

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

COIMBATORE | MONDAY 31 | AUGUST 2020

WEATHER



Max: 35°C
Min: 23°C
Rainfall: 1mm

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvri: Aavani 15
Tithi: Chaturtashi
Star: Thiruvonam
Rahukalam:
7.30 am to 9 am
Yamagandam:
10.30 am to 12 noon

PRAYERS

Fajar: 4.46 am
Zohar: 12.15 pm
Asar: 3.21 pm
Maghrib: 6.21 pm
Isha: 7.33 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.20 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.58 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 5.17 PM
MOONSET TOMORROW 5.55 AM

CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+77,477)	(+960)
36,17,189	64,617

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+6,495)
TN: 4,22,085 7,231

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

2,52,82,859

DEATHS

8,48,465

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES
215

worldometers.info

29 killed as restaurant collapses in China

Beijing: At least 29 people were killed and 28 others injured when a village restaurant collapsed during the 80th birthday celebrations of a person in north China's Shanxi province, local authorities said Sunday. The accident happened at around 9.40 am on Saturday when relatives and fellow villagers were attending the birthday party.

Pondy health min cleans toilet in hospital

Puducherry: Health Minister Malladi Krishna Rao took it upon himself the task of cleaning a toilet in a Puducherry government-run hospital here after complaints about its poor maintenance came to fore. The Minister who has been at the forefront in the fight against COVID-19 in the union territory had received complaints from relatives.

COUNTER POINT



Sorry, I don't want to touch anything!



STATE | 3

For Chennai's Malayalis, it's low-key Onam



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Famous author Randall Kenan dies at 57

SPORT | 8

Did Raina leave CSK camp after rift?



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Vol. 10 No. 244 Established 1938 | 8 PAGES | ₹4.00

Most curbs off as TN moves to Unlock 4.0

Buses, Metro to run, temples, hotels, malls to open

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG 30

Lifting of the Sunday curfew and e-pass for travel within the State, allowing places of worship with limited number of devotees, operation of government and private buses, opening of shopping malls, hotels, resorts, clubs and letting government offices and banks to function with full attendance are some of the relaxations to the lockdown announced from September 1.

An official press release on Sunday said that the curfew n force had been extended till September 30 with the relaxations and restrictions. Though more relaxations have been announced for September, Section 144 banning the assembling of more than four persons in public and total curfew in containment zones would continue to be in force.

Among those relaxations are allowing film shootings with a maximum of 75 workers and no visitors, Metro Rail operation from September 7, opening hill stations like Nilgiris, Kodaikannal and Yercaud for visitors with e-pass issued by the Collectors, opening parks and stadia for exercise and sports

COME SEPTEMBER

- No more Sunday curfews
- E-pass system goes save for travel into TN from other states
- Places of worship to open
- Malls, hotels, clubs, resorts to open
- Buses, Metro to operate
- Banks at full attendance
- Film shooting with 75 persons allowed

NO

- No schools, colleges
- No cinema halls, multiplexes
- No spectators at sports venues

practice but not for spectators and letting factories and IT companies to function with 100 per cent staff.

Schools, colleges and other educational institutions, other than skill and entrepreneurial training centres, would remain closed, allowing online teaching that would be encouraged. Similarly, cinema halls, swimming pools, entertainment and amusement parks, big halls, auditoriums, beach-

es, zoos, museums and tourist spots where large numbers of people congregate would not be opened.

The ban on religious, social, political, entertainment, cultural, educational and such gatherings and processions would continue in September when suburban trains would not run and international flights would be operated only on the routes allowed by the Union Home Ministry. ■ P2

Global cases exceed 25 million

New York, Aug 30: The number of confirmed coronavirus cases globally has topped 25 million, according to a tally kept by

Johns Hopkins University. The US leads the count with 5.9 million cases, followed by Brazil with 3.8 million and India with 3.5 million.

— PTI

Shia mourners defy restrictions in Kashmir

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR, AUG. 30

The Shia mourners in large numbers on Sunday defied curfew-like restrictions at several places across Kashmir Valley including central towns of Budgam and Magam and Srinagar's Zadibal area by taking out tazia and zuljanah processions to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, the grandson of Islam's Prophet Muhammad, and his 71 family members and companions in the 'Battle of Karbala' (Iraq) in October 680.

Except at Zadibal where 16 persons were injured in police action, these events passed off peacefully after the mourners including women marched along the streets and alleys beating their chests, reciting elegies and chanting slogans and, some of them, also doing self-flagellation.

Counterinsurgency expert killed in J&K

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR, AUG. 30

Three militants and a counterinsurgency specialist of the Jammu and Kashmir police were killed in an encounter in Srinagar's Panthachowk area overnight, the officials said here on Sunday.

This was the third such clash between the separatist militants and security forces in the Valley since Friday evening. Seven militants-four belonging to Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT) and three to Hizb-ul-Mujahideen -and an Army jawan were killed earlier in two separate gunfights in southern Shopian and Pulwama districts, respectively.

Director General of Police, Dilbag Singh, said that J&K police lost one of its counterinsurgency experts in the killing of ASI Babu Singh in the encounter that took place in Panthachowk's Dhobi Mohalla after three bike-borne militants made a failed attempt to attack a joint naka party of the

police and CRPF and snatch the service weapon of one of security personnel in the area at around 10 pm on Saturday. "In Panthachowk operation, we lost a well-trained, brave and experienced counter insurgency cop," the DGP told reporters here.

He said that after the attack was foiled by the alert security personnel, the trio-one of them, as per reports, equipped with an AK assault rifle-abandoned their motorbike on the road and then ran into a nearby residential area which was quickly encircled by reinforcements including those from the Army's 20 Rashtriya Rifles. "It was a weapon snatching bid that was foiled by the alert security personnel, forcing the terrorists to leave their motorbike behind and run away. However, they were chased by our men till they took shelter in a private house in nearby area known as Dhobi Mohalla," the police chief said.

No urgency to have elected Cong prez: Khurshid

New Delhi, Aug 30: Asserting that there was no urgency to have an elected Congress president, senior leader Salman Khurshid on Sunday said he "can't see the heavens falling" for the need of a party chief as Sonia Gandhi was still at the helm and should be the one to decide on the leadership issue.

Khurshid, a former Union minister and among the leaders considered close to the Gandhi family, said he would not have signed the letter even if he was approached by the group that wrote to Gandhi seeking urgent organisational overhaul, including an active and full-time leadership.



CBI SLEUTHS

Narco test for Rhea

New Delhi: Not convinced with the replies given by Rhea Chakraborty and her brother Showik Chakraborty, the CBI is now exploring the options to conduct 'narco analysis' and 'brain mapping' tests on them as part of its investigation into the Sushant Singh death case.

Salute 'soldiers' Sophie and Vida

PAWAN BALI | DC
NEW DELHI, AUG. 30

Indian army dogs are playing a crucial role in many operations and are force multipliers. In the last one year, Indian army dogs have helped in detection of 30 IEDs and in five operations they tracked down terrorists which led to their elimination, said senior officials. They have also helped in 14 operations which led to recovery of arms and ammunition in the last one year. There have also been four instances in the past one year, where army dogs have helped in recovery of individuals or mortal remains of persons struck in snow bound areas.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday in his Mann Ki Baat address talked about Indian army dogs "Sophie" and "Vida" who have been awarded the Chief of Army Staff 'Commendation Cards'.

Vida, a Labrador is from the Army Dog Unit located in Northern Command (J&K) and was instrumental in detection of five mines and one grenade buried underground which prevented casualties or injuries to troops, said officials. Sophie, a Cocker Spaniel is with special forces 'Special Frontier Force' and is an



Sophie



Vida

explosive detection dog. Sophie sniffed out the presence of initiator in Delhi which could have been hastily used to fabricate an IED and saved precious lives.

Indian Army has eight different trades of dogs: tracker, guard, mine detection, explosive detection, infantry patrol, avalanche rescue operations, search and rescue, assault and narcotic detection dogs.

"Sophie and Vida received this honour because they performed their duties diligently while protecting their country."

SHORT TAKES

Testing capacity
ramped up to
fight Covid

Chennai: With a testing capacity of 6,000 Covid-19 RT-PCR tests per day, Medall Diagnostics is part of the efforts in high-testing Tamil Nadu in the battle against the coronavirus. Its central reference lab in Guindy is geared to bringing out the test results in time to be meaningful to state initiatives in testing, tracking and tracing. Arjun Ananth, CEO, Medall, says, "The need of the hour is quick and large scale testing to control the spread of the pandemic. In addition to RT-PCR capabilities, we also offer Antigen and Antibody tests on multiple platforms." Medall is also partnering with large NGOs and corporates to help bring factories and work places back to life and Siddha Institutes to evaluate the efficacy of Siddha medicine in treating Covid-19.

App for engineering
students

Chennai: Tutpro is an online learning app for engineering students in Tamil Nadu, developed by team of an experienced professor and IT professionals. The app will have a collection of easy to follow step-by-step video lessons that complement college online classes. Lessons are organised as per Anna University syllabus. There will be periodical live streaming sessions before every assessment / exam period for preparing students. Students can also post their doubts in the chat box. It has eLearning content for 12 subjects and hopes to develop eLearning content for more than 200 subjects covering all branches of engineering.

Corona cure under
Siddha, Ayurveda
soon in Pondy: CM

Puducherry, Aug. 30: Puducherry Chief Minister V Narayanasamy on Sunday announced that separate blocks to offer treatment to COVID-19 patients under Siddha and Ayurveda systems will be opened soon at the Mahatma Gandhi Government Dental College here. In fact it is a belated initiative on the part of the government to offer treatment under Indian system of medicines, he said at a virtual press conference.

"A team of doctors from Puducherry had held discussions with officials of the Siddha and Ayurveda hospitals in Chennai and obtained the details for the treatment under these systems in Puducherry," he added. Narayanasamy said a video conference was also held with the faculty and doctors of the Siddha and Ayurveda colleges functioning in Mahe earlier and they also expressed willingness to make themselves available to treat patients here. "Very soon the facility would be available," he added. Describing Unlock-4 announced by the Centre as a 'clear and timely measure', the Chief Minister said the government would enforce the lockdown till September 30 only during nights. The lockdown would be in force from September 1 from 7 pm till 6 am the next day till the month-end. —PTI

Puducherry reports 571 fresh
Covid-19 cases; tally now 14,127

Puducherry, Aug. 30: The COVID-19 tally in Puducherry rose to 14,127 on Sunday with 571 more people testing positive for the infection, while the number of deaths stood at 221 with 10 fatalities, a top health department official said. The new cases were detected out of a total of 1,866 samples which were tested in the last 24 hours ending at 10 AM in the Union Territory. Director of Health and Family Welfare S Mohan Kumar said in a release here.

The total active cases stood at 4,938 with cumulative recoveries of 8,968 people after treatment. As many as 457 patients were discharged in the

The total active cases stood at 4,938 with cumulative recoveries of 8,968 people after treatment

last 24 hours

Kumar said the fatality rate in the Union Territory was 1.56 per cent and the recovery rate, 63.48 per cent.

The Director said that 73,165 samples were tested so far, 57,839 had turned out to be negative.

The UT's Puducherry region had 516 cases, Yanam 42, Karaikal 12 and Mahe 1, he said. —PTI

Coronaviurs infections
continue to rise unabated

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG. 30

Coronavirus infections continued unabated as 6,495 cases were reported on Sunday when the death toll was at 94.

Chennai had 1,249 new cases and 16 deaths while the districts that had very high numbers were Chengalpattu 419, Coimbatore 498, Cuddalore 383, Kallakurichi 228, Salem 329 and Thiruvallur 293.

Last Sunday
curfew in TN

An intense lockdown was observed on Sunday across Tamil Nadu as part of efforts to fight COVID-19 and only healthcare services and milk supply continued as usual. Effective since last month on all Sundays, the complete lockdown saw closure of fuel pumps, markets and outlets selling essential commodities. But this was the last of the Sunday curfews as there will be no more as Unlock 4.0 kicks in from September 1.

Policemen could be seen warning those who ventured out on streets without any valid reason in

Call on railway service in
State to be taken Sept. 15

Turn P1

Rail services between States would continue only the routes now permitted and within the State there would be no service until September 15 when a call would be taken depending on the situation at that time, the release said.

A Protocol for new quarantine and testing will be announced for air and train passengers arriving in the State and the e-pass system would be in force for foreigners and passengers from other states, who could obtain it through auto-generation

several regions. Amma Canteens and healthcare services - hospitals, pharmacies and labs - functioning and sanitary workers continued their routine work.

Personnel of civic bodies conducted door-to-door surveys to detect people with flu like symptoms in addition to fever camps.

by giving details of Adhar card, travel ticket and phone number.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) would have to be strictly followed in all the facilities that were to be opened up in September and religious places would have to close down by 8 pm. Shops, restaurants and tea shops can remain open till 8 pm with take-away facility allowed till 9 pm.

Government and private offices and factories have been mandated to appoint a nodal officer to ensure that all safety norms are

followed, employees with infections do not attend office and those with symptoms are referred for immediate testing.

However, the government had advised private companies, particularly IT firms, to encourage work from home for its employees and people to avoid stepping out of their homes needlessly.

It has been made clear that all standard norms to prevent the spread of Coronavirus like wearing of facemasks, maintaining social distancing and use of sanitiser were strictly followed by all.

cases in 24 hours ending 9 am on Sunday, APs Covid-19 tally reached 4,24,767.

Tamil Nadu as of Saturday has reported a total of 4,15,590 COVID-19 positives and on Sunday reported 6,495 cases. While the infection positivity rate in AP reached an alarming 11.59 per cent, that of Tamil Nadu stood at 8.93 per cent.

<<<<

Velachery flyover blocked with a private bus instead of barricades on complete lockdown on Sunday.

— DC

Bus barricade

Stalin for extending
moratorium on EMIs

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG. 30

DMK President M K Stalin urged the Reserve Bank of India to extend the moratorium given for payment of EMI on loans taken from banks till August 31 to be extended in view of the continuing pandemic situation.

In a statement on Sunday, Stalin said the pandemic had led to job losses, salary cuts, paralysis of businesses, particularly of MSMEs, giving a shock treatment to the



middle classes.

Though the Monetary Policy Committee had discussed the devastation caused by the pandemic to the economy, it should be noted that not extending

the moratorium on EMIs to bank loans would not help redeem the economy, Stalin said.

Playing the suggestion that extending the moratorium would lead to the people forgetting the habit of repaying loans, Stalin said it was the same people who judiciously paid the EMIs once.

He requested bank heads not to put pressure on the RBI not to extend the moratorium beyond August 31, saying that a few of them were doing it now.

