

OTHER STORIES

KCR IGNORED
COVID WARNING,
SAYS BHATTIDC CORRESPONDENT
KAMAREDDY, AUG. 29

Congress Legislature Party leader (CLP) Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka came down heavily on Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao on Sunday. The CLP leader said, "The CM has declared he will spend ₹10,000 crore to tackle the Coronavirus pandemic, but has failed to release even ₹1,000 crore in the last six months. The TRS government is responsible for the Covid-19 deaths in the state, he said.

Opposition parties repeatedly alerted the government on pandemic, but it failed to react accordingly, he said.

Mr Vikramarka along with Congress senior leader, former minister Mohammad Ali Shabbir visited the district hospital in Kamareddy on Saturday to view the Covid-19 services provided. He said, "The CM failed to review the pandemic and is confined to his farm house in Gajwel."

Mr Shabbir Ali said that the Congress government upgraded Kamareddy hospital from 30 bed to 100 bed hospital. After formation of Telangana state and setting up of Kamareddy district, the bed number has not yet increased. Only 50 percent of doctors are working in Kamareddy hospital, he said. The TRS government is preventing opposition party leaders from visiting Gandhi hospital, which is the only Covid-19 hospital in the state, he said.

BJP LEGISLATOR
RAJA SINGH GETS
EXTRA SECURITYS.A. ISHAQUI | DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 29

The Hyderabad police have tightened security for BJP Goshamahala legislator T. Raja Singh following intelligence inputs about a terrorist threat to him.

Police commissioner Anjani Kumar has written to Raja Singh informing him about the terrorist threat and that the security provided to the legislator was being enhanced. According to sources, the city police has tightened security at the MLA's residence.

Anjani Kumar in his letter said, "Providing proper security to the MLA is our top priority. It is to inform you that due to your threat perception, enhanced security has been provided to you, and security personnel are also being alerted and checked from time to time. Special training has been organised to all your personal security personnel."

The police commissioner wrote to the MLA: "Your kind cooperation is solicited to ensure proper security. You may kindly completely avoid moving on motorcycles and travel by the bulletproof car allotted. The government has provided this car only for your security."

Responding to the letter, Raja Singh told reporters that he had asked the government and police department to identify the elements that were posing a threat to him. He said he had requested the police commissioner and the state government to grant him a gun licence for his personal protection as he moves in the lanes and bylanes in his constituency which are congested and cannot accommodate a car. Raja Singh said that he would write to Union home minister Amit Shah about the issue.

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Seven TS workers languish
in Saudi Arabia prisonsNARENDER
PULLOOR | DC
NIZAMABAD, AUG. 29

As many as seven Gulf migrants from undivided Nizamabad district in Telangana state have landed in jails in Saudi Arabia. Due to lack of official documents like passport, work visa etc, they have been thrown into jails in Riyadh and Jeddah for the last 10 months. The victims were arrested by Saudi Arabia police.

Their family members are worried about the safety of the workers. Against the backdrop of the pandemic, their situation has turned critical. With lack of food and medical facilities, the victims have been facing a hell-like situation in jail.

Desperate to earn a livelihood abroad and duped by agents and middlemen, a few of them landed in the Gulf on a visit visa instead of a work visa. They turned illegal migrants once their visas expired and they were thrown behind the bars.

According to the family members of the victims, siblings Bhukya Man Singh, 39, (passport No. K9204159) and Bhukya Ravi, 42, (passport No. N9661962) of School

● **THEIR FAMILY members** are worried about the safety of the workers. Against the backdrop of the pandemic, their situation has turned critical. With lack of food and medical facilities, the victims have been facing a hell-like situation in jail.

thanda in Ramareddy mandal of Kamareddy district are in jail in Riyadh for the last six months.

Kanneboyi Vishnu, 28, (passport No. K4783418), of Lingapur village in Navipet has been imprisoned for three months in a Riyadh jail.

28-year old Malavath Ganga Reddy of Devakkapet village in Bheemgal mandal has been in a Jeddah jail for the last three months.

Polevoina Narahari, 39, (passport No. p6472076) of Sadashivanagar mandal headquarters in Kamareddy district and Lambani Ravi, 36, of Secunderapur village in Bheemgal mandal of Nizamabad district have been staying in a Jeddah jail for last two

and three months respectively.

Speaking to Deccan Chronicle, Gali Rajalingaiah of Burgul village in Gandhari mandal of Kamareddy district said that his younger son, Gali Devaiah, 33 (passport No. 59703576) was in a Saudi Arabia jail for the last 10 months.

"Without proper food and medical facilities, my son is facing a horrible situation in a Saudi jail," said Rajalingaiah. Saudi Arabian authorities are neither releasing the workers nor providing traveling facilities for them to reach India, he lamented.

Rajalingaiah urged Chief Minister, K. Chandrasekhar Rao, to facilitate the safe return of his son.

The Telangana gulf welfare and cultural association president, P. Basanth Reddy, urged the ministry of external affairs and Telangana state government to facilitate the safe return of Indian workers from Saudi Arabian jails.

He interacted with the family members of Gulf migrant workers in Kamareddy on Saturday. He assured the kin that he would bring the issue to the notice of the Indian embassy in Saudi Arabia.



Telangana Gulf welfare and cultural association president P. Basanth Reddy interacts with the family members of Gulf migrant workers in Kamareddy on Saturday. — DC

Errolla says attacks on
Dalits won't be toleratedANUDEEP
CEREMILLA | DC
WARANGAL, AUG. 29

The state does not tolerate attacks on SC and ST communities, said state SC and ST commission chairperson Errolla Srinivas.

He visited the family of Revelli Raja Babu who was recently murdered at Mallaram in Malharrao mandal on Saturday and consoled the family.

He assured them of all possible help to get through in the future. "No matter who the culprits are they will be punished according to the law. I have already asked the police and the district collector to book a case under the SC/ST atrocities act. The family will be looked after under the same act. The family has received half the ex-gratia

and will receive the remaining amount through the collector after the chargesheet has been filed under the case," he said.

Mr Srinivas assured that he would move the district administration to see that there is no more delay in the investigation.

"The wife of the deceased will be provided a contract job and the two children free education from KG to PG. Later they will also be helped in finding a suitable job," he said. He appealed to the police to help the Dalits while they approach them for any issues.

Peddapalli MP Borlakunta Venkatesh Netha, Peddapalli ZP chairperson Putta Madhukar, Jayashankar Bhupalpally ZP Chairperson Jakku Sri Harshini were present along with others.



Telangana SC/ST commission chairperson Errolla Srinivas speaks to the family of Revelli Raja Babu on Saturday. — DECCAN CHRONICLE

DON'T FALL INTO
TRAP OF MAOISTS:
SP TO ADIVASIDC CORRESPONDENT
ADILABAD, AUG. 29

Adilabad superintendent of police Vishnu S. Warrior on Saturday appealed to the Adivasi youth not to ruin their lives by falling into the trap of Maoists.

He said, "Maoists are trying to lure the Adivasi youth to join banned organisation, adding that some Adivasi leaders are misguiding the youth for their selfish gains."

In a statement issued on Saturday, he claimed to have received crucial information about Adivasi youth and leaders extending cooperation to the Maoists through a Diary belonging to a Maoist leader Mylarapu Adellu alias Bhaskar that was seized during the combing operations in Tiryani mandal recently. He said,

"We will take appropriate action against the persons supporting the Maoist. These Maoists' supporters are giving them shelter and food by taking large sums of money from them. We also found that some surrendered Naxalites are also participating in the Maoists activities, he added.



Fire personnel douse the flames that burnt the transformers in the electricity office premises in Karimnagar on Saturday. — YELABAKA RADHAKRISHNA

Fire at NPDCL unit guts
₹20-L worth transformers

Three fire tenders rushed to the spot and doused the flames

PULI SHARATH
KUMAR | DC
KARIMNAGAR, AUG. 29

Panic gripped employees of the electricity office and those in the surrounding areas after a fire broke out due to a short circuit at the Northern Power Distribution Company Limited (NPDCL) godown situated adjacent to the electricity office in the heart of the city on Saturday.

Meanwhile, a major incident was averted because of the timely efforts of personnel from the fire services who doused the flames soon after they rushed to the spot.

According to the locals, there were sparks when a crow tried to land on the high tension wires from 33/11 KV sub-station to Choppadandi. The sparks touched the cables placed on the ground at the NPDCL godown and caught fire and soon spread to the surroundings. Hundreds of new transformers were burnt to ashes.

On receiving information, three fire tenders were rushed to the spot and they immediately brought the situation under control. NPDCL

● **ACCORDING TO the locals**, there were sparks when a crow tried to land on the high tension wires from 33/11 KV sub-station to Choppadandi.

● **THE SPARKS touched the cables placed on the ground at the NPDCL godown.**

authorities estimated the loss to be around ₹20 lakh.

Having learnt about the fire mishap, backward classes minister, Gangula Kamalakar, district collector, K. Shashanka, police commissioner V. B. Kamalasan Reddy visited the spot and enquired about the fire mishap. Locals wanted to know how new cables and transformers were left openly on the ground.

Karimnagar MP Bandi Sanjay Kumar made a call to the NPDCL authorities and enquired about the fire mishap and ordered them to take necessary precautionary steps to prevent such incidents in the future.



New transformers which are kept in the open ground at the premises of the NPDCL office in Karimnagar city on Saturday engulfed by the flames. — DC

Much-hyped KCR Island
remains a non-starterDC CORRESPONDENT
KARIMNAGAR, AUG. 29

Work on the 'KCR Island' is yet to commence despite the fact that it has been a year since the government gave its nod and sanctioned money to develop the four-acre natural hillock, Mysamma gutta, in the middle of the Lower Manair Dam (LMD) as a tourist spot.

BC minister Gangula Kamalakar conceived the initiative and sent the proposal to the government last year stating that transforming the tourist spot would cost around ₹20 crore.

The government approved the plan and sanctioned ₹5 crore for the first phase to take up construction work last year. The Karimnagar Municipal Corporation allotted ₹2 crore and the tourism department ₹2 crore. As on date, construction works are yet to take off.

The KCR Island, inspired by Indonesian architecture, comprises of an entrance lobby, banquet hall with mirror walls, meditation hub and five premium suites along with 18 bamboo cottages and two mini studios for shooting short films.

A floating restaurant accommodating 40 persons



The Mysamma gutta is spread over four acres in the middle of the Lower Manair Dam in Karimnagar district.

at a time, a presidential suite with seven-star hotel facilities and swimming pools for children and adults and two bridges were proposed.

Minister Kamalakar said that the ₹5 crore given by the government would be used for construction work. But he did not mention about other works on the island. Kamalakar said that the representatives of Infinitude Design Co had approached them with a design. Work would begin once the design is finalised.

But Opposition leaders see it as a plan to take the heat off the TRS leaders.

Karimnagar Congress president Komatireddy Narendar Reddy alleged

KAVITHA GIFTS
SCOOTER TO
DISABLED YOUTHDC CORRESPONDENT
JAGTIAL, AUG. 29

The former MP and founder president of the Telangana Jagruthi, K. Kavitha won hearts by helping a differently abled person on Saturday.

Boga Vinay, an engineering graduate, resident of Korutla town met with a road accident in 2014. He lost his legs in the accident and is unable to work for the past six years.

With medical bills mounting to around ₹18 lakh for his treatment, his family was in distress with Vinay's mother taking care of him. Former MP, Kavitha read about Vinay's story and reached out and interacted with him. She assured Vinay support of the TRS and herself.

Vinay and his mother accompanied by the Korutla MLA, K. Vidyasagar Rao met Kavitha in Hyderabad, where she handed over him a scooter. Vinay and his family expressed their thanks to the former MP and the MLA for their help.

