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HYDERABAD | FRIDAY | 14 AUGUST 2020

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Max: 23.8°C
Min: 21.9°C
RH: 96%
Rainfall: 21.9 mm

Forecast: Light to moderate rains or thundershowers.
Max/Min temp. 28/22 °C

COVID-19 COUNT

CASES (+63,557)

DEATHS (+993)

24,58,295 covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+1,931) (+11)

TS: 86,475 665

(+ 9,996) (+71)

AP: 2,64,142 2,367

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

2,09,40,054

DEATHS 7,49,860

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES 213

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana

Tithi: Shrawana Bahula Dasami till 1.56 pm

Star: Mrigasira full day

Varjyam: 11.14 am to 12.55 pm

Durmuhuram: 8.33 am to 9.24 am; 12.46 pm to 1.36 pm

Rahukalam: 10.30 am to 12 noon

HJRI CALENDAR

Zulhijja 23,1441 AH

PRAYERS

Fajar: 4.55 am

Zohar: 12.31 pm

Asar: 4.47 pm

Maghrab: 6.49 pm

Isha: 7.58 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.42 PM

SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.58 AM

MOONRISE TODAY 1.14 AM

MOONSET TOMORROW 2.39 PM

COUNTER POINT

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

IN BRIEF

Pranab still in critical condition

New Delhi: The condition of former President Pranab Mukherjee remained critical but stable on Thursday, and seems to be responding to treatment even as rumours about his death floated.

TRAVEL | BAN Indian IT professionals, health workers to benefit**US eases H-1B, L-1 visa curbs**

Washington, Aug. 13: In a move that could help Indian IT professionals and those working in the healthcare sector, the Trump Administration has announced certain exemptions in H-1B and L-1 travel ban for those continuing employment with the same employer.

The exemptions to the

June 22 Presidential

Proclamation 10052, commonly referred to as H-1B or L-1 Travel Ban, also includes the family members of the H-1B, L-1 and certain categories of J1 visas.

President Donald Trump, in his June proclamation, banned the entry into the US of workers in several key non-immigrant visa categories, including the

H-1B, arguing that they eat into American jobs.

Companies depend on H-1B visas to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China. The State Department, which issued the revised travel advisory, on Wednesday said that the exemptions were given under national interest category. In its

advisory, the State Department said that H-1B and L-1 visas can now be issued for staff who are "seeking to resume ongoing employment in the US in the same position with the same employer and visa classification."

Forcing employers to replace existing employees may cause financial hardship, it said.

—PTI

Highway falls**RAM TEMPLE TRUST HEAD WHO SHARED DAIS WITH PM +VE**

Lucknow/Mathura, Aug. 13: The head of the Ram temple trust, Mahant Nitya Gopal Das, 80, tested positive for Covid-19 on Thursday.

On August 5, Das shared the dais with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Adityanath, Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel and RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat at the groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of a Ram temple in Ayodhya.

He was rushed to the Medanta hospital in Gurgaon, officials said.

"A team of doctors tested him after the district administration was informed that he was feeling uneasy," Mathura District Magistrate (DM) Sarvagya Ram Mishra said. Meanwhile, India's Coronavirus count crossed 24 lakh on Thursday with 63,557 fresh cases detected in a day.

—PTI

**TS takes 50% beds in private hospitals**

Health department to control admissions

BALU PULIPAKA | DC

HYDERABAD, AUG. 13

The state government on Thursday announced that it was taking control of 50 per cent of beds in private hospitals. The health department will have control over admissions of Covid-19 patients for these beds, the government said.

As per the initial decision, the patients chosen for admission under this arrangement will be charged as per the rates decided by the government.

The decision was taken at a meeting of representatives of the Telangana Super-Specialty Hospitals Association representatives and health minister Etala Rajendar, according to a release from his office.

The meeting with the leaders was followed by the Congress Legislature Party meeting, where sources said Mr Gehlot expressed his desire to seek a trust vote on the first day of the Assembly session itself.

Covid-19 beds in private hospitals if they failed to fall in line and implement government guidelines on rates for treating patients.

It was reliably learnt that despite Thursday's announcement, a final agreement was yet to be arrived at between the pri-

from it, to reserve at least 20 per cent of beds for poor patients and provide free treatment.

The HC directed Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar, who appeared along with his colleagues via video-conferencing, to submit a report on the number of poor patients who got free treatment in private hospitals.

■ Page 2: Pvt hospitals seem to be powerful

vate hospitals and the government on the question of the number of beds that the government will have control over. It was learnt that the hospitals offered 30 per cent of the beds.

■ Page 2: Charges not fixed for beds taken over

Congress in Rajasthan united to face trust vote**DC CORRESPONDENT**

NEW DELHI, AUG. 13

The Congress government in Rajasthan led by Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot is all set to face a vote of confidence on Friday when the state Assembly convenes, and the party high command has asked Sachin Pilot to ensure that the MLAs loyal to him vote for the Gehlot government. Earlier, the Opposition BJP had said that it would move a no-confidence motion in the Assembly.

Congress sources said Gehlot would also seek a trust vote as it would give his government immunity from a similar move for the next six months. If the Chief Minister moves a confidence motion, under the rules it will supersede the no-confidence motion moved by any other member.

On Thursday, Pilot buried his differences and met Mr Gehlot for the first time after he openly rebelled against the senior leader around a month back.

Party leaders K.C. Venugopal, Avinash Pande, Randeep Surjewala, Ajay Maken



and new PCC chief Govind Singh Dotasra were also there at the meeting, held at Mr Gehlot's official residence in Jaipur, and posed for pictures together.

Pilot and Gehlot shook hands, marking the return of the sacked deputy chief minister and 18 other dissident MLAs properly to the party fold, after the intervention earlier this week by the top leadership of the Congress in New Delhi.

Sources said that at the meeting, Venugopal is understood to have told the two leaders to ensure

30 asymptomatic cases in India for every +ve case

social stigma surrounding Covid and the limited understanding of the disease among the people.

The increased spread of cases was noted in closed environments, crowded places where there is no proper social distancing and lack of ventilation facilities. In India, joint families have been most affected and toilets have been the source of the spread of infection, where there is only one bathroom in households.

In districts, this aspect has come to the fore, as seven to eight residents share one bathroom.

■ Page 2: Masks, social distancing only way out

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IN BRIEF

INTUC UNION MOVES HC ON FIELD ASSISTANTS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, AUG 13

The INTUC Field Assistants Union on Thursday filed a writ in the High Court challenging the removal of 8,000 field assistants from their jobs. The petition was filed by the union representatives R.D. Chandrasekhar, Yerraganti Naganna Goud, Bolluri Ravi, and Challa Venkateswarlu.

The court, which heard senior counsel Macharia Rangaiah, who represented the union, posted the case for hearing on Monday, after the lawyer representing the government sought some time.

Rangaiah said the field assistants were working under the Employment Guarantee Scheme of 2005 and were not paid for four months and illegally removed. He sought a direction to reinstate the staff and pay their salaries.

TEACHERS FED SAYS REGULARISE CONTRACT JOBS

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC
HYDERABAD, AUG 13

In the wake of the High Court observations on contract jobs, the Telangana State United Teachers Federation (TSUTF) state committee on Thursday demanded that the government immediately regularise the services of contract and outsourced employees working in various departments and pay them the salaries as mentioned for those posts.

The demands were discussed in the TSUTF state committee meeting held online on Wednesday and Thursday. The demands included seeking of clarity on the powers of school complex headmasters.

It sought appointment orders to be given to sectoral officers selected in the written examination and resolving the crisis of teacher promotions and to provide management-wise promotions.

The federation sought immediate release of the schedule of transfer of spouses and model school teacher transfers. It also wanted regularisation of services of contract and outsourced employees working in Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas, gurukulas, model schools and mandal resource centres. The committee also asked the government to publish the results of Hindi teachers in TRT-2017.

MASKS, SOCIAL DISTANCING ONLY WAY OUT: EXPERT

From Page 1

Apart from this, co-morbid conditions of heart disease, diabetes, kidney and other organ complications have caused rapid deterioration of the health of Covid-19 patients, leading to death in many cases.

Apart from the lungs, the load of virus has also been found in the heart, liver, kidney, pancreas, and ejected through stools and tears.

Dr K.K. Aggarwal, president, CMAAO, said, "In India, we have moved from community mitigation to individual containment. Wearing of masks and following social distancing have to be followed strictly. Only this is going to ensure that there are no spouts of new cases. The flare-up of cases in pockets is a matter of concern and they will continue to occur if preventive methods are not followed strictly."

With densely populated pockets in cities and extended urban areas, India has the maximum number of cases in the South Asia region. Bangladesh and Pakistan follow India.

The changing climate has shown that there is no significant cross-reactivity with other respiratory viruses or even coronaviruses. The risk of co-infection has not been noted in the population, which is a good sign as the fight is only against SARS-CoV 2.

The issue of negative testing in a CT scan despite high viral load persists in the region. The study said it is very important that the negative test result is not used to rule out infection.

