

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

VIJAYAWADA | FRIDAY | 14 AUGUST 2020

WEATHER



Max: 28.0°C
Min: 23°C
RH: 32%
Rainfall: 23.7 mm
Forecast: Cloudy.
Max/Min temp.
28/23 °C

COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+63,557)	(+993)
24,58,295	48,123
covid19india.org	
STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS	
(+1,931)	(+11)
TS: 86,475	665
(+ 9,996)	(+82)
AP: 2,64,142	2,378

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

	2,09,40,054
	DEATHS
	7,49,860
	COUNTRIES AREAS WITH CASES
	213
worldometers.info/coronavirus	

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Shravana Bahula Dasami till 1.56 pm
Star: Mrigasira full day
Variyam: 11.14 am to 12.55 pm
Durmuhurtam: 8.33 am to 9.24 am; 12.46 pm to 1.36 pm
Rahukalam: 10.30 am to 12 noon
HJRI CALENDAR
Zulhijja 23,1441 AH
PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.15 am
Zohar: 1.30 pm
Asar: 5.15 pm
Maghrib: 6.50 pm
Isha: 8.15 pm
SUNSET TODAY 6.35 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.49 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 1.06 AM
MOONSET TOMORROW 3.24 PM

COUNTER POINT



Free vaccine to all the people if I am voted to power... sponsored by my dearest friend Putin!

IN BRIEF

Notices to kin of accused

Vijayawada: The police served notices under Section 160 of Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) to the family members and relatives of Dr. P Ramesh Babu, managing director of Ramesh Hospitals, and Muttavaram Srinivas Babu, owner of the Swarna Palace hotel in connection with the death of 10 Covid-19 patients in fire accident on August 9 at the hotel turned Covid-19 care centre run by Ramesh Hospitals. Sources said the police asked the relatives to attend the enquiry and give information about the whereabouts of the accused.

■ Full report on Page 2

WORLD | 5

Miandad to challenge Imran Khan in politics



BUSINESS | 7

PayTM forays into stock broking

SPORTS | 8

Shuttler Sikki Covid positive, camp closed



Polavaram flooded



Floodwaters reach spill channel of Polavaram project on Thursday. Project chief engineer B. Sudhakar Babu said 6 lakh cusecs of water was flowing at the Polavaram project and there will be no problem till it reaches the 7 lakh mark. Even if the spillway works are affected, work on the cofferdam bridge will continue as iron gliders have been erected on it.

Godavari is in spate, road links to 19 villages cut off

VADREVU SRINIVAS | DC KAKINADA, AUG. 13

The Godavari is receiving copious amounts of floodwaters from the river Indravathi and nearly 6 lakh cusecs of water was released into the sea at the Sir Arthur Cotton Barrage till Thursday Night. The water levels in the Godavari are increasing, causing concern over the safety of villages in Polavaram (West Godavari) and Devipatnam mandal (East Godavari). Road connectivity to 52 villages — 19 in Polavaram mandal and 33 in

Devipatnam mandal — has been cut off. The Kothur causeway in Polavaram mandal was inundated and the officials arranged a boat for the people.

Floodwaters reached the spill channel in Polavaram project. Project chief engineer B. Sudhakar Babu said 6 lakh cusecs of water was flowing at the Polavaram project and there will be no problem till it reaches the 7 lakh mark. Even if the spillway works are affected, work on the cofferdam bridge will continue as iron gliders have been erected on it.

Meanwhile, due to huge water flows to the Krishna delta from the Budameru and other rivulets, the Krishna district irrigation officials suggested that the Pattiseema lift irrigation officials reduce the supply of water to the Krishna river. Pattiseema officials have stopped nine pumps and supply has been reduced to 3,400 cusecs from 7,000 cusecs. Sudhakar Babu said it would take five to seven days to restart the pumps.

■ Page 3: People not ready to shift to shelters

Remand prisoner escapes hospital

AVINASH P. SUBRAMANYAM | DC TIRUPATI, AUG. 13

A 51-year-old remand prisoner, who was being treated at a hospital in Chittoor for Covid-19, gave the slip to police and escaped from the hospital on Wednesday. The incident came to light on Thursday.

According to the police, the remand prisoner was arrested in connection with the murder of a person in Palamaner in July last year. He was remanded to judicial custody and lodged in the district

jail, from where he was shifted to the Covid ward in Piler sub-jail after he developed symptoms last week. “On Wednesday, at around 7.30 am, he came out of his ward on the pretext of getting some tea and escaped from the hospital,” Chittoor DSP K. Eswara Reddy said. He said the escort police was assigned to keep an eye on the prisoner, but they had to wait outside the hospital ward as per Covid-19 protocol.

■ Page 2: Police alerted cops of TN, Karnataka

3 Covid-19 patients run away in Ongole

PATHRI RAJASEKHAR | DC NELLORE, AUG. 13

Three Covid-19 patients on Thursday escaped from the Government General Hospital at Ongole.

While two patients are close relatives belonging to Ankireddypalem in Racharla mandal of Prakasam district, the third belongs to Chimakurthy. They were

admitted on Tuesday. The wife of the man from Chimakurthy was admitted in the hospital along with him after they tested positive to Covid. His wife is still in hospital. Ongole One Town CI Bheema Nayak launched a search after hospital staff lodged a complaint.

■ Page 2: Police threaten to book patients' kin

GET FUNDS FOR AMARAVATI, CM TELLS OFFICIALS

MD ILYAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 13

The state government has decided to complete the ongoing constructions, including Happy Nest project in Amaravati, and further develop Amaravati by fulfilling promises given to farmers. The government has also decided to invite Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the three capitals foundation stone laying function.

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy conducted a review meeting on Amaravati projects and Amaravati Metropolitan Region Development Authority (AMRDA), where he directed officials to prepare a plan to mobilise funds for development of Amaravati.

He enquired about the present status of the various projects in Amaravati. The officials said that there was a requirement of nearly ₹14,000 crore to ₹15,000 crore for completion of the ongoing projects.

■ Page 2: YSRC to work as Opposition too: Bosta

● Officials said there was a requirement of nearly ₹14,000 crore to complete projects



Mahant Nritya Gopal Das

RAM TEMPLE TRUST HEAD COVID +VE, WAS WITH MODI

Lucknow/Mathura, Aug. 13: The president of the Ram temple trust, Mahant Nritya Gopal Das (80), tested positive for Covid-19 on Thursday and was rushed to the Medanta hospital in Gurgaon, officials said.

According to the officials, Das was rushed to the Gurgaon hospital on instructions from Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

“A team of doctors tested him for Covid-19 after the district administration was informed in the morning that he was feeling uneasy,” Mathura District Magistrate Sarvagya Ram Mishra said.

He added that the process to identify those who had come in contact with Das in the recent past has started.

Adityanath has spoken to Mishra as also to Dr Naresh Trehan, the chairman of the Medanta hospital, and requested for immediate medical attention to Das, the officials said. Das, who is also the president of the Sri Krishna Janmabhoomi Nyas, was at Sri Krishna Janmasthan in Mathura till 1.30 am. — *PTI*

HC orders probe into judges' calls

Ex-SC judge to inquiry bid to defame judiciary

MD ILYAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 13

The Andhra Pradesh High Court ordered a thorough probe into the reported telephonic conversations between district judge (in suspension) S. Ramakrishna and retired High Court judge Justice V. Eswaraiah over the alleged conspiracy to defame judges through baseless allegations.

Justice M. Satyanarayana Murthy and Justice Lalita Kanneganti on Thursday entrusted the responsibility of conducting investigation to former Supreme Court judge Justice R.V. Ravindran and directed CBI and central intelligence to cooperate with him to investigate the voices in the audio tapes allegedly recorded during telephonic conversations.

Earlier, Lakshmi Narasaiah, member of BC, SC, ST and Minorities Students Federation, filed a writ petition in the High Court demanding declaration of the High Court area as red zone and a thorough enquiry into the death of High Court registrar Rajasekhara, who is suspected to have succumbed

● Suspended district judge Ramakrishna alleged that there was a larger conspiracy to malign the reputation of justices of the HC and Supreme Court

● Ramakrishna claimed that there was conspiracy as some people tried to induce him to take such a malicious decision. He also alleged that influential people were propping up Justice Eswaraiah

to coronavirus.

Recently, the suspended district judge Ramakrishna filed an implead petition in the same writ petition alleging that there was a larger conspiracy to malign the reputation of justices of the High Court and Supreme Court and he had sufficient evidence to substantiate his allegations.

Ramakrishna stated that Eswaraiah called him on the phone and sought to collect information against the justices of HC and Supreme Court. He said that he had recorded the conversation and sub-

mitted the audio call recordings and its English translation to the High Court.

Ramakrishna claimed that there was conspiracy as some people tried to induce him to take such a malicious decision. He also alleged that influential people were propping up Justice Eswaraiah.

After hearing the arguments of the counsels for the petitioners, Justice M Satyanarayana Murthy and Justice Lalita Kanneganti directed Justice Ravindran to probe into the allegations. Justice Ravindran was also asked to find out the veracity of the conversations recorded in a pen-drive submitted by Judge Ramakrishna. The HC judges said that this was the first-of-its-kind incident to defame justices and hence they are calling for establishing the authenticity of the audio recording.

The government raised some objections in the implead petition of Ramakrishna for which the Court gave seven days of time to file a counter to the petitioner. The next hearing of the writ petition has been for after four weeks.

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IN BRIEF

NOTICES SERVED
TO HOSP, HOTEL
OWNERS' KINDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 13

The police served notices under 160 CRPC to the family members and relatives of Dr P. Ramesh Babu, managing director of the Ramesh hospitals and Mutavarapu Srinivas Babu, owner of the Swarna palace hotel in connection with the death of 10 Covid-19 patients in the fire that broke out on August 9 at the hotel turned Covid-19 care centre (CCC) operated by Ramesh Hospitals.

According to information, the police asked the relatives and family members of both men to attend the enquiry and give information about the whereabouts of Dr Ramesh Babu and Srinivas Babu who are absconding since the fire.

The police intensified the search operation to arrest the two. Governorpet police booked a case against both earlier and began a hunt to nab them four days ago through special teams but have not yet succeeded.

Earlier, the police arrested the hospital chief operating officer (COO), Dr. Kodali Rajagopala Rao, Ramesh Hospital GM, Dr. K. Sudarsha and the CCC coordinating manager, Venkatesh P.

The police produced the three accused before the judge and they were later sent to 14-day judicial remand.

DGP: SI INVOLVED
IN HEAD TONSURE
TO BE PUNISHEDDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 13

DGP Gowtham Sawang stated that the police department took stern measures in the Dalit youth head tonsure incident by arresting the accused Sub-Inspector and further investigation is under progress. He averred that no one would be spared in the Swarna Palace Hotel fire tragedy.

Mr Sawang said that APP has received 26 awards at the national level in various categories, including technology, development and investigation.

He said that immediate action had been taken against the SI in the Chirala incident in which the SI allegedly had beaten a Dalit youth for not wearing a mask. The DGP said that the SI was arrested and sent to remand. He said the government had directed the police department not to delay cases under any circumstances.

The DGP said stern action would be taken against those responsible in the Swarna Palace fire accident that claimed 10 lives of Covid patients.

COPS THREATEN
TO BOOK KIN
OF PATIENTS

From Page 1

One among the two patients belonging to Racharla mandal answered the mobile phone and replied that they were going home as they don't have Covid-19 symptoms.

Aghast with the reply, police threatened to book them as well as their relatives if they fail to return to GGH. The fear is that the patients could infect more people.

The police managed to trace the details and mobile number of the driver of the autorickshaw in which the patients were returning home, and warned him with dire consequences if he took them home.

In addition to this, Bheema Nayak alerted the sub-inspector of Podili to stop the autorickshaw and send it back to the GGH. The SI stopped the vehicle and deputised a constable to follow it back to the hospital.

GGH officials said they cannot blame anyone for the escape of the patients as the staff is overloaded with work. "The staff can handle hardly 500 patients but there are more than 900 patients in the hospital. Even the security staff is no match to the heavy inflow of patients every day. Nobody expects patients to leave the hospital before discharge," a senior official in the hospital said.