TRIBAL INITIATIVE To avoid children dropping out, the unemployed youth took up the initiative

Adivasi educated youth take classes during Covid

PILLALAMARRI
SRINIVAS | DC
ADILABAD, AUG. 29

Many unemployed educated Adivasi youth have started teaching their community children in the villages in wake of the closure of government and private schools due to the pandemic in the old Adilabad district.

Educated youth are coming forward to teach their community's students as their education has been affected by the pandemic and the

children waste their time since schools have yet to open. The youth came to the rescue of the children, fearing that the latter may end up as dropouts if the schools remained closed for a long time and there was a possibility of the schools not re-opening.

Government school teachers, are also coming forward to teach students in village-level learning centres that the community has begun in various gudums. Educated youth of

● **STUDENTS IN these Adivasi gudums and villages** are unable to take the online classes as the villages lack telephone towers. The classes have been named 'Haimendorf Giri vidyalayam.'

Marlavai in Jainoor mandal have volunteered to teach the children and have formed

informal schools.

The villagers passed a unanimous resolution in the gram sabha under the leadership of sarpanch, Kanaka Pratibha, to start classes to students from class one to class 10 in their village.

Villagers named the classes 'Haimendorf Giri vidyalayam.' Classes are being held by the educated youth of the village by strictly following Covid-19 norms.

The villagers paid rich tributes to anthropologist Christoph Von Furer

Haimendorf, Betti Elizabeth and Adivasi legend, Kumarambheem, before they began classes on Friday.

The villagers regretted that students of their village are unable to take online classes as the villages lack telephone towers.

The educated Adivasi youth have started taking classes for the Adivasi children in Kadki, Lokari (B) in Gadeduga and Jamda, Gunjala villages in Narnoor mandal.

Marsakola Kamala Bai, an Adivasi woman, is also tak-

ing classes for the Adivasi children in Navgadh village, Tiryani mandal, Kumarambheem. She provides the children attending the classes with slates, books, and pencils from her own money.

Educated Adivasi youth have also come forward to take classes for the children in Khandala village in Adilabad rural mandal.

Marsakola Gnaneshwar and Korenga Laxman are taking the classes for the children in their village.

VIJAYAWADA MUNICIPAL CORPORATION (VMC)		
'E' Procurement Notice No.20/VMC/AE/2020-21, Dt.29-08-2020		
Sl. No.	Name of work	Estimate Amount Rs. in Lakhs
1	Operation & Maintenance of Jakkampudi 20 MLD STP, Construction of CC Drains and Re grading the existing drains in 62 & 64th Divisions, Development of Food Street in Red Circle to MG Road, Repairs & Maintenance of CVR Flyover from YSR Colony Jn to Kabela Road Jn, Central Divider Christurajpuram, BT Pavement to Loyola garden Sentini Hospital to Srirams Avenue, Development of UDA Colony Park in Rajiv Nagar 58th Division, BT Roads & Water Supply to Shiridi Sai Nagar, Adarsh Nagar, Prasanthi Nagar, Foot paths to Christurajpuram main road Amma Kalyana Mandapam road in VMC (10 Works)	974.60
Contact: Superintending Engineer (Works & Projects), VMC, Vijayawada-520 001 Further details can be seen @ 'e' procurement market place @ www.tender.aeprocurement.gov.in Download of bid documents starts from - 02-09-2020 @ 04.00 P.M. Last date / time for receipt of tenders from - 16-09-2020 upto 4.30 P.M.		
Sd/- For COMMISSIONER		

IN BRIEF

Man kills wife over suspicion of affair

Hyderabad: A man in Suraram of Medchal-Malkajgiri district killed his wife, suspecting that she was cheating on him after he found her talking constantly on phone. The couple had come from Latur, Maharashtra, to Hyderabad in search of a better livelihood. Police said he fatally attacked her with a kitchen knife after a quarrel. The accused hid the weapon in a box and fled to his native village. The police caught him while he was returning to Siddipet on Saturday for labour work, at the JBS bus stand, Secunderabad.

TONSURE CASE ACCUSED BOOKED UNDER SC/ST ACT

From Page 1

Apart from Madhu Priya, the others registered were T. Indira Rani, Ch. Varahalu, I. Ravi Kumar, Saleem Bala Gangadhar, M. Jhansi and K. Sowjanya. The Pendurthy police booked them under the IPC and the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. The case was shifted to the special court for SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) court. Assistant commissioner of police, SC/ST Cell-1 has taken up the investigation. He visited Nutan Naidu's home and seized the tonsured hair and a wood stick and iron rod used in the incident. KE brothers have been associated with liquor business through a chain of syndicates for over five decades in Kurnool and surrounding districts.

INTER HUMANITIES SYLLABUS REVISED

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, AUG. 29

The Telangana State Board of Intermediate Education (TSBIE) in a notification issued on Saturday announced the revision of syllabus of second-year Humanities subjects, which is a norm every five years.

The TSBIE revised the syllabus of commerce, economics, political science, history, geography, and public administration by constituting subject committees comprising professors and lecturers of degree and junior colleges.

However, the TSBIE secretary also announced that candidates, who had failed, would be permitted to answer as per the old syllabus.

SCHOOLS, COLLEGES TO STAY SHUT TILL SEPTEMBER END

From Page 1

Schools, colleges and educational and coaching institutions will remain closed for students till September 30, with some relaxations for students of classes 9 to 12 to go to school to clarify doubts.

States may permit up to 50 per cent of teaching and non-teaching staff to be called to the schools at a time for online teaching or tele-counselling and related work.

The Centre said that state governments shall not impose any local lockdown outside the containment zones without prior consultation with the Centre. This bears significance as sporadic and weekend lockdowns have been implemented by various state governments across the country.

The permission to hold political and other gatherings comes ahead of the Bihar Assembly elections, which are due in October-November.

Cinema halls, swimming pools, entertainment parks, theatres and similar places will remain shut and international air travel of passengers, except as permitted by MHA, will not be allowed. Open-air theatres will be permitted to open with effect from September 21.

Higher education institutions only for research scholars (PhD) and post-graduate students of technical and professional programmes requiring laboratory and experimental works will be permitted by the department of higher education (DHE) in consultation with MHA.

● **THE CENTRE** said that state governments shall not impose any local lockdown outside the containment zones without prior consultation with the Centre.

'Bibi ka Alam' on a van this yr

Mourners are not allowed at the commencement of procession

ATHER MOIN | DC HYDERABAD, AUG. 29

Hyderabad police commissioner Anjani Kumar keeping alive a centuries-old tradition finally allowed the historic 'Bibi ka Alam' on a van without any procession on Sunday and self-flagellation under police surveillance from Bibi ka Alawa Dabeerpura to Masjid-e-Ilahi in Chaderghat.

At a meeting of representatives of the Shia community here on Saturday, it was decided

● **AT A MEETING** of representatives of the Shia community here on Saturday, it was decided not to allow mourners to accompany the Bibi ka Alam. Police authorities have imposed a ban on ceremonies in public places due to Covid pandemic.

● **THE SHIA LEADER** appealed to the community members to do 'matam' (mourning) in Ashoorkhanas or community spaces or at their respective homes and cooperate with police.

not to allow mourners to accompany the Bibi ka Alam. Police authorities have imposed a ban on ceremonies in public places due to Covid pandemic.

The High Court, while disposing of a write petition, directed the police commissioner to consider and pass appropriate orders before August 30, strictly adhering to the

guidelines issued by Union home ministry and the Supreme Court.

Sources said the police commissioner convinced the community not to insist on the procession and to refrain from congregating at public places.

However, Anjani Kumar said that as maintaining the centuries-old tradition was a necessity, Bibi ka Alam can be carried out in a van with a few stakeholders from Bibi ka Alawa to Masjid-e-Ilahi with a single stop at Alawa Qadam-e-Rasool.

No mourners will be allowed at the commencement of Alam.

Moulana Syed Wahe-uddin Hyder Jafry, secretary and patron of Anjuman-E-Alavi Shia Imamia Athna Ashari Akbari, appealed to the Shia community to avoid gathering at Bibi ka Alawa.

The Shia leader appealed to the community members to do 'matam' (mourning) in Ashoorkhanas or community spaces or at their respective homes and cooperate with police.

CM meets Governor



Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao called on Governor Dr. Tamilisai Soundararajan at Raj Bhavan on Saturday to express his sympathies and convey his deep condolences at the demise of the Governor's uncle and MP H. Vasantha Kumar, who represents Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu.

— PTI

TS records 2,751 new cases, nine fatalities

BALU PULIPAKA | DC HYDERABAD, AUG. 29

The number of Covid-19 patients undergoing treatment either at home or in hospitals continues to rise with no let-up in the fresh cases of the disease that are being discovered in the state.

As per the Covid-19 media bulletin issued on Saturday morning, 30,008 patients, a fourth of the caseload of 1,20,166 so far, were listed as active cases. Of the active cases as on Friday evening, 23,049 were in home or institutional isolation.

While 6,529 were in the government and private hospitals as on August 22, this number rose to 6,959 as on August 28. Deaths from Covid-19

RISING CASES

Top 10 Covid-19 districts by number of cases from August 22 to 29

1,344	Ranga Reddy
993	Karimnagar
973	Nalgonda
938	Nizamabad
929	Khammam
853	Medchal-Malkajgiri
754	Warangal Urban
667	Suryapet
658	Mancherla
642	Siddipet
GHMC area: 3,016	

crossed the 800 mark with nine fatalities taking the toll to 808. The 2,751 fresh Covid-19 cases reported between Thursday and Friday evening have taken the total number of cases to

1,20,166.

The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation area continues to be the biggest Covid-19 hotspot in the state with 432 new cases. So far, 3,016 cases have been found in the GHMC area in the week beginning August 22.

Karimnagar's latest single day tally stood at 192, followed by 185 in Ranga Reddy, 132 in Khammam, 128 in Medchal-Malkajgiri, 113 in Nizamabad, 111 in Suryapet, and 101 in Warangal Urban districts.

The state health department said in the bulletin that 1,675 people recovered from the disease on Friday, taking the cumulative number of people in this group to 89,350.

QUARANTINE PATIENTS DATA

Date	New cases	Active	In isolation*	In hospitals	Deaths	Recovere
Aug. 22	2,384	22,908	16,379	6,529	9	1,851
Aug. 23	1,842	22,919	16,482	6,437	11	1,825
Aug. 24	2,579	23,737	17,226	6,511	8	1,752
Aug. 25	3,018	25,685	19,113	6,572	10	1,060
Aug. 26	2,795	27,600	20,866	6,734	9	872
Aug. 27	2,932	28,941	22,097	6,844	6	1,580
Aug. 28	2,751	30,008	23,049	6,959	1	1,675

*Home/Institutional isolation data from daily Covid-19 bulletins. The state does not provide breakdown on these two categories)

IMA CONDEMNS ATTACK ON MEDICAL STAFF, STRICT ACTION TO BE TAKEN

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, AUG. 29

The Indian Medical Association, Telangana state unit, on Saturday, condemned the attack on a medical personnel, Dr. Praveen, medical superintendent at the area hospital at Huzurabad, along with other staff on duty. The TS IMA called the

attack highly objectionable and said that action has to be taken as per the Act 11 of 2008, the Medicare Service Persons and Medicare Service Institutions (Prevention of Violence and Damage to Property) Act, 2008. They said that authorities at the hospital to take proper action as per the Epidemic Act.

Hyd girl faces island struggles

SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL | DC HYDERABAD, AUG. 29

Hyderabad after six months, Meghana shared her lockdown days on the island, the hard times during the unplanned extended stay, eating one meal a day, interacting with the island tribes people, learning their fears about and understanding of the virus.

A consultant architect by profession, with adventure as a passion, she was supposed to return on March 21 but flights were cancelled and soon the nation-wide lockdown followed.