B RAVICHANDRAN | DC
OOTY, AUG. 30

The Gurukulam school at Agalar in the rural limits here has been conferred with the prestigious 'Green Apple Environment Award 2019' by the UK-based 'The Green Organization', for its unique project 'Each One, Plant One, Yearly One', to promote tree planting habit among children.

Stating this, school correspondent, N Arjunan, said that the school launched the 'One student, One tree' project in 2008, which won accolades from former president Dr APJ Abdul Kalam. On his advice, the school annually organizes an intra-school contest to confer 'green awards' to the children and encourage them to conserve nature.

By 2017, this project evolved into 'Each One, Plant One, Yearly One' project, to inculcate in them the need to adhere to tree growing culture

"Now, the UK-based 'The Green Organization' has described the school's greening project as an impressive and inspiring project, which others could emulate. Gurukulam is the only school from India which was selected for the green award for year 2019"



A cop from Triplicane police station distributes free food to the home less people near Chepauk.

— DC

Don't delay cataract surgeries
for fear of Covid, say doctors

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG. 30

One of the side effects triggered by the fear of the Covid-19 pandemic in people has been their reluctance to visit hospitals and clinics for seeking clinical help. Eye doctors are among those who are warning people that certain procedures like cataract surgeries should not be put off for too long and that people should trust hospitals and healthcare clinics in their following all norms and protocols in treatment, including in surgical procedures.

Telemedicine and other tools for easy clinical consultation may not work in cases where urgent surgeries are required. Among them is a disorder like cataract, the most common age-related eye condition and the leading cause of blindness. Cataract surgery is an

"Cataract is a degenerative condition even leading to permanent vision loss. It is wise to go for a cataract surgery without delaying it. A latest report has revealed alarming data that about 20 lakh new cases of cataract are added every year and 51 percent of blindness is because of cataract"

operating room (OR) procedure and cannot be conducted at the convenience of home.

"It should not be delayed and must be conducted at the appropriate time as otherwise, the cataract may turn hard and the procedure can become more complicated, posing greater risk to restoring vision. It is advisable to consult doctors for test and book an immediate surgery depending on the severity of the condition," says Dr. Praveen Krishna, Phaco surgeon and paediatric ophthalmologist, director, Radhatri Nethralaya.

atric ophthalmologist, director, Radhatri Nethralaya.

"Cataract is a degenerative condition even leading to permanent vision loss. It is wise to go for a cataract surgery without delaying it. A latest report has revealed alarming data that about 20 lakh new cases of cataract are added every year and 51 percent of blindness is because of cataract," he adds.

D r . D . R a j e n d r a n (Cataract and Refractive Surgeon, Medical Director of DR Eye Care Centre, Madipakkam) says, "Now, as we are taking proper safety measures for patients like PPE kits and sanitisation of the hospitals, we can assure patients and their family of safety. We are also trying our best to complete procedure as fast as possible with the help of expert doctors at the theatre."

Gurukulam bags 'environment award'



Gurukulam school at Agalar launched the 'One student, One tree' project in 2008.

— DC

throughout their lifetime, even after a student leaves the school. This is to promote the concept of 'greening the planet' which is necessary to combat the global warming and climate change threat.

"Now, the UK-based 'The Green Organization' has described the school's greening project as an impressive and inspiring project, which others could emulate. Gurukulam is the only

school from India which was selected for the green award for year 2019," Arjunan said, and added that the award would motivate the school to pursue its green projects with extra zeal.

HC pulls up an RDO, quashes patta order

J. STALIN | DC
CHENNAI, AUG. 30

Pulling up the Revenue Divisional Officer, Tambaram for acting in a very questionable manner for extraneous consideration, the Madras high court quashed his order directing that the patta in respect of certain properties situated in Zamin Pallavaram to be transferred in the name of Chambers.

Justice N.Anand Venkatesh quashed the order dated July 12, 2019 while allowing the petition filed by M/s The Chrome Leather company Ltd represented by its Vice President Vairakumar.

The case of the petitioner was that they are the absolute owners of the prop-



erty situated in Zamin Pallavaram. The petitioner traced the title through the sale deed executed in 1944. It is the further case of the petitioner that the revenue records stands in the name of the petitioner company and the same was clear from the copy of the Town Survey Field Register issued by the Pallavaram Municipality dated August 23, 2014.

A man named Quenti

Dawson had been trying to make a claim over the property and all the earlier attempts made by him before this court was rejected. He seems to have approached the RDO and sought for cancellation of the patta, which according to him stood in the name of one Damodharan. The petitioner had informed the RDO that Damodharan had nothing to do with the subject property and therefore the petition submitted by Quenti Dawson should not be entertained. The RDO by the impugned proceedings directed the patta to be transferred in the name of Chambers.

The judge said a careful perusal of the entire documents filed by the petitioner shows that the petitioner

became the owner of the property in 1944 by virtue of a registered Sale Deed dated March 14, 1944. The judge said the father of David Chamber was earlier making an attempt to claim right over the property and the same was rejected by this court by an order dated July 8, 2008. Similarly, he also made an attempt to get a Patta before the Tahsildar, Tambaram and that was also rejected by proceedings dated December 5, 2007.

Thereafter, Quenti Dawson started claiming right over the property by virtue of a will said to have been executed by the father of David Chamber. This attempt made by Quenti Dawson was also shot down by this court in orders dated July 17, 2018. But the RDO proceeded to

deal with the issue as if the patta stands in the name of Damodharan. The RDO seems to have completely disregarded the earlier proceedings and never took into consideration the conduct of Quenti Dawson commented upon by the court and proceeded to deal with the application submitted by Quenti Dawson as if he was dealing with the title to the property.

"The order passed by the RDO suffers from patent illegality. The RDO has proceeded to decide the issue like a civil court and even without giving an opportunity to the petitioner, has passed the impugned order. It is not known as to why the RDO did not even take note of the earlier proceedings of the Tahsildar, where Quenti

Dawson was directed to go before the Civil Court. Surprisingly, that was not even referred by the RDO," the judge said.

"The order of the RDO is totally unsustainable since the RDO has decided the issue as if it is a dispute between Quenti Dawson and Damodharan. Surprisingly, Damodharan has not even challenged the proceedings and that speaks volumes about the collusion between Quenti Dawson and Damodharan. The court does not want to use any strong words against the RDO, who is a statutory authority, who has acted in a very questionable manner for extraneous consideration", the judge added and quashed the order of the RDO.

SHORT TAKES

Newly-married woman killed

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUCHY, AUG. 30

A 26-year-old newly-married woman was brutally murdered by miscreants and threw her body in a water pool inside the Kollidam river at suburban Vazhavandhipuram near here, in the wee hours of Sunday.

Based on alert by neighbours of the deceased, police said the deceased Christi Helan Rani, who got married with one Arulraj of the same area only on July 10, went for a walk on the Kollidam river bund, in the wee hours of Sunday and did not return.

After a long time, family members who went in search of her were shocked to find her lying dead in the water pool. Jewellery including her mangalsutra were found missing.

On information, a police team led by SP Jayachandran along with fingerprint experts and a sniffer dog visited the spot, and collected evidence from the crime site. Later, they removed the body to the government hospital, Srirangam, for post-mortem. Kollidam police are investigating.

Pudukottai: '4k fever tests done daily'

DC CORRESPONDENT
PUDUKOTTAI, AUG. 30

The district public health authorities conducted 3,900 to 4,000 fever tests every day across the district, as part of preventive measures against the pandemic, said state health minister Dr C Vijayabaskar.

In a release here on Sunday, the minister said, so far 6,934 fever detective camps were held, and if anyone was found with fever, they would be immediately subjected to Covid tests. If their results are positive, they would be quarantined and given treatment for covid, he added. The minister wanted people to utilise the fever camps held in their areas. If anyone is suspected to have fever symptoms, they should go to nearby government hospitals, instead of rendering self medication.

Church festival: 7 arrested for defying ban

DC CORRESPONDENT
NAGAPATTINAM, AUG. 30

Police registered cases against seven persons for defying police ban and attempting to enter the Velankanni church through the sea, to witness the flag hoisting ceremony which marked the commencement of the 10-day annual festival of Annai Velankanni Matha at Velankanni in Nagapattinam, on Saturday.

Police said, they had closed all the eight gates of the Velankanni Church as part of preventive measures against the pandemic as well as security purpose. Police bandobust was also arranged in all roads leading to the church.

However, a police patrol on the sea shore area, found seven persons moving on their way to the Velankanni Church on Saturday. When police questioned them, they found that all of them hailed from places like Thiruvallur, Chennai and Dindigul districts. They had parked their cars near Seruthur and engaged a boat to reach Velankanni shore, through the sea.

Police registered cases against S Thuyavan (32) of Pul-larambakkam in Thiruvallur district, R Dinesh of Kadam-pathur and G Meganathan (32) of Villivakkam, Chennai, V James Amstrong (43) and his son Daniel (19), X Arokiasamy of Yagappanpatti, D Vijay Robert (21) of Mettupatti in Dindigul district.

2 cops attacked during prohibition raid on Allari

DC CORRESPONDENT
VELLORE, AUG. 30

Two policemen were injured in a raid in the Allari hills in the district, on Sunday.

Police sources said, based on a tip-off that illicit liquor was being brewed in the Allari hills near here, a police team led by Anaicut SI Sivakumar, raided the place.

As they were proceeding, the team found the way blocked with chopped tree trunks spread on the road. As the policemen got down to remove them, a 20-men bootlegging gang including Ganesan, which was lying in wait for the police, suddenly attacked them.

Before the policemen could gather their wits, the gang fled away.

Constable Anbalagan and another Rakesh were seriously injured and



Cop Rakesh seriously injured and immediately rushed to the Christian Medical College, Vellore, where he is under intensive medical care.

immediately rushed to the Christian Medical College, Vellore, where they are under intensive medical care. As the police team was coming down the hill, sub-inspector Sivakumar complained of chest pain and was admitted to the Anaicut government hospital.

Coming to know of the attack on the police team, another team of about 120 police personnel led by DIG Kamini and SP Pravesh Kumar, launched

a search on Sunday. Drones equipped with cameras have also been deployed in the region to locate the gang.

Sources said the Allari hills are used as hideout even by naxals, and outsiders are shot dead without a question in seconds. Hence, no one would daringly go up the hill unarmed.

But the fact the police team went up the hill with no firearms or protection, is baffling. The hunt for the miscreants is on.

Agritceh will revolutionise farming and food: Report

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG. 30

A vision report on Indian agriculture explores how new technologies demographic trends, and climate change will impact Indian agriculture and food systems over the next decade.

Among the trends predicted is that the farms and farmers will be connected, digitised and smart as precision agriculture takes over. Biotechnology will produce tastier, more nutritious, and eco-friendly crops while a majority of rural jobs will be of higher value and non-agro. TRhe report also predicts that food will increasingly (and scientifically) replace medicine. Of course, a critical caveat is climate change which can negate positive direction if not reckoned with: The 'Future of Indian

Over 90% of kirana stores across the country will be digitized by 2025 and be linked to modern traceable logistics which will further benefit the transparency of supply chain between the farmer and consumer

Agriculture and Food Systems: Vision 2030' report points out the need for investment in horticulture, dairy, poultry, aquaculture, and food processing. It anticipates a future with significant advances in farm mechanization and automation, including farm robots taking over labor intensive tasks and reducing drudgery.

With middle class driving consumption, the growing concern of food hygiene, nutrition, and

sustainability will increase awareness about labels and food hygiene. Over 90% of kirana stores across the country will be digitized by 2025 and be linked to modern traceable logistics which will further benefit the transparency of supply chain between the farmer and consumer.

Jinesh Shah, Managing Partner, Omnivore said, "India's agritech sector is witnessing a paradigm shift catalysed by digitisation and rural smartphone penetration. Spearheading this change are agritech startups who are driving a transformation in Indian agriculture towards profitability, resilience, nutrition, and sustainability." Authored by Umang Prabhakar and Subinder Khurana the Omnivore (a VC) team helped brainstorm ideas and offered support throughout the study.

For Chennai's Malayalis, it's a low-key Onam

T. SUDHEESH | DC
CHENNAI, AUG. 30

The pandemic and the subsequent series of lockdowns have dampened the Onam spirit of Malayalis in the city. Onam, the annual harvest festival of Malayalis, usually used to be celebrated with great fervour and gusto, with festival events extending for at least three months.

But this season, the pandemic and lockdown, have forced members of the Malayalee community to confine themselves behind closed doors and celebrate the festival online.

Onam is the reminder of the golden era of governance by Asura King Mahabali, known for his generosity and secular values. Chennai city today is the residence of about five lakh Malayalees and about 90 Malayalee associations. Malayalees located the world over prepare flower carpets and the sumptuous sadya, and sing Onam songs on Thiruvonam day in an act of receiving King Mahabali as he makes a visit to his state from the netherworld, to watch his prajals.

Legend has it that Vamana, incarnation of Lord Vishnu, sent Mahabali to the netherworld by stomping on his head, after he failed to provide three-feet of land to conduct yagna (fire sacrifice). "We are celebrating Onam this year only online," said P N Sreekumar, general secretary, Chennai-based All India Malayali Association.

Usually, Malayalis here

Leaders greet Keralites on grand harvest festival

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG. 30

Governor Banwarilal Purohit took the lead in greeting Malayalees a happy and prosperous Onam, the festival that marks the return of emperor Mahabali to his land to meet the people whom he loved most.

"Onam marks the rich harvest and revisit of King Mahabali, who is known for his devotion, bravery, love and generosity. The harvest festival reminds us to shed all our differences and to work with commitment for progress," Purohit said in his message.

'Let us on this happy occasion resolve to rededicate ourselves to promote love, compassion and work towards our nations' progress and prosperity,' he said.

Greeting all Malayalam speaking people on the occasion of the traditional festival, which stressed

on equality and brotherhood, Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami pointed out that Onam was celebrated without caste or religious differences.

Let love and peace fill all homes and happiness and wealth multiply on this day of Onam, tweeted Deputy Chief Minister O Pannerselvam, wishing all Malayalees the best.

Wishing the Malayalam speaking people in Tamil Nadu and all the people in Kerala a healthy life and prosperity, DMK President M K Stalin said Onam is a festival that is

Malayali families observed Uthradam shopping on Saturday. We would organise online celebrations for our members on Thiruvonam day," he added.

For Suja Ajayakumar, an entrepreneur, Onam is an emotional matter. She says, "Come what may, I will celebrate Onam with new clothes, pookalam (flower carpet) and the tra-

integrated with the culture and sentiments of the people of Kerala.

In his statement he recalled that it was former Chief Minister M Karunanidhi who declared a local holiday for Onam first in the districts of Kanyakumari, Coimbatore and Nilgiris in 2006 and then in Chennai from 2007 with a view to enabling the Malayalees living in Tamil Nadu celebrate the festival with gusto.

