

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA  
KARIMNAGAR | SATURDAY | 29 AUGUST 2020

## WEATHER

**Max:** 29.2°C  
**Min:** 21.8°C  
**RH:** 80%  
**Rain:** 0.5 mm

**Forecast:** Cloudy sky.  
Rain likely. Max/Min temp. 29/22°C

## ASTROGUIDE

**Sarvari:** Dakshinayana  
**Tithi:** Bhadrapada Shuddha Chavithi till 7.59 pm  
**Star:** Hasta till 7.12 pm  
**Variyam:** 2.30 am to 3.58 am  
**Durmuhurtam:** 6.04 am to 7.44 am  
**Rahukalam:** 9 am to 10.30 am  
**HIJRI CALENDAR**  
**Muharram** 2,1442 AH  
**PRAYERS**  
**Fajar:** 4:56 am  
**Zohar:** 12:29 pm  
**Asar:** 4:43 pm  
**Maghrib:** 6:44 pm  
**Isha:** 7:53 pm  
**SUNSET** TODAY 6:36 PM  
**SUNRISE** TOMORROW 6:00 AM  
**MOONRISE** TODAY 9:02 AM  
**MOONSET** TODAY 9:22 PM

## COUNTER POINT



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

## IN BRIEF

### Congress MP dies due to Covid

**Chennai:** Congress MP from Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu H. Vasanthakumar died of Covid-19 at a hospital here on Friday, the party said. The 70-year-old first time MP, who was admitted to the Apollo Hospitals on August 10 after he tested positive for coronavirus, succumbed to the illness, a party spokesperson said. Earlier, in a statement, Apollo Hospitals said the MP was in critical condition and treated by a team of doctors for severe Covid pneumonia. Vasanthakumar was a two-time MLA and elected to the Lok Sabha in the 2019 elections.

### Boeing grounds defective 787 jets

**Washington:** Boeing has found manufacturing defects on some of its 787 long-range airliners in areas where parts of the fuselage are joined together, the latest setback for the aircraft maker whose 737 Max is still grounded after two deadly crashes. The company said on Friday that eight planes must be inspected and repaired before they are allowed to fly, and it contacted the airlines, which removed those planes from service. The airlines were not identified. Boeing Co. said that it discovered "two distinct manufacturing issues" toward the rear of certain 787s that means the planes don't meet design standards. The company said it notified the FAA.

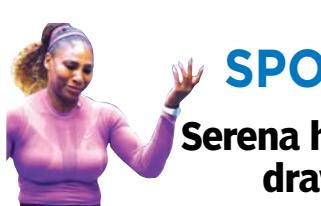
## NDRF rescues man from island

**A. RAVINDRA SESHU | DC KHAMMAM, AUG. 28**

A fisherman who was caught in an island in Munner river when it started flooding was rescued by the National Disaster Response Force on Friday. As per information reaching here, the fisherman, Parbagani Bulli Venkaiah, a resident of Chinamandava in Chintakani mandal, entered the Munner for fishing on Friday. The floodwater suddenly increased and quickly went to a small island in the middle of the river and began shouting for help. Zilla Parishad chairperson L. Kamalraj was informed about it and he called Wyra assistant com-



**WORLD | 5**  
**Abe resigns as PM due to poor health**



**SPORTS | 8**  
**Serena handed tough draw at US Open**

**CORONA SUNT**  
CASES (+68,559)  
**29,72,235**  
DEATHS (+958)  
**55,921**  
covid19india.org

**STATE GOVT BULLETINS**  
**TELANGANA** (+1,967)  
**99,391**  
(+8)  
**737**

**ANDHRA PRADESH** (+9,544)  
**3,34,940**  
(+91)  
**3,092**

**WORLD CONFIRMED CASES**  
**2,30,06,465**  
**DEATHS**  
**7,99,576**  
COUNTRIES/AREAS WITH CASES  
**213**

### LOCKDOWN SAW MORE WOMEN FACE ABUSE

**SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL | DC HYDERABAD, AUG. 28**

Several reports have stated that women faced increased domestic violence during the lockdown as families were cooped together due to restrictions on their movement, and asking for help was difficult. One such victim is Dipali Mehta, an award-winning fashion designer and handloom supplier, who decided she had had enough. After 21 years of marriage, she has lodged a complaint with the women's police station at Begumpet accusing her husband and in-laws of domestic violence. This is not the one case, said psychological experts. An advocate said there was an increase in family disputes. Depali, a mother of two, told *Deccan Chronicle*: "for 21 long years, I was silent and taking all the harassment, only to safeguard the family's reputation and pride. Now I said enough is enough and walked into the women's police station at Begumpet." "My children who are 19 and 16 stood by me. They say I should have done it long back," she said.

## 6 Opposition-ruled states move SC on NEET, JEE dates

**PARMOD KUMAR | DC WITH AGENCY INPUTS NEW DELHI, AUG. 28**

Six Opposition-ruled states on Friday approached the Supreme Court seeking a review of its August 17 order refusing to interfere with the conduct of the NEET/JEE exams by the National Testing Agency for admission to medical and engineering courses. The states that approached the court through their respective ministers are Maharashtra, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Punjab, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. The petitioner ministers have sought an urgent open court hearing of the petition to reconsider its

- **THE STATES** which approached the court through their respective ministers are Maharashtra, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Punjab, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh.
- **THE PETITION** sought reconsideration of the SC's August 17 order permitting the conduct of these exams. The review petition has been moved by senior lawyer and Congress leader Abhishek Manu Singhvi. The petition sought reconsideration of the August 17 order saying that if it wasn't reviewed, grave and irreparable harm and injury will befall the students appearing for the NEET/JEE and would

severely jeopardise public health. The other grounds raised are the safety, security and right to life of all the candidates appearing for the NEET/JEE exams. It adds that the August 17 order ignores the logistical difficulties in holding the JEE from September 1 and NEET on September 13. Meanwhile, the IIT-Delhi has appealed to its students and alumni to help those appearing for the JEE-Advanced next month with transport to reach their exam centres. The institute has also suggested to its students and alumni to come up with a registration portal for needy candidates and help take care of their logistics.

## Bihar elections not to be postponed: SC

**New Delhi, Aug. 28:** Stating that Covid-19 cannot be a ground for postponing elections, the Supreme Court on Friday dismissed a PIL seeking to defer the Bihar Assembly polls till the state is free of Coronavirus. The Election Commission of India will consider everything, a bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan said. The bench, also comprising Justices R.S. Reddy and M.R. Shah, said it is a premature petition as no notification for

the Assembly polls has been issued till now. The petitioner, Avinash Thakur, had sought a direction to the Chief Election Commissioner to postpone the polls due to the Covid-19 pandemic on the ground that the Representation of the People Act provides for the deferment of polls in extraordinary situations. "How can we ask the EC to not hold elections? Covid cannot be a valid ground for postponing polls," the bench stated. — *PTI*

### SUPER KINGS IN QUARANTINE AFTER 10 TEST COVID POSITIVE

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

In what could be a big blow to their IPL preparations, at least 10 members of the Chennai Super Kings have tested positive for Covid-19 in Dubai. Super Kings, who landed in the UAE on August 21, were supposed to begin their training session on Friday, but have now been forced to extend their room quarantine till September 1. IPL is scheduled to start on September 19 with Mumbai Indians taking on CSK in the opener. Neither CSK nor BCCI has issued an official statement, but it's learnt that Indian fast bowler Deepak Chahar, a top franchise official's wife, a few net bowlers and a couple of members of the social media team are among those infected. As per IPL's Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), those who test positive will be isolated and allowed to return to the bio-bubble only after at least two weeks of quarantine and two negative test reports.

■ **Page 8:** IPL teams begin practice amid Covid scare

## Hold degree final year exams by Sept. 30: SC

**DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, AUG. 28**

In another setback to those resisting examinations in the midst of Covid pandemic, the Supreme Court on Friday ruled that states and universities cannot promote students in the final year/terminal semes-

ter without holding examinations. It brushed aside the suggestion that students be awarded marks based on their previous performance and internal assessment. Upholding the July 6 circular of the University Grant Commission (UGC) directing universities and

colleges across the country to conduct final year examinations by September 30, a bench comprising Justice Ashok Bhushan, Justice R. Subhash Reddy and Justice M.R. Shah, however, said that the decision of the State Disaster Management Authority

not to hold final examination by September 30 would prevail over the UGC deadline. In this case Maharashtra State Disaster Management Authority had decided against holding final year examinations by September 30, 2020.. The court further

ordered that if any State/Union Territory taking recourse to Disaster Management Act 2005 decides that it is not possible to hold exams by September 30, then it should approach the UGC for the extension of deadline and the same would be considered by the UGC.

### ASSEMBLY TO PROPOSE RATNA FOR PV

**DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, AUG. 28**

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao on Friday said the Assembly, which will meet from September 7, will pass a resolution demanding that the Centre confer the Bharat Ratna on former prime minister P.V. Narasimha Rao. "We will discuss the greatness of PV and his achievements in the Assembly. We have decided to have a comprehensive debate on PV. We will pass a resolution urging the Centre to confer the Bharat Ratna on PV," the Chief Minister said. "We have decided to instal a portrait of PV in the Assembly and request the Centre to instal a portrait in Parliament. We will ask the Centre to rename the University of Hyderabad as P.V. Narasimha Rao Central University."

## One-month-old baby girl sold for ₹1.10 L by granny

**PULI SHARATH KUMAR | DC KARIMNAGAR, AUG. 28**

A woman of Veenavanka village in Karimnagar district sold her one-month-old granddaughter for ₹1.1 lakh to clear her debts. The incident, which took place four days ago, came to light on Friday when the infant's grandfather Mothe Yadagiri informed the police. The baby's mother Jamalpur Padma, who signed papers approving the sale, said she did so after her mother M. Kanakamma got her drunk. Padma, 32, had been married to a person 10 years ago and the couple had two children. Four years back, she fell in love with one Ramesh, a mutation shop owner of the same village. She left her family and married Ramesh. The couple moved to Hyderabad. A month ago, Padma delivered a girl child. She and Ramesh celebrated the 21st day of the girl's birth with his family. A

week ago, the couple quarrelled and Padma returned to her mother Kanakamma's ho-use in Veenavanka. Kanakamma was staying separately from husband Yadagiri, the baby's grandfather, who opposed Padma's marriage to Ramesh. Police said Kanakamma persuaded Padma to sell the baby and took her signature. She tried to sell the baby for ₹2 lakh but a middleman offered her only ₹1.1 lakh. Kanakamma sold the baby to a family from Gumpala village of Odelu mandal in Peddapalli district. Yadagiri was aware of the baby's birth and was surprised to notice his daughter without the child for four days. He then informed police who, along with officials of child and women welfare department, went to the village and inquired about the baby. That is when the entire story came out.