MLC B Form



Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy hands over B Form to MLC candidate Penmetsa Suryanarayana Raju at the camp office on Thursday. Ministers Botsa Satyanarayana is also seen.

Jagan mandates Disha patrols at every PS

CM says quality service should be provided to all Disha cases

MD ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 13

The state government will shortly introduce Disha patrols in all police stations and kiosks for cyber safety. Disha App downloads have logged 11 lakh and 390 cases were registered under Disha Act.

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy conducted a review meeting on Disha Act at Tadepalli and insisted on strict measures in order to ensure safety and protection of girls and women.

The review meeting decided that Disha patrol vehicles will be introduced soon with 900 scooters working as patrol vehicles and every police station will have one vehicle to check crimes against women. Cyber kiosks will help in checking the safety of smart phones and laptops.

YSRC GOVT. REDUCED
AMARAVATI TO BURIAL
GROUND: LOKESHDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 13

Telugu Desam national general secretary and MLC Nara Lokesh on Thursday accused the YSRC government of reducing Amaravati capital city to a burial ground and causing death of over 82 farmers waging a relentless struggle against proposed shifting of capital.

Mr Lokesh said a woman farmer, named Nagendramma, died out of dejection over capital decentralization. Nagendramma who gave up 95 cents of her land for capital construction participated in protests for the last 240 days, Mr Lokesh claimed.

He accused the CM of playing a cruel 'three-card' game with the lives of Amaravati farmers. "YSRC leaders took sadistic pleasure in describing Amaravati as a burial ground and now made it their single point agenda to reduce it into one, causing unbearable sorrow to the farmers in the region," he said.

POLICE ALERTED COPS
OF TN, KARNATAKA

From Page 1

"When the escort police checked with hospital staff at around 8 am, they found that the remand prisoner was missing. They immediately informed the seniors, who forwarded a complaint to the Chittoor one town police and efforts are on to nab the prisoner," the DSP said.

The district police wing has alerted all the police stations in the district and tightened security at the inter-district borders of AP, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. About 10 special teams were formed to nab the escaped prisoner.

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy urged the officials to expedite the process of setting up of special courts for trying cases of crime against women and children. The officials said that 11 Public Prosecutors were appointed for Disha cases and eight for cases under POCSSO.

He enquired about forensic labs and instructed officials to speed up the work.

The Chief Minister said that quality service should be provided to all Disha cases and there should be constant monitoring of its functioning. He said that there should be a monthly review and Disha Act should be implemented strictly besides creating awareness by displaying hoardings at all village and ward secretariats and at public places.

Mr Jagan Mohan Reddy urged the officials to expedite the process of setting up of special courts for trying cases of crime against women and children. The officials said that 11 Public

Prosecutors were appointed for Disha cases and eight for cases under POCSSO. He enquired about forensic labs and instructed officials to speed up the work. The Disha Act (amendment) Bill which is pending with the Centre should be followed up, he said.

The officials told the Chief Minister that so far 11 lakh Disha Apps were downloaded and 502 calls have come from the App of which 107 FIRs were registered. This is besides 390 cases that have been registered and charge-sheets were filed within seven days leading to 74 convictions with

three death penalties, life imprisonment for five, 20-year imprisonment for two, ten-year jail for five and seven years or above term for 10.

They further explained that through Cyber Mitra, 265 FIRs were registered, 27,000 complaints were received for cyber bullying through social media and 780 habitual offenders were identified and cases were registered against them. E-Rakshabandhan has been creating awareness on cyber bullying, they said.

Disha one-stop centres in all the district headquarters are functioning well and 2,285 cases were registered from January to August, they said.

Home Minister M. Sucharita, Chief Secretary Nilam Sawhney, DGP Goutham Sawang and other officials were among those present at the meeting.

Botsa: YSRC to work
as Opposition too

From Page 1

He urged AMRDA officials and those from other departments to discuss funds mobilization with the revenue department. He sought a report about the action plan under the supervision of the Chief Secretary.

Later addressing the media, minister for municipal administration Botsa Satyanarayana said that the development plan would be in accordance with the financial condition of the State government. He stated that the government will develop

returnable plots in Amaravati and asserted that all proposed buildings would be completed.

Mr Satyanarayana said that the Chief Minister decided to lay the foundation stone for three capitals after getting approval from the governor. He expressed that the opposition parties were creating legal hurdles despite the fact that the three capitals policy decision would ensure all-round development of the state.

He alleged that N. Chandrababu Naidu had shunned his responsibility as 'Opposition' leader and hence the YSR

Congress would play the role of opposition by taking all public issues to the government's notice.

Satyanarayana asked the agitating farmers not to get carried away by baseless allegations and provocations of opposition parties as the government would certainly develop Amaravati and also take a decision on the buildings there.

Mr Satyanarayana said that according to Hindu tradition and culture, people will do good things by informing it to all hence the government would follow the same in laying the foundation of three capitals.

CALL FOR EXPANDING
AGRI MARKETING
FACILITIESDC CORRESPONDENT
KURNOOL, AUG. 13

Andhra Pradesh Agriculture Mission vice chairman M.V.S. Nagi Reddy has stressed the need for expanding marketing facilities for farm produce.

There is no financial security for the farming community due to unremunerative prices, lack of proper marketing strategies and absence of post harvest storage facilities.

State government's YSR Rythu Bharosa scheme came as a boon for farmers with small landholdings, he said.

According to him, 69.27 per cent of farmers in the state have an average landholding of 0.4 hectare and 19.31 per cent have an average of 1.22 hectares.

These two categories constituting 88.53 per cent of farming community are benefiting from the scheme, Mr Nagi Reddy said.

Agency to monitor
pollution in VizagK.M.P. PATNAIK | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM,
AUG. 13

Five agencies have been shortlisted for the appointment of consultant for monitoring pollution to suggest preventive measures for Visakhapatnam city, now tipped to be state capital.

The city was found to be among the most polluted in the country prior to Covid-19 pandemic and two years ago many PSU oil companies were asked to cut down their production to minimise sulphur dioxide emissions.

"Six months ago, the government called for an expression of interest and five agencies shortlisted. Of them, some have joint ventures with foreign agencies," said a senior official from the Andhra Pradesh pollution control board.

He told this correspondent that the process has been halted due to lockdown and it might resume any day.

The selected agency will have to study all the available reports and studies conducted in the past few years by various agencies such as CPCB, APPCB, universities and other agencies, to carry out additional environmental studies, study the pollu-

tion-related problems, suggest measures for mitigation and design a futuristic sustainable environment management plan for Vizag city as well as other industrial clusters in the Vizag region.

Another senior officer said that the agency will consult all stakeholders and elicit the opinion of Vizagites to prepare a sustainable environment management plan.

The plan is not only to study ambient air pollution but water, including ground and surface, pollution, marine pollution and sewage systems.

The focus will also be on the bowl area located between two hill ranges, Yarada and Simhachalam.

These two hill ranges cause inversion conditions particularly during the winter season.

Major habitation and industries co-exist in the bowl area.

The point, line and area sources of emissions from the industries, service sector and vehicular pollution which are likely to have impact on the air quality of the study area due to prevailing meteorological conditions are to be identified and comprehensive source data of pollutants obtained.

Pothireddypadu tenders
sent for judicial reviewD. SIVA RAMI REDDY | DC
KURNOOL, AUG. 13

The tender documents for upgrading Pothireddypadu head regulator and Banakacherla Reservoir (BCR) have been submitted for judicial review and the same has been uploaded on the website concerned.

Disclosing this here on

Thursday, superintending engineer of Srisaillam project K. Srinivasulu said that the works would start from Pothireddypadu head regulator and BCR complex.

Administrative sanction was given for ₹1510.10 crore by the chief engineer of Kurnool district water resources department.

Covid cases will go up in
coming days: MinisterDC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, AUG. 13

Health minister Alla Kali Krishna Srinivas has said the state government is spending ₹350 crore every month towards providing treatment to patients and containment measures.

Speaking to media persons here on Thursday, he appealed to the recovered patients to donate plasma to save the lives of Covid patients.

Assuring that there will be no side-effects because

of donating plasma, he said the government is offering ₹5,000 to the donors.

Hinting that Covid cases will increase manifold in the coming months, he urged the people to cooperate with the government to contain the spread of the dreaded virus.

Earlier, the minister interacted with the patients undergoing treatment at Covid hospitals in Nellore through Zoom application.

APUCF DEMANDS
QUARANTINE CENTRES
IN ALL MANDALSDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 13

AP Urban Citizen Federation (APUCF) has demanded quarantine centres in every mandal, Rs 5 lakh ex gratia to the kin of Corona victims and setting up of temporary hospitals to treat non-Covid patients in the state.

APUCF convener Ch. Babu Rao said that APUCF conducted the survey in 52 towns and cities from August 5 to 11 on the availability of facilities in the Covid centers and met a wider section of people to collect the data of the expenditure they incurred on treatment.

He said that the survey indicated immediate steps to be taken by the government to increase the number of beds, ventilators, oxygen supply, ICU facilities and recruitment of doctors, nurses and paramedical staff.

Mr Babu Rao lamented that the survey found poor quality of food being supplied to the patients at quarantine centres and government hospitals. Though the government issued an order bringing Covid-9 treatment under Aarogya cover, no hospital was admitting patients under the scheme forcing people to spend huge money.

Mr Babu Rao said the survey report would be submitted to the government.

DIST-LEVEL
COMMITTEE ON
INDUSTRIESV.K.L. GAYATRI | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, AUG. 13

The district administration has deployed a district-level special committee to check the industrial accidents. According to the recommendations from the high power committee appointed for probing into the LG Polymers gas leak incident, the district level committee was appointed.

Joint Collector will be chairman of the committee, while the Deputy Chief Inspector of Factories, Inspector of Boilers, Regional Fire Officer, Deputy Electrical Inspector and District Fire Officer are the members in the committee. General Manager of District Industries Centre will act as a member convenor of the committee.

The industries which have been shut down due to Covid-19 must obtain NOC from the committee to restart the operations. The committee would conduct special drives to check the safety standards, environmental issues, and other safety aspects of the industries and will give certification to restart the works.

The government is establishing an emergency exit group with management representatives, technical experts, members of trade unions, officials from the health department and spontaneous responsive teams.

PATIENTS ADVISED
HOME ISOLATION BUT
NO KITS AVAILABLEDC CORRESPONDENT
KADAPA, AUG. 13

Corona is booming Kadapa in the wake of lockdown relaxations. The number of victims has crossed 15,000.

It became difficult to provide medical treatment to the victims due to shortage of doctors, staff and beds in the hospitals. With this, those with fewer symptoms are being asked to stay at home for 14 days rather than in a hospital and get regular nutrition and timely medication, government officials and medical officials say.

They are guaranteed to be given medical kits. Official figures say more than 3,000 victims in the district are in home isolation. The state government, however, has been criticised for not providing Coronavirus kits to Covid-19 patients even though it promotes home isolation.

Medical kits are designed to help patients in home isolation. The medical kit includes masks, gloves, sanitisers as well as paracetamol tablets to reduce fever and back pain, pantoprazole for gastric trouble, multi-vitamin tablets for immunity, and hydroxy-chloroquine and cetirizine tablets.

Brahmasagar
to disappoint
farmers againNAGESWARA RAO
BALLEDA | DC
KADAPA, AUG. 13

Brahmamsagar, an integral part of the Telugu Ganga project, is likely to disappoint farmers this year as well. Though Telugu Ganga water was coming to the district for the last 13 years, this particular reservoir was never filled to its capacity.

Although there is a main canal with a capacity of 5,000 cusecs from Velugodu Reservoir in Kurnool district, water never reaches more than 2000 cusecs. The canal is expected to flow for 98 km but gets diverted by farmers in the upper area, which remains the main reason for the water flow not going beyond 2,000 cusecs in any given year.

Even if water is brought in for a long time, it is not possible to fill more than 12 TMC due to leakage in the Brahmasagar earth dam. The reservoir's full water level was 17.73 TMC, filled up from a maximum of 11.9 TMC last year.