PMK founder Dr S Ramadoss greeted Malayalis all over the world and wished them happiness, prosperity, peace, love and a secure future. In his message, he urged all to pledge on this day to redeem Nature and save the world.

BJP State President L Murugan wished the Malayalees all over the world on the occasion of Onam, which, he said, was a special festival for Malayalees.

ditional Malayali sadya which includes sambar, avial, kichchi, pachadi, and kalan."

Subash, a domestic help in Chennai from Kannur, said, "I could neither join my family this Onam nor could I shop anything for my children from Chennai. We have decided to keep the festivities low key, because of the misery the virus has brought us."

Boy drowns in river

DC CORRESPONDENT
THANJAVUR, AUG. 30

A youth, Poovarasana (21) of Ammapettai near Kumbakonam, doing MBBS fourth year in a medical college in China, drowned in Arasalar near his house, on Saturday evening.

Police said, Poovarasana, son of Sivakumar of Ammapettai, joined the MBBS course in China.

When the Chinese government asked students to leave for their home country, due to corona, Poovarasana had come to Ammapettai in March, and stayed with his parents.

On Saturday, he went to Arasalar river near his house to take bath by 7 pm. He got caught in a whirlpool and was dragged inside the river. Those who were nearby

shouted for help and informed fire and rescue service personnel at Kumbakonam.

On their arrival, the personnel searched for the body but could not find it. They stopped their search for the night and in the morning found the body near a bush on the river bank. Kumbakonam taluk police has registered a case.

Blue whale washed ashore on TN beach

S.P. LOGANATHAN | DC
RAMANATHAPURAM, AUG. 30

A whale shark was washed ashore on Valinokkam beach in Ramanathapuram district, on Sunday.

Local fishermen sources said that the whale weighing around seven tons and measuring about 20 feet in length with a girth of eight feet, was washed ashore dead. Wildlife officials visited the spot and held investigations.

The whale shark is protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act of India 1972, which means capturing and killing of the fish is a cognisable offence.

These species are found in the deep parts of the ocean, and casualties are said to happen as they sometimes collide with fast moving ships or get poisoned by some sea planktons, which at times gets mixed with their feed.



Twenty feet blue whale washed ashore dead.

— DC

Love couple takes shelter in K'konam police station

G. SRINIVASAN | DC
KUMBAKONAM, AUG. 30

A couple from Pennagaram area of Dharmapuri district took shelter at the Kumbakonam police station on Sunday, stating that theirs was a love marriage, and hence, it would not be safe for them to return to Pennagaram.

Police said, Selvi (23) daughter of Chinnappa and Mani, belonging to U p p a l a p u r a m Jelmarayanpatti near Pennagaram and Arulmani (23), son of Govindan - Savithiri couple of Moongilmedu near Pennagaram, both of different communities, were in love for the past five years. They both studied BA English in a college in Dharmapuri. After the course, Arulmani went to Andhra for a job in a chips

Selvi informed Arulmani and both of them came to Kumbakonam on a motor bike on August 24. Their marriage was conducted at Thiruvaigadi Manickanachiyar temple in the presence of advocate Jayam Pandian of Makkal Adhikaram outfit, and advocate Guna of Neelapuligam Iyakkam

company and came back recently. Meanwhile, parents of Selvi arranged her marriage.

Selvi informed Arulmani and both of them came to Kumbakonam on a motor bike on August 24. Their marriage was conducted at Thiruvaigadi Manickanachiyar temple in the presence of advocate Jayam Pandian of

Makkal Adhikaram outfit, and advocate Guna of Neelapuligam Iyakkam. Later, they took shelter at Kumbakonam west police station along with their advocates. Selvi's parents informed Pennagaram police that Selvi was missing. Selvi and Arulmani informed Pennagaram police that it may not be safe for them to come to Pennagaram, and hence, had taken shelter in the Kumbakonam police station.

Selvi's parents along with an advocate came to Kumbakonam west police station, and said that they accepted the marriage and asked their daughter to get back home with them. But Selvi gave in writing to the police that she wanted to go with her husband, and left the police station along with Arulmani.

Continue current procedure for loan disbursement to ryots: HC

J. STALIN | DC
CHENNAI, AUG. 30

The Madras high court said the current procedure adopted for disbursement of loan to the members of the Co-operative societies, who are mainly farmers, can continue till the new procedure is implemented from November 1, 2020. Justice N.Anand Venkatesh passed the order while disposing of a petition filed by P.V.Saravanan, challenging the new procedure introduced by the Registrar of co-operative societies for withdrawal of loan amount by farmers.

According to petitioner, this petition has been filed challenging the proceedings of the Registrar of Cooperative Societies dated



July 27, 2020 wherein the withdrawal of the loan amount by the members of the society, who are mainly the farmers across the State of Tamil Nadu, has been structured in such a way that the members will have to open a Mirror Account with the District Central Cooperative Bank and the loan amount can be with-

drawn only through a card called Kisan Credit Card. This withdrawal will be done from an ATM. The main grievance of the petitioner was that this system has been introduced all of a sudden and implemented immediately without giving time to the farmers to get prepared for the change in the system to withdraw the loan amount. In view of the introduction of this new procedure, many farmers were not in a position to withdraw the loan amount right from July 2020 onwards, the petitioner added.

C.Prakasam, counsel appearing for the petitioner submitted that the farmers were not against the new procedure for withdrawal of the loan amount.

Considering the present pandemic situation and also the fact that the farmers will have to get themselves ready to follow the new system, the same has to be effected by giving some time.

Special government pleader L.P.Shanmugasundaram appearing for Cooperative submitted that the new system was implemented due to the instructions received from NABARD. That apart, by issuing loan to the farmers under the new system, there will be a proper accountability and the middle man can be avoided and the entire money can directly go to the farmers. The new system that was introduced will be safer and beneficial to a farmer in order to avail agricultural loan, he

added.

The judge said that a careful reading of the 'Position Note' shows that the authorities were implementing the new system pursuant to instructions received from NABARD. As rightly contended by the Special government pleader, the new system brings about a fool-proof method for disbursement of the loan to farmers. This system will effectively take care of interference of middlemen and the farmers will be getting the entire loan amount directly from their accounts. They will have access to ATM card and they can withdraw the amount as and when necessary and they do not need to withdraw the amount at one stroke, the judge added.

The judge said the court

also found force in the submissions of C.Prakasam. There can be no objection to the new system coming into force and the only request made was that some more time must be given to implement it, so that the stakeholders will get ready to acclimatise themselves to the new system.

"Court thought it fit to request the Registrar of Cooperative Societies to implement the impugned order dated July 27, 2020 from November 1, 2020. In the meantime, the opening of Mirror Account and the issuance of ATM card can take place. The current procedure adopted for disbursement of loan can continue till the new procedure is implemented from November 1, 2020", the judge added.

Pondy health min cleans toilet in COVID hospital after complaints

Puducherry, Aug. 30: Puducherry Health Minister Malladi Krishna Rao took it upon himself the task of cleaning a toilet in a government-run hospital here after complaints about its poor maintenance came to fore.

The Minister who has been at the forefront in the fight against COVID-19 in the union territory had received complaints from relatives of COVID-19 patients that toilets in the Indira Gandhi Government Medical College (IGGMC) hospital in Kadirakam were not clean. During his visit to the hospital accompanied by teams of Health department officials on Saturday, he saw for himself the poor maintenance

and swung into action for a clean-up. The Minister wore personal protective equipment while doing the cleaning work. The video of him cleaning the toilet went viral on social media. He asked the sanitary workers to keep the premises clean. Seeing the Minister taking up cleaning work, one of the sanitary workers rushed towards him and requested him to hand over the brush to her as she would do the work. The IGGMC hospital is a facility designated by the ICMR to take care of coronavirus patients. Rao had been regularly visiting the hospital to ensure that there was no room for any deficiency in service. —PTI

SHORT TAKES

411 VILLAGES
MAROONED IN MP,
5 LAKH AFFECTEDDC CORRESPONDENT
BHOPAL, AUG. 30

Nearly five lakh people in 411 villages under 12 districts in Madhya Pradesh have been affected by flashfloods in various rivers in the state caused by torrential rains in the last 72 hours.

At least seven persons were killed in rain-related incidents in the state in the last 24 hours.

Four children were killed when a mud wall of a house collapsed on them while they were playing on a road in Banhara village under Umaria police limits in Katni district on Saturday evening.

"As many as 411 villages in 12 districts have been affected. Army and State Disaster Response Force have been deployed in rescue and relief operations," Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan who conducted aerial survey of the flood-hit areas in the state for the second day on Sunday said.

Mr Chouhan briefed prime minister Narendra Modi on the flood situation in the state.

Reports said the torrential rains have caused damage to properties and standing crops.

ODISHA SEES 32
RIVER BREACHES
DUE TO FLOODSAKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO DC
BHUBANESWAR, AUG. 30

The apprehension of high floods in different rivers of Odisha proved authentic on Sunday as at least 32 breaches occurred in major river systems in the state. Majority of the breaches were reported in the Brahmani river system in Jajpur district.

The high flood in Odisha, according to official sources, had by Sunday evening destroyed at least eight lakh hectares of farmland and left as many as 16 people dead.

According to Jyotirmaya Rath, the chief engineer of the state water resources department, as many as 24 breaches happened in the Brahmani river system, while Mahanadi system reported two. The remaining breaches occurred in Kharasrota, Jalaka and Baitarani river systems.

According to state Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) Pradeep Kumar Jena, Bari and Dasarath block areas in Jajpur district were severely hit with thousands of hectares of standing crop getting washed away in the gushing floods of Brahmani, Baitarani and Kharasrota rivers. Rhea SRC said the flood situation in three rivers- Subarnarekha, Budhabalanga and Baitarani is improving.

RARE BUTTERFLY
SIGHTED IN
CHHATTISGARHRABINDRA NATH
CHOUDHURY I DC
BHOPAL, AUG. 30

A rare species of butterfly has been sighted in a reserve forest in Chhattisgarh. The spotted angle butterfly, caprona agama in zoological terms, has been spotted in the Bharamdeo reserve forest in Kawardha district by a survey team of the Chhattisgarh forest department.

"The rare butterfly species has been sighted in Bharamdeo reserve forest," local divisional forest officer (DFO), Dilraj Prabhakar, said.

In fact, this was the first time the species has been found in Central India.

"Based on published research, the species is reported for the first time in central India in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. The species of butterfly is rarely sighted rarely in India," researcher Dr Rajendra Gupta told this newspaper on Sunday.

The species is found in south India, Maharashtra, Uttaranchal, and Arunachal Pradesh and Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, southern China, and Java.

"The species is migratory in nature. It may have migrated from north-east to Chhattisgarh through south Bastar via the eastern state of Odisha," Dr Sheila Dubey, who has done her PhD on butterfly species in Central India, told *Deccan Chronicle*.

All set for Onam



A family makes a *pookalam*, an intricate and colourful arrangement of flowers, a quintessential element of Onam, on the eve of the festival at Kizhakkum Muri in Kozhikode, Kerala, on Sunday. — PTI

INDIA JAILS ARE
OVERCROWDED,
UNDERSTAFFED,
FINDS NCRB

New Delhi, Aug. 30 Jails across India remained overcrowded in 2019 with these facilities lodging 4.78 lakh prisoners against the actual capacity of 4.03 lakh, reveals the latest data by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).

On the other hand, the prisons were understaffed with a sanctioned strength of 87,599, while the actual strength was 60,787 as on December 31, 2019, the data showed.

The actual capacity of prisons has increased to 4.03 lakh in 2019 from 3.91 lakh in 2017 and 3.96 lakh in 2018 (as on December 31 of these respective years), it said.

The number of prisoners lodged in various jails increased to 4.78 lakh in 2019 from 4.50 lakh in 2017 and 4.66 lakh in 2018 (as on December 31 of each year).

The total number of prisons in the country were 1,361, 1,339 and 1,350 at the end of 2017, 2018 and 2019, respectively. The occupancy rates during the period rose steadily at 115.1 per cent, 117.6 per cent and 118.5 per cent, respectively, according to the data.

Out of the 4.78 lakh prisoners in 2019, 4.58 lakh were men and 19,913 women, the NCRB, under the Union home ministry, stated.

The total 1,350 prisons in the country in 2019 consisted of 617 sub jails, 410 district jails, 144 Central jails, 86 open jails, 41 special jails, 31 women jails, 19 Borstal School and two other jails, it added. The Central jails had the highest capacity of inmates (1.77 lakh) followed by district jails (1.58 lakh) and sub jails (45,071) last year.

Govt should not be running
airports and airlines: Puri

New Delhi, Aug 30: The government should not be running airports and airlines, Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Sunday, adding that he hopes to privatise Air India during 2020.

His remarks come at a time when the Kerala government has opposed the Union Cabinet's approval on August 19 to lease out the Thiruvananthapuram airport to Adani Enterprises under the public-private partnership (PPP) model for a period of 50 years.

Addressing a virtual meet on Nammo app, Puri said, "I can tell you from my heart the government should not be running air-

ports and the government should not be running airlines." The Centre-run Airports Authority of India (AAI) owns and manages more than 100 airports, including the one in Kerala's capital city. On Air India's privatisation, Puri said, "As a going concern, one that is attractive to potential bidders, we should privatise it (Air India). And I am hopeful that we will be able to complete that privatisation process during this year."

Last Tuesday, the Central government extended by two months the deadline for placing bids for Air India till October 30 as the COVID-19 fallout has disrupted

economic activity globally. The process of stake sale in the national carrier was initiated on January 27. This is the fourth extension given by the government for putting in bids.

"If the government runs an airport or an airline, then they have to follow the government rules like L1 and L2, and that is not how commercial entities can run," Puri said. When the government issues a tender, the lowest bidder deemed as L1 is the winner.

Puri said he expects that the domestic air traffic would reach pre-COVID levels by the end of this year. Domestic flights resumed on May 25 after a

gap of two months due to the coronavirus-triggered lockdown. Currently, airlines are allowed to operate maximum 45 per cent of their pre-COVID domestic flights.

The central government privatised six major airports -- Lucknow, Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Mangaluru, Thiruvananthapuram, and Guwahati - in February 2019. After a competitive bidding process, Adani Enterprises won the rights to run all of them. In July 2019, the Union Cabinet had approved the proposal for leasing out three airports -- Ahmedabad, Mangaluru and Lucknow - to Adani Enterprises.

CPM leaders decline
Kishor-led I-PAC bidRAJIB CHOWDHURI I DC
KOLKATA, AUG. 30

For the first time, election strategist Prashant Kishor and his political consultancy firm, Indian Political Action Committee (I-PAC), hired by the Trinamul to brighten its prospect for the third consecutive term in power, have received a setback in West Bengal in the run up to the assembly election next year.

Eying the Communists with a clean image, I-PAC last week contacted former state information technology (IT) minister, Debesh Das, in a bid to rope him in. The attempt failed as the former CPM MLA of Entally in central Kolkata outright rejected the offer.