■ **Page 2:** Police registers case against granny

**Are all surfaces in your home germ\*-free?**

**Maxkleen**

**FLOOR**

**KITCHEN COUNTER**

**DOOR KNOB**

**FLOOR CLEANER**

**SURFACE SANITIZER**

**Maxkleen Kills 99.9% Germs<sup>AS</sup>**

Cleaning everything you touch is as important as cleaning your hands.

Maxkleen kills 99.9%\* bacteria and kills viruses\*<sup>AS</sup> across surfaces keeping your home safe.

**Maxkleen Disinfectant Range**

\*As per standard laboratory test protocol on select bacteria and fungi. When used diluted as per "How to Use Wipro MaxKleen Floor Cleaner" on the product pack. <sup>AS</sup>As per standard laboratory tests on select bacteria and fungi, when sprayed directly on contaminant surface. <sup>FS</sup>For Surface Sanitizer, on select viruses, based on active ingredient, when sprayed directly on contaminant surface with approximate 15 min contact time. —Free Santoor 75g soap worth ₹20 with every 500ml Maxkleen floor cleaner worth ₹35 (inclusive of all taxes)



## IN BRIEF

### Scholarships for disabled students

**Hyderabad:** The Union department of empowerment of persons with disabilities (DePWD) has invited scholarship applications from students with disabilities through the National Scholarships Portal. Pre-matric scholarships will be awarded to students of Classes 9 and 10. Post-matric scholarships will be awarded to students from Class 11 to postgraduation, and scholarships for graduate/postgraduate or diploma education in 241 notified institutions is available, said an official notification. Registration of fresh students started from August 16 and for renewals on August 21. The last date for registration and submission of applications is October 31 on the website [www.disabilityaffairs.gov.in](http://www.disabilityaffairs.gov.in).

## POLICE FILES CASE AGAINST GRANNY

From Page 1

While Padma told the police that Kanakamma had sold the baby after getting her drunk, Kanakamma says she did so after Padma agreed. She told the police she has also shared the money with Padma.

Police have registered a case against Kanakamma and those who helped her sell the baby. Officials have sent Padma and her daughter to the Integrated Child Development Centre. Padma's husband Ramesh said he was unaware of the entire incident.

## IIT-H SEEKS APPLICATION FROM START-UPS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 28

The IIT-Hyderabad based AISEA Accelerator, on Friday opened applications from start-ups for the next cohort which will run for four months from September. The accelerator will now focus on the health-tech sector.

AISEA Accelerator is an AFI i-TIC Foundation social entrepreneurship programme and is sponsored by the the Union department of science and technology and set up jointly by the i-TIC Foundation of IIT-Hyderabad and Action For India.

AISEA will provide support to start-ups from core health-tech and allied domains like healthcare, telemedicine, wellness, fitness, biotechnology, bio 3D printing, online pharmacy, diagnostics, personal health management, healthcare softwares, etc. The deadline is August 31 and details are available on [www.aisea.co](http://www.aisea.co).

## TWO COPS SUSPENDED FOR SEEKING BRIBE

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 28

Two police personnel who were facing allegations of demanding money from a woman doctor practicing homeopathy, were placed under suspension by the Hyderabad police commissioner on Friday.

Constable T. Biksham and Home Guard Y. Mohan Reddy of the SR Nagar police had demanded money from the doctor for running the clinic at her home in Motinagar.

The doctor lodged a complaint with the police. Announcing their suspension, Hyderabad police commissioner Anjani Kumar said, "Hyderabad police remains committed to clean image and public service. Any complaint against police officer can be made on WhatsApp at 9490616555."

● **CONSTABLE T. Biksham** and Home Guard Y. Mohan Reddy of the SR Nagar police had demanded money from the doctor for running the clinic at her home.

# Final year exams by Sept. 30

Students oppose, parents ready to skip exams than expose kids to Covid

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 28

The Supreme Court on Friday upheld the University Grants Commission's (UGC) position in its order that final year exams will be conducted by September 30 and that degrees cannot be conferred on the basis of internal assessments.

The Supreme Court also added that the states have the power under the Disaster Management Act to order postponement of exams in view of the Covid-19 pandemic and they can file an application before the UGC expressing their inability to hold examinations before the deadline of September 30.

The Telangana State Council of Higher Education (TSCHE) chairman, Prof. T. Papi Reddy, told *Deccan Chronicle* that the state will conduct final year degree exams as per the SC order by September 30.

However, an extension for PG and backlog exams will be sought until October, he said. "The PG and backlog exams for final year students depend a lot on the opening of college hostels, so we will seek postponement," Dr Reddy added.

Students have expressed opposition to this decision. Parents also are of the view that they are ready to skip the exams than send their wards out during the pandemic and expose them to the risk of infection.

Venkat Balmoor, TS NSUI state president, said, "We are already on an indefinite hunger strike since Thursday (seeking postponement of exams).



TPCC chief Uttam Kumar Reddy along with Congress leaders participate in a protest against the scheduling of JEE and NEET, at Gandhi Bhavan on Friday. — DEEPAK DESHPANDE

● **THE TELANGANA** State Council of Higher Education (TSCHE) chairman, Prof. T. Papi Reddy, told *Deccan Chronicle* that the state will conduct final year degree exams as per the SC order by September 30.

● **HOWEVER, AN** extension for PG and backlog exams will be sought until October, he said. "The PG and backlog exams for final year students depend a lot on the opening of college hostels, so we will seek postponement," Dr Reddy added.

We will also stage a protest against the state government's move to conduct exams and risk the lives of the students. Thousands of students are against the idea of taking exams. Even if some out of fear of losing a year come out to take the exams, what will happen to the rest."

## Centre, TS playing with lives of students: Cong

IREDDY SRINIVAS REDDY  
IDC  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 28

Telangana state Congress president N. Uttam Kumar Reddy has accused the BJP government at the Centre and the TRS government in the state of playing with the lives of lakhs of students by conducting examinations during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Along with senior party leaders, including former PCC president Ponnala Lakshmaiah, TPCC vice-president Dr Mallu Ravi and others, he held a protest at Gandhi Bhavan on Friday demanding postponement of Joint Entrance Examinations

(JEE) and National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET).

As per the directions of the All India Congress Committee, they wanted to hold a dharna before the offices of the Central government. They were prevented from doing so by the police, which deployed a large number of personnel at the gates of Gandhi Bhavan, the TPCC headquarters here.

Uttam Kumar Reddy said that it was insane on the part of the Centre to conduct JEE and NEET during the pandemic. He said Covid-19 cases were at their peak in almost all states. He pointed out that India has recorded the

world's highest spike of positive cases in a single day on Friday. Similarly, Telangana state has been reporting nearly 3,000 cases every day for the last one week. In a situation where it has spread to the community level, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government at the Centre wants to put the lives of nearly 25 lakh students and their families at stake by conducting the JEE and NEET exams.

Similarly, he said by silently accepting that decision, Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao was risking the lives of nearly 1.2 lakh students who have registered for JEE and NEET, he alleged.

## 2 INVOLVED IN 14 ROBBERIES ARRESTED

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 28

Two murder accused from Madhya Pradesh were arrested by the Rachakonda Central Crime Station (CCS) police on Friday for involvement in 14 burglaries.

The police seized property worth ₹17 lakh from the accused, Rituraj Singh, 33, and Gaya Prasad Sen, 28, residents of Boduppal and natives of Satna district of Madhya Pradesh.

A Malkajgiri CCS police officer said Rituraj was earlier jailed for burglary in MP, where he met Sen.

In 2019, they moved to Shamshabad in the city, and were again arrested for burglary houses.

## Remembering the victims



CPI (ML) leaders pay tribute to those who died in police firing near Basheerbagh during a protest against the hike in power charges on August 28, 2000. — P. SURENDRA

## HC fines petitioner ₹50K for PIL abuse

VUJJINI VAMSHIDHARA | DC  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 28

Cautioning that it would take a serious view of petitioners who try to abuse the purpose of public interest litigation for their personal or political interest, the Telangana High Court on Friday imposed a fine of ₹50,000 on a petitioner belonging to Nagarjun-asagar.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Raghavendra Singh Chauhan and Justice Annireddy Abhishek Reddy was dealing with a PIL filed by B. Venkateshwarlu, seeking a direction to not allow a new petrol station at Nagarjunasagar. He said the spot came under the

purview of the dam and complained that it would affect to the structure if land was dug to instal oil storage tanks.

Concerned over the contentions, the court had earlier asked for details from the government. On Friday, the court was told that the proposed station would not come under the dam limits. It stated that the petitioner was an employee in another petrol pump which is close to the proposed fuel station. The court directed Venkateshwarlu to pay ₹50,000 as costs for filing the PIL for personal interest. It warned that the petitioner would face contempt if the money was not deposited to the Advocates Welfare Fund.

## Ex-soldier opens fire to threaten residents, held

JAYENDRA CHAITHANYA  
T. IDC  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 28

A retired Army jawan was arrested for opening two rounds of fire to threaten a group of people following an argument at the apartment over the Ganesh idol immersion.

The licensed pistol of Naga Naga Maheshwara Rao, 38, a former havaldar, has been seized, and he was produced before a court for judicial remand, said the Narsingi police.

Rao, a native of Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh, is a resident of Hydershakote in the city and works as a general manager with an automobile store in

Mehdipatnam.