Neil Island is 37 km from Port Blair with a population of about 2,500 people. Most supplies to the Andaman islands come from outside. The lockdown caused a scarcity of essential commodities. No one was aware of the situation and all the people were anxious, talking only about the virus everywhere.

"For the initial two weeks, we survived on one meal a day, lockdown was very strict. People lacked sanitizers and masks. As the supply was struck, onions were sold at 300 per kg, same other prices of essentials shot up," said Meghana.

As there was relaxation in the lockdown, Meghana worked in the fields and then along with the locals, she went to hunt for fish for survival, an adventure she had never imagined.

On June 10, Meghana

moved to Port Blair, where every day she used to spend her time with the Jarawa and Nicobarese tribes. She discovered there was a great need of medical aid; the island has only one hospital.

A girl from one of the tribes who was a medical practitioner came on vacation and got stuck in the lockdown. She was helping them with the medical assistance. "The tribes are disciplined. Though there is shortage of masks, they covered their faces with the cloth and made sure the social distancing was maintained," said Meghana.

Summer is a peak season for tourism on the islands. The inhabitants lost most of the earnings due to the lockdown. "It was a big blow to them. They earn for the whole year in the season. Many farmers in the lockdown could not sell their harvest which was thrown away as there was no transport," said a deeply affected Meghana.

The first case of Coronavirus was found in the island is on March 26 when a man returned from Kolkata and was identified as positive. But the cases have increased rapidly in recent times. According to Meghana, initially, during the lockdown, anyone reaching the island was supposed to go through the institutional quarantine but as the lockdown was eased, this was stopped. "This might have triggered more cases in the island," said Meghana.

Court slaps fine on state, AP HCs

VUJJINI VAMSHIDHARA | DC HYDERABAD, AUG. 29

In a rare incident, a division bench of the Telangana High Court has imposed costs on the Telangana High Court and the AP High Court over the matter of bifurcation of court employees.

The division bench comprising Justices M.S. Ramachandra Rao and T. Amarnath Goud was dealing with a petition filed by retired employees of the then combined High Court at Hyderabad who retired prior to November 1, 2018.

They said this denied them an opportunity to choose where they would like to work from — Telangana state or Andhra Pradesh.

Anticipating the division of the High Courts, the combined High Court had issued a circular in November 2018 asking employees to choose where they would like to work.

The petitioners who retired before issuance of

the circular, the petitioners in the case, said that they would have had an opportunity to work till the age of 60, which is superannuation age for employees of the High Court of Andhra Pradesh at Amaravati, if they were given the opportunity to opt between the two states. They contended that the 'Appointed Day' (June 2, 2014) should be considered for giving options, not January 1, 2019, the day the separate High Courts were constituted for the two states.

As their representations were rejected by both High Courts, the petitioners approached the Telangana High Court by way of filing the writ petition.

Giving relief to the petitioners, the bench of Justices Ramachandra Rao and Amarnath Goud said that this exclusion without any valid reason was violative of Article 14 of the Constitution and also denied them fair and equitable treatment.

HC PHYSICAL HEARING FROM SEPTEMBER 7

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, AUG. 29

The Telangana High Court will resume physical court hearings from September 7, after a gap of five-and-a-half months. The court had stopped physical hearings due to the Covid-19 pandemic and taken to the online mode.

The decision was taken by the full court of the TS High Court, which has 14 judges, at a meeting convened on Saturday. In the first instance, only five benches will start physical hearings. A division bench headed by Chief Justice Raghavendra Singh Chauhan and 4 individual single benches headed by Justice Challa Kondaram, Justice Ponugoti Naveen Rao, Justice Md. Shameem Akther and Justice Gandikota Sridevi.

Candidates died waiting for jobs

From page 1

Last year, on Teachers Day, a single judge of the TS High Court slapped a jail sentence and fine on district educational officers of Khammam, Warangal, Karimnagar and Nalgonda for contempt of court, said Srinivas. Despite this, the fate of the teachers has not changed due to the lethargic attitude of bureaucrats and politicians, Srinivas alleged.

Some of the candidates have died waiting for their jobs. The number of teachers asking for appointments is around 500 in TS," Srinivas said.

S.K. Khasim, vice president of the DSC Sadhana Samithi, said, "We left no stone unturned. We submitted representations multiple times to N. Chandrababu Naidu, K. Chandrashekar Rao and Jagan Mohan Reddy. The then Chief Minister Dr Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy had asked officials to sort out

● **After the HC slapped contempt punishment, the DEOs of Nalgonda and Karimnagar gave appointments to seven.**

the matter. After his sudden death, the issue headed nowhere. "In the 2014 Assembly elections, Chandrashekar Rao promised to resolve the issue. In 2016, he invited us to Pragathi Bhavan and had a discussion for over two-and-a-half hours, assuring us that he would resolve the problem."

After the High Court slapped contempt punishment, the DEOs of Nalgonda and Karimnagar gave appointments to seven candidates.

P. Somashekar, president of USR 1998 DSC Teachers' Association, said Jagan Mohan Reddy assured the candidates of resolving the problem during his padayatra before the elections.

There are around 2,000 candidates waiting for jobs in AP and many have crossed the age limit and

some have died. During the Covid-19 crisis as many as 25 candidates died, Somashekar said.

He said there are no cases with regard to AP candidates. He said the then Telugu Desam government had constituted an MLCs committee on the matter but it clubbed the issue with DSC 2008 candidates which resulted in complicating the problem.

The MLC committee pointed out that 4,534 qualified candidates of DSC 1998 suffered losses due to the litigation, but it found only 36 candidates eligible for posting. After the survey, it found only six candidates eligible for posting.

"We have been facing severe losses with the carrying forward of the unfilled posts under all the categories by the state government," said Somashekar. Srinivas and Somashekar demanded that both the Chief Ministers give them justice after their 22-year-old fight.



Women caught in the sudden showers that lashed Karimnagar on Saturday evening.

— YELABAKA RADHAKRISHNA

SHORT TAKES

110-YEAR-OLD WOMAN RECOVERS FROM COVID-19

GYLVESTER ASSARY
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, AUG. 29

In Malappuram district, a 110-year-old woman was cured of Covid-19. The patient, Pathu, who tested positive on August 18, was discharged from Manjeri medical college on Saturday after successful treatment.

The oldest patient to have been cured from infection in Kerala so far, health minister, K.K. Shailaja, congratulated the medical team which treated Pathu. “It’s a proud moment for all of us,” she added.

On Saturday, Kerala reported 2397 new Covid-19 cases, taking the total number of cases to 71,701. Of the 71,701, 23,277 are active cases. The state also reported six deaths taking the toll to 280 while 2225 people recovered from the infection.

RAYANNA STATUE DISPUTE GETS RESOLVED

VITTAL SHASTRY | DC
HUBBALLI, AUG. 29

The dispute between Kannadigas and Marathas over the installation of a statue of freedom fighter Rayanna in Peeranawadi village of Belagavi taluk was settled amicably after the intervention of district incharge minister Ramesh Jarkiholi and additional director general of police Amarkumar Pande.

The Marathas agreed not to remove the Rayanna statue installed by the Kannadigas at Peeranwadi circle on Friday morning. The Kannadigas agreed not to harm the Shivaji statue situated at the venue.

Rural development and panchayat raj minister K.S. Eshwarappa, who visited the disputed place on Saturday, has assured that he will persuade home minister Basavaraj Bommai to withdraw the cases lodged against both Kannada and Marathi activists over the issue.

ARMY RESCUES PEOPLE IN FLOOD-HIT MP

DC CORRESPONDENT
BHOPAL, AUG. 29

The army has been called in to rescue people in marooned areas in Madhya Pradesh’s Hosangabad district following flash floods in the Narmada caused by heavy downpours in the region over the last 24 hours. The river was flowing nine feet above its danger level in the district.

“The army has been called in to evacuate the people in marooned areas in the district. Besides, the national disaster response force (NDRF) teams have already been pressed into service to rescue the people in flood-hit areas,” Hosangabad divisional commissioner, Rajnish Srivastav, said.

Chief minister, Shivrāj Singh Chouhan, made an aerial survey of Hosangabad to assess the flood situation.

Road communications between Bhopal and Sagar and Narasingshpur and Chhindwara have been cut off as the flooded Narmada breached bridges and national highways at several places in the region.

INDIA WITHDRAWS FROM ‘KAVKAZ 2020’ IN RUSSIA

PAWAN BALI | DC
NEW DELHI, AUG. 29

India has withdrawn from the multi-nation military exercise ‘Kavkaz 2020’ in Russia next month as China was one of the participating countries.

India did not want to participate in a military exercise with China at a time when armies from the two countries are involved in a stand-off in eastern Ladakh for the last three months.

Pakistan is also participating in the exercise. Some 20 countries are participating in this exercise, including Iran and Turkey. The exercise is being held in the Astrakhan region of southern Russia from 15-27 September, 2020. The military exercise is part of a four-year exercise cycle of the Russian army and the name is based on the region where it is being held.

Kavkaz was last held in 2012 and 2016.

As per the earlier plan, India’s participation in the exercise was to be a company level strength (180 troops from an infantry battalion plus elements of other arms) along with elements of IAF and observers from the Indian navy.

INDIA RECORDS SINGLE DAY SPIKE OF 76,140 NEW CASES

DC CORRESPONDENT
WITH AGENCY INPUTS
NEW DELHI, AUG. 29

India once again recorded a single-day spike of 76,140 cases of Coronavirus taking the country’s overall infections till now to 35,35,435 out of which 27.12 lakh people have recovered. Such high numbers come at a time when the government is planning to restart metro train services, call the Monsoon Session of Parliament, hold medical and engineering entrances and university exams.

It is learnt that the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha may either function on alternate days or have staggered timings.

Maharashtra with close to 15,000 fresh cases saw a new high while Andhra Pradesh (10,621) and Karnataka (9, 386) too registered large numbers of cases in the last 24 hours. The total number of deaths recorded due to the deadly virus in one day was 1, 057 taking overall fatalities to 61, 529 according to the union health ministry.

According to COVID19India.org, the total cases in India by Saturday evening were over 35 lakh and deaths over 63,000.

There are 7,62,950 active cases of Covid-19 in the country.

The Union health ministry pointed out that in the past five months, more than three-fourth of Covid-19 cases have recovered and less than one-fourth are active now. “The number of recoveries is nearly 3.5 times the active cases of Coronavirus infection currently,” health ministry officials said.

Uttar Pradesh on Friday reported 77 Covid-19-related deaths, taking the death toll in the state to 3,294, while 5,447 new cases pushed the infection tally to 2,13,824.

NC meets to discuss political state in J&K

DC CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR, AUG. 29

National Conference (NC)’s high-power political affairs committee met here on Friday to discuss the overall political situation prevailing in Jammu and Kashmir and chalk out strategy towards seeking restoration of its special status and statehood.

The meeting, the first held since the Centre abrogated Article 370 and bifurcated J&K into two Union Territories (UTs) in August last year, authorised its president and former chief minister Farooq Abdullah to garner support for ‘Gupkar Declaration’ beyond its signatories.

On August 4, 2019, the leaders of J&K’s regional parties including NC and People’s Democratic Party (PDP) and their allies in Congress and CPIM had met at Mr. Abdullah’s residence along Srinagar’s Gupkar Road and signed a joint statement named as ‘Gupkar Declaration’ through which they vowed to protect the special status, identity and autonomy of J&K and fight tool and nail attempts to split it up.

Last week, the leaders of NC, PDP, Peoples Conference, Awami Na-

Mourner shot at



A youth lies injured hit by multiple pellets when the J&K police used force to disperse a Muharram tazia procession in Srinagar’s Bemina area on Saturday.