In order for water to be fully brought in from Velugodu Reservoir, the canal till up to its eighth kilometre is filled with bushes and other waste material, which remains the main obstacle for the water stream. The canal is hit by lack of lining works.

Although it has a capacity of 5,000 cusecs, till now the water release has been less than 3,000 cusecs.

While farmers and farmers' union leaders have been battling over the past few years for full water, the previous government had called for tenders to strengthen the canals. The company that secured the works removed the bushes and other debris into the canal and they stopped the works. However, the latest is that water will be released to the canal this week. If the main canal is not solidified under these conditions, it will not be possible to fill the reservoir completely this year.

Mydukuru and Badvel Assembly constituencies have an area of 1,67,000 acres under the Telugu Ganga. The ponds are filled with Ganga water and supplied for cultivation. There are 77 irrigation tanks in these two constituencies. Apart from these, the Badvel Paddacheruvu is also within the canal.

Currently, Brahmasagar Reservoir has storage of six TMC water. If another six TMC comes in, farmers will stand to benefit and the remaining water is pumped through the reservoir right and left canals to fill 77 ponds. The farmers are seeking an early completion of lining works.

OTHER STORIES

NCLT OFFICIALS JOIN GREEN DRIVE AT BAHVAN

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, AUG. 13

An annual plantation drive was held on Thursday at the lush green campus of the Corporate Bhavan premises in Tatti Annaram of Pedda Amberpet. A variety of plants, including parijat, tulasi and night queen were planted by three members of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT).

The annual plantation drive was arranged by the office of Regional Director (South East Region — Telangana, AP, Karnataka) in the Corporate Bhavan premises, under the directions of Regional Director M.P. Shah.

The plantation drive was led by Ratakonda Murali, member judicial, NCLT, Hyderabad Bench, K. Anantha Padmanabha Swamy, member judicial, NCLT Hyderabad Bench, and Bhaskara Pantula Mohan, member judicial, NCLT Amaravathi Bench.

Also taking part in the plantation drive were officers of the Indial Company Law Service (ICLS) cadre of the Union ministry of corporate affairs, including senior officers M.P. Shah, regional director, P. Atchuta Ramaiah, joint director, Shashi Raj Dara, joint director, Jose Kutty, Registratr of Companies Hyderabad, Pola Raghu-nath, Official Liquidator, Hyderabad.

The Corporate Bhavan comprises the offices of the National Company Law Tribunal-NCLT, Hyderabad and Amaravathi Bench, Regional Director (South East Region).

Official Liquidator, attached to the High Court, Registrar of Companies (RoC), Hyderabad, and Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO), Hyderabad.

■ Also taking part in the plantation drive were officers of the Indial Company Law Service (ICLS) cadre of the Union ministry of corporate affairs, including senior officers M.P. Shah, regional director, P. Atchuta Ramaiah

AP records nearly 10,000 cases again

The total positive cases stand at 2,64,142 in the state

V.K.L.GAYATRI | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, AUG. 13

As many as 9,996 Covid-19 positive cases have been reported in the State during the past 24 hours. The virus claimed six lives while 1,427 patients were discharged during the period.

High tension is prevailing in East Godavari district where 1,504 cases were reported followed by Chittoor 963, Anantapur 856 and West Godavari district with 853 cases till 9 pm on Thursday.

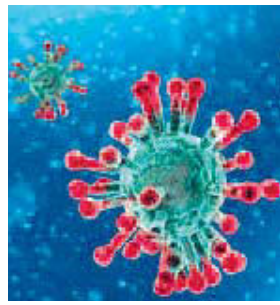
Positive cases increased to 16,019 in SPSR Nellore district following 682 fresh cases. The active cases have been put at 5,967. The virus claimed six lives while 1,427 patients were discharged during the period.

VIGNAN VARSITY LAUNCHES ONLINE CLASSES

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 13

Vignan University launched online classes for students on Thursday. Inaugurating the online classes, university chairman Lavu Rattalah said that VU was first to start online classes immediately after completion of first year B. Tech admissions. The university introduced four new courses, namely Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, Cyber Security, Computer Science and Business Systems and Robotics and Automation, according to him.

The online classes have been designed by the VU faculty using Zoom app.



With regard to Prakasam district, 681 cases have been detected taking the tally to 10,463. The death toll increased to 146 with six deaths in the district. In Chittoor district, about 705 cases were reported, thereby taking the total number of cases to around 21,237. Among the total cases, 311 cases were reported from Tirupati in which 276 are from urban

■ Positive cases increased to 16,019 in SPSR Nellore district following 682 fresh cases. The active cases have been put at 5,967. The virus claimed six lives while 1,427 patients were discharged. Over 681 cases were recorded in Prakasam district

limits and 35 from the interiors. About 88 cases were reported from Srikalahasti, 31 from Puttur, 34 each from Chittoor and Narayanavanam, 15 from Punganur, etc.

As many as 233 patients recovered and were discharged from various Covid-19 hospitals and care centres in Tirupati. In all, about 170 patients were discharged from

Srinivasam quarantine centre, 14 from the Covid-19 ward in S.V.R.R. government general hospital. Apart from this, 49 patients, including 40 from Chittoor, six from Kadapa, two from Kurnool, and one from Nellore district were discharged from Padmavathi State Covid-19 hospital attached to SVIMS.

In Kadapa 784 Covid positive cases reported on Thursday and the tally moved to 15,788 cases in the district. Around 559 fully recovered patients were discharged from FIMS and RIMS Covid hospitals.

The total positive cases stand at 2,64,142. Meanwhile, 1,70,924 persons have recovered even as the toll reached 2,378 across the state.

People not ready to shift to shelters

From Page 1

At Devipatnam mandal of East Godavari, officials arranged two RTC buses and two boats to evacuate people. A majority voted to stay back,

“We are appealing to the government and the district officials to expedite the R&R and Rehabilitation Colony works as the region had experienced floods last year. Previously, when the water level touched 55 feet at Bhadrachalam, Devipatnam mandal villages were inundated,” said P. Krishna Rao, Polavaram Project Victims Parirakshana Porata

Samithi Devipatnam mandal honorary president.

The water level at Bhadrachalam stands at 35 feet now.

He said that the people are not willing to go to the shelters provided by the government at Rampachodavaram as it is not suitable for them. There are hillocks near the villages and the shelters should be opened there, where locals along with their livestock can wait out the rain.

Rampachodavaram sub-collector and ITDA project officer incharge Pravin Aditya said that all precautions have been taken up to face the flood situation and

there was no transportation problem in Devipatnam mandal. He said that two country boats and two RTC buses were available at Devipatnam police station if people need to be evacuated. He said that for the past one month, the officials were taking precautionary steps and 12 pregnant women and lactating women have been identified in the high-risk category and brought to Rampachodavaram from Devipatnam, Thoyyeru and Mnturu villages.

He said that six sectoral officers have been deployed for assessing the situation.

Load test begins on Kanakadurga flyover

MD. ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 13

The load test on the long-awaited Kanaka Durga flyover here started on Thursday. The trial run of the flyover, which will ease traffic at Durga temple, start on August 20.

City police commissioner B. Srinivasalu announced a few traffic diversions in view of the load test. Authorities said that there would be traffic restrictions on vehicles coming from Kummariapalem to Vinayaka temple. Vehicles coming towards

Vijayawada should use Ibrahimpatnam, Gollapudi, Sithara Center, Kabela, CVR flyover, Inner Ring Road, Pipe Road Junction and Ramavarapadu Ring Road.

The vehicles heading towards Hyderabad are being allowed via Krishna Lanka Police Station, Police Control Room, Panja Center, Chittinagar Tunnel, Gollapudi and Ibrahimpatnam.

Commissioner Srinivasalu appealed to the people to bear with the traffic diversions, which would remain in force till

the evening of August 15. R&B (Quality Control) superintending engineer John Moshe said the load test would continue for 48 hours.

He explained that as part of the load test, 24 lorries filled with sand or concrete, weighing a combined 684 tons were placed between the spans on the bridge.

He said that if the officials found any defects, they would be corrected after 48 hours. He said vehicles would be allowed on the flyover as part of the trial run after August 20.

TRIPATHI NEW DG OF NAVAL OPERATIONS

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, AUG. 13

Vice Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi on Thursday assumed charge as the Director General of Naval Operations.

The Flag Officer is a specialist in communication and electronic warfare and has served on frontline warships of the Navy as Signal Communication Officer and Electronic Warfare Officer and later as the Executive Officer and Principal Warfare Officer of Guided Missile Destroyer INS Mumbai.

A graduate of Defense Services Staff College, Wellington, Mr Tripathi was awarded the Thimmaiya Medal. The Vice Admiral attended the Naval Higher Command Course and the Naval Command College at the US Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island from 2007-08.

4 fishermen missing in Bay of Bengal

VADREVV SRINIVAS | DC
KAKINADA, AUG. 13

Four fishermen of Ameenabad village in U.Kothapallimandal have gone missing in the Bay of Bengal.

The family members of the fishermen say that they were in touch on Wednesday evening and later, their communication was cut off. The fisheries department informed the Indian coast guard (ICG) station about the fishermen.

According to sources, Vanka Sanjeev, P. Kasi, Vanka Veeranna and Vanka Durgarao of Christunagar in Aminabad village ventured into the sea in boat number 1686 on Tuesday. They informed their family members that their engine had been damaged in the sea.

Immediately, some of the fishermen along with their boats went to trace their boat but they could not locate them.

■ Vanka Sanjeev, P. Kasi, Vanka Veeranna and Vanka Durgarao of Aminabad ventured into the sea in boat number 1686 on Tuesday. They informed their families that their engine got damaged

Joint director of fisheries, Koteswara Rao, said that the fishermen went to the sea towards Narsapur shore and due to the damage of the boat, they may have been tossed around Narasapuram due to the waves.

Saying that the ICG officials are searching for the fishermen, Rao added that, if necessary, they would request the ICG to search for the fishermen through helicopters.

Meanwhile, former MLA of Pithapuram, S.V.S.N.Varma, said that the family members of the fishermen are worried and the government should search for the fishermen with helicopters.

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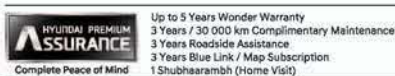
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INNOCEAN-018/20

SHORT TAKES

VARUN TO
TABLE ORGAN
DONATION BILL

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 13

Bharatiya Janata Party MP Varun Gandhi will introduce a private member bill — Donation and Transplantation of Human Organ Bill, 2020 — promoting cadaver donation and making it compulsory for all Indian adults to be registered as organ donors unless a person opts out.

The Bill, which also seeks a National Registry of donors, non-donors and recipients which “shall have information as may be prescribed to an ongoing evaluation of the scientific and clinical status of human organs and tissues.”

The Bill also seeks state governments to maintain a registry and non-disclosure of identity of people in both databases in public domain unless regarding a complaint, a court case, bonafide medical research but with the consent of the person.

“According to the WHO estimates, three to four million lives per year can be saved in India if we have such a system and most of these people will be from poor and middle class families who otherwise cannot afford. Let’s say even five per cent of Indian population agrees to donate their organs and tissues, the number can be multiplied by 15 times in organ banks which is a very significant number as compared to the figures which we have now,” said Gandhi, who is likely to introduce the Bill in the monsoon session of Parliament.

COMPULSORY
RETIREMENT FOR
TAINTED BABU

AKSHAYA KUMAR
SAHOJ | DC
BHUBANESWAR, AUG. 13

The Odisha government on Thursday gave compulsory retirement to the suspended director of National Ayush Mission in Odisha, Bibhu Prasad Sarangi.

Bibhu was arrested on July 9 on charges of sexually harassing a woman employee of the Ayush Directorate and remained in judicial custody till July 13. Later on July 21, the Odisha Administrative Service officer was placed under suspension.

“Bibhu Prasad Sarangi was suspended from the government service in view of the gravity of the case and evidence against him. The conduct of Sarangi towards a subordinate woman employee, prima facie, constitutes an act of personal immorality and violation of conduct of rules,” read an official order issued by the state government.

Therefore, after careful consideration and in line with policy of zero tolerance of any act of immorality by any of its employees, the state government ordered compulsory retirement of Sarangi from service with immediate effect, the order read.