The doubts over a possible relapse of Covid-19 has been negated, as a study of 108 patients in the region has shown that while the test showed positive, culture for the virus was negative. This means the ability of the Coronavirus to reproduce and replicate itself is not present.

For the region to come out of the crisis, surveillance will play a very important role and outbreaks will mean that challenges will persist.

Sample collection



People queue up for Covid-19 tests at the health centre at Musheerabad, Hyderabad. Fewer people came for the tests because of the rain on Thursday, officials said.

S. SURENDER REDDY

Doctors oppose hiring on one-year contracts

Specialists want permanent appointments to be made

KANIZA GARARI | DC
HYDERABAD, AUG 13

● THERE ARE major challenges in absorption to permanent posts after working on contract basis and for that reason many doctors are not willing.

few doctors will apply as there is risk of contracting the infection.

The announcement for permanent posts was expected during the pandemic. The announcement that the recruitment will be on contract basis has angered doctors, who feel that temporarily contract-

ed doctors will not ease the situation.

There are major challenges in absorption to permanent posts after working on contract basis and for that reason many doctors are not willing.

Healthcare Reforms Association president Dr Mahesh Kumar explained,

"We want permanent recruitment of specialists as they are not required only for cities but also for the districts. There is a dearth of specialists in districts and that too has to be filled up."

Doctors have been waiting for the recruitment process in the government set-up as there are vacant posts of specialists due to the retirement of senior doctors.

There are an estimated 500 sanctioned posts and most of them are vacant due to lack of recruitment.

With the new hospital having come up in Gachibowli, it has now become important to make it fully functional and that will require specialists.

HC: Pvt hospitals seem powerful

From page 1

The bench also directed government to report to the court if it was facing difficulty in replicating the Delhi model.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Raghavendra Singh Chauhan and Justice B. Vijay Sen Reddy issued the direction while hearing 18 PILs on Covid-19 testing, excessive billing by private hospitals, lack of infrastructure in government notified hospitals and other issues.

Chief Justice Chauhan observed: "it seems that private hospitals are more powerful than the government. The government is making a lot of sound on taking steps against the hospitals for excessive billing. But, except the noise, it seems nothing has been done."

Referring to health min-

ister Etala Rajendar's statement that the 50 per cent of beds in private hospitals will be taken if complaints of excessive billing continue, the bench said: "We have been observing such statements but no action was initiated."

The court quoting from the government affidavit said it had received complaints of excessive billing from 50 private hospitals but notices had been issued to 46 and response received from 16. "The remaining 30 hospitals are silent. Still no stringent action was taken, except against two hospitals," the court said.

Hinting at tough action, the Chief Justice said: "The government should ensure that the GOs issued on capping the prices should be complied with by the private hospitals. In case any private

hospital continues to defy the GOs, the government shall be free to take drastic action. We hope that government will take action in that line. This is a polite way of cautioning by the court."

The court pointed out the grievance over non-availability of hearses to transport the bodies of Covid-19 patients. The government said 61 hearses had been arranged.

Regarding action on private hospitals, the Chief Secretary said the government was given them a chance to reply. Regarding the hearses, he said that families need to call the helpline number 104.

Kumar said the state machinery, doctors and bureaucrats, were working 24x7. "Most of our officials are deprived of sleep, having tremendous workload and exposed to the coronavirus," he said. He

added that they had to furnish information for Central teams arriving at short notice, as well as videoconferencing held by the Prime Minister, besides to advocates in court cases.

Responding to this, Justice Vijay Sen Reddy said "Some family members of this bench and judges are also working on Covid-19 duties and we are aware of their difficulties. Don't think that the court is calling you without knowing the difficulties of the officers. All efforts of the court are to ensure the right to life and right to have medical facilities for the people."

Justice Chauhan said the Chief Secretary and the government should not be taken as criticism by the court. "This court certainly appreciates not only the efforts made by the officials," he said.

The department said 1,633 fresh cases came from all the non-GHMC area districts. The last time in the past week that any district reported zero cases was on August 9 when no new Coronavirus

infections were reported from Kumraambheem-Asifabad district. From August 10, every one of the 33 districts in the state have been recording new cases.

The department said 2,662 patients were undergoing treatment in 56 of its hospitals across the state, a total of 4,453 Covid-19 patients were receiving treatment in 118 private hospitals, the bulletin said.

ISB LAUNCHES WEB PORTAL ON ECONOMIC DATA

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, AUG 13

The Indian School of Business (ISB), Hyderabad, on Thursday launched the web portal for its project JumpStartIndia@ISB, which will be a one-stop portal for several high-frequency indicators (HFIs) of India's economic recovery.

The portal will provide a range of data on multiple aspects of the economy, including fertiliser sales, trade in agricultural commodities, registration of new businesses, registration of different types of vehicles, digital transactions and payments and demand for wage labour under MGNREGA. It facilitates comparison of high frequency indicators for 2020 and 2019.

Prof Ashwini Chhatre, executive director, Bharti Institute of Public Policy at the Indian School of Business, said: "As the economy recovers from the pandemic-induced lockdown, this would help governments and policy makers in their plans and decision making to get India back on track of economic growth in post-Covid scenario."

Corporate Bhavan premises, under the directions of Regional Director M.P. Shah.

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

Also taking part in the plantation drive were officers of the Indian Company Law Service (ICLS) cadre of the Union ministry of corporate affairs, including senior officers M.P. Shah, region-

al director, P. Atchuta Ramaiah, joint director, Shashi Raj Dara, joint director, Jose Kutty, Registrar of Companies Hyderabad, Pola Raghu Nath, Official Liquidator, Hyderabad.

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

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

IREDDY SRINIVAS REDDY | DC
HYDERABAD, AUG 13

Governor Dr Tami Selvaraj said on Thursday that the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 will leverage India to emerge as the global hub of education. She said the NEP will usher in massive reforms and restructuring of the education system in the country and will promote

the 21st century-needs based education.

The Governor was interacted with eminent personalities in the field of education and educational administration through a webinar on the topic, 'Perspectives on National Education Policy 2020: Road Map for Telangana', from Raj Bhavan.

"The measures like establishing Multi-disciplinary Education and Research Universities

(MERUs), multiple entry and exit options to students, focus on interdisciplinary studies, and promotion of research through National Research Foundation and stress on skill training, entrepreneurship development, employability skills, vocational courses will take the Indian education to an altogether different league," Dr Soundararajan added.

Elaborating on the policy

Chinese gaming firm in ₹1.1K cr betting ring

BALU PULIPAKA | DC
HYDERABAD, AUG 13

arrested for their involvement in the racket. The three Indians were directors in the company, Anjani Kumar said.

Investigations began after a case was registered following complaints from individuals that they were cheated in online gaming on the website and lost ₹97,000 and ₹1,64,000 respectively. The entire technical operation was run by China-based directors/partners of these companies.

According to police commissioner Anjani Kumar, a series of shell companies, all controlled through a firm called Beijing T Power Company based out of China, were identified as having been used by the racketeers to siphon money out of India. The police has so far managed to freeze ₹30 crore, Anjani Kumar said.

He announced that four persons, Chinese national Yah Hao, the authorised signatory and head of operations for South East Asia for the Chinese company Dheeraj Sarkar of Gurugram in Haryana, Ankit Kapoor and Neeraj Tuli of Delhi have been

arrested for their involvement in the racket. The three Indians were directors in the company, Anjani Kumar said.

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The payments, he said, were being routed through India-based payment service providers/gateways and in this case, the payments were routed through PayTM and Cash Free services.

Some suicides that were reported in recent times in the state and other parts of the country, and were linked to online will be investigated as part of this case, he said.

In addition, the investigations also indicated that these groups were possibly involved in other cybercrimes such as phishing, running banned apps and dating apps.

Covid cases in Hyd fall to 298, districts record 1,633

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, AUG 13

Greater Hyderabad witnessed a steep fall in Covid-19 cases with the health department reporting that 298 fresh cases were found till Wednesday evening, down from 479 cases recorded on Tuesday.

In its latest bulletin on Covid-19, the department on Thursday said 1,931 new cases were recorded across the state along with 11 fatalities in the 24-hour period between Tuesday and Wednesday evenings.

With the new cases, the total Covid-19 infected people rose to 86,475 while the number of deaths increased to 665.

The department said 1,780 patients had recovered from the disease taking their total number to 63,074 while another 22,736 persons were still undergoing treatment either at their homes or in hospitals.

It said 23,303 tests were conducted in the 24-hour period with results awaited for 706 from these tests. Following the GHMC's 298 new cases, Warangal Urban district with 144 cases, and Ranga Reddy district with 124 new cases.

The department said 1,633 fresh cases came from all the non-GHMC area districts. The last time in the past week that any district reported zero cases was on August 9 when no new Coronavirus

NORMS over billing for taken-over beds will be fixed today.

A dedicated app will be used to communicate decisions on sending of patients to the private hospitals by the health department, the release added.

It said that from the very beginning of the outbreak of the disease, the government was urging private hospitals to join hands with the government in providing treatment to Covid-19 patients. Though the government fixed rates to be charged for treating such patients, some private hospitals have been disregarding the guidelines and billing patients as they wished.

