISE TOMORROW 4.36 AM **MOONSET TODAY 5.59 PM**



No secrets... my life is an open Facebook!

Drushyam fame Nishikant dead

IN BRIEF

Hyderabad: Bollywood director Nishikant Kamat, who was hospitalised in a critical condition at Hyderabad a couple of weeks ago, passed away on Monday evening. The 50year-old had been on ventilator support and was fighting for his life during the past few days. He was diag-

nosed with chronic liver disease and secondary infections. In a statement, AIG Hospitals, Hyderabad, said Kamat was admitted to AIG on July 31 with complaints of fever and excessive

fatigue. Diagnosis revealed that he was suffering from liver cirrhosis for the past two years. Kamat made his directorial debut with Marathi film Dombivali Fast

(2005). The movie won the National Film Award for Best Feature Film in Marathi. Kamat later directed blockbuster Marathi film Lai Bhaari, starring Riteish Deshmukh. Best-known for directing the Hindi remake of Malayalam hit Drishyam (starring Ajay Devgn and Tabu), Nishikant made his

Bollywood debut with Mumbai Meri Jaan (2008), apart from directing Irrfan Khan in Madaari and John Abraham in Force and Rocky Handsome. Kamat also enacted cameos in films like Rocky

Handsome and Bhavesh *Joshi Superhero.* No sooner the news about Nishikant Kamat's death broke out, condolences started pouring in from Bollywood per-

sonalities.

NATION 4

Sharad Pawar is in home quarantine



WORLD 5

Spotlight on Biden in US convention

SPORTS 8

Wimbledon champ Halep says no to US Open



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Contempt cases on naming CM directs officials to judges: SC to set procedure

PARMOD KUMAR | DC

The Supreme Court on Monday said that it will examine the larger questions involved in contempt cases with respect to allegations of corruption against sitting or former judges and the procedure to be followed in deal-

ing with them. The court passed this order while hearing the 2009 contempt case against advocate Prashant Bhushan who allegedly spoke about judicial "corruption" in an interview to Tehelka magazine.

The court said that the issues involved in the 2009 contempt case against Mr Bhushan had "wider ramification" and the bench, headed by Justice Mishra, spelt out three issues that need to be examined -Whether allegations of corruption against sitting or former judges can be made in public; the circumstances in which such allegations are made and the procedure to be followed in dealing with such

SC REFUSES TO

INTERVENE IN JEE,

NEET SCHEDULE

DC CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI, AUG. 17

THE COURT passed the prder while hearing the 2009 contempt case against advocate Prashant Bhushan who allegedly spoke about judicial "corruption" in an interview

matters. "In case you have any grievance against any judge, what should be the process? In what circumstances can such allega-tions be made? When some matter is subjudice, to what extent can matter be argued through media or another mode?" Justice Mishra said.

'We are not on conviction... We want to hear (the case) because if the question is left, then it will not be better for later on... The issues involved have several ramifications and we would like senior lawyers to address them,' the bench, also comprising Justices B.R. Gavau and Krishna Murari, observed even as senior counsel Rajeev Dhavan wanted to address it on the conviction part of the 2009 contempt case against Mr

After Justice Mishra framed the three questions to be addressed by senior lawyers appearing

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in the matter — Mr Dhavan for Prashant Bhushan, Kapil Sibal for former *Tehelka* editor Tarun Tejpal and Harish Salve as amicus curiae assisting the court — Mr Dhavan told the court that he along with Mr Bhushan had framed five questions which they think should be heard by a five-judge constitution bench.

Justice Mishra permitted Mr Dhavan to circulate the questions amongst all the lawyers appearing in the case. At the outset of the hearing, Mr Dhavan pointed to the opposite positions in the August 14 judgment holding Mr Bhushan guilty of criminal contempt for his two tweets. He said that while its first part holds that the tweets are not contemptu-

ous, it later holds the same tweets to be contemptuous. He said that his client intends to file a plea seeking a review of the order. Naidu writes to

N. VAMSI SRINIVAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 17

The Supreme Court on Monday refused to inter-Accusing the ruling YSR fere with the conduct of Congress-led state governmedical and engineering ment and "private perentrance exams — NEET and JEE — scheduled to take place in September saying that life must go sons" of illegally tapping phones of people from different walks of life, Telugu Desam supremo on and students can't N. Chandrababu Naidu on lose a precious year in the wake of Covid pan-Monday appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to order an inquiry Dismissing a plea by one Sayantan Biswas by the Central agency concerned into the illegal

seeking direction to National Testing Agency In a letter to the Prime (NTA), which conducts Minister, Naidu said that both the NEET and JEE the ruling party in its exams, to postpone them, Justice Arun Mishra, overenthusiasm to retain power at any cost was heading a three-judge dangerously threatening bench, said that there was "absolutely" no and attacking persons or institutions raising their merit in the plea. voice against the "malfunctioning of the govern-

Lawyers,

and social activists have

with the leaders of the

Opposition parties. "It appears that the YSRCP

has now even targeted

"Life cannot be stopped. We have to move ahead with all safeguards and all... Are students ready to waste one whole year? Education should be opened up. Covid may continue for a year more. Are you going to wait another year? Do you know what the loss to the country and peril to the students is?" Justice Arun Mishra said. The court took on record assurance by the NTA that all necessary precautions will be taken in view of Covid-19 pan-demic. The ICAI had on July 13 informed the SC of its decision to scrap the examination for

PM on phone tap hurdles from them," he said. Naidu said some private persons had been resorting to phone tapping using cutting edge

> integrity of the nation. They will not only violate the right to privacy of blackmail of people in

per the Indian Telegraph

journalists countries. In the long run, such nefarious activities would not been spared along result in breakdown of democratic values and freedom of speech leading to jungle raj, Naidu pointjudiciary as it is facing

technologies. If the activity is allowed unchecked, it may even pose a threat to the security and

individuals, but resort to high places, he added. The TD supremo said that telephone tapping as

Act, 1885 (Section 5(2)) and Information Technology Act, 2000 (Section 69) can be done only in the case of threat to national security or in the interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India, threat to friendly relations with foreign

SECOND TMC MLA DIES OF COVID-19, INDIA CASELOAD CROSSES 27 LAKH

DC CORRESPONDENT KOLKATA, AUG. 17

Trinamul Congress has lost its second MLA to Covid-19. The deceased, Samaresh Das, 76, was the three-time legislator of

Egra in East Midnapore. Meanwhile, the overall Covid tally in India rose to 27,00,931 with the addition of 48,031 cases. The toll rose to

51,922 with 782 more

men and a jawan in the trict on Monday.

counterinsur-

Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) after laying siege to a vast area around the scene of shooting killed all the three assailants "in a swift and meticulous" action, the police said adding that one

gency Special Operations Group (SOG) together with the Army's 29 Rashtriya Rifles and der. The rifle snatched

from the slain cop was recovered, the police said. Late on Monday evening, militants attacked a CRPF camp in Nehama of Kulgam district, injuring a ASI S. Sukumar of the 'A' Company of its 18th Battalion, police said.

ensure people's safety

5 bridges submerged in floods: E. Godavari collector

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 17

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has directed collectors of both East and West Godavari districts to take all necessary measures to evacuate rain and flood-affected people to safety and provide them proper accommodation, food and health care, especially in the wake of Coronavirus also prevail-ing in the two districts.

Addressing collectors through video conference from his Camp Office here on Monday, the CM asked them to extend all requisite help to flood victims without hesitating about the costs involved. He wanted personnel from both NDRF and SDRF to be deployed in vulnerable areas to ensure safety of the people.

East Godavari collector Muralidhar Reddy informed the Chief Minister that five bridges have got submerged in flood waters. 161 villages in 13 mandals of the district have been impacted by floods. Most of the inundation has been in island villages. So far, 63 relief camps have been set up in the district to provide succour to the flood-affected people. The

EGcollector informed the CM that they have arranged satellite phones at all necessary places, so that communication is not disrupted during the crisis period. 14 launches and 86 boats have kept ready to mobilise essential commodities to relief camps as well as villages that have got isolated due to floods. He said so far, no loss of life has been reported due to floods.

With regard to precautions against Covid-19, Muralidhar Reddy informed the CM that they are providing face masks and hand sanitisers to people at the relief camps. Medical camps are also



Chhattisgarh's Bilaspur district on Monday. The 43-year-old man was caught in water discharged from the dam and clung to a tree for over 12 hours before he was rescued.

Bhadrachalam crosses 62ft, Godavari set to rise further

by Tuesday night. It could

stabilise for some time and

Wednesday morning onwards. However, as IMD predicts low-area for-mation in Bay of Bengal

and the resultant rainfall

from Wednesday, authori-

ties are keeping their fin-

gers crossed on handling

the flood situation and to avoid any damage to prop-

Godavari river wit-

nessed its worst floods in

1986 where the discharge was estimated at about 35

lakh cusecs. Though the

erties and loss of life.

receding from

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 17

The water levels in Godavari are rising alarmingly and it crossed 18.20 feet at Sir Arthur Cotton Barrage in Dowleswaram with a discharge of 19.69 lakh cusecs of water downstream into the sea Monday 6 pm.

Water resources authorities issued a third flood warning when water level touched 17.75 feet at 3 pm. As the levels at Bhadrachalam crossed 62 feet at 6 pm and continued to rise, the authorities warned of further rise in Godavari

being organised to carry out Covid-19 tests. He asserted that good food is being provided to evac-

West Godavari collector Muthyalu informed the Minister that 30 villages in seven mandals of the dis-

trict have been impacted

by floods in Godavari, All

water resources authorities do not expect a repeat river and up to 21-22 feet of such heavy floods this aged persons and pregnant

> Raiu Chief

women have been evacuated from vulnerable areas to the safety of relief

camps.
NDRF and SDRF have been deployed at three places. Power generators have been kept ready at primary health centres, besides antidotes for snake

The WG collector said they have identified four weak points along the Godavari flood bank at Polavaram and strengthened them by placing sand

lying areas.

CM Jagan asked both the district collectors to avoid any trouble related to distribution of essential commodities to people.

time, they are more con-

cerned about IMD's pre-

diction of further rainfall

With Wednesday being Amavasya, authorities are

also worried with the dis-

charge of water from

Godavari into the sea at its

mouth in places like Anta-

rvedi, Yanam, Kotipalli

and others as the water

level in the sea rises due to

high tides during that

time. The river water may

not go into the sea result-

ing in rise in backwaters causing inundation of low-

Page 2: Tributaries of

Godavari swelling

in the next few days.

3 cops, 1 jawan killed in terrorist attack in J&K

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, AUG. 17

Separatist militants in a sneak attack, the second in the past four days in the Valley, killed three police-Kreeri area of Jammu and Kashmir's Baramulla dis-However, the J&K

of them was Sajad Ahmed

LAND GRABBING CASES FEARED IN VISAKHAPATNAM

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC VISAKHAPATNAM, AUG. 17

Making the port city of Visakhapatnam the executive capital may augur well for people of north coastal Andhra. But this should not be at the cost of people from middle class owning prime lands in the city and its outskirts. During the last five years, Visakhapatnam, being the biggest city in truncated AP, has been drawing the attention of big time realtors. The movement picked up pace when the CM announced three capitals for the state in the Assembly in December.

■ Pg 3: Land-grabbings reported in last 5 months

FARMER TRIES TO **IMMOLATE SELF AT** TAHSILDAR OFFICE

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, AUG. 17

A farmer Polavarapu Nookaraju tried to immolate himself in front of the Tahsildar office in S. Rayavaram in the rural district of Visakhapatnam.

Page 3: Farmer found inherited land deleted

chartered accountants.

MELODY | LINGERS | Music legend was associated with Nizam College for annual Sangeet Samaroh Jasraj dead, Hyd recalls Panditji's musical legacy

SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL I DC HYDERABAD, AUG. 17

Hindustani Legendary classical vocalist Pandit Jasraj who enthralled crores of fans for more than eight decades, is no

more. He breathed his last in New Jersey at 5.15 pm on Monday. He was 90. He is survived by his wife Madura, son Shaarang Dev Pandit and daughter Durga

Jasraj, both musicians. Pandit Jasraj, who belonged to the Mewati gharana and was one of India's greatest music legends, was in the US when the Coronavirus-led lockdown happened and decided to stay back in that country. His last performance was in April this

Panditji has a great connection with Hyderabad, where he used to live with his parents at Phoolbagh near Moazzam Jahi market. His father was a court singer for the Nizam. A street in Hyderabad is named after his father,

Pandit Motiram Marg. Pandit Jasraj had a long association with students of Nizam College. The college offered the old principal lodge building for the purpose of promoting Hindustani music to children.

Pandit Jasraj would hold

Pandit Jasraj as a tribute to his father Pandit Motiram and for Pandit Maniram. Pandit Jasraj's Sangeet Samaroh gave an opportunity to the city music lovers to get first hand exposure to his childhood in Hyderabad, and was a student of Vivek Vardhini High School.

 HE USED to bunk school and spend time to hear songs of Begum Akthar at a small tea hotel where they used to play gramophone records, recalled Mohan Hemmadi, who was associated with Pandit Jasraj since 1960.

world renowned classical artists. On November 30 every year, Pandit Jasraj himself would perform as a tribute to his father and his guru at the Sangeet Pandit Jasraj, who was decorated with Padma Vibhushan, spent his childhood in Hyderabad, and was a student of Vivek Vardhini High School. He used to bunk school

and spend time to hear songs of Begum Akthar at a small tea hotel where they used to play gramophone reco-rds, recalled Mohan Hem-madi, who was associated with Pandit Jasraj since 1960.

According to Prof. Uma Maheshwar Reddy, the then Principal of Nizam College, Pandit Jasraj was offered space in the year 2000 and the annual concerts were held in the premises from 2000 to 2004. Panditji and many artists

ing the event but he would also conduct free classes to beginners of Hindustani classical music. The tombs of Pandit Motiram and Pandit

would not stay there dur-

Hariram are in Amberpet Smashana Vatika, and Pandit Jasraj used to offer his respects whenever he was in Hyderabad. selected by him during the

"Sisters Pragya and Chhavi Sodhani were Sangeet Samaroh. After completing their tenth and eleventh standards, they shifted to Bombay to be under the tutelage of Pandit ji," said Alka Sodhani, their mother, in whose house Panditji would sometimes stay.



IN BRIEF 'AP DEVELOPS 980 SQ KM NEW **GREEN COVER'**

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 17

The minister for energy, forest & environment, science & technology in the state of Andhra Pradesh, Balineni Srinivas Reddy said that AP developed 980 sq km new green cover for the second consecutive year as part of its efforts to enhance green cover in the state.

Γhe minister, took part in an online meeting, along with forest ministers from other states. with the union minister for environment and Prakash Javadekar, on Monday. Mr Reddy, quoting the Indian State of Forest Report, 2019, informed Mr Javedekar that AP stood second in developing green cover in the entire country and claimed credit for

repeating the same.

The minister said that under Jagananna Patchathoranam programme, 20 crore saplings were distributed with the support from 26 departments for plantation and added that with the support from the Centre, they were planning to develop four more Nagara Vanams in addition to the existing 23 in the state. The minister also said that they were taking up plantation along the Godavari

and Krishna rivers.

The minister further said that they were taking all measures to develop green cover to 33 per cent from the present 23 per cent, under directions from the Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy.

GODAVARI DISTS GEAR UP TO HANDLE COVID

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 17

Authorities in Godavari districts are facing a tough challenge to handle Godavari floods and also prevention of spread of Covid-19 especially among evacuees in relief camps.

In East Godavari, the authorities have identified

Rampachodavaram, Chintur, Yetapaka in agency area and Amalapuram in Konaseema area as vulnerable for area as vulnerable for Godavari floods and evacuated the people to relief centres for

The health authorities have swung into action and started conducting medical camps at relief centres. They supplied 10,000 face masks, 1,000 N95 masks and five litres of sanitiser to be distributed at relief camps through local PHCs under the supervision of deputy DMHOs. Several rueNat machines and Rapid Test Kits have also been sent to the concerned PHCs.