CPM Kolkata district secretary Kallol Majumdar said, "On Friday, Kishor's team

called up Das and wanted to know how he performed as an MLA in his constituency. They also sought a meeting with him for discussion." Das said, "As soon as I heard the call was from Kishor's team, I rejected the offer."

According to the CPM sources, two leaders of the party in North Bengal were approached before Das by I-PAC. They were two-time former MLA of Dhupguri, Lakshmikanta Roy, and ex-Jalpaiguri MP, Mahendra Kumar Roy. Both, however, rejected the offers. The three refusals left the ruling party in a spot. Neither I-PAC nor the TMC were available for comments.

Das, erstwhile professor of Jadavpur University, was not only a three-time MLA during the Left rule in the state but also served as the IT minister in CM Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee's Cabinet.

Rallies in Kashmir teargassed

YUSUF JAMEEL I DC
SRINAGAR, AUG. 30

Shia mourners in large numbers on Sunday defied curfew-like restrictions at several places across the Kashmir valley, including the central towns of Budgam and Magam and Srinagar's Zadibal area by taking out tazia and zuljanah processions to commemorate Muharram.

Except at Zadibal, where 16 persons were injured in police action, these events passed off peacefully after the mourners, including women, marched along the streets and alleys beating their chests, reciting elegies and chanting slogans and some of them also self-flagellating.

In Budgam, a predominantly Shia town located 27 km west of Srinagar, thousands of mourners participated in the Zuljanah procession. Zuljanah, bought and raised by Prophet Muhammad, was the horse of Imam Hussain and a very impor-

tant character in the battle of Karbala. The Zuljanah procession is taken out by Shia Muslims only on the tenth day of Muharram, the first month of Islamic calendar, when Imam Hussain was martyred at Karbala.

Similar processions were taken out also in some other parts of Kashmir whereas elsewhere in the valley only tazia, or mourning processions and rallies, without the participation of Zuljanah replicas were organised by the mourners.

At Zadibal in the heart of Srinagar, the police fired pellet shotguns and also lobbed teargas to disperse the mourners who took to the streets in a tazia procession and clashed with the former. Reports said that 16 persons were injured, most of them receiving multiple pellet wounds. The police detained about 20 people for violating the restrictions in force.

78,487 Covid cases
see India cross
the 36-lakh markSANJAY KAW I DC
NEW DELHI, AUG. 30

With a record surge of 78,487 fresh Coronavirus cases in the past 24 hours, India's Covid-19 tally zoomed past 36 lakh on Sunday, just a week after it crossed the 30-lakh mark. India saw one of the highest single-day jumps in Coronavirus infections reported by any country in the world since the start of the pandemic. The United States set the previous record on July 17, with 77,638 cases in one day. In the past 24 hours, 906 deaths linked to the highly contagious disease were reported, taking the overall number of fatalities to 64,547.

The country further strengthened its diagnostic capacity by performing a record number of 10.5 lakh-plus tests in a day to detect Covid-19. The total tests done in the country has crossed 4.14 crores.

The exponential jump in testing capacity has led to an upsurge in the tests per million to 30,044 as of date.

India continued to be the third worst-hit country by the deadly infection in the world after the

United States and Brazil, by recording the highest single-day surge since August 4. The country has recorded over 75,000 cases daily for the past four days.

It took India 213 days to reach 35 lakh cases. The nation's infections rose from 20 lakhs to 30 lakhs in 16 days, 10 lakhs to 20 lakhs in 21 days and it had taken 59 days for the cases to cross the 10 lakh mark.

It took 110 days for Covid-19 cases in India to reach one lakh and just 59 days more to go past the 10-lakh mark.

The country has registered over five lakh cases in the last one week. In the last 24 hours, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh reported the highest number of fresh cases.

These five states also recorded the highest number of deaths

With the total Coronavirus cases going up to 35.44 lakhs, the recovery rate has also increased to 76.61 per cent.

The country's positivity rate now stands at 7.46 per cent.

CBI grills Rhea,
brother for 9 hoursAISHWARYA KHOKLE I DC
MUMBAI, AUG. 30

The CBI on Sunday grilled Rhea Chakraborty for the third consecutive day for nine hours in connection with the Sushant Singh Rajput suicide. Her brother Showik was also grilled by teams of the Central agency with the process starting at 10.30 am at the DRDO guest house, Santacruz.

Sushant's house help Keshav and house manager Samuel Miranda were also questioned by the CBI on Sunday. The investigators are coordinating

with the ED and the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) who are also probing the suicide case.

The officials are looking into the alleged transfer of funds from the actor's account and use of his debit and credit cards to make payments. The CBI is also verifying if the money was transferred from the deceased actor's account to either Rhea or her family members.

The ED has, meanwhile, summoned businessman Gaurav Arya for questioning after some text messages between him and Rhea surfaced.

We are not anyone's
puppets, says Farooq

New Delhi, Aug. 30: Reacting sharply to Pakistan hailing the recent Gupkar Declaration in which six political parties of Jammu and Kashmir vowed to fight collectively against the abrogation of Article 370, National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah on Sunday asserted that "we are not anyone's puppets".

"Pakistan has always abused mainstream political parties of Jammu and Kashmir but now suddenly they like us," the former chief minister said when asked about Pakistan foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi's statement that the declaration issued by the NC, PDP, Congress and three other parties was "not an

ordinary occurrence but an important development".

"Let me make it clear that we are not anyone's puppets, neither New Delhi's nor of anyone across the border. We are answerable to the people of Jammu and Kashmir and will work for them," he said from Srinagar.

In response to a question on cross-border terrorism, Abdullah said, "I would urge Pakistan to stop sending armed men into Kashmir. We want an end to the bloodshed in our state. All political parties in Jammu and Kashmir are committed to fight for our rights peacefully, including for what was unconstitutionally snatched away from us on August 5 last year." — PTI

TN's 'Chippiparai' finds
mention by PM Modi

Chennai, Aug 30: Tamil Nadu's native dog breed 'Chippiparai' that found a mention in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Mann Ki Baat radio address could run very fast and jump upto 10 feet at one go with ease. Besides it, all the three other Tamil Nadu breeds -- Kombai, Kanni and Rajapalayam -- are fearless and loyal to their masters, experts said.

In an initiative to conserve the native dog breeds and to create awareness about them, Chippiparai, Kanni and Rajapalayam varieties were being reared here

since last year by authorities of the Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (TANUVAS).

"From the place it stands, Chippiparai could jump 10 feet quite easily and it could run really very fast. It is a tall and robust breed," Professor and Head, Department of Clinics, Veterinary College, TANUVAS, Namakkal, R Ezakial Napoleon said. Kombai is comparatively more intelligent and has a higher sense of smell, he said.

Mentioning about Indian dog breeds, the prime minister said they

cost less to raise and are better adapted to the Indian environment and surroundings, adding that the security agencies had also been inducting these dogs.

"Among the Indian breeds, Mudhol Hound and Himachali Hound are of excellent pedigree. Rajapalayam, Kanni, Chippiparai and Kombai are fabulous Indian breeds. They cost less to raise and are better adapted to the Indian environment and surroundings," Modi said.

Other veterinary doctors, who too have a hands on experience in handling the native vari-

eties in the state, said all the four breeds were highly useful and dependable.

These breeds, once used by royals and local chieftains for hunting and to help protect them, were now being deployed by many farmers to guard their farms and all these breeds do not have much maintenance expenditure, they said.

Of the four breeds, the number of Kombai dogs are "very low," one of the veterinarians said adding the three other varieties were found in many regions of the state. — PTI

JCO killed in sniper
attack from across LoCDC CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR, AUG. 30

A Junior Commissioned Officer (JCO) of the Army was killed possibly in a sniper attack from across the Line of Control (LoC) in Nowshera sector of Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district on Sunday.

The Army sources identified the slain Naib Subedar (JCO) as Rajvinder Singh of 1 Sikh Regiment. The sources said that though the exact cause of the fatality is not known it could be a sniper attack, a ceasefire violation or a sneak attack by infiltrators. "There could

be some other reason behind this killing. We're investigating and trying to ascertain how actually he was killed," the sources said.

An earlier report had said that the facing armies traded small arms fire in Kalsiyan and Jhangar areas of Nowshera sector after suspicious movement was observed by Indian Army near the fence early Sunday. It is likely that Naib Subedar Singh was killed during that exchange of fire, he report had said.

The Indian and Pakistani armies and border guards often clash along the LoC and also

International Border (IB) in J&K. As per official statistics, 16 Army and BSF personnel, three civilian porters working for the Army, seven militants and infiltrators and an equal number of civilians were killed in the incidents of cross-border firing and shelling, clashes and sneak attacks carried out by militants along the LoC and 198-km stretch of IB with Pakistan in Jammu region-called 'Working Boundary' by Islamabad, so far, this year. After each violation of the November 2003 ceasefire understanding, the two sides have accused each other of initiating firing.

IN BRIEF

Israeli tanks hit Hamas targets

Jerusalem: Israeli tanks hit Hamas targets in the Gaza Strip on Sunday, the army said, as Palestinian balloon attacks across the border continued despite international truce efforts. An early-morning military statement said there had been airborne explosive and incendiary attacks into southern Israel on Saturday. "In response to the ongoing events, a short while ago... tanks struck military posts belonging to the Hamas terror organization in the southern Gaza Strip," the English-language statement said. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

Death toll in China mishap rises to 29

Beijing: The number of people killed when a restaurant in northern China collapsed has climbed to 29, state media said on Sunday, with efforts to find survivors brought to a close. The two-storey building in Xiangfen county, Shanxi province, came down on Saturday morning during an 80th birthday party, according to official news agency Xinhua. A total of 57 people have been pulled from the debris of the Juxian restaurant, with dozens injured. Seven people are seriously hurt, although Xinhua said the injuries were "not life-threatening". State broadcaster CGTN said the rescue operation ended in the early hours of Sunday morning. The cause of the collapse is unknown and the central government's State Council said it would supervise an investigation by provincial authorities.

Top French military officer arrested

Paris: A senior French military officer based abroad is under investigation for "serious security breaches," the defense minister said on Sunday. Europe-1 radio reported that the officer served on a NATO base in Italy and is accused of treason for passing "ultra-sensitive" information to Russian secret services. The French Defense Ministry would not provide details about the officer. Speaking on Europe-1 on Sunday, Defense Minister Florence Parly said only that a judicial procedure is underway and the French military has taken "necessary protective measures" after the breaches. The Paris prosecutor's office, which is handling the case, would not comment. NATO did not immediately respond to requests for information. Parly also said on Sunday that France is putting "massive investment" into military activities in space — notably after a 2018 incident in which a Russian satellite coaxed up to a French one in an apparent effort to eavesdrop on secure military communications.

HEZBOLLAH CHIEF SAYS OPEN TO NEW LEBANON PACT

Beirut, Aug. 30: Hezbollah chief Hasan Nasrallah on Sunday said that his Shiite movement is "open" to a French proposal for a new political pact for Lebanon as long as there is national consensus.

"On his latest visit to Lebanon, we heard a call from the French president for a new political pact in Lebanon... today we are open to a constructive discussion in this regard," Nasrallah said in a speech.

"But we have one condition: this discussion should be carried out... with the will and consent of the various Lebanese factions."

Nasrallah did not elaborate on what kind of changes his movement was willing to consider but cited criticism from "official French sources" over Lebanon's "sect-based political system and its inability to solve Lebanon's problems and respond to its needs."

Lebanon recognises 18 official religious sects and its 128 parliamentary seats are divided equally between Muslims and Christians, an arrangement unique in the region.

However, governments born out of this system have been prone to deadlock and have failed to meet popular demands for better living conditions.

Macron, the first world leader to visit Lebanon after the devastating August 4 Beirut port blast, will return on Monday to press for reform and reconstruction. On his earlier visit days after the blast, the French president said Lebanese leaders had a "huge" responsibility: "that of a revamped pact with the Lebanese people in the coming weeks, that of deep change."

Trump supporters, protesters clash in Portland, 1 killed

San Francisco, Aug. 30: A person was shot dead on Saturday in Portland following clashes between Black Lives Matter protesters and supporters of US President Donald Trump, police said.

The Oregon city has been an epicenter of BLM protests since the police killing of unarmed black man George Floyd in Minnesota in late May, and according to local media a "caravan of hundreds of cars" of Trump supporters also converged there on Saturday. Portland Police tweeted a political rally was "caravanning" throughout downtown Portland, adding: "There have been some instances of violence between demonstrators and counter demonstrators. Officers have intervened and in some cases made arrests." OregonLive reported "clashes" and "tense moments" between the groups, although police did not say whether the shooting was related to the demonstrations.

The shooting occurred at around 8:45pm downtown, police said later in a statement, adding a homicide investigation was under way. "Portland Police officers heard sounds of gunfire from the area of Southeast 3rd Avenue and Southwest Alder Street," the statement said.

— AFP

TRUMP TO VISIT KENOSHA IN WAKE OF RACIAL UNREST

Washington, Aug. 30: President Donald Trump will travel next week to the Midwestern city where African American Jacob Blake was shot multiple times in the back by a white policeman, sparking a nationwide wave of protest, the White House said. Trump will meet police in Kenosha, Wisconsin on Tuesday and "survey damage from recent riots" triggered by Blake's shooting last weekend, administration spokesman Judd Deere said. Blake took at least half a dozen shots in the back in front of his small children as he tried to get into a car, in an incident that triggered an outpouring of anger over yet another shooting of a black man by white police.

Deere did not say if Trump would meet the family of Blake, who was left paralyzed from the waist down. Protesters have taken to the streets nationwide this summer over the killing of black men by police, including George Floyd in Minneapolis in May. Trump has characterised the mostly-peaceful activists as vicious rioters as he presses a law and order message while fighting an uphill battle for re-election in November.

— AFP

BEN CRUMP, ADVOCATE FOR VICTIMS

Washington, Aug. 30: When angry protesters shout the names of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor or Jacob Blake — Ben Crump is listening. He is the seemingly omnipresent black attorney representing the families of all those emblematic victims of US police violence, and others too.

On Friday, he joined thousands of protesters in Washington at a rally denouncing discriminatory policing and demanding fairness in the justice system.

It is a cause Crump has ardently embraced, whether in courtrooms or before television cameras. Crump has repeatedly found himself in the spotlight following high-profile cases of violence against African Americans: the vigilante killing of jogger Ahmaud Arbery, the death of George Floyd under the knee of a Minneapolis police officer and now the grievous wounding of Jacob Blake by a policeman in Wisconsin who repeatedly shot him in the back.