According to the police, the apartment in which Rao stays has an office of Hireach Broadband Pvt Ltd on the ground floor. A Ganesh idol had been installed for the Ganesh Chaturthi festival and some people were making arrangements to immerse it on Thursday night.

At around 9.30 pm, a group of about 40 persons including the representatives of the company, while taking part in the immersion celebrations, went to the terrace and allegedly consumed alcohol while playing loud music.

The residents of the apartment including Rao, who lives in the third

floor, objected to the loud music and a heated argument followed. Rao returned to his flat, took his .32 mm pistol to the terrace and opened one round of fire in the air to threaten the partying group, said the police.

"When the partying group went to the cellar to continue their celebrations, he again went there and opened another round of fire," said Narsingi inspector M. Gangadhar.

"Fortunately, no one suffered injuries in the incident. A case has been registered against Rao under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Arms Act. He has a licence for the pistol but misused it," the inspector said.

## Second Niloufer Hospital staff dies of Covid

BALU PULIPAKA | DC  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 28

Coronavirus continues to take a toll on the lives of healthcare workers in the state, with one more person, a 50-year-old sanitation worker at Niloufer Hospital for Women and Children, succumbing to Covid-19.

The worker, was being treated at Gandhi Hospital and passed away on Thursday. Just this past Tuesday, a 35-year-old woman, who worked as a EEG technician, had passed away, also at Gandhi Hospital after being diagnosed with Covid-19.

Earlier this week, the health department said 2,000 of its staff, including doctors, nurses, and other workers in hospitals had contracted Covid-19, and 16 of those infected had lost their lives.

Staff at various levels,

right from superintendents to sanitation workers at many government hospitals in the city including the big ones such as NIMS, Osmania, Gandhi, Niloufer and the Maternity Hospital at Petlaburj, as well as in the rest of the state, are among the healthcare workers who have been infected by Coronavirus.

Staff at Niloufer Hospital in the city including paid rich tributes to the sanitation worker and called on the government to stand by the families of health workers who have lost their lives to Covid-19.

The government, Telangana Government Doctors Association president Dr Lalu Prasad Rathod said, should provide ₹1 crore compensation to families of such healthcare workers and also provide a suitable government job to a member of the affected family.

## 2,932 new cases, city crosses 500

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 28

Coronavirus cases shot past the 500 mark in the city again, with the GHMC area recording 520 cases in a day even as Telangana state continued to record high number of new Coronavirus infections. The number of cases had fallen in the past couple of weeks before rising again.

Health department authorities said 2,932 new cases of the disease have been found in the state between Thursday and Friday. As per Friday morning's Covid-19 bulletin, the total number of cases has reached 1,17,415 while the number of those succumbing to the disease rose to 799 with the health department reporting 11 more fatalities.

The number of active Covid-19 cases as on 8 pm on Thursday was 28,941 of whom 22,097 were either under home or institutional isolation, the department said.

Ranga Reddy and Medchal-Malkajgiri districts reported 212 cases each. Karimnagar 168, Nalgonda 159, Nizamabad 129, Jagtial 113, Mancherial 110, Suryapet 102 and Siddipet 100 were the other districts where fresh Covid-19 cases were a hundred or more. The department said that as of Thursday evening, 42 government hospitals had 2,579 Covid-19 patients while 4,265 patients were being treated in 172 private hospitals.

## COVID HITS 686 MEDIAPERSONS, 73 IN ONE DAY

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 28

A whopping 73 mediapersons in the state are among those identified as Covid-19 positive in the state as on Friday, taking the total number of journalists and mediapersons infected by the disease in the state to 686, the Telangana State Media Academy has said.

According to Academy Chairman Allam Narayana, the Academy has so far extended financial help totalling ₹1,28,60,000 to mediapersons affected by Covid-19.

While ₹1.20 crore has been extended as aid to 600 journalists at the rate of ₹20,000 each, 86 journalists who have been quarantined at home have been provided with ₹8.6 lakh at the rate of ₹10,000 each as assistance, he said.

On Friday, the Academy extended financial assistance totalling ₹14.60 lakh to the 73 journalists who have tested positive for the disease. Journalists and media persons who are affected by Covid-19 may contact the Academy on WhatsApp number 8096677444 or call the Academy manager Lakshman Kumar at 9676647807 and provide test reports, Narayana said.

## TN MP, kin of TS Gov, dies of Covid

**Chennai, Aug. 28:** Congress MP from Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu, H. Vasanthakumar, died of Covid-19 at a hospital here on Friday. He was 70.

Vasanthakumar is survived by his wife, two sons, including the Tamil actor Vijay Vasanth, and a daughter. Vasanthakumar is the brother of Tamil Nadu Congress veteran and noted Tamil litterateur Kumari Ananthan. TS Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan is his niece.

The first time MP, and working president of Tamil Nadu Congress

● **THE 70-YEAR** old first time MP, and working president of Tamil Nadu Congress Committee, who was admitted to the Apollo Hospitals on August 10 after he tested positive for Coronavirus.

Committee, who was admitted to the Apollo Hospitals on August 10 after he tested positive for the Coronavirus, succumbed to the illness, a party spokesperson said.

Vasanthakumar, a two-time MLA was elected to the Lok Sabha last year. —PTI

## Learn to live with Covid-19, Etala tells RWAs

T.S.S. SIDDHARTH | DC  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 28

People have to learn to live with Covid-19 and residents welfare associations (RWAs) need to be vigilant as the government cannot be everywhere, said health minister Etala Rajendar.

Speaking at a meeting with a large group of RWA federations under the UFERWAS

(United Federation of RWAs), Rajendar said this meeting was held to seek the assistance of RWAs in preventing the spread of Covid-19.

Expressing regret that social stigma around the virus was rampant, Rajendar added that the mortality rate in state was 0.8 per cent as against the national average of 2 per cent. The minister then appealed to the people to take precautions.

B.T. Srinivasan, general secretary of UFERWAS, highlighted the areas of possible cooperation by way of sharing of primary health centre (PHC)

information with details of concerned officers, decentralised testing services at various community locations and counselling services at isolation centres.

Major Shiva Kiran of UFERWAS said that UFERWAS vol-

unteers could handle the call centre, take up ward-wise home isolation monitoring and suggested that

Coronavirus combat initiatives could first be taken up in 10-15 locations where RWAs are strong — Malkajgiri, Begumpet, Mehdiapatnam, Kalyannagar, Tarnaka, Masab Tank, AS Rao Nagar, Kukatpally, Erragada, Motinagar, Nanakaramguda,

Hitec City, Kusaiguda, Medchal, Yapral, Sainikpuri and other locations. UFERWAS representatives thanked TRS Malkajgiri in-charge M. Rajasekhara Reddy for his support for their cause.

Dr Srinivas Rao, Director of Medical and Health Services, said DMOHs will be directed to work with RWAs and assured mobile testing services as required.

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 28

The Supreme Court's ruling on Thursday on sub-classification of SC and ST groups has given a ray of hope to the Madiga Reservation Porata Samithi (MRPS), which has been agitating for the categorisation of the Scheduled Castes quota to ensure judicious

distribution of benefits among all SC communities for 26 years.

The MRPS led by founder president Mandana Krishna Madiga had succeeded in 1997 when the erstwhile AP government of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu passed the Rationalisation of Reservation Act to categorise the SC community quotas on the ba-

sis of population. The Act categorised SCs into A, B, C and D groups in accordance with each group's relative backwardness and proportion of population. The Act was challenged before the HC and a five-judge bench upheld the Act 4:1 in 2000. The community enjoyed categorisation reservation benefits.



## OTHER STORIES

## 532 COVID-19 +VE CASES REPORTED IN KHAMMAM

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KHAMMAM, AUG. 28

About 532 Covid-19 cases were exposed in Khammam district on Friday of the 2,377 samples collected.

43 persons tested positive in the limits of three primary health centres in Madhira, 22 cases were reported in Enkoor, six in Kallur, 19 in Wyra, 17 in Sulanagar, nine in Kamepalli, 13 in Vemsoor and 13 in Mudigonda. Collector R.V. Karnan said that the government has asked the medical officials to conduct tests in all primary health centres. He said that persons suspected to have symptoms can undergo Covid-19 test at any PHC.

## TS HC ASKS CENTRE TO CLARIFY ON ETHEPHON

VUJJINI VAMSHIDHARA  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 28

Puzzled by the Centre categorising the chemical ethephon as a fruit and vegetable ripener and as an insecticide, the Telangana High Court directed the Centre to explain whether the chemical was toxic or not.

A division bench headed by Chief Justice Raghavendra Singh Chauhan while dealing a suo motu PIL over using chemicals to ripen fruits and challenging the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) norms allowing the use of ethephon for the purpose. The bench wondered how insecticides are allowed for ripening fruits.

The court was told that ethephon is an organo phosphorous chemical and also a corrosive acid. Using it to ripen fruits could be harmful on human beings.

## CABLE OPERATORS TO TELECAST ONLINE CLASSES

BALU PILIPAKA | DC  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 28

Forty three cable network operators, in addition to direct-to-home television broadcasters, are now on telecast lessons for students from Class 3 to Intermediate from September 1, on the T-SAT network, according to the Society for Telangana State Network (SoFTNET). This is an from the government's information technology to provide quality education harnessing the potential of satellite communications and IT.

In addition to cable operators, Airtel DTH will telecast T-SAT Vidya and T-SAP Nipuna on its channels 948, and 949. The classes are available on T-SAT's YouTube channel, its app, on Facebook and Twitter.

SoFTNET chief executive officer R. Shailesh Reddy said in case of any difficulty of accessing T-SAT's channels on television, people can inform the local government officials or the district collector.

If cable operators are found wanting on this front, the local Vidya Committee chairpersons and elected representatives should take the initiative to ensure T-SAT telecasts are transmitted, he said.

He also urged parents to ensure that their children watch the classes and not miss them.

## TTD TO REJIG GOLD DEPOSITS TO EARN MORE

DC CORRESPONDENT  
TIRUPATI, AUG. 28

TTD Trust Board chairman Y.V. Subba Reddy said that the temple body is mulling over depositing a certain amount of gold and cash in banks on a monthly basis instead of going for long tenures, as part of the idea of increasing revenues.