The health authorities say that by conducting medical camps they were screening the patients mainly pregnant women, antenatal cases and symptomatic aged persons in order to conduct Covid-19 tests and provide them treatment based on the test results. People in relief camps are advised to maintain social distancing and wear face masks without fail. The authorities though had even planned to mobilise Sanjeevini bus to the affected areas to conduct Covid-19 tests in the vehicle itself, but due to lack of proper road connectivity in flood affected areas, they mobilised through small vehicles all requisite medical equipment to take care of health of the people. PPE kits have also been sent for benefit of health personnel to conduct Covid-19 tests on suspect cases. The authorities have also sent stocks of anti rabies vaccine, antidote for snake bite and other requisite medical equipment.
In West Godavari, the health

authorities have identified vulareas Achanta, Narasapuram, Bhimavaram and agency areas like Koida and Velerupadu where relief camps have been

set up due to Godavari floods and mobilised all requisite equipment to conduct Covid-19 tests and provide treatment to the infected patients. The health authorities said that four PHCs were identified falling in the vulnerable area and all requisite medical

equipment were mobilised. West Godavari DMHO Dr K.M. Sunanda said, "We have mobilised face masks, sanitis-PPE kits, TrueNat machines and other equipment to conduct Covid-19 tests on suspect cases at relief camps. We are conducting medical camps and educating people on maintenance of social distanc-

care in case of any symptoms. The authorities had even planned to mobilise Sanjeevini bus to the affected areas to conduct Covid-19 tests in the vehicle itself.

ing and the need to seek health

Teachers against schools reopening from September 5

30% of syllabus dropped but textbooks remain unchanged

V.K.L.GAYATRI | DC VISAKHAPATNAM, AUG. 17

Though the government has decided to reduce school and Intermediate syllabus by 30 per cent for the 2020-21 academic year, there will be no new textbooks. The govern-ment has decided to inform the teaching community about the lessons that have been dropped and to continue with the same textbooks for the present academic year.

All educational institutions have been shut since March 23 because of the Covid-19 pandemic. After a series of review meetings, the state government has announced to re-open schools from September 5, which also marks Teacher's Day.

Normally, there will be 220 working days in an academic year. However, in the new academic year, as almost three months have already been wasted and with only 160 days ahead, the government has decided to reduce the syllabus. As there is no time to print new textbooks, it has been decided to continue with the present textbooks, albeit after removing some portions. 'Details of syllabus that

has been dropped will be informed to the teachers and there will not be any classes for those lessons. Managements are also being informed about reopening on September 5,' a senior official from Commissioner of School Education said.

However, the teachers' associations are suggesting the government not to re-open schools from September 5, as Covid-19 positive cases have been increasing in the state. Even the reduced syllabus and Covid-19 precautions would be eye-washes, the unions point-

"There are about 70 lakh students in the state from Class I to X. How can the ratio be divided in the given critical situation. The government should take opinion from the public, teachers and their associations and other political parties. The goving any meetings to elicit opinions of the teaching community. The decision to reopen from September 5 is not good. We are seeking further postponement," said K. Bhanu Murthy, State President of Andhra Pradesh Andhra Prac Teachers Federation.

ULB accounts to be audited online

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, AUG. 17

In a first, the Union and past audit records of the state governments have jointly developed a web portal to facilitate the financial audit of accounts of village panchayats, mandals, and Urban Local Bodies

online.
AuditOnline is a generic and open source application developed as part of Panchayat Enterprise Suite (PES) under the e-panchayat Missien Model panchayat Mission Mode Project (MMP) initiated by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR). It recording of details for both internal and external audits as per the defined process. The software not only

ed list of the auditors and audit team and acts as a good financial audit tool. It also improves transparency and accountabili-The information will be uploaded in the public domain and for usage by

facilitates online and

offline audit of accounts

but also maintains the

auditee with an associat-

other PES applications. The government has started the new facility audit online web portal (http://auditonline.gov.in) Around 20 per cent of audit of village panchayat

accounts will be conducted online in the present fiscal, District Audit fiscal, District Officer, Srikakulam, K.

Property registrations to be recorded

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, AUG 17

The state government has issued orders for implementation of video recordings of property registration capturing by CCTV cameras, to buyers and sellers in the Sub Registrar Offices (SRO).

Stamps and Registration department proposed to conduct the online registrations by using the CCTV cameras at all the SROs through video recording and surveillance with central monitoring.

The government accorded permission for implementing the new system as a pilot project as phase1. The video recordings user charges from the par-

implemented in 20 selected SROs in the state including Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, Kaki-nada, Eluru, Patamata, Vijayawada, Gunadala, Guntur, Mangalagiri and

will serve as evidence and a second layer of protection for buyers and sellers as cases of impersonation by forging identities. A copy of the video and snapshot would be provided to the parties on request in CDs and other devices on a normal cost. The expenditure for the pilot project by collecting

The new facility will be



Dr Supriya underlines the importance of closely monitoring a patient's clinical status and vital signs and adjusting treatment for saving patients.

Pats AP doctors for dedication and commitment; says treatment protocol in AP is similar to the one in the US.

> men, similar to what I noted in the protocols of AP. For patients with oxysupplemental oxygen,"

State and director of the 500-bed hospital, she said that they have not seen much benefit in giving Remdesivir if it is initiated after the patient is already on mechanical ventilation. If giving convalescent plasma, she advises that giving it early

in the Infectious Disease Department at Georgia

is beneficial for patients. "We have learnt that Covid-19 patients are at high risk of developing clots. Treatment protocols both in USA and AP include prophylactic anticoagulation based on Ddimer levels, especially for

proning and breathing exercises are very helpful in improving oxygenation. that these are being included in the treatment protocols in AP," she remarked.

said Tocilizumab, which is another drug that is part of the treatment protocols in AP and USA, is helpful in patients who develop cytokine storm. We are using it less and less, especially if treatment is started early with Remdesivir and steroids.

She also said they are noticing increased risk of bacterial sepsis and fungal infections in patients who are receiving this drug.



Flood water discharge from Dowleswaram barrage in Rajahmundry on Monday.

- A. MANIKANTA KUMAR

Godavari floods hit 29,280 in 13 mandals in E. Godavari

6,029 people were evacuated to safety by using 135 boats: Collector

Tributaries of Godavari swelling

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC

VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 17

The East Godavari administration has said that 29,280 people from 146 villages in 13 mandals have been affected due to the Godavari floods so far.

District Collector D. Muralidhar Reddy in a statement said that 6,029 people were evacuated to safety by using 135 boats and nine launches from 80 villages and added that 65 medical camps were arranged to avoid the spread of diseases. He said that so far, 95 relief centres were set up, and 14,477 persons were being accommodated in them by providing food

and drinking water.
Paddy in 35 hectares and horticulture crops in 872 hectares were inundated and damaged. The floodwater entered into 211 houses, and two houses suffered damages. FROM PAGE 1

Central Water Commission authorities maintain that following heavy rainfall, areas like Peruru, Kothaguda, Palwancha received rainfall of 100 to 150 mm in a day while Pathagudem received 270 mm resulting in swelling of Godavari tributaries like Sileur, Sabari and Indravati causing heavy inflow of water into Godavari river.

Water resources superintending engineer K.S. Prakasa Rao said, "We are expecting the Godavari water level to rise further water level at Bhadrachalam too is rising at present. However, we expect water at the bar-rage to stabilise at 21-22 DC CORRESPONDENT

VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 17 The water level in the Godavari river in Bhadrachalam has started receding and its level recorded at 60.90 feet at 10 pm against 61.5 feet at 5 pm

feet and start receding. We have identified 70-90 vulnerable points along the 534-km stretch of river from Akhanda Godavari to the place where the river merges into sea."

Water resources authori-

ties maintain that 84 villages in East Godavari and 58 villages in West Godavari are to be affected due to the floods and

WATER LEVEL AT BHADRACHALAM STARTS RECEDING

The water resources authorities say that as the water level has started receding in Bhadrachalam, it will be having its impact at the Sir Arthur Cotton Barrage after 10 hours. They main-

the local revenue authorities have evacuated people from all vulnerable places

Polavaram project and the flood water in the river is flowing on spillway and also through gaps in cof-

tain that the water level in the Godavari river will continue to rise and after the discharge touching about 22-23 lakh cusecs from the barrage at 6 am on Tuesday, the level will stabilise for some time before receding.

Polavaram project chief engineer B. Sudhakar Babu said, "We have tem-porarily stopped works on some components of

fer dam both upstream and downstream avoiding any inundation of local villages as was the case in last year's floods. Once the flood water recedes, we will resume work at the project."

Moreover, water level in Godavari at the barrage is rising at the rate of 0.10-0.20 ft for every hour and recorded 18.10 ft at 5 pm.

TB reservoir receives 98 tmc ft

NAGABHUSHANAM HOSKOTE | DC ANANTAPUR, AUG. 17

The Tungabhadra reservoir had received 98.855 TMC ft as against 100.8 TMC ft capacity on Monday following inflows from upstream parts of the reservoir. The reservoir was filled and overflown in last year on the same day while the reservoir needs two more TMC ft to fill the dam.

The water level recorded 98.855 TMC ft with 1632.29 ft level, and 33,737 cusecs of inflows and 8 594 cusecs of outflows from the river. The dam authorities observed that the situation was different last year when inflow was 76.534 cusecs and the outflow of 63928 cusecs on the same day. The Tungabhadra dam superintendent engineer Venkataramana said that the dam authorities were not per-

The dam authorities observed that the situation was different last year when inflow was 76.534 cusecs and the outflow of 63928 cusecs on the same day.

mitting visitors even during Independence Day due to the Covid-19 pandemic. "Last year the river area

Tungabhadra river area at Hampi and there were heavy flows towards Mantralayam in Kurnool district, but the situation is different this year as the river areas towards AP are still dried up," Dhananjya, resident of Hampi told *DC*. He further added that many historic temples and locations were submerged last year.

inundated

However, the Srisailam reservoir received heavy

inflows from the upstream parts in Krishna basin. The water level recorded 871.60 ft along with 148 TMC ft water along with 1.41 lakh cusecs inflows, and 61,000 cusecs outflows towards downstream.

Official sources said that the Almatti reservoir had 114 TMC ft storage along with 1.27 lakh cusecs of inflows and 2.25 lakh outflows towards the downstream

Brahmotsavams to begin on Sept 19

SUBRAMANYAM | DC

The much-awaited annual brahmotsavams of Lord Venkateshwara Tirumala, slated to begin on September 19, is likely to be a low-key affair for the first time in the temple's history, due to the

Covid-19 pandemic. The nine-day annual fes-

tival is usually a grand affair and it attracts a huge turnout of devotees from across the country every day. But the global pandemic may deter the festive spirit this time around, as the virus scare is still alive and the temple management is also enforcing Covid-19 guide-lines to avoid overcrowd-

ing. According to temple

authorities, the annual September 27. Brahmotsavam of Srivari Sources in T temple will commence on September 19.

Brahmotsavams include Dwaiarohanam September 19, followed by Garuda vahana seva (Sept 23), Swarna Rathotsavam (Sept 24), Rathotsavam (Sept 26) and concludes with Chakrasnanam and Dwajavarohanam

Sources in TTD said that have a meeting by the Prominent events of month-end to take a final call on the magnitude of the nine-day mega event and to what level the entry of devotees can be restricted each day while being within the Covid protocol and on whether they have to have the festival inside

TO NAIDU ON PHONE TAPPING DC CORRESPONDENT

DGP WRITES

VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 17

AP Director General of Police (DGP), D. Goutam Sawang, stated that the police had not received any complaint from any quarter whatsoever about the alleged tapping of phones of lead-ers of the opposition party, lawyers, journal-

ists and activists.

The DGP wrote a letter to the former CM N. Chandrababu Naidu referring to the latter's letter to the Prime Minister on the tapping of phones. He asked for the submission of details of such phone tapping as they violate the provisions of the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 and Information Technology Act, 2000, to his office to take necessary action. He requested for cooperation to protect the rights of people at large and to maintain and uphold the rule

The DGP wrote a letter to the former CM N. Chandrababu Naidu referring to the latter's letter to the Prime Minister on the tapping of phones.

WAR ON COVID

Doctor with roots in Nellore is all praise for doctors in AP for their services

US-based doctor suggests early use of Remdesivir

PATHRI RAJASEKHAR |

NELLORE, AUG. 17

Dr Supriya Mannepalli, a US-based doctor with roots in Nellore of AP, has underlined administration of IV Remdesivir injection early in hospitalised Covid-19 patients.

She recommends this especially for patients on supplemental oxygen, who have bilateral lung infil-

Medical Director for Infectious Diseases at Northeast Georgia Health System, Gainesville, GA, ÚSA; Ór Supriya is all praise for doctors in AP for their dedicated services. She says the treatment protocol in AP is no different from that of the USA. She expressed her heart-

felt gratitude for the care her family members received at Government General Hospital in Nellore recently. Deccan Speaking to

Chronicle over phone from the USA, Dr Supriya stressed the importance of closely monitoring a patient's clinical status and vital signs for any worsening Coronavirus, so that treatment could be adjusted immediately. Those with mild symptoms at home should espe-

cially monitor their oxy-

gen saturation closely, as there can be worsening in

the second week of symptoms (second week crash). She warns against missing happy hypoxia (oxygenation less than 94 per cent on room air but exhibiting mild or no symptoms).

vitamin D supplements as

part of the treatment regi-

"We in US utilise vitamin C, zinc, melatonin, and

recounted Dr Supriya. One among 10 top doctors

genation less than 94 per cent on room air and bilateral lung infiltrates, we are starting Remdesivir and adding steroids if on

those who are hospitalised," she stated. The US-based doctor said

IN BRIEF

Ganja smuggler escapes custody

Visakhapatnam: Causing embarrassment to the police department on the eve of the new commissioner taking charge, 32-year-old Mittipalli Nageswara Rao, who was nabbed on charges of ganja storage and peddling, managed to escape from the New Port police station in Vizag city on Sunday However, the incident came to light only on Monday morning. The City Task Force (CTF) police, led by ACP A. Trinad Rao, along with New Port police, raided a house at Gandhinagar near Peda Gantyada area in Vizag city on Saturday night. The Task Force arrested Nageswara Rao and seized 486 kg of dry ganja worth ₹36 lakh from his house. Noticing the police team. Nageswara Rao's associates Pyla Prakash, Gantla Srinu, Veera and Raj Kumar escaped from the spot in a car. The gang procured the weed from Vizag Agency and had planned to transport it in a goods carrier to Chennai. The accused and the seized ganja have been handed over to the New Port police for further investigation. Sources said that Nageswara Rao escaped from the police station on Sunday morning while the police were busy with routine work. A few minutes later, the police realized that Nageswara Rao was missing and launched a

Expand VIMS services: Collector

Visakhapatnam: Collector V. Vinay Chand has directed the management of Visakha Institute of Medical Sciences (VIMS), which is the state Covid-19 hospital, to prepare an action plan to expand the services to facilitate medical aid to more patients. The Collector, along with Covid-19 special officer and principal, Andhra Medical College Dr P.V. Sudhakar visited VIMS and inspected the services in the hospital. Mr Vinay Chand said that given the rapid increase in the Covid-19 positive cases. VIMS has to play a vital role in the coming days. Given the future challenges, VIMS should be developed to tackle any emergencies like Covid-19. He directed the management to procure more ventilators and

Mystery shrouds death of tribal

oxygen cylinders as required.

Nellore: Mystery shrouds the body of a 44-year-old tribal woman found at the cross road near Amudaladinne village in Kavali rural mandal on Monday. The woman identified as Namburu Seshamma was seen living with one Subba Rayudu, also a tribal, in a makeshift tent The woman also has a son. Both are rag pickers and in the habit of consuming liquor and toddy every day. The locals alerted the police when they found the body of Seshamma in a pool of blood on Sunday night. A police team led by Kavali DSP D. Prasad rushed to

offence. The DSP said that they found stab wounds on the neck abdomen and thigh of the deceased woman. The DSP added that they have booked a case and formed a team to track down Subba

the spot on Monday and

scanned the scene of the

Ravudu

RENOVATED **BUTTERFLY PARK TO REOPEN**

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC

The Butterfly Park located in Indira Gandhi Zoological Park is all set to reopen for public if the lockdown is completely eased and government accorded permission for opening the premises.