NOTICE TO FOREST
OFFICIAL FOR
REMARKS ON LIONS

Ahmedabad, Aug. 13: The Gujarat government on Thursday issued a notice to a senior forest official over his “irresponsible” and “undesirable” statements about the Asiatic lions and their conservation.

The notice was issued to Chief Wildlife Warden of the state Shyamal Tikadar, the government said in a statement. The government said it “does not agree with such personal views, which are far from truth and facts”.

“For his irresponsible statements against the government policies, the Gujarat government has decided to seek his explanation and issue a notice as per All India Service (Conduct) Rules,” the statement said. On the eve of the World Lion Day on August 10, a webinar was organised by the Central Zoo Authority, in which the Chief Wildlife Warden and Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) was one of the panelists, it added.

“During this webinar, he spoke about the conservation of Asiatic lions in Gujarat. He presented certain objectionable views and made undesirable comments on various issues,” it said without elaborating. In a video of the webinar, Tikadar, a 1986-batch IFS officer, can be heard suggesting that people should look at lions or wildlife more as “a resource than an asset”.

He termed the Asiatic lions of Gir forest as a “commodity which we have branded, but can not sell”.



Security personnel carry out a flag march in the riot-hit area after a mob went on a rampage on Tuesday over a social media post, allegedly posted by a Congress MLA’s relative, in Bengaluru on Thursday. - PTI

Role of SDPI in Bengaluru
violence comes to the fore

Several SDPI office-bearers arrested; RAF contingent holds flag march

Bengaluru, Aug. 13: Karnataka Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Thursday said the role of the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI) behind the Tuesday night violence in parts of Bengaluru, had come to light and investigation will go deep into it and their connections.

The Minister said, four people associated with SDPI have been arrested in this regard and investigation is under way.

“K G Halli and D J Halli are peaceful since Wednesday and there have been no untoward incidents...as the investigation is progressing new information is coming out. I cannot share with you everything, but in the days to come I will share before the media,” Bommai said.

Speaking to reporters here, he said, as per the information gathered so far and video footage, most importantly the role of SDPI is coming to light. We are collecting more

information regarding it, we are investigating deeply in this regard.

“Already, several SDPI office-bearers have been arrested. Muzammil Pasha, the SDPI district secretary is the main (person), also Firoz, Afraz Pasha and Shaik Adil, all of them are from SDPI. Their role is completely being investigated and they have been arrested,” he added.

Three people were killed after police opened fire to quell a mob that went on a rampage in a city locality on Tuesday night over an inflammatory social media post allegedly put out by a Congress legislator’s relative.

Pulakeshi Nagar MLA Akhanda Srinivasa Murthy’s residence and a police station at D J Halli were among those targeted by the angry mob.

The house of the MLA, who was not at home at the time, was allegedly set on fire. The rioters also torched many police and

private vehicles, badly damaged the house and looted the belongings of MLA Murthy and those of his sister. An ATM was smashed into pieces.

After the arson and violence, the entire DJ Halli resembled a war zone. Nearly 140 people have been arrested so far, in connection with the incident. Bommai said, through some video footage it has come to light that SDPI workers had come from neighbouring areas of K G Halli and D J Halli, and it is being investigated.

“The investigation will look into who are behind the incident, its links with other such incidents in the past. We will go deep into it and will not rest until we break through this conspiracy,” he said.

Officials are also gathering details on cases against the SDPI in Mysuru, Mangaluru and other places, Bommai said, adding that all angles at the local level are also

being looked into like rivalry between and within political parties.

“Everything that might have led to this incident, we will investigate. Whoever is at fault or have supported it, we will take action even if it is an elected representative,” he added. Assuring people of security, the Home Minister said, police have worked putting their life at risk, with Covid on one side and such incidents on the other.

“I appeal to people not to fear and cooperate in maintaining peace and order,” he added.

The SDPI on Wednesday had denied its role in the violence and had blamed police inaction.

The Karnataka government on Wednesday announced that a district magistrate would conduct an inquiry into the violence. The government has also decided to recover losses caused to public property during the violence from the rioters.

Meanwhile, Muzamil Pasha and others have been named as one of the many accused in the FIR.

The police registered at least five FIRs in connection with the incident - two in Devara Jeevanahalli (DJ Halli) and three in Kadugondanahalli (KG Halli) stations.

Besides Pasha, police have named Afran, Syed Masood, Ayaz and Allabaksh in the first FIR at DJ Halli. The second FIR has three names and ‘other 200 persons.’

The police in their FIR charged the rioters with barging into the two police stations with an intention to kill the policeman there and kill

Pulakeshinagar MLA Akhanda Srinivasa Murthy’s nephew whose alleged inflammatory post in social media enraged a section of the society.

Meanwhile, a contingent of the Rapid Action Force conducted a flag march in the riot-hit areas. - PTI

Youth form
human chain to
protect temple

Bengaluru, Aug. 13: Youth, including those from a minority community, decided to protect a temple when a mob was going on a rampage here after being irked over a social media post on an allegedly communally sensitive issue.

A video of the youth quickly forming the human chain to protect the Hanuman temple on Shampura Main Road has gone viral, even as the mob was indulging in arson.

The human chain was formed on Tuesday night as a result of some quick thinking while violence sent shock waves across DJ Halli, KG Halli and neighbouring areas of Pulakeshinagar.

“We saw the rioters coming in groups towards the temple and their intention seemed to damage it. Then we decided to form a human chain to protect it,” a youth who wished not to be named, said.

He expressed fear that any damage to the temple could have complicated

things further. On Tuesday night, a mob had gone on the rampage at Pulakeshinagar irked over the social media post allegedly put out by a Congress legislator’s relative, with the government terming the violence as a well-planned act.

Three persons were killed when police opened fire to quell the mob and scores of others, including over 50 police personnel, sustained injuries in the violence that stretched till the wee hours of Wednesday.

The mob had set on fire the DJ Halli Police Station, besides damaging Pulakeshinagar Congress MLA Akhanda Srinivasa Murthy’s property for his nephew Naveen had allegedly posted some objectionable content in the social media about a week ago.

State Revenue Minister R. Ashoka had dubbed the violence pre-planned with an intention to spread it in other parts of the city.

Naveen has also been arrested. - PTI

All arrested can’t be
guilty: Deve Gowda

Bengaluru, Aug. 13: Former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda on Thursday said only those really guilty should be punished for the violence in parts of the city on August 11, as he asked the Congress and BJP not to indulge in a political blamegame on the issue.

Expressing sadness over the attack on Pulakeshi Nagar MLA Akhanda Srinivasa Murthy’s residence, the JD(S) patriarch also said the government should take action to get justice for him and give him compensation for the losses. “The attack on Pulakeshi Nagar MLA Akhanda Srinivasa Murthy’s residence is unfortunate and such incidents should not occur in any part of the country.

Police have arrested about 140 people in connection with rioting, but

how many among them are real culprits?” Gowda was quoted as saying by his office in a release. He said, “all of them (arrested) cannot be culprits.

Only those who are really guilty should be held responsible for the incident and merciless action should be taken against them. Innocents should not be punished, this is my request to the police.”

Three persons were killed after police opened fire to quell a mob that went on a rampage in a city locality on Tuesday night over a purportedly inflammatory social media post allegedly put out by the Congress legislator Murthy’s relative.

Urging the government to take action against those guilty, he said, burning down houses, cars and looting the properties related to an MLA was unheard of in the state. - PTI

RHEA OPPOSES
CBI PROBE INTO
SSR’S DEATH

PARMOD KUMAR | DC
NEW DELHI, AUG. 13

Bollywood actress Rhea Chakraborty — alleged to have abetted the suicide by actor Sushant Singh Rajput — has opposed the handing over the investigation into the case to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

Rhea Chakraborty in her submissions has said that the Patna FIR could be regarded as a zero FIR and transferred to Mumbai Police and the transfer of the probe to the CBI at the behest of the Bihar police is “without jurisdiction”

The Maharashtra government has also opposed the CBI probe, pointing out that the investigation by the Mumbai Police was already in an advanced stage.

24-YEAR OLD
LABOURER
BURIED ALIVE

Erode (TN), Aug. 13: A 24-year-old labourer died while he was involved in connecting pipes in an underground drain here on Thursday, police said.

The worker Anandhan was engaged by the Erode Municipal Corporation on contract to install the pipelines to take the sewage, when the soil caved in and he was buried alive.

On seeing this, the other workers raised an alarm. Soon, an earth-mover was pressed into service and the body of the worker was retrieved.

He was taken to a hospital where doctors declared him brought dead, the police said. A complaint has been registered and further investigations have are under way, the police said. — PTI

Bihar elections likely to
be held in 5 or 6 phases

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 13

Bihar Assembly elections could be held in five or six phases in November and the Home Ministry is likely to deploy 500-600 companies, roughly 60,000 personnel, of central para military forces for the same. Ministry officials claim they were going ahead with all necessary arrangements anticipating the polls would be held on schedule.

Home Ministry officials claimed that though finalising the poll schedule was the prerogative of the Election Commission, the Centre was going ahead with all security and other necessary arrangements anticipating that Bihar Assembly elections will be held as per the schedule, which is in first week of November. While the 2015 Bihar

● HOME MINISTRY officials have also assured that all necessary security and health arrangements would be made if Election Commission decides to go ahead with the November elections.

elections were also held in five phases, this time in view of the Corona pandemic, it is believed that the polling would be completed in six phases or maybe even another addition round.

Another big challenge, sources added, this time during elections would be to ensure proper health protocols during both polling and counting in view of the Corona scare. Home Ministry, sources said, will soon hold detailed discussion with the Election Commission, Health

Ministry and other agencies concerned to draw a detail blueprint for the health precautions that would be taken during the elections.

Bihar has seen a sharp increase in number of Corona cases while a large parts of the state have also witnessed heavy rainfall leading to floods. Thus, some regional parties like the RJD and the LJP had approached the Election Commission with a plea to postpone the elections.

However, indications are that the poll panel was likely to go ahead with the elections as per the original schedule. Home Ministry officials have also assured that all necessary security and health arrangements would be made if Election Commission decides to go ahead with the November elections.

SECURITY | MATTERS

Missile launching platform, sniper rifle on the anvil

15 indigenously built weapons launched

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC
KOLKATA, AUG. 13

Within few days of the Centre’s ban on the import of 101 defence items, 15 indigenously built weapons and products including a missile platform were launched on Thursday for the Indian armed forces.

Defence minister Rajnath Singh launched them in New Delhi.

One of the 15 products

is Nag Missile Carrier (NAMICA), a missile launching platform for the third generation anti-tank fire, using an indigenously produced Infantry Combat Vehicle with amphibious capabilities.

Jointly developed by Ordnance Factory Medak and Defence Research Development Laboratory, the platform can fire six missiles with a gap of 20 seconds.

The NAMICA has the potential for import substitution to the tune of ₹260 cr in the first phase, which may go upto more than ₹3,000 crore.

It is followed by the 14.5/20 mm Anti Material Rifle, developed by the Ordnance Factory Tiruchirappalli.

It is a dual calibre single shot with bolt action sniper rifle for destroying enemy bunkers, light armoured vehicles,

radar systems etc. modular, man-portable and highly accurate.

Another is the 8.6x70mm Sniper Rifle, made by the Rifle Factory Ishapore, which is a light and durable sniper rifle with a range of 1500m using high strength aluminium alloy.

It is the indigenous replacement to sniper rifles being imported from Finland, Italy and other countries.

The list also has the Upgraded Commanders Thermal Imager-cum-Day sight for T-90 tanks which is jointly developed by the Opto Electronics Factory, Dehradun and IRDE for the Indian Army.

It has a range of maximum detection of 8,000 meters at night.

It will also be retrofitted in T-90 Tanks already in service and will lead to substantial foreign exchange savings.



IN BRIEF

Saudi King rests after surgery

Riyadh: Saudi Arabia's King Salman arrived at a planned Red Sea megacity to "rest and recuperate", state media said Thursday, after the 84-year-old ruler underwent surgery to remove his gall bladder. The kingdom has sought to quell speculation over the health of the ageing monarch, who has ruled the top oil exporter and the Arab world's biggest economy since 2015. "The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman arrived in NEOM, where he will spend some time to rest and recuperate," the official Saudi Press Agency said in a brief statement.