Speaking to the media after the trust board meeting at Annamaiah Bhavan in Tirumala on Friday, Subba Reddy said that, based on the current scenario, the trust board had resolved to negotiate with the RBI and banks to enhance the rate of interest on TTD deposits, as banks were offering low interest rates at present.

The board resolved to go ahead with the construction of the Lord Venkateswara divya kshetrams in Jammu, Varanasi, Chennai and other parts of the country once the pandemic subsides.

● **TEMPLE BODY** is mulling over depositing a certain amount of gold and cash in banks on a monthly basis.

## Lower Manair Dam gates opened



Two gates of the Lower Manair Dam were opened again in Karimnagar on Friday.

— YELABAKA RADHAKRISHNA

## Cong accuses Errabelli of harassing ex-DCCB chief

## Raghava Reddy targeted for contesting in assembly elections

ANUDEEP CEREMILLA | DC  
WARANGAL, AUG. 28

Panchayat raj minister, Errabelli Dayakar Rao, falsely implicated former district co-operative central bank (DCCB) chairman, Janga Raghava Reddy, said Warangal district Congress committee (DCC) president, N. Rajender Reddy.

Speaking to mediapersons on Friday, Rajender Reddy blamed the minister for targeting Raghava Reddy for contesting against him during the assembly elections.

The political rivalry between Errabelli and Raghava Reddy is well-known in political circles. Congress leaders alleged

● **THE POLITICAL** rivalry between Errabelli and Raghava Reddy is well-known in political circles. Congress leaders alleged that Errabelli influenced the government to take action against Reddy, who was serving as the DCCB chairperson at that time.

that Errabelli influenced the government to take action against Reddy, who was serving as the DCCB chairperson at that time. Errabelli accused him of involvement in large scale irregularities causing a loss to the bank and the government ordered a CB CID inquiry to investigate the irregularities.

“Financial irregularities also cropped up in Khammam and Nalgonda DCCBs but no action was taken. Why is only

Raghava Reddy being targeted? Why was the CB CID inquiry ordered into the affairs of other such banks?” asked Rajender Reddy.

It gives an impression that Mr Errabelli had been playing vindictive politics by targeting Raghava Reddy for contesting against him in Palakurthy constituency.

Saying that it is not fair to harass Raghava Reddy by influencing the CB CID, Rajender Reddy said he

Congress is ready to engage if the TRS wants any debate on DCCB affairs.

Raghava Reddy said that he is not scared of the TRS. “Errabelli has a track record of deceiving Telugu Desam chief, N. Chandrababu Naidu, and A. Revanth Reddy. The minister is using his power to foist false cases against me,” he said.

Referring to the construction of check dams, Raghava Reddy alleged that Errabelli is greedy and was taking 20 per cent commission from the contractors.

“Come what may, I will be with the Congress,” he asserted, stating that he was under pressure to join the TRS.

## GWMC SEEKS ₹500-CR FOR FLOOD RELIEF

DC CORRESPONDENT  
WARANGAL, AUG. 28

The council meeting of the Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation (GWMC) was held in Hanamkonda on Friday.

In the meeting, 30 agendas were discussed and 32 issues were tabled of which all were approved by the end of the day.

The council agreed on the development works to be taken up in 45 divisions at a cost of ₹45crore.

The city experienced 212 mm of rainfall, the highest in the country. The flash floods caused by the rainfall left a huge damage to public and private property.

The council unanimously agreed to seek funds to the tune of ₹500 crore under the National Disaster Relief Fund by sending proposals of the required works.

Government Chief Whip Dasyam Vinay Bhaskar, Warangal East MLA Nannapuneni Narendar, Warangal Urban collector Rajeev Gandhi Hanumanthu, MLAs A. Ramesh, Ch. Dharma Reddy, deputy mayor Sirajuddin, corporators and co-opted members and GWMC officers were present.

## Bhatti slams TRS for Covid deaths

PILLALAMARRI SRINIVAS | DC  
ADILABAD, AUG. 28

CLP leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka on Friday said all Covid deaths are murders committed by the state government and that the deaths happened because of the state government's inability to control the spread of the Coronavirus and the abysmal facilities in government hospitals in the state.

He expressed his displeasure at the facilities in isolation wards and charged that the state government was asking patients to go for home quarantine in order to cover up its failure in providing quality treatment.

Speaking to media persons after visiting RIMS, in Adilabad and interacting with relatives of Covid patients, Mr Vikramarka said that the Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao and minister K.T. Rama Rao had both failed in their efforts to control the spread and had left patients to their fate.

He said that the minister from the old Adilabad district was more concerned about encroachments of tanks and lands than on public health. He demanded the state government to utilise the funds meant for SC and ST sub-plan to improve medical facilities at RIMS and other hospitals to give better services to patients from these communities since old Adilabad has a predominant tribal population.

Mr Vikramarka said the situation would have been controlled if the state gov-



CLP leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka enquires about the facilities at the Covid isolation ward in RIMS, Adilabad district, on Friday.

— DECCAN CHRONICLE

ernment had considered the advice given by Congress Legislative Party and added that they will raise the failure of the state government in containing the virus in the next Assembly session.

The state government has not spent a single rupee in the last six years on developing RIMS, which was sanctioned during the Congress government.

He said that at least 100 doctor posts are vacant at RIMS and state government has failed to fill up the posts. The existing doctors, nurses and support staff of RIMS are working under tremendous stress, yet doing a wonderful job, he said.

Mr Vikramarka interacted with Balram Naik, director of RIMS, to take stock of the situation.

Earlier, he visited the government hospital in Nirmal and enquired about the medical services being provided there.

## Fill all vacancies in govt hosps: Bhatti

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NIZAMABAD, AUG. 28

Congress Legislature Party leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka demanded fill-up of all vacancies in Government hospitals including the Government General Hospital in Nizamabad.

The Government Medical College in Nizamabad was established by the previous Congress government. But, the TRS government failed to fill up the vacancies in the medical college attached to the hospital for the last six and half years, he said.

Mr Vikramarka along with senior Congress leaders visited the GGH on Friday and enquired about the Covid-19 services. Mr Vikramarka said that of the

35 professor posts 20 are vacant, 11 associate professor posts are lying vacant. Nursing, paramedical, Class IV, ministerial staff posts are also vacant. The limited staff are having to put up with the pressure as the number of patients rise, he said.

The CLP leader said that TRS government failed to react on the Covid-19 outbreak.

A health emergency should be declared in the state and isolation centers in each Assembly constituency should be set up. Mr Vikramarka also demanded ex-gratia for frontline warriors of Covid-19 patients and the kin of the deceased.

## Chinese embassy keeps watch on investigation into betting firms

VIKRAM SHARMA | DC  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 28

Even as a multi-agency probe is underway into the murky affairs involving two Chinese nationals — one arrested in Hyderabad and the other in Delhi recently — which comes right between the ongoing military and diplomatic meetings between India and China, the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in New Delhi is keeping a close watch on the investigations and is said to be updating Beijing on a daily basis.

Though there is nothing to indicate that the arrests may have figured during the back channel talks between India and China, which are locked over a tense stand-off since the deadly Galwan clashes, top officials in India's security establishment still hold the view that the arrests could still be an irritant at this crucial juncture when several rounds of meetings at different levels has only led to a limited disengagement in parts of Ladakh.

While Luo Sang is being probed by agencies in Delhi for allegedly running a hawala racket worth

## All irrigation depts in Khammam, Bhadradri to be under one roof

A. RAVINDRA SESHU | DC  
KHAMMAM, AUG. 28

Efforts are on to merge all the irrigation departments — the Nagarjunasagar project, Dummugudem irrigation project, different lift irrigation schemes and the irrigation development corporation in Khammam and Bhadradri districts as one department. Presently, the different departments have a chief engineer, three superintendent engineers and 12 executive engineers.

The Reorganization Committee set up by the state government that is looking after the merge is studying the probabilities. The aim of the government with the new plan is to get work done from the department effectively. In the old set up it was not cost-effective and there was confusion.

Under the merger plan, a chief engineer's post will be created in each district to look after all the irrigation projects in

● **THE AIM** of the government with the new plan is to get work done from the department effectively.

the district along with two superintendent engineers. There will be an engineer in each assembly segment and a deputy engineer will be posted for every 25,000 acre ayacut area and executive engineer for each 1 lakh acre ayacut.

After the pending projects are completed in Khammam district nearly 10 lakh acres will come under irrigation.

About 3.28 lakh acres will be irrigated under the Sitarama Lift Irrigation Project, 2.54 lakh acres under NSP 2.52 lakh under minor irrigation, 75,000 under Bhakta Ramadasu Project, 54,000 acres under medium irrigation and 73,000 acres under different lift irrigation schemes.

It is expected that with the new system, wastage of water, money and time can be checked.

## Rythu vedikas to open on Sept. 5: Min

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KARIMNAGAR, AUG. 28

The rythu vedikas constructed in Karimnagar constituency will be inaugurated on September 5, informed Backward Class, food and civil supplies minister, Gangula Kamalakara on Friday.

The minister along with the district collector K. Shashanka inspected the construction works of rythu vedikas at Mugdhampur and Baddipalli villages of Karimnagar district.

The rythu vedikas will have a special chamber for agriculture officials, conference hall, drinking water and toilet facilities along with a soil testing centre. The agriculture officials and scientists stationed at these centres will give farmers required suggestions and will resolve their issues pertaining to crops. Mr Kamalakara

● **THE RYTHU** vedikas will have a special chamber for agriculture officials, conference hall, drinking water and toilet facilities along with a soil testing centre. Agriculture officials and scientists at these centres will give farmers suggestions.

informed that the rythu vedikas will be highly helpful for the farmers as they will be able to get details about the kind of crops to be sown depending on the season, what steps to be taken to prevent crop attack and about the type of crops that will give maximum profits.

He ordered the concerned officials to speed up the works along with maintaining quality.