The Park has also a breeding room, an environment in itself where butterflies are hand reared for release into the park. With adaptations and setups in accordance with the four stages of their life cycle, the room has a sole purpose of breeding and rearing butterflies. The rearing activity was inactive for a few years now and work is under progress to restart it again, said curator Nandini Salaria.

She said fully fledged Butterfly Park which is home to more than 50 species of butterflies. The park supports the life cycle of butterflies by providing both host plants and a variety of nectar plants. The multi coloured flowers ranging from creepers, shrubs to trees make sure the butterflies have plenty

to feed on. With a variety of host plants and nectar plants raised to cater to the life cycle of these winged jewels, Šalaria said there are 30-40 plants raised here with ultimate care.



Medical staffe collect swab samples from people for Covid-19 testing at Sanjeevini bus parked at the Government ENT Hospital in Visakhapatnam on Monday.

AP shows decline with 6,780 cases, 82 deaths

Of 29,05,521 samples tested so far, 2,09,100 recovered

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN |

VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 17

Andhra Pradesh has started witnessing a slight dip in the number of Covid-19 cases in the last few days with Monday recording 6,780 new Covid-19 cases, raising the overall tally to 2,96,609, apart from 82 deaths, taking the death toll to 2,732.

The state health department, in its Covid-19 bulletin, reported that out of 44,578 samples tested, 6,780 individuals have tested Covid-19 positive.

Of the 29,05,521 samples tested so far in the state, 2,09,100 patients have been discharged after recovery, while 84,777 patients are still undergoing treatment for the infection.

Godavari tops East among the newly confirmed Coronavirus infections with 911 cases, followed by 776 in Guntur, 724 in West Godavari, 535 in

ALERT IOC STAFF

AVERT MAJOR

DC CORRESPONDENT

A major fire accident was

averted following timely

Indian Oil Company's

(IOC) Ongole depot when

a fire broke out in a

Bharat Petroleum (BP)

fuel outlet located close to

Prakasam district on

Deputy Superintendent

of Police, Ongole P.V.V.N.V. Prasad, a lorry

transporting rice brawn

from Miryalaguda in

Telangana to Chennai

came to the BPCL retail

outlet to fill diesel on

Monday evening. When a tyre of the lorry

exploded, startled by the

sound, the bunk atten-

dant spilt the oil on the

exhaust pipe, while filling

the tank. A fire broke out

immediately before those

in the outlet realised

On noticing the fire in

the BPCL outlet, alert

workers on duty in the

IOC depot pulled the

water hose pipe running

all along the depot to deal

with fire mishaps up to

the BPCL bunk and put

what was happening.

Surareddypalem

According

Monday.

MISHAP

■ With regard to cumulative cases, East Godavari has suffered the worst with 41,204 cases, followed by 33,952 in Kurnool, 30,062 in Anantapur, 26,915 in Guntur, 25,327 in Visakhapatnam, 24,306 in West Godavari, 23,917 in Chittoor, 17,645 in Nellore

Anantapur, 527 in Srikakulam, 523 in Kadapa, 519 in Visakhapatnam, 481 in Nellore, Vizianagaram, 458 in Chittoor, 372 in Kurnool, 357 in Prakasam and 135 in

With regard to cumulative cases, East Godavari has suffered the worst with 41,204 cases, followed by 33,952 in Kurnool, 30,062 in Anantapur, 26,915 Guntur, 25,327 in Visakhapatnam, 24,306 in West Godavari, 23,917 in Chittoor, 17,645 in Nellore, 17,331 in Kadapa, 15,258 in Srikakulam, 13,095 Vizianagaram, 12,479 in Krishna, 12,223 from Prakasam, 2,461

other states and 434 from

other countries.

Rate of recovery appears to be good in Kurnool with 26,407 persons discharged, followed by 26,049 in East Godavari, 24,300 Anantapur, 19,524 Visakhapatnam, 18,938 in Guntur, 18,690 in West Chittoor, 12,679 in Kadapa, 12,334 in Nellore, 9,830 in Srikakulam, 9,208 Krishna, 7,351

6,222 Prakasam, Vizianagaram, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries. Prakasam has registered

13 deaths, followed by 10 in East Godavari, eight in Chittoor, seven each in Guntur and Kadapa, six each in Srikakulam and West Godavari, five each in Anantapur, Kurnool, Visakhapatnam and Vizianagaram, three in Krishna and two in Nellore.

cumulative deaths, Guntur and Kurnool have recorded the highest number of with 297 deaths each, followed by 286 in East Godavari, 243 in Chittoor, 229 each in Anantapur and Krishna, 211 in Visakhapatnam, 202 in West Godavari, 174 in Prakasam, Srikakulam, Nellore, 124 in Kadapa and 121 in Vizianagaram dis-

State health authorities have discharged 7,866 patients from various hospitals after recovery in the last 24 hours.

AP has carried out Covid-19 tests on 54,441 samples for one million population and registered Covid-19 positive rate of 10.21, while Maharashtra Telangana have recorded positive rates of 18.82 and 12.27 respectively.



Man tries to kill 3 by setting car afire in Vijayawada

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 17

Having had differences in real estate and car sale business with his three partners, a man attempted to murder them by setting their car on fire, on Monday.

According police, based on a preliminary inquiry, Venugopal Reddy, Gangadhar and his wife

Nagavalli were involved in the business since 2014. However, they suffered a loss in the busi-

Venugopal Reddy allegedly called the other three partners to meet him at a place near a private hotel in the city to discuss matters of business. When the trio arrived there, Venugopal Reddy doused the car with

petrol and set it on fire

and fled from the scene. escape from the burning car, and one of them reportedly suffered severe burns on his body. The injured was shifted to a nearby hos pital for treatment.

Assistant commissioner of police, Nagarjuna Reddy, inspected the scene of the offence. He said that special teams were formed to capture

the Chief Secretary and Mr Prakash chose to ignore was that no central government office in New Delhi works on Saturday and Sunday even thoughe has

state exchequer. Mr Prakash's family stays in New Delhi. His wife, a senior IPS officer, Bhavan Saxena, is Resident Commissioner of Bhavan in the national

Covid-19 patient

misses from RIMS

Chief Secretary Nilam Sawhney has recently issued a memo permitting

DC CORRESPONDENT

A 50-year-old woman of

Rajam town has alleged

that her husband Sira Srinvisa Naidu, who has

been tested positive for Covid and admitted in

RIMS in Srikakulam, has

been missing since the

last 32 days. Sira Rajeswari told

reporters on Sunday that

her husband has been

suffering from jaundice

and when admitted into

hospital in Rajam, he was tested positive.

He was immediately taken to RIMS hospital in

an ambulance and she

was asked to follow in an

autorickshaw. When she

went there the health officials told her that her

husband has been admit-

ted and she was asked to

return home as entry has

Two days later she went

been banned.

RESUME

IN BIRRD

OP SERVICES

CORRESPONDENT

The outpatient (OP) serv-

ices, which were stalled

given Covid-19 pandemic,

have been resumed from Monday in the TTD-run

Research, Rehabilitation

and Surgery for the

According to BIRRD

Madanmohan Reddy, the

OP services were resumed

with 50 patients given

observing all precaution-

ary measures as per the

Covid norms. He said that

OP services remain open

from 8 am till 12 noon and

all emergency cases will

the patients with OP tick-

ets would be provided

medication on the same

day, while there will be limited inpatients only for

Both the doctors and the

strictly

patients have to wear

observe social distancing

by maintaining three feet

distance. This is to avoid

the rampant spread of

the OP services were

patients given treatment

daily by observing all

precautionary measures

ernment land had been up

for grab in the name of

land pooling. Former BJP

MLA P. Vishnu Kumar

and

an emergency

Coronavirus.

resumed with 50

as per the Covid

The director said that all

also be given admission

treatment daily

Tirupati.

Director.

Institute

SRIKAKULAM, AUG. 17

N. VAMSI SRINIVAS | DC

In gross misuse of official

position, Prayeen Prakash,

principal secretary to Chief

Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan

Reddy has obtained permis-

sion from the state govern-

ment to visit New Delhi on

weekends at the cost of

VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 17

■ The crucial factor both to travel in weekends

principal secy Praveen Prakash

Misuse of position by CM's

"on duty". Justifying the order, the Chief Secretary said Mr Prakash was assigned the crucial subjects of Centre-State relations, state reorganisation Act, projects, release of funds from the centre and hence he has to meet senior Central officials in New Delhi.

He has been permitted to

there and made an

enquiry on his health sta-

tus but none replied to

her. She repeated her vis-

its every three days but

all the time none responded to her.

She said she later went

to the superintendent of

police and the officers

there advised her to file a report in Two Town police station.

Since no response came

from the police station so

far, she is suspecting

something might have

gone wrong. A senior government official told

this correspondent that

in many cases proper

entries were not being

made at the time of admissions. There was also a possibility of the

man dying and family

"As of now the patient

is not traced in the hospital," the official said.

were

members

informed.

end, Saturday and Sunday, on "official purpose, the Chief Secretary said and also made it clear that her order does not require condepartment which in other words means the watchdog of the state exchequer cannot raise any queries

But, the crucial factor both the Chief Secretary and Mr Prakash chose to ignore was that no central government office in New Delhi works on Saturday and Sunday and both can only explain whom he would meet and what official work he could dis-charge in the Central offices that remain closed on Saturday and Sunday.



SINHA ASSUMES CHARGE AS VIZAG POLICE CHIEF

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, AUG. 17

Manish Kumar Sinha took charge as the new Commissioner of Police for Visakhapatnam city on Monday. A 2000-batch officer of Telangana cadre, Sinha earlier served as the Intelligence Chief (Inspector General of Police) of Andhra Pradesh.

He took charge from the out going Commissioner Rajiv Kumar Meena, who has been transferred and directed to report to the police headquarters, Mangalagiri, until further orders.

Probably, Manish Kumar Sinha will be the first Commissioner of police for the Executive Capital of Andhra Pradesh as YSR Congress party government will lay the foundation stone for the administrative capital in the city in coming days.

FARMER FOUND PART OF INHERITED **LAND DELETED** FROM RECORDS

From Page 1

The farmer found that the village revenue officer allegedly deleted a part of his inherited land from the revenue records. The incident took place on Monday Reports said Polavarapu

Peddapushpalam village of S. Ravavaram owned 1.55 acres of land in the village. After his death, the land was inherited by his son Polavarapu Ramana. The passbook was in the name of Kannayya. Ramana recently applied for changing the passbook in his name. To his shock, he found 36 cents of land had gone missing from the records and registered in the name of one P Appalakonda of the same

village. Ramana's two Eswara Rao and Nookaraju approached VRO Esawara Rao for corrs rection of records but they were abused by him. Nookaraju immediately doused himself in diesel which he carried with him but others rescued him.

🙉 PARADIP PORT TRUST

e-TENDER-CUM-e-AUCTION NOTICE

No. AD/EST/LAND-I-31/2020/3489 Date: 07/08/2020 Date: 07/08/2020

A e-Tender-cum-e-Auction Notice invites for "Allotment of Port land about 58 acres on 60 (sixty) years long term lease basis for settling up of Port based acretical intensive inclusions. Tank Farms as a part of MMLP/ IP under Paradip Smart Industrial Port City Plan". The date of available of documents in the website is from 07.08.2020 to 02.09.2020. For details, please log on the website: https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Ex. Army No. 2589763-X, Rank NK(TS) Name: PILAKA GOVINDA REDDY Son of Late PILAKA SURYANARAYANA, residing at D.No.5-15-16, Reddy Tunglam Pedagantyada, BHPV Post Visakhapatnam-530 012, Andhra Pradesh. I submit that in my Discharge Book my daughter's name mentioned mistakenly as PILAKA JHANSI Instead of SHREYA PILAKA. my daughter's correct name is SHREYA PILAKA born on 16-12-1999.

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Land-grabbings reported in last 5 months

From Page 1

Several incidents of land grabbing have been reported during the last few months. Attempts in this regard have reached highproportions after Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan gave his assent to the three capital

On top of it, the infamous Sunday morning incident, when 30 people ransacked an office and godown over an extent of 3,500 square yards abutting the National Highway and put an ownership billboard, across the city. Referring to Sunday's incident, senior lawyer T. V. V. S.

has been registered in the name of La-ksmi Kovvuri, wife of Gangi Reddy, former VUDA chairman and founding member of Telugu Desam. Their sons Srinivasa Reddy and Satyanarayana Reddy had inherited the land and gave it to one Santosh on lease 20 vears ago for running a marble showroom. Proving the authenticity of the land, the government compensated the Reddy family for loss of

land during the highway expansion in 1981. "Around 30 people clad in spotless whites got down from expensive cars and

executed the grabbing," Kanakaraju said. He won-

Kanakaraju said the land dered how police cordoned off the entire site, not allowing even the marble shop owner and lease holder to enter the premises. In another case of

Gajwuka, the High Court had confirmed ownership of 1.55 acres of prime land in Peda Gantyada in the name of Chenchu Venkayya, which was inherited later by his son Govindarajulu and his

One Atchenna, who lost the case in High Court, created a document and executed a sale cum GPA in favour of another person. On a complaint, Gajuwaka police, instead of taking action against the accused, allegedly began harassing the land owner at the behest of local YSRCP leader. Contempt, criminal and civil cases were filed against Atchenna and Govindarajulu also filed a writ petition against Gajuwaka police recently.

'Land grabbing is a refined crime and police are helpless in initiating any action. The police should hire a civil lawyer if they are serious about congrabbing, Kanakaraju said.

All political parties indulge in such activities when they come to power, said a retired revenue officer. Telugu Desam Party had also had its bouts of land grab before losing last year's polls. Acres of gov-

Raju successfully stalled it. None other than a senior minister in Naidu cabinet and his associates were accused of grabbing the government land. On the insistence of his own party leader. Chandrababu Naidu was forced to create an SIT for a probe but its report has never seen the

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy also constituted SIT-2 soon after coming to power and promised a report by May 31 this year. People have forgotten both these

SHORT TAKES

NEPAL, INDIA HOLD TALKS AMIDST BORDER ROW

Kathmandu, Aug. 17: Senior diplomats of India and Nepal on Monday held a virtual meeting to review the progress made on various India-aided developmental projects being implemented Himalayan nation.

The meeting came days after Nepal Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli telephoned his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi to greet him on India's 74th Independence Day, in the first high-level contact after bilateral ties came under severe strain following issuance of a new political

map by Nepal in May.

Nepalese Foreign Secretary
Shanker Das Bairagi and
Indian Ambassador to Nepal Vinay Mohan Kwatra are leading the delegations representing their respective countries during the oversight mechanism meeting, according to Nepal Foreign Ministry sources here.

The meeting, being held virtually due to the coronavirus outbreak, will assess the progress made on various India aided development proj-ects being implemented in Nepal, the sources said.

No further details of the

meeting were available.
The ties between India and Nepal came under strain after Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated an 80-kmlong strategically crucial road connecting the Lipulekh pass with Dharchula in Uttarakhand on May 8.

AL-HIND ACTIVIST HELD FOR B'LURU VIOLENCE

DC CORRESPONDENT BENGALURU, AUG. 17

The special team investigating last week's riots at KG Halli in the city have arrested one person, reportedly said to be a member of Al Hind, an organisation working against the Sangh Parivar.

Though the police sources said that the arrested person was also allegedly involved in murder of an RSS activist Rudresh in Shivajinagar some years ago, home minister Basavaraj Bommai said that the investigation was in pre-liminary stages and could give any details only after verification of facts.