US: Iran forces board ship

Dubai: Iranian forces boarded a tanker in international waters in the Gulf of Oman, using a helicopter and two ships to take over the vessel, US officials said. They also posted eerie grainy black-and-white footage of the helicopter hovering low over the vessel and special forces personnel fast-roping onto the deck. "Today in international waters, Iranian forces, including two ships and an Iranian 'Sea King' helicopter, overtook and boarded a ship called the 'Willa'," the US Central Command said in a tweet on Wednesday. A US defence official said the Iranians released the vessel, a Liberian-flagged oil and chemicals tanker, after holding it for four to five hours. It occurred in international waters of the Gulf of Oman, 32 kilometres off the coast of the United Arab Emirates.

Israel halts Gaza fuel supply

Gaza City: Israel announced Thursday it was halting the "import of fuel into the Gaza Strip", the latest punitive measure over a wave of airborne fire bombs from the Palestinian territory. The defence ministry announcement came hours after Israeli jets and tanks hit targets affiliated with Hamas, the enclave's Islamist rulers. No casualties were reported. The latest round of hostilities has seen firebombs attached to bunches of balloons floating into Israel, setting scrubland ablaze. Sometimes kites are used in the makeshift attacks. In response, Israel has closed a goods crossing with Gaza and slashed the territory's permitted coastal fishing zone. The fuel sanction was "in light of the continued launching of incendiary balloons from the Strip toward the territory of the State of Israel and of the undermining of security stability", the defence ministry said.

LEBANON NOD TO EMERGENCY POWERS

Beirut, Aug. 13: Lebanon's parliament on Thursday approved a two-week state of emergency imposed by the government after last week's deadly port explosion that gives it legal authority to suppress resurgent protests.

Calls had circulated on social media networks for protesters to prevent lawmakers from entering the session — the first since the August 4 blast that ravaged swathes of the capital. But turnout was too low on Thursday morning, ahead of official visits by French Defence Minister Florence Parly and David Hale, the top career diplomat at the US State Department. Security forces outnumbered the dozen or so demonstrators who had gathered on a street near parliament.

Demonstrators tried to heckle tinted vehicles dashing to the debate but they could not stop it reaching a quorum.

The colossal explosion that killed 171 people and wounded at least 6,500 others has rekindled calls for the ouster of Lebanon's decades-old political elite, many of whom are former warlords from the 1975-1990 civil war.

There has been widespread anger against a political leadership which allowed a large shipment of hazardous ammonium nitrate fertiliser to rot for years in a port warehouse despite repeated safety warnings.

An AFP investigation found that up until the day before the deadly blast, officials had exchanged warnings over the cargo, but did nothing despite experts' fears it could cause a major conflagration.

As he presented his government's resignation on Monday, Prime Minister Hassan Diab blamed the blast on decades of corruption and official mismanagement.

Biden, Harris vow to rebuild US

V-P nominee says citizens crying out to overcome pandemic, racial bias, poor economy

Wilmington, United States, Aug. 13: Joe Biden and Kamala Harris launched their joint White House bid Wednesday, with the newly minted vice-presidential nominee saying Americans are "crying out for leadership" to overcome the triple crisis of a pandemic, racial injustice and a ravaged economy.

Making their first appearance as running mates, before a small crowd of reporters and staffers at a Delaware high school closed to the public due to coronavirus concerns, the Democratic duo vowed to end Donald Trump's presidency and, in Biden's words, "rebuild this country". "Everything we care about," said Harris. "It's all on the line."

A formidable 55-year-old US senator from California and a daughter of immigrants, Harris has already made history as the first woman of colour tapped for a major party presidential ticket.

Describing a country at the crossroads, she left little doubt of her determination to go on the attack, saying Trump "just isn't up for the job" and has left the nation "in tatters".

"America is crying out for leadership, yet we have a president who cares more about himself than the people who elected him," said Harris.

Despite the awkwardly intimate setting, a far cry from the typical campaign rollout featuring an audience of thousands, Harris appeared telegenic and confident in her first speech as vice-presidential nominee — for which she and Biden both arrived wearing facemasks.

"The case against Donald Trump and Mike Pence is open and shut," said the former California attorney general as she assailed the president's "failures of

leadership" on containing the deadly pandemic and an economy hobbled by measures to fight the contagion. The daughter of Indian and Jamaican immigrants to the United States sought to tap into the nationwide upheaval over police violence and racial disparities.

"We're experiencing a moral reckoning with racism and systemic injustice that has brought a new coalition of conscience to the streets of our country demanding change," she said. For Biden — who leads Trump in most national polls and in swing states like Florida and Wisconsin despite conducting the campaign mostly from his Wilmington, Delaware home — his V-P reveal marks a crucial moment as he aims to build a broad coalition of voters to defeat Trump.

Biden spoke of why he chose Harris as his partner, stressing she was a tough and experienced legislator who is "ready to do this job on Day 1".

And he said that Harris' story as the child of immigrants and a woman of colour who fought her way to the top ranks of US legal and political circles would inspire the country.

"Her story's America's story," Biden said. "She's worked hard (and) she's never backed down from a challenge."

He also laced his remarks with optimism about the future, promising that a Biden-Harris administration will do what it takes to "turn the corner on this pandemic".

The event capped a 24-hour flurry since Biden's running mate announcement, with Biden saying they raised an impressive \$26 million during the period, the campaign's one-day record.

— AFP



Democratic presidential nominee and former US Vice-President Joe Biden along with vice-presidential running mate and US California Senator Kamala Harris, participate in a virtual grassroots fundraiser at the Hotel du Pont in Wilmington, Delaware on Wednesday.

— AFP

Israel ties could ease Obama-era tensions

Jerusalem, Aug. 13: During Joe Biden's first trip to Israel in 1973, he met prime minister Golda Meir, who chain-smoked as she detailed regional security threats days before the Yom Kippur War.

Biden, a newly elected US senator at the time, later described that meeting as "one of the most consequential" of his life.

In the more than four decades since, his career has been marked by a staunch defence of Israel, especially in its handling of the Palestinian conflict.

Biden, set to become the Democratic Party's presidential nominee next week, will face in Donald Trump a president whom Prime

Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has described as Israel's best friend to ever sit in the White House.

The warm ties contrast with Netanyahu's acrimonious relationship with Biden's old boss, former president Barack Obama. But some experts say a Biden win would be welcomed across Israel's political and military establishment — not just by Netanyahu's rivals on the left.

Biden has long been a vocal supporter of the Jewish state, declaring in a 2015 speech that the US must uphold its "sacred promise to protect the homeland of the Jewish people". Kamala Harris, Biden's vice-presidential

nominee, is also regarded as a staunch backer of the Jewish state.

After hosting a delegation from the main pro-Israel lobby AIPAC in her office in California last year, she wrote on Twitter of the "need for a strong US-Israel alliance, the right of Israel to defend itself, and my commitment to combat anti-Semitism in our country and around the world".

A strong commitment to defending Israel is key to winning the trust of Israeli leaders, perpetually sensitive to international criticism. "We like people who love us," said Nadav Tamir, a former diplomat and foreign policy advisor

to president Shimon Peres. "There is no doubt Biden is a friend who has very strong emotions for Israel," he said.

Experts suggested Biden could also restore the traditional American role of interlocutor between Israel and the Palestinians.

The Palestinian Authority has cut ties with Trump, accusing him of egregious bias towards Israel.

Biden "will do much better than Trump on the real issues because he understands that the Israel-Palestinian issue is not a zero-sum game," Tamir said.

Biden served in an Obama administration that often clashed with Israel.

— AFP

Miandad: Will challenge Imran Khan in politics



Imran Khan

ARMY CHIEF TO PLACATE SAUDI ARABIA

SHAFQAT ALI | DC ISLAMABAD, AUG. 13

Pakistan army chief Qamar Javed Bajwa will visit Saudi Arabia this weekend in a bid to remove misunderstandings as financial support for Islamabad hangs in the balance.

Pakistan has long pressed the Saudi-led Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC) to convene a high-level meeting to highlight alleged Indian violations in Kashmir. But the OIC has only held low-level meetings so far.

"If you cannot convene it, then I'll be compelled to ask Prime Minister Imran Khan to call a meeting of the Islamic countries that are ready to stand with us on the issue of Kashmir and support the oppressed Kashmiris," Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi said last week.

Last year, Islamabad had pulled out of a Muslim-majority countries forum at the last minute on insistence by Riyadh, which saw the gathering as an attempt to challenge its leadership of the OIC. Qureshi's remarks have revived Riyadh's anger.

Saudi Arabia had already made Pakistan pay back \$1 billion two weeks ago, forcing it to borrow from another close ally China.

the treatment of former captain Sarfaraz Ahmed was not right. Miandad, a member of the 1992 World Cup-winning side, was the backbone of the then Pakistan team and is remembered for many memorable innings.

— PTI

Covid-19 spreads: NZ mulls curb extension

Wellington, Aug. 13: New Zealand health officials said Wednesday a Covid-19 cluster in Auckland had grown, raising the prospect a lockdown imposed on the country's biggest city after the virus returned will be extended.

National health director-general Ashley Bloomfield said a high school student in Auckland had tested positive, taking the number of confirmed infections to five, with another four probable cases.

"This is someone who was a close contact with one of our existing confirmed cases," Bloomfield told TVNZ.

Health authorities rushed to implement a lockdown in the country's largest city after testing revealed four family members had contracted the virus from an unknown source.

It ended New Zealand's much envied run of 102 days without community transmission, and resulted

NOBELIST SVETLANA TELLS BELARUS PRESIDENT TO LEAVE

Minsk, Aug 13: Belarusian Nobel prize-winning writer Svetlana Alexievich has condemned police violence against protesters in her country and urged President Alexander Lukashenko to go peacefully.

The 72-year-old author won the 2015 Nobel literature prize for her work chronicling the horrors of war and life under the repressive Soviet regime, including the 1986 Chernobyl disaster.

In her first public reaction to the protests that have broken out across Belarus over Sunday's disputed presidential election, the writer told Radio Liberty/Radio Free Europe that Lukashenko should step down peacefully to prevent a bloody civil war.

"Leave before it's too late, before you've thrown people into a terrible abyss, into the abyss of civil war," she appealed to Lukashenko.

— Agencies

US BRACES FOR EVICTIONS CRISIS

New York, Aug 13: Activists and relief groups in the United States are scrambling to head off a monumental wave of evictions nationwide, as the coronavirus crisis leaves tens of millions at risk of homelessness.

The jobs catastrophe sparked by the global health emergency and the tepid rebound in the world's largest economy have left Americans struggling to pay rent and vulnerable to eviction. Hopes for relief in the form of a fresh aid

package from Washington were dashed as partisan bickering scuppered the latest negotiations.

The housing crisis is "already a tsunami," said Bambie Hayes-Brown of Georgia Advancing Communities Together, a coalition of nonprofit housing and community development groups.

"We got some funding from the United Way and we went through it so fast. We were just inundated," said Mariatou Diallo, who lives in New York. — AFP

ed in a three-day stay-at-home order in Auckland which ends at midnight Friday. Bloomfield said it was "almost certain" more cases would emerge, and teams of health workers were racing to find the

cluster's origin.

"We want to find out how large it is as soon as possible, so we've been testing all close contacts, casual contacts, workplace, family related," he said.

— AFP

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DECCAN Chronicle

14 AUGUST 2020

Kamala Harris: A smart choice by US Democrats

The Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden's pick of running mate in Kamala Harris is historic in more ways than one. Her selection will resonate with a large section of American voters even as it spotlights the growing importance of voters among people of colour (PoC), more so of PoC women who have fought for decades since the suffragette revolution for their voices to be heard and their ambitions given equal opportunity. Her Afro-Caribbean-Jamaican and Indian parentage brings to the centre stage once again the immigrants' American dream and middle class aspirations that have been threatened in four years of Trump and at a time when the world is in the grip of a raging pandemic.