While many hospitals were issued notices on this front, permission for two hospitals to treat Covid-19 patients was withdrawn following such complaints.

2,662 patients were undergoing treatment in 56 of its hospitals across the state, a total of 4,453 Covid-19 patients were receiving treatment in 118 private hospitals, the bulletin said.

NCLT officials join green drive at Corporate Bhavan

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, AUG 13

Corporate Bhavan premises, under the directions of Regional Director M.P. Shah.

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Officials take part in the annual plantation drive on the premises of the Corporate Bhavan in Hyderabad on Thursday.

NEP will make India global education hub: Gov.

IREDDY SRINIVAS REDDY | DC
HYDERABAD, AUG 13

The 21st century-needs based education.

The Governor was interacted with eminent personalities in the field of education and educational administration through a webinar on the topic, 'Perspectives on National Education Policy 2020: Road Map for Telangana', from Raj Bhavan.

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(MERUs), multiple entry and exit options to students, focus on interdisciplinary studies, and promotion of research through National Research Foundation and stress on skill training, entrepreneurship development, employability skills, vocational courses will take the Indian education to an altogether different league,"

SHORT TAKES

TS CONSTRUCTION WORKER STUCK IN DUBAI

SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL | DC HYDERABAD, AUG. 13

Kokkula Rajender, a construction labourer from Telangana state, went to Muscat, Oman through an agency. After landing there, the employer made him cross the border and enter the United Arab Emirates illegally, where he has been working for the past two years in Dubai.

Now he wants to return to his family. Learning about his difficulties, Kokkula Latha, his wife, approached the collector to help her husband in getting back home through the intervention of the government and the Indian Embassy.

The Covid-19 pandemic left Rajender without work. While he wants to return, he has no documentation or a passport. Latha is asking that he be issued a 'white passport' (which is an emergency passport).

Rajender has a daughter and a son, both in school, in Rapalle in Jagtial. He is constantly in touch on phone, since the outbreak of the pandemic but as he is not able to earn, he has not sent remittances home for months.



Following heavy rain, roads were inundated making the ride splashy for motorists on the waterlogged stretch near Nagole, Hyderabad, on Thursday.

— P. SURENDRA



Priest along with a temple attendant bails out raniwater what seeped into the 12th century Ganapeshwaralayam temple in Warangal on Thursday.

— DC

Continuous downpour blacks out sun

IMD says thunderstorms with lightning likely to occur at isolated places over TS

T.S.S. SIDDHARTH | DC HYDERABAD, AUG. 13

Incessant rain enveloped the city on Thursday resulting in the day turning colder with the day temperature slipping down by 6° Celsius. The maximum temperature was 23.8°C, way below normal for this time of the year.

On Thursday, several parts of the city recorded light rain with Khairatabad recording 28 mm till 8 pm, followed by Asifnagar (27.5 mm), Golconda (25.8 mm) and Red Hills playground (25.8 mm), according to the State Development Planning Society (TSDPS).

"Since the entire state is under the influence of a low-pressure zone, there was rainfall activity. This weather will continue for the next 24 hours (Friday). Due to the persistent drizzle, there was heavy clouding over the city's sky. This did not allow the sunlight to break through, so there was very little heat that got through," Dr K. Nagarathna, director of the Indian Meteorological Department-Hyderabad (IMD), told *Deccan Chronicle*.

Following the day-long clouding and rain, officials of the local IMD office warned of bouts of heavy rainfall at isolated places over Telangana state till Monday.

The IMD said: "Thunderstorms accompanied with lightning likely to occur at isolated places over Telangana. Heavy to very heavy rain very likely to occur at isolated places in the districts Adilabad, Nirmal, Kumaram Bheem, Mancherial, Nizamabad, Jangammal, Rajanna Sircilla, Karimnagar, Jayashankar-Bhupalpally, Mulugu, Pedapall, Warangal (Urban and Rural), Mahabubabad, Bhadrak-Kothagudem, Khammam, Nalgonda and Suryapet districts."

In the capital city, too, there was a possibility of light to moderate rain or thundershowers on Friday, she said.

"August is supposed to be the雨iest month in Hyderabad. It usually receives close to 207 mm of rainfall in this month. Till date, it has received close to 80 mm of rainfall, said G.P. Sharma, a meteorologist from Skymet, a private weather forecasting outfit.



The Laknavaram lake in Mulugu district near Warangal is brimming with water.

Laknavaram lake overflows due to rain

ANUDEEP CEREMILLA | DC WARANGAL, AUG. 13

All major water bodies are being filled by the incessant rains that have affected the undivided Warangal district in the past four days. While the Laknavaram lake is overflowing, Ramappa and Pakhal lakes are filling up fast.

The Laknavaram lake in Govindarao Mandal of Mulugu district has water till its full reservoir level (FRL) of 32.2 feet. The lake which provides irrigation water to 12,000 acres has 1.2 tmc ft of water.

Water at the Pakhal lake is standing at 27.3 feet against its FRL of 30 feet. Spread over 5,300 acres and holding 3.23 tmc ft, the lake irrigates 28,365 acres.

The Ramappa lake is having water at the 29-feet mark against its FRL of 35 feet. The lake irrigates 5,100 acres.

Meanwhile, the Kaleshwaram Project is receiving huge inflows of water. At the Lakshmi barrage at the Lakshmi barrage

Medigadda, 57 gates have been opened to release water. The Godavari and Pranhita rivers are receiving 3.5 lakh cusecs, all of which is being released downstream.

Rain and heavy wind uprooted several trees on the National Highway 163 which connects Hyderabad with Bhupatnam in Chhattisgarh, bringing the traffic to a standstill for three hours. The district administration took up measures to remove the fallen trees.

Several rivulets overflowed inundating roads connecting villages. As a result, interior areas have been cut off in Jayashankar Bhupalpally and Mulugu districts.

"Because the temple is about 700 years old, the foundation got disturbed and the set-up of the pillars got misaligned, resulting in gaps in the roof. The roof is shaped in a way to hold water, which is now seeping inside the temple. It is high time the government took cognisance of the situation of this historic temple and stepped up measures for its restoration," Srinivas said.

Coal production by Singareni Collieries in Jayashankar Bhupalpally district has been hit severely. Mining at open-cast sector 1 and 2 has been halted since three days resulting in a loss of about ₹12 crore to Singareni Collieries Limited (SCCL).

12TH CENTURY GANESH TEMPLE CRIES FOR ATTENTION

DC CORRESPONDENT

WARANGAL, AUG. 13

Rainwater is seeping through the roof of the 12th century Ganapeshwaralayam, constructed in Ghanpur in Jayashankar Bhupalpally by the Kakatiya rulers. The sanctum sanctorum is flooded and the water has nowhere to go due to the outlet being damaged. Officials are manually drawing out the water.

Locally known as Kotagullu, the temple is protected under Hyderabad Ancient Monuments Preservation Act by Heritage Telangana. Restoration was started up in 2009 and 2014 but the work went no further than laying a foundation stone.

The villagers who take pride because in the temple formed a committee to preserve it and have been ensuring daily prayers are held. Nagapuri Srinivas, a member of the committee, said they set up 10 tarpaulin sheets on the roof to avoid the water from dripping inside but it remains a temporary measure.

"Because the temple is about 700 years old, the foundation got disturbed and the set-up of the pillars got misaligned, resulting in gaps in the roof. The roof is shaped in a way to hold water, which is now seeping inside the temple. It is high time the government took cognisance of the situation of this historic temple and stepped up measures for its restoration," Srinivas said.

Paddy in 1,500 acres damaged in Bhadrak

A. RAVINDRA SESHU | DC KHAMMAM/KOTHAGUDEM, AUG. 13

Incessant rains over the last two days have inundated many fields and residential colonies in Khammam and Bhadrak-Kothagudem districts. Paddy, cotton and green gram crops were submerged in 1,500 acres in both districts.

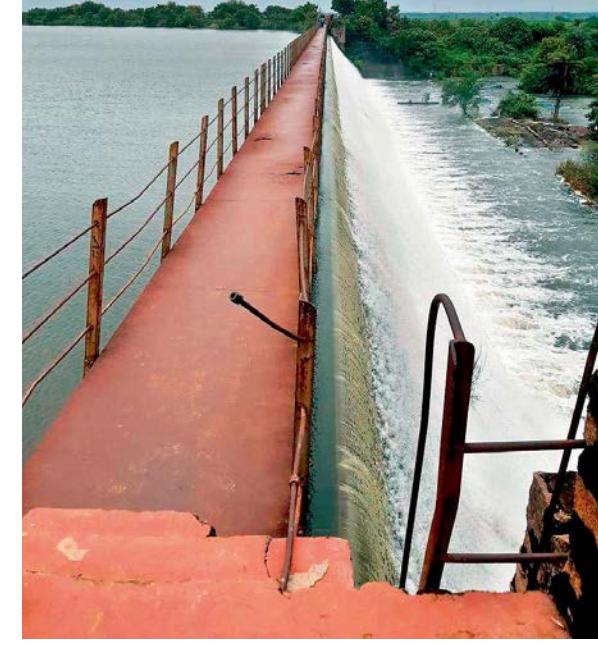
About 40 rivulets and tanks are overflowing in 26 mandals in the two districts, including the Munner, a rivulet of the Krishna, is running full. The Nagarjunasagar Left Bank Canal is full after the release of water from the Palair reservoir.

