

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

COIMBATORE | WEDNESDAY 12 | AUGUST 2020

WEATHER



Max: 31°C
Min: 23°C
Rainfall: Nil

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Aadi 28
Tithi: Navami
Star: Krithigai
Rahukalam:
12 noon to 1.30 pm
Yamagandam:
7.30 am to 9 am

PRAYERS

Fajar: 4.41am
Zohar: 12.20 pm
Asar: 3.28 pm
Maghrib: 6.34 pm
Isha: 7.49 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.32 PM

SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.57 AM

MOONRISE TODAY 11.58 AM

MOONSET TOMORROW 12.40 PM

CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+61,202)	(+835)
23,28,355	46,188

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+5,834)
TN: 3,08,649 5,159

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

2,03,86,497

DEATHS

7,41,727

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES
213

worldometers.info

Pranab Mukherjee remains critical, on ventilator support

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 11

Former President Pranab Mukherjee's health worsened Tuesday and he continues to be critical, on ventilatory support, at the Army's Research and Referral Hospital in Delhi. Hospital officials said Mr Mukherjee had not shown any improvement since Monday, when he was operated upon for a clot in the brain.

38 killed in Pakistan in rain-related incidents

Karachi: As many as 38 people were killed in the recent spell of heavy rain and flash floods in Pakistan's Balochistan province and Karachi, the authorities said on Tuesday. The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) said that 28 people died in Karachi in rain-related incidents in the last one month while another 10 fatalities were recorded in Balochistan.

COUNTER POINT



He is unable to understand online classes... let's arrange online tuitions!

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BJP wants e-pass scrapped



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Trump evacuated after man shot outside WH

SPORT | 8

Maskless Jadeja wife in row with cop



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PUTIN'S DAUGHTER ALSO INOCULATED

Russia claims first Covid-19 vaccine, names breakthrough 'Sputnik V'

Moscow, Aug.11: Russia on Tuesday became the first country to approve a coronavirus vaccine, a move that was met with international skepticism and unease because the shots have only been studied in dozens of people.

President Vladimir Putin announced the Health Ministry's approval and said one of his two adult daughters already was inoculated. He said the vaccine underwent the necessary tests and was shown to provide lasting immunity to the coronavirus, although Russian authorities have offered no proof to back up claims of safety or effectiveness.

"I know it has proven efficient and forms a stable immunity," Putin said. "We must be grateful to those who made that first step very important for our country and the entire world."

However, scientists in Russia and other countries sounded an alarm, saying that rushing to offer the vaccine before final-stage testing could backfire. What's called a Phase 3 trial — which involves tens of thousands



● **"This morning, for the first time in the world, a vaccine against the new coronavirus was registered. I know that it is quite effective, that it gives sustainable immunity," Russian President Vladimir Putin said**

of people and can take months — is the only way to prove if an experimental vaccine is safe and really works.

By comparison, vaccines entering final-stage testing in the U.S. require studies of 30,000 people each. Two vaccine candidates already have begun those huge studies, with three more set to get underway by fall.

"Fast-tracked approval will not make Russia the leader in the race, it will just expose consumers of the vaccine to unnecessary danger," said Russia's Association of Clinical Trials Organizations, in urging government officials to postpone approving the vaccine without completed advanced trials.

While Russian officials have said large-scale production of the vaccine wasn't scheduled until September, Deputy Prime Minister Tatyana Golikova said vaccination of doctors could start as early as this month. Officials say they will be closely monitored after the injections. Mass vaccination may begin as early as October.

"We expect tens of thousands of volunteers to be vaccinated within the next months," Kirill Dmitriev, chief executive of the Russian Direct Investment Fund that bankrolled the vaccine, told reporters.

The vaccine developed by the Gamaleya Institute in Moscow with assistance from Russia's Defense Ministry uses a different virus — the common cold-

causing adenovirus — that's been modified to carry genes for the "spike" protein that coats the coronavirus, as a way to prime the body to recognize if a real COVID-19 infection comes along.

That's a similar technology as vaccines being developed by China's CanSino Biologics and Britain's Oxford University and AstraZeneca — but unlike those companies, Russian scientists haven't published any scientific information about how the vaccine has performed in animal tests or in early-stage human studies.

Dmitriev said even as Russian doctors and teachers start getting vaccinated, advanced trials are set to start Wednesday that will involve "several thousand people" and span several countries, including the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, the Philippines and possibly Brazil.

The Associated Press couldn't find documentation in the Russian Health Ministry's records indicating that permission to start the advanced trials was granted. —AP

10 States must do more: Modi

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 11

As coronavirus deaths continue unabated, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said 10 states, including his native Gujarat, have 80 per cent of active cases, which must be arrested.

Interacting with these states' chief ministers, Mr Modi said there was an urgent need to ramp up testing in Bihar, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Telangana.

He noted daily tests had reached almost seven lakhs and rising, which helped in identification and containment.

The Chief Ministers of Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra were also present at the meeting, along with Karnataka's deputy Chief Minister.

The Prime Minister said as these 10 states had 80 per cent active cases, if they could "defeat" the virus, the country would gain.

India, among the world's top 20 countries in coronavirus cases, however, ranks 17th in conducting tests.

It is testing only 18,000 people per million, and only Pakistan, Mexico and Bangladesh are behind it in testing terms.

Britain and the United States test 2.70 lakh and two lakh people per million.



Narendra Modi

TN CM asks for ₹9,000 cr for Covid fight

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG. 11

Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami urged the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to allocate ₹9,000 crore as a special grant to combat Covid-19 and its after-effects on the State economy, besides stepping up to ₹3,000 crore the Emergency Response and Health Systems Preparedness package.

"We have received ₹512.64 crore from the Centre in two tranches under the package out of an envelope of ₹712.64 crore allotted to Tamil Nadu," Palaniswami said while addressing the meeting of Chief Ministers with the Prime Minister through video conference on Tuesday.



TEARFUL FAREWELL

Wife Sushma Sathe, younger son Dhananjay Sathe (blue shirt) and elder son Shantanu (black shirt) pay their last respects to Wing Commander (retired) Deepak Sathe before his cremation at Tagore Nagar (Vikhroli) crematorium in Mumbai, on Tuesday. Sathe, pilot-in-command of the Air India Express plane that crashed in Kerala last week, was cremated with state honours. — PTI

Don't want vendetta politics: Pilot

Jaipur, Aug. 11: Congress leader Sachin Pilot here on Tuesday said he has not demanded any post from the party but wants that there is no vendetta politics against the MLAs who stood by him.

Pilot said this as he returned to Jaipur nearly a month after he rebelled against Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot.

The former state Congress chief also hoped that the three-member committee constituted by

the party high command to look into the issues will start its work soon.

On Monday, a meeting between Sachin Pilot and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had signalled an "amicable resolution" of nearly a month-long Rajasthan political crisis ahead of the crucial assembly session beginning August 14.

About the meeting, Pilot told reporters, "I did not ask for any position from the party. I told the party



not to act against our MLAs in a spirit of malice. There should not be vendetta politics against them and this has been

Every worker wants Rahul to head party: Congress

New Delhi, Aug 11: The Congress on Tuesday said every party worker wants Rahul Gandhi to be its president and hoped that good things will happen in future.

Congress chief spokesperson, Randeep Surjewala said Rahul has shown the courage and mettle to take on the government by "pointing out and criticising every anti-people policy". He said "not 99 per cent, but 100 per cent of Congressmen and women across India, those who belong to Congress ideology, those who have faith in the Congress philosophy and those who have sacrificed their self to tread the path of the Congress party want Rahul to be the Congress president". —PTI

ensured. Yesterday, Priyanka Gandhi said we are members of a family." Pilot said those who doubted their loyalty, will have to face the reality now.

"Our commitment is 100 per cent for the people of Rajasthan," the former deputy chief minister said. He said differences can be ideological or due to the working style but "there is no space for personal malice, ill-feelings and personal confrontation in politics". —PTI

Govt okays military procurement worth ₹8,722 crore for IAF

New Delhi, Aug. 11: The defence ministry on Tuesday approved military procurement worth ₹8,722 crore including 106 basic trainer aircraft for the Indian Air Force, officials said.

They said the basic trainer aircraft named HTT-40 will be procured from state-run aerospace major Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL). The procurement proposals were approved by the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), the defence ministry's highest

decision making body on procurement.

The meeting was chaired by defence minister Rajnath Singh. In a statement, the defence ministry said the DAC also accorded approvals that are likely to speed up the procurement of AK-203 rifles and Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) 'upgrades'. Under the UAV upgrade project, the government is likely to arm some of them with laser-guided bombs and precision-guided munitions. —PTI

Deaths of jumbos in Kovai forests raise concern

DC CORRESPONDENT
COIMBATORE, AUG. 11

The sick wild female elephant died without responding to treatment, spiking the death toll to 17 in the Coimbatore forest division in the last 90 days.

The serial deaths of wild elephants in the Coimbatore forest division, like in Botswana, had left activists and NGOs in the district worried about the situation. They have also demanded the department

to share the pathology and postmortem reports on social media, and environment conservation groups.

More particularly, such types of elephant deaths are happening in and around Bhavani Sagar reservoir near Sirumugai and Mettupalayam ranges, and death rate is on the rise. After a lengthy discussion with 'greens' over social media, district forest official D Venkatesh disclosed particulars here on Tuesday, including the

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postmortem report.

He said the postmortem was carried out by Coimbatore forest veterinarian Dr A Sukumar, along with Asst. veterinary surgeons Dr K P Prabhu and Dr Siva Radhika. In their post-mortem report, the doctors have claimed the ele-

phant's age to be between 15 to 16 years, with no external injuries or fight marks on its body.

On the other hand, doctors found severely congested lungs, heart, brain, liver and lots of round worms, a congested intestinal mucous membrane and undigested material. The

stomach mucous membrane was congested with fluid materials and worms.

The samples were collected for forensic analysis and histopathology examination, bacteriological and virology culture.

The exact cause of death will be known only after receiving the laboratory reports. Hemorrhage could have been caused due to severe stress, added the DFO.

"When animals become weak, they fall victims to

SHORT TAKES

Abin worth ₹4.5L seized, 5 arrested

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUCHY, AUG. 11

The Tiruchy district unit of the organised crime investigation unit (OCIU) wing police, late on Monday night, arrested five persons in connection with the smuggling of 1.8 kg of 'abin' worth ₹4.5 lakh, during their routine vehicle check at Mannarpuram, in the city.

Police said based on information, an OCIU team led by DSP Senthilkumar intercepted a car and seized some quantity of abin from the car, and secured its two occupants, Saravanan and Jeyaprakash, of Tiruchy.

They were later handed over to the Narcotic Intelligence Bureau (NIB) CID police team led by DSP E Kamaraj, who grilled them. Based on their information, police secured three more persons of Perambalur and seized the contraband from them also. DSP Kamaraj told *DC* that two cars used in the crime were also seized. All the five were remanded to judicial custody, he added.

Don't oppose NEP, BJP tells CM

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUCHY, AUG. 11

The local BJP unit has urged Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami to reconsider his categorical announcement that the state would follow the two-language formula.

BJP state spokesperson, Er Subramanian, in a press conference here on Tuesday, said, since there is no ban on mother tongue education in NEP, state governments opposing the new education policy for political reasons, should give up their opposition.

Claiming that the education standard in the state had taken a steep dive during both the successive DMK and AIADMK rule, there is an overwhelming response from people in favour of NEP. Moreover, NEP will provide equal importance to all languages in the country, and because of this, people will have education in toto by 2030, he added.

Subramanian said that the TN BJP unit would organise an one-crore signature campaign in support of the NEP, and also explain the significance of NEP through wall posters.

Referring to DMK RS member, Kanimozhi's CISF episode, Subramanian said her claim was a total lie for which she should tender her apology.

Subramanian said that the TN BJP unit would organise an one-crore signature campaign in support of the NEP, and also explain the significance of NEP through wall posters

Is it so crucial to know if Kani knows Hindi?

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR | DC
CHENNAI, AUG. 11

A contemporary myth that is being widely circulated in Tamil Nadu, particularly on social media, is that Kanimozhi Karunanidhi, DMK MP representing Thoothukudi constituency in the Lok Sabha, had translated the Hindi speech of former Deputy Prime Minister Devail into Tamil way back in 1989.

A reader of this newspaper, too, wrote in to the editor averring with authority what BJP leader H. Raja had put out on Facebook, stating that as a 21-year-old Kanimozhi had proved her knowledge of Hindi in front of a huge audience. Was the reader present there on the occasion or does he know anyone who witnessed the incident? He had not mentioned it.

In fact there seems to be a big movement out there to drive home the point that the MP knows Hindi though none of those who seek to prove it by citing that 1989 event have come out with any evidence. If at all the then Chief Minister of the state had put on stage his young daughter, it would have been on the pages of all newspapers the

NEWS ANALYSIS

In fact there seems to be a big movement out there to drive home the point that the MP knows Hindi though none of those who seek to prove it by citing that 1989 event have come out with any evidence

next day. But nothing has been produced to substantiate the claim by all those raving about the imagined incident.

Even if the myth has been created adopting Goebbelsian propaganda techniques, should not those who repeat it at least raise their own doubts? How could a student studying only Tamil and English in school and college and growing up in a home where the parents do not speak Hindi have mastered the language well enough to translate a political speech? Nobody asked the question because they were not bothered to find out the truth.

Instead, even discussions on social media and elsewhere on the MP being insulted by an officer of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) at the airport revolved on the million dol-

lar question: Does she know Hindi or not? With no one bothering to authenticate the translation story, some journalists came on social media to say that she did not translate the speech of Devail. Some had even given the name of the real translator. Even that is not substantiated and hence immaterial.

But is it so important to know if Kanimozhi is proficient in Hindi or not? Even if she knows Hindi, does not she have the right to ask the CISF officer to explain things in a language that all the passengers at the particular airport would understand? Definitely there are millions of people in Tamil Nadu who travel by air but do not speak a single word in Hindi.