The arrest comes following a raid by the CCB team of SDPI office in Frazer Town on

In the raid the team seized a large haul of arms, including petrol bombs and daggers. The mobile phone call records revealed that he was in touch with most of the persons, who were coordinating with the people participating in riots, through WhatsApp messages.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister B.S. Yeddyurappa held a meeting with the home minister, DG&IGP, Bengaluru City Police Commissioner and chief secretary. It was decided that the government would approach the Karnataka High Court, seeking permission to appoint a Claim Commissioner to recover the loss of damaged property from

SHARAD PAWAR IS IN HOME QUARANTINE

DC CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI, AUG. 17

the accused.

Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar will remain in home quarantine for next few days after five persons working at his Mumbai residence tested positive for Coronavirus. Mr Pawar's test results have come out nega-

Informing about Mr Pawar's isolation Maharashtra health minister Rajesh Tope said, "Mr Pawar is not showing any symptoms of the Coronavirus infection. He underwent Covid tests in Mumbai and his reports have come out negative. But we will ask him not to go on a state tour for the next few days.

As a precautionary measure, tests of nearly 100 people are being conducted, including personal assistants, secretaries and other officials working daily with Mr Pawar, who came in contact with these persons in the last couple of

days.
"Five persons working at Silver Oak (Mr Pawar's residence) have tested positive for coronavirus. informed the state health department to communicate with health and civic officials in Pune as Mr Pawar was there on Sunday," corporation offi-

Festivities go on



A man carries Lord Ganesha idol covered in a plastic sheet during rain ahead of the Ganesh Chaturthi festival in Kolkata on Monday. Meanwhile, with two months to go for Bengal's biggest festival, the first Durga idol for a Kolkata-based puja organiser was delivered from Kumartuli, the clay modellers hub, bringing hope in the minds of the artisans and organisers amidst the Covid-19 pandemic situation.

Visva Bharati campus closed after violence

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, AUG. 17

Visva Bharati (VB), world famous central university founded by Rabindranath Tagore at Shantiniketan in Birbhum of West Bengal, has been shut down for an indefinite

The move came hours after a 4,000-strong mob, allegedly led by a Trinamul Congress MLA, stormed and vandalised it is an Monday to protect the on Monday to protest the varsity's decision to abolish the traditional festival, Poush Mela, held every winter on its campus, and construction of a boundary wall surrounding the fair venue.

Susovan Banerjee, a VB executive council member, said, "There is nothing wrong in trying to stop encroachment on the VB property by constructing a wall. We have written to ministry of human resources and develop-ment and union home ministry about the inciBengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee and Jagdeep Governor Dhankhar on the incident.

The university will remain closed till normal-cy returns to the campus."
Calling Poush Mela a heritage and integral part of Bengal, the attackers vandalised two temporary offices, destroyed con-struction material and used a payloader brought for work, in bulldozing one of the gates of the VB. A varsity spokesperson

alleged that neither the police came to rescue nor the district magistrate responded despite contact. While TMC MLA of Dubrajpur Naresh Bauri was seen during the rampage, the mob included local traders who did their business over the years at the handloom, handicraft and folk musical fair, a brainchild of Tagore's father late Maharshi Debendra Nath Tagore to celebrate Poush.

Mr Bauri said, "I was

the attention of West resident, not as an MLA Bengal chief minister or a TMC leader. How can Mamata Banerjee and Tagore's university, supposed to be a part of nature, be caged behind walls? Local people will

never tolerate this."

The rampage, first such in the history of VB of which Prime Minister Narendra Modi is the Chancellor, unfolded at around 9 am when VB vice chancellor Prof Bidyut Chakrabarti and other senior officials visited the ground to supervise the construction work.

Trouble was brewing in VB since August 15 when the work began only to be disrupted by protests by the angry locals, mainly the traders within a day.

In July, the VB authorities decided to scrap the festival citing its poor experience of past two years in organising it in view of a 2017 National Green Tribunal order.

Green Jagueer Governor Jagueer Dhankhar called up chief Mamata Banerjee to express concern on the issue.

BJP SCRIPTED Can block access to AIMIM SHAHEEN BAGH PROTEST: AAP supporter if ordered: FB New Delhi, Aug. 17: The AAP on Monday claimed the entire

The supporter is accused of posting inflammatory content on websites

DC CORRESPONDENT

Shaheen Bagh protest was "scripted by the BJP" and that its leader-ship dictated each and

every move of the agita-

election

fited from the controver-sy surrounding the stir.

education, health, envi-

But the Delhi BJP chose

to fight the election on

the issue of Shaheen

The whole Shaheen Bagh protest was script-

ed by the BJP. The top-

most leadership of the

BJP scripted each and

every step of these protests," he alleged. His allegations drew a

rebuttal from Manoj Tiwari, the chief of

Delhi BJP when these

protests happened, who

said his party does not

discriminate on the

basis of religion. - PTI

Bengaluru, Aug. 17: Enraged over sharing in

Whatsapp the recent Supreme Court order

about women's rights on

ancestral property, four

youth allegedly attacked their uncle and aunt here,

M. Shashikala lodged a

complaint that the sons of

and Mohan attacked her

and her hotelier-husband

police said.

Muttu on August 12, the

She stated that Muttu

had in the family

WhatsApp group posted

the court order saying

women too have equal

rights on the property of

On night of August 12,

Dhanraj's sons Vaishak, Vaibhav and Vaishnav

and Mohan's son Varun

went to Muttu's hotel and

attacked him with sticks

to the rescue, she was also attacked and threatened.

police said the four have

When Shashikala went

When contacted, the

their parents, they said.

brothers Dhanaraj

police said on Monday.

Couple attacked

for posting order on equal rights

Bagh, he said.

"Delhi assembly elec-

tors for electoral bene-MUMBAI, AUG. 17 fits in Delhi polls, drawing a rebuttal from the Social media platforms Facebook and YouTube on Monday told the Bombay saffron party.

AAP spokesperson
Saurabh Bhardwaj made high court that they would block access of the claim a day after sevtheir websites to an All India Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen (AIMIM) sup-porter, accused of posting inflammatory content eral members of the Muslim community from Shaheen Bagh area, which was the cen-Citizenship Amendment Act protests here, joined aimed at creating communal unrest, if the Union the BJP.

He alleged the BJP's campaign for the Delhi government or the court

A division bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice Madhav centered around the Shaheen Jamdar was hearing a petition filed by Mumbai resident Imran Khan, seeking a direction to Bagh protests and it was the only party that benepolice to take action tion could have been against Abu Faizal for fought on the issue of uploading incriminating hate speeches on social ronment or other developmental narratives.

The petitioner's lawver earlier said Faizal was a Asaduddin Owaisi-led All India Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen (AIMIM).

The plea sought deletion of videos uploaded by Faizal and also a permanent ban to be imposed on him from all social media websites.

In May this year, the high court had ordered YouTube and Facebook to delete the videos uploaded by Faizal.

On Monday, Facebook's counsel Darius Khambata and YouTube's advocate

THE SC recently ruled

equal coparcenary rights

that women will have

in joint Hindu family

property even if the

father died before the

Hindu Succession Act,

THE VERDICT makes it

clear the amendment to

inherit ancestral property

would have retrospective

The Supreme Court recently ruled that

women will have equal

coparcenary rights in

joint Hindu family prop-

erty even if the father died before the Hindu

Succession (Amendment)

Act, 2005. The verdict

makes it clear the amend-

ment to the Hindu

Succession Act, 1956 granting equal rights to

daughters to inherit

ancestral property would

the Act granting equal

rights to daughters to

not been arrested yet.

effect.

Naresh Thacker informed the court that the videos uploaded by the user

(Faizal) have been deleted. The petitioners advocate, Vivek Shukla, told the court that Faizal has uploaded videos even after his earlier clips were

deleted. "We (Facebook) can block access of the site to this user (Faizal) if the central government passes an order as per the pro-cedure laid down under the Information Techn-ology Act or if the court orders us to do so," Khambata said.

Thacker, appearing for YouTube, conceded and said the URLs of the earlier videos uploaded by the user (Faizal) have been

The bench sought to know from Shukla if the petitioner approached the nodal officer appointed by the government under the IT Act Section 69(A) (power to delete/block objectionable content posted online).

"The Information Technology Act has laid down a procedure by which any person can approach the nodal officer if he or she has a complaint against any content posted on the internet. Why should the court interfere and pass orders," Chief Justice Datta said.

The bench reserved its order on the plea.

Enforcement Directorate

(ED) has registered a

money laundering case

against a Chinese national for allegedly running a

hawala racket worth an

estimated ₹1,000 crore using shell or dubious firms, officials said on

Monday.
They said the central

probe agency has pressed

ANKHI DAS FILES PLAINT WITH There is more to do, says Facebook **DELHI POLICE**

New Delhi, Aug. 17: Senior Facebook India executive Ankhi Das has filed a complaint with Delhi Police, alleging that she has been receiv-

that she has been receiving "violent threats to her life", officials said on Monday.

The Cyber cell unit is looking into the complaint by Das, who is Facebook's Director, Public Policy, India, South and Central Asia, a police official said a police official said.

Das filed the complaint

on Sunday and alleged that several people were issuing "threats, making sexually coloured remarks and defaming ner through online posts. As per the complaint, the threats are in relation to an article published in the Wall Street Journal.

"The content, which

even includes my photograph is evidently threatening to my life and body and I fear for my safety as well as that of my family members. content maligns my reputation based on a news article and I am subjected to name-calling and cyber

against 42-year-old Charlie Peng, alias Luo

Sang, who is alleged to be

the kingpin of the racket.

Peng and some of his

alleged associates, includ-

ing Indians, and bankers

were raided by the Income

Tax Department on August 12. The taxman

had searched at least two

dozen premises, including

New Delhi, Aug. 17: The of Money Laundering Act

New Delhi, Aug. 17: Facebook, that is at the centre of a political slugfest over allegations of supporting the ruling dis-WHILE BJP accused the social media giant of pensation, on Monday said its social media plat-form prohibits hate speech and content that incites violence and these

policies are enforced globally without regard to political affiliation. However, the social media giant - which counts India among its largest markets globally -

also acknowledged that "there is more to do". "We prohibit hate speech and content that incites violence and we enforce policies globally without regard to anyone's political position or party affiliation. While we know there is more to do. we're making progress on enforcement and conduct regular audits of our process to ensure fairness

spokesperson said. The comments came as the ruling BJP and opposition Congress traded barbs over Facebook's

and accuracy," a Facebook

alleged bias.
While BJP accused the social media giant of censoring nationalist voices,

The ED has taken cogni-

sance of the tax depart-

ment evidence and action

and a Delhi Police Special Cell FIR against Peng

before filing the criminal

case of money laundering

Peng is alleged to be

holding a fake Indian passport and tax officials

had said he created a "web

of sham companies to

launder hawala funds to

against him, they said.

Chinese national booked for money laundering

censoring nationalist voices, Congress seized on a media report that alleged that Facebook's content policies favour the ruling party. opposition

Congress seized on a Wall Street Journal report that alleged that Facebook's content policies favour the ruling party.
Meanwhile, demanding a

probe by JPC into the allegations emerging from the news report in the US daily, the CPI(M) said the issue raises questions about the ruling investment in the leading social media platform and claimed that there is a 'nexus" between them.

'The Politburo of the CPI(M) strongly condemns the role of global social media behemoth, Facebook, as exposed by the Wall Street Journal, particularly the functioning of its India policy chapter. Facebook is not following its own laid down policy against com-munal hate content," a statement from the Left party alleged.

and from China" in the

past two-three years. They said his front or showcase

business was import and

export of medical and

electronic goods and some

Peng was arrested by the

Special Cell of the Delhi

Police in September 2018

on charges of fraud and

forgery and was allegedly

running an illegal money

other items.

CONGRESS SAYS NO LETTER ON 'LEADERSHIP' WRITTEN

DC CORRESPONDENT **NEW DELHI AUG. 17**

The internal strife in the Congress once again came to the fore with suspended Congress leader Sanjay Jha tweet-ing about several leaders writing to the party chief Sonia Gandhi.

However, the party was quick to rubbish the claims of any letter and alleged that the "non-existent letter" was an attempt to divert attention from the Facebook controversy and was being circulated by "BJP

stooges". Insiders claim that several leaders have been in consultations about raising 'leadership issues' in the party. They further claimed that ad-hoc lead-ership in the Congress does not auger well for the party.

Speaking to this newspaper on the condition of anonymity a leader said, "we are in the process of writing a letter to the Congress President. The letter presently is in the possession of one of the top most leaders.

He also claimed that they require clarity on the leadership, either Mrs. Gandhi should continue as the party chief or there should be elec-tions to the Working Committee.

Then the elected Working Committee should select the party chief.

He said that the interference from Mr. Rahul Gandhi and his office should cease 'either he becomes a full-fledged President or stop controlling from backseat'.

Last month in a virtual conference of Rajya Sabha MPs only five out of 45 MPs demanded that Mr. Gandhi be made the President again.

The meeting attended by Mrs. Gandhi former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan

While several others MPs suggested that spection in the party.

sections of the Prevention that of Peng in Gurgaon.

GOLD SMUGGLING I CASE Accused says she travelled with Sivasankar abroad thrice

Swapna's claim puts CM's ex-aide in soup

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,

Gold smuggling case accused Swapna Suresh has reportedly given a statement before the Enforcement Directorate which could put the former principal secretary to minister Sivasankar and the gov-

ernment in trouble. The accused has told the ED that she had travelled to foreign countries with Sivasankar at least on three occasions. Swapna

visited Oman along with Sivasankar in 2017, and then in April 2018. The ED team probing the case believes that the bureaucrat was aware of clandestine Swapna's activities.

When questioned by the ED on the gold found in Swapna's locker, the accused said that it was kept in the bank under Sivasankar's instruction.

It may be recalled that the NIA last month found ₹1.05 cr and 1 kg gold in Swapna's locker. While ₹36.5 lakh was found in the

branches in Thiruvananthapuram and ₹64 lakh and 982.5 gm gold in another. The investigating agency suspected that the money found in the locker could be cash received for gold smuggling. But her lawyer had maintained that the gold was received by Swapna as a gift on her

There are also allegations that Swapna had sought Sivasankar's help to arrange tickets under the Vande Bharat mission for foreigners. ED sources

when confronted, said he had helped people in UAE who were stranded during Covid-19 lockdown, return home.

However, reports say that the five persons for whom tickets were pro-cured were not foreigners. They had allegedly smuggled baggage which were not screened properly at the airport.

The ED team wants to investigate these issues in detail and might seek further custody of the

Meanwhile, with just a couple of months left for the local bodies poll which are also considered as the semi-final before the Assembly elections in Kerala in 2021, the ruling CPM has ventured into damage control mode in the wake of the gold smuggling case.

The party has prepared a detailed FAQ model pamphlet, related to the case. The pamphlet will be taken door-to-door by party members to explain their position on the gold















IN BRIEF

Putin, Erdogan discuss conflicts

Moscow: Russian President Vladimir Putin discussed the conflicts in Libya and Syria with his Turkish counterpart Tayyip Erdogan in a telephone call on Monday, the Kremlin said in a statement. The Kremlin said the call's main focus was on the crisis in Libya, highlighting the need to make real steps towards a sustainable

US choppers attack

Syrian army post

Amman: Two US helicopters on Monday attacked a Syrian Army checkpoint in northeastern Syria near the Kurdishheld city of Qamishli, killing one soldier and injuring two others, state media said. The incident happened shortly after a US patrol was prevented from passing by an Army checkpoint in the area, state media said.

China welcomes

Putin's proposal Beijing: China welcomed on

Monday to Russian President Vladimir Putin's proposed summit of world leaders to avoid "confrontation" over a US threat to trigger a return of all UN sanctions on Iran The United States lost a bid on Friday to extend a UN arms embargo on Iran. Russia and China opposed extending the weapons ban, which is due to expire in October under a 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and the world powers. Eleven members abstained, including France, Germany and Britain, while the United States and the Dominican Republic were the only two

Japan PM leaves hosp post check-up

Tokyo: Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe underwent a medical check-up in hospital on Monday, a government source said, amid concern voiced by a top official that the premier was suffering from fatigue from handling the Coronavirus pandemic. Abe, Japan's longestserving prime minister, left hospital after the examination, Jiji news agency said. He had the check-up at Tokyo's Keio University Hospital, the source familiar with the situation said.