## BRIDGING THE GAP These courses have been designed with a blend of pragmatic and theoretical concepts

## SRU partners with Microsoft, launches B.Tech programmes

DC CORRESPONDENT  
WARANGAL, AUG. 28

SR University (SRU), in partnership with Microsoft have launched B.Tech programmes in Computer Science and Engineering with choice of specialisation in

Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, Data Science, Big Data & Data Analytics, Cloud Engineering & DevOps Automation and Internet of Things (IoT), said the Vice Chancellor of the University, Dr. G. R. C.

Reddy. These cutting edge programmes have been designed with a blend of pragmatic and theoretical concepts that build a firm foundation in the core areas of Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

The programmes provide

students with the tools to identify those problems that are best solved by means of a computer and to design and implement effective, economical and creative solutions.

“The Microsoft partnership enables SR University students to experience

industry oriented content and curricula, get access to digital labs to accelerate research and provide near industry experience, participate in Hackathons and get industry recognised certifications that will drive the campus recruitment,” he said.

Skills like cloud computing, AI, Machine Learning are already in demand in organisations around the world, yet our talent gap persists and is set to widen. To bridge this talent gap SR University joined hands with Microsoft, said Dr. Reddy.

● **MICROSOFT** partnership enables SRU students to experience industry oriented content and curricula and be able to get access to digital labs.



## IN BRIEFS

## HC dismisses Choksi's plea

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

## HC stays telecast by Sudarshan TV

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

## Pandemic care now part of MBBS course

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

## BJP WELCOMES SC's VERDICT ON BIHAR ELECTIONS

NAYEAR AZAD | DC  
PATNA, AUG. 28

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

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

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

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

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

RABINDRA NATH  
CHOUDHURY | DC  
BHOPAL, AUG. 28

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

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

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

## Shiite mourners detained



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Students raise safety concerns on Twitter

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

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

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

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

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

— PTI

## CBI questions Rhea for 10 hrs in Sushant case

DC CORRESPONDENT  
with agency inputs  
MUMBAI, AUG. 28

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

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

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

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

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

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

SONU  
SHRIVASTAVA | DC  
MUMBAI, AUG. 28

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DC CORRESPONDENT  
SRINAGAR, Aug. 28

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

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

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

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

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

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

DC CORRESPONDENT  
with agency inputs  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 28

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

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

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

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

## 7 killed, 2 missing as Odisha battles floods

AKSHAYA KUMAR  
SAHOO | DC  
BHUBANESWAR, AUG. 28

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DC CORRESPONDENT  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,  
AUG. 28

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Will BJP leaders speak

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



## IN BRIEF

**Aus PM 'open' to repatriate gunman**

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

**Turkish lawyer dies on hunger strike**

**Ankara:** A human rights lawyer on hunger strike in a Turkish prison to demand a fair trial for herself and colleagues has died, an attorney's group said. Ebru Timtik, 42, died in an Istanbul hospital late Thursday, the Progressive Lawyers' Association said. She had been fasting for 238 days. The lawyer and 17 of her colleagues were accused of links to the outlawed Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front, or DHKP/C, a militant group designated a terrorist organization by Turkey, the United States and the European Union. She was convicted in March 2019 and sentenced to 13 years and six months in prison. Her case was under review by an appeals court.

**1st woman of colour as New Jersey judge**

**Trenton:** The nomination of the first woman of colour to sit on New Jersey's Supreme Court was confirmed on Thursday by the state Senate. Fabiana Pierre-Louis, a 39-year-old attorney in private practice and a former federal prosecutor, was nominated by Democratic Governor Phil Murphy in June to succeed Justice Walter Timpone. He was nominated to the court by former Republican Governor Chris Christie in 2016 and will reach the mandatory retirement age of 70 later this year. "Ms Pierre-Louis is a New Jersey success story who will bring more diversity to the highest court of the most diverse state in the country," said Senate President Steve Sweeney, also a Democrat. She is Murphy's first pick for the high court.

**US braces for mass anti-racism protest**

**Washington:** Anti-racism protesters were planning to flood the streets of the US capital on Friday, after a white officer's shooting of African American Jacob Blake rekindled outrage over police violence and sparked a boycott movement in the sports world. Tens of thousands of demonstrators are expected on the streets of Washington for a march to mark the date of civil rights leader Martin Luther King's historic "I have a dream" speech. The demonstration has been dubbed "Get Your Knee Off Our Necks," in reference to African American George Floyd, who suffocated beneath the knee of a white officer in Minneapolis, igniting the most widespread civil unrest in the country in decades.

**ALLOWING SHARIF TO LEAVE PAK WAS A MISTAKE: IMRAN**

**Islamabad, Aug. 28:** Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has said that allowing his predecessor Nawaz Sharif to leave the country was a "mistake" and that his government "regretted" the decision. In a wide-ranging interview to ARY News on Thursday night, Khan hinted that he was pressurised into sending Sharif abroad, saying that the reports presented to his government suggested that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) supremo was severely ill, reports *Dawn news*. The federal cabinet, he said, had held a long debate over whether the government should let Sharif leave on humanitarian grounds. The Prime minister further said the court had declared that the government would be responsible, should anything happen to Sharif.

# Japanese PM Abe ill, to demit office

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

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

Abe said he is suffering a recurrence of the ulcerative colitis that forced him to cut short a first term in office and said that he no longer felt able to continue as prime minister. "There must not be time when I am not able to deliver results," he said, speaking in a calm but sombre voice.

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

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

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

"I would like to sincerely apologise to the people of Japan for leaving my post with one year left in my term of office, and amid the coronavirus woes, while various policies are still in the process of being implemented," he

**Who could be next**

- Taro Aso, gaffe-prone finance minister

- Shigeru Ishiba, popular ex-defence minister

- Yoshihide Suga, power player and adviser

- Fumio Kishida, favoured successor

- Taro Kono, colourful Twitter user

said, bowing deeply.

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

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

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

"His resignation comes

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

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

Russia's relationship with Japan has been overshadowed by a decades-long territorial dispute over Tokyo's claim to a chain of islands seized by the Soviet Union in the final days of World War II.

"Shinzo Abe really made an invaluable contribution to the development of bilateral Russian-Japanese relations," President Vladimir Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

Putin and Abe met many times to try to find a solution to the impasse over the Kuril islands, known in Japan as the Northern Territories.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said Friday she "regrets" the resignation of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on health grounds, hailing his "fight for multilateralism". Merkel said she and her fellow veteran leader in the Group of Seven industrialised nations had a "shared foundation of values".

"I of course regret his resignation and wish him all the best for his health," she told reporters. "We always worked very, very well together... He was always someone who committed himself to the fight for multilateralism." — *AFP*



Angela Merkel

## MERKEL WARNS OF PANDEMIC DIFFICULTIES

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

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

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

Merkel's comments came after she agreed a wave of new measures with the leaders of Germany's 16 federal states on Thursday designed to combat rising case numbers in Germany blamed mainly on summer travel and private parties. — *AFP*

# China to unveil bronze statue of Indian doc Kotnis

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

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

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

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

Apart from the school named after him as the

- A WOMAN of Indian-origin dubbed "the spy princess" on Friday gets a new memorial in Britain honouring her espionage work and refusal to betray secrets in World War II.

- ENGLISH HERITAGE is putting up a Blue Plaque honouring Noor Inayat Khan outside 4 Taviton Street in the Bloomsbury area of central London where she lived from 1942-43.

Shijiazhuang Ke Dihua Medical Science Secondary Specialised School, there are memorials of Kotnis in both Shijiazhuang, the capital of Hebei province, and Tangxian county where he once worked. Late Chinese leader Mao Zedong was deeply affected by his death, the report said.

Mao wrote in his eulogy that "the army has lost a helping hand, the nation has lost a friend. Let us always bear in mind his internationalist spirit".

According to Liu Wenzhu, an official of the Shijiazhuang Ke Dihua Medical Science Secondary Specialised School, since the founding of the school in 1992 more than 45,000 medical professionals have graduated from it. — *PTI*



Donald Trump Jr., Tiffany Trump, President Donald Trump, first lady Melania Trump and Barron Trump stand on stage on the South Lawn of the White House on the fourth day of the Republican National Convention. — *AFP*

# Trump says Biden wants to destroy 'American greatness'

## Harris slams Don over social unrest

**Washington, Aug. 28:** President Donald Trump warned on Thursday that his election opponent Joe Biden wants to destroy "American greatness" in a speech accepting the Republican nomination for a second term against a backdrop of explosive racial tensions and the deadly coronavirus pandemic.

The former celebrity real estate developer declared himself all that stands between Americans and the disaster he claimed his "weak" Democratic rival would bring if he wins on November 3.

"This election will decide whether we save the American Dream," Trump said. "Joe Biden is not a savior of America's soul. He's the destroyer of America's jobs and given the chance, he'll be the destroyer of American greatness."

Despite Trump's warnings of chaos, his bid for reelection is already taking place amid levels of turmoil the country hasn't seen for decades, a fact

rubbed in by a Black Lives Matter protest outside the White House — with shouting and vuvezela trumpets audible inside

in Wisconsin. The shooting sparked nationwide rage and three nights of violence in the city of Kenosha. Tensions soared when two protesters were shot dead Tuesday.

A white 17-year-old was detained on murder charges connected to the protesters' slayings, and Trump announced he was sending federal forces to Kenosha to "restore law and order." On Wednesday Vice President Mike Pence warned people watching the Republican convention that they "won't be safe in Joe Biden's America." — *AFP*

Trump spoke from the White House' South Lawn, which he had transformed into a flashy event center

the fences. "Trump spoke from the White House' South Lawn, which he had transformed into a flashy event center

# US def. chief says China destabilising Indo-Pacific

**Koror, Palau, Aug. 28:** US Defense Secretary Mark Esper accused China of "destabilising" the Pacific region on Friday on a whistle-stop trip to the tiny island nation of Palau.

The visit, which lasted barely three hours, comes as Washington attempts to counter Beijing's efforts to gain influence in the sparsely populated but strategically important Pacific island nations.

Esper said the United States and Palau shared values of freedom "where all countries respect the rules and norms for peace and prosperity of all nations".

"This is especially important today, as we continue work alongside our allies and partners to protect that international system that is under threat from China and its ongoing destabilising activities in the region," he said.