Ahead of polls, Nadda meets MPs from Bihar

BJP asks MPs to visit 60 panchayats each to ensure win

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 29

BJP president J.P. Nadda on Saturday met party MPs from both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha from Bihar at the party headquarters to review the party’s preparedness for the coming crucial Assembly polls in the state. The BJP, which is a junior coalition partner in the state government led by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar’s JD(U), has asked its MPs to visit atleast 60 panchayats, two each day, not in their own constituencies to meet people and also work to ensure the victory of NDA candidates, whether it is of their own party or alliance partners — JD(U) and LJP. Nadda

● **WHILE NADDA** is likely to visit the state in the second week of next month, former Maharashtra chief minister Devendra Fadnavis is expected to visit Patna on September 6.

had recently announced that the NDA will go to polls under the leadership of Kumar and exuded confidence that the ruling coalition will retain power. Bihar will be the first state that will go to polls in October-November amid the global pandemic Covid-19. While Nadda is likely to visit the state in the second week of next month, former Maharashtra chief minister Devendra Fadnavis, who is likely to get a key

role in the election committee, is expected to visit Patna on September 6, when the BJP could officially start the seat-sharing talks with allies.

During the meeting, BJP MPs were asked to address at least one virtual rally at Shakti Kendras (booths) and reach out to as many prominent people in every district, highlighting Central government and state government’s achievements. BJP MPs have also been asked to observe Prime Minister Narendra Modi birthday on September 17 as ‘Seva Divas’ and the birth anniversary of party ideologue Deen Dayal Upadhyaya next month in a big way.

For the Prime Minister’s

monthly radio programme Mann Ki Baat in September, BJP leaders have been asked to make sure that arrangements are made at every booth in the state for the karyakartas and locals, while keeping in mind the social distancing norms and guidelines against Covid-19. Nadda held a separate meeting with Union ministers, including Ravi Shankar Prasad, Giriraj Singh, Ashwini Chaubey and Nityanand Rai. During the meeting with the party MPs, general secretary B.L. Santosh, general secretary and state’s in-charge Bhupendra Yadav, Bihar organisational secretary Nagendra and state unit chief Sanjay Jaiswal also attended.

Sushant case: CBI grills Rhea for 2nd day in a row

DC CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, AUG. 29

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) grilled Rhea Chakraborty for the second day in a row on Saturday in connection with the Sushant Singh Rajput suicide.

Chakraborty is the prime accused in the case of abetment to suicide and cheating filed by Rajput’s father. She was escorted to the DRDO guest house by a team of Mumbai police. The CBI also questioned others in connection with the suicide on Saturday.

The officials had grilled Chakraborty on Friday

for more than 10 hours in connection with her monetary details and bank transactions. The CBI also questioned Rajput’s flatmate Siddharth Pithani, cook Neeraj Singh, domestic help Keshav, manager Samuel Miranda and accountant Rajat Mewati on Saturday.

Separate teams are questioning the suspects to weed out discrepancies in the sequence of incidents. Rajput’s father has accused Chakraborty of allegedly swindling at least ₹15 crore from the actor’s bank account. The ED is hence studying the monetary transactions of the

actor and Chakraborty. “The family will also be questioned at a later stage on the same lines. Chakraborty may also be questioned again if needed,” said an officer privy to the probe.

On Friday, Rhea had sought police protection for her family citing hounding by the media and others. A police escort vehicle was provided to her, who dropped her to the CBI office at DRDO guest house in Santacruz.

Apart from the ED and CBI, the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) is also investigating the narcotics angle in the case.

Mahanadi river breaches at Banki in Odisha

AKSHAY KUMAR
SAOO | DC
CUTTACK/JAIPUR, AUG. 29

Thousands of people were on Saturday marooned and hectares of agricultural lands got submerged as the river Mahanadi breached at Bhagipur under Banki block in Odisha’s Cuttack district.

According to sources, initially, a breach measuring around five-foot wide was

formed which later widened to around 60-foot causing a heavy flooding in the area. This is the second time after 1982 when the embankment of the state’s major river caved in.

Vehicular movement on many routes disrupted as roads and bridges were submerged by the flood water.

Reports from Jaipur district said at least 26 breaches occurred in Brahmani,

Baitarani, Kharasrota and Jalaka river systems, causing serious damage to standing crops and vegetables.

As many as seven human lives have been lost and two others have gone missing in the last three days. Several cattle and goats were reportedly washed away in the floods in north Odisha as major rivers like Budhabalanga and Subarnarekha flew above their danger marks.

3 militants, one jawan killed in Pulwama fight

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR, AUG. 29

Hours after the security forces gunned down four Al-Barq Mujahedin militants and captured a fifth one in Jammu and Kashmir’s southern Shopian district on Friday evening, a similar fire fight occurred in neighbouring Pulwama leaving three more militants dead. One Army jawan was also killed in the second clash, the officials said here.

A spokesman of J&K police said on Saturday that its counterinsurgency Special Operations Group (SOG) together with the Army’s 50 Rashtriya Rifles and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)’s 182 and 183 Battalions launched a cordon-and-search operation in Pulwama Zadoora village overnight.

“During the search operation, as the presence of terrorists got ascertained they were given the opportunity to surrender. However, they fired indiscriminately upon the joint search party, which was retaliated leading to an encounter,” the spokesman said.

He added that the three Hizb-ul-Mujahideen cadres killed in the clash have been identified as Adil Hafiz, Arshid Ahmed Dar and Rouf Ahmed Miral residents of Pulwama.

In the encounter, Army jawan Prashant Sharma received critical injuries. He was evacuated to Srinagar’s 92-Base Army Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries later.

Defence spokesman, Colonel Rajesh Kalia said Sepoy Sharma “was in the lead element of his party when it came into contact with the terrorists during a specific search operation launched in village Zadoora.” An Army jawan suffered gunshot wounds.

Didn’t mean to hurt Tharoor: Suresh

DC CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, AUG. 29

Congress chief whip in the Lok Sabha and working president of the Kerala Pradesh Congress committee, Kodikkunnil Suresh, has expressed regret over his ‘guest artiste’ jibe against Shashi Tharoor.

Saying his words were not meant to hurt or belittle Tharoor and he had only expressed his annoyance against the letter written by 23 leaders to Sonia Gandhi on the organisation revamp. Suresh expressed regret after facing widespread criticism in social media mainly from party workers.

“If he feels hurt by my statements, I regret keeping the party interest

above everything else but at the same time strongly differ with the stand taken by him on various issues,” Suresh, Congress MP from Mavelikkara and one of the seniormost Dalit leaders, added. A section of youth Congress leaders had also come out in support of Tharoor.

In a Facebook post, Suresh said the crux of the criticism against Tharoor was related to his views against the Congress party’s well-stated positions. “We have differences over the manner in which he takes stands on various issues without discussing them first in party fora. But the criticism should not be construed as personal because these are in the realm of political debates,” he said.

ASSAM SCHOOLS TO REOPEN FROM SEPT. 1, SAYS STATE EDUCATION MIN

MANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, AUG. 29

A day after doubling appointment letters to 5,319 teachers for primary and upper primary schools, Assam education minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday announced that all schools across the state will reopen from September 1.

However, for the first 15 days, teachers will focus on sanitisation of their respective school premises and informal classes

Hirakud reservoir, more than 7.2 lakh cusecs of water is being discharged through 44 of the 64 sluice gates of the dam. The water level at Hirakud Dam stood at 626.37 ft as against the full reservoir level of 630 ft,” Jena said. Till last reports came in, over 8.95 cusecs of water is flowing at Mundali barrage in Cuttack district which is likely to go up to 10 lakh cusec by Saturday evening.

ASSAM SCHOOLS TO REOPEN FROM SEPT. 1, SAYS STATE EDUCATION MIN

will start from September 15. Moreover, the government will also distribute free masks for the students.

Informing that teachers who had tested negative in mandatory Covid-19 tests will start coming to schools from September 1, Sarma told reporters it was decided to carry out massive sanitisation of the school premises. “We have also decided to allot a fund to the schools for sanitisation of schools,” said the minister.



DECCAN
Chronicle

30 AUGUST 2020



Shreya Sen-Handley

Off the beaten track

The pandemic
kissiquette

The new normal has brought with it new priorities, new rules of engagement, and a new or rarely-used-before vocabulary, which includes 'Coronavirus' itself, wfh (bet you thought it a swear word at first — I did!), lockdown, flattening the curve, and social distancing. We all now know the two-metre rule, though we don't seem to be able to abide by it (what's with all the bargaining, People?). We've also been advised not to hold hands, hug or kiss, except in our bubbles. Since kissing from two metres away is a physical impossibility, this rule isn't hard to maintain except for politicians and cheats, viz. often one and the same. The rags are full of scandals about British politicians caught with their pants two metres down, in bubbles that don't appear to be theirs, because the lockdown rules have eluded them (though they made them themselves). Yet, for many of us the pandemic rules of engagement are no more baffling than those we had to contend with before, such as the etiquette around kissing, aka. Kissiquette. Having had two children, and perfectly aware of how they came about, it's not romantic or affectionate smooching that perplexes, but the formal, impersonal, performative variety, practised with relative strangers. For example —

1) How many kisses before one can disengage? Us plebs would have it at one, if at all. But if you're part of the fashionable set, it is at least two, on either cheek. This, I understand, is French (not to be mistaken for French kissing which doesn't involve cheeks at all). At other times, they will complete their pair of kisses and lean in for a third. The Swiss Kiss, I believe. This is fraught with danger. Will they or won't they? Will you offend them by stepping away too soon or unwittingly end up molesting them by moving in for an unwanted third? As a writer and a reclusive one, this is more stress than I can handle, especially at festival time, when the literary fraternity morph into showbiz luvvies, rushing into the arms of their peers, no matter how often they've stabbed each other in the back. At one such, I found myself in a sticky situation when having kissed me twice, the well-known author surfaced for air, but did not appear to have finished. Very much the novice, at both literary fests and social snogging, I became so unnerved by the ticking time bomb of our face-off, I found myself holding up my half-eaten biscuit and squeaking, "Want my cookie?" They did not, nor my company thereafter. Which settled that, but left me no wiser about how many kisses are too many. Or why not a wave, smile, or namaste instead?