16 killed in hotel

attack in Somalia

Mogadishu: At least 16 people were killed in an attack on Sunday by al Shabaab on a seaside hotel in Somalia's capital Mogadishu, a government spokesman said, as the Islamist group launched a similar assault on a Somali military base. Sunday's toll includes 11 victims and five assailants, Ismail Mukhtar Omar said in a tweet late on Sunday, adding: "Security forces lost one. 18 people were injured." Militants stormed the high-end Elite Hotel in Lido beach, detonated a car bomb and then opened fire with assault rifles, the latest attack by al Shabaab, which has been battling the country's central government since 2008. Al Shabaab wants to topple the central government and establish its own rule based on its own strict interpretation of Islamic

PROTESTOR CHALLENGES THAI MONARCHY

Bangkok, Aug. 17: The deafening cheer for Anon Nampa at Thailand's biggest demonstrabookish human rights lawyer's emergence at the forefront of a youth protest movement with his taboo-breaking call for reforms to the monarchy.

"He looks quite harmless," Rangsiman Rome, a former activist who is now an opposition member of parliament, said. "But once he gets the microphone and gets on stage or starts working, he becomes a different, serious person.'

Although the protest movement has no single leader, Anon's August 3 call for curbs on the power of the monarchy Thai politics in a way not known in living memory and made him a hero for some and a hate figure for

others.

His open challenge put Anon at risk of arrest under "lese majeste" charges, which can mean 15 years in jail. "I think there is a need for everyone to be able to talk about the monarchy openly and constructively," Anon said. "I think society is becoming more open about

Freedom in the air



Women in masks to help curb the spread of the Coronavirus participate in a tug-of-war game during the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the country's independence in Medan, Indonesia, on Monday.

EU calls for emergency summit over Belarus polls

Minsk, Aug. 17: European Council President Charles Michel on Monday convened an emergency summit of EU leaders to discuss the presidential election in Belarus and the crackdown in the wake of

the polls. Noting that the video conference would take place on Wednesday at 1000 GMT, Michel tweeted that "the people of Belarus have the right to decide on their future and freely elect their leader." "Violence against protesters is unacceptable and cannot be allowed," he

The 27 EU foreign ministers said on Friday that the elections were neither free nor fair and that they refuse to accept the results of the polls, as announced by the Belarus electoral commission.

Several thousand factory workers took to the streets of Minsk on Monday, demanding the resignation

THE OFFICIAL **RESULTS** of the August 9 vote gave Lukashenko 80 per cent of the votes and . Tsikhanouskaya only 10%, but the opposition claimed the vote was

rigged.

of authoritarian Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko. It was the ninth straight day of protesting against the resu-lts of an election that extended his 26-year rule. Nearly 5,000 workers from the Minsk Tractor Works plant, which has been on strike since Monday morning, marched down the streets of Minsk, demanding that Lukashenko step down and cede his post to Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, the leading opposition candidate.

The official results of the August 9 vote gave Lukashenko 80 per cent of the votes and Tsikhan-

ouskaya only 10%, but the opposition claimed the vote was rigged.
"Lukashenko is a former

president, he needs to go,' Sergei Dylevsky, the leader of the protest at the Minsk Tractor Works plant, said on Monday. "Sveta (Tsikhanouskaya)

is our president, legitimate and elected by the people.' Tsikhanouskaya, a 37-yearold former English teacher, entered the race after her husband's jailing in Belarus. She managed to galvanize nationwide support, drawing tens of thousands to her campaign rallies. Large-scale protests against the vote results continued even after she left the country for Lithuania last week, a move her campaign said was made under duress.

The protests have posed the biggest challenge yet to Lukashenko's iron-fisted rule of the ex-Soviet nation

Biden in spotlight as polls near

Four-day convention will be held online due to Covid-19 pandemic

Milwaukee, Aug. 17: As Democrats on Monday open an unprecedented virtual convention, the party's disparate factions are projecting a united front behind Joe Biden, brought together by their common determination to oust Donald Trump in November's election.

"It is absolutely impera-tive that Donald Trump be defeated," Bernie Sanders, a former Biden rival and a keynote speaker on the event's opening night, said on Sunday. Adding to the drama, the four-day convention — originally planned for the Mid-western city of Milwaukee but forced online by the Covid-19 pandemic takes place amid a furor over Trump's efforts to limit mail-in voting. The president, insisting

without proof that mail-in voting fosters fraud, has threatened to block extra funding that Democrats say is urgently needed to allow the US Postal Service to process millions of ballots

In normal election years, nominating conventions are a raucous scene, attended by tens of thousands of party faithful and designed to inspire the party's base and lure independents and the undecided.

Democrats had picked Milwaukee for its location in the important swing state of Wisconsin. The city had spent millions in preparation.

But planners have been struggling to find virtual replacements for the usual roaring applause, circuslike atmosphere and balloon drops.

Viewers are expected to be treated to live feeds from several Democratic "watch parties," some even live-streamed from drive-in theaters or featuring erstwhile Biden rivals widely popular among Democrats. -AFP

Don will get dirty: Kamala

Indian-American Democratic Vice-Presidential nominee Kamala Harris has said that President Donald Trump and his campaign will "engage in lies" and "dirty tactics" to distract from the real issues that are impacting

the American people. She was responding to President Trump's promotion of the conspiracy theories about her eligibility to serve as the vice president and president. On Saturday, Trump said

that he would not be "pur-suing" questions about Harris' eligibility, but did not dismiss the conspiracy theories as false. Trump on Thursday said he heard on "social media" that Harris could be ineligible. "I heard today that she doesn't meet the requirements," Trump said, referring to

John Eastman, the lawyer and Chapman University professor who raised the

Senator

The experimental format

will allow speakers to

address American voters

unfiltered — largely shorn

of the usual overwrought

stagecraft and screaming

delegates. Or, some fear, it

could make for a more bor-

Biden enters the conven-

tion with significant but

tightening poll leads over

Trump and amid signs

that his history-making pick of Senator Kamala

Harris as his running

mate — the first woman of

colour on a major party's

presidential ticket — is

Klobuchar.

ing show.

Trump's remarks, Harris, 55, said on Sunday that the President and his campaign will engage in deception.

issue in a Newsweek op-ed, as "very highly quali-

Responding to Trump's remarks, Harris, 55, said on Sunday that the president and his campaign will engage in deception. "They're going to engage in lies. They're going to in deception. They're going to engage in an attempt to distract from the real issues that impacting American people. And I expect that they will engage in dirty tactics. And this is going to be a knockdown, drag-out. And we're ready," she said. Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden scr-

erican Sabrina Singh, who

previously was the spokes-

woman of two Democratic

presidential candidates, as

press secretary for her

Presidential campaign.
Singh, 32, headed the

press shop of New Jersey

Senator Cory Booker and

former New York mayor

Mike Bloomberg. Last

Democratic

and an Indian mother, California Senator Harris, if elected, would be the first woman Vice -President ever for the country. 'What's at stake right now is that we've had over 160,000 people die in the last few months and many of them needlessly ... tens of millions of people who have lost their jobs ... we're in the midst of a hunger crisis in our country. The media isn't covering it so much," she said.
"I'm prepared to fight because this is a fight that is for something, not against something. This is a fight for where we need to be ... We need to focus on what can be unburdened by what has been,' Harris said. Harris is no stranger to accusations ipted history on Wedn- about her race.

Harris picks Indo-American as

ee Joe Biden, 77, picked 55-

vear-old Indian-origin Ha-

rris as his running mate.

Democratic National Committee. She is the granddaughter of Sardar J.J. Singh of the India

League of America, a non-

profit organisation which

champions the interests of

Indian-American commu- annum.

spokesperson of

Singh was earlier

National

her press secy for V-P rally

Washington, Aug. 17: week, Democratic presum-Senator Kamala Harris ptive presidential nomin-has roped in Indian-Am-ee Joe Biden, 77, picked 55-

esday by selecting Harris,

an Indian-American and

an African-American, as his running mate in the

election on November 3.

Born to a Jamaican father

FEARS RISE OVER UNFAIR U.S. **PREZ ELECTION**

Washington, Aug. 17: With less than 80 days to go before the US presidential election, it looks like Democratic nominee Joe Biden's race to

Yet, as Democrats nationwide gather online this week to nominate him as their party's choice to challenge President Donald Trump on November 3, many fear Biden may just do that —for factors almost entirely out of his control.

The former Vice-President and his allies have every reason to feel bullish. Polls show Biden has built an expansive lead in nearly every battleground state that Trump won narrowly in 2016, as the Republican's approval numbers tumble amid the Coronavirus pandemic. For the first time in a decade, retaking the Senate — and full control of Congress — is within sight. — Agencies

In the 1940s, J.J. Singh

along with a small group of fellow Indians mounted

a nationwide campaign

against racial discrimina-

tory policies of the US.

This culminated in the

then president Harry

Truman signing the Luce-

Celler Act on July 2, 1946.

It allowed a quota of 100

Indians to immigrate to

the United States per annum. — PTI

NZ delays election as Covid cases rise

Wellington, Aug. 17: New Zealand's Prime Minister postponed the country's general election on Monday by a month to October 17 as the city of Auckland remains in lockdown due to a growing Coronavirus outbreak. Prime Minister Jacinda

Ardern bowed to pressure

to delay the polls after parties complained they could not campaign with nearly a third of New Zealand's 5 million people lockdown under Auckland. "Ultimately, the 17th of October... provides sufficient time for parties to plan around the range of circumstances we will be campaigning under,' Ardern said at a news conference.

The election was scheduled for September 19 and New Zealand law requires it to be held by November 21. Advance voting will now start on October 3.

The Prime Minister ruled out delaying the polls any further, as her Labour Party maintains a strong lead over the conservative National Party in opinion polls. "We are all in the same boat. We are all campaigning in the environment,

Ardern said. New Zealand on Monday recorded nine new cases of Covid-19, taking the number of active cases to 78. There have now been a total of 1,280 cases in the country, and 22 deaths.

An earlier election would have worked in Ardern's favour, as her success in stifling Covid-19 and keeping the country virus-free for 102 days until the latest outbreak boosted popularity.

Deputy Prime Minister

Winston Peters, who had called for a delay, said "common sense has pre-

Islamabad

CHINA GRANTS 1st **VIRUS CURE PATENT TO CANSINO**

Beijing, Aug. 17: China's vaccine specialist CanSino Biologics Inc has won a approval Beijing for its Covid-19 vaccine candidate Ad5-nCOV, state media reported, citing documents from the country's intellectual property regulator.

It is the first Covid-19 vaccine patent granted by China, state reports. The paper cited documents published by China's National Intellectual Property Administration saying that the patent was issued on August 11. Saudi Arabia said this month it plans to begin Phase III clinical trials for the CanSino vac-

S. KOREA PASTOR **TESTS POSITIVE AMID VIRUS SPIKE**

Seoul, Aug. 17: A conservative South Korean pastor who has been a bitter critic of the country's president has tested positive for Coronavirus, health authorities said on Monday, two days after he participated in an antigovernment rally in Seoul that drew thousands. More than 300 virus

cases have been linked to the Rev. Jun Kwang-hun's huge church in northern Seoul. which emerged as a major cluster of infections amid growing fears of a massive outbreak in the greater capital region.

China ready to work with India

Beijing, Aug. 17: China on Monday said it is ready to work with India to enhance political mutual trust, properly manage their differences and safeguard the long-term development of bilateral ties.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said this at a regular briefing when a Western media iournalist sought China's reaction to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks that the Indian armed forces have given a befitting reply to those challenging

the country's sovereignty.

Modi, in his 74th
Independence Day address to the nation from the ramparts of Red Fort, said the armed forces have given a befitting reply to those challenging the country's sovereignty "from LoC to LAC", in a veiled reference to Pakistan and China. "From LoC (Line of Control) to LAC (Line of Actual Control), anyone who casts an eye on the sovereignty of the country, the armed forces have responded in the language they understand," Modi said. Modi's comments came amid India's bitter border row with China along the LAC in eastern Pak Army chief visits Saudi to revive ties Riyadh, Aug. 17: Pakistan's Army chief arrived in Saudi Arabia on Monday amid a row between the two countries that has threatened Riyadh's financial lifeline to Islamabad. General Qamar Javed Bajwa's visit was "primarily mili-

spokesman said.

Pakistani

tary-affairs oriented," a

Army

and government officials have said that Gen. Bajwa would use his good offices to try to calm the situation that if not reversed could badly hurt Pakistan's central bank foreign reserves.

A traditional ally, Saudi Arabia gave Pakistan a \$3 billion loan and \$3.2 billion oil credit facility to help its balance But Pakistani military of payments crisis in loan.

late 2018. demands for Riyadh to

convene a high-level meeting to highlight archrival India's alleged human rights violations in the disputed Kashmir region, Saudi Arabia has forced Pakistan to pay back \$1 billion prematurely and is demanding another \$1 billion of the said.

Riyadh has also not responded to Pakistani requests to extend the oil facility, military and finance ministry officials

said.
The head of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), General Faiz Hameed, was accompanying Bajwa, Pakistani military source

- Agencies

WEB LALERT Tech giant's warning in 'Open letter to Australians' after draft law to make it pay for news

Aussies could lose free search services, warns Google

Canberra, **Aug**. 17: Google warned on Monday that the Australian government's plans to make digital giants pay for news content threatens users' free services in Australia and could hand users' data to media organ-

The US-based company's warning, contained in what it called an "Open let-ter to Australians," comes a week before public consultations close on Australian draft laws that

would make both Google and Facebook pay for news siphoned from commercial media companies.

"A proposed law... would force us to provide you with a dramatically worse Search Google YouTube, could lead to your data being handed over to big news businesses, and would put the free services you use at risk in Australia," Google and Australia Zealand managing director Mel Silva wrote.

video-sharing plat-Both Google and Facebook have condemned the proposed legislation, which was month and aims to succeed where other countries have failed in making them compensate media businesses for news content.

Australian competition

watchdog Rod Sims, chair

Google owns YouTube, a of the Australian Competition Consumer Commission, which drafted the laws, said Google's letter contains misinformation." "Google will not be required to c h a r g e Australians for the use of its free services such as

Google Search and YouTube, unless it chooses

to do so," Sims said in

a statement. "Google will not be required to share any additional user data with Australian news businesses unless it chooses to do so," he added.

Australian Treasurer Josh Frydenberg, the min-ister responsible for the consumer watchdog, said in a statement that the draft law "remains open for consultation, providing an opportunity for media companies and digital platforms to provide

feedback" until August 28. Swinburne University lecturer media Belinda Barnet described the Google letter as a "cynical exercise" designed to "scare Google users." "I see no merit in any of the arguments," "I see no merit in she said.

"One of the most ironic arguments is that they're going to have to hand over some data to news organisations — for example which article people have read and how long they

may have read it for - and this coming from the world's major privacy violator and certainly the world's largest data aggrega-tor is a bit rich," Barnet added. Google has been battling

the Australian consumer watchdog on two fronts. Last month, the watchdog launched court action against Google for allegedly misleading account holders about its use of their personal data.



Chronicle

Misuse of social media a threat to democracy

emocracy and the life it seeks to assure its stakeholders are under increasing threat of being undermined by the reckless use of social media by vested interests. The threat includes the issue of external forces making a charade of the electoral process. Allegations ran thick and fast about how such media undermined the 2016 United States presidential elections. There are also instances of violence breaking out based on misinformation or deliberate and provocative messages, claiming lives and disrupting normal life of unsuspecting innocent

people. The recent riots in Bengaluru is the latest example.