The USA of today is far more of a racial and cultural melting pot than it was when a Chennai woman broke her Indian shackles and set forth to study in the USA back in 1958 and her daughter now represents eloquently the fight for equal opportunity and equal justice. The Democratic ticket needed this burst of energy to back the 78-year-old Joe Biden. Whether he is to be viewed as a transitional leader or not, what Democrats have right now is a Vice-President candidate acceptable to a large section of the population besides the fundraising ability of a prosperous West Coast Senator who is married to a Jew. Far from damaging the handy lead pollsters are giving Biden, she may add value.

Biden's choice predictably ignited the misogynistic, sexist Donald Trump into offending nearly half the US population by bringing back affront to women's dignity in his attitude that is more suited to the Middle Ages. It is at an inflection point in contemporary history of civil strife in the time of the tragic George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter movement that his death inspired bringing Harris into the limelight and making her presence on the ticket a smart choice indeed. Furthermore, when the Donald Trump administration is seen to be not only ineffective in handling the Covid-19 pandemic but also deliberately and cynically contemptuous of a threat that has killed more than 1.66 lakh Americans, she brings strength with substance and not just symbolism to a Democratic ticket promising at least the much-needed empathy to a difficult situation.

The far right may have reason to believe Harris, brought up more as a PoC kid singing in the church choir than a Tamil Brahmin (and yet mindful of her mother's legacy) is too far to the left while the liberals believe she is, like Biden, too much at the centre. The Chinese are already annoyed by her brave and moral stand on the discriminatory treatment of Uighur Muslims. Harris' strong views on CAA, Kashmir and other home policies may be seen as abrasive by official India. Most Indian-Americans would, however, sense a chance to be more of a mainstream community in their adopted country with their votes likely to be valuable in battleground states. An antidote to the most divisive president in modern history is bound to come with ideologies and philosophies that are principled and it is not only in her animus towards Trump that a politician such as this must be seen as a champion to fight the forces in these conflicted times.

Show no mercy to rioters

The vandalism that followed an inflammatory Facebook post and the police firing which cost the lives of three youngsters in Bengaluru on Wednesday point to the urgent need for the authorities to be on a state of high alert against attempts to flame communal passions and throw life into disarray. Hurting religious sentiments is a punishable offence in India. So, anyone who does it knows about its implications, and as such, must be brought to book. The same logic works for believers, too, and they must know that the legal system is capable of dealing with deliberate attempts to denigrate religious figures.

The Bengaluru rioters deserve no mercy as they torched the home of a legislator, set fire to vehicles and even attacked a police station. The Social Democratic Party of India, which now stands accused of having a role in the violence, has a history of portraying themselves as the champions of the Muslim cause in India while pursuing an often-counterproductive path of violence to achieve their ends. Such forces must be made to understand that rule of law prevails in the country.

The BJP, which is ruling the state, was quick to condemn the riot and blame "appeasement" saying the Congress was silent about the vandalism though a Congress legislator, who is a Dalit, was at the receiving end. The Opposition party must respond to the charge and take an unequivocal stand against communal elements in society.

Bengaluru police stopped the violence from turning into a communal riot. However, the assertions by the ministers and senior police officials that the violence was planned beg the question why the police did not take preventive action. They must do more and prevent its recurrence. This country can ill-afford more calamities, manmade or otherwise.

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Subhani

Why Ayodhya was not like battle for freedom



Anand K. Sahay

Far & Near

We are limping toward our 73rd Independence Day with little enthusiasm. The mood cannot but be downbeat after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's morale eroding recent Ayodhya foray.

The most narrow-minded Hindu, who (even if inadvertently) takes his cue from an outfit with a militaristic anti-democracy mindset that espouses antagonism toward particular religions, and weakens the core concepts of modern Indian nationhood rooted in our freedom movement, may have been charged up that day. But even such people have to think of their home fires, the pandemic at the door, and the push of expansionist China's army inside our borders.

Their evidently pseudo "Ram bhakti", or devotion to the exalted ideals exemplified by Lord Ram, has no basis in religion. Its fundamentals lie elsewhere — in the corrosive alleyways of politics that seek religion-based domination of society and the political space — as in Pakistan, for instance, and can without exaggeration be called non-sacred devotion to the divine.

The entire Ayodhya temple project has, in fact, been a massive enterprise in the politics of bigotry in which religion is whipped up as a mobilising tool with the aim of acquiring and retaining power on premises that are unconnected with the demands of everyday life. And this is why, eventually, it is likely to prove of little avail against such powerful counter-urges as have been noted above — those of pressing concerns of the country.

Even if an ideologically-crazed and politically greedy Prime Minister is

not ready at present to comprehend this, he is likely to be brought down to earth when ordinary Indians begin to feel the pinch and hold him and his buddies to account.

A (probably modified) Turkish proverb runs thus: "The forest was shrinking but the trees kept voting for the axe, for the axe was clever and convinced the trees that because his handle was made of wood he was one of them." In this the metaphor of our present politics (and indeed that of Turkey) becomes clear as day.

Just 10 days before India was to mark the 73rd anniversary of its freedom from colonial rule — and of attaining in that process the composite identity of a common nationhood, which is an overarching canopy across our complex identities of religion, caste, language and ethnicity — the Prime Minister struck at the fundamental precepts enshrined in the idea of Indian independence. These had even served as a model to many countries as the process of decolonisation unfolded across the world.

It was careful choreography that the temple-building trust (which seems an extension of the PMO) chose August 5 — the very date last year on which the constitutionally-ordained autonomy of Jammu and Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority state, was snatched away by the Centre by adopting illegal and irregular ways that have been challenged in the Supreme Court, and the region brought under militarised suppression with not even a semblance of democratic governance — to lay the foundation of the Ram temple in Ayodhya.

The Kashmir-to-Ayodhya common template was clearly intend-

ed to overtly demonstrate the suppression of Muslim aspirations in India by the Indian State under the RSS-BJP aegis, although Muslims were equal participants in the freedom movement.

The RSS-BJP cohorts had declared from the start that the temple of their dreams would be erected at the exact spot where the Babri Masjid, a 16th century mosque of no particular significance (the Supreme Court rejected the propaganda that the mosque was on built on the ruins of a temple), had stood and was violently pulled down on December 6, 1992.

This was ruthlessly ensured through an illogical and justifiably condemned decree of the Supreme Court in November last year. A judgment in favour of Ram Lalla (beloved Ram) would hardly have presented a problem since it is widely recognised now that many of democracy's characteristic institutions appear to have been all but superseded by the executive under the Narendra Modi government.

Mr Modi is known to bring communal mobs to their feet without breaking a sweat, and for full theatrical effect he seldom fails to appear in the attire of ancient Hindu sages as depicted in kitsch art. For him, it would have been quite enough to satisfy the faithful by just being around to lay the first symbolic brick for the construction of the temple in Ayodhya, no matter how constitutionally unseemly this is.

And yet, the PM thought it best to make a big deal about invoking the freedom movement, and giving the (patently false) impression that

building the temple was the second edition of the glorious struggle for independence, which is imprinted in the psyche of every Indian. Why did he do so?

The reason seems clear. He wanted to steal the emotional association every Indian has with the long-drawn freedom struggle for an act of violent bigotry at Ayodhya — arguably the most reprehensible in free India. Even if no one dared to inform him of this earlier, the Prime Minister may as well be made conscious that his August 5 speech in Ayodhya eviscerates the ideas that underlie the independence of India.

"The soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance," Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had said as the midnight hour struck proclaiming the emergence of India on the world stage as a new kind of free nation, one whose very concept had mesmerised the world on account of its perplexing diversity, plurality, and its ambition for democracy. But the present PM presses the delete button on such thoughts every single day. Yet, nothing bestows legitimacy like favourable allusions to the independence movement.

So, speaking from Ayodhya, Mr Modi engaged in yet another act of misappropriation by falsely linking the temple project with the freedom movement. He sought to portray the construction of the Ram temple as an act of "liberation". But we have been a free country for over 70 years, and no one in India feels enslaved except by caste, class, gender or communal oppression. That makes Mr Modi's "liberation theology" a grand deception.

Truth to tell, the PM has already made his Independence Day address on August 5, and it had little to do with the core values of India and the immediate concerns of all Indians. From the Red Fort on August 15, he can only give us a round of rituals and some more propaganda.

LETTERS

YSR CHEYUTHA

Financial assistance to poor women from all castes except OC will provide relief during this pandemic but productivity for this amount will be zero. Mere monetary help will lead to nothing. It should be linked to skill development activities in any business with government. Otherwise public will wait for the next installment.

V. Chidambar Reddy
Kurnool

WILD GOOSE CHASE

The BJP aspiring to capture power in 2024 will be a wild goose chase, irrespective of whom it allies with. Its nonchalant attitude towards AP is well-known. It needs to convince people that it is genuinely interested in their well-being and progress.

D.S.P. Rao
Kakinada

VIZAG TO KURNOOL

For CM N. Chandrababu Naidu is trying to reason how people from Kurnool, etc., will travel to Vizag if it becomes the capital. Well, people of Vizag could travel to Chennai, Kurnool and Hyderabad in the last 74 years when they were capitals. Has the distance doubled now?

K. Suryanarayana
Visakhapatnam

KAMALA HARRIS

It was a clever move by Joe Biden and the Democratic Party to choose Kamala Harris as his running mate. The California senator can brighten the chances at hustings with her unique credentials. Trump is known for his aversion towards immigrants, his rival duo can take advantage of this.

Dr D.V.G. Sankararao
Vizianagaram

Grabbing won't help landless, says PM

NEW DELHI, Aug. 13 Prime Minister Indira Gandhi today strongly disapproved the landgrab movement being carried on by some Opposition parties and said it was not the right method to solve the problem of the landless.

Replying to a three-day debate on the Fourt Plan in the Rajya Sabha,

Mrs. Gandhi said the movement would not do any social justice in the long run because it was "based on the feeling of hatred, envy and even promotion of acquisitive spirit."

The Prime Minister emphasised that the land problem could be solved by persuasion and peaceful means.

Dilip Cherian
Dilli Ka Babu



Cops slug it out to the beat of Bihar poll drum

This looks like a nightmarish end to federalism as we know it. Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput's tragic death has turned into deplorable political one-upmanship. The unprecedented face-off between Bihar Police and Mumbai Police on the investigation of the suicide has far reaching consequences. Many experts are of the view that sending a team of Bihar Police personnel to Mumbai after Rajput's father filed a FIR demanding a probe into the "crime" was out of step. In India, police is a state subject and crimes are investigated by the police depending on where they occurred. If states start to interfere and go after crimes committed against their citizens in another state, we have a recipe for disaster. With the further likely addition of the CBI into this pot, the stew has grown thicker.

Had some worthies shown some prudence, we wouldn't have had to see the DGPs of the two states sling-

ing at each other on the TV news. TV newsrooms or Twitter are not the place to conduct a serious investigation into the death of a popular actor.

The case has grown much bigger with the respective state governments getting into the ring. The Bihar CM has given his nod for a CBI probe, bowing to pressure from the actor's family, while Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray refusing to give in to the demand. Both chief ministers have decided to stick by their police chiefs. The Enforcement Directorate has also opened an investigation into alleged money laundering. It is pretty much a no-holds-barred affair now, teetering dangerously on the edge of turning into a farce.

None of this would have merited so much focus and energy were it not for the Assembly elections in Bihar, due in October. The Bihari "sentiment" seems to have taken the frontstage, a thinly veiled euphemism for votes. The politicisa-

tion of the police is one of those vexing issues that no amount of reform has been able to deal with. The recent Vikas Dubey encounter and the police custodial deaths in Sathankulam town near Thoothukudi in Tamil Nadu are already forgotten. The Sushant case will likely drag until it is no longer convenient. Sadly, if this lack of restraint and willful flouting of procedure by the police persists, it will end badly for the country.

CONTROVERSIAL NITI AAYOG EXIT

The repatriation of Niti Aayog adviser Alok Kumar to his cadre state Uttar Pradesh has set tongues wagging. Barely less than two months ago, the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet had given Mr Kumar a one-year extension of tenure at the think tank. He was relieved on July 31.