Bruderkuß: Leonid Brezhnev and Erich Honecker kiss on the 30th-anniversary celebrations of the foundation of the German Democratic Republic, in 1979

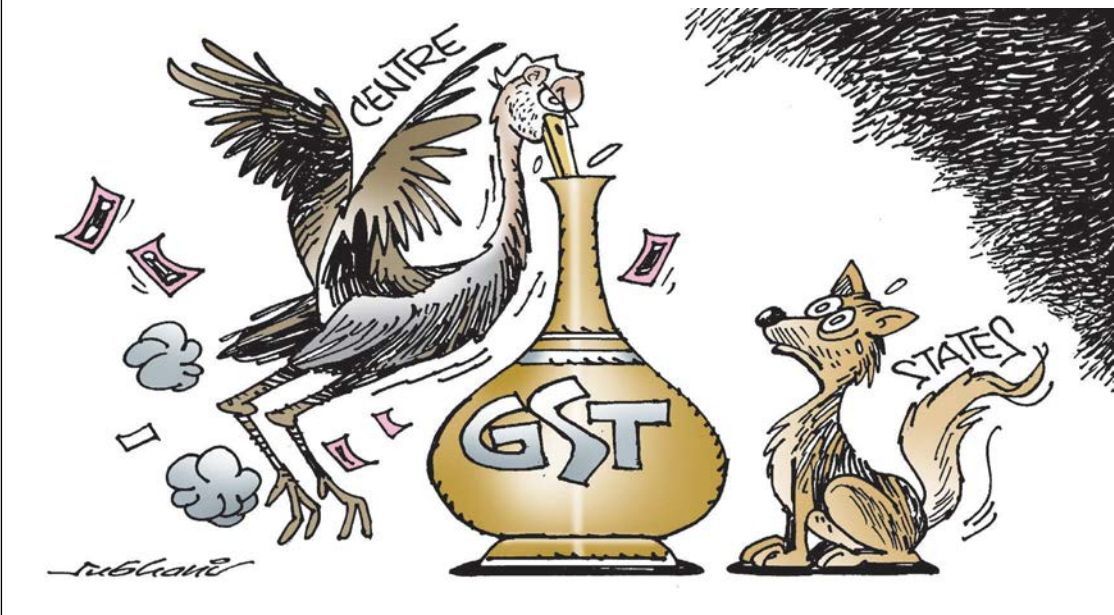
2) Whose idea was it to start blowing kisses on Zoom? In these long months of webinars, only one person has, thus far, ended a session by actually planting a smacker on the screen. But nearly everyone now blows kisses at it. The problem with virtual kisses is that they're so indiscriminate. You cannot blow kisses selectively. It has to be to everyone in the 'room' or not at all. Or go to extraordinary lengths to ensure you're left at the end with the right people, the kissable people. Or shut down screens, open up other screens, kiss the wrong people. Gaah. What if, outrageous though it might sound, a blown kiss for you is not a thing of air and inconsequence but an affirmation of actual affection? And blowing kisses to all and sundry smack of hypocrisy? If that's making heavy weather of something slight, doesn't the awkwardness of it all bother you? While the planted smacker may have been the only one, several people in their inelegant attempt to throw kisses from too close to the screen have thwacked it instead, jolting the session to a premature close. Of course friendly chats shouldn't stint on kisses blown, but strangely, younger, singler friends tell me that romantic assignations, much of which has moved online, have turned out terribly chaste. That there's no va-va-voom in Zoom, no Tinder kegs are lit, and blowing of any sort hardly happens. Through time and tide and many conversations, slow and steady wins the kiss. Like the amours conducted through epistles in the pages of an Austen classic.

3) But what would Jane have made of kissy emojis and the many curious crosses in texts? Oh I've learnt to mirror them exactly when writing back, in the hope no one guesses I haven't a clue what they mean. I get that they're kisses of course, and a convenient way of expressing affection in writing, because how many of us have time to compose sonnets? Yet, how many emoji hearts are too many? What colour should they be? If it's a kissy emoji, should it wink, for example, if your feelings are true? How about those pesky little exes, I mean x's; when are they in excess? I was led to believe a capital X denoted passion till the many messages from my 102-year-old great-aunt-in-law, each carrying giant X's, convinced me otherwise. Similarly, when is it "love", and when "luv"? Whatever it is, I must have got it wrong hundreds of times, and offended as many as I've scared!

I know I no longer need worry in this pandemic if in-the-flesh salutations involve one kiss or three (hurrah). And if biscuits are misplaced in such transactions, there's clearly more for me (double hurrah). Yet the question stands: how much performative love is too much (or too little), and why wasn't I sent the explanatory memo everyone else got? If you know the answers to these, especially the correct number of kisses, please drop them into an envelope and send to The Editor, *Deccan Chronicle*, Hyderabad.

Shreya Sen-Handley is the author of the recently published *Strange: Stories, the award-winning Memoirs of My Body, and a forthcoming book of travel misadventures. Her Twitter and Insta handle is @shreyasenan.*

Subhani

Is Modi govt ready for
Biden-Harris sarkar?

K.C. Singh

The naming of Kamala Devi Harris, an Indian-African-American senator from California, as Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden's running mate, elicited more excitement in the United States and of course in Chennai and elsewhere in India than in ruling BJP circles. When the external affairs ministry's spokesman was asked why no congratulatory message had gone from Prime Minister Narendra Modi or anyone in Cabinet, he incredulously replied that India doesn't interfere in the internal affairs of other countries. Why then, one could ask, did Mr Modi serenade President Donald Trump at the "Howdy Modi" Indian diaspora rally in Houston in September last year? Or goad the crowd by shouting "Abki baar...", awaiting the roaring reply of "Trump sarkar". South Block's nervousness is understandable as external affairs minister S. Jaishankar quarreled with a US congressional committee demanding Indian-origin Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal be excluded for her critique of the Indian government's majoritarian politics. Senator Kamala Harris and other influential Democrats rallied to berate Mr Jaishankar. Ms Harris is, in any case, known human rights crusader.

What then would be Biden-Harris government's foreign policy priorities and their impact on India-US relations, tailored by Modi government to keep Mr Trump's ego massaged. A diaspora assemblage at Houston, followed by lakhs gathered at Ahmedabad, provided Mr Trump the stage

to indulge in populist self-gratification, while irritants like trade were side-stepped. Mr Trump in turn ignored anti-CAA agitation, including rioting in parts of New Delhi as he settled at Rashtrapati Bhavan for the farewell banquet.

James Traub, in *Foreign Policy* magazine, quotes Colin Kahl, then vice-president Joe Biden's national security adviser in 2014-16, that three issues will dominate a Biden administration's agenda. One, the inter-connectedness of the world and global existential challenges like the Covid-19 pandemic; two, democracy at threat across the world; and three, with ongoing power transition between nations the return of great power competition. Mr Biden had earlier this year written in *Foreign Affairs* that the contest between democracy-liberalism and autocracy-fascism did not end in the last century. It lurks in the future again. Mr Biden plans a "Summit for Democracy" in the first year of his presidency. But his vision for resurrection of liberalism and democracy, centres on Europe. By instinct an "Atlanticist" his priority would be revival of European alliance that Mr Trump has scorned. James Traub tellingly remarks: "On many issues, emerging-world democracies like India and Brazil feel much more like the problem than a part of the solution". The smothered voices of liberalism in India would agree.

Many recent books have analysed worldwide democratic recession, seen in Turkey, Poland, Hungary, Brazil, etc. Even autocrats like Russia's Vladimir Putin and Chi-

na's Xi Jinping have eliminated term limits on their rule. *How Democracies Die* by Daniel Ziblatt and Steven Levitsky analyses the malaise. The authors conclude that "Trump's rise may itself pose a challenge to global democracy". Between the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Barack Obama presidency, US governments maintained a broadly pro-democratic foreign policy, except where strategic interests were dominant. But globalisation de-industrialising the US and the rush of immigrants created by Syrian crisis, with greater effect in Europe, and through America's porous southern border created the conditions for the rise of a populist leader playing on the sense of marginalisation of the working and middle-class white majority. The authors' conclusion, written before the pandemic hit the US, is that only President Trump's gross failure would create public disgust and desire for political reform, as happened after Richard Nixon's resignation in 1974. Weighing against this is dominant social media spreading unbridled bigotry, slanted news and prejudice.

America's founding fathers created foolproof institutions and separation of powers to counter power grab by either the executive, legislature or judiciary. They also mandated unwritten shared beliefs and practices that enabled those institutions to work. Two cardinal principles prescribed were mutual tolerance and institutional forbearance. Similar traditions were nurtured in Jawaharlal Nehru's India. Breached in the US, and progressively so in India, these ideals surrendered to highly polarised politics once Newt Gingrich in 1989 gained control over Republicans in two houses of US Congress. Institutional legitimacy of the US Congress got degraded, paving the way for the anti-establishment presidency of Mr Trump. Treating mainstream

media as illegitimate interlopers, attacking political opponents to not just defeat but destroy them and stealing mandates by gerrymandering or vote suppression, as Mr Trump is attempting by attacking postal ballots, or as in India by forming defection-based governments even after losing mandates. All these are signs of slow strangulation of liberal democracy.

New Delhi may today downplay Prime Minister Modi's unwise public political dalliance with Mr Trump, but the latter's campaign is merrily using videos of the Houston and Ahmedabad joint rallies in their publicity blitz to woo Indian-American voters, who mostly favour Democrats. According to Pew Research, Hindus constitute about 51 per cent of the two million-odd diaspora voters, others being Sikhs, Christians and Muslims. Will the diaspora be drawn to Democrats' promises on immigration laws, health insurance and a fairer economic order or accept Mr Modi's endorsement of a divisive, pro-rich Mr Trump, hoping he is better for India?

US voters are living through mishandled pandemic, economic chaos and racial tension caused street violence. Mr Trump is getting traction fanning the white majority's law and order fears, while promising a vaccine and economic turnaround is around the corner. US leadership is critical for addressing vital issues like climate change, anti-globalisation paranoia affecting global trade and investment, and an aggressive China. On November 3 will be known whether a reforming and pro-democracy Biden wins, compelling majoritarian populists globally to reflect and perhaps change, or the US sees the return of disruptive, autocratic and "America First" Trump.

The writer is a former secretary in the external affairs ministry. He tweets at @ambkcsingh.

LETTERS

HEALTH IS WEALTH

Exams next month will put the lives of many students at risk (6 *Opposition-ruled states move SC on NEET, JEE dates, DC, Aug. 29*). Apart from students, even the invigilators will also be at risk. Though many preventive measures are in place, is it possible for everyone to abide by the measures during stress?

Tajunnisa Amin
Secunderabad

The Centre must rethink about conducting NEET and JEE as many states are not prepared to meet the challenges due to pandemic, floods, non-availability of transport and other reasons. States should have been consulted before announcing the dates. Human life is more important than exams. The fear of getting infected will play on the minds of students weakening their aptitude.

P.J. David
Hyderabad

THINK AGAIN

Even as the frightening cases of Covid-19 are coming out daily, the government's plan to reopen cinema halls and other places of public gathering is frightening. Why are they more worried about cinema halls that are not in malls? Is it just income for government to open more Covid centres and beds or are they indirectly inducing corporate leeches squeezing Covid patients?

Garlapaty Sitharamaiah
Hyderabad

GST BETRAYAL

Before the implementation of GST, the Centre promised to compensate states for their losses. The finance minister's claim that there is shortfall in revenues due to an 'Act of God' means there is no compensation for states. However, the promise must be honoured or states will be incapacitated to meet their obligations. This is betrayal of Centre-State understanding.

P.R. Ravinder
Hyderabad

The Centre has run out of excuses after blaming the Opposition, Nehru, Pakistan and China.

Dr Mohd Abdul Mujeeb Siddiqui
Hyderabad

Email your letters to info@deccanmail.com, editor@deccanmail.com. You can also send to Editor, Deccan Chronicle, 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad-500 003.

IA plane with 38
missing

CALCUTTA, Aug. 29 An Indian Airline Fokker Friendship is missing while on a flight from Imphal to Calcutta with 38 people, including a crew of five aboard according to the Airlines sources here. The plane lost contact with the ground control about eight minutes after taking off from Kumbigram airport near Silchar at about 2.35 pm for Gauhati, its next stop. An aerial search by an Indian Air Force helicopter was called off at night fall. A

DC-3 plane leaves Calcutta at 5 am tomorrow to resume the search. The 30-minute flight from Silchar to Gauhati passes over thickly wooded mountainous terrain in North Cachar and Mikir Hills, where the weather is normally cloudy at this time of the year. The passengers including three women and one, then of them had boarded the plane at Imphal and the remaining 25 at Kumbigram.

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

‘23 vs 23’: Is affable Ahmed the ‘villain’ of the piece?

Favouritism stink

It's 23 versus 23. On the face of it, the Congress power struggle is between the 23 dissenters and the Gandhis but a closer look would reveal something additional. Ghulam Nabi Azad, Kapil Sibal, Manish Tiwari and others have problems more with AICC treasurer Ahmed Patel than with Sonia or Rahul. The grudge against otherwise affable Patel is that he is pushing his favourites at all levels of the Congress hierarchy. Since Patel's residential address in New Delhi is 23, Mother Teresa Crescent, Congress insiders are dubbing the leadership challenge as 23 versus 23.