It is against this background that the demand of the Congress party for a joint parliamentary committee to investigate the allegations that social media platform Facebook has been violating its own policy to favour the rabble-rousers and hate-mongers of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) gains relevance. The allegation is based on a report that appeared in The Wall Street Journal which alleged a "broader pattern of favouritism" towards the BJP by Facebook. The report named BJP leaders who posted hate-filled messages against Muslims on several occasions, including before the Delhi riots. The company's top public-policy executive opposed the application of the hate speech rules of the company against at least four BJP leaders and groups who were "flagged internationally for participating in violence", saying it "would damage the company's business prospects in the country". The report said the company "acknowledged that the official had raised concerns about the political fallout that would want to provide the provided that the official had raised concerns about the political fallout that would want to provide the provided that the official had raised to be provided to the provided that the official had raised to be provided to the provided that the official had raised to be provided to the provided that the official had raised to be provided to the provided that the official had raised to be provided to the provided to result from designating the BJP leader a dangerous individual".

The business model of social media is directly and instantly proportional to the reach of their contents. This will be best served by pandering to and often engaging extremist elements in society and polity who will ensure such stuff gets widest publicity. With little checks and balance in place, the social media has the power to break into smithereens the social fabric that has been woven for decades or even centuries.

The allegation, though denied by Facebook, is not about partisan politics; it's about the sanctity of the country's democracy and democratic processes, which should be a matter of concern for the government as well as the Opposition. The response of the government, however, has been less than forthright. Instead of addressing the issue, Union law minister Ravi Shankar Prasad has sought to level personal allegations against former Congress president Rahul Gandhi and advance a whataboutery that the Opposition was in the dock during the Cambridge Analytica scandal. This denial is not enough. Mr Prasad and the government must understand that no mature democracy would allow outsiders to violate the law and manipulate systems. The heads of social media organisations, including Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook, had been hauled up before the US congressional committee for alleged unethical business practices. India, priding itself to be a global leader, must do whatever it takes to protect the sanctity of the democratic process. Giving in to the Opposition demand would reinforce our democratic processes and enhance the national pres-

Covid strikes cricket

ricketer, cricket administrator and politician Chetan Chauhan has created a distressing record as the first Test player to die of Covid-19. The death of a son of an Indian Army doctor is illustrative of the insidious power of the coronavirus to inveigle itself into the human body despite all the precautions a person of knowledge might take against it. His case is a tragic reminder that the battle against Covid-19 is far from over in India and that complications the virus creates in multiple organs in some people, especially in the most vulnerable 70-plus section of the population, are not easily fought off even with specialised medical care.

Born just a few weeks before independence was attained, Chauhan became famous as the diligent yet stodgy other half of an opening partnership with the world record breaking Sunil Gavaskar that helped erase the memories of eras symbolised by the retreating back foot in the face of hostile fast bowling, without the benefit of protective gear of course. Chauhan was the unglamorous but sincere second fiddle who was reluctant to stage the walkout in Melbourne in 1981 just because Gavaskar was given out Leg Before Wicket (LBW), perhaps wrongly. India went on to stage a remarkable comeback victory in the Melbourne Test to square

Having experienced life in Australia for a few years, Chauhan felt the tug of his homeland and returned to daringly step into the politics of Delhi cricket, which is a kind of crash course before real politics of the electoral kind. With his engaging quality of having time to listen to everyone, Chauhan fared well as an MP and became a UP minister too. He may have helped overturn the belief that there is no place for a decent man in the quagmire of UP politics. To serve in public life was Chauhan's credo. As a batsman he was a cricket tragic in the sense that he never managed a Test century, 97 being his best. But he tried for India in every sense under all the hats he wore.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

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PM's 'creative solution' for Nagas floundering?



Mohan Guruswamy

he so-called Naga peace talks are now floundering. National Socialist Council of Nagaland Muivah Thuingaleng reiterated on August 14 from New Delhi that going by the 2015 Framework Agreement signed between his outfit, the NSCN(I-M), and the Government of India: "Nagas can co-exist with India, but will not merge with it. We are not asking (for a) Naga national flag and constitution from the Government of India. Recognise them or not, we have our own flag and constitution. Flag and constitution are ingredients of our recognised sovereign entity and the symbols of Naga nation-

Not long ago I had a conversation with an RSS figure conversant with the Naga issue. He was confident Narendra Modi would soon find a "creative solution" to this vexed problem. I asked him if it meant the Manipur, as the dominant Tangkhul faction of the NSCN (I-M) was mostly based around Ukhrul

in Manipur? And the dismemberment of Arunachal Pradesh as the Konyak Nagas, who mostly owe allegiance to the NSCN's Khaplang faction, are mostly in Tirap and Changlang divisions of that state? He didn't answer, except saying wait and see --Modiji has a "creative

solution".

Whatever it was, the "creative solution" is now clearly unravelling. The NSCN(I-M) has now demanded that Prime Minister Modi's longtime Naga interlocutor R.N. Ravi, now Nagaland's governor, must removed from the talks. The severely ailing 86vear-old Isak Muivah is now in New Delhi for health reasons and is also in talks with the powers that be. What can they now offer him after scrapping Article 370 and dismembering J&K and putting Jammu and Kashmir under Central rule as a Union territory?

How far removed is Article 371 from Article The Naga quest for a separate identity inde-pendent of India burst into an armed conflict in January 1956 when A.Z. Phizo assumed full control of the Naga National Council, which was championing the Naga cause. Immediately after Phizo took over, the Naga Hills was declared a disturbed area and put under the Indian Army's control.

At that time eminent Indians like Jayaprakash Jawaharlal Nehru for sending the Army to "pacify" the Naga Hills. Nehru assured critics that the Army would be in the area for just a few months. The Indian Army is still deployed in the region and 3 Corps is permanently headquartered in Dimapur. From time to time news would filter out that the contours of a settlement were visible, but nothing of consequence came out. On August 3, 2015 the Narendra Modi government announced that an agreement was concluded and that its details would be kept secret. Why the details of the accord must be secret is best known to it, and what exactly it is has been the subject of much speculation.

While the details of the 'historic agreement" are still shrouded in secrecy, it is believed the immediate deal only covered the territory of Nagaland. It seemed agreed that the question of the other areas of "Greater Nagalim" would be resolved consensually via dialogue with Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh. It was thought the deal will pave the

The Naga quest for a separate identity independent of India burst into an armed conflict in January 1956.

way to an election where the NSCN (I-M) or a successor political party would be facilitated to secure power through polls, as done in Mizoram. In a paper published on

March 30, 2017 in a widely read blog "Indian Security Affairs" main-tained by Maj. Gen. P.K. Mullick (Retd), Lt. Gen. J.R. Mukherjee (Retd), a former corps commander with extensive experience and connections in Assam and Northeast, 'Unauthenticated leaks from reliable sources

indicate that points agreed are: A separate constitution? Flag for Nagaland, separate cur-rency and passports for Nagas. Nagaland would have a UN representative, foreign affairs and defence will be a joint subject; a pan-Naga gov-ernment to cover all Naga-inhabited areas." This is why Manipur is agitated, as it will leave it with just the Imphal Valley. The unabashed governor following the recent elections to install BJP-led government lends credence to a certain urgency to implement the deal, as the talks have been going on for almost two decades. We constantly worry

at play since the days when Mowu Angami went to Yunnan. But what we need to worry more about is the American hand at work. The first missionaries went there in 1836, when Rev. Miles Bronson set a mission Namsang, now Arunachal Pradesh's Tirap subdivision. But the real impetus to Christianity came after American Baptist mis-Rev. E.W.

about the Chinese hand

sionary, Clarke. The Baptists never looked back since then and now maintain over 800 churches and have a

majority of Nagas under their fold. While it must be acknowledged the mis-sionaries played a pioneering role in establishing modern healthcare and educational facilities, we must not remain unaware of the Baptist Church's role in creating a new awareness and sense of oneness among

the Naga tribes. While the armed forces may have learnt from their experience, our political and bureaucratleadership never seemed to have learnt anything, or worse, forgotten anything. We have since Nagaland's formation in December 1963 lurched from one compromise after another. Consequently, the Naga Hills region -- Nagaland, Manipur and Arunachal

have had the most uncaring and corrupt state governments with little to show on the ground despite India's highest per capita development expenditures.

India's long-term security interests, and the steady expansion of Chinese influence in Myanmar in the areas abutting our borders, equally require our military and administrative presence in the Naga Hills as it does a general stability.

The answers to these can only be found in new and innovative political administrative arrangements that factor not just the culture of Naga tribes but the geography of the Naga Hills Article 371A of the Constitution does offer some safeguards, but clearly these do not satisfy the Nagas.

But a separate constitution, flag, currency and UN membership might be going a bit too far. Will this not have consequences in other parts of the country like Jammu and Kashmir, where a secessionist war is raging, and even in states like Tamil Nadu where regional nationalism is extremely strong?

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

MOTHER TONGUE

Mr Tulasi Reddy's opinion (citing good instances) that education up to primary level should be in mother tongue (CM demeans mother tongue, DC, Aug. 17) is appreciable. He should know that the people studying in private (English medium) schools are not from England, America or Australia, but India, So. if he had insisted that both in government and private schools, the primary education should be in mother tongue, his statement would have been 100 per cent unbiased.

Jagannadham Chowdari

HEALTH MISSION The launch of National Digital Health Mission to provide citizenship card with all health related details and forming a repository of medical information is good but is also a tall order. It carries the risk of breaching the Right to Privacy of the patient. To respect the privacy of patient and maintain secrecy of their condition is an important part of medical ethics. That will be hard to follow with the proposed digitisation. Another problem is that with limited resources it is difficult to create repository at national level. It requires manpower with knowledge of medical jargon and infrastructure. **Dr D.V.G. Sankararao**

Russia launches Venus-7

The Soviet Union today launched what it called an "Automatic inter-planetary station Venus-7. Tass said the aim of the launching "is to continue the exploration of theplanet Venus, which was carried out earlier by the Soviet automatic stations."

Tass said the spaceship was launched at 8.38 a.m. Moscow time (1108hrs IST) and together with the final stage of the rocket carrier was

50 YEARS AGO IN put into an

Chronicle of the earth.
At 1229 hrs. IST. the engine of the final stage

was switched on for just over four minutes out of orbit and on

its way.
Tass said at 1430 hours IST
Venus-7 was more than 40,000
km. from earht.

'Venus-7 was put into a trajectory close to the present one," the Soviet news agency said, "All the systems and scientific equipment on board the station are functioning normally.



Kishwar ondon Diary

Of 'staycations' & cheap meals: Will Christmas be merry again?

nly those who were sensible enough to opt for a staycation did not get their holidays wrecked. Oh, to think that just a year ago we could fly endlessly around the globe. And now taking even a short holiday is like a complicated military manoeuvre, where every possibility has to be measured and prepared for. Just a fortnight ago, people were told to travel abroad to European countries with which the UK had "air bridges". As holidays typically end by the beginning of September, Brits rushed off to Italy, Greece, Spain and France. Now comes the ruling that France is a no-go, as is Spain, which has seen a second wave of infections. If you have been or are in France and get delayed in returning, then you face a fortnight of quarantine at home

upon return.

This means kids will miss opening days of school. That is, in case the schools open at all. The Teachers Union is not sure if their members or their pupils will be safe. But not to worry. Pubs are open and restaurants have been cheered up by Rishi Sunak's scheme of meals at halfprice if you eat out. As the old rock The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh headed off to Balmoral, their castle in Scotland.

song said: "We need no education". Cheap meals is all we need! But whether this will be enough to ensure that restaurants will survive is difficult to say - as the subsidies cannot last for too long.

Each society has its own way of dealing with Covid-19. In India we have families bonding even more and the sale of noodles and pasta is shooting up as people home-cook. And many feel it is time to bring back the joint family. But in London it is difficult to keep anyone at home while the pubs continue to overflow.

ike others, the royal family too have opted for a staycation. The Queen, 94, and the Duke of Edinburgh, 99, headed off to Balmoral, their Scottish castle where the weather is, if anything, more severe than in Windsor, where they were isolating themselves. Prime Minister Boris Johnson has also chosen Scotland for his holidays

but that is more because he knows that there is yet again a rising demand in Scotland for independence. Nicola Sturgeon, the Scottish First Minister (like chief minister) managed the Covid episode much better than Boris did for England and is likely to win the elections in Scotland. So we are bracing for yet another referendum on Scottish independence.

ven so the government in Scotland did not do better than England when it came to exam results of school leavers waiting to go to universities. Teaching was disrupted due to lockdowns. Schools tried teaching online but as usual the private schools did better than state funded schools. Proper examinations could not be held. So they had mock exams in many parts of the country. The students also have teachers' assessments to send forward with their university applications. With no proper exams, what would the final grades be?

If anything worse than the pandemic policy can be imagined, we have had it. The Scottish Education Authority used an "algorithm" which resulted

in massive downgrading of students. There was such a furore that the minister had to apologise and rescind the results. Better decisions are awaited and students feel cheated and angry. So they will appeal. With only four weeks left before the university admissions are decided, an unhappy holiday is what students can look forward to. For young people all over the world, 2020 has brought huge uncertainty.

here are many reasons to celebrate or commemorate August 15 — which is also Victory over Japan (VJ) Day, but it gets celebrated much less than the Victory in Europe (VE) Day. In India it is rarely mentioned, though one of the most crucial land battles, that in Kohima, took place in India, which Japan lost and then retreated from Southeast Asia. It means a lot in Australia and New Zealand but not in other places which should commemorate it.

he one good news among many sad ones is that theatres are about to reopen. In a dramatic gesture, Andrew Lloyd Webber volunteered to be a test case for the

Covid-19 vaccine because like many. he thinks that until there is a vaccine the problem of social distancing will trouble theatres. He had to close the long-running Phantom of the Opera (which I saw it for the first time 20 years ago), but no doubt he will rebound with something else. But even with their capacity reduced to one-third of normal, venues like Bridge Theatre and the National will open in the autumn. Bridge would show a new play by David Hare and later it will revive Talking Heads by Alan Bennet. The National will open only the Olivier Theatre with a new one-person play Death of England: Delroy. It is an unusual play about racism written by two black playwrights. Art galleries are also reopening. Tate Modern has opened as has the National Gallery. The British Museum and the British Library are back but with limited capacity. Perhaps by Christmas, life may, finally, be merry again.

Kishwar Desai is an award win-











TUESDAY | 18 AUGUST 2020 | VISAKHAPATNAM

quick

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	38,050.78	0.46
Nifty 50	11,247.10	0.61
S&P 500*	3,382.57	0.29
Dollar (₹)	74.88	0.04
Pound Sterling (₹)	97.97	-0.09
Euro (₹)	88.62	0.21
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	53,611▲340	0.63
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	45.03	0.23
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.975	0.010
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.688	-0.021
* As of 9:30 PM IST		

GDP contracted 16.5% in June quarter: Ecowrap

SBI's research report Ecowrap expects India's GDP to have contracted by 16.5 per cent during April-June (Q1). In May, it had estimated Q1 GDP contraction of over 20 per cent. It said degrowth in corporate GVA (better results of firms) has been significantly better than revenue degrowth. So far, around 1,000 firms have repor-ted their Q1 results, which indicate over 25 per cent fall in top line and over 55 per cent fall in bottom line.

Seafood exports in FY20 pegged at 12,89,651 mt



India shipped 12,89,651 mt of seafood worth Rs 46,662.85 crore (\$6.68 billion) during 2019-20, largely cushioning the adverse impact of the pandemic, the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPE-DA) said in Kochi. Frozen shrimp remained the major export item in both quantity and value folwed by frozen fish while the USA and China were the major importers. Exports improved in rupee term by 0.16 per cent.

Aarti Drugs board to consider bonus issue

Aarti Drugs said its board will meet later this week to consider a proposal to issue bonus shares. The firm, which manufactures bulk drugs and chemicals, did not divulge more details. The next meeting of "the board of directors of the company is scheduled to be held on Thursday, August 20, to consider a proposal for issue of bonus shares," Aarti Drugs said. Shares of Aarti Drugs rose 10.03 per cent on the BSE.