Housing colonies in Khammam and Kothagudem towns were inundated by rainwater including at Raparthinagar, Edulapuram, Dwansalapuram, Sarathinagar and Pumping Well Road in Khammam. Rainwater entered 15 houses in Raparthinagar.

In Khammam district, Kapparelli mandal witnessed 12.1 cm rainfall followed by Kamepalli (10.4 cm), Enkoor (8.2 cm), Penuballi (7.2 cm), Rahangavu, Edumelikavagu, Jalleri, Kodelavagu and Budidavagu in Gundala and Allapalli mandals were in spate and the water is joining the Kinnerasani.

Road connectivity was cut off to 40 habitations in these two mandals. About 17,000 cusecs of water were released from the Kinnerasani reservoir.

The Singabupalam tank in Sujathanagar ma-



Sluice gates of the Lankasagar reservoir at Penuballi in Khammam district were opened due to heavy rain.

ndal was overflowing. Flooded away in some places.

In Bhadrak district, fourteen streams like Ellannavagu, Nurreduvagu, Pottivagu, Mallannavagu, Edumelikavagu and Kodelavagu in Gundala and Allapalli mandals were in spate and the water is joining the Kinnerasani.

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The Singabupalam tank in Sujathanagar ma-

Tree collapses on RTC bus, conductor injured



Picture shows tree fallen over RTC bus as heavy rain, strong winds lashes city.

DC CORRESPONDENT

WARANGAL, AUG. 13

Passengers on board a Mulugu-bound TSRTC bus had a miraculous escape on Thursday after a huge tree fell on the vehicle at Kota Cheruvu in Ghanpur of Jayashankar Bhupalpally district. Witnesses said the tree fell on the right side of the moving bus above the driver's seat. The driver, who saw the

tree falling, applied brakes but could not avoid the tree which fell on the bus and later slid down to the road.

The conductor got injured after she got thrown on the floor of the bus due to the impact. Along with the driver and the conductor, five passengers were in the bus at the time of the mishap. Had the tree fallen on the middle portion of the bus, the

passengers would have been injured.

Traffic movement was hit on the route for some time before local sub-inspector Rajan Babu arrived at the location with an earthmover and removed the collapsed tree to clear the road.

The tree got uprooted as a result of heavy rain coupled with strong wind that lashed the district since three days.

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Mahaprasthanam conducts last rites for Covid-19 victims' bodies

DC CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD, AUG. 13

After many incidents of opposition to burial or cremation of bodies of Covid-19 victims, and an apparent lack of respect for the deceased, the Mahaprasthanam, the crematorium in Jubilee Hills, has stepped up to provide what the families of the deceased, and those who lost their lives to the disease deserve, respect, in conducting the last rites.

"We saw the plight of Covid-19 victims' bodies and that of their family members. So we took permission from the GHMC to offer proper and respectful last rites in such cases," Srikanth Badiga, director of Phoenix Group, which

for conducting the last rites, Mahaprasthanam management cordoned off one of its electric cremation piers to ensure the required Covid-19 protocols are followed.

There were some apprehensions among the staff initially but then they came forward voluntarily to perform the cremations, he said. "We have provided them with full body protection kits. Every cremation of a Covid-19 victim is performed with respectful handling of the body till the collection of ashes in a container," Srikanth said.

Usually two to four members of the family of the deceased are allowed to perform the ceremonies before the staff cremate the body. Each body takes

about 45 minutes to an hour-and-a-half to be cremated. Typically, about eight Covid-19 victims are cremated every day. After each cremation, the entire area is disinfected and only after the full sanitisation of the cordoned off area, is another body of a Covid-19 victim carried to the pier, he said.

The real challenge, in addition to keeping the staff safe and giving them confidence to perform their tasks, was to ensure sanctity of the entire process. While the cremation costs ₹10,000, and sometimes up to ₹13,500, "Mahaprasthanam has also been conducting Covid-19 cremation free of cost when required," Srikanth said.

Escaped jail inmate held in Abu Dhabi

DC CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD, AUG. 13

A man sentenced in a murder case in 2006 here, who had escaped from police custody in 2007, was caught in Abu Dhabi and brought back to the city to serve his sentence, the police said on Thursday.

The police said Afzal Hussain was brought back after the Interpol was requested to issue a Red Corner notice for him. Hussain was produced on Thursday before the court and sent to Chanchalguda jail, the police said.

The progress in the recapture of Hussain was monitored by Devender, ACP, Sultan Bazaar, M. Ramesh, joint commissioner of police, East Zone, and the Afzaganj inspector.

68 jr colleges to get the rap over fire safety

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC

HYDERABAD, AUG. 13

Almost six months after 68 junior colleges in the state were ordered to shut down over poor fire safety measures that fall short of the minimum standards, they continue to operate and even invite new admissions.

The Telangana State Board of Intermediate Education (TSBIE) had sought time till March to shut the colleges, after the issue had reached the High Court when activist Dantham Raju filed a PIL over junior colleges being run from unsafe buildings without fire safety. These included as many as 18 junior colleges of Sri Chaitanya Educational Institutions and 26 of the Narayana Educational Institutions.

As they still continue to operate till date, NSUI Hyderabad and activist Dantham Raju

have requested the Intermediate Board to look into the criminal activity of the institutions and take appropriate action. Reacting to this, Syed Omar Jaleel, Secretary, TSBIE, has said that he had received the complaints and ordered a report on the issue. "I have a detailed report with me on the issue and we have taken cognisance of the unruly institutes. We will take action on the concerned junior colleges on three fronts, that is on civic grounds, criminally and judicially," Jaleel said.

"We will issue notices to these colleges saying that they are not allowed to operate as per the HC's orders. Furthermore, we will file a police complaint with the reports we have gathered, whereas judicially there will be a contempt of court case filed against such institutes," Jaleel said.

operates the crematorium as part of its CSR programme through the Phoenix Foundation, said.

As part of the offer to provide cremation services, while simultaneously providing access to priests

SHORT TAKES
TRS, MIM BAG POSTS IN KMC ELECTIONS

PULI SHARAT KUMAR | DC KARIMNAGAR, AUG. 13

Out of the five co-option posts in the Karimnagar Municipal Corporation (KMC), the Telangana Rashtriya Samiti (TRS) won four and the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) won the remaining one in the elections that were held on Thursday.

The election was held as per the new panchayat raj Act at a meeting chaired by Mayor Y. Sunil Rao at the Collectorate auditorium.

In the past, only four co-option posts were allotted to the city. Of the five posts this time, two were allotted for minorities and three for the general category. One post in both the categories was reserved for women.

Twenty members filed their nomination papers, who included former corporators, councillors, ward members, municipal retired employees.

Of the 60 divisions of the KMC, the TRS has 41, BJP 15 and the AIMIM five.

OWAISI SLAMS GOVT FOR MUSLIM BACKWARDNESS

ATHER MOIN | DC HYDERABAD, AUG. 13

MIM president Asaduddin Owaisi, commenting on the report 'Household Social Consumption on Education in India' said it shows that the literacy gap between Muslims and other groups continues to increase.

Because successive governments have refused to invest in education for Muslims, haven't made scholarships demand driven and not established schools for Muslim students, Muslims remain at the bottom of the barrel, he said.

Explaining that demand-driven scholarships mean that every eligible person who applies for the scholarship will get it, Owaisi said that "since our standing committee report has 'gracefully' slashed 80 crore from scholarships, this is unlikely to happen."

Last month, Union minister for minority affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi promised crores of scholarships to minority students. In the budget, BJP slashed ₹80 crore from schemes that required a substantial increase.

The fact that so many people applied for these scholarships but only a few get it proves, asserted Owaisi, that Muslims aspire to study despite the absence of support. "Reservations may be too much for you to digest but at least establish more schools and fund more scholarships," he said.

The report shows that on every attendance ratio, Muslims lag behind others. What is more worrisome is that the ratio falls substantially as Muslim students move from primary towards higher education. In other words, Muslim students are forced to drop out due to lack of financial support.

Muslims have the highest proportion of young people who have never been enrolled in a formal education programme. This again points to the worsening state of government spending on education for Muslims. Muslim backwardness is solely a product of deliberate neglect by the government, Owaisi contended.

The parliamentary standing committee on social justice's 2018 report showed that 85 lakh Muslim students are deprived of scholarships every year because the government gives scholarships to only a limited number of people and does not make it demand driven, Owaisi reiterated.

Panel wracks brains on which convict to free

VIKRAM SHARMA | DC HYDERABAD, AUG. 13

Case 1: Some 15 years ago, a young man who married the love of his life, who belongs to another religion, was stabbed to death by family members of the girl's family. The accused were arrested and sent to jail. Convicted of the crime, they have now spent 15 years in prison.