The government's U-turn has left many observers bemused. Some say that since the UP government had

agreed to an extension for Mr Kumar in May, it is unlikely that it would recall the 1993-batch IAS officer. This then implies that the Centre's U-turn may have been caused by some rift among the higher-ups in Delhi over the babu. The buzz is that there are some differences between the Niti Aayog and the health ministry over policy matters, and possibly Mr Kumar was in the middle of the spat. But that may not be the only reason, certainly not enough to warrant this U-turn. After all, Mr Kumar was reportedly handling the majority of the key assignments at the nation's premier think tank. We may never know.

However, some observers believe that Mr Kumar's unexpected exit from Niti Aayog will cast a cloud over the empanelment of 1983 batch IAS officers for additional secretary-level posts at the Centre.

ROOPA K'TAKA HOME SECY

Roopa D. Moudgil is the first woman IPS officer of Karnataka and has

now become the first woman police officer to be appointed the state's home secretary. The decision is unpalatable for IAS officers who might have been eyeing the post for themselves. It's not often that an IPS officer is appointed to a post traditionally associated with the IAS. The violence this week in Bangalore may, however, quieten naysayers.

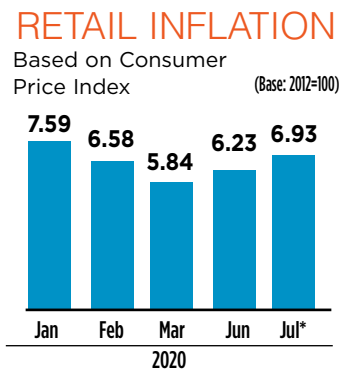
This posting comes amid a major rejig that has been happening within the government. Thirteen senior IPS officers were given different posts, and 19 ranked officers were transferred. This 2000-batch IPS officer, however, has many firsts to her credit, having become well-known for taking up cases that involve either senior IPS officers or politicians, most recently, late ADADMK chief Jayalalitha's aide Sasikala.

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quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	38,310.49	-0.15
Nifty 50	11,300.45	-0.07
S&P 500*	3,385.05	0.14
Dollar (₹)	74.84	0.00
Pound Sterling (₹)	97.87	-0.12
Euro (₹)	88.52	0.62
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	53,132.11	0.02
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	45.02	-0.41
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.895	0.011
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.685	-0.001

* As of 9:30 PM IST



SIP inflows hit 22-month low in July at ₹7,830 cr



Investments in mutual funds through systematic investment plans (SIPs) hit a 22-month low of Rs 7,831 crore in July amidst market volatility. This was the lowest level since September 2018, when investment through this route stood at Rs 7,727 crore. Inflows through SIP have slowed down in the past four months. Investment in June 2020 dropped below Rs 8,000 crore for the first time since November 2018.

Cadila launches remdesivir at \$37 per vial

Zydus Cadila launched the cheapest generic version of Gilead Sciences' antiviral drug remdesivir in India to treat Covid-19 following reports of shortages at hospitals. Zydus has priced it at Rs 2,800 per 100mg vial. It will be sold under the brand name Remdac to government and private hospitals treating Covid-19 patients. Officials in some states had a few weeks ago complained of supply issues.

Mi India pledges 2,500 phones to support students

Chinese smartphone major Xiaomi said its arm MI India will distribute 2,500 handsets worth Rs 2 crore to support online education of children. "MI India distribution and retail came up with a fantastic idea. Together they will be contributing 2,500 smartphones to enable children most impacted by the pandemic to access quality education. In this endeavour we found the right partner Teach for India," COO Muralikrishnan B. said.



J&J ties up with Biological E for making Covid-19 vaccine in India

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, AUG. 13

Biological E. Limited, India's oldest biological products company, said on Thursday that it has tied up United States-based Johnson & Johnson to manufacture the latter's Covid-19 vaccine candidate in India.

"We are very pleased indeed to collaborate with an organisation like Johnson & Johnson. Given

the magnitude of the Covid-19 pandemic, our ability to mount an effective response will be predicated on the ability to supply the vaccine globally and in significant quantities. This is best achieved through collaboration," said Mahima Datla, the managing director of BE.

J&J is developing a vaccine candidate 'Ad26.COV2.S' for the coronavirus through its pharmaceutical arm Janssen

Pharmaceutica NV. The vaccine candidate is currently in phase 1/2a clinical trials.

The phase 1/2a study will involve more than 1,000 adults aged between 18 and 55. The study will also include testing the vaccine in people 65 and older. Human trials in the Netherlands, Spain, Germany and Japan will follow.

Johnson & Johnson chief scientific officer Paul

Our ability to mount an effective response (to Covid-19) will be predicated on the ability to supply the vaccine globally and in significant quantities

— Mahima Datla
MD, Biological E Limited



Stoffels had told a conference call last month that the company expects initial human results in September and phase 3

efficacy testing could start the same month itself. "The vaccine could be ready by early 2021," he said.

The tie-up with Biological E. would help J&J to ramp its manufacturing capabilities in India.

"We look forward to deploying our manufacturing infrastructure to support Johnson & Johnson's commitment to global access for its Covid-19 vaccine," said Narender Dev Mantena, director of BioE Holdings Inc., who heads BE's novel vaccine initiative.

According to the World Health Organisation data, people around the world are working on 42 vaccine candidates for the coronavirus, including two from India, which are at different stages of development.

"Six vaccine candidates are in phase-3 trials, two candidates in phase 2 trials. Ten vaccine candidates, including two being developed in India, are at phase 1/2," claims the WHO data as on August 10.

■ Investigation wing, TDS directorate to decide on surveys

Curtains on I-T raids at will

New Delhi, Aug 13: The income tax surveys to collect information for scrutiny assessment will be undertaken only by the investigation wing and the tax deducted at source (TDS) directorate with effect from Thursday, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) said.

In an order, the CBDT said officers in Directorate General of Income Tax (DGIT) (Investigation) and Principal Commissioner of I-T/Chief Commissioner of I-T (TDS) "only and exclusively" shall be the competent authority for approving survey actions with effect from August 13, 2020. "The survey action u/s 133A of the Act being an intrusive action, it is expected that the same should be carried out with utmost responsibility and accountability," the CBDT said, adding that with faceless assessment the department is moving towards minimal interface with taxpayers.

PM UNVEILS INCOME-TAX REFORMS

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 13

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday unveiled a "faceless" tax scrutiny and appeal system and urged people to pay their due taxes and contribute to nation-building. The Centre launched a new platform to ease the compliance burden and reward "honest taxpayers".

"The country's honest taxpayer plays a big role in nation-building. A faceless tax system will

give the taxpayer confidence on fairness and fearlessness," the PM said in a video address after rolling out the "Transparent Taxation: Honouring the Honest" platform in a big push for tax reforms.

The Prime Minister said a "faceless appeal facility" will be available to all citizens from September 25, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya's birth anniversary, and this will strengthen efforts to "reform and simplify our tax system". — PTI

Nangia Andersen LLP Partner Aravind Srivatsan said the previous regime allowed taxmen from inspector onwards, jurisdictional assessing officer to initiate the survey with prior approval of joint commissioner of income tax.

"In effect the powers of the assessment authorities which were exercised in the normal course will now have to be backed by credible evidence to seek such approval from now permitted higher authorities. This shows the govern-

States' sales tax receipts from fuel may go up by 9%

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, AUG. 13

The recovery trend in sales volumes and increase in excise duties will see sales tax receipts of states on petroleum products going up by 7 to 9 per cent this fiscal, despite the negative impact of the pandemic, finds Crisil. Firmer crude oil prices will also add to the increase in receipts.

If volumes rebound amidst increased central and state taxes and firmer crude oil prices, there could be a 7-9 per cent rise in sales tax receipts over last year to Rs 1.96 lakh crore, despite an expected 25 per cent fall in collections in the first quarter.

"The first quarter saw petrol and diesel sales volume plunging by a third because of the Covid-19 induced lockdown. But with the economy slowly unlocking and industrial and commercial activities clawing back, vehicular traffic has started to improve," said Manish Gupta, senior director of Crisil Ratings.

In April combined monthly volume of petrol and diesel sales, which account for 90 per cent of sales tax collections from petroleum products, were 43 per cent of the pre-Covid levels. This moved up to 85 per cent in June and is around 83 per cent in July. If economic activity rebounds to pre-pandemic levels by November, the annual volume decline may be restricted to 11-12 per cent this fiscal.

Further, the central excise duty and state sales tax rates of petrol and diesel were increased several times in the past few months. Between March and May weighted average diesel retail price had gone up by Rs 16 per litre. By July another Rs 2.8 per litre hike was also implemented.

An increase in excise duty increases the taxable value of petrol and diesel for the levy of state sales tax. This higher taxable value of the fuel is providing additional sales tax of Rs 3 per litre to states.

I-T Charter: Every taxpayer to be treated as honest & with courtesy

New Delhi, Aug 13: The tax department has committed to treat every taxpayer as honest, unless proven otherwise, and provide fair, courteous and reasonable treatment, according to the taxpayers' charter adopted on Thursday. The charter also expects taxpayers to pay taxes on time and be honest and compliant.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the platform 'Transparent Taxation Honoring the Honest' which provides for adoption of a taxpayers' charter, which defines the tax department's commitment and its expectation from the taxpayers.

The tax officers will now be committed to a 14-point charter, which includes

collecting "only the (tax) amount due" as per the law, while taxpayers would have to be "responsible" and fulfill six-point expectations of the I-T Department, including being honest and compliant.

The charter mandates the I-T Department to hold its "authorities accountable for their actions" and states that the department would provide fair, courteous, prompt and reasonable treatment as well as professional assistance to all taxpayers.

The officers shall treat taxpayers as honest "unless there is a reason to believe otherwise", it said.

The charter also bars the tax officers from disclosing taxpayer information unless authorised by law

and also respect privacy of taxpayer.

The department will have to periodically publish standards for service delivery and provide a fair system to resolve tax issues in a time-bound manner.

The charter also mandates the department to allow every taxpayer to choose an authorised representative of his choice and provide mechanism for lodging a complaint, and its prompt disposal.

The charter expects the taxpayers to honestly disclose full information and "fulfill his compliance obligations". Also, the taxpayer is expected to keep accurate records and know what information and submissions are made by his authorised representative.

PAYTM STARTS TRADING PLATFORM

FC BUREAU
MUMBAI, AUG. 13

Fintech firm Paytm announced the launch of stock trading on its online investment & wealth management platform Paytm Money with lower brokerage charges than currently offered by traditional and discount brokers. Cash delivery trades are free and intraday trades are charged at Rs 10 only, the firm said.



fraudulent and deceitful manner and their excess OI positions created a false or misleading appearance in the market.

The SCN further said that Ruchi Global and Ruchi Soya Industries and National Steel & Agro Industries belonged to one distinct group, while Secunderabad Oils and UKS Oils belonged to another distinct group.

"In the absence of any material to show that these two distinct groups were connected to each other and traded in the castor seeds contracts in a concerted manner to manipulate the market, it is not correct to allege that the five noticees together cornered the derivative market in castor seeds contract...in violation of PFUTP Regulations, 2003 and at the expense of other clients," Sebi said. —PTI

NBFC bond sales jump to levels before 2018 crisis

DIVYA PATIL
AUG. 13

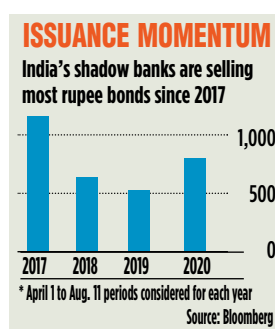
Indian shadow lenders are selling the most local-currency bonds since before a financial crisis engulfed the sector two years ago, in a sign that record stimulus is easing their fundraising burden.

The financiers have raised Rs 81,300 crore (\$10.9 billion) through rupee notes since April 1, making it the best start to a financial year since 2017. Offerings from non-bank firms had declined in 2018 and 2019 as at least three shadow lenders defaulted on their repayments, battering investor demand for the sector's debt.

More cash for shadow banks is good news for the economy, which relies on these firms to provide financing to everyone from tailors to business giants. Non-bank lending is crucial in supporting Asia's third-largest economy, which is forecast to contract for the first time in four decades this year due to fallout from the pandemic.