Muthoot, Kotak arm tie up to offer Covid cover

Muthoot Finance said it has tied up with Kotak Mahindra General Insurance to offer Covid-19 insurance cover of up to Rs 1 lakh against gold Ioan. Muthoot Finance Avush Gold Loan sche-me will provide complimentary cover to customers taking gold loan under the Super Loan scheme. Muthoot Finance MD George Alexander Muthoot the intitiative is part of the firm's ongoing customer loyalty programme and social commitment.



■ Disbursements dip 90% in April-June

MFIs take a hard knock in first qtr

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, AUG. 17

Micro-finance disbursements dropped by 90 per cent in the June quarter to all-time low levels and the gross loan portfolios of all micro-lenders shrank by 2.42 per cent compared to March quarter. However, collection rates, which had fallen to alltime low of 35 to 40 per cent in March, have start-

ed picking up. All the microlenders together disbursed Rs 6,235 crore in the lockdown-hit June quarter, which was down 91 per cent from Rs 72,528 crore in the March quarter and 88 per cent below the disbursement of Rs 54,127 crore in June 2019 quarter, according to

the data from Sa-Dhan.
The share of NBFC-MFIs, in quarterly dis-bursement, fell to a dismal 97.5 per cent to Rs 529 crore from Rs 21,927 crore in the March quarter. Though banks accounted for a major share of the disbursements at Rs 4,233 crore, it was still 88 per cent down from the March quarter disbursement of Rs 35,194 crore. Small Finance Banks too saw 88 per cent decline from Rs 10,746 crore in the March quarter to Rs 1,281 crore in

the June quarter.

"During the lock-down we were not contemplating disbursements. We disbursements only after the June first week. Our strategy has been to disburse to exist-



clients," said S. V. Raja Vaidyanathan, MD of

Asirvad Microfinance.
Lower disbursements
dragged down the combined gross loan portfolio of micro-lenders in end-June to Rs 2,24,595 crore from Rs 2,30,165 crore in the March quarter.

The overall collection rate in April had fallen to an all-time low of 35-40 per cent, which was lower than the repayment rate during demonetisation. By May it improved to 45-50 per cent, by June to 50-55 per cent and in July to 65-70 per cent. Sa-Dhan expects that collection rates will move up to 80-85 per cent by August-September.

"By September, when the moratorium ends, there will be a jump in collections as the 20 per cent customers who have availed of moratorium, will start repaying. By the end of the year, collection rates should return to pre-Covid levels," said

Vaidyanathan.

Collections rates were 99.08 per cent in the March quarter and 98.11 per cent in June 2019. The overall write off

ratio, which stood at 0.52 per cent in the March quarter and 0.90 per cent in June 2019, shot up to 2.57 per cent in the last quarter. Uttarakhand recorded a write-off ratio of 10.31 per cent, Delhi 8.35 per cent, Maharashtra 5.88 per cent, Gujarat 5.53 per cent and Uttar Pradesh 4.72 per cent. Industrywide portfolio at risk>30 days deteriorated to 1.89 per cent from 1.78 per cent in March.

"Nationwide lockdown and extension of moratorium led to lower repayments in April, however after relaxations and opening up of the economy, now the repayment rate is at 65-70 per cent and is expected to increase to 80-85 per cent in August and September," said P Satish, Executive Director, Sa-

Taxpayers don't have to report big transactions

New Delhi, Aug. 17: Taxpayers will not be required to mention their high-value transactions in their income tax returns, officials in the know of the devel-opment said.

There is no such proposal to modify income tax return forms," an official said, responding to reports of a proposal to expand reportable financial transactions to include hotel payments over Rs 20,000, life insurance premium payment over Rs 50,000 and health insurance premium payment over Rs 20,000, donations and payment of school/college fees over Rs 1 lakh a year.

Any expansion in reporting under the statement of financial transactions (SFT) will mean that such report ing of high-value transactions to the I-T department will be done by financial insti-

tutions, they said.
Only third parties would report highvalue transactions to the I-T department as per the Income Tax Act. Such information would be used to identify people who are not paying up due taxes.

'There is no such proposal to modify income tax returns forms," an official said. "The taxpayer would not need to mention his/her highvalue transactions in his/her return."

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO

With more than 170 Covid-

19 vaccine candidates in

the works globally, insur-

ers and reinsurers are

looking to offer transit

cover for the vaccines to be

transported from one coun-

try to other parts of the

world. Insurance compa-

nies, which aim to provide

comprehensive risk miti-

gation services to support

the development, manufac-

turing and distribution of

Covid-19 vaccines, are like-

ly to start writing business

Lloyd's, the world's spe-

and in-principle approval

of its programme, Syndicate 1796, set up to insure

the storage and transporta-

tion of Covid vaccines to

from October 1.

NEW DELHI, AUG. 17

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD **BUYING UP**

stake in more than 1,000

companies during the April-June 2020 quarter.

in 1,018 companies listed on the NSE in the last quarter. The average stock price of these com-panies in the same peri-

od increased by 60.28 per

cent. On the other hand,

retail holding went down

in 545 companies. The

average stock price of these companies too

increased by a slightly higher 61.08 per cent," according to Prime

"Unlike seen in previ-ous quarters and years

wherein retail would typ-

ically buy at the peak and

sell at lows, the last quar-

ter saw heavy buying by retail making use of the steep fall in share prices

due to the coronavirus

pandemic," said Pranav

Haldea, managing director, Prime Database

Group.
Holdings of high net worth individuals (HNIs)

-individuals with more

than Rs 2 lakh sharehold-

ing—in companies listed on the NSE also

increased to 1.84 per cent

by value as on June 30,

2020 from 1.78 per cent as

Among the domestic institutions, holdings of insurance companies, in

absolute value terms,

went up by 25.28 per cent

from the March quarter

to Rs 7.02 lakh crore as on

Insurers set to offer transit

cover for Covid-19 vaccine

on March 31, 2020.

Database.

Retail holding went up

Retail holding rises in Retail investors have entered the stock market 1,018 companies in Q1 in a big way during the ▶ HNI holdings in NSE lockdown period, as evifirms rise to 1.84% denced by a rise in their

Insurers holdings up 25.28% to ₹7.02 L cr FPI holdings fall to 21.05% from 21.17% In top 10 firms, FPIs have 52.29% stake, DIIs

Retail investors play the

market in June quarter

June 30, 2020. Life Insurance Corporation of India's holding—across 292 companies where its holding is more than 1 per cent—stood at Rs 5.40 lakh crore in the June quarter, an increase of

38.64% and MFs 36.05%

26.93 per cent over the previous quarter.
The holding of private promoters in companies listed on the NSE reached an all-time high of 44.43 per cent by value, increasing from 44.25 per cent in March. Private promoter ownership has been steadily increasing for the last 11 years, having increased from 33.61

per cent in June 2009.
While Indian private promoters' holding has gone up from 26.45 per cent to 34.86 per cent over the last 11 years, foreign promoters' holding has gone up from 7.16 per cent to 9.57 per cent.

On the other hand, the holding of the government in companies listed on the NSE hit an alltime low of 6.36 per cent as on June 30, 2020, down from 6.56 per cent as on March 31, 2020.

"Since June 2009, hold-

ing of government has been steadily declining, from 22.71 per cent as on June 30, 2009, due to the government's divestment programme, not enough new listings as also lacklustre performance of many CPSEs relative to their private peers," according to Haldea.

Holdings of domestic mutual funds in companies listed on the NSE reduced to 7.81 per cent by value in June from 7.96 per cent in March.

Holdings of foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) also fell from 21.17 per cent in March to 21.05 per cent in June 2020, despite net inflows of Rs 29,516 crore during the quarter. FPI ownership stood at Rs 28.60 lakh crore as on June 30, 2020.

FPIs are the largest non-promoter shareholders in the Indian market and their investment decisions have a huge bearing on the stock prices and overall direction of markets. It is thus time that complete details of all their holdings are made mandatory to be disclosed in India, Haldea said.

"Institutional money continues to incrementally get more concentrated to the top 10 per cent companies by mar-ket cap, reflecting a heightened risk-off environment, Haldea said, adding, "The top 10 per cent companies by market capitalisation accounted for 52.29 per cent of overall FPI holding, 38.64 per cent of overall DII holding and 36.05 per cent of overall mutual fund holding.

US law firm Rosen plans to sue HDFC Bank over misleading info

based Rosen Law Firm on Monday said it is planning to investigate potential securities claims against HDFC Bank following allegations of sharing "materially misleading business iniormation

HDFC Bank said it was not aware of any lawsuit and prima facie it looked 'frivolous as we believe we have been transparent in our disclosures"

"Rosen law firm is preparing a securities lawsuit on behalf of HDFC Bank shareholders," the global investor right law firm said in a statement on its website.

Citing some news reports about alleged unfair business practices and the lender missing estimates on analysts' profits for the June quarter, Rosen Law Firm said it is preparing a securities lawsuit.

HDFC American Depository Receipt share price fell by 2.83 per cent following the report, it added.

The bank's ADRs are listed on the NYSE. The law firm said it will

investigate "potential securities claims on behalf of shareholders of HDFC Bank Ltd resulting from allegations that the bank may have issued materialmisleading business information to the investing public".

Last year, Rosen Law had prepared a similar classaction suit against IT giant Infosys after a whistleblower had alleged malpractices by a few key management personnel. The suit was dismissed in May this year.

The law firm quoted media reports about allegations of improper practices and conflict of interest in HDFC Bank Ltd's vehicle financing opera-tions, which involved its former unit head.

"If you purchased securities of HDFC Bank please visit the firm's website...to join the securities action," Rosen Law Firm said.

rne targest vate sector lender had posted a 22 per cent rise in its consolidated net profit at Rs 6,927 crore in April-June quarter of the current fiscal year 2020-21.

Commenting on the development, HDFC Bank said: "We were unaware of any such development (class action lawsuit) till we heard about it from the media a little earlier today. We are getting details of it. We'll examine it and respond to it as appropriate. Prima facie it does look frivolous as we believe we have been transparent in our disclo-

The bank said it is an interim response.

The lender in July launched a probe on vehicle finance lending practices following allegations against the conduct of a key executive in the auto lending business.

cialist insurance and reinsurance leader, recently announced the creation

> the emerging economies. Indian insurers are also keen to tap the evolving market for transportation of vaccines. Sanjay Datta, chief-underwriting and claims, ICICI Lombard, said, "We are already providing marine cover for transportation of pharma-

ceutical products. How-

BIOLOGICAL E BUYS AKORN INDIA

Hyderabad, Aug. 17: Biological E. Limited (BE), a city-based pharmaceuticals and biologics company, on Monday announced the acquisition of Akorn India Limited, a subsidiary of Akorn Inc, USA, for an undisclosed sum. By this strategic acquisition. BE will be able to enhance its manufacturing capabilities of its vaccines and injectable medicines, a BE release said. BE is in the process of developing a Covid-19 vaccine and may be able to use Akorn's facilities at Paonta Sahib plant in Himachal Pradesh for manufacture of the vac-

ever, when it comes to providing the end-to-end cover transportation of Covid-19 vaccines, we are watching the ongoing developments in this developments regard. Accordingly, we will decide about the

launch of such a product, as the government is making special arrangements for its transportation right from the laboratories to the end-consumers." Syndicate 1796 is devel-

oped by insurance technologv firm Parsvl in tie-up with various partners, including vaccine alliance Gavi. The Syndicate forms the foundation of the new global health risk facility (GHRF) at Lloyd's. The GHRF will offer All Risk' cargo coverage for transit and storage risks on all global health products related to Covid-19 and any other infectious disease control programmes. The creation of a public-private syndicate to address a global health emergency is the first in Lloyd's history.

It is expected that those eligible for coverage will include manufacturers, procurement agents, logistics companies, ministries of health and other public agencies. "This unique partnership is a real demonstration of the value and ingenuity the Lloyd's market can bring to help address a global health emergency, Neal, CEO, Lloyd's.

NFRA FINDS LAPSES IN KPMG ARM'S **FY18 AUDIT OF IFIN**

New Delhi, Aug. 17: The National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA) has found various lapses in the statutory audit of IL&FS Financial Services Limited for 2017-18 done by

BSR & Associates LLP. NFRA has issued the Auait Report (AQRR) of the statutory audit for the year 2017-18 of IL&FS Financial Services Ltd (IFIN).

However, BSR said the audit quality review did not give "due consideration to all the facts and circumstances", adding that it was reviewing the report and would respond later.

"The instances of failure to comply with the requirements of the Standards of Auditing (SAs) by BSR are signifi-cant," a release issued by the corporate affairs ministry said on Monday. NFRA comes under the ministry, BSR & Associates is an affiliate of KPMG As per the ministry's release, BSR did not have

adequate justification for issuing the audit report. NFRA found that the IT processes/ platform used by BSR have deficiencies that are systemic and

structural in nature.—PTI

I-SEC TO OFFER WALL S'pore gives more wage support to tourism sectors STREET STOCKS

FARIS MOKHTAR & MICHELLE JAMRISKO **RAVI RANJAN PRASAD** SINGAPORE, AUG. 17 MUMBAI, AUG, 17

ICICI Securities hands Interactive Brokers, a USbased online brokerage firm with multi-asset and multi geography trading capabilities, to offer its customers the ability to invest in the US markets.
"The alliance wil

"The alliance will enable ICICI Securities nation. clients to diversify their investments outside of the Indian market and access multi-asset investment opportunities and trade in US markets across stocks, ETFs, and fixed income products,'

ICICI Securities said. There is no minimum ticket size and US markets even allow for fracownership of shares, so even small retail investors can build a portfolio, it said.

Singapore will provide additional wage support to protect jobs in sectors hardest hit by the pandemic such as aviation and tourism till March next year, deputy prime minister Heng Swee Keat said on Monday in a televised address to the some sectors

recovering faster than others, the government will adjust support based on the projected recovery, Heng said.

The city-state will provide 50 per cent wage support for seven more months for firms in the aerospace, aviation and tourism sectors while 50 per cent wage support will be extended to the construction sector for



two more months and then lowered to 30 per to March 2021. Similarly, 30 per cent wage support will be pro-vided for arts and entertainment, food services, land transport, marine and offshore and retail sectors till March 2021.

Heng promised 25 per cent wage subsidy for each new hire younger than 40 years old, and as

those 40 or older. For a few sectors seen as managing well, including biomedical sciences. financial services, the government plans to provide 10 per cent support for four more months, for wages paid up to December.

The latest relief measures mean that most businesses will eventually

have received wage support for more than a year as Singapore seeks to cushion the economic blow of the pandemic on jobs. The government has disbursed over S\$16 billion of wage support, benefit-ing over two million local workers in more than 150,000 firms, Heng said.

But Heng warned that support couldn't be indefinite, saying Singapore "cannot sustain" its job support scheme at current levels as it draws heavily on reserves and "risks trapping our workers in unviable business-

Heng said businesses should use the extended support to retain and upskill workers, "and to transform your opera-tions for the post-Covid-19 world" in order to "spring back faster when the recovery comes."

The wage support is part of additional support measures of S\$8 bilannounced on Monday to cushion the blow from the coronavirus pandemic. The new set of meas-

ures, announced almost three months after the last package, adds to Singapore's total pledged pandemic aid of almost S\$100 billion, Heng, who is also finance minister, said in the recorded

Singapore's economy shrank a record 42.9 per cent on an annualised basis in the second quarter from the previous three months, data last week showed, with trade and industry minister Chan Chun Sing warning there could be "recurring waves of infection and disruption.'

- Bloomberg

RENAULT BRINGS NEW DUSTER 1.3 TURBO PETROL

MICHAEL GONSALVES

The French car maker Renault on Monday launched the all-new Duster turbo petrol variant starting at Rs 10.49 lakh. The top-end is priced Rs 13.59 lakh at pan- India showroom. The company will continue to sell the existing BS6 Duster 1.5 petrol variant. Renault claims the new 1.3-litre turbo petrol engine to be the most pow-



erful SUV in its segment.