Beijing has enjoyed recent success in the Pacific, persuading the Solomon Islands and Kiribati last year to switch diplomatic allegiance from Taiwan to China.

That left Palau as one of

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

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

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

The US regularly conduct "freedom of navigation operations" in the area to challenge Chinese territorial claims.

The U.S. Navy's Pacific Fleet said in a statement that the USS Mustin, a guided-missile destroyer, sailed on Thursday "in the vicinity of the Paracel Islands to ensure critical shipping lanes in the area remain free and open".

The Chinese military on Friday accused the US ship of entering "China's territorial waters" near the islands "without authorisation". Chinese forces tracked the warship and then warned it to leave, said military spokesman Li Huamin. — *AFP*

sure from China to switch. Remengesau said China had employed "aggressive moves" in the region but he understood why it had won over some island nations. "It's no secret that they are loaning money and putting money into the economies of many Pacific island nations," he said. — *AFP*

area to challenge Chinese territorial claims. The U.S. Navy's Pacific Fleet said in a statement that the USS Mustin, a guided-missile destroyer, sailed on Thursday "in the vicinity of the Paracel Islands to ensure critical shipping lanes in the area remain free and open".

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for the final night of the Republican convention.

Trampling over long-running presidential custom to separate the executive mansion from political campaigning, Trump had some 1,500 white chairs laid out in front of the stage bedecked with rows of US flags and two giant video screens.

His message of anarchy under Democratic rule was amplified by a string of warm-up speakers including his powerful daughter Ivanka.

And when Trump finally came to deliver the main speech, he did not hold back.

"If the left gains power, they will demolish the suburbs, confiscate your guns," he said, while branding Biden as a man with a history of "betrayals" and "blunders." Biden responded on Twitter, asking: "When Donald Trump says tonight you won't be safe in Joe Biden's America, look around and ask yourself: How safe do you feel in Donald Trump's America?" — *AFP*

## EU FINALISES LIST FROM BELARUS TO BE BLACKLISTED

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

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

Belarus authoritarian president of 26 years has faced weeks of protests since he was reelected to a sixth term on August 9 with 80 per cent of the vote. The opposition says the poll was rigged and the EU, among others, disputes the results.

In the first four days of demonstrations that followed, Belarus security forces detained almost 7,000 people and injured hundreds with rubber bullets, stun grenades and clubs. — *PTI*

**BACK TO FUTURE**

## Machine can fly for 10 minutes; potential to be seen when it can stay in air for 30 minutes

# Japan's 'flying car' has successful flight

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

Japan's SkyDrive Inc., among the myriads of "flying car" projects around the world, has carried out a successful though modest test flight with one person aboard. In a video shown to reporters on Friday, a contraption that looked like a slick motorcycle with propellers lifted several feet (1-2

meters) off the ground, and hovered in a netted area for four minutes.

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

"I hope many people will want to ride it and feel safe." The machine so far

can fly for just five to 10 minutes but if that can become 30 minutes, it will have more potential, including exports to places like China, Fukuzawa said. Unlike airplanes and helicopters, eVTOL, or "electric vertical takeoff and landing," vehicles offer quick point-to-point personal travel, at least in principle.

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

Battery sizes, air traffic control and other infrastructure issues are among the many potential challenges to commercializing them. "Many things have to happen," said Sanjiv Singh, professor at the Robotics Institute at Carnegie Mellon University, who co-founded Near Earth Autonomy, near Pittsburgh, which is also working on an eVTOL aircraft.

"If they cost \$10 million, no one is going to buy them. If they fly for 5 minutes, no

one is going to buy them. If they fall out of the sky every so often, no one is going to buy them," Singh said in a telephone interview.

The SkyDrive project began humbly as a volunteer project called Carti-ator in 2012, with funding by top Japanese companies including automaker Toyota Motor Corp., electronics company Panasonic Corp. and videogame developer Bandai Namco. — *AP*



This picture shows a test flight of a manned 'flying car' at Toyota Test Field in Toyota, central Japan. — *AP*



# DECCAN Chronicle

29 AUGUST 2020

## GST meet: Has govt failed its citizens?

During the GST Council meeting on August 27, the government of India has invoked the *force majeure* clause (a phrase in French for superior force or the act of God) to renege on its statutory obligation to make good the loss incurred by states on account of switching over to the Goods and Services Tax. The Centre argued that the shortfall in revenue collection was because of an extraordinary situation caused by a pandemic and that it is not bound to make good loss caused by an act of God. The Central government's argument was based on two factors — one, the promise that it made to states to make good its revenue loss on account of the GST rollout, and two, a contraction that the Indian economy is expected to witness this financial year. The Centre believes that the revenue shortfall would be considerably more because of the Covid-19 drag on the economy and should not be attributed to the GST.

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

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

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

## Protect tribes in Andamans

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

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

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

The UT administration should, therefore, swing into patrol, conduct a risk assessment and ensure complete eradication of the disease from one island to the next in a deadline-driven manner before the crisis gets out of hand.

### DECCAN CHRONICLE

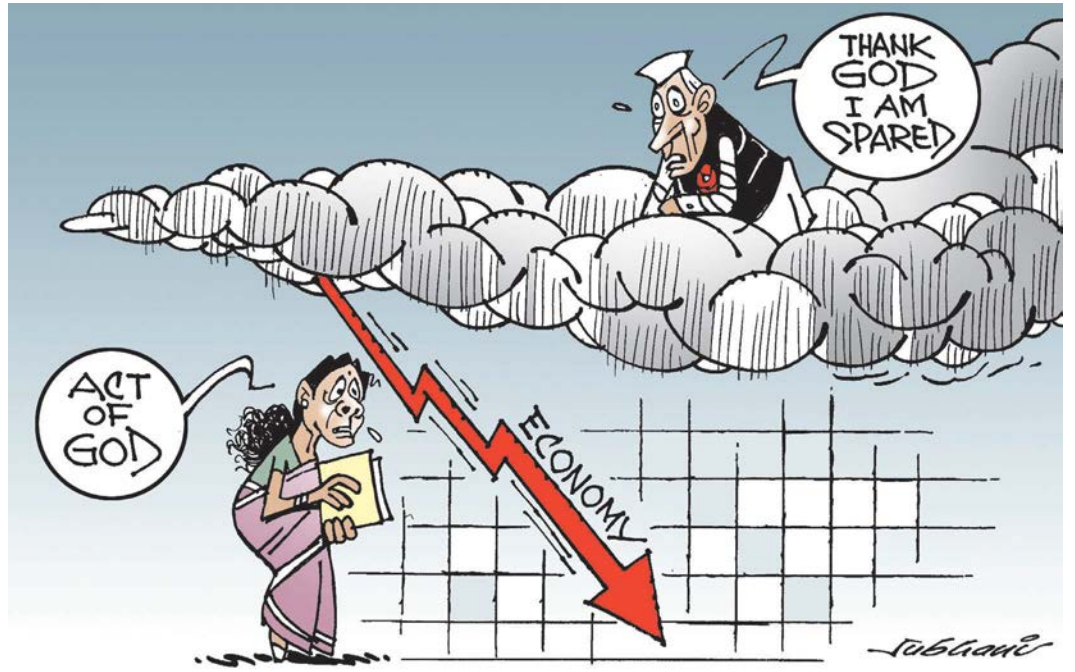
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 Gram: CHRONICLE Postal registration no: No. H/SD-348/2006-08

Subhani



## Chinese mischief likely in Himachal, U'khand



Claude Arpi

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

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

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

All this does not tally with the facts.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### LETTERS

#### JEE AND NEET

How can the government dictate students to write exams? Seems like people have lost their Fundamental Rights. Government needs to represent people's interests and protect them. Exams can be conducted when the situation is under control. No need to worry about loss of an academic year in case of JEE and NEET.

Sathish Chandra  
Hyderabad

#### GLOBAL CITY

The ban on sale of illegal properties must be strictly implemented (*TS bans registration of illegal buildings, plots, DC, Aug. 28*). It will reduce corruption, litigations by state, citizens, harassment of innocent citizens and help orderly growth of the city. State governments may lose revenue for some time but revenue will increase many folds in future. Kudos to the TRS.

K.K. Jeshrani  
Hyderabad

#### TEACHERS AT RISK

Teachers are made a scapegoat in this pandemic by resuming duties. In government schools they are unable to maintain distance. The situation may worsen in the event of a community spread. There is no transportation. Why can't teachers take online classes till the situation improves? At Banjara Hills Rd. No. 7, a Covid centre is attached to a government school.

Idris Najaf  
Hyderabad

#### PM's move shocks princes

NEW DELHI, August 28  
Intendant-general of the rulers' concord Maharaja of Dhrangadhra is writing to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi expressing the astonishment of the princes that the Government should be going ahead with the legislation to abolish privy purses, while efforts were still on to solve the problem through bipartite negotiations.

The Maharaja is understood to have pointed out that any discussions between the Government and the concord after the legislation was adopted by Parliament would be pointless.

Ayesha Khaliq



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

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

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

deteriorating economic opportunities and future uncertainties. The sudden and prolonged March lockdown has hit hard a very large section of our country's population; leading to economic deprivation. As a result, poor parents, out of work due to Covid, are marrying off minor daughters to reduce financial burden. The closure of schools has aggravated the problem. Tragically, poor parents see this as an opportunity to get their minor daughters married at a lower cost on ceremonies and dowry. Overall, the current situation will further undermine efforts of past years to combat child marriages in India. Families coming from lower socioeconomic strata, particularly in rural areas, are thus being compelled to marry their offspring early. Raising the legal age of marriage is not going to make any favourable impact on this section of the society.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



## quick BITES

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

\* As of 9:30 PM IST

## Gold bond opens on Aug. 31; issue priced at ₹5,117

The issue price for the sixth tranche of the Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme has been fixed at Rs 5,117 per gram, the Reserve Bank of India said. The Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme 2020-21 series VI will open for subscription on August 31 and close on September 4. The issue price for the bonds (series V), which were open for subscription from August 3 to August 7, was Rs 5,334 per gram of gold.