— AFP



Ashraf Ghani

AFGHAN PREZ NAMES COUNCIL FOR PEACE DEAL

Kabul, Aug. 30: Afghanistan's president has appointed a council for national reconciliation, which will have final say on whether the government will sign a peace deal with the Taliban after what are expected to be protracted and uncertain negotiations with the insurgents.

The negotiations were envisaged under a US - Taliban peace agreement signed in February as intra-Afghan talks to decide the war-torn country's future. However, their start has been hampered by a series of delays that have frustrated Washington. Some had expected the negotiations to begin earlier this month.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani issued a decree late Saturday establishing the 46-member council, led by his former rival in last year's presidential election, Abdullah Abdullah, who is now in the government.

The council is separate from a 21-member negotiating team, which Ghani appointed in March and which is expected to travel to the Gulf Arab state of Qatar, where the Taliban maintain a political office, for intra-Afghan talks.

The council will have the final say and will ultimately decide on the points that the negotiating team takes up with the Taliban.

— AP

Mass rally against Belarus leader

Minsk, Aug. 30: Tens of thousands of opposition supporters marched through the Belarusian capital of Minsk on Sunday calling for an end to strongman Alexander Lukashenko's rule, despite heavily armed police and troops blocking streets and detaining dozens of demonstrators.

Protests have now entered a third week since the disputed presidential election on August 9 in which Lukashenko claimed victory, while opposition rival Svetlana Tikhanovskaya said she was the true winner.

An AFP journalist and local media estimated that more than 1,00,000 people came to Sunday's protest, equalling the scale of the rallies on previous weekends, the largest demonstrations the country has seen since independence from the USSR.

Some protesters gathered around Lukashenko's official residence in the centre of Minsk, the Palace of Independence, which was guarded by a cordon of

riot police and special forces with helmets and anti-riot shields, equipped with water cannons. Sunday's rally fell on Lukashenko's 66th birthday and online opposition messages urged people to bring flowers and "creative" handmade gifts reflecting their attitude to the authoritarian leader.

Some chanted "Get out! We're coming for you on your birthday!" Others held quirky items aloft including a cardboard model toilet with a sign urging Lukashenko to "flush" himself away. Others carried a model coffin with "Dictatorship" written on the side and a picture of a giant cockroach, the nickname used by the opposition for Lukashenko.

— AFP

SAD | DEMISE

Chapel Hill (US), Aug. 30: Randall Kenan, an author whose stories explored the experience of being a man of colour and gay in the American South, has died. He was 57. The University of North Carolina, where Kenan taught as an English professor, confirmed his death on Saturday. A cause was not immediately available, Daniel Wallace, his friend and colleague at the university,

said Kenan was found dead Friday at his home in Hillsborough, near Chapel Hill. "He was just an immense talent. His best years were ahead of him," Wallace said, noting that his most recent book, If I Had Two Wings, was published just this month.

"And he was a gentleman of the old school" who never failed to bring flowers or chocolate to Wallace's wife when he



Randall Kenan

would visit the couple. Kenan grew up in North

Carolina and attended UNC, receiving his undergraduate degree in 1985. His 1992 collection of short stories, Let the Dead Bury Their Dead, was set in the fictional town of Tim's Creek, North Carolina. It received critical acclaim and was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award.

He also wrote a young adult biography of author James Baldwin.

Earlier this month, Kenan wrote an open letter reflecting on his expe-

rience as a Black student at UNC in the '80s, and the changes prompted by civil unrest, demands for racial justice and the removal of Confederate statues across the South. "For me — a poor coloured boy from the swamps of Eastern North Carolina — the Civil War was far from a lost cause, let alone a done war. I had underestimated how unfinished," he wrote.

— AP

Protesters storm Reichstag during mass Covid protest

Around 300 people were arrested in scuffles with police

Berlin, Aug. 30: German leaders on Sunday condemned the "unacceptable" attempt by protesters to storm the Reichstag parliament building during a mass rally against coronavirus restrictions.

Some of the protesters on Saturday carried the flag of the former German Reich which was used up until the end of the First World War.

"Flags from the Reich and far-right profanity in front of the German parliament are an unacceptable attack on the heart of our democracy," President Frank-Walter Steinmeier said on Instagram. "We will never accept this".

Police said some 38,000 people, double the number expected, had gathered in Berlin on Saturday to protest restrictions imposed to curb the spread of the coronavirus, such as the wearing of masks and social distancing.

Late Saturday, several hundred broke through barriers and a police cordon to climb the steps leading to the entrance to the Reichstag.

About 300 people were arrested in front of the Reichstag and following an incident at the Russian embassy, according to



Police officers remove a large portrait of Indian political ethicist and civil disobedience advocate Mahatma Gandhi at an unregistered demonstration against government Coronavirus regulations held next to the Siegessäule, or Victory Column, in Berlin, Germany on Sunday.

— AFP

police.

They were narrowly prevented from entering the building by police, who used pepper spray and arrested several people.

Police initially appeared overwhelmed, as only a

handful of officers were there to block the crowd.

"We cannot be present everywhere and it is precisely these weaknesses in the deployment that were exploited, in this case to cross the security barriers

in order to reach the steps of the Reichstag," said local police spokesman Thilo Cablitz.

The Reichstag, where German deputies meet, has a powerful symbolic role in the country. The

building, with its famous dome, was burnt down by the Nazis in 1933 in an act aimed at destroying what remained of German democracy between the two world wars.

— AFP

Zuckerberg: Facebook erred in not removing militia page's post

Washington, Aug. 30: Facebook made a mistake in not removing a militia group's page earlier this week that called for armed civilians to enter Kenosha, Wisconsin, amid violent protests after police shot Jacob Blake, CEO Mark Zuckerberg said.

The page for the Kenosha Guard violated Facebook's policies and had been flagged by a bunch of people,

Zuckerberg said in a video posted on Friday on Facebook. The social media giant has in recent

weeks adopted new guidelines removing or restricting posts from groups that pose a threat to public safety.

Facebook took down the page Wednesday, after an armed civilian allegedly killed two people and wounded a third Tuesday night amid protests in Kenosha that followed the shooting of Blake, who man of colour.

It was largely an operational mistake, Zuckerberg said. The contractors, the reviewers, who the initial complaints were fun-

neled to, didn't, basically didn't pick this up.

Zuckerberg did not apologize for the error and said that so far, Facebook hasn't found any evidence that Rittenhouse was aware of the Kenosha Guard page or the invitation it posted for armed militia members to go to Kenosha.

Facebook is now taking down posts that praise the shooting or shooter, Zuckerberg said. Yet a report on Thursday by The Guardian newspaper found examples of sup-

port and even fundraising messages still being shared on Facebook and its photo-sharing service, Instagram.

Zuckerberg also contrasted the treatment of Blake, who was shot in the back by Kenosha police, and the white 17-year-old now charged in Tuesday's slayings, Kyle Rittenhouse, who carried an AR-15-style rifle near police without being challenged. Zuckerberg also acknowledged the civil rights demonstration on Friday in Washington, D.C. — AP



Joe Biden

BIDEN: WON'T USE MILITARY AS 'PROP'

Washington, Aug. 30: Joe Biden said on Saturday that as president, he would never use the military "as a prop or private militia" and accused President Donald Trump of employing US forces to settle "personal vendettas" and violate citizens' rights.

The Democratic presidential nominee, in a virtual address to the National Guard Association of the United States' general conference, said Trump recommended "that you should be deployed to quote, 'dominate,' your fellow citizens for exercising their right to peacefully protest."

"We're so much better than this," Biden said. "You deserve so much better." His comments came a day after Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told Congress that the armed forces will have no role in carrying out the election process or resolving a disputed vote.

It was a sign of rising tensions on both sides as the president has declared without evidence that the expected surge in mail-in ballots during the coronavirus pandemic will make the vote "inaccurate and fraudulent." Trump has also suggested he might not accept the election results if he loses.

Biden has said he's "absolutely convinced" the military would escort Trump from the White House if the incumbent lost but refused to leave. — AP

Global virus cases top 25 mn, Brazil's toll crosses 1,20,000

New Delhi, Aug. 30: Global Coronavirus infections soared past 25 million on Sunday, as countries around the world further tightened restrictions to try to stop the rampaging pandemic.

A million additional cases have been detected globally roughly every four days since mid-July, with India on Sunday setting the record for the highest single-day rise in cases with 78,761.

The surge in India, home to 1.3 billion people, came as the government further eased lockdown restrictions on the weekend to help ease pressure on the reeling economy.

Even nations such as New Zealand and South Korea, which had previously brought their outbreaks largely under control, are now battling new clusters of infections.

On the other side of the world, Latin America — the worst-hit region — was still struggling with its first wave, with Covid-19 deaths in Brazil crossing 1,20,000, second only to the United States.

Brazil's curve "has sta-

Shias mark Ashura in Iraq's amid virus

Karbala, Aug. 30: Thousands of tearful Shias Muslim pilgrims wearing gloves and masks flooded Iraq's holy city of Karbala on Sunday to mark Ashura, in one of the largest religious gatherings of the Coronavirus era.

Ashura, on the 10th day of the mourning month of Muharram, commemorates the killing of the Prophet Mohammed's grandson Hussein at the Battle of Karbala in 680 AD — the defining moment of Islam's confessional schism.

Typically, millions of

Shiites from around the world flock to the city's golden-domed shrine where Hussein's remains are buried, to pray and cry, shoulder-to-shoulder.

But with Coronavirus numbers spiking across the globe, this year's commemoration has been subdued.

"Honestly, this year is nothing like the millions-strong commemorations of other years," said Fadel Hakim, who was out early in the streets around the shrine, a blue medical mask cupping his chin.

— AFP

8,43,000 people have died of Covid-19 globally, and with no vaccine or effective treatment available yet, governments have been forced to resort to some form of social distancing and lockdowns to stop the spread of the virus.

— AFP

DECCAN Chronicle

31 AUGUST 2020

In guise of Covid war, it's unbridled hate

The savage violence let loose by the police on Muharram processions in Srinagar last Saturday is likely to deepen the perception that physical assaults on the populace in the Valley is the action of the first resort as far as the government is concerned. At least 19 persons have been reported to be wounded, one of whom is said to be in a critical state. A dozen of the injured have taken pellet hits, including in the face. This is suggestive of the fact that pellet guns were fired from close range.

When scores were blinded or lost sight in one eye as a result of pellet injuries in the post-BurhanWani protests of 2016 in Kashir valley, the government mulled minimising if not eliminating the use of pellet guns until suitable replacements were developed. The faulty trajectory of the discharge from close range from these weapons was hitting people in the face, and head and chest areas, causing injuries of a grave nature. Such weapons were not proving to crowd deterrents in volatile situations but instruments of possible death, which raised political costs for the local administration and the country internationally.

Clearly, no active thinking on ending the use of such weapons may exist now except on paper. Last year, not long after the ending of J&K's constitutional autonomy, the government forces in Srinagar had used pellet guns on a thick crowd of civilian protesters in the Soura-Anchar locality, a dirt poor area of the old city. The incident, which caused widespread injury, had raised international concern, and gave the lie to the orchestrated government propaganda that people had accepted the ending of autonomy peacefully and had not protested.

Last Thursday the Supreme Court disallowed the holding of Muharram processions anywhere in the country on the ground that this may lead to the blaming of a particular community (the Shia Muslim) for the spread of the new coronavirus (presumably as had happened in the case of the Tablighi Jamaat). If this was a common sense precaution the top court sounded, the authorities in Kashmir enforced it with brutal energy.

Over the years, Muharram processions in Kashmir have been routinely limited to specified areas in order not to take chances with sectarian clashes, but last week's violence testifies to the uncommon zeal that the government brought to the fighting of Covid-19 by cracking down with unequalled force on the small Muharram processions. This stood in sharp contrast with police behaviour at religious ceremonies of India's majority community in many parts of the country, sometimes held with official sanction and display of devotion, underlining the grievance of many that the blatant repression of Kashmir and the taking away of J&K's historical rights owes to the fact of the Valley's denominational status in contrast with the rest of the country.

There is no peace in Kashmir, and the government's fear of the people seems real. Top political figures, no longer in detention, are routinely prevented by the police from leaving their homes. Last week, a group of protesters of the People's Democratic Party was scattered through police action. This was immediately followed by the police attacks on Muharram processions. These are signs that betray the government's insecurities.

The show must go on

The Chennai Super Kings retinue has been like a bat flying among pigeons in the IPL bio-bubble in the UAE. A whole XI of the training staff as well as two players have tested positive thus introducing a degree of uncertainty into the conduct of IPL 2020 and the participation of an international cast of players. The team's vice-captain Suresh Raina has had to leave Dubai after tragedy struck his uncle's family in Pathankot in Punjab as violent robbers trespassed into their home. One of eight teams may have run into a jinx of sorts but that cannot be reason enough to abandon the IPL season.

There is no cricket business like T20 business and the show must go on to nurture the promise to the people that a new normal can be established. Of course, there are rules to be followed, which only iron discipline can ensure. International sport set up very successful bio-secure environments in Europe, UK and USA, the worst affected country in the Covid-19 pandemic that is holding the world in its thrall. Soccer has been played, so too cricket in England with only the occasional player indiscretion to be dealt with.

The IPL is a ₹4,000 crore direct TV rights revenue per annum entertainment industry with several hundreds of crores more in team and player sponsorships, besides being a big spender in chartered flights, hotels and resorts, etc. The point is a high degree of responsibility commensurate with such riches must go hand in hand, with everyone contributing to the safety of the bio-bubble.

One team may have been foolhardy in its overenthusiasm in also holding a preparatory camp to please its iconic captain Dhoni's wishes in Chennai. But that shouldn't stop the whole circus, as the great showman P.T. Barnum said when they burned down his tent. The show must go on and UAE with 379 deaths to date from under 70,000 coronavirus cases in six months is a safer bet than India that is seeing as many cases in a day.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

ADITYA SINHA
Editor

R. MOHAN
Resident Editor

K. SUDHAKAR
Printer & Publisher

DECCAN CHRONICLE offices are located at:

Chennai: SP 3 Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai 600032. Phones: (044) 22254747, 22254748

Coimbatore: 77 Vivekananda Road, Rannagar, Coimbatore 641009. Phone: (0422) 2231255, 2231256

Hyderabad: 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad 500 003. Phone: (040) 27803930-4. Fax: (040) 27805256.