So when people like H. Raja jump in with false claims in support of an unknown arrogant CISF officer, who flaunted her Hindi chauvinism unabashedly, it becomes clear that they too support Hindi imposition on the people of Tamil Nadu. They have no qualms about justifying the CISF officer, who had suggested that if you are an Indian you should know Hindi. It is a tragedy that all those who are out to

prove to the world that Kanimozhi knows Hindi does not want to ask if a security officer at the airport has the powers to decide a passenger's nationality.

Another BJP acolyte and comedian S Ve Sekar, in an earlier occasion, claimed that Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami knew Hindi, prompting the Chief Minister to ask: How does he know? Of course the Chief Minister dismissed Sekar as a man of no consequence who had a penchant to run and hide himself when a case was filed against him.

But what is on display now is the revival of an ancient discourse by the Hindi protagonists that top politicians in the state know Hindi but would not allow others to learn the language. It is coming up in the context of Tamil Nadu standing up to protect its rights on education as the debate over the National Education Policy rages. For the people, however, it does not matter whether leaders like Palaniswami and Kanimozhi know Hindi or not. They would decide what languages they would like to learn.

IUML chief greets SL poll winners

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUCHY, AUG. 11

The national president of the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) Prof K M Kader Mohideen, congratulated former Sri Lankan minister and president of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress party, Rauff Hakeem, for his poll victory from Kandy district, to the Sri Lankan parliament in the recent elections. In his message to Rauff Hakeem, Prof Kader Mohideen recalled his field service in the recent parliamentary elections, where he coordinated with the Tamils and Muslims, due to which 46 representatives from the Tamil and Muslim community in Sri Lanka were elected to parliament. On behalf of the IUML, Kader Mohideen also congratulated the SL Muslim Congress candidates H M M Haris Fyzeel Kasim, Habis Nazeer Ahmed, M S Thowpeeg, who were elected to parliament.

Vegetable vendor, goon murdered in Chennai

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG. 11

At least two persons were murdered within the St Thomas Mount district police limits on Monday night.

The first murder was reported at Mudichur near Tambaram at 9.30 pm on Monday. The man killed was identified as Ravi (40), a vegetable vendor and a resident of Nethaji Colony in Mudichur.

Colours of India



Employees at Khadi Gramodyog Bhavan on Anna Salai, Triplicane, showcase the national flags readied for the upcoming Independence Day. — DC

BCI extends time to furnish details of advocates till Sept. 30

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG. 11

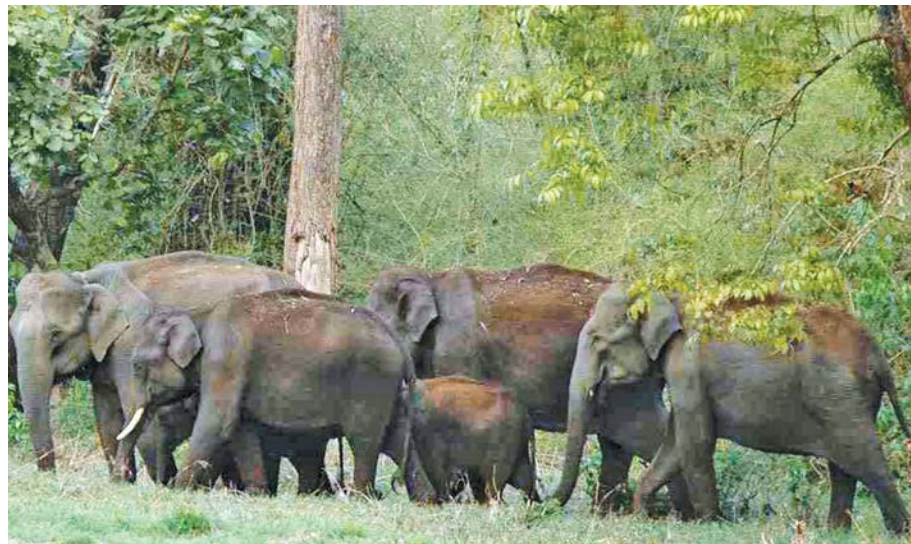
The Bar Council of India has extended the time limit till September 30, 2020, for the State Bar Councils/Bar Associations across the country to furnish the details of every practising advocates as per the requirement of the e-committee of the Supreme Court of India for the purpose of the scheme of the e-committee of the Supreme Court to train advocates and make them computer friendly.

In a letter addressed to all presidents and secretaries, all the bar associations in the country, BCI secretary Srimanto Sen said in view of the requests received from various quarters including various Bar

Associations and the State Bar Councils to extend the last date for furnishing the information as per the format required by the e-committee of the Supreme Court of India, on account of hardship being faced due to Covid-19, it is hereby informed to all, the time period is hereby extended till September 30, 2020. It should be ensured that by such date the required information should be supplied by the respective Bar Associations to the e-mail ID bci.scinfo@gmail.com, he added.

He said individual advocates who are not members of any Bar Association may kindly furnish such information to the State Bar Councils concerned and the State Bar Councils may further furnish such

information to the Bar Council of India. He clarified that on May 2, 2020, an e-mail sent by the BCI to all State Bar Councils asking for information as required by the e-committee of the Supreme Court. Thereafter the same was followed up with the secretaries of the of State Bar Councils repeatedly by way of WhatsApp and telephonic calls. However, as the information which was received from some State Bar Councils was inadequate and in fact some State Bar Councils were unable to furnish any information at all, which they stated on account of difficulties due to Covid-19, therefore it was deemed necessary to issue the letter dated July 24, 2020, he added.



World Elephant Day

Give priority to jumbo conservation, say experts

B. RAVICHANDRAN | DC
OOTY, AUG. 11

As the globe observes World Elephant Day, today, experts in wildlife conservation have called for an in-depth study on the new-era challenges shrouding elephant conservation, especially in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve (NBR), the first of its kind in the country.

Founder of Wildlife and Nature Conservation Trust, N Sadiq Ali, said that in recent years, the growth of invasive plant species, mostly weeds, in the jungles pose a bigger threat to the growth of naturally available fodder in the jungles for the jumbos, which need relatively more food for its survival.

"The jungles in the NBR, for which the Nilgiris is the core centre, had been witnessing a steady increase in alien as well as invasive plant species, mostly weeds like lantana and parthenium, that tend to spread rapidly and occupy more space in the forest floor. These invasive species mask the growth of naturally growing jungle plant species that serve as natural fodder for elephants. The overgrowth of these invasive plant species would, in course of time, create fodder scarcity for the jumbos leading to other undesirable consequences. Hence, the need of the hour is to thoroughly study the issue and find solutions to eradicate them," said Sadiq Ali. Assistant professor,

Wildlife Biology and Zoology, Government Arts College here, Dr B Ramakrishnan, a well-known name in elephant studies, said that of late, the mysterious death of young jumbos in the jungle fringes in Sirumugai limits in Coimbatore, a part of NBR, has become a cause of concern. "The death of young jumbos, which constitute a good breeding population, would tilt the balance in reproductive capability of the animals. Hence, research should be initiated with an area specific approach to find out the cause and apply corrective measures to set right the issue, failing which, this would become a major conservation challenge in future," he added.

New community hall



Police Commissioner Mahesh Kumar Aggarwal interacts after inaugurating a community hall on St Thomas Mount AR campus on Tuesday. — DC

She spends ₹5L, feeds over 200 strays in last 120 days

T. SUDHEESH | DC
CHENNAI, AUG. 11

If you take a stroll down the Ramapuram-Porur stretch in the evening, you can see small piles of expensive pedigree dog feed strewn in every 10-15 metres gap for the starving strays. It will make any passerby think about the individual behind this noble effort. These 'small piles of pedigree' on the sidewalks, that are sumptuous meals for 200 strays in the area, is a daily sight for the last four months, ever since the national lockdown was announced on March 25.

These strays, that would have been starved to death due to the unavailability of food in the lockdown, have now been saved by the daily rationing of food thanks to the kindness of Geetha Narayanan, owner, GR Estate, a construction company and executive director (corporate) of Voltech Group.

For more than 120 days, Ms. Geetha's silent mission of feeding these street dogs,



Geetha feeds stray dogs outside her house.

spending at least ₹ 3,000-₹4,000 (30 kg pedigree dog feed) every day, has undoubtedly become an epitome of sustainable co-existence between humans and animals in the tough pandemic time.

When *DC* caught up with her at her house in

Ramapuram, she unveiled her two-decade-long tale of unsung service to the abandoned puppies. Inside her house, at least 20 stray dogs adopted from the streets have been given proper care by setting up an open shelter right in front of the portico. They are, she says, just

a cross section of her adopted strays. Another 200 strays, including dogs and cats saved from critical life conditions, have been given new lease of life with a safe accommodation in a special shelter in Porur.

Born in the city to a Malayali couple,

Ms.Geetha, an MBA graduate and mother of a daughter, developed an affinity to the street dogs ever since childhood. Her father Narayanan, hailing from Palakkad in Kerala, was an employee at the Chennai corporation.

"I am deeply concerned about each and every animal on the planet as I strongly believe the fact that they are equal stakeholders of the resources human beings enjoy. Just because we are more intelligent and sophisticated than them, we have occupied their space, making their life miserable as well as vulnerable. This thought has always overwhelmed me and made me commit myself to their life especially during the lockdown period. I did see a lot of kids (stray dogs) wandering starved on the street. That sight persuaded me to launch an effort to feed them so that I could make sure no kid is left starved due to the lockdown," she pointed out.

SHORT TAKES

School admissions from Aug. 17

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG. 11

Admissions to classes one, five and nine in all schools will begin on August 17 all over the state, Minister for School Education K. A. Sengottaiyan said on Tuesday.

Urging all to ensure that social distancing and other Covid-19 preventive measures were followed during the admission process, he said admission for LKG and class 1 in private schools would be done online.

However, reopening of schools would be considered only after the pandemic comes under total control.

Asked how 5,249 students had been declared as failed in the class 10 examinations when it was earlier announced that all of them would pass, the minister said that those students had not even written the quarterly and half-yearly examinations in the schools.

Carcasses of 20 dogs found dumped in well

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG. 11

Over 20 dogs were found dead in Guduvanchery. The carcasses were dumped in an abandoned well on Nellikuppam road at Guduvanchery.

According to police, Meghna Reddy, a resident of Lancer Lumina apartment in Perumattunallur, lodged a complaint with the police that her three female dogs were kidnapped by unidentified persons on August 7.

Recently, police found carcasses of around 20 dogs in an abandoned well in Nellikuppam road. They were retrieved from the well and sent for post-mortem. The reason for their death is yet unknown, police said. The complainant alleged that the elected members of her apartment had abducted and killed the dogs. Investigation is under way.

BJP wants e-pass scrapped

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG. 11

BJP Tamil Nadu president L. Murugan has urged Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami to scrap the e-pass system that is in vogue in the state.

In a letter to the Chief Minister, he pointed out that the system was not in force anywhere in the country and that it had lost its relevance in the context of the relaxations to the lockdown.

He said he was hearing poignant stories of married couple separated and parents and children unable to meet all because of the e-pass system.

Alleging that the system was breeding corruption, Murugan said that there were instances of fake e-passes being issued and all these could be avoided by removing it completely.



Children dressed up like Krishna and Radha to mark Krishna Jayanthi in Madurai. — DC

Virtual meet with PM



Prime Minister Narendra Modi discusses with Chief Minister Palaniswami on Tuesday via video conferencing on corona status in Tamil Nadu. — DC

Is the AIADMK divided over next CM post?

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG. 11

A tweet by dairy development minister Rajenthra Bhalaji saying that they would face the next Assembly elections by projecting Palaniswami as the Chief Ministerial candidate came as a surprise to many within the AIADMK and outside of it on Tuesday.

Seen as a reply to cooperation minister Sellur K. Raju, who had, told the media in Madurai that the party would win the elections and the MLAs would then select the Chief Minister, suggesting that there were resentments within the party over the

Palaniswami would lead the ranks from the front, Bhalaji said in the tweet, exuding confidence in winning the elections in 2021

leadership. Bhalaji's tweet pointed to some internal differences.

Or, was the tweet aimed at dispelling all doubts about the AIADMK leadership within and outside the party? Perhaps it was also aimed at putting speculations at rest and reaffirm

the party's faith in the leadership of Palaniswami. For, Bhalaji makes it very clear that the party would enter the electoral battle with their target fixed.

Palaniswami would lead the ranks from the front, Bhalaji said in the tweet, exuding confidence in winning the elections in 2021.

Otherwise, however, no cracks had been visible in the AIADMK party structure with all party communiqué signed by both deputy coordinator Palaniswami and coordinator O. Panneerselvam and all ministers swearing by the Chief Minister's leadership in government while making announcements relating to their portfolios.

GHs treat 24x7 non-Covid cases too

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG. 11

Government hospitals in the state have been working unfailingly round the clock treating patients for all illness other than coronavirus infection, too, health minister C. Vijayabaskar said on Tuesday.

In a statement, the minister said that the number of patients visiting Government Hospitals had gone up during the pandemic as patients were unable to approach private hospitals earlier.

All kinds of treatment were provided to people with no hindrance, he said, giving statistics.

All kinds of treatment were provided to people with no hindrance, he said, giving statistics

Between March and now, the number of outpatients who visited government hospitals was 5,09,02,183 and the number of inpatients was 27,30,864, he said.

In government hospitals alone had performed 1,90,57 deliveries and 68,474 Cesarean sections during the period, the Minister said, adding that 1,29,206 deliveries were performed in the 126 integrated centres for obstetrics and infant care in the state.

Collector discusses I-Day formalities

DC CORRESPONDENT
THANJAVUR, AUG. 11

The Independence Day celebrations on Saturday (August 15), will be held here in compliance to strict corona preventive measures like social distancing, wearing of masks and use of sanitisers said Collector M Govinda Rao.

Presiding over a meeting here to discuss prepara-

Invitees would be allowed to enter the grounds only after testing with thermal scanners and using sanitisers

tions for the independence day celebrations to be held at the armed police grounds, the collector said that hand wash facilities would be provided at the

Girl's perilous high-rise walk on OMR triggers scare

P.A. JEBARAJ AND
SINDHIYA SAMUEL | DC
CHENNAI, AUG 11

A terrifying video of a girl walking dangerously on the ledge of a high-rise apartment building is going viral on social media. The incident took place in Chennai's OMR, the police have confirmed.