New kid on the block

The BJP's nominee for a Uttar Pradesh Rajya Sabha seat, Zafar-ul Islam, has a past in the Congress. The BJP spokesman who got his nomination for the remaining term of the late Amar Singh from Uttar Pradesh (in Rajya Sabha bypolls, the ruling

party gets the numerical strength) was a part of the Congress social media team till 2014. Zafar, then an investment banker, had joined Deependra Singh Hooda's team and functioned from 15, Gurudwara Rakabgunj Marg, when he became disillusioned with the grand old party. There has been no looking back since. It is a different matter that not everyone in the BJP is happy over the rise and rise of Zafar-ul Islam. Veteran Shahnawaz Hussain was a contender for the Upper House berth.

Interminable wait?

Call it a Covid-19 impact but in the coming Parliament session, Central Hall will be out of bounds for journalists and ex-MPs. The Lok Sabha Speaker has already constituted a panel to look into criteria for issuance of Central Hall passes. Cynics believe by the time the panel submits its report there will be a new Parliament building in the central vista. The panel, headed by TV personality Rajat Sharma, has not



By WAQYANAWIS

been meeting as its chairman wants to discuss issues online while most members feel a physical, offline discussion would be suit-

able. Emails are being exchanged to work out a consensus. Meanwhile, senior journalists who have passes in the Long and Distinguished (L&D) category are most exercised over the delay.

Azad's motivations

The Congress disquiet has rattled many, particularly the manner in which Ghulam Nabi Azad has turned dissident. Azad's term is ending in early 2021 and there is no sign of renomination. At present Azad is the Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, enjoying the perks of a Union minister. There is likelihood that Mallikarjun Kharge, who was the Congress leader in the Lok Sabha during 2014-2019, may get the job in the Upper House. Some Congress insiders see more in Azad's defiance pointing that he has been the only former J&K chief minister who was not booked or detained under the Public Safety Act after the abrogation of Article 370. There is also talk of misuse of the Jammu and Kashmir State Lands (Vesting of

Ownership to the Occupants) Act, 2001, popularly known as the Roshni Act during Azad's chief ministerial stint. Investigations into the land transfers subsequently said to have found that land in Gulmarg and elsewhere in the valley had been given over to ineligible beneficiaries.

Surrender to Sangh

BJP leader Jyotiraditya Scindia was Brecently at the RSS headquarters in Nagpur. It prompted Digvijaya Singh and a number of Madhya Pradesh Congress leaders to twist a notable Buddhist chant, *Buddham Sharanam Gachchami*, to "Sangham Charanam Gachchami". In the original chanting, the disciple supposedly surrenders to the Buddha, the awakened one but in the perverted form, Scindia is accused of taking a shelter in RSS.

The writer is a keen observer of the goings-on in backrooms of power

IN BRIEF

Kansas girl's killer is 5th execution of 2020

Terre Haute: A Kansas girl's killer on Friday became the fifth federal inmate put to death this year, an execution that went forward only after a higher court tossed a ruling that would have required the government to get a prescription for the drug used to kill him. Questions about whether the drug pentobarbital causes pain prior to death had been a focus of appeals for Keith Nelson, 45, the second inmate executed this week in the Trump administration's resumption of federal executions this summer after a 17-year hiatus.

New Orleans pianist Ronnie Kole dies

New Orleans: Ronnie Kole, an acclaimed New Orleans pianist who performed across the globe, has died. He was 89. His death on Thursday night was announced on his website and the Ronnie Kole Entertainment Facebook page. The cause of death was not released. Kole was a Chicago native. In interviews, he said he suffered from a heart condition as a child and was discouraged from playing outdoors. He began learning piano from an aunt and considered himself largely self-taught. He went on the road at 16, he told WWL-TV. A master of a variety of musical styles, he performed for six presidents. He also played a rollicking version of "Amazing Grace" when Pope John Paul II visited New Orleans in 1987.

Royal bros reunite to unveil Diana's statue

London: Britain's Princes William and Harry, believed to have become estranged from each other as the latter stepped back from frontline royalty to move to the US, are expected to reunite to unveil a statue in memory of their late mother, Princess Diana, to mark her 60th birth anniversary next year. Kensington Palace issued a rare joint statement on behalf of the royal brothers on Friday to announce that the memorial will be revealed in the Sunken Garden of Kensington Palace on July 1, 2021. The statue had been commissioned by William, the Duke of Cambridge, and Harry, the Duke of Sussex, the second and sixth in line to the British throne, respectively, a few years ago as a permanent memorial on the grounds of the palace in central London which was their late mother's home.

Nevada man to be 1st virus reinfection in US

Reno: Nevada officials are reporting what may be the first documented case of coronavirus reinfection in the United States, following similar reports earlier this week from Hong Kong and Europe. A 25-year-old Reno man with mild Covid-19 symptoms initially was found to have the virus in April, recovered and tested negative twice, and then tested positive again in June. He was much sicker the second time, with pneumonia that required hospitalization and oxygen treatment.

Genetic tests from each episode showed that viruses were similar in major ways but differed in at least 12 spots that would be highly unlikely from natural evolution of the bug if the man had it continuously rather than being infected a second time, said Mark Pandori, director of the Nevada State Public Health Laboratory.

KENOSHA LAWYER SAYS TEEN ACTED IN SELF-DEFENCE

Kenosha, Wis., Aug. 29: A high-profile lawyer representing the 17-year-old boy charged with killing two protesters and wounding another during demonstrations on the streets of Kenosha, Wisconsin, said on Friday that his client had acted in self-defence. Atlanta-based attorney Lin Wood said video footage of the altercation would vindicate Kyle Rittenhouse despite what he described as misinformation being spread by the media. "Kyle Rittenhouse acted in self-defence. Murder charges are factually unsupportable. An egregious miscarriage of justice is occurring with respect to this 17-year old boy" Wood said on Twitter.

Rittenhouse, who prosecutors say traveled 30 miles (50 km) to Kenosha from his home in Antioch, Illinois, before the shooting at about 11:45 p.m. on Tuesday, is charged with six criminal counts, including first-degree homicide and attempted homicide.



Smoke billows from burning tyres and pallets and fireworks as a few hundred protesters riot in the Rosengard neighbourhood of Malmö, Sweden.

— AP

Riot in Sweden after Danish leader banned from Quran-burning rally

Stockholm, Aug. 29: Protesters threw stones at police and burned tyres in southern Sweden late on Friday, authorities said, hours after an anti-Muslim Danish politician was blocked from attending a Quran-burning rally nearby.

About 300 people were on the streets of Malmö with violence escalating as the evening wore on, according to police and local media.

The demonstration was connected to an incident earlier in the day in which protesters burned a copy of the Islamic holy book, police spokesman Rickard Lundqvist told Swedish tabloid Expressen.

Rasmus Paludan, who leads the far-right Danish anti-immigration party Hard Line, was due to travel to Malmö to speak at that event, which was being held on the same day as weekly prayers for the Muslim sabbath.

But authorities preempted Paludan's arrival by announcing he had been banned from entering Sweden for two years. He was later arrested near Malmö.

"We suspect that he was going to break the law in Sweden," Calle Persson, spokesman for the police in Malmö said.

"There was also a risk

Anti-racism protest crowds flood US

Washington, Aug. 28: Tens of thousands of protesters demanding an end to racial injustice and police brutality thronged the US capital on Friday, signaling a renewed groundswell of anger gripping the nation following a white officer's shooting of African-American Jacob Blake.

Crowds flooded the National Mall for a mass march marking the anniversary of Reverend Martin Luther King Jr's historic "I have a dream" speech on August 28, 1963. Friday's demonstration was dubbed "Get Your Knee Off Our Necks," in reference to George Floyd, who suffocated beneath the knee of a white officer in Minneapolis in May, igniting the most wide-

spread civil unrest in the country in decades.

Al Sharpton, the civil rights activist who gave the eulogy at Floyd's funeral, told the crowd it was time for a "new conversation" with America.

"We need to have a conversation about your racism, about your bigotry, about your hate, about how you would put your knee on our neck while we cry for our lives," he said.

Often fighting back tears, relatives of Floyd, Blake and Breonna Taylor — a black 26-year-old shot dead by police in her own apartment last March — took turns addressing the sea of people, who repeatedly called out the victims' names in response.

— AFP

that his behaviour... would pose a threat to society."

But his supporters went ahead with the rally, and three people were then arrested for inciting racial hatred. Paludan later put up a scathing message on Facebook.

"Sent back and banned

from Sweden for two years. However, rapists and murderers are always welcome!" he wrote.

Paludan last year attracted media attention for burning a Koran wrapped in bacon — a meat that is anathema for Muslims.

— AFP

Many foreign journalists in Belarus lose accreditation

Minsk, Aug. 29: Belarusian authorities on Saturday withdrew the accreditation of several foreign media journalists, including AFP, ahead of the latest demonstration challenging the results of the presidential election.

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, who has been in power since 1994, is facing unprecedented protests since the disputed August 9 election in which he claimed a landslide victory with 80 percent of the vote. The opposition has rejected the results as manipulated, and has organised two major demonstrations this month and called for a large-scale protest on Sunday.

Government spokesman Anatoly Glaz said the decision to revoke the media accreditations was taken on the recommendation of the country's counter-terrorism unit.

He did not specify how many journalists were

affected by the measure, but foreign media including the BBC and Radio Liberty reported the withdrawal of accreditation of several of their journalists.

"The Belarusian Foreign Ministry called me and informed me that my accreditation and that of one of my colleagues as BBC correspondents had been cancelled. They demanded that I return my card," journalist Tatyana Melnichuk said.

Opposition leader Svetlana Tikhanovskaya has fled to neighbouring Lithuania, an EU nation, after claiming she beat the 65-year-old leader at the polls and calling for the protests.

She called news about the withdrawn media accreditations extremely worrying. "If true, it is another sign that this regime is morally bankrupt and the only way it will attempt to cling onto power is by fear and intimidation," she said in a statement.

— AFP

STUDENT LEADER DEFIES THAI'S ROYAL TABOO

Pathum Thani: When university student "Rung" calmly read out 10 demands to reform Thailand's monarchy before thousands of protesters at a pro-democracy rally this month, she defied the country's biggest political taboo. Backed by an arch-royalist military and shielded by draconian royal defamation laws, the superrich monarchy wields enormous influence in nearly every sphere of Thai society.

But 21-year-old Rung — real name Panusaya Sithijirawattanakul — said the Aug. 10 protest at Thammasat University outside Bangkok was "the right time" to ask for change, even though she risked arrest. "When I left the stage, I felt like I had expanded the boundaries ... raised the limits on how people can talk about the monarchy," the bespectacled sociology and anthropology student said. The demands Rung announced that day included more transparency for the royal family's fortune and the abolition of the royal defamation law, which carries a sentence of up to 15 years in prison per charge.

— AFP

YOUNG BLOGGER MOBILISES PROTEST IN BELARUS

Warsaw, Aug. 29: fresh-faced 22-year-old blogger is using nothing more than his keyboard to run the main communications hub for protesters in Belarus as they mount an unprecedented challenge to the regime of President Alexander Lukashenko, often dubbed Europe's last dictator.

Stepan Svetlov is the founder of Nexta Live, a Telegram channel with 2.1 million subscribers that helps mobilise protesters and shares photo and video content from the demonstrations. "It started out as a school project," Svetlov said in an interview in the Polish capital Warsaw where he has been living in exile under police protection after having received death threats.

— AFP

Don calls Biden a 'low-IQ' individual

Trump asserts he will win in November polls

Manchester, Aug. 29: US President Donald Trump on Friday insulted his Democratic challenger Joe Biden as "low-IQ" and barely conscious in a New Hampshire speech reinforcing his strategy of painting himself as the defender of the country against socialist mayhem. The speech, filled with hyperbolic and inaccurate descriptions of life under the Democrats, followed Trump's White House address to the Republican convention late Thursday where he warned that "no one will be safe in Biden's America." Trump told the crowd assembled at the airport in Manchester, New Hampshire, that he was sure of victory on November 3.