Case 2: A businessman was shot dead and his suitcase snatched by some assailants outside his house. Again, it was a planned murder. Those convicted have spent close to 16 years in prison.

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DETAILS OF RELEASE

The last time prisoners were released was in August 2016 when over 250 prisoners walked out free based on good conduct, age and number of years spent behind bars.

Some of the women convicts are also likely to be released.

The total capacity of prisons in the state is around 6,850.

finalise the list of prisoners to be released are cracking their brains as a case-by-case review of the heinous crimes and the accused, which includes revisiting the Court judgments — some as old as 15 to 18 years, court observations and facts that sur-

faced during investigation — is still underway.

Prisoners who are eagerly waiting for remission of their sentences will have to wait a little longer as the process might take closer to a month to complete. The number of prisoners who will be set free is like-

ly to be less than 150, and many hopefuls may not find their names in the list.

Sources in the Telangana police told *Deccan Chronicle* that while the guidelines for releasing prisoners on various criteria, particularly age, number of years spent in prison, good behaviour among others would form the basis for their release,

the larger question is whether those convicts who were involved in well-planned murders should be freed, just because they fulfil the other criteria.

While there are little or no chance of such convicts

finding their names on the list, officials are most likely to recommend the release of those who, though involved in murders, committed the offence in the spur of the moment and not in a planned manner as in other cases.

There are number of convicts who were involved in well-planned murders — some killed their family members for money, property, extra-marital affairs or even marrying against the wishes of the family members. All of them had a motive to kill. Then there are those who killed someone following a heated argument or a fight

in a fit of rage. More than 50 per cent of the murders are planned offences.

"Judgments in each case, evidence, facts that surfaced during investigation and observation of the courts are being studied in detail before recommending the name of the prisoners for release. A thorough revision of guidelines for release of prisoners is underway which will take some more time," sources said.

The DGP, DG, prisons, home secretary, chiefs of State Intelligence wing, CID and law secretary are part of the committee which met recently.

Farmers sow record 1.2cr acres in state

New projects, bountiful rain may see TS exceed target

S.A. ISHAQUI | DC HYDERABAD, AUG. 13

acres during the monsoon season.

The minister said that with the increased availability of water resources apart from the Rythu Bandhu assistance, free power supply and other incentives being provided by the state government, the state has witnessed huge growth in the area sown for cropping.

Niranjan Reddy said the farmers took up agricultural activities as per the regulated farming proposed by Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao.

During a recent interaction, the Chief Minister had appealed to farmers that "those cultivating maize during the monsoon should switch over to cotton and grams. Be cautious about the paddy varieties. Cultivate those varieties, which have demand in the market. There is a lot of demand for Telangana Sona variety. Cultivate that. There is an international market for rice of 6.5 mm size. Cultivate that variety due to Covid-19 crisis."

The minister said that this appeal has been yielding good results and farmers sown paddy as the second major crop. Many of them choose the Telangana Sona variety and maize cultivation has come down drastically when compared to last year:

The minister said that the state government has procured 64.14 lakh metric tonnes of paddy, 92,668 tonnes of maize, 83,585 tonnes of Bengal gram, 6,193 tonnes sunflower and 17,172 tonnes of jowar produced under the Rabi season 2019-20 by spending ₹18,787 crores, despite of financial constraints due to Covid-19 crisis.

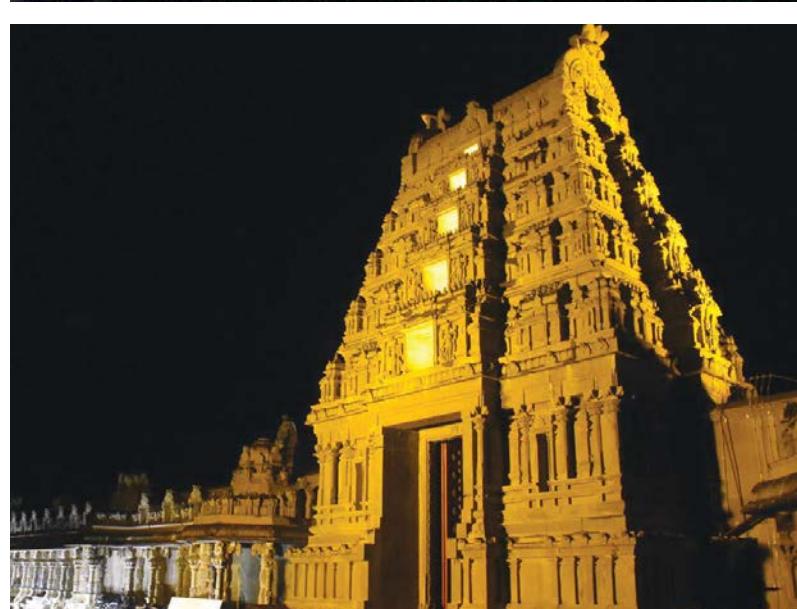
Lights on



(Above) The cable bridge over Durgam Cheruvu connecting Jubilee Hills and Madhapur was lit up with colour lights as part of Independence Day celebrations, in Hyderabad on Thursday. The bridge is likely to be inaugurated in the third week of August.

(Left) The Yadadri temple glows in magnificence after it was decorated with colour lights.

— R. PAVAN



KTR asks Centre for rly coach factory in TS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, AUG. 13

Industries minister K.T. Rama Rao on Thursday requested the Centre to keep its word to Telangana state and set up a railway coach factory in the public sector at Kazipet. He was speaking after laying the foundation stone for Medha Rail Coach Factory in Kondakal village in Ranga Reddy district.

He stated that the Centre had promised to set up the coach factory under the AP bifurcation Act. "Telangana is a new and progressive state and the Centre must assist this growth-oriented state by



setting up the coach factory in the public sector," the government's proactive approach and con-

ducive policies had encouraged the Medha Group to establish its world-class rail coach factory in the state.

Pointing out that the Medha Servo Drives Pvt Ltd, founded by Y. Yugandhar Reddy, a local, the minister said "I am appreciating Yugandhar Reddy for coming forward to set up the ₹1,000 crore factory."

He said that Medha is India's largest private-sector rail coach factory, which is expected to create an ecosystem for rail coach manufacturing in the state. He said the state had units that manufacture buses, tractors, parts

of aircraft, and helicopters. "With Medha setting up their rail coach factory, we can proudly say that Telangana state also houses a factory which manufactures train coaches," Rama Rao said.

The minister said it was expected that the Medha Rail Coach Factory will provide direct employment to 1,000 persons and indirectly employ 1500 more. The annual capacity of the factory would be 500 coaches and 50 locomotives.

Ministers T. Harish Rao and Sabitha Indra Reddy and Medha Group MD Kashyap Reddy were present at the programme.

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VIRUS: CHRISTIANS REQUEST GOVT FOR GRAVEYARD

BALU PULIPAKA | DC HYDERABAD, AUG. 13

Representatives of the Christian community on Thursday requested the government to allocate a graveyard for Covid-19 victims as there was no place to bury those losing lives to the disease.

At a meeting with Koppula Easwar, the minister for SC development and minority welfare, the community elders also discussed the issue of allocating regular graveyards for the Christian community as committed to earlier by the government.

At the meeting, the minister was requested to appoint a committee with members for the representation of all churches, and agreed that the committee members should represent the ratio of 30 per cent Catholics and 70 per cent Protestants based on the strength of the both sections of the Christian community.

According to a release, the minister responded positively to the requests and asked them to submit a written representation on the issues to take necessary action.



Kammula Seshaiyah
S/o Kammla Veeraswamy
Retd.D.I.G. Revenue and Stamps (Registration Department)

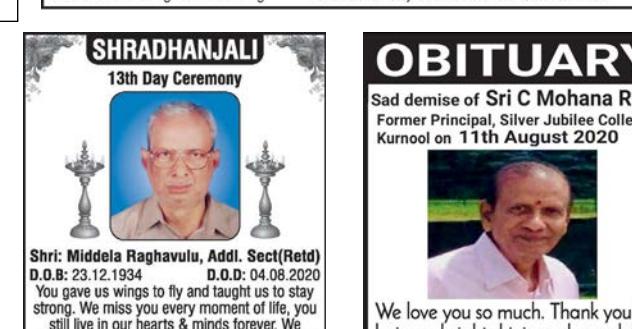
Our beloved father, Shri Kammula Seshaiyah, left for heavenly abode on 01st August 2020 at 6.44 am. His obsequies will be performed on 15th August, 2020.

Keeping in mind the need to be safe in the present situation, we request everyone to pray for our father's departed soul from their homes.



SHRADHANJALI
With profound grief and sorrow we inform the sad demise of our beloved Father Shri Ramavath Surya Naik who left for heavenly abode on 11/08/2020.