In an alarming video that is being shared widely on WhatsApp and Twitter, a girl was seen walking on the ledge on the 23rd floor of a 29-storey apartment building. The people recording the video can be heard saying she was doing the daredevilry for the third time.

The video shot a week back is going viral now. Some people said that it is from Hiranandani Meadows in Thane and some others said it is from Gurgaon. However, when Deccan Chronicle contacted Mamallapuram assistant superintendent of police E. Sundaravathanan, he confirmed that the incident took place in an apartment building in Egattur under the Kelambakkam police limits on Old Mahabalipuram Road



A screen shot of the video that went viral.

(OMR). He said, after seeing the video, an investigation was launched into the matter. The Kelambakkam police reached the apartment

building located near the Navalur checkpoint and conducted inquiries. During preliminary investigation, it was revealed that the heart-stopping stunt was allegedly performed by a nine-year-old girl. She claimed to have done it after her 12-year-old brother challenged her to walk on the ledge three times.

Police said that though no complaint was registered regarding the incident, there is no denying how dangerous these acts are and should, therefore, be avoided. A stringent warning was given to the parents and the siblings, police said.

A safety notice has been sent to the apartment authorities. Effective precautions will be taken by the authorities to stop such incidents from happening, police said.

The assistant superintendent of police has warned the public especially kids and teens not to indulge in such reckless acts and also to stop others from participating in it. Police also asked the parents to be extra careful of what your children are doing and monitor their activities.

CM, OPS, STALIN WELCOME SC VERDICT

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG. 11

Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami, Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam and leader of the Opposition M K Stalin welcomed the Supreme Court order bestowing equal rights to women in inheriting family property.

Expressing happiness over the verdict, Palaniswami said that it had upheld social justice in the country.

The judgment would pave the way for women's development, tweeted Panneerselvam, welcoming it wholeheartedly.

Stalin said that he would consider it as a victory for DMK's principles as former Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi had brought in a law providing equal rights for women in property way back in 1989 itself.

The judgment would lay the foundation for women standing up acquiring both social and economic equal rights.

Tension at airport over new quarantine norms

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG. 11

Tension prevailed at the Chennai airport, as the state government has not implemented the new guidelines framed for International flyers by the Union ministry of health that allows home quarantine for the flyers with a Covid-19 negative certificate. The new set of guidelines was announced by the Union government and implemented on August 8.

The Indians stranded abroad due to the Covid-19 pandemic are coming back to the country in flights

According to the new guidelines, the travellers may seek exemption from institutional quarantine by submitting a negative RT PCR test report on arrival

arranged by the union government under the Vande Bharat Mission. The old protocol by the Union government made institutional quarantine compulsory for International flyers. However, according to the new guidelines, the travellers may seek exemption

from institutional quarantine by submitting a negative RT PCR test report on arrival.

This test should have been conducted within 96 hours prior to undertaking the journey and produced upon arrival at the point of entry airport in India.

However, several passengers who did not know that the state government is not following the new protocol by the Centre arrived with the Covid-19 negative tests to avoid institutional quarantine.

This absence of uniformity in policy is affecting the Indians returning home

Kolam protest



People draw kolams to show their protest against EIA draft 2020. The novel protest was organised by Chennai Climate Action Group on Tuesday. — DC

2 more die of corona in Pondy; toll mounts to 91

Puducherry, Aug. 11: Two more people succumbed to COVID-19 and 276 fresh cases were reported on Tuesday in Puducherry, where the aggregate touched 5,900.

Health Minister Malladi Krishna Rao told a virtual press conference that while one patient aged 44 died at Indira Gandhi Government Medical college (IGGMC) hospital here, the other aged 69 passed away at a private hospital in the last 24 hours. Both the patients had co-morbidities. With the two deaths, the toll rose to 91.

Of the new cases, Puducherry registered 241, followed by 30 cases in Karaikal and five in Yanam region. He said the overall active cases including 874 patients in home quarantine are 2,277.

Total patients treated and discharged are 3,532 and fatalities are 91.

Rao said 172 patients were discharged during the last 24 hours.

The 276 new cases were identified after examination of 967 samples projecting the positivity rate at 28.5 percent while the fatality in the Union Territory was 1.6 percent.

Remote controlled gun system unveiled

R. VALAYAPATHY | DC
TIRUCHY, AUG. 11

Union defence minister Rajnath Singh on Monday inaugurated the Stabilized Remote Controlled Gun System (SRCG) through a video-conferencing event held in the Ordnance Factory, Tiruchy, (OFT), as a part of Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan (Self-Reliant India Mission).

In a release here on Tuesday, Dr C Ariya Sakthi Works Manager / Public Relation Officer, OFT, said, SRCG is fitted with a 12.7mm M2 NATO-standard machine gun, designed for marine operations, mounted on-board ships and small crafts, and can also remotely engage small boats, skiffs and other small crafts with accuracy, both during day and night. SRCG has automatic target tracking capability. The gun is capable of manual firing in case of malfunction of the weapon or power failure, he added. The dedicated state-of-art



assembly and testing facility has been developed at OFT by investing Rs 2.82 crore. This indigenous product for the Indian Navy and Coast Guard would result in a saving of Rs 167 crore approximately. The SRCG system would provide business opportunities at the rate of Rs 255 crore per annum for the next four years to OFT and other sist-

ter factories, he added. A contract has been signed by Integrated Headquarters, Ministry of Defence on M/s. Elbit Systems, Israel, for transfer of technology (ToT) for this gun. The OFT is the nodal factory for SRCG Weapon System and Ordnance Factory, Varangaon, which will also produce ammunition for use in these guns,

he added. Minister of state for defence, Shripad Yesso Naik, secretary (defence), Ajay Kumar, secretary (defence production), Rajkumar, IOFS, Chairman & DGOF, OFB, Kolkata, Hari Mohan, Vice Admiral PVSM, AVSM, VSM, G Ashok Kumar, and general manager, OFT, Shirish Khare, were present.

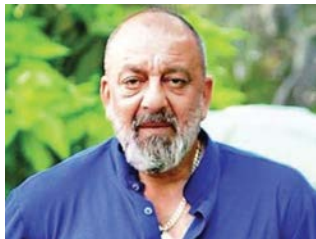


IN BRIEF

Ban on flights to Kolkata extended

Kolkata: Suspension of passenger flights to Kolkata from six metros with high prevalence of Covid-19 cases has been extended till August 31, a senior government official said on Tuesday. Earlier, the temporary restriction on the arrival of flights to Kolkata airport from Delhi, Mumbai, Pune, Chennai, Nagpur and Ahmedabad was extended till August 15, amid the surge in Coronavirus cases in the state.

ACTOR SANJAY DUTT DIAGNOSED WITH CANCER?



DC CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, AUG. 11

Hours after Bollywood actor Sanjay Dutt on Tuesday announced that he would be taking a holiday from work for medical treatment, reports have appeared suggesting that he has been diagnosed with stage 3 lung cancer and will be proceeding to the US for treatment. There has, however, been no official confirmation from the office of the actor.

"Hi friends, I am taking a short break from work for some medical treatment. My family and friends are with me and I urge my well-wishers not to worry or unnecessarily speculate. With your love and good wishes, I will be back soon!" his tweet earlier in the day said.

Mr Dutt, 61, had been admitted at Leelavati Hospital in Mumbai last week for a day complaining of breathlessness. He was meanwhile tested negative for Covid-19.

He had on August 8 tweeted, "Just wanted to assure everyone that I'm doing well. I'm currently under medical observation & my Covid-19 report is negative. With the help & care of the doctors, nurses & staff at Lilavati hospital, I should be home in a day or two. Thank you for your well wishes & blessings."

'1951 MUST BE CUT OFF YEAR FOR 'ASSAMESE'

MANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, AUG. 11

Irked by New Delhi's delay in taking note of recommendations by the high-powered committee on Clause 6 of the Assam Accord, the All Assam Students' Union (AASU), which was a part of the committee, here on Tuesday released a confidential report.

The Clause 6 of the Assam Accord proposes to provide Constitutional, legislative and administrative safeguards, to protect, preserve and promote the culture, social, linguistic identity and heritage of the Assamese people.

The committee in its recommendation has proposed that those who are living in Assam since January 1951 and their descendants should be treated as "Assamese". It is significant that since the signing of the Assam Accord the definition of Assamese people has been the 'bone of contention'.

6 MANIPUR CONG MLAS RESIGN FROM ASSEMBLY

Imphal, Aug. 11: Six Congress MLAs in Manipur have submitted their resignation from the Legislative Assembly and also quit the party on Tuesday.

The six legislators who had handed over resignation letters to Speaker Yumnam Khemchand Singh the previous night, formally informed the Congress office here about leaving the party.

The six are among the eight Congress legislators who had defied a party whip on Monday and skipped the one-day session of the Assembly, in which the BJP-led N. Biren Singh government had comfortably won the confidence vote.

The MLAs include Okram Henry Singh, nephew of Congress Legislature Party leader, Okram Ibobi Singh, Oinam Lukhoi, Md Abdul Nasir, Paonam Brojen, Ngamthang Haokip and Ginsuanhau.

ILLEGAL FISH TRADE ACROSS BORDER WITH B'DESH TO FORE

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC
KOLKATA, AUG. 11

After smuggling of cattle, gold and drugs, a new trend of illegal trade of fish across the India-Bangladesh border has been unearthed by the Border Security Force (BSF) in West Bengal in the past one week.

On Monday, the BSF jawans of 112 Battalion at border outpost Tarali in North 24 Parganas under Sector Kolkata spotted a gang of eight men carrying some plastic drums and approaching towards the Indian side from Bangladesh, BSF (South Bengal Frontier) stated on Tuesday.

When the BSF team asked them to stop, the smugglers fled by taking the advantage of jute field.

However, they left four drums behind.

The drums were filled with Singi fish larvae worth ₹7.20 lakh, the BSF added.

The seized consignment was later handed over to the Customs at Tentulia.

It may be recalled that earlier on August 5, the Border Security Force caught a man for smuggling 126 kgs of Hilsa fish worth ₹11.26 lakh in a truck during a routine vehicle checking at integrated check post in Petrapole in North 24 Parganas.

As many as nine white bags containing the fish were found in the cabin of the truck which was coming from Bangladesh without any Customs clearance.

While the truck was seized, Biplob Shil (35), the truck driver, and consignment were handed over to the police.

Originally from Dinabandhu Nagar in Bongaon of the district he went to Bangladesh on Aug. 4, driving his truck for exports.

While returning, he received the consignment from a Bangladeshi national, Miraj Chaudhary, who asked him to deliver it Khokan, a guard in Lucky Truck parking in Naraharipur in Bongaon, in exchange of ₹5,000.

On guard



An Indian Army's woman soldier patrol the Sadhna Pass in Kupwara district. For the first time, women soldiers have been deployed along the LoC in order to keep a check on weapons and drug smuggling in the area. — PTI

Sena demands CBI probe in Loya, Munde death cases

BJP says Sushant case not linked to Justice Loya and Munde cases

DC CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, AUG. 11

Fuming over the Centre's decision to hand over the Sushant Singh Rajput death case to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Shiv Sena has demanded that the deaths of BJP leader Gopinath Munde and justice B.H. Loya should also be investigated by the central agency.

Former Union minister and Sena leader Arvind Sawant said, "Even we demand CBI inquiry into the death of Gopinath Munde and Justice Loya. Let the truth come out in these cases."

"Demand for CBI inquiry is not made very often. It's not right to conduct a probe just because someone has demanded it. There is some procedure,

● **FOUL PLAY** was suspected in the death of Loya, who was hearing the Sohrabuddin fake encounter case. Munde had died in a road accident, but a hacker said he was murdered.

which needs to be followed for carrying out a CBI probe. But an attempt is being made to undermine the Constitution, which is based on the federal structure of governance," he said.

Mumbai police was investigating Sushant Singh's death case impartially. But the decision to hand over the case to CBI is an attempt to demoralise them, Sawant added.

Foul play was suspected in the death of Loya, who was hearing the

Sohrabuddin Sheikh fake encounter case.

Munde had died in a road accident in 2014, but a US hacker claimed he was murdered as he was aware of EVM hacking.

Meanwhile, Maharashtra BJP chief Chandrakant Patil has slammed the Shiv Sena saying it's demand of a CBI probe into the deaths of Munde and Loya was due to its confused state.

"There is no connection between the Sushant Singh's case and these two deaths. There is no point in again raking up the Justice Loya issue, which is already over. The entire world knows that Munde had died in a road accident," he added.

Rajput, 34, was found dead in his apartment in Bandra on June 14.

SC reserves order on Rhea's petition

PARMOD KUMAR | DC
NEW DELHI, AUG. 11

The Supreme Court on Tuesday reserved order on whether Mumbai police or the Central Bureau of Investigation will probe the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput.

The court was hearing a plea by Rhea Chakraborty seeking transfer of investigation in the FIR lodged in Patna by Rajput's father to Mumbai Police.

However, now the investigation in Patna FIR has been taken over by the CBI. Justice Hrishikesh

Roy reserving the order gave the Centre, Maharashtra and Bihar governments, Rhea Chakraborty, late actor's father Krishna Kishore Singh time till August 13 to file written note on their submissions.

The hearing that lasted for over two hours witnessed Mumbai Police raising the issue of jurisdiction, Bihar and K.K. Singh alleging bias against Mumbai Police and Centre contending that there is a strong case for an independent probe by a central agency.

No let up in Telangana as Covid no rises by 1,896

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, AUG. 11

Covid-19 cases in Telangana state are being registered without any let up with 1,896 more people found to have been infected by the Coronavirus even as eight more people succumbed to Covid-19. This takes the total cases to 82,647 while the fatalities rose to 645, according to the health department.

It said that as many as 1,788 persons recovered from the disease in the 24-hour period between 8 pm on Sunday and 8 pm on Monday, taking their numbers to 59,374. There were 22,628 active Covid-19 cases; 15,554 of them were either in home or institutional isolation.

The number of cases in the GHMC limits continued to show a dip with 338 new cases being reported for the 24-hour period, Ranga Reddy district saw an increase to 147 cases from 86 the previous day as did Karimnagar district that witnessed a rise from 73 the previous day to 121, while Medchal-Malkajgiri district saw an increase in cases to 119 from 34 for the same period.