Bengaluru: 5th Floor, BMTC Commercial Complex, 80 Ft. Road, Koramangala, Bangalore-560095. Ph: 08043460500; Fax: 080-22960551/52/55

Visakhapatnam: Survey No. 1/3A Beach Road, Near Kailasagiri Ropeway, Sector-9 MVP Colony, Visakhapatnam - 530 017. Phones: (0891) 2552333/2552334, Fax: (0891) 2752385

Vijayawada: No. C 3 & 4, Patamata, Industrial Estate, Auto Nagar, Vijayawada (A.P.). Phones: (0866) 2555284/2555287, Fax: (0866) 2555234

Rajahmundry: Vemagiri, Dhawleswaram Rd, Rajahmundry 533125. Phones: (0883) 2417208, 2417618

Anantapur: Thapovan Colony, Bangalore Bye-Pass Road, Anantapur 515004. Phones: (08554) 276903, Fax: 08554-276904

Nellore: Survey No. 527/2, Burranpur Village, Venkatachalam (M), Chermudugunta Panchayat, Nellore. Phone: (0861) 2248581/82, Telefax: (0861) 2348580

Karimnagar: Survey No. 1341, Vavilalpalay Colony, Jagityala Road, Karimnagar 505 001. Phone: (0878) 2228908; Telefax: (0878) 2220433

Kochi: No. 3-B, 3rd Floor, DD TRADE TOWER, Kaloor-Kadavanthara Road, Emakulam, Ph: 0484-4039408

Kozhikode: No 6/1002 E, First Floor City Mall, Opp. YMCA Kannur Road, Kozhikode - 673 001

Thiruvananthapuram: St Joseph Press Thycad post, Cotton Hills, Thiruvananthapuram-14, Ph: 0471-2735105/6/7, Fax: 0471-4016112 Gram: CHRONICLE Postal registration no: No. H/SD-348/2006-08ss

Subhani

GOVT MAY DROP QUESTION HOUR

NOW, WE CAN'T QUESTION THEM EVEN INSIDE THE HOUSE

The centrality of dissent



Manish Tewari

State of the Union

The Nasdiya Sukta, a major verse in the Rigveda, states, "Then He, who created all that is, or did not, Who looks upon everything from the highest heaven, He alone knows. Or maybe He too does not."

In its very first intellectual iterations the Indic civilisation laid down its commitment to doubt and dissent, its determination to address the ambiguities of both the human mind and the omniscient gods through a critical lens.

It was this combination of constant seeking and continual absence of certitude that made our civilisation so fecund. A crucible of key human ideas and systems of thought. Questioning shaped us. Our foundational texts, the key Upanishads, were exploratory, provisional, in their wisdom. No rajan, no rishi, no god, could escape the sincere question. None could turn their face away from the mirror.

Anyone could be cross-examined on their dharma, from the unimpeachable Yudhishtira, to the divine Rama and Krishna. Your conduct defined your stature. No one's station was fixed. It was made and re-made through beliefs and action. It was always up for interrogation.

The genius of Mohandas Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Babasaheb Ambedkar — who gave up their entire lives to restore a wounded civilisation — lay in the same seed: constant self-examination and self-correction; and a brutal honesty inextricably aligned to the greater good.

The free society they struggled to create, even as it seems to borrow from the language of a more recent West, actually owes its deepest debt to our own ancient impulses. The conviction that free citizens, thinking citizens, questioning citizens, lie at the

root of the good society. The finest rajan is not the unquestioned master of the people. The finest rajan is the embodiment of a questioning people.

More than 1,600 years after the glorious triumph of dissent in the death of Socrates, the Magna Carta was the first successful act of political dissent in 1215. It hewed into stone the first principles of Constitutional Democracy and sowed the seeds of a million mutinies. It proclaimed "No free man shall be seized or imprisoned, or stripped of his rights or possessions, or outlawed or exiled, or deprived of his standing in any other way, nor will we proceed with force against him, or send others to do so, except by the lawful judgment of his equals or by the law of the land. To no one will we sell, to no one deny or delay right or justice".

It gave birth to a central tenet of modern societies, "Be ye ever so high, the law is above you", by holding that no man is above the law, not even the king. The Magna Carta has been for 800 years a plinth idea of free people, free societies and free nations around the world.

On the continent, the Magna Carta was succeeded by the Renaissance and Reformation and the battle between old blind feudalisms and dogmas against the engines of human thought was noisily afoot. Answers were demanded not just from divine rulers but also from divinity. Political dissidents were persecuted, exiled, and heretics often burnt at the stake.

But the tsunami of change was beyond being bottled anymore. The next few hundred years would see more change than the millennia and a half before. The fruit of human inquiry would flower. Technology in the shape of the printing press would spread dissident ideas rapidly and spark fresh

questioning and reform movements. It would hasten the end of Europe's Dark Ages.

The Age of Enlightenment would push for individual liberty and religious tolerance. The English Bill of Rights in 1689 would limit the powers of the monarch and set out rights of individuals including free speech.

The founding of United States of America itself would become perhaps the most successful act of historical dissent — a revolt against the feudal order of Europe by people who went to the New World to create a new land of equality and opportunity.

Dissent is thus cardinal to the idea of the United States. The American founding fathers enshrined the right to dissent in the First Amendment to the Constitution for the American nation was baked in the oven of contesting ideas. Justice Oliver Wendell consecrated this in his famous dissenting opinion "Abrams vs United States" a century ago. He wrote, "But when men have realised that time has upset many fighting faiths, they may come to believe even more than they believe the very foundations of their own conduct that the ultimate good desired is better reached by free trade in ideas."

The twentieth century saw the rise of Communist and Fascist regimes. These regimes were set against all dissent. (One reason Nehru, with rare foresight and integrity, refused to meet Benito Mussolini in 1936, even while transiting through Rome.) It saw the monstrous excesses of Stalin and Mao, just to name the worst two. An estimated 50-100 million people, including their finest minds, died due to their autocratic — not-to-be-questioned — policies. In time both schools of

The Indian national movement is easily the finest example of the power and creativity of dissent, both internal and external

thought and governance collapsed, having inflicted untold suffering on innocent millions.

Adolf Hitler's concentration camp regime also commenced with the persecution of his political opponents, the Social Democrats. They were tortured and executed by the Nazi Gauleiters and Reichsleiters. While the Social Democratic ideal survived the ravages of Nazism, Hitler and his mistress were compelled to commit suicide and their bodies were charred beyond recognition. Mussolini and his mistress, similarly, were strung up in public by their own oppressed countrymen.

Ultimately what remains are the voices of dissidents celebrated for speaking truth to power, for attempting a restoration of humanity's faith in itself. Writer Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Soviet communism's trenchant critic, built his Nobel Prize lecture around a Russian proverb: "One word of truth outweighs the whole world." Andrei Sakharov, another famous dissident, stated that, "A man may hope for nothing, but nevertheless speak because he cannot simply remain silent."

The Indian national movement is easily the finest example of the power and creativity of dissent, both internal and external. One drove out by moral force and principled protest the most powerful colonial power in history since the Romans.

The other, the healthy, productive dissent within the key architects of the freedom struggle — arguably the greatest assemblage ever of remarkable leaders — is what made the former possible. From their arguments, their disagreements and agreements, their unwavering goal of the greater good, that the sublime idea of India was born.

The argumentative Indian is not a trope. It is the truth upon which our civilisation stands.

The author is a lawyer, Member of Parliament and former Union information and broadcasting minister. The views expressed are personal.

LETTERS

NEED TIMELY BREAK

Apropos the article, *The nation needs a break.*

National TV news channels conducting so called intensive 'media trials' is not new. We have seen similar things happen in the Aarushi, Sunanda and other cases too. In the actor Sushant Singh's death case, we are witnessing a virtual channel war going on now, with a few channels perhaps trying to 'make hay while the sun shines'. While a few channels have been devoting more than 60% of their prime time since over the past two months clearly battling for the homicide angle, others are putting up a neutral picture by offering a free interactive platform to an accused in the case. While a completely free, responsible media is vital for a democracy like ours, one particular channel has perhaps taken its 'chasing the accused' role a bit too riskily far, strongly reminding us of the tragic accidental death of Britain's Princess Diana years back after being allegedly hounded non-stop by the paparazzi.

A. Mohan
Chennai

HYPOCRITE TRUMP

THE US PRESIDENT Donald Trump is reported to have insulted his democratic challenger Joe Biden as a person with 'low IQ'. He has also commented that Kamala Harris who is of Indian origin and a senator as 'not competent' to be US President. It seems that Trump has a very high IQ as he does not believe in wearing a mask even at public places. His supporters too follow him helping US increase the spread of coronavirus. Trump seems to have more IQ than common sense! Trump has also stated that his daughter Ivana Trump is more suitable to become the President of US. India is infamous for family rule at the state and central levels from time immemorial. US politics seem to be as dirty as India's going by the recent acts/statements of Trump & company.

M.C. Vijay Shankar
Chennai

Kishwar Desai

London Diary



The latest ruse to meet people; e-cycles are the new rage in UK

There is always another side to the story — and right now it belongs to the anti-vaccine lobby — which was demonstrating in London over the weekend stating that the Covid-19 pandemic is nothing but a conspiracy by Bill Gates! None of the gathered 10,000 were wearing masks and for them there is no such thing as the killer virus either. So what happened to those millions who died, and millions more who were hospitalised all over the world? Were they somehow brainwashed by the vaccine makers into making themselves sick? It would be difficult to find a more adamant bunch of Brits, whose opinions trump over scientific research (pun intended!). But they can be understood, if we place them next to the flat-earth lobby, or anything else that seems an inexplicable denial of everything that is happening in the real world. We can only hope that their mingling in large crowds as they protest and ask for a return to "normal life" will not lead to a spike in the virus — while the rest of us continue to 'social-distance'.

Another lot of demonstrators are

also going be out and about soon — the Extinction Rebellion — which is an environmental movement and is having its demonstration, too. If it is anything like their demonstration last year, any traffic movement will be impossible in Central London and that is not a bad thing either. Is this the latest way to hang out with buddies — organise a demonstration?

I never imagined that we would actually hope for colder weekends. We are thankful that the August bank holiday weekend threatens to be a cold one. Well, hot summer weekends mean no distancing, traffic jams on country roads and crowded beaches. Then that in turn leads to a revival of Covid infections. We need some stay-at-home cold days and nights to slow down the pandemic.

The latest data show a sharp upsurge in new cases, highest since June and in four figures. Whether this will stay next month or is just a blip is anyone's guess. September is crucial because schools reopen. There has been a battle going on between the government, which

wants schools to open, and the teachers' union, which is asking for guarantees about safety. The Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, keeps changing his mind — but now it seems he has decided to follow the practice in Scotland where a sensible compromise is being worked out about masks and distancing and bubbles.

The UK government writ runs only to England in Corona matters and the devolved authorities Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are doing much better. But while the government led by Boris would like people to come back to work — not all companies agree and some City financial firms are happy to let their workers stay at home. Tube trains will have to be monitored for distancing. Many are buying e-cycles that allow them to speed fast and effortlessly to work. How London traffic will cope with bicycles as well as e-cycles remains to be seen!

This is the season for the Proms. It is a high point in the transition between summer

and autumn. It is a musical feast in the splendid location of the Royal Albert Hall. Day after day famous composers and singers and soloists perform divine music, which is broadcast on the BBC which sponsors the programme. If you want a seat you have to wrangle it from those who have bought seats permanently but may let you have it for a night for a hefty price. If not, you stand at the back as part of the promenade. On the final day of the Proms, the climax comes with the playing of Land of Hope and Glory and, of course, Rule Britannia with many standing at the back waving Union Jacks and singing a raucous chorus. All around the country people gather in open places and parks and gardens and sing along with those in the Royal Albert Hall. This has led to some light-hearted displays of patriotism. But now it seems BBC is not sure it is culturally appropriate to celebrate the past as it is associated with Empire and slavery. The culture war, which has been going on since Black Lives Matter erupted four months ago, has still not abated. So the BBC has proposed that the

music will be played but no singing of the lyrics.

You can just imagine what that has done. As it is the BBC is in trouble. It is financed by the income from the TV licence paid for by everyone who has a TV and costs £175. The Blair government gave everyone above 75 a free TV licence as part of its settlement with BBC. But the Conservatives (who never liked the BBC) have removed the subsidy. So BBC wants the elderly to pay. This is the precise audience who like Rule Britannia and the flag waving. Amol Rajan who is media editor with BBC has just accused it of becoming "the broadcasting wing for Black Lives Matter"! There is a petition going around asking Lord Hall, the departing director general of the BBC, to change his mind. BLM is impacting everything now, even music!

Kishwar Desai is an award-winning author. Her 6th book, the biography of the 1930s superstar, Devika Rani, The Longest Kiss will soon be out.

quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	39,467.31 0.90
Nifty 50	11,647.60 0.76
S&P 500*	3,508.01 0.67
Dollar (₹)	73.39 0.58
Pound Sterling (₹)	97.38 0.16
Euro (₹)	87.38 0.00
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	52,155*252 0.40
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	45.81 00
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.097 -0.050
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.724 00

* As of Friday/Saturday

FM to meet bankers on loan recast on Sept. 3



Ahead of the roll out of one-time debt recast for resolution of Covid-19 related stress in bank loans, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman will hold a review meeting with bankers and heads of NBFCs on Sept. 3 for smooth and speedy implementation of the scheme. "The review (meeting) will focus on enabling businesses and households to avail of the revival framework on the basis of viability..." the finance ministry said.

Bank QIPs help swell inflow to ₹46,600 cr August FPI inflow hits five-year high

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, AUG. 30

Private banks' huge fund raising through qualified institutional placement (QIP) bloated foreign fund flows to the equity market in August and balanced out outflows from profit taking by domestic mutual funds.

Total foreign portfolio investments stood at Rs 46,602 crore in August so far. This is the highest foreign inflows in a month this year and in the last five years.

It should also be kept in mind that such a large inflow is coming in a world flooded with abundant liquidity and after huge withdrawal by the foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) earlier this year worth Rs 61,973 crore in March and Rs 6,884 crore in April.

In the first half of August, ICICI Bank raised Rs 15,000 crore through QIP. Also, Axis Bank and home loan financier HDFC raised Rs 10,000 crore each through QIPs where both FPIs and domestic institutions were bidders.

FPIs cornered a lion's share of ICICI Bank's QIP;



the Government of Singapore was allotted over 46.44 lakh shares comprising 11.08 per cent of the total equity shares issued in the QIP issue. Morgan Stanley Investment Management's Global Opportunity Fund was allotted over 30.63 lakh shares (7.31 per cent of the issue) and Societe Generale got over 23.24 lakh shares, or 5.55 per cent of the issue.

Axis Bank, after close of the QIP, said, "Despite a challenging macro-economic environment, the placement has witnessed strong reception from the global and domestic investor community, including several large foreign portfolio investors, domes-

tic mutual funds and insurance companies."

FPIs shareholding in Axis Bank has gone up from 45.96 per cent as on June 30 to 48.47 per cent as on August 11, as per the updated shareholding data, post-QIP.

In HDFC Ltd's case, Government of Singapore was allotted over 75.96 lakh shares comprising 13.37 per cent of the total equity shares issued in the QIP while another FPI, Invesco Oppenheimer Developing Market Fund was allotted over 31.40 lakh shares comprising 5.54 per cent of the QIP.