GRIEF STRICKEN Family
Ramavath Radhika (Wife)
Son-R.Madhukar Rathod,
Daughter-in-law-R.Smitha Rathod,
Daughters-V.Umadevi,Dr.Usha Rani & D.Udaya Bhanu, Son-in-laws:Dr.V.Balraj, B.Srinivasa Rao & D.Raghavendra Naik, Grand Sons:R.Hitesh Rathod, V.Sai Nikhil Rathod, & Sahaj, Grand Daughters:R.Akshita Rathod, V.Sravanti, Sai Kethana & Monisha.



SHRADHANJALI
13th Day Ceremony

Shri Middela Raghavulu, Addl. Sect.(Retd)
D.O.B: 23.12.1934 D.O.D: 04.08.2020
We give you wings to fly and taught us to stay strong. We miss you every moment of life, you still live in our hearts & minds forever. We always love you and miss you. May your soul rest in peace.

Daughters: M.R.Salluji, M.R.Neeraja, PR. Manga Padmaraj, Son-in-laws: S.Ravinda Babu, PNares Babu, Grand children: S.Rama Kishore (Karthik) M.Akhlesh, M.Harka P. Nandini, P. Hasini

MEMORIAL SERVICE
"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." - 2 Timothy 4:7

1st Death Anniversary
The memory of the righteous is blessed - Prov.10:7

K. K. KOSHY
Retd. Glaxo India Ltd. Officer
DOB: 09.03.1938 - DOD: 14.08.2019
Your sweet memories will remain in our hearts forever and ever.
Inserted by: Mrs. Aleymma Koshy Binu, Nisha, Anisha & Nathan Anu, Sunny, Ashish & Shireen Ph.: 8008319847, 9739039996



14th DEATH ANNIVERSARY

1st DEATH ANNIVERSARY
In Loving Memory of

Mrs. MEERA GURUNG
(Famous Beautician)
D.O.B: 14-08-1919

ALTHOUGH A YEAR HAS PASSED, YOU STILL REMAIN FRESH IN OUR MEMORIES FOR YOUR INSPIRATION, CREATIVITY, AFFECTION AND CHERISHED MOMENTS SPENT WITH US. WE PRAY GOD TO MAKE YOUR HOLY SOUL REST IN PEACE.

Inserted by: Ever loving 5th Sister: SHOBHA DEVI Eldest Daughter : NIRUPA RANA

7th DEATH ANNIVERSARY

Late BOBBILI NARAYAN REDDY
D.O.D: 14-08-2013
MAY HIS SOUL REST IN PEACE

Brother: Bobbili Malli Reddy - Prabhavathi and their Sons & Family Bobbili Srinath Reddy - Madhavi Bobbili Sriveni Reddy - Bhavana & Grand Children. Ph: 9989194677



12th DEATH ANNIVERSARY

Smt. T.S. MALINI
DOB: 16-08-1973 DOD: 14-08-2008

Time flies fast. Life goes on at its own pace. But some Memories can never be forgotten or erased from the mind of the dearest ones. You will always remain in our thoughts.

Inserted by: Mother-In-Law : T.N. Surya Kumari Husband : T.N. Sai Kumar Daughter : T.S. Rakshitha & Family Members. Ph: 9059974672

MRS. B. SUGUNA WESLEY
D.O

IN BRIEF
ATCHANNAIDU TESTS +VE AT RAMESH HOSP

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 13

Former minister and TD legislator K. Atchannaidu tested positive for Coronavirus despite undergoing treatment for his illness in Ramesh Hospital at Guntur.

He was in judicial remand in the multi-crore ESI scam and was undergoing treatment in Ramesh Hospital for piles for the past 33 days. When he began suffering from a cold and cough, the doctors conducted the Covid-19 test which came positive on Thursday.

TD general secretary and MLC Nara Lokesh alleged that YSR government had arrested Atchannaidu despite knowing about his piles surgery and continued to harass him as they were bent on politics of vengeance.

AP Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu confirmed that his uncle had tested positive and said that Atchannaidu was a fighter and he would conquer the disease. Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) officials had arrested him from Nimmada village in Srikakulam district on June 12 for his alleged involvement in irregularities in purchase of equipment, medicines and other items by Directorate of Insurance and Medical Services from 2104 to 2019.

He was shifted to Government General Hospital (GGH) at Guntur due to health issues as per the directions of the court. He was discharged after a minor surgery on July 1 while TD activists objected to the discharge. He was later admitted in Ramesh Hospital as per the interim orders of the High Court on July 8.

Atchannaidu's advocate Maguluri Hari Babu said that doctors were regularly submitting his health reports to the court as per its directions.

PRISONER FLEES COVID WARD IN CHITTOOR

AVINASH P.
SUBRAMANYAM | DC
TIRUPATI, AUG. 13

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

According to the police, the remand prisoner, a vagabond, was arrested in connection with the murder of another person in Palamaner in July last year. He was remanded to judicial custody and lodged in the district jail, from where he was shifted to the Covid ward in Piler sub-jail after he developed symptoms last week.

"The prisoner who was tested positive for Covid-19, developed high fever four days ago, following which the jail authorities shifted him to the district hospital for treatment. On Wednesday, at around 7.30 am, he came out of his ward on the pretext of getting some tea and escaped from the hospital," Chittoor DSP K. Eswara Reddy told Deccan Chronicle.

The DSP said the escort police was assigned to keep an eye on the prisoner, but they had to wait outside the hospital ward as per Covid-19 protocol. This prevented them from tracking the prisoner's movements inside the hospital.

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

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

Amaravati buildings to be put on fast track

Jagan to invite Modi for 3 capitals foundation ceremony

MD ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 13

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

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

He enquired about the present status of the various projects coming up in Amaravati.

Officials said that there was a requirement of nearly ₹14,000 crore to ₹15,000 crore for completion of the ongoing projects.

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Minister for municipal administration Botsa Satyanarayana said that the development plan would be in accordance with the financial condition of the State government.

would be in accordance with the financial condition of the State government.

He stated that the government will develop returnable plots in Amaravati and asserted that all proposed buildings would be completed.

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

He expressed that the Opposition parties were creating legal hurdles despite the fact that the three capitals policy decision would ensure all-round development of the state.

He alleged that Telugu Desam president N. Chandrababu Naidu had shunned his responsibility as Opposition leader and hence the YSR Congress would play the role of the Opposition by taking all public issues to the government's notice.

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

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



A motorist tries to negotiate his way across an inundated road after floodwaters entered villages in Devipatnam mandal of East Godavari district on Thursday. — DECCAN CHRONICLE

Godavari receives copious inflow, 6 lakh cusecs released into sea

VADREVU SRINIVAS | DC
KAKINADA, AUG. 13

The Godavari is receiving copious amounts of floodwaters from the Indravathi and nearly 6 lakh cusecs of water was released into the sea at the Sir Arthur Cotton Barrage till Thursday Night.

The water levels in the Godavari are increasing, causing concern over the safety of villages in Polavaram (West Godavari) and Devipatnam mandal (East Godavari).

Road connectivity to 52 villages — 19 in Polavaram mandal and 33 in Devipatnam mandal — has been cut off. The Kothur causeway in

Polavaram mandal was inundated and the officials arranged a boat for the people.

Floodwaters reached the spill channel in Polavaram project. Project chief engineer B. Sudhakar Babu said 6 lakh cusecs of water was flowing at the Polavaram project and there will be no problem till it reaches the 7 lakh mark.

Even if the spillway works are affected, work on the cofferdam bridge will continue as iron gliders have been erected on it.

Meanwhile, due to huge water flows to the Krishna delta from the Budameru and other rivulets, the Krishna district irrigation officials

suggested that the Pattiseema lift irrigation officials reduce the supply of water to the Krishna river.

Pattiseema officials have stopped nine pumps and supply has been reduced to 3,400 cusecs from 7,000 cusecs. Sudhakar Babu said it would take five to seven days to restart the pumps.

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

"We are appealing to

the government and the district officials to expedite the R&R and Rehabilitation Colony works as the region had experienced floods last

year. Previously, when the water level touched 55 feet at Bhadrachalam, Devipatnam mandal villages were inundated," said P. Krishna Rao, Polavaram Project Victims Parirakshan Porata Samithi Devipatnam mandal honorary president.

The water level at Bhadrachalam stands at 35 feet now.

He said that the people are not willing to go to the shelters provided by the government at Rampachadavaram as it is not suitable for them.

There are hillocks near the villages and the shelters should be opened there, where locals along with their livestock can wait out the rain.

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DECCAN Chronicle

14 AUGUST 2020

Kamala Harris: A smart choice by US Democrats

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

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

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

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

Show no mercy to rioters

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

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

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

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

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Subhani



Why Ayodhya was not like battle for freedom



Anand K. Sahay

Far & Near

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

building the temple was the second edition of the glorious struggle for independence, which is imprinted in the psyche of every Indian. Why did Muslims were equal participants in the freedom movement.

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

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

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

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Truth to tell, the PM has already made his Independence Day address, and it had little to do with the core values of India and the immediate concerns of all Indians

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Muslims were equal participants in the freedom movement.

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

"The soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance," Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had said as the midnight hour struck proclaiming the emergence of India on the world stage as a new kind of free nation, one whose very concept had mesmerised the world on account of its perplexing diversity, plurality, and its ambition for democracy. But the present PM presses the delete button on such thoughts every single day.