9,024 new Covid-19 cases, 87 deaths in AP

Vijayawada: Andhra Pradesh registered 9,024 new Covid-19 cases taking the tally to 2,44,549 and 87 deaths rising toll to 2,203 on Tuesday.

Among new infections, East Godavari continues to lead with 1,372 cases followed by 1,138 in Kurnool, 959 in Anantapur, 758 in Chittoor, 717 in Guntur, 678 in West Godavari and 676 in Visakhapatnam.

● **THE NUMBER** of cases in the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation limits continued to show a dip with 338 new cases being reported for the 24-hour period, the health department said.

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1,417 new cases in Kerala

Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala on Tuesday recorded 1417 cases of Covid - 19 even as 1426 people recovered from the infection.

The total number of cases in the state has reached 36,568 of which 12,723 are active cases. Of the new cases, 1242 contracted the infection through contact, source of infection among 105 is not known, 62 came from abroad, 72 from other states and 36 health care workers also got infected.

Over 1 lakh patients discharged in K'taka

Bengaluru: Over one lakh Covid-19 patients have been discharged so far after recovery in Karnataka, as the state on Tuesday reported 6,257 new cases and 86 fatalities. The total number of infections now stood at 1,88,611 and death toll was 3,398.

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, AUG. 11

The landslide in Pettimudi Rajamala in Idukki district of Kerala on August 7 which has so far claimed 51 lives, has brought into sharp focus the pathetic and pitiable living conditions of plantation workers.

The cluster houses (layams) in which most plantation workers live are 80 to 90 years old. In other words, these dwelling units are as old as the tea estates in the area.

As many as 30 rooms of the residential cluster or layams of tea estate workers were buried under the debris following the landslide on Friday. Each building comprises ten dwelling units and each unit has a room, a kitchen and work area.

But these dwelling units are in a deplorable condition.

Though it sounds okay,

● **AS MANY** as 30 rooms of the residential cluster or layams of tea estate workers were buried under the debris following the landslide.

● **THE CLUSTER** houses (layams) in which most plantation workers live are 80 to 90 years old.

● **THE ESTATE** owners and companies responsible for maintenance, rarely carry out repair works in the dwelling units.

there's nothing good about these layams. Most residential units are nearly 80 to 90 years old (as old as the estates themselves) and obviously in extremely deplorable conditions.

The estate owners and companies responsible for maintenance, rarely carry out such repair works in the dwelling units.

These workers have been pleading with successive

governments and estate owners to construct new structures replacing the 80-90 year old dilapidated buildings.

Last year the Kerala government announced a special housing scheme for plantation workers under which each family owning land would get ₹4 lakh and apartments would be constructed for workers who do not own land.

Many believe that the scheme which has been included in the government's flagship housing programme - The Life Mission - if implemented in right earnest would ensure safe and livable houses for the workers.

Of the 70,000 plantation workers in Kerala, Idukki district where the tragedy occurred, alone accounts for 50,000 workers. Majority of the workers (more than 60 per cent) belong to the SC/ST category who are landless and homeless.

A recent survey by the

HC SEEKS MAHA GOVT'S REPLY ON PAROLE FOR SAIBABA

Nagpur, Aug. 11: The Nagpur bench of Bombay High Court on Tuesday sought Maharashtra government's response to a petition filed by Delhi University's former professor G.N. Saibaba for emergency parole to attend the post funeral rituals of his late mother in Hyderabad.

Saibaba, who is serving life sentence in the Nagpur Central Prison for links with Maoists, lost his 74-year-old ailing mother on August 1, even as his lawyers were seeking to arrange a video conference between the two.

Last week, the prison authorities rejected Saibaba's application for parole to attend the last rites of his mother.

He then approached the high court through his advocate Mihir Desai, seeking to be released on emergency parole so that he could go to Hyderabad and attend the post funeral rituals of his mother.

On Tuesday, special public prosecutor P.K. Sathianathan sought time from the court to respond to the plea.

A division bench of Justices A.S. Chandurkar and A.B. Borkar issued a notice to the state government and directed it to respond to the plea by August 18.

Saibaba earlier also sought parole from the prison authorities to meet his mother, who was suffering from cancer, but it was rejected.

The former professor, 51, who is wheelchair-bound with over 90 per cent physical disabilities, had also filed a bail plea before the high court's Nagpur bench on the ground that his mother was unwell and his own health was deteriorating.

The high court rejected the bail plea on July 28.

In March 2017, a sessions court in Gadchiroli district convicted Saibaba and four others, including a journalist and a student of the Jawaharlal Nehru University, for alleged Maoist links and indulging in activities amounting to "waging war against the country". — PTI

Absence of reliable data puts Russian Covid vaccine under cloud

KANIZA GARARI | DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 11

There is no data available on pre-clinical trials and no scientific input in peer-reviewed journals about the development of the vaccine by Russia, which is creating doubt about its development.

An indigenous vaccine development will require at least eight to 12 months and there must be some trial results on animals and humans available for

assessment to understand its efficacy.

None of these has been provided by Russia which has only said that the vaccine was tested on 38 people and they have completely recovered.

CCMB director Dr Rakesh Mishra said, "It is a very unreliable vaccine as there is no data available on how and in what manner trials have been carried out. For any vaccine development, apart from time, there are thousands

of people who have to be tested. How have they tested the number that they have provided to the world without a cure? When we inject a virus in the body, there has to also be a cure available. But there is no definite cure for Covid-19 yet. There is no clarity on this. Till these questions are answered, no country will be willing to take the vaccine from Russia."

Dr A.V. Ramarao, senior scientist and former director of Indian Institute of

Chemical Technology (CSIR-ICT), said, "It is too early to say anything about the vaccine from Russia. There is too much confusion. The numbers presented by them in terms of trials and testing are too few. We have to wait and watch."

Questions have been raised by scientists as to why the apex body of healthcare, the World Health Organisation, has not been involved in the announcement. Have the

results of the trials been reviewed by WHO.

Sanjay Reddy, pharmacologist and member of Telangana State Pharmacy Council, says, "If the vaccine is really what it is claimed to be, it will help the world but we need data in terms of efficacy, safety and trial results to understand its impact on the human race. The number of trials and the number of people are also very important. Take the case of the Oxford University-

AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine where the trial on monkeys and the pre-clinical results are peer-reviewed and the data available for scrutiny. These are confidence-building measures in the scientific world as this vaccine is not for one set of people. It will be required for the world population."

While one section of the medical and scientific fraternity is positive and keenly looking forward to the results of the vaccine,

others are sceptical due to the lack of scientific information being given out by Russia.

R. Gangadhar, state convener of Breakthrough Science Society said, "We have to congratulate Russia for coming out with a vaccine so soon. The results on their human population will now be very important. The real benefit of the vaccine will be judged only when the worldwide populations benefit the same way."

IN BRIEF

Millennium-old Mexico skeleton

Mexico City: A millennium-old skeleton of a pre-Hispanic man has been unearthed in northeast Mexico, archeologists said Monday, describing it as one of the first of its kind to be discovered complete.

The body of the man, believed to be between 21 and 35 years old, had been placed inside a woven mat with a small mortar as an offering, the National Anthropology and History Institute said. His remains lay untouched for more than 1,000 years and the skeleton and its position were preserved along with a ceramic relic, the institute said.

13 die in Sudan ethnic clashes

Khartoum: Sudan said Tuesday 13 people were killed and 42 injured in days of clashes between rival ethnic groups in its Red Sea port, state media reported. Violence broke out in the eastern city of Port Sudan on Sunday evening, the SUNA news agency said, quoting medics who had treated the wounded. Police sent in reinforcements and have imposed a night-time curfew, the statement added. Fighting began when protesters from the Nuba people, demonstrating against a new governor, entered a district of the Beni Amer group. There is long standing hostility between the groups. The Nuba originate from the South Kordofan region, an area that suffered from the decades of civil war. The Beni Amer people come from eastern Sudan.

Gunmen kill 13 in Nigeria

Lagos: Gunmen have killed 13 villagers in central Nigeria's Benue state following a long-running "chieftaincy" dispute, police said on Tuesday. The attack on Edikwu in the Apa district on Monday, also left several people injured and many houses burnt, said Catherine Anene, the state police spokeswoman. "About 20 armed men invaded the community and shot sporadically at members of the community," she said in a statement. "A team of police officers was deployed to the scene where 13 corpses were recovered," she said. Anene said police had launched an investigation, adding that a dispute over "chieftaincy" matters was to blame for the violence. "Edikwu... was experiencing incessant crises over chieftaincy affairs until May 25 when the Benue government convened a peace meeting, headed by the deputy governor, Mr. Benson Aboudu, to put an end to the rancour," she said. She said peace was restored until Monday when the gunmen invaded. Communal clashes over land rights, water and access to political opportunities are common in Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation with 200 million people.

MARYAM SUMMONED BY NAB

SHAFQAT ALI | DC ISLAMABAD, AUG. 11

Pakistan's National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Tuesday said that it had summoned the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) vice president Maryam Nawaz to hear her stance on the case registered against her. In a statement after a violent clash between PML-N workers and police, he anti-graft watchdog alleged that PML-N workers pelted stones and were involved in hooliganism at the time of her appearance.

The Bureau also said that it will register FIRs against PML-N representatives and leaders for interfering in the legal process. Earlier, clash erupted between outraged the PML-N workers and police as party's vice-president Maryam Nawaz reached NAB office in a case pertaining to illegal transfer of 180 acres of land in Raiwind.

The PML-N workers — who accompanied Maryam Nawaz from Jati Umrah to the NAB office in a convoy — pelted stones at police officials and tried to break the barriers outside the anti-corruption watchdog's office.

In retaliation, the police resorting to aerial firing, shelling and baton charge to disperse the infuriated crowd. Several protesters, including women, were arrested. PML-N president Shehbaz Sharif condemned the incident of pelting stones and teargas shelling on workers on the occasion of party vice-president Maryam Nawaz's appearance before NAB.

Belarus poll challenger safely reaches Lithuania

Minsk, Aug. 11: The main challenger in Belarus's disputed presidential election is "safe" in Lithuania, the Baltic state's foreign minister said, after a second night of street clashes between police and opposition supporters left a protester dead.

Svetlana Tikhonovskaya, who has claimed victory over authoritarian President Alexander Lukashenko in Sunday's vote, "arrived in Lithuania and is safe", Foreign Minister Linas Linkevicius said. He did not provide any further details but EU and NATO member Lithuania, which like Belarus was once part of the Soviet Union, has a history of granting refuge to Belarusian and Russian opposition figures.

Tikhonovskaya's whereabouts had been unclear after campaign staff said they had lost contact with her and there had been concern for her safety. Her surfacing in Lithuania came after thousands took to the streets of the capital Minsk for a second night on Monday to contest claims by authorities that longtime ruler Lukashenko had secured a sixth term with 80 percent of the vote.

Tikhonovskaya, a political novice who has energised the opposition, came second with 10 percent and protesters are backing her claim to have won the election. For the second night in a row, police used rubber bullets, stun grenades and tear gas to disperse demonstrations, though protesters fought back with stones and fireworks and built makeshift barricades, reporters, protesters and witnesses said. "Too many people are against Lukashenko," Pavel, a 34-year-old protester, said.

"Our goal is to depose Lukashenko. He is not worthy of being president." Dozens of people have been injured in the violence and the first fatality was confirmed on Monday when police said a man died after an explosive device went off in his hand. Olga Kovalkova, a member of Tikhonovskaya's staff, said she believed the candidate had left the country against her will after meeting with officials on Monday at the Central Election Commission.

"The Belarusian authorities took Svetlana to Lithuania. She had no choice," Kovalkova said. "Before entering the Central Election Commission, she had no plans to leave the country. It was not her decision." Her spokeswoman Anna Krasulina said the opposition movement would continue even if Tikhonovskaya was no longer in the country.

"Her departure does not change anything, she did what she could, raised and

Protests: Poland ready to mediate

Riga, Aug 11: Poland is ready to mediate between Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko and the opposition, the foreign minister said on Tuesday after a second night of protests following the disputed election.

"Poland is ready to act as a mediator between Belarus opposition and president Lukashenko," Jacek Czaputowicz told a joint press conference in Riga after meeting his Estonian, Finnish and Latvian counterparts. "There is still a place for dialogue but we will have a hard time trying to convince other Western countries not to impose sanctions against Belarus if the violent crackdown on protesters will continue," he said. Poland has called for an emergency European Union summit on Belarus, a former Soviet republic where strongman Lukashenko won a sixth term in office in a vote disputed by opposition challenger

Svetlana Tikhonovskaya.

The candidate has now sought refuge in Lithuania. Latvian Foreign Minister Edgars Rinkevics said his country too would be willing to take in "political refugees from Belarus if that will be necessary". But he called for a "cautious approach" to imposing sanctions on Belarus, warning that this "will only enlarge their overall dependence on Russia". Finnish Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto also said that any sanctions "should be imposed in a way that they do not hurt regular Belarusian citizens". Estonia's Urmas Reinsalu added that since the election in Belarus was not free and fair "we should not recognise the legitimacy of its outcome". The foreign ministers were meeting on the 100th anniversary of the Riga Peace Treaty, which confirmed Latvia's independence from Soviet Russia. —AFP

Video recorded under pressure, say allies

Minsk, Aug. 11: Belarus election challenger Svetlana Tikhonovskaya appeared in a video published by state media Tuesday urging supporters not to protest, but her allies said it was recorded under pressure.

In the video published by state news agency *Belta*, Tikhonovskaya appeared to read from a prepared statement calling for "respect for the law" and for Belarusians not to take to the streets.

Her head lowered, she was shown sitting on a black sofa in front of a window with the blinds closed. Tikhonovskaya, who says she defeated longtime authoritarian ruler Alexander Lukashenko in Sunday's vote, has left the country to seek

refuge in Lithuania after two nights of clashes.

"We believe that this video was recorded under pressure from law enforcement," Maria Kolesnikova, a key Tikhonovskaya ally, told reporters.

"A person who has been receiving threats and whose husband is in prison can record any video," Tikhonovskaya decided to run for president after the authorities jailed her husband, popular blogger Sergei Tikhonovsky, and barred him from contesting.