"Does anyone have any doubt?" he asked to a chorus of support.

"I will have lost to a low-IQ individual. I don't want that. 'Sleepy Joe,' I don't want it," Trump said of the former vice president and longtime senator. "The guy doesn't know he's alive." Much as he did Thursday at the White House, Trump claimed to be singlehandedly protecting the country from Democratic anarchists.

And he again said that the coronavirus, which has killed more than 1,80,000 Americans already, was under control. "Hopefully we're at the end," he said.

The difference in New Hampshire, where he hosted a scaled-down version of his trademark pre-Coronavirus rallies, was that Trump was able to cut free with ad-libs and even

Harris 'not competent' to be US Prez: Don

Washington, Aug. 29: Kamala Harris is "not competent" to be president, US President Donald Trump has said as he launched an attack on the Indian-origin senator's credentials for the top post.

Addressing his supporters at a Republican campaign rally in New Hampshire on Friday, Trump said he would support seeing a female president in the US but suggested that his daughter and senior White House adviser Ivanka Trump would be a better candidate for such a role.

Harris, 55, was a presidential aspirant until last year before she dropped out of the race because of lack of popular support. Harris returned to political limelight after Joe Biden, the Democratic Party's presidential candidate, picked her as his running mate in the November 3 election.

Born to a Jamaican father and an Indian mother, Harris is the first Indian-American and first

● **THE COMPANY** that owns the Trump International Hotel in Vancouver has filed for bankruptcy.

● **ACCORDING TO** the Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy Canada, TA Hotel Management Limited Partnership filed for bankruptcy on Thursday. Records show the company has CDN\$4.7 million (US\$3.59 million) in liabilities and CDN\$1.1 million (US\$840,000) in assets.

● **THE FIRST** meeting of creditors is expected on Sept. 16.

woman of colour to be picked by a major American political party for the top post. "You know I want to see the first woman president also, but I don't want to see a woman president get into that position the way she'd do it, and she's not competent," Trump said.

— AFP

more personal attacks on his rival.

"We are all that stand between the American people and the left wing mob," he said. "If you want to save democracy from the mob, then you must vote to defeat an extremely poor candi-

date." To cheers and laughter, Trump, 74, described 77-year-old Biden as "weak" and "the worst candidate ever put up by the Democratic party." As he has before, Trump claimed falsely that Biden, a lifelong Catholic, is "against God."

— AFP

Matt Hancock warns of extensive lockdowns

London, Aug. 29: England could face "national action" and "very extensive local lockdowns" in the event of a winter Coronavirus wave, the government said Saturday, with a "worst-case scenario" of 80,000 deaths.

"A second wave is clearly visible in other parts of the world," Health Secretary Matt Hancock told Saturday's Times newspaper.

"Cases go up again, and we have to use very extensive local lockdowns or take further national action. We don't rule that out but we don't want to see it." Britain has been one of the country's hardest hit by the disease, with over 41,000 dead, but has eased lockdown restrictions recently as hospitalisations and deaths dropped. But cases have ticked up in recent weeks and the government is worried about another wave of the virus arriving during flu season.

Although more restrictions could be re-introduced, schools would likely remain open, according to a report prepared for the government by the Sage scientific advisory group and aired on BBC's Newsnight late Friday.

By November "policy measures would be put in place to reduce non-household contacts to half of their normal pre-March 2020 levels," it said.

The report found 85,000 more could die across Britain, with more than 80,000 in England alone, in a "reasonable worst-case scenario."

— AFP

Berlin braces for 'anti-Corona' demo

Berlin, Aug. 29: Thousands of Coronavirus sceptics are set to descend on Berlin on Saturday for a mass protest against pandemic restrictions that was allowed to go ahead after a bitter legal battle.

Police said they will turn out in force and strictly monitor compliance with mask-wearing and social distancing, with Berlin police chief Barbara Slowik warning that if the demonstrators do not adhere to virus safety rules, police will clear the area "very quickly".

"We will not be able or

willing to watch tens of thousands assemble and create infection risks," she added.

Berlin city authorities had previously decided not to allow the Saturday demonstration to go ahead, fearing that the estimated 22,000 protesters would not keep a distance of 1.5 metres apart or comply with face mask requirements.

The ban sparked outrage from organisers and their supporters who flooded social media with angry messages vowing to protest anyway, with some even calling for violence.

— AFP

HK MASS VIRUS TEST PLAN HAMPERED BY SWIRLING CHINA DISTRUST

Hong Kong, Aug. 29: Hong Kong's plan to offer free Coronavirus tests to all residents has become swept up in the festering political debate dividing the city, where many remain deeply distrustful of both local leaders and China.

Billed as a benevolent public health initiative made possible with Chinese help, the city-wide tests are set to start on Tuesday in an attempt to stamp out a third wave of infections that have swept through the densely populated financial hub.

But the involvement of

doctors and companies from the mainland has sent the rumour mills into overdrive and compounded fears of Beijing's surveillance state, while many health experts in the city have questioned the efficacy of a mass testing programme.

On the authoritarian mainland, biometric data forms a crucial part of China's vast security dragnet and many Hong Kongers fear mass testing will lead to widespread DNA collection — something local authorities have strenuously denied.

— AFP

CONTEST FOR POWER

Right-hand man Suga, longtime anchor of government, seen as a possible successor

Japan succession race for PM kicks off

Tokyo, Aug. 29: The race to succeed Prime Minister Shinzo Abe kicked off informally on Saturday, with several contenders announcing their plans to stand, a day after Japan's longest-serving leader announced his resignation.

Abe said he was suffering a recurrence of ulcera-

tive colitis, the condition that forced him to cut short his first term in office, but that he would stay on until his successor is decided.

Exactly how the process will unfold was still unclear, with local media reporting on Saturday that several options were being considered.

Abe's ruling Liberal Democratic Party could opt for a more traditional leadership election, involving lawmakers but also members of the party nationwide.

But the urgency of the situation, as well as the constraints imposed by the coronavirus outbreak, could see the party instead

opt to poll only its lawmakers and regional representatives—a faster process.

A decision on how the election will be held, and when, is expected early next week, along with more clarity on who will stand for the post.

A few would-be candidates have already thrown their hats into the ring,

including party policy chief Fumio Kishida, a mild-mannered former foreign minister considered Abe's personal choice for successor, and ex-defence minister Shigeru Ishiba, who is seen as more popular with voters but commands less party support than some other candidates.

Finance Minister Taro Aso, himself a former prime minister and long considered a likely successor to Abe, has announced he will not stand.

Other possible candidates include powerful chief cabinet secretary Yoshihide Suga, viewed by many as a frontrunner, and current defence minis-

ter Taro Kono, a social-media-savvy former foreign minister who is seen as something of a long-shot.

One woman is among those expected to stand so far: Seiko Noda, a former cabinet minister whose chances are thought to be slim.

— AFP

SHORT TAKES

Humpy helps India reach final

Chennai: Koneru Humpy took the spotlight as she beat Monika Socko in a nervy tie-break to help India pip Poland in the semifinals and reach the summit clash of the FIDE Online Chess Olympiad on Saturday. After the two teams won one round each in regular play, world rapid champion Humpy was pitted against Socko for the Armageddon (a tie-break), and the Indian beat her rival in style with black pieces to clinch a spot in the final. India will play the winner of the other semifinal between Russia and the USA, in the summit clash on Sunday. It was, however, not an easy job for the Indian team as they lost the first round 2-4 before bouncing back strongly in the second with a crushing 4.5-1.5 win. Humpy did the rest in the match-deciding tie-break. Viswanathan Anand came into his own with a much-needed win over Jan-Krzysztof Duda in 78 moves in the second round after losing to his opponent in the first round. — *PTI*

Djokovic in final, Osaka withdraws

New York: World number one Novak Djokovic battled into the ATP and WTA Western & Southern Open final despite a neck problem while Japan's Naomi Osaka withdrew from the tournament after reaching the final due to a left hamstring injury on Saturday, just two days before the start of the US Open. Djokovic was treated twice by a trainer for neck issues but rallied to defeat Spanish eighth seed Roberto Bautista Agut 4-6, 6-4, 7-6 (7/0). He will face Milos Raonic in Saturday's final after the Canadian eliminated Greek fourth seed Stefanos Tsitsipas 7-6 (7/5), 6-3. The world number 10's withdrawal means meaning Victoria Azarenka takes the title by walkover. "I'm sorry to have to withdraw today with an injury. I pulled my left hamstring yesterday in the second set tiebreak and it has not recovered overnight as I had hoped. This has been an emotional week and I want to thank everyone for the outpouring of support," Osaka said in a statement. — *AP*

Kristoff wins first stage of Tour

Nice, France: Norway's Alexander Kristoff won the opening stage of the Tour de France on Saturday in a mass bunch sprint along the iconic Promenade des Anglais in Nice. UAE Team Emirates rider Kristoff takes hold of the race leader's yellow jersey following a stage littered with crashes on a slippery 154km loop around Nice, where the finish line was limited to just 100 spectators due to strict coronavirus health protocols. The Tour de France set off from the French Riviera on Saturday, two months later than planned and under the shadow of a coronavirus pandemic which could still shatter hopes of the world's greatest bike race making it to the Paris finish line in three weeks' time. — *AFP*

NBA playoffs set to resume

Washington: NBA playoff games are set to resume on Saturday, but players are determined to keep the focus on the fight for social justice and racial equality with the help from club owners and the league. NBA commissioner Adam Silver and National Basketball Players Association executive director Michele Roberts said in a joint statement on Friday that "All parties agreed to resume NBA playoff games on Saturday". Players and the league agreed to form a social justice coalition to address a broad range of issues including access to voting, promoting civic engagement and police and criminal justice reform. The announcement came on a third day of postponed NBA playoff games after the Milwaukee Bucks — shocked by the police shooting of Jacob Blake in Kenosha, Wisconsin — refused to take the court on Wednesday for a scheduled Eastern Conference first-round matchup against Orlando in the NBA's Covid-19 quarantine bubble. — *AFP*

DOUBLE WHAMMY

Raina pulls out of IPL, virus count touches 13

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR
CHENNAI, AUG. 29

Over a dozen Covid-19 positive cases in the Chennai Super Kings camp and a surprise pullout by Suresh Raina have sent shock waves across IPL teams based in Dubai and Abu Dhabi. Even though the other teams have settled into their bubbles and begun training, the Covid-19 scare has raised serious doubts about the tournament, scheduled to start on September 19.

The BCCI is yet to announce the fixtures as different health protocols in Dubai and Abu Dhabi have complicated the scheduling issue.

As defending champions, Mumbai Indians were expected to take on CSK in the opener but now that the M.S. Dhoni-led team's pre-tournament camp is in disarray, BCCI could give them extra time and rework the plan.

A top CSK official said the team is looking to start training by September 5, with those who tested positive expected to rejoin the bio-bubble later.

As many as 13 from CSK have tested positive and all of them have been moved to a different hotel for a two-week isolation. "All the affected personnel as well as their close contacts are asymptomatic and have been isolated from other team members," said a BCCI release without mentioning the name of the franchise or players.

FOCUS ON COUNSELLING

As Raina was reportedly 'worried' about the growing number of cases within the bubble and dealing with family issues, the focus of the teams has now shifted to counselling their players. A few teams, including the Super Kings, are said to have sought help from mental health experts to deal with the situation. "It's very important to survive in a bio-bubble where players have to cope with Covid-19 fear, isolation and anxiety. We sense that some players are not their usual self with so many restrictions and



Suresh Raina bats during a training session in Chennai in this file photo.

protocols to follow," a team official said. Players have been constantly monitored through a gadget (a fob) which they are supposed to wear all the time.