## NZ probing cyber attacks on stock market



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

## Taxpayers under faceless scrutiny to get intimation

The Income Tax Department will soon start sending out intimation to assesses undergoing scrutiny that such cases would now be handled under faceless assessment. CBDT additional commissioner Jaishree Sharma said domestic transfer pricing cases too will be covered under the faceless assessment mechanism. Reassessment cases would also be part of the faceless scheme.

## Kawasaki Vulcan S cruiser bike costs ₹5.79 lakh

Japanese automaker Kawasaki Motors introduced the new BS-6 compliant middleweight cruiser bike Vulcan S priced at Rs 5.79 lakh at pan-India showroom. With this, Kawasaki has updated its entire 650cc lineup to comply with BS6 regulations. The Vulcan S is powered by the 650cc, liquid-cooled, parallel-twin engine that offers 61PS of power and 63Nm of torque, and the bike is mated to a 6-speed gearbox



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

**RAVI RANJAN PRASAD**  
MUMBAI, AUG. 28

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

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

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

The Nifty closed the week up 2.43 per cent.

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

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

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

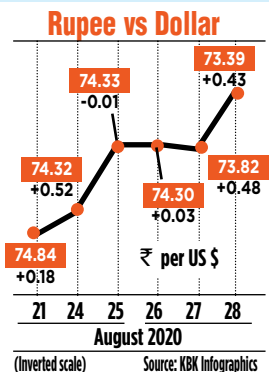
Vikas Jain, senior

## Rupee posts biggest weekly gain in 20 months at 73.38

**FALAKNAAZ SYED**  
MUMBAI, AUG. 28

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

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



a seven-month high.

The Dollar Index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, is at a two-year low at 92.50. So far this month foreign portfolio investors have invested Rs 50,000 crore in the domestic market.

Analysts said the RBI has probably stepped aside from the dollar buying intervention.

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

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

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

## Murugappa all set to bag CG Power

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## World Bank suspends ease of business report

### Probing irregularities in data; India rankings may be revised

**ARCHANA CHAUDHARY**  
AUG. 28

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

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

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

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

Changes to the World Bank's methodology penalised Chile under



## INDIA 72ND ON WAGE LIST

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

—Bloomberg

## Cereal exports jump over 200%

**SANGEETHA G**  
CHENNAI, AUG. 28

Cereals, other than wheat and rice, have seen a jump in demand in the overseas market due to the pandemic with their exports growing over 200 per cent in July.

In July, exports of cereals like bajra, oats, corn, ragi, quinoa, yellow maize, sorghum and their seeds collectively grew 226 per cent to Rs 330 crore against Rs 101 crore in the same month last year. Between April and July, exports grew 32 per cent to Rs 673 crore against Rs 509 crore in the year-ago period.

Among the cereals, certain varieties of popcorn fetched export revenues of Rs 190 crore in July against nil exports in July 2019. Yellow maize and another variety of maize too saw an emerging demand in the overseas market this July.

According to K. Unnikrishnan, deputy director general, Federation of Indian Export Organisations, cereals have witnessed increased demand from African countries

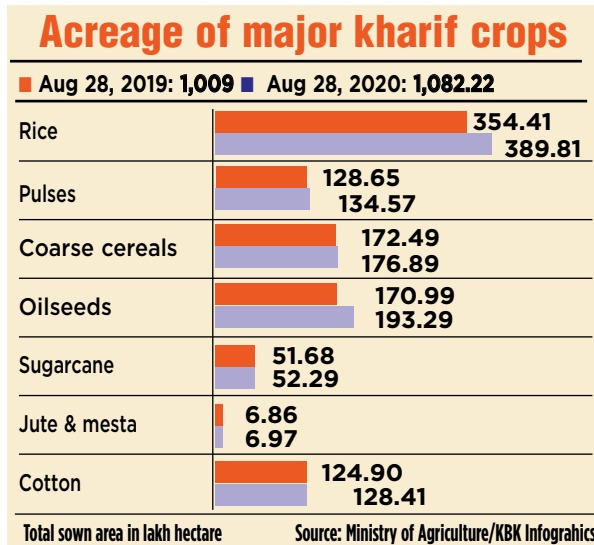
and the Gulf region during the lockdown.

"Many of the exporting nations had imposed restrictions on shipments to ensure food security during the lock-down. On the other hand, India had excess production and there were no restrictions on exports. This made countries in Africa and the Gulf region increasingly buy from India," he said.

Further, the Gulf region was seen stocking up commodities fearing scarcity.

In the case of maize, Vietnam, one of the largest producers, had a lower output and countries turned to India. Bangladesh, Myanmar and Sri Lanka have been buyers of cereal seeds from India.

Apart from volumes, price rise in cereals also helped export earnings.



## India may get vaccine by early 2021

New Delhi, Aug 28: As Covid-19 vaccine trials move ahead at a breakneck speed, an approved vaccine is likely to hit the Indian market by the first quarter of 2021, Bernstein said in a report.

Globally, there are four candidates that are close to approval by the end of 2020 or early 2021.

Through partnerships, India has access to two of those AZ/Oxford's viral vector vaccine and Novavax's protein subunit vaccine.

"Phase I/II data looks promising for both in terms of safety and the vaccine's ability to elicit an immune response," it said. "We are optimistic that there will be an approved vaccine in the market by 1Q calendar year 2021 in India."

While the vaccine could be available at \$3-6 (Rs 225-550) per dose, herd immunity might be two years away due to implementation challenges, it said, adding the experience in large scale adult vaccination programmes is thin.

## US-BASED BCM TIES UP WITH BE FOR VACCINE PRODUCTION

**SEEMA HAKHU KACHRU**  
HOUSTON, AUG. 28

In the race to find a cure for the coronavirus infection, Texas-based Baylor College of Medicine (BCM) has entered into a licensing agreement with Indian pharmaceutical company Biological E Limited (BE) for the development of a safe, effective and affordable vaccine.

According to BCM, Hyderabad-headquartered BE has licenced the recombinant protein Covid-19 vaccine candidate developed at Baylor. The company engaged in

licence negotiations with the BCM Ventures team after initial discussions on Baylor's technology and how it could possibly work on a vaccine to address the current global pandemic.

The company will leverage its past experience for the further development and commercialisation of the vaccine candidate, which is currently produced using a proven yeast-based expression technology, the Texas-based BCM said.

At a webinar organised by the Consul General of India in Houston, Dr Peter Hotez, professor and dean

of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor, said he and his colleagues have already been making SARs and MERS vaccines.

"Then, when we got word about Covid-19, we saw that the sequence for the new virus was similar to some of the viruses that we were already making vaccines for," said Hotez.

Hotez and his team were able to quickly move on to creating a Covid-19 vaccine, which resulted in the collaboration with a large vaccine producer in India.

—PTI

## Sarda Agro insolvency plan scrapped

New Delhi, Aug 28: The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) on Friday set aside the insolvency proceedings initiated against Telangana-based Sarda Agro Oils, citing that claims were filed by the lender three years after declaring the account as a non-performing asset.

The ruling comes nearly a year after the Hyderabad bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) admitted a plea from Allahabad Bank for insolvency proceedings against the company.

In an order, a three-member bench of the NCLAT said the date of default is computed from the date of declaration of account as a NPA (non-performing asset) and such date of default would not shift.

It will be "impermissible to proceed with Section 7 application," filed by the bank which is after the limitation period of three years, the order said.

Under Section 7 of the Insolvency and Bankrupt-



Sarda Agro

insolvency proceedings on December 31, 2018.

"We are of the firm view that the determining factor is the three years period from the date of default NPA," the NCLAT bench, headed by acting chairperson Justice B. L. Bhat, said.

According to the NCLAT, the Supreme Court has also held that the limitation period for application under Section 7 of the IBC is three years as provided by the Limitation Act, 1963 and is extendable only by the application of Section 5 of Limitation Act, 1963 if any case for condonation of delay is made out. Section 5 pertains to extension of the stipulated period.

The appellate tribunal has directed the NCLT to close the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) initiated against Sarda Agro Oils and set aside the appointment of resolution professional, declaring all consequential action taken by him as "illegal". —PTI



## SHORT TAKES



Vinesh Phogat

## Khel Ratna Vinesh is Covid positive

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

## Coach dies a day ahead of award

**New Delhi:** Veteran athletics coach Purshottam Rai died due to a cardiac arrest on Friday, tragically a day before he was to be conferred with the prestigious Dronacharya Award. He was 79. "He took part in the rehearsal for the National Sports Awards but later suffered heart attack and passed away," an Athletics Federation of India official said. The National Sports Awards ceremony will be held virtually on Saturday due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Rai was to receive the Dronacharya Award from President Ram Nath Kovind in the lifetime category. Rai coached top athletes such as Olympian quartermiler Vandana Rao, heptathlete Pramila Aiyappa, Ashwini Nachappa, Murali Kuttan, M. K. Asha, E. B. Shyla, Rosa Kutty and G. Pramila. "It is a tragic incident and we at AFI are shocked. He spent his whole life for athletics and he made immense contribution. We condole his tragic demise and express our condolences to his family," said AFI president Adil Sumariwalla. — PTI

## Arsenal, Liverpool in clash for Shield

**London:** Jordan Henderson has urged Liverpool to show their hunger to retain the Premier League title when they face Arsenal in the Community Shield on Saturday. Just five weeks after Liverpool captain Henderson lifted the Premier League trophy, Jurgen Klopp's side kick off the new season in the glamour friendly at Wembley. While their Premier League title defence doesn't get underway until September 12, the Reds are keen to lay down an early marker to their title rivals. Henderson knows FA Cup winners Arsenal will pose a good test of Liverpool's desire for more silverware after beating the champions 2-1 at the Emirates Stadium late last season. — AFP

## Live on TV

### FORMULA ONE

**Belgian Grand Prix Practice-3** from 3.25 pm; Qualifying from 6.25 pm on Star Sports Select 2, HD

### TOUR DE FRANCE

**Cycling race** from 5.30 pm on Eurosport, HD

### CARIBBEAN PREMIER LEAGUE

Barbados Tridents vs Trinbago Knight Riders from 7.30 pm; St Kitts & Nevis Patriots vs Jamaica Tallawahs from 11.45 pm on Star Sports 1, 2, HD

### FA COMMUNITY SHIELD

**Arsenal vs Liverpool** from 9 pm on Sony Ten 2, HD

### T20 CRICKET

**England vs Pakistan** from 10.30 pm on Sony Six, HD

### UFC FIGHT NIGHT

**Anthony Smith vs Aleksandar Rakic** from 6.30 am (Sunday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

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

Printed and Published by K. Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited. Printed at Deccan Chronicle Press situated at Plot No. 9 Alwal Village, Vallabh Nagar Taluk, Medchal Malkajgiri Dist. Telangana and Published at 36, S.D. Road, Secunderabad-3. RNI Registration No. 3081/1957. Editor: Aditya Sinha



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



# Shaken sides train

## IPL teams begin practice amid Covid scare

C. SANTOSH KUMAR | DC with agency inputs  
CHENNAI, AUG. 28

With just 22 days left before the start of the 13th edition of the Indian Premier League, multiple members of the Chennai Super Kings contingent have tested positive for Covid-19, causing an upheaval ahead of the event starting September 19.