Her campaign galvanised the opposition, presenting a historic challenge to former collective farm director Lukashenko, who has ruled Belarus since 1994, brooking no dissent. —Agencies

inspired the people," Krasulina said. "The people will act without her, they are protesting not for Tikhonovskaya but for themselves." Lukashenko's opponents have called for running protests against his regime and there were calls for a nationwide strike. The 37-year-old mother of two decided to run for president after the authorities jailed her husband, popular blogger Sergei Tikhonovsky, and barred him from contesting.

Her campaign galvanis-

ed the opposition, presenting a historic challenge to former collective farm director Lukashenko, who has ruled Belarus since 1994, brooking no dissent and earning the nickname of "Europe's last dictator". Western governments have widely condemned the police crackdown, with some in the European Union suggesting it may reimpose sanctions on Lukashenko's regime that were lifted several years ago. —AFP

China trying to turn Taiwan into HK: FM

Taipei, Aug. 11: China is trying to turn democratic Taiwan into another Hong Kong, the island's foreign minister warned Tuesday as he met with a senior US official making a historic diplomatic trip. A crackdown on dissent in Hong Kong has gathered pace since China imposed a sweeping security law on the financial hub in June, with opposition politicians disqualified and activists arrested.

That has caused alarm in

Taiwan, a self-ruled island of 23 million people that Beijing claims as its own territory and has vowed to one day seize, by force if necessary. Foreign minister Joseph Wu said Taiwan lives under the constant threat of having its freedoms taken away by China, during a rare meeting with US cabinet official Alex Azar in Taipei on Tuesday. "Our lives have become increasingly difficult as China continues to pressure Taiwan into accept-

ing its political conditions, conditions that will turn Taiwan into the next Hong Kong," he said.

"The people of Taiwan are all too familiar with dealing with threats, be it military, diplomatic or the threats of epidemics," Health Secretary Azar is in Taipei for a three-day visit billed as the highest-level visit from the United States since it switched diplomatic recognition from the island to China in 1979. Beijing has ramped up



Police cars block the entrance to Pennsylvania Avenue near the White House shortly after Secret Service guards shot a person who was apparently armed, outside the White House on Monday while US President Donald Trump was speaking to the press in the Brady Briefing Room of the White House in Washington, DC. —AFP

Trump evacuated after man shot outside WH

Saudi arms sales: Pompeo cleared

Washington, Aug. 11: US Secret Service agents shot and wounded a man who was apparently armed outside the White House on Monday, President Donald Trump said, after being briefly whisked away in the middle of a press conference. A 51-year-old male approached a Secret Service officer standing at the corner of 17th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, one block from the White House, according to Tom Sullivan, the chief of the Secret Service Uniformed Division. The suspect told the officer he had a weapon and ran "aggressively" towards him, drawing an object out of his clothes, Sullivan said in a statement that was broadcast on Twitter. He then assumed a "shooter's stance" as if he intended to fire, whereupon the Secret Service officer shot him in the torso, Sullivan added.

Officers on the scene administered first aid, and emergency medical services were called. Both the suspect and the officer were taken to hospital. "The Secret Service Office of Professional Responsibility will be conducting an internal review of the officer's actions," Sullivan said, adding the DC Metropolitan Police Department had been contacted.

As the President was speaking to reporters in the White House briefing room, a Secret Service bodyguard abruptly approached him and interrupted, saying in a quiet voice, "Sir, could you please come with me?"

Trump and staff members left. Doors to the briefing room, still filled with

journalists, were locked. Outside, black-clad Secret Service agents with automatic rifles could be seen rushing across the lawn and took up positions behind trees. According to *Fox News*, whose camera team was outside, two shots were heard. Minutes later, Trump reappeared at the press conference and announced that someone had been shot by the Secret Service outside the White House grounds. —AFP

Pompeo was accused of abuse of power after he used an obscure emergency procedure to ram through \$8.1 billion in arms sales to Saudi Arabia and other Arab allies in May of last year, despite opposition from the US Congress. The Inspector General's report on the investigation has concluded that the State Department had "acted in complete accordance with the law and found no wrongdoing in the administration exercise of the emergency authorities that are available under

the arms export control act," the senior official told reporters, speaking on condition of anonymity. The official did not say when the report would be published, but the State Department released excerpts in a statement.

Congress had sought to block the arms sale in protest against the October 2018 murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, which was attributed by US intelligence services to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

Then-inspector general Steve Linick had been investigating Pompeo's 2019 declaration of an emergency that permitted the Trump administration to sell arms and bypass Congress, where lawmakers have voiced horror at civilian casualties in the Saudi-led offensive in Yemen. —AFP

EUROPE VISIT: POMPEO IN PRAGUE

Plzen, Czech Republic, Aug 11: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo arrived in Prague on Tuesday, public TV footage showed, to open a five-day visit to central Europe with a hefty agenda, including China's role in 5G network construction.

Pompeo will spend two days in the Czech Republic before moving on to Slovenia, Austria and close

ally Poland, which is eager to welcome some of the US troops leaving Germany to guard against historic adversary Russia. The focus will be on his campaign for nations to shun Huawei, the Chinese telecom giant considered a threat by Washington as it takes a lead in fifth-generation internet, and to reduce Europe's energy dependence on Russia. —AFP

"We could do it through teleconference, or we could do it through a meeting, but I sort of am now suggesting, I tell my people yesterday, 'Actually, why don't we do it sometime after the election when things are a bit, you have a little more time to think about it because it's very important,'" he said. —AFP

WHO to review Russian vaccine

COVID-19 CASES RETURN TO NZ AFTER 102 DAYS

Geneva, Aug. 11: The World Health Organisation said any WHO stamp of approval on a Covid-19 vaccine candidate would require a rigorous safety data review, after Russia announced Tuesday it had approved a vaccine.

President Vladimir Putin said Russia had become the first country to approve a vaccine offering "sustainable immunity" against Coronavirus. "We are in close contact with the Russian health authorities and discussions are ongoing with respect to possible WHO pre-qualification of the vaccine," the United Nations health agency's spokesman Tarik Jasarevic told reporters in Geneva at an online press briefing.

"Pre-qualification of any vaccine includes the rigorous review and assessment of all the required safety and efficacy data." Russia's Sputnik V vaccine has been developed by the Gamaleya research institute in coordination with the country's defence ministry.

A total of 165 candidate vaccines are being worked on around the world, according to the latest WHO overview produced on July 31.

Of those, 139 are still in pre-clinical evaluation,

Wellington, Aug. 11: New Zealand's dream run of 102 days without locally transmitted Coronavirus ended Tuesday, prompting a stay-at-home lockdown order for the country's largest city.

After receiving global praise for successfully containing the virus, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said four cases had been detected in a single family in Auckland from an unknown source.

"After 102 days, we have our first cases of Covid-19 outside of managed isolation or quarantine facilities..." , Ardern said. —AFP

while the other 26 are in the various phases of being tested on humans, of which six are the furthest ahead, having reached Phase 3 of clinical evaluation.

The Gamaleya candidate being produced in Russia, which is among the 26 being tested on humans, is listed as being in Phase 1. —AFP

GOVT | CRITIC

Family not giving up hope for return of Wanchalearm Satsaksit

Missing Thai activist's kin to 'have faith'

Bangkok, Aug. 11: The family of a missing Thai pro-democracy activist celebrated his birthday Tuesday, vowing not to give up hope for his return more than two months after he was allegedly abducted in Cambodia.

The disappearance of Wanchalearm Satsaksit was one of the catalysts for a growing pro-democracy movement in Thailand, which has seen thousands turn out to protest the military-aligned administration.

Wanchalearm, a critic of the Thai government led by former army chief

Prayut Chan-O-Cha, was abducted off the streets of the Cambodian capital Phnom Penh in early June, according to rights groups.

The self-exiled activist, who runs an acerbic anti-government Facebook page, is wanted by Thai authorities for allegedly breaching the Computer Crimes Act.

Both Thai and Cambodian authorities have vowed to investigate his disappearance. However, sister Sitanan said Tuesday — his 38th birthday — that she was "frustrated" — with the slow

● **WANCHALEARM SATSAKSIT**, a critic of the Thai government led by former army chief Prayut Chan-O-Cha, was abducted off the streets of Phnom Penh in early June, according to rights groups. The activist, who runs an acerbic anti-government Facebook page, is wanted by Thai authorities for allegedly breaching the Computer Crimes Act.

pace the investigations have taken.

"Our family is waiting for the truth and clarity from both countries," she said, as she lit candles on a cake in front of the Cambodian Embassy in Bangkok.

"I still have faith that he's alive... We cannot give up hope if there is a small chance," she said.

Protesters in rallies across the country have held up posters with Wanchalearm's face to demand answers of his fate. Sitanan said she was "proud" that her brother has become a symbol the movement, adding that she didn't used to under-

stand why he was so active in the pro-democracy movement.

"On the day he disappeared, that's when I realised we needed to do something about the politics of Thailand," she said. Since a coup in May 2014, Thailand has vowed to track down pro-democracy critics — especially those accused of attacking the unassailable monarchy.

At least eight prominent Thai activists who fled to Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam have subsequently disappeared, according to Human Rights Watch. —AFP

DECCAN Chronicle

12 AUGUST 2020

Truce in Raj Cong, but rift still needs solution

The defusing of the rebellion within the Rajasthan Congress after former deputy CM Sachin Pilot met Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra in New Delhi Monday, days ahead of Friday's Assembly session, is welcome news for the party, which feared the loss of yet another state government due to the BJP's mischief. But while the first signs of a possible rapprochement are evident, the rift between Mr Pilot and chief minister Ashok Gehlot is far from over, and the contours of a peace deal still need to be worked out, for which Congress president Sonia Gandhi has set up a three-member committee. Mr Pilot is said to have demanded he be reinstated as state party chief and made chief minister in the last year of the current government's term. That is extremely unlikely, given that a large majority of MLAs want Mr Gehlot as CM. The chief minister, in turn, who is clearly not happy at these developments, has advised the Congress high command to accommodate Mr Pilot in a central role in New Delhi. It was suggested he be made an AICC general secretary, but it doesn't seem this will be acceptable to Mr Pilot.

Mr Gehlot, who had an abrasive relationship with his former deputy all through their government's first 18 months, said Tuesday he would listen to the grievances of all party MLAs, including the rebels, and try to address them, but was opaque about whether he would try to repair ties with Mr Pilot, against whom he had used extremely harsh language in the past few weeks, calling him a "nikamma", among other things. And while the younger leader can be faulted for much of the friction between the two, the senior leader too should share some of the blame. Political differences, especially in the same party, cannot be resolved by bringing in the police. That said, the CM may have been right to suspect the BJP of plotting with some Congress leaders to bring down his government, but that needed to be handled politically.

For the BJP, the developments in Rajasthan are a wake-up call — that there are limits to its ability to bring down elected governments and come to power through the backdoor. After its successful dislodging of the Kamal Nath government in Madhya Pradesh earlier this year, with the help of another Congress leader Jyotiraditya Scindia, and several other such instances in the past, the saffron party had hoped for a repeat in Rajasthan, cashing in on the rebellion by Sachin Pilot (who had always insisted, though, that he had no plans to join the BJP). But Mr Pilot, who initially claimed that 30 Congress MLAs were backing him, finally saw he had no more than 18 legislators in his camp, which was insufficient to dislodge the Gehlot government. State BJP leader and Union minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, who was allegedly caught on tape while conspiring to wean away MLAs, ended up with egg all over his face. The role played by Rajasthan's governor Kalraj Mishra in the whole affair — including impeding the CM's bid to hold an Assembly session to prove his majority — also clearly shows that the BJP has not given up trying to misuse the Raj Bhavans to further its political ends. The Congress and other Opposition-led state governments need to watch out in the months ahead.

How green is this valley!

With the deadline of India's first commercial coal auction affixed on September 29, the Narendra Modi government is once again well on the path of destroying its own ecological riches and jeopardising its carbon credits. The auction initially put on sale 18 coal blocks spread over Hasdeo Arand's 4.2 lakh acres in Chhattisgarh. Among bidders are the usual suspects — the Adani Group, despite stray contrarian assurances. It is as if a plutocratic insurgency is all set to stamp out the ancient forests, at incalculable human, social and environmental costs. India is the world's third largest emitter of greenhouse gases.

Located in the valley of a Mahanadi tributary, Hasdeo forest sits on an estimated five billion tonnes of coal. It is also home to 86 species of trees, 51 species of medicinal plants, 34 species of mammals, 14 species of reptiles, 111 species of birds and 29 fish species. Already, mining operations are on in two coal blocks — Parsa East and Kete Basan, and Chotia — since ministry approval in 2011. Proposals concerning four other blocks are being considered.

The mining has hurt livelihoods of the local population — consisting chiefly of Gondhs who subsist on collection and sale of forest produce. That has depleted drastically. Processing of dirty coal, the only kind available here, causes severe air and water pollution, in the absence of regulation, leading to climate and health hazards, including lung cancer. The people now face the nightmare of displacement en masse, in lieu of a meagre, one-time compensation. The Lemru elephant reserve coming up on a small, unmined area of the forest — there have been 325 human and 70 pachyderm deaths due to conflict in the last five years — will cause more displacement. The reserve itself defeats its own purpose — it is to be located safely away from the proposed mines and will act as a veritable prison for the animals.

In its eagerness to usher in private investment, the Centre has kept the revenue share of the state governments dramatically low. This was perhaps one reason why at least four states — West Bengal, Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh — opposed the auction. Five coal blocks that belong to Hasdeo forest have been dropped from the auction, thanks to the effort of the Chhattisgarh government. It is a short breather.