Yet, nothing bestows legitimacy like favourable allusions to the independence movement.

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

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

LETTERS

BENGALURU RIOTS

The sequence of events is getting repeated, but the real culprits are rarely brought to book (*FB post sparks riots in B'luru, 3 killed in firing, DC, Aug. 12*). When a post considered blasphemous by one community is put on social media, members of that community demand immediate action, police dilly-dally, and clashes ensue. Recurrence of such incidents may continue till they are investigated without bias. Irrespective of the community that bears greater brunt, every life lost and property damaged causes endless agony to families and also a national loss.

M. Saleemuddin
Hyderabad

Derogatory statements against any religion are condemnable. Fundamentalists provoking and taking the law into their hands is against the Constitution. There are many such instances against Hindu gods and goddesses in public but no one indulged in rioting and looting public and private property. Why are pseudo seculars, intellectuals and politicians tight-lipped now?

Sriraman Kulkarni
Hyderabad

GHMC MACHINES

It is disgusting to note that the GHMC's sweeping machines have become a source for minting money. The bills are created for no jobs done. CCTV cameras need to be installed. Activists must be given the role of monitors.

P.R. Ravinder
Hyderabad

Grabbing won't help landless, says PM

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

Replying to a three-day debate on the *F o u r t h Plan in the R a j y a S a b h a*,

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

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

Dilip Cherian
Dilli Ka Babu

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

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

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

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

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

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

CONTROVERSIAL NITI AAYOG EXIT

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

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

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

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

ROOPA K'TAKA HOME SECY
Roopa D. Moudgil is the first woman IAS officer of Karnataka and has

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

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

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipcherian@Twitter.com . Let's multiply the effect.

Cops slug it out
to the beat of
Bihar poll drum



SHORT TAKES

VARUN TO TABLE ORGAN DONATION BILL

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 13

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

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

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

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

COMPULSORY RETIREMENT FOR TAINTED BABU

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, AUG. 13

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

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

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

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

NOTICE TO FOREST OFFICIAL FOR REMARKS ON LIONS

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

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

"For his irresponsible statements against the government policies, the Gujarat government has decided to seek his explanation and issue a notice as per All India Service (Conduct) Rules," the statement said.

On the eve of the World Lion Day on August 10, a webinar was organised by the Central Zoo Authority, in which the Chief Wildlife Warden and Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) was one of the panelists, it added.

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

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



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

Role of SDPI in Bengaluru violence comes to the fore

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

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

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

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

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

We are collecting more

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

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

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

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

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

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

After the arson and violence, the entire DJ Halli resembled a war zone.

Nearly 140 people have been arrested so far, in connection with the incident. Bommai said,

through some video footage it has come to light that SDPI workers had come from neighbouring areas of K G Halli and D J Halli, and it is being investigated.

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

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

being looked into like rivalry between and within political parties.

"Everything that might have led to this incident, we will investigate. Whoever is at fault or have supported it, we will take action even if it is an elected representative," he added.

Assuring people of security, the Home Minister said, police have worked putting their life at risk, with Covid on one side and such incidents on the other.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The police in their FIR charged the rioters with barging into the two police stations with an intention to kill the policeman there and kill the Pulakeshi Nagar MLA Akhanda Srinivasa Murthy's nephew whose alleged inflammatory post in social media enraged a section of the society.

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

'No mandate for Naga Hoho'

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, AUG. 13

Nagaland where the apex body of each tribal group has rejected the Naga Hoho which is alleged to have been claiming to be a supreme authority of Nagas people in various political circle.

The statement also warned that the 14 tribal hohos would unitedly take a course of action against any individual or organisation if any kind of threat is meted to the tribal leaders.

Pointing out that date and time for next round of talks with negotiators of NSCN (IM) and interlocutor R.N. Ravi is yet to be fixed, security sources said that Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio recently met Union home minister Amit Shah who categorically told the Nagaland Chief Minister to go back to the state and prepare for signing the peace accord. Informing that the Chief Minister was also told about the September deadline to conclude the Naga peace process, sources said that Nagaland Chief Minister was trying to buy more time through political lobbying to delay the signing of the peace accord.

The 14 Naga tribal hohos and various other indigenous tribal groups have also written letter to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressing their desire for peace and asking an early conclusion of the ongoing peace process with the all the stakeholders including NSCN (IM) and find a solution to the decades-old violent movement in Nagaland.

It is significant that 80 per cent of Nagas live in

24-YEAR OLD LABOURER BURIED ALIVE

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

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

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

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

Bihar elections likely to be held in 5 or 6 phases

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 13

Bihar Assembly elections could be held in five or six phases in November and the Home Ministry officials have also assured that all necessary security and health arrangements would be made if Election Commission decides to go ahead with the November elections.

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

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

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

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

RHEA OPPOSES CBI PROBE INTO SSR'S DEATH

PARMOD KUMAR | DC NEW DELHI, AUG. 13

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

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

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

SECURITY MATTERS

Missile launching platform, sniper rifle on the anvil

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, AUG. 13

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

Defence minister Rajnath Singh launched them in New Delhi.

One of the 15 products

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Youth form human chain to protect temple

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

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

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

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

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

Naveen had also been arrested. - PTI

All arrested can't be guilty: Deve Gowda

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- PTI

IN BRIEF
Saudi King rests after surgery

Riyadh: Saudi Arabia's King Salman arrived at a planned Red Sea megacity to "rest and recuperate", state media said Thursday, after the 84-year-old ruler underwent surgery to remove his gall bladder. The kingdom has sought to quell speculation over the health of the ageing monarch, who has ruled the top oil exporter and the Arab world's biggest economy since 2015.

"The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman arrived in NEOM, where he will spend some time to rest and recuperate," the official Saudi Press Agency said in a brief statement.

US: Iran forces board ship

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

Israel halts Gaza fuel supply

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

LEBANON NOD TO EMERGENCY POWERS

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

Calls had circulated on social media networks for protesters to prevent lawmakers from entering the session — the first since the August 4 blast that ravaged swathes of the capital.

But turnout was too low on Thursday morning, ahead of official visits by French Defence Minister Florence Parly and David Hale, the top career diplomat at the US State Department. Security forces outnumbered the dozen or so demonstrators who had gathered on a street near parliament.

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

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

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

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

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

Biden, Harris vow to rebuild US

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

— AFP

Miandad: Will challenge Imran Khan in politics



PAK ARMY CHIEF BIDS TO PLACATE SAUDI ARABIA

SHAFQAT ALI | DC
ISLAMABAD, AUG. 13

Pakistan army chief Qamar Javed Bajwa will visit Saudi Arabia this weekend in a bid to remove misunderstandings as financial support for Islamabad hangs in the balance. Pakistan has long pressed the Saudi-led Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC) to convene a high-level meeting to highlight alleged Indian violations in Kashmir. But the OIC has only held low-level meetings so far.

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

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

The former captain claimed that he made Khan the prime minister. He went on to say that Khan lost his way and was not running the country properly. He said Khan's appointments in the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) were questionable.

"Please do not bring people from abroad to manage our cricket. Look for deserving people in Pakistan. Believe in people of Pakistan," he said.

He spoke about the new regional cricket system and also said the treatment of former captain Sarfraz Ahmed was not right. Miandad, a member of the 1992 World Cup-winning side, was the



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

— AFP

Israel ties could ease Obama-era tensions

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

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

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

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

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

The warm ties contrast with Netanyahu's acrimonious relationship with Biden's old boss, former president Barack Obama.

But some experts say a Biden win would be welcomed across Israel's political and military establishment — not just by Netanyahu's rivals on the left.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

HISTORIC PEACE DEAL BETWEEN ISRAEL AND UAE

Washington, Aug. 13: US President Donald Trump, in a surprise announcement, said Thursday that Israel and the United Arab Emirates had reached a peace agreement.

The normalisation of relations between the UAE and Israel is a "HUGE breakthrough" Trump tweeted, calling it a "Historic Peace Agreement between our two GREAT friends." Speaking to reporters later, Trump suggested that more diplomatic breakthroughs between Israel and its Muslim neighbours in the region were expected.

"Things are happening that I can't talk about," he said.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo described it as "a historic day and a significant step forward for peace in the Middle East". "The United States hopes that this brave step will be the first in a series of agreements that ends 72 years of hostilities in the region," he said.

In a joint statement, Trump, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan said they had spoken on Thursday "and agreed to the full normalisation of relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates.

"Israeli and UAE delegations will meet in the coming weeks to sign bilateral agreements," they said.

"At the request of President Trump with the support of the United Arab Emirates, Israel will suspend declaring sovereignty over areas outlined in the President's Vision for Peace." — AFP

New Zealand mulls lockdown extension as Covid-19 spreads

US braces for eviction crisis

DUTERTE TO SKIP TRIAL OF RUSSIA VIRUS VACCINE

Manila, Aug. 13: The Philippines will begin large-scale human testing of Russia's Coronavirus vaccine in October, but President Rodrigo Duterte will not receive the inoculation until regulators guarantee its safety.