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

CSK have travelled with a fat contingent of 55 members. All of them were tested upon arrival at the Dubai airport followed by three more tests on days 1, 3 and 6 at the hotel.

"The infection could have been picked up either from those left out from the squad or the airport. Those who have tested positive are mostly asymptomatic. The BCCI-appointed healthcare officials have begun procedures to trace the contacts," said the team source.

Jittery BCCI officials have called for an informal meeting with franchise representatives.

Meanwhile, after completing a mandatory seven-day quarantine period in Abu Dhabi,



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

Mumbai Indians, Royal Challengers Bangalore and Rajasthan Royals were the latest set of teams to come out of their isolation and shake the rust off in their first practice session at various ICC Academies on Thursday.

RCB and India captain Virat Kohli appeared cheerful as he kicked about a volleyball and shared some light

moments with teammates. Meanwhile, the Delhi Capitals have signed Australian all-rounder Daniel Sams to replace England's Jason Roy.

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

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

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

## KNIGHT RIDERS RECORD FIFTH STRAIGHT WIN

**Port of Spain, Aug. 28:** Trinbago Knight Riders maintained their clean slate with a fifth win in as many matches, while Mohammed Nabi produced a career-best five-wicket haul to guide St Lucia Zouks to a six-wicket triumph in the Caribbean Premier League here.

Sent into bat, the Warriors posted a lowly 112 for 7. The Knight Riders then overhauled the target, scoring 115 for 3 with 10 balls to spare.

Trinbago got an early break when Sikandar Raza clean bowled Brandon King (6) in the second over of the innings. Khary Pierre then struck twice in one over, dismissing Chandrapaul Hemraj (2) and Nicholas Pooran (1) to leave Amazon Warriors at 12 for 3.

Chasing the total, Imran Tahir broke through with two wickets in two balls in the sixth over, sending back Lendl Simmons (19) with a google and then a big leg-break ended Colin Munro's (0) stay. Darren Bravo (26) denied Tahir the hat-trick.

After 10 overs, the Knight Riders were 51 for two but soon Tion Webster was sent back by Chris Green. Yet they stayed on the course and needed 35 off the last 36 balls. — PTI

# Andhra captain Pradeep retires

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 28

Andamani Ganga Pradeep, former captain of the Andhra Ranji Trophy team, announced his retirement from all formats of first class cricket on Friday.

In his letter addressed to the Andhra Cricket Association (ACA), which was forwarded to BCCI, he thanked the Krishna District Cricket Association, from where he represented the ACA in all tournaments, and also the ACA for giving him all encouragement for his growth in the game. He specially thanked his family for their co-operation.

"It's time for me to say goodbye and make way for the youngsters," the 33-year-old wrote, adding he will continue to be associated with cricket and would like to help budding players in future.

Pradeep played 64 Ranji Trophy matches and scored 2,757 runs with six centuries and 13 half centuries. In List 'A' matches he got three more centuries (1,053 runs). Pradeep was also a good fielder and has 81 catches to his account in all matches.

He also led the India Under 17 team and was part of the India Under 19 side.

● **Pradeep played 64 Ranji Trophy matches and scored 2,757 runs with six centuries and 13 half centuries. In List 'A' matches he got three more centuries (1,053 runs).**

● **Pradeep was also a good fielder and has 81 catches to his account in all matches.**

● **He also led the India Under 17 team and was part of the India Under 19 side.**

Pradeep was born in Vijayawada into a family of cricketers — his father AG Prasad, elder brother AG Praveen and maternal uncle I. Sreenivas all represented Andhra in Ranji Trophy.

Presently, Pradeep is working as Assistant Manager in Indian Overseas Bank at Chennai.

ACA president P. Sarat Chandra Reddy thanked Pradeep for his services. "ACA is proud to have players of such caliber and stature. I wish him all the best and his services shall be best utilised by ACA when required," he said.



A. G. Pradeep

# Serena handed tough US draw

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

The women's draw offers some challenges for the 38-year-old third seed. Serena, one Slam singles crown shy of matching Margaret Court's all-time record, could meet 2017 US Open champion Sloane Stephens in the third round and 2017 US Open runner-up and seventh seed Madison Keys in a quarterfinal before a chance at Kenin in the semis and potentially Czech top seed Karolina Pliskova in the final.

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

On the men's side, world No.1 Novak Djokovic's path could include a semifinal against Stefanos Tsitsipas or Alexander Zverev.

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

Austrian second seed Dominic Thiem, who pushed Djokovic to five sets before falling in this year's Australian Open final, was placed on the opposite end of the bracket, setting up the possibility of a rematch in the championship match.

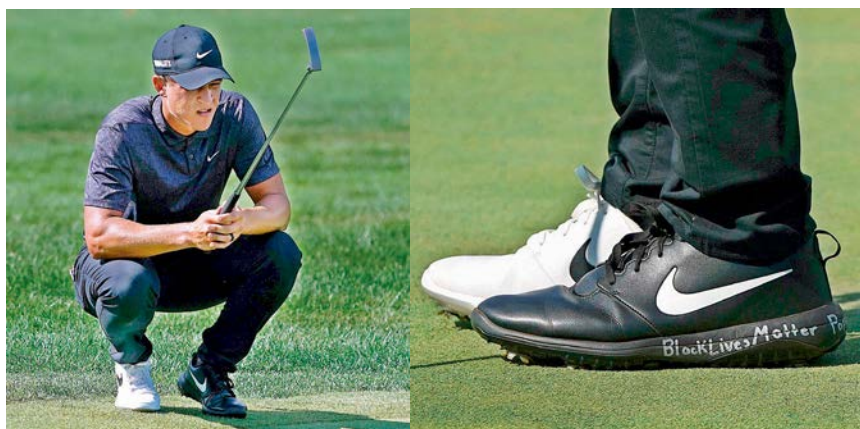
With fellow "Big Three" players Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer absent, Djokovic has a prime chance to close the gap on his record rivals in a field of 128 that is missing several standouts. — AFP

## TOUR DE FRANCE ROLLS OUT IN CYCLE OF GLOOM

**Nice (France), Aug. 28:** There are always sunshine and smiles on the French Riviera but the 2020 Tour de France will roll out of Nice on Saturday under a cloud of Covid-19 gloom, with doubts the 21-day jaunt across the peaks and plains will be end with its usual dash up the Champs Elysees in Paris.

Leaving the well heeled Riviera resort the 22 teams will race 3,484km through some of the prettiest vistas in France in a globally popular event.

Defending champion Colombian Egan Bernal is again a good bet for the overall leader's fabled yellow jersey, along with Primoz Roglic and Thibaut Pinot chief among his rivals on a course that crosses all five of France's mountain ranges. — AFP



View of shoes worn by Cameron Champ that read "Black Lives Matter" as seen during the first round of the BMW Championship in Olympia Fields on Friday. — AFP

# Champ makes statement with shoes, Tiger joins in

**Washington, Aug. 28:** Cameron Champ considered not playing in Thursday's opening round of the USPGA's BMW Championship over the police shooting of Jacob Blake, but made his own statement with his shoes.

The 25-year-old biracial American, who has a Black father and a white mother, wore one white shoe and one black shoe with messages of support during his seven-over 77 at Olympia Fields, where Tiger Woods and Tony Finau also backed the growing sport boycott movement.

"I definitely thought about it for sure. But obviously I feel like I can do a lot more playing, and again, showing my support and expressing myself," Champ said of sitting out.

Champ had Blake's name and "Black Lives Matter" among the messages on his shoes, objecting to police brutality and racial injustice.

The PGA on Thursday backed the game boycotts and sport shutdowns by the NBA, NHL, Major League Baseball, Major League Soccer and Women's NBA clubs over

shooting of Blake in Kenosha. "The PGA Tour supports them and any of our own members standing up for issues they believe in," the tour said in a statement.

Woods, a 15-time major winner and reigning Masters champion, said he did not consider sitting out the round, which would have ended his bid to qualify for next week's Tour Championship. "No, I talked to the commissioner and they were on board. He released his statement, and all the guys were on board," Woods said. — AFP

## BASEBALLERS PITCH IN WITH 7 GAMES OFF

**New York, Aug. 28:** The New York Mets and Miami Marlins made sure their point was clear on Thursday as seven Major League Baseball games were postponed in protest of racial injustice.

The Mets and Marlins didn't announce their plans prior to the game, taking the field in uniform and standing with caps off for 42 seconds.

It was a strong statement on the eve of MLB's Jackie Robinson Day — which commemorates the player who broke MLB's colour barrier and wore jersey No.42.

Dominic Smith led the Mets onto the field and led them off, after a shirt with the legend "Black Lives Matter" was placed on top of home plate.

Smith had been emotional after the Mets won on Wednesday night — when the team went ahead with games even as the issues of racial injustice and police brutality roiled the NBA and the rest of the sports world.

"I think the most difficult part is to see people still don't care. For this to just continually happen, it just shows just the hate in people's hearts," Smith said on Wednesday night. — AFP