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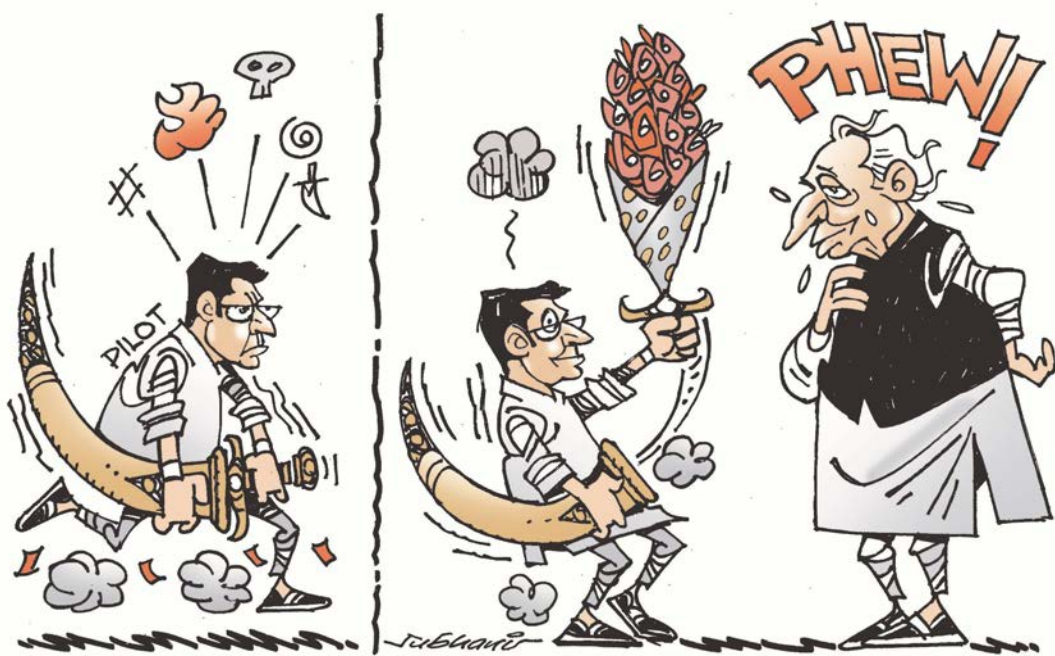
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Subhani



Afghans face turmoil: Back to a dark future



N.V. Subramanian

Afghanistan is becoming the Balkans of the late 19th and early 20th centuries and there is almost no one of Otto von Bismarck's sagacity and vision to prevent the place from blowing up and damaging the neighbourhood. April 2021 is the last month of the American and allied troops' occupation of Afghanistan and there is little likelihood of a change of plans regardless of whether Donald Trump or Joe Biden wins the US presidential elections in November.

Countries sharing a border with Afghanistan, which include the Central Asian states, Iran, Pakistan and China, have an equal stake in keeping the situation from blowing up, as do countries and big powers that don't like the United States, Russia, India, Turkey and the Arab nations. Afghanistan has never known unbroken central rule as it is usually defined, and it doesn't have a strong centralising army, like another xenophobic state, Myanmar. Tribes and warlords determine the power structure on the ground and this phenomenon often defies the Islamic impulses.

Afghanistan has an excess of local and foreign actors compounding its misery. Its chief local and foreign actors, respectively, are the Taliban and the United States. Afghanistan is America's longest war and next year will be its inglorious 20th anniversary. Although Washington's objectives of its post-9/11 intervention were met with the dislodgement of the Taliban government and the ouster of Al Qaeda from all power structures, the US returned from the distraction of the Iraq War with new nation-building pledges for Afghanistan, in which India has so far spent \$3 billion. The objectives of foreign inter-

ventions amended and enlarged mid-course usually end in stalemate.

The situation with the principal actor opposed to the United States, the Taliban, is equally fraught and troublesome. Although it controls 20 per cent of Afghanistan, contests another 50 per cent with the international coalition and Afghan forces, twice has held populous Kunduz city in the north, and is close to encircling six to eight other cities whose road links it can sever at will, its future still depends on the gains from the February 2020 peace agreement with the US.

The Taliban's hardliners were opposed to the peace deal, which binds it and allies like Al Qaeda, the semi-autonomous anti-India, pro-Pakistan Haqqani Taliban of Sirajuddin Haqqani, etc, from attacking the US and its allies. One of the biggest beneficiaries of disenchantment in the Taliban is the Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K), originally constituted from leaders of the Pakistan Taliban facing Pakistan Army persecution. In the months leading up to the peace deal, the US and Afghan forces on one side and Taliban on the other decimated IS(K), claiming no collusion. Since the Taliban must sustain violence against the US and Afghan forces and others generally considered "outsiders" to preserve its raison d'être, it has, so to speak, outsourced bloodletting and mayhem to IS(K), with the Haqqani Taliban acting as intermediary. The Jalalabad jailbreak on August 3, while attributed to IS(K), benefited Taliban inmates the most. IS(K) attacks on a Kabul gurdwara and a maternity ward were particularly gruesome but were, however, not meant to help the Taliban cause entirely.

IS(K) mirrors its mother organisation, Islamic State of Iraq and Levant,

by making extreme violence an end in itself to gain influence, strength and resources. This has proved a magnet for disenchanted Taliban hardliners. The key test ahead is if the United States leaves a residual counter-terrorism force of upto 5,000 after the April 2021 withdrawal. A sort of guarantee for the peace deal, it can also increase the Taliban's problems with its hardliners to the benefit of IS(K).

Between the Taliban and the IS(K), most states affected by Afghanistan's instabilities prefer the Taliban, which is an insurgent movement with no revolutionary ambitions abroad. These grudging supporters include the leading powers, the US, Russia, China, the Central Asian Republics, Iran, Pakistan, etc. Although Indian agencies have contacts with the Taliban through Iran, it doesn't translate to meaningful political traction, this being scuppered by Pakistan's closeness to the insurgent outfit, and the Taliban's own supportive role in the IC-814 hijack. The Haqqani Taliban through its violent attack on Indian interests and assets in Afghanistan guided by Pakistan's ISI also makes accommodation with the Taliban remote for now.

On the other hand, India's support of the Afghan government and its training of Afghan defence forces makes it anathema to the Taliban. Nevertheless, the IS(K) represents a bigger challenge, with recruits from India and with a chapter dedicated to terrorism in India. Once the US departs, India's non-military investments of \$3 billion in Afghanistan will go up in smoke and India's security interests will come under severe

strain. It is unlikely that the isolated civilian government with a depleted military can withstand Taliban pressure for long. If this is accompanied by an ascendancy of Pakistan, it can provide no comfort to New Delhi. Between a rock and a hard place is what confronts India in Afghanistan.

The situation of other states is, however, only slightly better. The United States has to keep an eagle eye on Afghanistan in the foreseeable future with the possibility of repeat military deployments which are politically controversial. Russia, China and Iran have to tolerate a hardline Taliban in their backyard because the alternative of IS(K) is unacceptable. Having spearheaded the Islamic "revolution" in the 1990s, the Taliban cannot go soft and still hope to retain its radical base which is ever ready to switch to the IS(K). The last of its hardcore 400 fighters in Afghan government captivity are to be released after US threats of aid cuts and this only makes the situation more precarious.

All of Afghanistan's neighbours and near-neighbours have deepened partnerships with one another to manage the new flux after the US withdrawal, except for India whose differences with Pakistan over Kashmir and now China on the border question stand in the way. Once a conduit for humanitarian aid to Afghanistan and quiet manoeuvres with the Taliban, Iran has also moved away over differences over compliances with US sanctions and internal issues related to Muslims and Kashmir. Busy retrenching, the US has nothing to offer except vague promises of protecting Indian interests. The only big player left is Russia, with which India has a defence suppliers' relationship after the United States displaced it as the most valued political partner. All at once, history is being turned back 20 years and the prospects are dark.

The writer is an analyst and journalist based in New Delhi

One of the biggest beneficiaries of disenchantment in the Taliban is the Islamic State-Khorasan, originally constituted from leaders of the Pakistan Taliban facing Pakistan Army persecution

LETTERS

OPEN AIR CLASSES

It is quite interesting to note that open air classes are gathering momentum in Kashmir Valley.

Considering the insecure situation prevailing there, the initiatives taken by teachers and local village committees to teach students (from primary to higher secondary classes) in open air and sometimes in mosques when there is rain, and free of cost too, are gobsmackingly amazing. They deserve accolades. Kudos to Muneer Aalam, an engineer-turned-teacher from Srinagar, who has been credited as a pioneer of this novel approach. Students are indeed blessed to have such dedicated and committed teachers and altruists around them. May their tribe increase!

S. Ramakrishnasayee
Chennai

IMPOSITION OF HINDI

IT IS WITH absolute arrogance, audacity and Hindi chauvinism that a woman security officer from CISF had asked Kanimozhi, MP, whether she was an Indian. It is more shocking that this incident has happened in Chennai airport. If such a blatant exhibition of language chauvinism has happened in Tamil Nadu, what would be the plight of non-Hindi speaking persons in the Hindi heartlands of the country? The above is proof of blatant imposition of Hindi in non-Hindi speaking states like Tamil Nadu.

Tharcus S. Fernando

Chennai

RAMDEV'S GOOGLY

IT IS BAFFLING that Yoga guru Baba Ramdev's Patanjali eyes IPL sponsorship. Only recently he released 'Covinil' for corona pandemic amidst much fanfare and made a hasty retreat in the face of uproar in the media saying it is an immunity booster. Madras high court banned its sale outright in Tamil Nadu. BCCI says that highest bidder's claim need not be accepted. His meteoric rise from yoga lessons on TV to be able to bid for IPL sponsorship shows how much clout he has garnered with the powers that be. He reminds us of swami Dharendra Brahmachari, another controversial yogi who wielded lot of power during Indira Gandhi's Congress rule.

Parthasarathy Mandadi
Tirupati

Nilofar Suhrawardy



Ayodhya glory will fade amid Covid tension before long

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has certainly gone overboard in making a grand show of his presence at Ayodhya. He has proved to be a master strategist, ahead of seniors in his own political camp and, of course, his political rivals. Clearly, he can claim to have achieved what apparently was not visualised and perhaps not even seriously considered by others. True, around a year ago, the apex court's verdict regarding this controversial issue had set the clock ticking speedily in this direction. Apprehension prevailed in certain quarters about the verdict and subsequent developments, including the latest ceremonies, leading to communal tension. Thankfully, Indians at large adopted a mature and secular approach then as well as now (August 5), with there being no report about any major communal disturbance from any part of the country.

And this certainly proves that the Ayodhya-issue can no longer be viewed as a communal bomb that it once seemed to be. Against this back-

drop, what can Mr Modi expect to gain by the grand "religious" show displayed at Ayodhya on August 5? Of course, constitutionally, he has as much a right to be as religious he wants to be. After all, India is a multi-religious, secular country. Besides, most politicians do indulge in display of their religious as well as secular images for political gains. Almost all key leaders, including Mr Modi, flaunt their "secularism" by sending a token symbol to Ajmer Sharief every year. During electoral season, substantial importance is given by most to gain media coverage of their visiting temples and so forth. Well, this is India.

Mr Modi's Ayodhya-show cannot but be viewed as a grand step taken by him in style, to enhance his image, particularly his "religious" credentials in the eyes of Indian voters. Considering that it has been taken at a time when a vicious virus is sending distress signals from all directions, Mr Modi is probably hopeful that this Ayodhya-move will be of some help in distracting the people's attention. Will it? This may be

viewed as a million dollar question.

The nature of comments coming from even his key political rivals suggests that they cannot afford to criticise his Ayodhya-show. This may be viewed as a political "victory" for Mr Modi. There is nothing wrong with politicians of various parties expressing appreciation for the Ayodhya Ram temple ceremony.

Indians have come a long way from December 6, 1992, when communal violence engulfed practically the entire country following the demolition of Babri Masjid, for construction of the Ram temple. Nevertheless, there lurks a fear in certain sections, whether the underlying motive of the ruling party and its leaders is to pay greater importance to their Hindutva-agenda than to the country's Constitution. It is hoped that this is not the case and substantial attention is paid not to provoke communal violence in name of religion, constitutionally.

Mr Modi is apparently well aware that he cannot afford to openly use the communal card for political gains. It is not without reason that

he donned a secular mask when he first chose to come on the national stage by contesting the 2014 parliamentary elections. Also, each time communal frenzy targeting minorities of some nature, particularly Muslims, hits headlines, protests and demonstrations against it do not take long to surface. A greater number of secular non-Muslims (largely Hindus) participate in these demonstrations than Muslims. This suggests that the question of his Ayodhya-show being viewed communally by people in general is as good as non-existent. Even if this were not a Covid year, the prospects of people adding communal fervour to the Ayodhya-show would probably not have prevailed.

It is possible that Mr Modi has his eye on gaining votes in the Hindi belt with the Bihar Assembly election round the corner. He has his right to make political use of religious shows, if he wants to, as long as communal violence and hatred are not provoked. In recent years, some noise has been made about certain leaders hoping for polarisation of vote banks

along religious lines. Perhaps, a motive of the Ayodhya-show is this. It may be, but with Hindus as well as Muslims divided into numerous groups, castes, sub-castes and also regional, the question of there being any Hindu or Muslim vote-bank is as good as non-existent.

So Mr Modi's Ayodhya move may certainly be viewed as a master card as it has helped him gain substantially a positive image that had suffered in recent days because of crises caused by the coronavirus. He hopes to dominate headlines for some time. It cannot be ignored that the virus has left Indians a little too tense to remain distracted by his Ayodhya show for long. Nevertheless, he has once again proved to be a master strategist who knows how to steal a march on his rivals in the political race. He has, for the moment, all the reason to talk about his "56-inch" chest and feel proud!

The writer is a journalist with specialisation in communication studies and nuclear diplomacy. She is also the author of several books.

quick
BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	38,407.01	0.59
Nifty 50	11,322.50	0.46
S&P 500*	3,374.37	0.41
Dollar (₹)	74.77	0.22
Pound Sterling (₹)	97.76	0.02
Euro (₹)	87.83	0.35
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	54,763	1,317
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	45.16	0.17
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.903	0.010
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.632	0.058

* As of 9:30 PM IST

Medtronic to put
in ₹1,200 cr in
H'bad R&D centre

Global medical technology major Medtronic plc said it will invest ₹1,200 crore to scale up and expand its current R&D facility in Hyderabad into a state-of-the-art engineering and innovation center. Medtronic Engineering and Innovation Center (MEIC) will be its largest global R&D centre outside the US. "This investment planned over five years will provide a boost to Telangana's MedTech plans," it said.