Apart from that, they have to feed their body temperature in a mobile app on a daily basis.

FOREIGN PLAYERS JITTERY

A foreign player who is currently in the CSK bio-bubble has reportedly raised concerns over the pre-departure conditioning camp in Chennai which is believed to be the source of infection. A net bowler and a member of the social media team had to be left out of the contingent after they

tested positive in Chennai. CSK were the only team to organise a pre-departure conditioning camp for their Indian players at the insistence of skipper Dhoni. The 'jittery' foreign player has questioned the decision to hold the camp in a city that witnesses at least 1,000 new positive cases every day.

BHAJJI TO JOIN CSK CAMP ON SEPT. 1

Off-spinner Harbhajan Singh, who opted out of CSK's conditioning camp in Chennai, is expected to join the squad on September 1. He had withdrawn from the team's travel schedule because of personal reasons.

KOHLI RETURNS TO NETS AFTER FIVE MONTHS

Dubai, Aug. 29: Indian captain Virat Kohli hit the nets for the first time in five months and so did his white-ball deputy Rohit Sharma and a few other big names, beginning their preparations in earnest for the upcoming IPL in the UAE.

Despite coming off a long break, Kohli had a good hit in the nets which was also attended by South African pace legend Dale Steyn and RCB team director Mike Hesson, among others.

Hesson was seen interacting with both Kohli and Steyn. "Been 5 months since the last time I stepped onto the field. Felt like 6 days when I got into the nets. Great first session with the boys," Kohli tweeted.

In Abu Dhabi, Rohit led his team into the ground and even as he batted, his pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah ran in to bowl some quick deliveries and get back his rhythm.

Meanwhile, Rajasthan Royals' fielding coach Dishant Yagnik has recovered from COVID-19 and joined his team here ahead of the Indian Premier League after clearing two consecutive coronavirus tests.

— *PTI*

Banton sparkles before rain washes out 1st T20

Manchester, Aug. 29: England rising star Tom Banton made a fine 71 before Pakistan fought back in the first Twenty20 international at Old Trafford on Friday only for rain to reduce the match to a no-result washout.

England had threatened a huge total while the 21-year-old Banton was compiling his maiden fifty in four T20s at this level.

But his exit left England 109-3 and sparked a collapse that saw four wickets lost for 14 runs in 19 balls before rain fell with

England 131-6 off 16.1 overs.

The umpires held a lengthy inspection but decided shortly after 9:00 pm (2000 GMT) that the outfield was too wet to get the game back on.

But Banton, opening after Jason Roy was ruled out with a side injury, at least had a night to remember. "It was good fun," Banton told Sky Sports. "I struggled to begin with, they bowled quite nicely and then I just backed myself when the spinners came on."

— *AFP*

Hamilton dedicates pole to Boseman

Spa-Francorchamps (Belgium), Aug. 29: Lewis Hamilton delivered two successive record breaking qualifying laps to claim his sixth Belgian Grand Prix pole position and a record-increasing 93rd of his career with a flawless demonstration of speed on Saturday.

The championship leader clocked a best lap in one minute and 41.252 seconds in the final seconds of a session that he dominated in a personal tribute to the Hollywood film actor Chadwick Boseman, who died on Friday. His Mercedes team-mate Valtteri Bottas was second, to complete another 'black

● It was Hamilton's fifth pole in seven races this year, a feat he said he had wanted to achieve in memory of Boseman whose life had been an inspiration to Hamilton.

arrows' front row of the grid, but he was more than half a second adrift of Hamilton's pace.

It was Hamilton's fifth pole in seven races this year, a feat he said he had wanted to achieve in memory of Boseman whose life had been an inspiration to Hamilton.

"Today was a very, very clean session for me and the end of the lap was getting better and better. We did such a lot of work for this in the back-ground."

Max Verstappen, who trails Hamilton by 37 points in the drivers' title race, took third place for Red Bull ahead of Renault's Daniel Ricciardo, who aborted his final lap, and Alex Albon in the second Red Bull. After winning last year's race, Charles Leclerc and his Ferrari team-mate Sebastian Vettel were eliminated during Q2 and will start Sunday's race from 13th and 14th positions.

— *AFP*



Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton celebrates as he stands on his car after securing his 93rd pole position during the qualifying session at the Spa-Francorchamps circuit in Spa on Saturday ahead of the Belgian Grand Prix.

— *AFP*

NATIONAL SPORTS | DAY

Players receive awards virtually

New Delhi, Aug. 29: India's sporting heroes were bestowed the annual national awards in an unparalleled online ceremony amid the COVID-19 pandemic during which athletes logged in from multiple cities to be honoured by President Ram Nath Kovind.

This year a whopping 74 were picked for the national honours, including an unprecedented five Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratnas and 27 Arjuna awardees.

Of these, 60 attended the virtual ceremony conducted across 11 Sports Authority of India (SAI) centres in various cities.

Cricketers Rohit Sharma (Khel Ratna) and Ishant Sharma (Arjuna) missed the ceremony due to their IPL commitments, while star wrestler Vinesh Phogat (Khel Ratna) and shuttler Satwiksairaj Rankireddy (Arjuna) had to pull out of the ceremony after testing positive for the Coronavirus.

The other three Khel Ratna winners — table tennis player Manika Batra, Paralympic gold-medallist Mariyappan Thangavelu and women's hockey team captain Rani Rampal — attended the ceremony.

While Batra logged in from Pune, Thangavelu

and Rampal joined from the Bengaluru SAI centre.

President Kovind applauded as names of the attending awardees were called out and their achievements cited as is the convention.

Missing, however, was the grandeur of the Rashtrapati Bhavan's Durbar Hall.

Sports minister Kiren Rijiju on Saturday defended his government's decision to confer a record 74 National Sports Awards this year, including an unprecedented five Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna honours, a move which faced severe criticism from all quarters.

RIJIJU CONDOLES RAI'S DEATH

Rijiju on Saturday condoled the death of veteran athletics coach Purushottam Rai, who was to receive this year's Dronacharya award in the lifetime category.

Rai, who was to be bestowed the honour on Saturday and had even participated in the dress rehearsal for the first-of-its-kind virtual ceremony, died on Friday evening after suffering a heart attack in Bengaluru. He was 79.

— *PTI*

MASSIVE HIKE IN PRIZE MONEY OF RATNA, ARJUNA

New Delhi, Aug. 29: Sports minister Kiren Rijiju on Saturday officially announced a massive hike in the prize money in four of the seven categories of the National Sports and Adventure Awards.

The prize money for the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award has been increased to a whopping ₹25 lakh from the previous amount of ₹7.5 lakh, while Arjuna Award has been enhanced to ₹15 lakh from ₹5 lakh.

The Dronacharya (Lifetime) awardees, who were earlier given ₹5 lakh, will now be richer by ₹15 lakh, while Dronacharya (Regular) winners will be given ₹10 lakh instead of ₹5 lakh.

The prize money of Dhyan Chand Award has been increased to ₹10 lakh from ₹5 lakh. The hike will come into effect from this year.

— *PTI*

14-year struggle paid off: Dutee

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO
BHUBANESWAR, AUG. 29

● Dutee Chand was among 27 sportspersons to have been selected for the Arjuna Award. With this, she became the ninth Arjuna awardee from Odisha.

Ace sprinter from Odisha Dutee Chand, who was on Saturday conferred with the prestigious Arjuna Award for the year 2020, said her struggle had brought her 'sweet successes and recognitions'.

"My 14 years of struggle and hard work has brought me enough successes and recognition. This Arjun Award is a very special recognition for me. Every sportsperson cherishes a dream to get it in his lifetime," Dutee said while receiving the award from President Ram Nath Kovind.

The athlete who in the past faced questions on her gender and was banned temporarily from international events thanked followers and supporters for standing by her during hard times.

She also took to micro-blogging site Twitter and wrote, "Grateful and proud of my journey till now. Lots to achieve still. Let's

get to work!"

The sprint queen of India was nominated for the award in the discipline of athletics. She was among 27 sportspersons to have been selected for the Arjuna Award. With this, she became the ninth Arjuna awardee from Odisha.

Earlier, eight sportspersons from Odisha have won the Arjuna Award. They include Minati Mohapatra (cyclist), Bijay Kumar Satpathy (weightlifter), Rachita Mistry (athlete), Dilip Turkey (hockey), Jyoti Sunita Kullu (hockey), Ignace Turkey (hockey), K. Ravi Kumar (weightlifter), and Pramod Bhagat (para-badminton).



Ayaz Memon
Over The Top

Star player Suresh Raina pulling out of the IPL for 'personal reasons' just a day after a clutch of people attached to the Chennai Super Kings squad in the UAE tested positive for Covid made it a double whammy for the franchise and the league.

On Friday evening, news emerged from Dubai that several from the CSK group had tested positive. Identities and precise number of those infected by the virus was not clarified by either the franchise or the

BCCI. In these excruciating circumstances this is neither smart nor desirable.

On Saturday afternoon, the BCCI finally put out an official release, confirming that 13 people associated with the tournament — players, support staff, management, etc — had tested positive. The release, however, did not still identify those afflicted.

Nor did the franchise (assuming CSK is the only affected party), which created more questions than were answered. Raina

returning home for reasons unknown exacerbated the situation.

The franchise was perhaps looking to do damage control, and the BCCI for a full status report before going public. Both understandable in ordinary circumstances. But secrecy in these times is an invitation to wild speculation.

The BCCI did clarify though that all 13 who tested positive "as well as their close contacts are asymptomatic and have been isolated from other team members". They will be attended to by the IPL medical staff.

This is in keeping with standard operating procedures.

That prompt action has been taken is also reassuring, but I still can't fathom the need to hide the identi-

ties of those infected. It tinges the situation unnecessarily with controversy. More importantly, it is unfair on everybody else involved in the tournament.

It is unclear what 'personal reasons' prompted Raina to return. There could be some other compelling grounds, but for argument's sake, it is perfectly reasonable if this was because of Covid-related anxiety too.

Since the time big time cricket resumed in June, players have been given the liberty to join a series/tournament or not, without fear of recrimination. Three West Indies players — Shimron Hetmyer, Darren Bravo and Kemo Paul — skipped the tour to England for personal safety.

Dread of the Coronavirus is not misplaced, and players cannot be faulted for prioritising their families and themselves over cricket. That elite athletes are immune to Covid 19 because of their supreme fitness, has been shown to be a fallacy.

Tennis world no.1 Novak Djokovic, among the fittest sportspersons on the planet, tested positive (along with some other players) during the ill-fated Adria Tour he organized a few months back.

Djokovic had cavalierly underplayed the Covid threat. Players on the Adria Tour mixed with spectators, in fact even attended after match parties where social distancing was completely disregarded. The consequences were harrowing.

This brings us back to the issue of the 13 people in the IPL who have tested positive in the UAE. How did this happen when they had cleared everything that the bio-secure bubble protocol demanded before leaving for the gulf a week back, as also in the time there subsequently before the calamitous tests on Friday?

Was it that the tests done in India or the earlier ones in UAE, were erratic? This is not impossible. Remember Mohammed Hafeez's flip-flop test results before he was cleared to join the Pakistan team to England? Was the problem then in the diagnostic analyses done earlier?

Or is it because these people came in contact with carriers of Corona in some

other way, which suggests a loophole in the bio-secure bubble, or a contravention of laid down SOPs? This becomes a far more serious issue if true.

Whatever the cause, events of the past couple of days should set alarm bells clanging violently in the BCCI. There clearly needs to be a more diligent implementation of the SOPs with the active and total participation of franchise owners/management, players, support staff et al. The vigil has to be strict, and even the most minor transgression — by anybody — has to be treated unsparingly.

If the problem is not arrested asap, the league itself could collapse. Worse, it would also imperil India's tour of Australia scheduled at the year-end.