Ronnie wraps up sixth World title

Washington: Ronnie O'Sullivan became world snooker champion for the sixth time and at the age of 44 by beating fellow Englishman Kyren Wilson 18-8 in the final.

O'Sullivan moved to within one of the all-time record of world titles, held by Stephen Hendry, and tied the number won by Steve Davis and Ray Reardon.

Regarded as the most talented player ever, O'Sullivan had a tough run to the final, beating Chinese star Ding Junhui in the second round, former world champion Mark Williams in the quarterfinals, and then threetime winner Mark Selby in a

spectacular semifinal that went

to a decider. The best-of-35-frame match against Wilson, a first-time finalist, ended up being a procession after O'Sullivan won seven straight frames in Sunday's afternoon session from 10-8 up. Returning for the evening session at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield, O'Sullivan needed just one more frame for the win and sealed it with a

Nagal in Prague pre-quarterfinal

break of 96. - AP

Prague: India's Sumit Nagal advanced to the pre-quarterfinals of the Prague Challenger tennis tournament after his opponent Jay Clarke of Britain retired hurt here on Monday. Nagal, ranked 127 in the world, was leading 6-3, 5-7, 4-1, when Clarke decided to call it quits in the second round match after playing for over

two hours. The 22-year-old Indian, playing his first competitive match since his Davis Cup encounter against Croatia's Marin Cilic in March, had received a bye in the opening round. Nagal, seeded sixth in the

tournament that also features three-time Grand Slam winner Stanislas Wawrinka, will face local favourite Jiri Lehecka in the Round of 16. Other Indians in the fray include Divij Sharan and N. Sriram Balaji, who will be com-

peting in the doubles events with separate partners. Sharan will partner Dutchman Robin Haase and they were seeded number one. Balaji will join hands with Belgium's Kimmer Coppejans. — PTI

Alex grabs points at Austrian GP

Spielberg, Austria: A trying day at the Red Bull Ring with a red-flag interrupted race, but Alex Marquez salvaged points o continue his top 15 run in the MotoGP. Stefan Bradl's participation in next week's Styria GP is now confirmed as Marc

Marquez continues his recovery. Weather forecasts were once again proven wrong as glorious sunshine beat down on the Red Bull Ring for the fourth MotoGP race of the year. Both Repsol Honda Team RC213Vs shot off

the line, Alex Marguez and Stefan Bradl immediately gaining positions and joining the group battling for the top ten. But a red flag for a dramatic crash at Turn 3 saw the race stopped, restarted and run over 20 laps.

Alex made another strong start from 13th on the grid with the restart, immediately moving into the top 10 as the field roared through the opening corners. The fighting was fierce in the first laps and the MotoGP rookie found himself shuffled

down the order after his lightning start. But Alex's consistency saw him stay free of trouble afterwards and benefit from the mistakes of others, moving back into the points.

Live on TV

CARIBBEAN PREMIER LEAGUE

Trinbago Knight Riders vs Guyana Amazon Warriors from 7.30 pm: Barbados Tridents vs St Kitts & Nevis Patriots from 3 am Star Sports 1, 2, HD

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE SEMIFINAL

Paris-Saint Germain vs RB Leipzig on Sony Ten 2, HD

NBA PLAYOFFS

Milwaukee Bucks vs Orlando Magic from 11 pm; Oklahoma City Thunder vs Houston Rockets from 4 am (Wednesday); Los Angeles Lakers vs Portland Trailblazers from 6.30 am (Wednesday). All matches on Sony Six, HD.

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United they fall again Simona says no

Manchester lose another semifinal, this time in Europe

Aug. 17: Manchester United made it an unwanted hat-trick of semifinal defeats this season after losing 2-1 in the Europa League to Sevilla. After losing in the last four of the FA Cup and EFL Cup, United failed to convert a string of chances before Luuk de Jong scored the winning goal for Europa League experts Sevilla.

The Spanish club has

won all five of the finals it's reached in Europe's second-level cup competition. Sevilla has the chance to win a recordextending sixth title on Friday in Cologne when its opposition will be either Inter Milan or Shakhtar Donetsk, who play Monday.

Sevilla goalkeeper Yassine Bounou kept his team in the semifinal at 1-1 with crucial saves either side of halftime, before de Jong won it.

With the game at 1-1 and heading for extra time, Sevilla substitute de Jong made the breakthrough in the 78th minute. A cross by Jesus Navas fell kindly for the tall Dutch forward to score his first European goal of the season from

close range. United had taken the lead in the ninth minute with yet another penalty in a season packed with them. Diego Carlos tangled with Marcus Rashford as the United forward had his shot saved, and then Bruno Fernandes stepped up to send the penalty into the top-left corner.

RAINA TOLD

A DAY LATE

BCCI HE QUIT,

New Delhi, Aug. 17:

Suresh Raina communicated his retirement deci-

sion to the BCCI a day

after he made it public,

the Board said on Monday, lauding the for-mer India all-rounder for being a key player in the

Minutes after the iconic

Mahendra Singh Dhoni announced his interna-

tional retirement on

August 15, 33-year-old

Raina followed his men-

tor in doing the same, sur-

"Attacking left-hand batsman Suresh Raina

officially communicated

to BCCI on Sunday about

his decision to retire from

international cricket," said the BCCI in a state-

The usual norm is play-

ers informing the BCCI

before announcing retire-

Raina represented India in 18 Tests, 226 ODIs and

78 T20Is in an internation-

al career spanning 13 years. He also had the

honour of captaining the

series win in Zimbabwe,'

tury on debut in Tests, is

also the first Indian to

slam hundreds in all three formats of the game

and his centuries were

BCCI president Sourav

Ganguly and secretary

Jay Shah paid a glowing

tribute to the southpaw.

scored outside India.

the statement added.

prising many.

ment.

limited-overs format.



Sevilla players celebrate after Suso (second from left) scored their first goal during the Europa League semifinal

Paris giants train guns on Leipzig

similarities between Paris Saint-Germain and Leipzig end with both clubs trying to reach the Champions League final for the first time.

The French powerhouse will head into Tuesday's semifinal match with its high-profile squad, while the German club comes with a team of mostly untested players.

At the Stadium of Light in Lisbon, it will be

Lisbon, Aug. 17: The Neymar, Kylian Mbapp and his teammates taking on a Leipzig squad with little Champions League experience.

Leipzig have almost nothing to lose. For PSG, anything short of the title will feel like a disappointment for a club where a priority aim has been to break through with the European title after years of dominance in France.

Leipzig reached the Bundesliga in 2016 and

the Champions League a few years later. In their second Champions League appearance, the German club eliminated Tottenham in the Round of 16 and Atletico Madrid in the quarterfinals. PSG, managed by German coach Thomas Tuchel, got past Borussia Dortmund in the Last 16 and

Atalanta in quarterfinals. PSG enter the semifinals with the feeling that this finally could be the time

PSG was eliminated in the Round of 16 in the last three seasons, and in the quarterfinals straight times before that. Its last semifinal appearance was 25 years ago, when they lost to AC Milan.

'We don't talk about history, we live at the moment. We are here

RITES WITH

because we played a great Champions League season," Tuchel said. -AP**CHAUHAN LAST**

New Delhi, Aug. 17: Former India cricketer and Uttar Pradesh cabiminister Chetan Chauhan, who died of Covid-19 related complications, was on Monday cremated with state hon-ours in Garhmukteshwar,

FULL HONOURS

Hapur. Chauhan was 73 and breathed his last at a Gurugram hospital after battling the dreaded infection for over a month. His body was first taken to his residence in Mayur Vihar before the last rites were performed in Garhmukteshwar.

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

Sunday. "He was cremated with full state honours. The funeral was attended by several bureaucrats and a sizeable crowd gathered to pay their last respects,' a Delhi and Districts Cricket Association official, who attended the

funeral, said. Chauhan was the legendary Sunil Gavaskar's longest serving opening partner and together the duo scored more than 3,000 runs, including 12 century stands.

He played 40 Tests for India and was the first Test cricketer to finish his career with over 2,000 runs but without a centu-

He became the second UP minister to succumb to Coronavirus.

Bashir Bozai, his Chicago-based Pakistan-born fan, in this file photo.

Dhoni's fan from Pakistan will quit watching cricket

Karachi-born Mohammad Bashir Bozai's vow to give up watching India-Pakistan play at ICC events, obsessive fandom follows Mahendra Singh Dhoni into retirement, adding to things like jersey number and disciples

team briefly.
"Under his captaincy, such as Suresh Raina. India registered a 3-2 series victory in West Indies and a 2-0 win over Travelling the world to watch the arch-rivals in action doesn't make sense Bangladesh in ODIs and a anymore to Bashir, aka 2-0 T20 International 'Chacha Chicago', who endured abuses Pakistani fans from while Raina, who scored a cen-

cheering for Dhoni. The well-known chacha, instead, plans to visit Ranchi to meet the man whose sphere of influence spreads far and wide.

'Dhoni has retired and so have I. I don't see myself travelling cricket again with him not being around. I loved him and he loved me myself travelling for cricket again with him not being around. — MOHAMMAD

Dhoni has retired and

so have I. I don't see

BASHIR BOZAI M. S. Dhoni fan

back," Bashir said from Chicago, where he runs a restaurant

'All great players have to call time one day but his retiring makes me sad and brings back a lot of precious memories. He deserved a grand send-off but again he is beyond that," he added.

The unspoken bond between Bashir and Dhoni blossomed after the 2011 World Cup semifinal between Pakistan. A ticket for arguably the biggest game of the Cup in Mohali was a precious commodity but

65-year-old, enough for him to "unconditionally love" the World Cup-winning captain for life. For someone who sur-

vived three heart attacks and cris-crossed the globe to see Dhoni in flesh and blood, cricket will never be the same. Now that he is done attending live games, his next stop is Ranchi. "I will go to his house in Ranchi when things get normal (post Covid-19 pandemic). That is the least I can do to wish him all the best for the future. I will also ask Ram Babu (another super fan, from Mohali, to come with me). I would have travelled to see him in the IPL but there are travel conditions and with my heart condition, it is not safe to do so," said Bashir, whose wife hails from

Marksman MS may just shoot a surprise

A life member of

New Delhi, Aug. 17: Enquiring about importing a rifle, he once sent a mail at 2 am, got it delivered at his Ranchi home, went to the range and did what he does in anything

he tries his hand at. Mahendra Singh Dhoni hit the bull's eye, fuelling an interest that would see him visit innumerable shooting ranges in the country over the next few years and display his

skills in the sport. The Walther imported by Dhoni, who interaction with cricketer retired from international Suresh Raina, shooter Manavaditya cricket on Saturday, is the

same model (LG300XT Walther Carbontec) which Abhinav Bindra had used to win a historic gold medal at the Olympics. This was 10 years ago,

when Indian shooters were starting to dominate on the world stage and Dhoni, who is now also a life member of National Rifle Association of India (NRAI), was bracing up for what would culminate into his second World Cup title triumph. Recently, during

National Rifle Association of India, M. S. Dhoni owns a **LG300XT Walther** Carbonte, the model **Abhinav Bindra had** used to win gold at the 2008 Olympics.

Rathore, who is the son of Olympic silver-medallist Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore, revealed that Dhoni is a pro when it comes to shooting as well. Manavaditya recalled how impressive Dhoni was when the cricketer visited his house. "He has a lot of interest in shooting also. I think he hit the target all the time," Manavaditya had said.

Hyderabad (India). — PTI

Dhoni has exhibited his shooting skills in the past. In 2017, when a team training session was cancelled due to rain in Kolkata, Dhoni headed to Kolkata Training School and tried his hand at pistol shooting. "His accuracy is breathtaking," Kolkata Police was quoted as saying at the time.

He had also shared a clip of him trying his hand at pistol shooting in 2018. "He has had love for

guns and shooting since a very long time. Now that he is done with cricket, shooting could be his next sport. I have seen many professional athletes shifting to shooting after retiring from their sport and go on to become Olympic champions. Unlike other sports shooting and golf can be played till a very long time," Shimon Sharif, a top importer of equipment for leading shooters, said.

COVID | SCARE

to Grand Slam

New York, Aug. 17: Wimbledon champion Simona Halep will skip the US Open, saying she is put-ting her health first and prefers to stay in Europe amid the Coronavirus pan-

Halep, a former topranked player who is currently No.2, won the title in Prague on Sunday.

"After weighing up all the factors involved and with the exceptional circumstances in which we are living, I have decided that I will not travel to New York to play the (at)usopen,' Halep wrote on Twitter.

"I always said I would put my health at the heart of my decision and I therefore prefer to stay and train in Europe," she wrote. Six of the top eight women in the WTA rank-

ings won't play in New York. No.1 Ash Barty and defending champion Bianca Andreescu have also withdrawn from the tournament. Other women who won't be playing include No.5 Elina Svitolina, No.7 Kiki Bertens and No.8 Belinda Bencic.

Rafael Nadal, the men's defending champion, has also withdrawn from the tournament, but Novak Djokovic has said he will play. The US Open is sched-uled to start at Flushing Meadows on Aug. 31.

Irina Khromacheva of Russia will replace Halep in the main draw, according to the United States Tennis Association.

NISHIKOR TESTS POSITIVE FOR VIRUS

New York, Aug. 17: Japan's Kei Nishikori, the 2014 US Open runner-up, said he has contracted Covid-19 and has with-drawn from an ATP event in New York with this year's US Open only two weeks away.

World number 31 Nishikori said he took the test and received the positive result on Sunday in Florida and will isolate himself despite few symptoms. He and his team plan more tests.

"I have some unfortunate news. This morning, while still in Florida, I got tested for Covid-19 and tested positive," Nishikori said in a statement posted on social media.

Boxer Sarita Devi is Covid positive

Back in India, former world champion boxer L. Sarita Devi on Monday tested positive for Covid-19 along with her husband Thoiba Singh but both of them are asymptomatic. The couple are based in Imphal. "Me and Sarita have tested positive. We are right now moving to a Covid-19 care facility in Imphal. Both of us have no symptoms at all," Thoiba

FAN FRAME



Ravindra Sharma (centre) took this photo with former Indian cricket captain Gundappa Viswanath (left). Viswanath scored 6.080 runs in the 91 Tests he plaved between 1969 and 1983, scoring 14 centuries and 35 half-centuries in 155 innings.

BRADY BAGS BRAGGING RIGHTS AT LEXINGTON

Lexington (Kentucky, USA), Aug. 17: Wearing a pandemic-appropriate mask, Jennifer Brady walked over to accept the first WTA trophy of her career, making sure to apply hand sanitiser before raising the new hardware overhead.

Brady claimed her initial tour-level title at the Top Seed Open on Sunday, overcoming some shaky serving and using a five-game run to seize control for a 6-3, 6-4 victory over Jil Teichmann in the final

It was the the first professional tennis event in the United States since the start of the Coronavirus outbreak, and no spectators were allowed. The unusual circumstances did not bother Brady at all.

She did not drop a set throughout the hard-court tournament and ceded only 24 games in all. It was a perfect way to prepare for the US Open, which begins August 31 in New York. -AP

Bucks, Lakers in focus at playoffs

Miami, Aug. 17: An NBA season unlike any other shifts into high gear with the start of the playoffs in the league's quarantine bubble in Orlando, Florida.

In a season reshaped by the Coronavirus pandemic, home court advantage is just a memory.

Fans are banned from the campus where the league has so far successfully operated without a positive Covid-19 test. But the price is that players know that the deeper their teams playoff run the longer they remain isolated from their

families and friends. "This is going to be the toughest championship you could ever win," Milwaukee Bucks star Giannis Antetokounmpo, the reigning Most Valuable Player, had said.

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

in all four of their regular season games, but they've produced a lacklustre 3-5 record in the restart. The Los Angeles Lakers

have also gone an unimpressive 3-5 in seeding games. LeBron James, Anthony Davis and company will be up against bat tle-hardened Trail Blazers, who won four straight down-to the wire games — including an extra play-in game against Memphis Grizzlies — to seize the final playoff berth in the West.