■ The worst seems behind in the long road to recovery
Stimulus slows credit downgrades of firmsANURAG JOSHI
AUG. 11

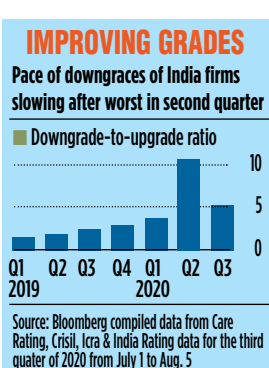
The country's unprecedented stimulus measures to fight the coronavirus crisis seem to have slowed the worsening of corporate credit quality.

There have been around five downgrades for every one upgrade of rupee debt of companies since July 1. That's a major improvement when compared with a ratio of almost 11 to one in the quarter ended June 30, a record rate, according to a review of rating moves by four main credit assess-

sors-Care Ratings, Crisil, Ica and India Ratings & Research.

"The stimulus has brought incremental relief to firms in India, helping them to stay afloat and avoid the risk of closures," said T.N. Arun Kumar, chief ratings officer at Care Ratings Ltd. "The measures have helped corporates tide over cash problems and boosted their short-term credit profiles."

Borrowing costs have declined for local companies due to a barrage of stimulus steps. The central government unveiled ₹277



billion of stimulus in May, while the Reserve Bank pumped ₹50 billion of cash

into domestic banks in March and it has cut its benchmark repurchase rate to the lowest level ever. The lower funding rates are important for the corporate sector, which faces a bill of about ₹1.5 lakh crore (\$20 billion) in bond repayments in the September quarter.

Yield premiums for AAA-ranked 10-year rupee company notes over similar-maturity sovereign debt have declined to 80 basis points from 152 at the end of May, the highest since 2009.

— Bloomberg

Foreign flows may dictate market momentum again**Inflows slowing for MFs, insurance firms**RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, AUG. 11

The market may face rough weather again, much like in March this year, and move in the direction of foreign flows, as inflows from domestic institutions have started slowing down, especially from mutual funds and insurance companies, as indicated by June and July monthly data.

In August too domestic institutions have been booking profit and brisk inflows from the foreign portfolio investors are keeping the market momentum intact.

In August so far FPIs have invested ₹10,420 crore, surpassing the July month investment of ₹7,563 crore.

On Tuesday domestic institutions were net sellers by ₹1,415.54 crore while the foreign portfolio investors were net buyers by ₹1,013.66 crore.

Whether these are sticky investments from the long only funds or short-term investments by fly by night operators, only time will tell.

India witnessed foreign portfolio investment outflow of \$16.05 billion in March 2020 and \$1.97 billion during April-May 2020, triggered by the Covid-19 fallout on domestic and global economy.

Upcoming US presidential election and continuing threat of Covid-19 are likely to drive investors away from risky asset classes.

Mutual fund flows have



fallen sharply in June and July to ₹240.55 crore and an outflow of ₹2,480 crore respectively compared to inflows of ₹6,212.96 in April and ₹5,256.52 crore in May 2020. "Net flows in the open ended equity fund category have been on a downward spiral since April and barely positive at ₹240 crore in June. In July, the trend continued, leading to net outflows of ₹2,480 crore. On the positive side, flows through systematic investments plans (SIPs) have sustained around the ₹8,000-crore mark till June (numbers for July are yet to be released), said a report by rating agency Crisil..

Private life insurance players' premium declined 7.1 per cent in July 2020, similar to the decline in June 2020 while the life insurance industry as a whole posted a decline of 0.3 per cent. The overall decline has moderated considerably from the levels seen over March-May 2020. For FY21 year to date, private players' individual premium received declined 18.1 per cent year-

on-year while for the industry, it dropped 12.6 per cent YoY, said a report by Motilal Oswal.

So far this year, the impact of foreign investors pulling their money out of India did not lead to any macroeconomic instability. Rather, foreign exchange reserves increased to \$517.64 billion (foreign currency assets: \$477.81 billion) on 17 July 2020 from \$476.88 billion (\$442.21 billion) at end-March 2020.

The rupee's strength against foreign currencies remains the key to foreign portfolio investors staying invested in India, said analysts.

"Swelling of foreign exchange reserves in combination with benign oil prices and tepid imports, leading to a current account surplus, has helped the rupee to remain broadly stable since mid-March 2020, despite deterioration in some of the other macro parameters such as retail inflation, fiscal deficits and negative GDP growth," said India Ratings & Research.

COFFEE-BREAK

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



Aries: Catch up on your sleep. Past efforts of approaching the one you love may bring positive results. All your professional activities get a great boost, as seniors help.



Taurus: Romantic life suffers because of minor differences. Understanding your family's feelings will sort out problems. Expect financial problems.



Gemini: Entrance exam requires focus and hard work. Good news in the days' second half rejuvenates family members' spirits. Lack of physical activities causes issues.



Cancer: Avoid forcing opinions on children. Work load hampers health. Don't waste money on speculations. You'll find success in whatever you do.



Leo: Confusion arises in your family and the atmosphere won't be peaceful. Your friends help you overpower your enemies. Beware of your opponents.



Virgo: Heavy expenses ruin budgets. You'll find things moving in your desired direction; relations with friends and family further strengthen. It is a favourable time on the work front.

You share your b'day with

Sara Ali Khan, Bollywood actress. She is best known for her roles in *Kedarnath*, *Simmha* and *Love Aaj Kal*.



Libra: Leave your negative thoughts behind. Avoid controversies to keep off stress. Expect some good political links, which will be useful to enhance your profession. Your hard work is suitably rewarded.



Scorpio: Your projects will be completed in time, bringing you suitable rewards. Unmarried may get marriage proposals. You'll focus on charity.



Sagittarius: Don't let down those admiring you and seeking your advice. Protect yourself from those bringing you negative energy. Finances will be good.



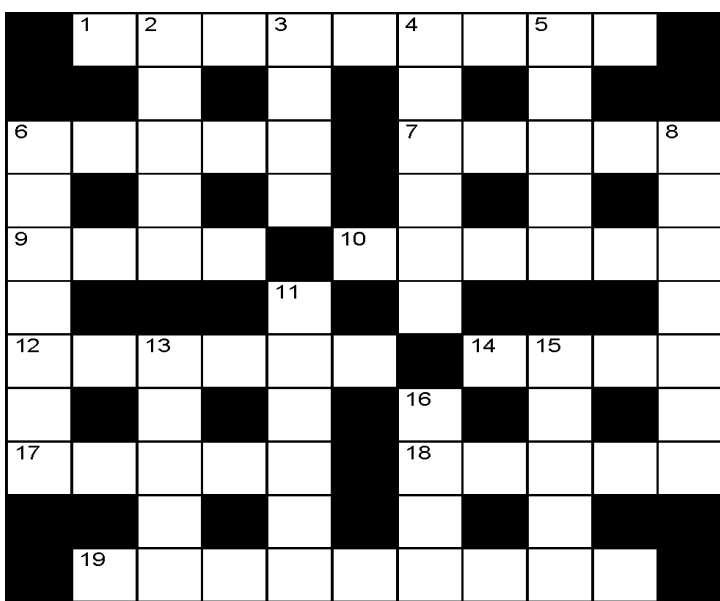
Capricorn: Despite being a positive person you're unaware of how much negative influences can affect your outlook. Stick with positive people today. Expect some good news.



Aquarius: Futile activities may keep you busy. Don't be arrogant at work. You'll find peace as your projects complete. Bank balance increases with new income sources coming into play.



Pisces: Expect altercations with your spouse over household expenses. Avoid arguments. You may attend a celebration. Family disputes will sort out amicably. Tensions and troubles at home and work will gradually decrease.

QUICK CROSSWORD

Across

1. Secretly listen in (9)
6. Correspond (5)
7. Low-priced (5)
9. Decisive defeat (4)
10. Expose (6)
12. Cover for loss (6)
14. Worry (4)
17. Inexperienced (5)
18. Sufficient (5)
19. Grave marker (9)

Down

2. Farewell (5)
3. Pitcher (4)
4. Edict (6)
5. Excessively fat (5)
6. Caution (7)
8. Artist's mixing board (7)
11. Pressed (6)
13. Vista (5)
15. Mature (5)
16. Treaty (4)

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

Across: 1. Greenfly, 7. Erred, 8. Tango, 9. Absurd, 10. Grib, 12. Idle, 14. Candid, 17. Unwed, 18. Bible, 19. Ornament.

Down: 1. Girls, 2. Endure, 3. Note, 4. Lunar, 5. Behaviour, 6. Forbidden, 11. Gamble, 13. Lower, 15. Debit, 16. Idea.

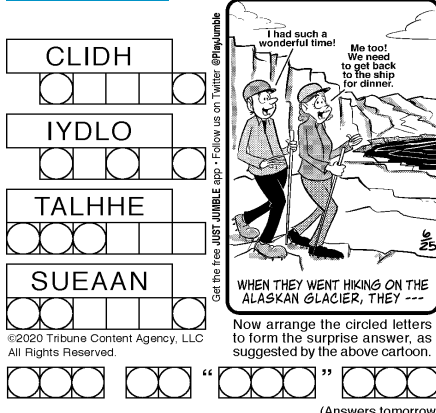
Word Mine

F
R
I
U
I
C
Y
D
A

TODAY'S RATINGS: 4 AVERAGE; 5 GOOD; 7 OUTSTANDING

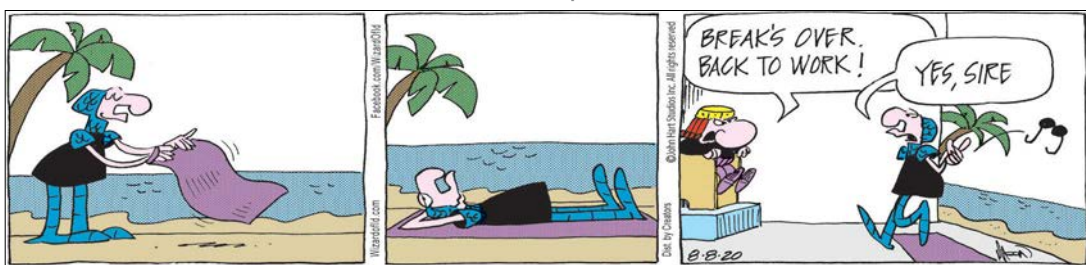
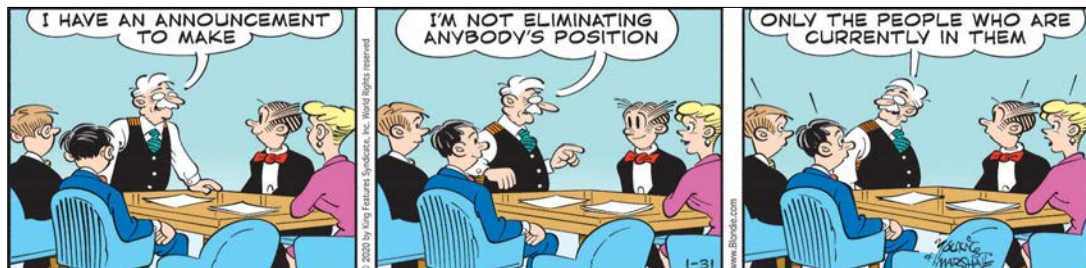
How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown in today's puzzle? In making a word, each letter may be used once only. Each word must contain the letter at the top of the pyramid. There should be at least one nine letter word. Plurals, foreign words and proper names are not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

ANSWERS: Addict, fly, fan, fly, forehead, friend, frog, key.

jumble

Yesterday's Jumbles: BLINK OUTDO TUNNEL ORIOLE
Answer: When the student couldn't get the microscope to work, the teacher said she'd — LOOK INTO IT

suit jack. If East had played low, declarer would have produced a scissors coup, discarding his remaining club. West gets an unexpected diamond trick, but East no longer has an entry to deliver the lethal heart ruff. If East had covered the diamond jack with his king, declarer would have ruffed, played the spade jack to the queen and ace, then led the diamond eight. Here, luck would have been in: East couldn't beat that, so declarer would have

CALVIN AND HOBBS | Bill Watterson**THE WIZARD OF ID** | Parker and Hartsd**ARCHIE** | Bill Henry Scarpelli & craig boldman**BLONDIE** | Dean Young and John Marshall**ANDY CAPP** | Reg Smythe**TARZAN** | Edgar Rice Burroughs**USE SCISSORS
TO SAVE
TRICKS**

Finley Peter Dunne, an American journalist and humorist who died in 1936, wrote, "Trust everybody, but cut the cards." That's appropriate to this deal.

South did not have many points, but he had lots of winners. Hence his jump to four spades.

If sitting East-West, would you prefer to defend against four spades or to declare in five diamonds?

West cashed the club ace:

six, nine, four. Realizing that East had the club queen for his encouraging signal, West switched to his singleton heart. Declarer won in hand and led the spade jack: queen, ace, two. West won the second round of trumps, underlined his club king to East's queen and ruffed the heart return for down one.

West's plan was transparent. To counteract it, South should have won trick two with dummy's heart jack, then called for the other red-

Dealer: South
Vulnerable: Both
North
East
West
South
Deal
All Pass
Opening lead: ♠ A

pitched his second club and lost only three tricks: one spade, one diamond and one club.

To defeat four spades, West must lead his heart at trick one, then, if necessary, underlead both of his club honors! Finally, five diamonds can be beaten if North-South starts with two rounds of hearts to tap the West hand.