ICICI Bank and HDFC are yet to update their shareholding data post-QIP.

BANKS TOLD TO REFUND UPI, RUPAY TRANSACTION CHARGES

New Delhi, Aug. 30: The Income Tax department on Sunday asked banks to refund the charges collected on or after January 1, 2020, on transactions carried out through electronic modes like RuPay cards or

BHIM-UPI.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), in a circular on 'imposition of charge on the prescribed electronic modes under section 269SU of I-T Act', also advised banks not to

impose any charges on any future transactions made through these modes.

"Banks are advised to immediately refund the charges collected, if any, on or after January 1," the circular said. —PTI

Consumers opting for essentials, not luxury: Nestle

New Delhi, Aug. 30: The pandemic has brought a major shift in consumption patterns among consumers as necessary purchases are taking precedence over luxury spending, Nestle India chairman Suresh Narayanan has said.

Stating that the coronavirus crisis has witnessed "re-calibration of the consumer wallets" amidst economic disruptions, he said certain terms like quality, safety, nutrition and trust have gathered more prominence as consumers are preferring "tried and tested" brands in these uncertain times.

"With the economic pandemic that has followed Covid-19, a re-calibration of the consumer wallets is taking place where essentials are taking precedence over luxuries, however affordable they are," said Narayanan. Moreover, there will also be re-calibration of channels such as e-commerce, which has increased its penetration among the customers post lockdown, he said.

"If you look at e-commerce channels, in the US what took eight years in terms of penetration, it has been achieved in eight weeks (of lockdown). Clearly the e-commerce journey is here to stay and there will be re-calibration of channels, Narayanan said. —PTI

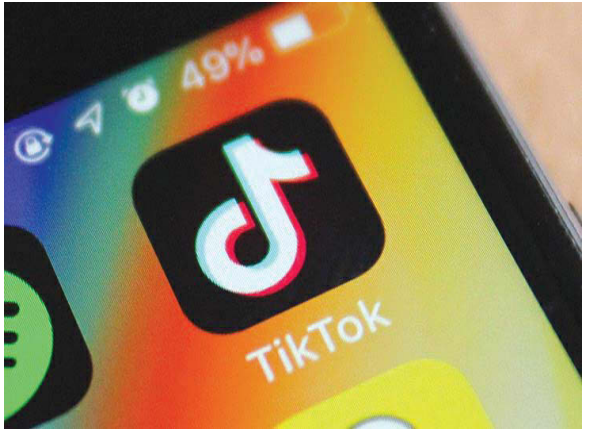
China throws spanner in Trump's TikTok works

Aug. 30: ByteDance Ltd. will be required to seek Chinese government approval to sell the US operations of its short-video TikTok app under new restrictions Beijing imposed on the export of artificial intelligence technologies, according to a person familiar with the matter.

AI interface technologies such as speech and text recognition, and those that analyse data to make personalised content recommendations, were added to a revised list of export-control products published on the Ministry of Commerce's website late Friday. Government permits will be required for overseas transfers to "safeguard national economic security," it said.

The new restrictions cover technologies ByteDance uses in TikTok and will require the company to seek government approval for any deal, according to the person, asking not to be identified because the details aren't public. The new rule is aimed at delaying the sale and is not an outright ban, the person said.

Donald Trump's administration has said ByteDance must sell the US operations of its popular video-sharing app because of alleged national security risks. Microsoft Corp and Oracle Corp have submitted rival bids to ByteDance to acquire TikTok's US business, while Centricus Asset Management Ltd and Triller Inc were said to have made a last-minute pitch on Friday to buy TikTok's operations in several countries for \$20



billion.

China's foreign ministry and commerce ministry did not immediately respond to requests for comment. A ByteDance representative had no immediate comment when reached by Bloomberg.

ByteDance should study the new export list and "seriously and cautiously" consider whether it should halt negotiations, Cui Fan, a trade expert and professor at Beijing's University of International Business and Economics, told the official Xinhua News Agency.

Additional approval in Beijing is likely to delay and could undermine any transaction. Because the Chinese government review will take time, the TikTok deal may be delayed until after the US elections in November, the person familiar said.

The revised rules would cover cross-border transfers of restricted technologies even within the same company, while the impact and consequences of failing to make appropriate

applications would be very different if an international business is spun off, Cui said separately in an interview with Bloomberg.

Technologies related to drones and to some genetic engineering methods and procedures were also added to the revised export-control list while others in areas like medical equipment were removed. The revisions are meant to promote China's technological advancement and international cooperation, and "safeguard national economic security," a commerce ministry representative said in a separate statement on Friday.

Technology exports encompass various transfers out of China including via trade, investment and patents, according to the statement. Any export of restricted technology will require letters of export permit intentions from Chinese authorities before negotiations can be held, while final permits are required before any transfer happens. —Bloomberg

COFFEE-BREAK

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



Aries: Love may happen while staying late at work. Expect several pleasant surprises. You may take a long pilgrimage. Stay off stock markets or expect heavy losses.



Taurus: A child's success brings joy at home. You'll socialise. Speculation brings huge losses. Secret love and sexual affairs may cause trouble later.



Gemini: Influential people will criticise you if you stray away from guidelines meant for you. Bills you thought were fully paid may need attention. Delays may cause anxiety.



Cancer: Don't keep off work for long. Your enemies' attempt to get the better of you will be thwarted today. Spend quality time with near and dear ones.



Leo: Love and romance get passionate. Loved ones get more understanding than ever. Compromise wherever possible. Today's auspicious for marital affairs.



Virgo: Expect fights with partner during breakfast. A colleague's call or mail may bring joy. Don't let friends interfere with your job-handling methods. Expect discrepancies in your accounts.

You share your b'day with

Richard Gere, American actor. He is best known for his roles in *Chicago*, *An Officer and a Gentleman*, *The Cotton Club*, *Pretty Woman*, *Sommersby*, *Primal Fear*, *Runaway Bride*, *I'm Not There* and *Arbitrage* amongst others.



Libra: Government-related jobs complete on time; you'd be honoured for that. Highly influential people help you complete your projects. Expect good money. Singles may decide to commit finally.



Scorpio: Religious literature may interest you. Don't waste time on unprofitable deeds. You'll lose temper at home. You'll have to work harder to smooth things out.



Sagittarius: You'll show excellent management skills at work. Finances are fairly comfortable; expect sudden windfalls. Scrutinise property offers carefully.



Capricorn: Your hectic work schedule drains you physically. Expect some unpleasant news. Finances are good, so relax. Fortune is not with you, be ready for setbacks.



Aquarius: Despite a hectic schedule, you'll find time for your family. Stay alert about legal complications. You'll enjoy many luxuries in life and your good deeds will find praise.



Pisces: Students can focus on their studies. Politicians and armed forces personnel should be careful in their daily affairs and arts professionals do well. Eat nutritious food or you could suffer minor ailments.

bridge
PHILLIP
ALDER

THREE POSSIBLE GAMES, SOME UNCERTAINTY

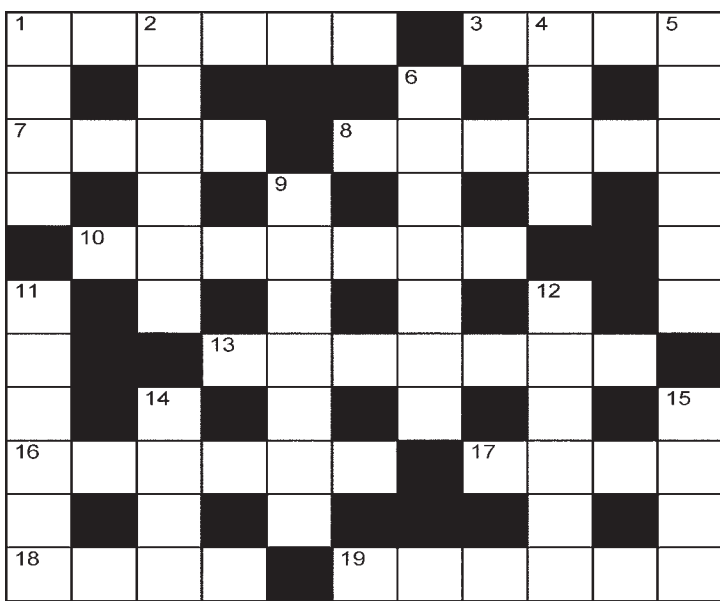
George S. Kaufman wrote, "Once upon a time there were three bears: Papa Bear, Mama Bear, and Camembert." Today's deal from a Bridge Base Online double game contracts. How two, Papa Game and Mama Game, get on is fairly clear. But the third, Baby Game, is less obvious.

What do you think about the given auction, knowing that South's double showed

three-card heart support, and what should be the result in five diamonds doubled?

Sitting South, I would have been tempted to ignore my three-card heart support and rebid three diamonds. But majors and no-trump rule in duplicates. Then surely South should have been happy with three no-trump. Even if partner had only a singleton diamond, there would be a play for the contract.

QUICK CROSSWORD



Across
1. Vehicle operator (6)
3. Aquatic creature (4)
7. Throw (4)
8. Rick (6)
10. Distraught with fear, anxiety (7)
13. Scolded (7)
16. Easily bent (6)
17. Branch (4)
18. Frolic (4)
19. Prisoner (6)

Down
1. Tax on imports (4)
2. Cover against loss (6)
4. Quantity of paper (4)
5. Long flag (6)
6. Separate (5,2)
9. Conflagration (7)
11. Seller of fabrics (6)
12. Part of the eye (6)
14. Company (4)
15. Competent (4)

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER
Across: 1. Nightmare, 6. Opera, 7. Slush, 9. Tutu, 10. Reject, 12. Ows up, 14. Rash, 17. Tamed, 18. Apart, 19. Threatens.

Down: 2. Inept, 3. Hoax, 4. Master, 5. Rouse, 6. Outpost, 8. Hatchet, 11. Puddle, 13. Nymph, 15. Again, 16. Cast.

Word Mine

W
NDA
OGANB

TODAY'S RATINGS: 5 AVERAGE: 6 GOOD: 8 OUTSTANDING

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

West	North	East
W 10 9 7 5 4	N 10 9 8 6 2 4	E 10 9 8 6 2 4
West	North	East
W 10 9 7 5 4	N 10 9 8 6 2 4	E 10 9 8 6 2 4
West	North	East
W 10 9 7 5 4	N 10 9 8 6 2 4	E 10 9 8 6 2 4
West	North	East
W 10 9 7 5 4	N 10 9 8 6 2 4	E 10 9 8 6 2 4

jumble

NSYNU
LIOGO
DUEHDL
CNEJTI

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Ans. here: LIVID FRONT IMPOSE WITHIN

Yesterday's Jumbles: LIVID FRONT IMPOSE WITHIN

Answer: She had everything she needed to apply a coat of lacquer to the table and would — FINISH IT

When the student said, "Can I ask a question?" the teacher said —

First of all, it's "May I ask a question?"

Can't?

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

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Maybe South should have

foreseen this and run to four no-trump. That would have made unless East led the spade king.

A couple of East-West pairs bought it in five clubs. Note that if declarer reads the position correctly, which isn't automatic, he takes 12 tricks unless the defenders begin with the spade ace and a spade ruff.

CALVIN AND HOBBS | Bill Watterson



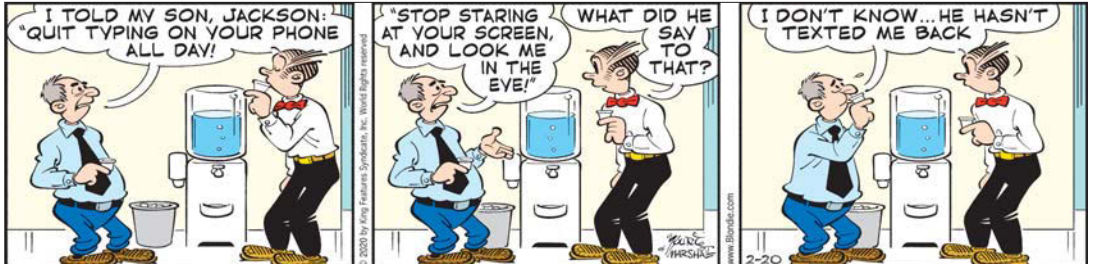
THE WIZARD OF ID | Parker and Hartsd



ARCHIE | Bill Henry Scarpelli & craig boldman



BLONDIE | Dean Young and John Marshall



ANDY CAPP | Reg Smythe



TARZAN | Edgar Rice Burroughs



SHORT TAKES

Messi skips Covid testing with Barca

Madrid: In another sign that Lionel Messi's time with Barcelona is coming to an end, the player did not report for required coronavirus testing scheduled for the whole squad on Sunday. Barcelona said Messi was the only player who did not undergo the tests at the club's training center. The team is set to resume training on Monday ahead of the upcoming start of the season. The club also reiterated their stance not to negotiate Messi's early release, saying president Josep Bartomeu will only sit down with the player if it is to extend his contract beyond next season. Messi last week expressed his desire to leave the club, but Barcelona want him to play out the contract that ends in June 2021. The club also said it is not negotiating a possible transfer with any other team. Messi announced his decision to leave on Tuesday by sending the club a burofax, a certified document similar to a telegram. — AP

Bucks advance in NBA playoffs

Miami: The Milwaukee Bucks powered into the second round of the NBA playoffs on Saturday, three days after their refusal to take the court in the wake of a police shooting in Wisconsin brought the post-season to a halt. Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 28 points and grabbed 17 rebounds and the Bucks led by as many as 21 on the way to a 118-104 victory over the Orlando Magic. Milwaukee won the best-of-seven Eastern Conference series four games to one to line up a second round clash with the Miami Heat, who swept the Indiana Pacers in four games. In the Western Conference, Anthony Davis scored 43 points and LeBron James kept his perfect playoff record alive as the Los Angeles Lakers beat Portland 131-122 to clinch their first round series in five games. — AFP

Djokovic seals 35th Masters title

New York: For all that's been on Novak Djokovic's plate of late including a painful neck and his efforts to start a new players' association in men's tennis he just keeps winning. He's perfect in 2020, an ideal way to head into the U.S. Open. Djokovic tied Rafael Nadal's record by earning his 35th title at a Masters 1000 tournament, overcoming a sluggish start to beat Milos Raonic 1-6, 6-3, 6-4 in the Western & Southern Open final Saturday and improve to 23-0 this season. "Has been challenging mentally and emotionally for me to stay sane and be able to compete on the highest level and win this title," Djokovic said. "Going on an unbeaten run so far this year obviously brings even more confidence each match." — AP

NOVAK, SERENA CHASE HISTORY IN US OPEN

New York: The US Open becomes the first Grand Slam of the COVID-19 era when it starts on Monday in a spectator-free bubble at Flushing Meadows following a troubled build-up that saw several top stars withdraw over coronavirus fears. Novak Djokovic and Serena Williams headline a tournament that will be unrecognisable from previous Slams due to strict safety protocols that were still not enough to convince some of tennis's biggest names to travel to New York. Defending champion Rafael Nadal and women's number one Ashleigh Barty are among high-profile absentees at the US National Tennis Center.