To help non-bank financiers counter the economic impact of the outbreak, the government in May announced a Rs 30,000 crore credit line for these financiers, and said it will fully guarantee investment-grade securities issued under this plan.

To further assist lower-rated shadow banks, the administration agreed to



also provide a partial guarantee to debt rated AA and below, injecting another Rs 45,000 crore. The central bank, meanwhile, funded banks' purchases of bonds issued by these lenders to the tune of Rs 12,850 crore.

But challenges remain, with signs investor demand for the debt is uneven. It's largely banks, which have to implement the economic stimulus steps, that are buying notes sold by shadow lenders. Other key players in the local credit market, such as mutual funds, halved their holdings of the bonds in the two-year period to June.

Moody's Investors Service warned in June that the stress among these lenders may be deeper and broader than it thought and S&P Global Ratings cut credit scores of several such firms citing liquidity risks.

The financiers are at least benefiting from lower borrowing costs as a result of the stimulus package. — Bloomberg

BROADER MARKET OUTPERFORMS SENSEX, NIFTY

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, AUG. 13

A broader market rally led to outperformance by medium and small sized companies in the stock market while the Sensex and Nifty-50 indices closed in the red for the second day, compared to 1.5 to over 2 per cent gains registered by the mid-cap indices.

The Sensex closed 0.15 per cent or 59.14 points lower and Nifty-50 ended down 0.07 per cent, or by 7.95 points.

The Nifty Midcap-50 Index rose 2.20 per cent and the Nifty Midcap-100 gained 1.57 per cent while the BSE Midcap Index gained 1.59 per cent and the BSE Smallcap gained 0.76 per cent.

Domestic institutions remained net sellers by Rs 763.54 crore while the foreign portfolio investors were net buyers by Rs 416.28 crore.

Some big midcap gainers on NSE included Bharat Forge (15.67 per cent), Ashok Leyland (14.46 per cent), BHEL (8.18 per cent), Cholamandalam Investment & Finance (8.07 per cent), Tata Power (5.67 per cent).

Sameet Chavan of Angel Broking said, the Nifty-50 is clearly struggling to surpass the 11350-11400 hurdle.

Maruti Alto crosses 40 L sales milestone

MICHAEL GONSALVES
PUNE, AUG 13

Maruti Suzuki, India's biggest car maker, on Thursday said its entry level small car Alto has crossed the cumulative sales milestone of 40 lakh units in the fiercely competitive India market.

Launched in September 2000, Alto has been the most selling car for 16 consecutive years in the country. "Alto is the preferred

choice of Indian car buyers with 76 per cent of Alto customers choosing it as their first car," the company, which sells one car out of the two bought in the country, said.

Shashank Srivastava, executive director at Maruti Suzuki India, said Alto has been ranked as the No 1 for 16 years in a row. "We are immensely proud to announce another remarkable milestone of 40 lakh cumulative sales. This has become a record," he said.



AMAZE CLOCKS 4 LAKH SALES

Pune, Aug. 13: Honda on Thursday said its popular family sub-compact sedan Honda Amaze has cumulatively sold 4 lakh units since its first introduction in the country in 2013.

The Amaze, now in its second generation, is currently Honda's largest selling model in India.

—Michael Gonsalves



SHORT TAKES

INOX to sponsor India at Olympics

New Delhi: The INOX group will be replacing Chinese sporting brand Li-Ning as the official sponsor of the Indian team for the rescheduled Tokyo Olympics, the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) announced on Thursday.

The Tokyo Olympics was rescheduled to next year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It will be held from July 23 to August 8 in 2021. As part of the partnership the Group will also support team's promotions through its entertainment company — INOX Leisure Limited, which owns a chain of multiplexes. IOA secretary general Rajeev Mehta said, "We are happy to announce this partnership with INOX Group which will be beneficial for all our athletes and the organisation. I would like to thank INOX Group and Mr Jain for showing their support for Team India, even under the current circumstances."

INOX Group has earlier supported various sporting events, teams and leagues in table Tennis, football, badminton, running, basketball and cricket, and building awareness among masses through effective promotional initiatives.

— PTI

Anderson puts England on top

Southampton: James Anderson returned to form with a double strike against Pakistan on Thursday as the England great moved closer to becoming the first paceman to take 600 Test wickets.

Pakistan were 85-2 at Tea on a rain-interrupted first day of the second Test at Hampshire's Ageas Bowl.

Anderson had figures of 2-24 in 12 overs, having come into this match, having taken just six wickets in three previous Tests this season at an expensive average of over 41.

Abid Ali, dropped twice in the slips, was 49 not out.

By his own admission, Anderson had not been at his best with a match haul of 1-67 during England's three-wicket win in the first Test at his Old Trafford home ground last week.

In humid conditions conducive to Anderson's bowling, the 38-year-old needed just eight balls to strike and have Shan Masood, fresh from his Test-best 156 last week, lbw for one with an inswinger to the left-hander. — AFP

Brief Scores (at Tea): Pakistan 85/2 in 33.5 overs (Abid Ali 49 n.o., Babar Azam 7 n.o., James Anderson 2/28) vs England.

Regd. No. AP/VJA/41/24/2000.

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Billions & 25 years

Later PSG make Champions league semis

Lisbon, Aug. 13: After years of failing to live up to their billing in Europe, Paris Saint-Germain are within 90 minutes of the Champions League final thanks to their dramatic win over Atalanta on Wednesday, and coach Thomas Tuchel now knows "everything is possible" for his team.

PSG were on the verge of another disappointing Champions League exit as they trailed Atalanta 1-0 into the 90th minute in Lisbon, where all the lat-

ter stages are being played after the long coronavirus shutdown.

But Mario Pasalic's 27th-minute strike for the Italians was finally cancelled out by Marquinhos, who scrambled in a last-gasp leveller.

Then, three minutes into injury time, Kylian Mbappe set up fellow substitute Eric Choupo-Moting to convert the clinching goal.

"The goals came very late but we deserved the victory. We never stopped

believing or attacking," said Tuchel, whose team will face Atletico Madrid or RB Leipzig in the semi-final, the club's first since 1995.

"The boys who came off the bench had a big impact. We deserved it, we made our own luck," the PSG coach added.

The money ploughed into the French champions by their Qatari owners has increased the pressure on PSG to deliver and losing to Atalanta would have invited more criti-

cism of a club whose recent record in such games has been poor.

After all, Atalanta's entire wage bill is believed to be equivalent to what PSG pay Neymar per year (about 36 million euros, or \$42.5m).

This is the club's first semifinal since 1995 and the first since they were taken over by Qatari owners, who pumped in money for the elusive Champions League trophy.

— AFP

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Neymar (left) and his Paris Saint-Germain teammate Kylian Mbappe celebrate after Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting scored PSG's second goal during their UEFA Champions League quarterfinal match at the Luz Stadium in Lisbon on Thursday. PSG won 2-1.

3 decades on, Sachin recalls first ton

New Delhi, Aug. 13: Test-saving hundreds have become extinct now but Sachin Tendulkar carved out one such innings exactly 30 years ago, the seeds of which were sown during one afternoon in Sialkot, eight months prior to that gloomy Manchester day.

It was on August 14, 1990, that Tendulkar scored the first of his 100 international centuries, a majestic 119 not out on a fifth day track to save the game for India.

Asked about that special first, he said it seemed like yesterday.

"I scored that 100 on August 14 and next day was our Independence Day, so it was special. The

headline was different and that hundred at least kept the series alive till next Test at the Oval," Tendulkar said on the eve of the 30th anniversary of his first ton.

So what exactly was the feeling, apart from the pure joy of achieving the milestone? "The art of saving a Test match was a new experience for me," Tendulkar said but added he knew he could save a game when he batted with a "bloodied nose" and a blood-soaked jersey after being hit by Waqar Younis.

"In Sialkot where I got hit and scored 57, we saved that Test match, too, from 38 for 4. Waqar's bouncer and playing

I scored that 100 (vs England) on August 14 and next day was our Independence Day, so it was special. The headline was different and that hundred at least kept the series alive till next Test at The Oval.

— SACHIN TENDULKAR on his Test saving century in Manchester

through pain defined me. After those kind of hits you are either stronger or you are nowhere to be seen," he said.

As scary as it may seem now, Tendulkar, in the first innings of that

Manchester match, was hit on the back of the head by one of the fastest pacers in the world back then, Devon Malcolm.

"Devon and Waqar, during that phase, were easily the two quickest bowlers in the world bowling at 90 mph.

"Yes, I didn't call the physio as I didn't want to show them that I am in pain. My pain threshold was fairly high. It's okay to get hit. So what. You don't show your pain to the bowler," the legend said.

Coach Ramakant Achrekar prepared him for all sorts of pain by making him play on the same pitch for 25 days straight at the Shivaji

Park Gymkhana. "I was used to getting hit on my body from my days in Shivaji Park as Achrekar sir would make us play on that and it would have enormous wear and tear," Tendulkar said.

"The same pitch we played a match on one day and next day we were back for nets. So balls would just jump off length and hit my nose.

"In fact, I would just throw the ball up and take it on my body to absorb the pain," the 47-year-old added.

Back to the match, the shots that he remembers are the exquisite backfoot cover drives off Chris Lewis deliveries that darted in.

— PTI

Sikki, physio test Covid-19 positive

Gopi academy is shut for sanitisation as Coronavirus strikes Games camp

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, AUG. 13

Barley a week after probables and Olympics bound shuttlers returned to courts at the Pullala Gopichand Badminton Academy N. Sikki Reddy and physiotherapist Kiran George have tested positive for Covid-19 at the ongoing national camp in Hyderabad on Thursday.

Sikki and Kiran, who have been attending the national camp at the academy, are both asymptomatic.

They had undergone the Sports Authority of India's mandatory Covid-19 test for players, coaches and support staff before the start of training on August 7 at the facility.

With Sikki and Kiran being tested positive for the virus, the Gopichand Academy has been closed for sanitisation, SAI said on Thursday.

"SAI's mandatory Covid-19 test was given to all athletes, coaches, support staff and administrative staff at the badminton national camp, and two campers have tested positive for Covid-19," Gopi said.

"All necessary precautions as per protocol are being taken so that players can come back for training safely and as soon as possible," he added.

Both Sikki and Kiran are from Hyderabad and have



N. Sikki Reddy

been attending the camp from their homes. All primary contacts of Sikki and Kiran are undergoing the RT PCR test again.

The badminton camp was allowed by SAI for eight Olympic hopefuls, including Rio Games silver-medallist and world champion P. V. Sindhu, following the approval from the Telangana government on August 1.

Sikki was seen training with three Indonesian doubles coaches — Namrih Suroto, Agus Dwi Santoso and Miftah — besides two sparring partners from that country on August 7.

She was pictured on the first day of training where all of them could be seen along with another physio Johnson Solomon and the Indonesians who also trained with world champion Sindhu and world championships bronze medallist B. Sai Praneeth.

NAIR TESTS NEGATIVE, TO JOIN KXIP FOR IPL

New Delhi, Aug. 13: India and Kings XI Punjab batsman Karun Nair tested positive for Covid-19 last month but has now recovered and will travel to the UAE for the Indian Premier League (IPL) starting September 19.

Cricket website *ESPNCricinfo* reported that Nair "went into self-isolation for more than two weeks" before testing negative for the dreaded virus.

The franchise did not comment on the report but a BCCI source confirmed that Nair returned a negative test on August 8 at the end of his quarantine.

He will now have to clear three more tests like the rest of the contingent to be able to fly out to the UAE on August 20.

"He is absolutely fine now. He was asymptomatic throughout and was feeling okay. His test came negative after two weeks and he has even resumed personal training. Now, he will be tested like all other squad members before the team leaves for UAE," the source said.

Nair, who has scored a triple hundred in Tests, last played for India in 2017. He has been a part of KXIP since 2018. The 28-year-old will be playing alongside Karnataka teammates Mayank Agarwal and K. L. Rahul, who will captain the side for the first time.

The team will be based in Dubai and like the rest of the sides, all players and support staff will undergo a six-day quarantine upon arrival. They will also need to return three negative tests to enter the bio-bubble and start training.

— PTI

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