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SHORT TAKES

Hockey camp hit by positive tests

New Delhi: The upcoming training camp for India's male hockey players in Bengaluru looks uncertain after half a dozen of them tested positive for Covid-19 but the women can resume practice after all of them tested negative for the dreaded virus. Six Indian men's team players — skipper Manpreet Singh, striker Mandeep Singh, defenders Surender Kumar, Jaskaran Singh, drag-flicker Varun Kumar and goalkeeper Krishan Bahadur Pathak — have tested positive after reaching Bengaluru for the national camp, scheduled to start on August 20. Of these, Mandeep has been hospitalised after his blood oxygen levels dropped on Monday. "The men's camp is in doubt after six positive results, more reports are still awaited from the state government," a SAI source confirmed. "But the women's camp is still on course after all the players tested negative. They are currently under 14-day quarantine period and the light intensity camp will begin once its over," the source added. — PTI

Coach for more boxers at training

New Delhi: Resumption is done and expansion can now follow, said Indian boxing's High Performance Director Santiago Nievea, revealing that addition of seven more boxers has been proposed at the ongoing national training camp for the Olympic-bound in Patiala. Nine male boxers and a few of their women counterparts are training at the National Institute of Sports (NIS) in Patiala, taking the first step towards a restart amid the Covid-19 pandemic. These include top medal hope Amit Panghal. "We are looking to add seven more boxers, two coaches and a support staff member to this list in the next few weeks. Approval has been sought (from SAI). We are assessing things one month at a time," Nievea said. "The boxers who are here are training under the strict health safety protocol given to us and things have been smooth. I can't give you names but the ones we want included next are second in rankings of their respective categories," he said. — PTI

Senior scribe Menon no more

Mumbai: Veteran sports journalist G. K. Menon died in suburban Mumbai on Tuesday morning. He was 93 and is survived by his wife, son and a daughter. He worked with the *Indian Express* and *The Times of India* and ended his freelance career in the early 1990s. Menon played cricket at the club level and also was an active member of the Shivaji Park Gymkhana in Dadar, central Mumbai. He was manager of the 1952-53 Bombay University team which won the Rohinton Baria Trophy by beating Delhi in the final at Bengaluru. That side included future Test players like Chandu Patankar, Nari Contractor, Ramnath Kenny, Naren Tamhane and GR Sunderam. Menon was also instrumental in the emergence of former India pacer, late Ramakant Desai. — PTI

CHAMP TRUMP IS DUMPED AT SNOOKER SHOW

London: Judd Trump suffered a shock exit from the World Snooker Championship as the title holder crashed to a 9-13 quarterfinal defeat against Kyren Wilson on Tuesday. Trump became the last victim of the so-called 'Crucible Curse' which has seen 18 first-time winners of the world title fail to retain the crown since the event moved to the Sheffield venue in 1977. Trump trailed 6-10 from Monday's opening session and fired three breaks over 50 in the first four frames on Tuesday to reduce the deficit to just two.

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BOWL BABY BOWL
CSK, KKR to carry 10 net bowlers for IPL

New Delhi, Aug. 11: The Indian Premier League shifting its base to the United Arab Emirates for the 2020 edition may prove to be a blessing in disguise for at least 50 unheralded cricketers, who are set to travel with the eight teams as "exclusive" net bowlers.

At least three franchises, Chennai Super Kings, Kolkata Knight Riders and Delhi Capitals confirmed that they are preparing a roster of net bowlers.

The list comprises mostly first-class, U-19 and U-23 state level cricketers who will get to bowl to the likes of MS Dhoni, Suresh Raina, Rishabh Pant for close to a month.

The convention all these years has been using local bowlers for nets apart from the junior fringe players but the strict bio-security measures for the tournament means that all franchise will have to arrange for quality bowlers during practice sessions.

While BCCI has capped the squad strength (players) to 24, the franchises have not been specified contingent volume which will vary from team to team.

"If all goes well, we are planning to take around 10 bowlers exclusively to UAE for the practice sessions. They will be accompanying the team and will remain till the tournament starts," Chennai Super Kings Chief Executive Officer Kashi Vishwanathan said.

The Kolkata Knight Riders also confirmed that they will also have 10 net bowlers in their roster, likely to be handpicked by former cricketer Abhishek Nayar.

"It will be a blend of players of who have played Ranji Trophy while some of have played U-23 and U-19 national level tournaments," someone who is privy to developments in the KKR camp informed.

— PTI



Chennai Super Kings coach Stephen Fleming (left) speaks with his captain M. S. Dhoni in this file photo.

Maskless Jadeja wife in row with cop

Ahmedabad, Aug. 11: Wife of cricketer Ravindra Jadeja entered into an argument with a police constable in Gujarat's Rajkot after the latter asked her the reason for not wearing a mask, police said on Tuesday.

The cricketer was driving the car at the time of the incident on Monday night. While he was wearing a mask, his wife Rivaba wasn't, a senior officer said.

The cricketer's wife had a heated argument with head constable Sonal Gosai when the latter stopped her car at Kisanpara Chowk after noticing that she was not wearing a mask, Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Manoharsinh Jadeja said.

"Our primary investigation has revealed that

MUMBAI CA TO MEET ON RESUMPTION OF CRICKET

Mumbai, Aug. 11: Resumption of cricketing activities in the megalopolis will top the agenda of the Mumbai Cricket Association's (MCA) Apex Council meeting to be held here on August 14.

Cricket in the megalopolis has come to a grinding halt since mid-March due to outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic and Mumbai is one of the worst affected cities in the country.

"We will discuss resumption of cricketing activity and also the Standard Operating Procedures sent by the BCCI to all the state associations in this regard," an Apex Council member said.

Issues related to the formation of Cricket Improvement Committee (CIC) will also be discussed.

The MCA had shortlisted three names — Lalchand Rajput, Raju Kulkarni and Samir Dighe — as members of the CIC.

— PTI

Rivaba Jadeja was not wearing a mask. While it is a matter of investigation why the issue escalated, we have learnt that both the parties entered into a verbal spat," the DCP said.

● **Ravindra Jadeja's wife, Rivaba was driving a car without wearing a mask and got into an argument with a head constable at the location while being questioned for not wearing a mask.**

Following the argument, Gosai, the head constable at the location, complained of uneasiness and was taken to a nearby hospital, he said.

The wife of Chennai Super Kings allrounder was discharged after half an hour and is fine now, the officer said, adding that no FIR has been lodged as yet.

— PTI

EUROPA | LEAGUE

Fernandes takes United to semis

Cologne (Germany), Aug. 11: Manchester United needed an extra-time penalty from Bruno Fernandes to scrape into the Europa League semifinals after beating Copenhagen 1-0.

In sweltering heat, United's young team controlled the lion's share of possession but had a hard time creating clear chances until Andreas Bjelland brought down Anthony Martial in the penalty area. Fernandes blasted the ball past the otherwise excellent goalkeeper Karl-Johan Johnsson to give United the 95th-minute lead.

Mason Greenwood and Fernandes hit the woodwork with shots during normal time and earlier video reviews cost United two of its best opportunities to score.

First, VAR scratched off a United penalty for offside in the buildup. Just before the break Greenwood put the ball in the net after a lightning break down the right flank but the replay showed he'd been just offside when Marcus Rashford's pass was played.

That decision was a par-

● **Manchester United's Bruno Fernandes scored an extra-time penalty to help his side scrap into the last-four stage of the tourney.**

ticular blow for United after the apparent breakthrough goal came just as the English team had seemed to be getting frustrated and taking increasingly speculative shots against a Danish team playing its first ever European quarterfinal.

● **LUKAKU STARS AS INTER ADVANCE**

Romelu Lukaku scored one goal and set up another as Inter Milan defeated a tenacious Bayer Leverkusen 2-1 to reach the Europa League semifinals.

Lukaku was the driving force from the start, imposing himself on the game and disrupting the Leverkusen defense to keep Inter in the hunt for its first trophy in nine years. Inter last played a European semifinal on its way to the Champions League title in 2010.

— Agencies



Manchester United's Bruno Fernandes (in red) vies for the ball with FC Copenhagen's Jason Wood (left) during their UEFA Europa league quarterfinal match in Cologne, Germany, on Monday. United won 1-0.

Atalanta brace for PSG strike

Milan, Aug. 11: Atalanta take on Paris Saint-Germain in the Champions League quarter-finals on Wednesday with the tournament debutants the surprise standard bearers for Italian football in Lisbon.

Serie A champions Juventus and Napoli were felled in the last 16, leaving Atalanta to carry the nation's hopes of a first major European trophy since Inter Milan's 2010 triumph.

PSG will not have superstar Kylian Mbappe available, but Atalanta look set to be without top scorer Josip Illicic, who found the net 21 times in all competitions, including five in the Champions League.

"We miss Illicic very much," said coach Gian Piero Gasperini.

The 32-year-old Slovenian was on form until the coronavirus engulfed Italy and

Live on TV
CHAMPIONS LEAGUE
QUARTERFINAL

Atalanta vs Paris Saint-Germain
from 12.30 am (Thursday)
on Sony Ten 2

in particular the team's home city Bergamo, where at one point the army was called in to take away coffins because local morgues could not cope with the number of virus deaths.

Illicic was overwhelmed by personal and psychological difficulties and has been sidelined for the team's final games of the season. But Atalanta's strength has been the number of players who have contributed to their all-competitions tally of 118 goals.

— AFP

Kuznetsova pulls out of US Open

New York, Aug. 11: Former US Open champion Svetlana Kuznetsova withdrew from this year's tournament on Monday citing concerns over the Covid-19 outbreak.

The 35-year-old Russian, who won the first of her two career Grand Slam titles at Flushing Meadows in 2004, joins a lengthening list of players from Europe who have opted to skip the event. "Due to the unfavourable situation due to Coronavirus... I made the difficult decision for myself to refuse to participate," Kuznetsova said in a post on her *Instagram* page.

The world number 32 will also miss the ATP/WTA Western and Southern Open, which is being played in New York this year instead of Cincinnati as a warm-up event for the August 31-September 13 Open.

"I'm sorry as I've been waiting for these tournaments, but the pandemic

Due to the unfavourable situation due to Coronavirus... I made the difficult decision for myself to refuse to participate. I hope that the situation in the world will become more stable.

— SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA on withdrawing from the US Open

changed all plans. I hope that the situation in the world will become more stable by the next competition," Kuznetsova said.

In a separate announcement on Monday, the US Tennis Association confirmed the Czech Republic's Barbora Strycova had also withdrawn from the US Open, along with China's Wang Xiyi.

The US's Ann Li and Australia's Priscilla Hon have been elevated to the main draw as a result of the withdrawals. — AFP



England cricketer Stuart Board (left) with his father Chris Board in this file photo.

tures which disparage or which could provoke an aggressive reaction from a batter upon his/her dismissal during an International Match."

In addition to this, one merit point has been

added to the disciplinary record of Broad, for whom it was the third offence in a 24-month period, taking his cumulative demerit points to three.

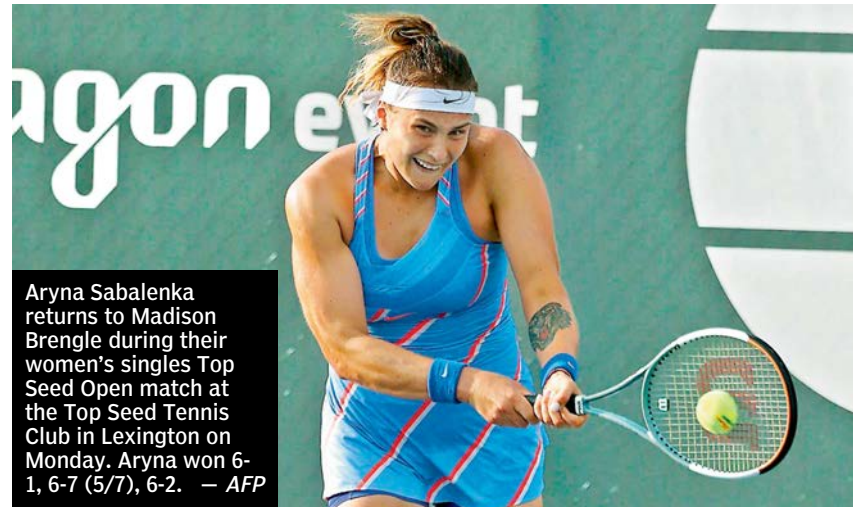
Broad's previous breaches were on January 27 this

year during the fourth Test against South Africa at the Wanderers, and on August 19, 2018, in the third Test against India at Trent Bridge.

"Broad admitted the offence and accepted the sanction proposed by Chris Broad of the Emirates ICC Elite Panel of Match Referees and ratified by the ICC Cricket Operations department as per the Covid-19 interim playing regulations," the release added.

On-field umpires Richard Kettleborough and Richard Illingworth, third umpire Michael Gough and fourth official Steve O'Shaughnessy levelled the charge against Broad.

— PTI



Aryna Sabalenka returns to Madison Brengle during their women's Singles Top Seed Open match at the Top Seed Tennis Club in Lexington on Monday. Aryna won 6-1, 6-7 (5/7), 6-2. — AFP

Gritty Konta goes down

Lexington (USA), Aug. 11: Britain's Jo Konta suffered a health scare as she crashed out of the opening round of the WTA Top Seed Open in Lexington on Monday with a straight-sets defeat to the Czech Republic's Marie Bouzkova.

Third seed Konta requested medical attention just a few minutes into her 4-6, 4-6 first round loss to the unseed-

ed Bouzkova.

The 29-year-old Briton looked uncomfortable and kept holding two fingers to her neck to check her pulse before eventually resuming play.

Konta later explained that she is prone to sudden palpitations that can send her heart rate soaring.

Other seeded players in action made it safely into the second round, with

Polish sixth seed Magda Linette beating the United States' Lauren Davis 6-2, 6-2, and Tunisia's Ons Jabeur, seeded eight, downing another American, Caty McNally, 6-2, 6-4.

Second seed Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus was taken to three sets by Madison Brengle before claiming a 6-1, 6-7 (5/7), 6-2 win.

— AFP

DEVIN SHINES IN SUNS WIN OVER OKLAHOMA THUNDER

Orlando, Aug. 11: Devin Booker produced another 30-point scoring display as the Phoenix Suns notched six wins in a row since the NBA's restart with a blowout victory over Oklahoma City Thunder on Monday.

Booker scored 35 points with five rebounds and four assists in a 128-101 win that maintained Phoenix's improbable charge towards a place in the Western Conference play-in.

It was the fourth time in six games that Booker has scored more than 30 points in Orlando, where the Suns are a perfect 6-0 since the season resumed inside the NBA's bubble last month.

Booker's latest masterclass included an audacious three-pointer from near halfway late in the third period that extended the Suns' lead to 13 points, and underscored his status as the NBA's form player.

Booker's offensive effort was backed by double-digit scoring from five teammates.

— AFP