Live on TV

TENNIS

US Open

First round matches from 8.30 pm on Star Sports Select 1, HD

Regd. No. TNENG/2010/35692

Printed & Published by K. Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited and Printed at Deccan Chronicle Press situated at No 2/22, Sengalipalayam Road, N.G.G.O Colony Post, Kurudampalayam Village, Coimbatore - 641 022. RNI Registration No: TNENG/2010/35692 Ph No: 2231252, 253, 255, 257 & 358 Editor: ADITYA SINHA

New start for chess, says Vishy

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR CHENNAI, AUG. 30

In a dramatic turn of events, India and Russia were declared joint winners of the first online chess Olympiad that concluded on Sunday. After the first round ended in a 3-3 draw, the final was poised for a thrilling finish before India's Nihal Sarin and Divya Deshmukh lost their Internet connection and forfeited on time. The match ended 4.5-1.5 in favour of Russia, but Fide, the international ruling body of chess, declared both finalists as joint winners after India filed an appeal.

The event has been hit by a global internet outage throughout and the final day witnessed more drama. Fide president Arkady Dvorkovich said the decision to award gold medals to both teams was made after the Appeals Committee examined all the evidence provided by Chess.com, the online partners of the event. "Apart from that, information was gathered from

other sources about this internet outage. After being informed of their considerations and in absence of an unanimous decision, and taken into account these unprecedented circumstances, I made the decision," said Dvorkovich.

FIRST GOLD FOR INDIA

It was India's second medal at the Olympiad after their historic bronze at the 2014 edition in Norway. The online edition adopted a unique format with countries fielding mixed teams — men, women and juniors — after the scheduled 44th Olympiad had to be cancelled in Moscow. Indian team comprised Vidit Gujrathi (captain), Viswanathan Anand, P. Harikrishna, Koneru Humpy, Dronavalli Harika, R. Vaishali, Bhakti Kulkarni, Nihal Sarin, R. Praggnanandhaa, Aravindh Chithambaram, R. Vaishali, Bhakti Kulkarni, Divya Deshmukh and Vantika Agrawal.

INDIA, RUSSIA SHARE OLYMPIAD GOLD



VISHY ENDS OLYMPIAD DROUGHT

For India's chess king Anand, it was his first taste of Olympiad success. He made his Olympiad debut as a teenager in 1984, but a medal had eluded him for more than two decades. "You can't make this up. It just had to happen and it did after so many twists and turns. It was an unusual end, but we will take it," said the five-time world champion, who didn't have a great tournament.

Anand had opted out of the first match on Sunday, paving the way for P. Harikrishna. Anand

returned for the second match and played out a draw against Ian Nepomniachtchi.

Anand credited India's stupendous show to its bench strength. "This format really showcased our strength. We have a good set of juniors. Koneru Humpy and Harika Dronavalli are still going strong. I wanted Harikrishna to play the first match because he brings in a lot of stability. I am glad it worked out," he added.

ONLINE CHESS CREATES BUZZ

The event created a lot of buzz online with more

than 60,000 people watching the live match analysis on chessbaseindia.com.

Anand said the support was amazing. "It was fantastic to see such interest. An unusual opportunity has opened up for chess in this pandemic."

Anand believes India's Olympiad success will change the public perception of chess.

ARJUNA AWARD SNUB

Anand believes India's Olympiad success will change the public perception of chess. "Hopefully, it will boost the game. We haven't got government recognition in the past few years. We no longer figure in the scheme of things for Arjuna and Dronacharya awards. I don't know what has happened. I didn't even realise it until someone forwarded a petition.

There are a lot of potential Arjuna as well as Drona awardees from the Olympiad team. We wouldn't have got this medal without their support. Hopefully, they will be rewarded," he added.

Trouble in kingdom

Raina reportedly left CSK camp after rift

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR CHENNAI, AUG. 30

A day after Chennai Super Kings announced Suresh Raina's surprise IPL pull-out citing "personal reasons", it has emerged that all is not well in the M.S. Dhoni-led team. According to reports, Raina was "unhappy" from the day CSK landed in the UAE because some of his "unreasonable demands" were unmet. Apparently, the hotel room he was allotted was "inadequate" for him and Raina wanted a suite similar to the one Dhoni had been provided with.

"He definitely hasn't left CSK camp on good terms. His demands were unreasonable," a team source told this newspaper.

With news of the alleged rift, the initial speculation that Raina was worried about the murder of a relative in Pathankot on August 20 — two days before CSK reached the UAE — may not be true.

N. Srinivasan, the man behind Super Kings, said on Sunday that cricketers, sometimes, "act like prima donnas". ".....like the temperamental actors of the olden days. Chennai Super Kings have always been like a family and all seniors players have learnt to co-exist," Srinivasan was quoted as saying.

"My thinking is that if you are reluctant or not happy, go back. I don't force anyone to do anything... sometimes success gets into your head," Srinivasan added.

Srinivasan said Dhoni was "not worried at all". "I spoke to MS (Dhoni) and he has assured me that even if the numbers go up, there was nothing to worry. He spoke to the players through a zoom call and asked them to remain safe. You really don't know who is a passive carrier," Srinivasan said.



Kohli & Co. sweat it out in nets

Dubai, Aug. 30: Indian captain Virat Kohli admitted he was "pretty scared" to hit the nets for the first time in five months but said his first training session ahead of the upcoming IPL went "better than expected".

The Royal Challengers Bangalore captain resumed training after a five-month coronavirus-fueled hiatus. The net session was also attended by South African pace legend Dale Steyn and RCB team director Mike Hesson.

"(It went) much better than expected, to be honest. I was pretty scared. I hadn't picked up a bat for



five months, but yeah it came out better than I thought, to be honest," Kohli was quoted as saying by the franchise's website.

The 31-year-old, who was RCB's highest run-getter in IPL last year,

said staying fit during the lockdown helped him to react better during the net session even though he was training after a long break.

"I've trained quite a bit during the lockdown, so I'm feeling quite fit and that helps. Because the body is light and you react better, I feel like I have more time on the ball. That's a big plus," he said.

"Otherwise you come heavier into the season, the body isn't moving as much, and it starts playing on mind, but yeah, as I said it went much better than I expected."

RCB arrived in Dubai

last week ahead of the 13th IPL which is scheduled to begin on September 19 in the UAE. The team hit the nets on Saturday after successfully ending their quarantine period.

Besides Kohli, spin trio of Yuzvendra Chahal, Washington Sundar and Shahbaz Nadeem and a few pacers also trained and Kohli was pleased with the way they went about their business in the first session.

"The spinners looked pretty good for day one, they pitched the ball in consistent areas for long enough," said Kohli.

— PTI

HAMILTON WINS, CLOSES IN ON SCHUMI RECORD

BELGIAN GP

Spa-Francorchamps (Belgium), Aug. 30: Lewis Hamilton stretched his lead in the drivers' world championship and closed to within two wins of Michael Schumacher's Formula One record of 91 on Sunday with a majestic, if ultimately tense, Belgian Grand Prix victory.

The series leader and six-time champion registered his 89th career win with another flawless drive to take his fourth Belgian triumph, finishing 8.448 seconds clear of his Mercedes team-mate Valtteri Bottas.

It was Hamilton's fifth win in seven races this year and extended his record run of points-scoring races to 40.

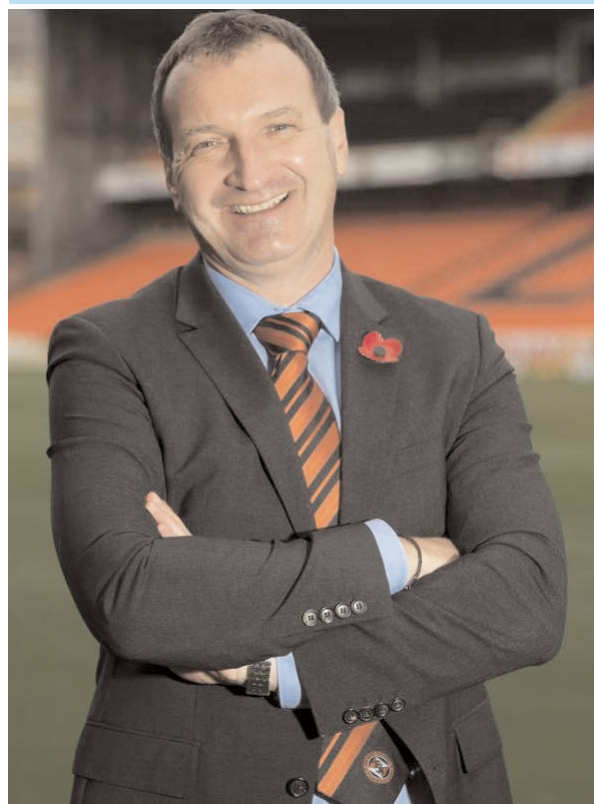
Max Verstappen came third for Red Bull, seven

seconds further adrift, to claim his sixth podium finish in succession.

Hamilton, who had to nurse his car home on worn tyres, has 157 points in the title race, 47 clear of Verstappen. The 'black arrows' lead the constructors' championship with 264 points, well ahead of Red Bull on 158.

"It wasn't the easiest of races," said Hamilton. "I had a lock-up, which produced vibrations, at Turn Five and another one at the last corner and it was a bit of a struggle, but nonetheless I think it was ok in the end."

At the British GP, Hamilton had clung on to win after one of his tyres disintegrated. — AFP



Chennaiyin FC coach Csaba Laszlo.

Csaba Laszlo is new Chennaiyin coach

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, AUG. 30:

Two-time ISL champions Chennaiyin FC on Sunday announced the appointment of experienced Csaba Laszlo as their head coach for the 2020-21 season.

It will be the 56-year-old Hungarian Laszlo's first stint in Asia. He has more than two decades of coaching experience at club and international level. The Romania-born Laszlo had coaching stints in eight countries, including two national teams — Uganda and Lithuania. Laszlo replaced Owen Coyle, who took the team to the final in the 2019-20 ISL season. Coyle recently moved to Jamshedpur FC as their head coach.

"I am very excited about coming to Asia and specifically India. I am aware that every continent and every country has a different culture and maybe different kind of football. But in my opinion the language of football is same around the world. I am looking forward to meeting the players and other staff members in person," said Laszlo.

"And I'm so happy now to be a part of this family. Together with my coaching

staff, we will do everything possible to take Chennaiyin to greater heights," he added.

Chennaiyin FC co-owner Vita Dani said Laszlo has the credentials to bring success to the club.

A central midfielder himself, Laszlo's playing career comprised a host of clubs in Romania, Hungary and erstwhile West Germany before he was forced to retire due to a knee injury at the age of 27. His early coaching career included a spell at the Borussia Monchengladbach B team, where he oversaw the discovery of several future stars, most notably German international and FIFA World Cup bronze medalist Marcell Jansen.

He worked as assistant to German World Cup-winning legend Lothar Matthäus at the Hungarian national team.

Laszlo also became head coach of Hungarian giants Ferencváros and he won the 2005 Hungarian Coach of the Year award. He then assumed the role of Ugandan national team boss, whom he took from 167 to 97 in the FIFA world rankings. He has also served as head coach of the Lithuanian national team.

In just 10 days alarm bells started ringing in IPL bubble



Hemant Kenkre Silly Point

"Double, double, toil and trouble; Fire burn, and cauldron bubble!" As kids we always had a problem when it came to reciting this famed line from the Shakespearean tragedy Macbeth as the last word (bubble) always replaced double. By a strange irony, the happenings in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) where the Indian Premier League (IPL) is to kick off in three weeks from now, there seems to be a bit of a burst in the

bubble; very different from what the three witches had chanted in the Bard's play. In just ten days (from when the teams playing the IPL landed in the desert country) the alarm bells started to ring when part of the contingent of Chennai Super Kings (CSK) were tested Covid positive, two of them being players. As if that was not enough, Suresh Raina, an iconic player who sports the yellow jersey pulled out of the edition and flew back to India citing personal reasons.

This will be the first (of the thirteen) edition without the 33-year old middle order batsman who has been the perfect foil to skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni, helping in making CSK a champion team. While no official statement giving specific reasons for Raina's departure has been issued barring a standard response from the team management that offered complete support to him and his family, one respects the effervescent cricketer's personal decision and leaves it at that.

With members testing positive, whatever plans that team CSK may have had of stepping out of their forced confines will need to be reviewed, effectively throwing a spanner in their works. Coming out after a five month hiatus

and being thrown, once again, in severe lock down situation with zero human contact is going to be a big test for the players who are raring to step out on the grassy field.

Those who have been given the privilege to travelling to the UAE with their families are fortunate unlike the others who will have to rest content staring at the same view out of their hotel rooms for a week to do so. The rules of confinement, set for the IPL, are very stringent and any deviation can lead to further isolation as was found out by England pacer Jofra Archer who broke the bio security bubble during the recently concluded Test series against the West Indies.

With quarantine rules being different in the three

Emirates — Dubai, Sharjah and Abu Dhabi — the plans for teams change depending on where they are based. Unlike in Dubai and Sharjah, which have a 7-day quarantine, Abu Dhabi has an isolation period of 14-days which entails a further delay of a week for two teams, Kolkata Knight Riders and Mumbai Indians who are camping there.

With multiple medical tests and strict guidelines to ensure that no member, player or otherwise, crosses the lines marked by the bio security bubble, the endurance and patience of all contingents will be severely tested.

Apart from monitoring the movements of players and support staff, team managements are tasked with the all important

effort to keep everyone in good spirits and in a positive frame of mind. The IPL is a high powered tournament in which a big role is played by maintaining the mental balance of team members and keep them from succumbing to pressure which can make or break the sides.

By organising the IPL in these trying times, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) have taken up a challenge which is unprecedented in the history of cricket. Managing eight teams, replete with 20-plus players along with the support and administrative staff is a mind blowing exercise which the BCCI is confident of pulling off. Teams apart, handling an entire ecosystem of affiliates and partners (broadcast and

more) for 80 plus days under harsh guidelines is going to be a thankless and ground breaking effort.

With just two weeks before the tournament begins, the cases affecting CSK have given the BCCI a mini preview of the tough demands that lie ahead. These are testing times for the BCCI which has a huge task on hand, one that can enhance or sully their reputation after having taken on a mammoth challenge. The obvious pun inserted in the statement will probably cause the naysayers to guffaw but the organisers who are currently running the show are certainly not in the mood for a laugh. They will be on double shifts to ensure that the bubble does not burst and the league stays out of trouble.