Duterte had offered himself up as a guinea pig for the very first jab. But his spokesman Harry Roque said the president was scheduled to receive the vaccine no earlier than May 1, weeks after the Russian-funded clinical trial is due to end in March. — AFP

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

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

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

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

It ended New Zealand's much envied run of 102 days without community transmission, and resulted in a three-day stay-at-home order in Auckland which ends at midnight Friday. Bloomfield said it was "almost certain" more cases would emerge, and teams of health workers were racing to find the cluster's origin.

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

— Agencies

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

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

"We have been dashed as partisan bickering scuppered the latest negotiations.

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

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SHORT TAKES

UN SAYS 43% OF SCHOOLS LACK WATER, SOAP

Johannesburg, Aug. 13: The United Nations estimates that 43 per cent of schools around the world don't have access to water and soap for basic hand-washing.

The new report comes as countries wrestle with when and how to safely open schools amid the Covid-19 pandemic. The report by the World Health Organisation and UNICEF says more than one-third of the 818 million children around the globe who lacked basic hand-washing facilities at their schools last year are in sub-Saharan Africa.

The report says authorities must balance health concerns with economic and social ones in deciding on opening schools, and it notes the negative effects that long closures have on children. The report also says one in three schools around the world have limited or no drinking water service.

STUDY: CLIMATE CHANGE KILLED WOOLLY RHINOS

Washington, Aug. 13: A woolly brown rhinoceros that weighed two tons once roamed northeastern Siberia before mysteriously disappearing around 14,000 years ago.

Was its demise caused by humans, or the warming climate of the time?

A new study by a Swedish and Russian team of scientists who examined DNA fragments from the remains of 14 of these prehistoric mammals lets our species off the hook.

They say the population of the animal — also known by its scientific name *Coelodonta antiquitatis* — remained stable for millennia as they lived alongside humans, before dropping sharply toward the end of the last ice age.

"That makes it more likely that climatic changes that happened around 14,000 years ago are the primary driver of extinction, rather than humans," Love Dalen, a geneticist at Sweden's Centre for Palaeogenetics, said.

Dalen led the study that was published in the journal Current Biology on Thursday. How did they reach that conclusion from DNA strands taken from the remains of animals frozen in the soil for thousands of years?

The size of a population of a species is proportional to its level of genetic diversity and the degree of inbreeding, said Dalen. The team were able to analyze the complete genome of one rhinoceros dating from 18,500 years ago.

WIND, SOLAR POWER AT RECORD HIGH IN 2020

Paris, Aug. 13: Wind and solar produced a record 10 percent of global electricity in the first half of 2020 as the world's coal plant fleet ran at less than half its capacity, analysis published on Thursday showed.

Despite a near-record drop in power demand due to the pandemic, renewables accounted for 1,129 terawatt-hours in January-June, compared with 992 in the first six months of 2019, according to a report by the Ember energy think tank.

Overall, the percentage of power drawn from wind and solar has more than doubled from 4.6 percent in 2015 — the year of the landmark Paris deal on climate change.

On the other hand, generation from coal — the most polluting fossil fuel — fell 8.3 percent in the first half of 2020, the analysis showed.

This was despite leading emitter China increasing its share of the global coal fleet slightly.

"From 2015 it's an incredible amount of growth (in solar and wind), but even at 10 percent it's not completely transformational," Dave Jones, senior electricity analyst at Ember, said.

"When we ask is it enough what we are really talking about is, how fast are emissions falling?"

"Thirty percent of fossil fuel emissions globally are just from coal power plants, so coal fired power generation needs to collapse quickly in order to limit climate change," said Jones.

The analysis showed that many major economies — including China, the United States, India, Japan, Brazil and Turkey — now generate at least 10 percent of their electricity through wind and solar. Britain and the European Union were singled out for particular praise, deriving 21 and 33 percent of their power from renewables, respectively.



Villagers watch the eruption of Mount Sinabung with a string of blasts that sent plumes of ash two kilometres into the sky, triggering a flight warning and fears of lava flows as seen from Karo, North Sumatra, on Thursday. — AFP

Flight warning as Mt Sinabung spews ash

Rumbling volcano erupts for the 8th time in less than a week

Jakarta, Aug. 13: Indonesia's Mount Sinabung erupted again on Thursday with a string of blasts that sent plumes of ash two kilometres (1.2 miles) into the sky, triggering a flight warning and fears of lava flows.

The activity marked at least the eighth time that the rumbling volcano on Sumatra island has erupted in less than a week, although there were no injuries or major damage reported.

Authorities issued a warning to planes flying near the volcano which last saw a deadly eruption in 2016.

"There is potential for more eruptions and airlines are asked to be on alert," said National Disaster Mitigation Agency spokesman Raditya Jati.

The crater's alert status remained at the second-highest level.

Jati said authorities had marked a five-kilometre no-go-zone around Sinabung and warned of possible lava flows.

"Locals are advised to wear face masks if they leave their homes to guard against the health effects of volcanic ash on health," he added.

On Monday, Sinabung belched a tower of smoke and ash some five kilometres high, coating local communities in a thick layer of debris, after erupting at the weekend.

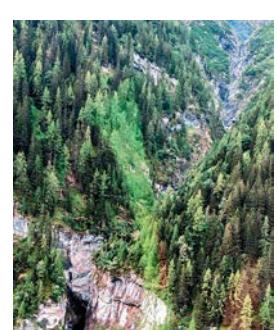
Sinabung roared back to life in 2010 for the first time in 400 years. After another period of inactivity it erupted once more in 2013, and has remained highly active since. In 2016, seven people died in

one of Sinabung's eruptions, while a 2014 eruption killed 16.

In late 2018, a volcano in the strait between Java and Sumatra islands erupted, causing an underwater landslide and tsunami that killed more than 400 people.

Indonesia is home to about 130 active volcanoes due to its position on the "Ring of Fire", a belt of tectonic plate boundaries encircling the Pacific Ocean where frequent seismic activity occurs.

— AFP



3 SPANIARDS DEAD, 1 MISSING IN SWISS MISHAP

Geneva, Aug. 13: Three Spanish tourists are dead and a fourth remains missing following a canyoning accident in Switzerland, police said on Thursday.

Four men were reported missing after a severe thunderstorm on Wednesday, St Gallen police said in a statement.

Three were found dead during the night.

The accident happened in the Parlitobel gorge in Vattis, near the eastern Swiss border.

"The three dead men and the missing are Spanish tourists," the cantonal police said.

"They were together on a canyoning tour in the Parlitobel gorge and must have been taken by surprise by the storm," Several rescue workers were deployed but the weather conditions disrupted their searches during the night. They resumed operations early Thursday.

The area is popular with canyoning enthusiasts. — AFP

China's deadly summer floods have caused \$25 bn in damage

Beijing, Aug. 13: Summer floods in China have left more than 200 people dead or missing and caused \$25 billion in direct damage, an emergency management official said on Thursday.

The floods struck major river systems across the central and southern parts of the country.

Major cities have been largely spared by the flooding but the impact compounds losses to the economy from the coronavirus outbreak that began in the central Chinese city of Wuhan late last year.

Vice Minister of Emergency Management Zhou Xuewen told reporters 219 people were listed as dead or missing and 54,000 homes had been destroyed.

Economic losses of 178.9 billion yuan (\$25.7 billion) were 15.9 percent higher than the average from flood damage over the past five years.

China has the world's second largest economy, but growth has slowed amid rising costs and market saturation at home. While it has largely contained the spread of Covid-19, strong concerns remain over employment and the fate of its export markets amid the continuing trade war with the United States.

— AFP



China's paramilitary police officers evacuate a resident from a flooded street after heavy rain in Meishan's southwestern Sichuan province. — AFP

'Clean your plate campaign' set up to avert food crisis in China

Beijing, Aug. 13: China has officially launched a new version of "Clean Your Plate Campaign" flagged by Chinese President Xi Jinping, sparking speculation that the world's most populous country faces food crisis following the Covid-19 pandemic.

Xi earlier said that food wastage was shocking and distressing, and that it is necessary to further enhance public awareness of the issue, cultivate

thrifty habits and foster a social environment where waste is shameful and thriftness is good. "Different from the previous campaign, which was aimed at putting an end to officials' extravagant feasts and receptions, the 2.0 version calls for the public to stop wasting food," state-run *Global Times* reported on Thursday.

"The initiative initially sparked speculation by some media over whether China is in a food crisis.

Experts say the world indeed faces a food shortage, but for China, the real threat to food security comes from more food wastage than epidemic or floods," it said. After he took over power in 2012, Xi in an image-building exercise banned luxury banquets with liquor, especially for the military which has been asked not to waste food and feed on leftovers and keep away from fancy food during official banquets. — PTT

 In human history, locust plagues, drought and flood were considered as three major natural disasters which caused serious agricultural and economic losses all over the world.

LE KANG, a professor of entomology

"As the most widely distributed and one of the most dangerous locust species, the migratory locust represents a serious threat to agriculture worldwide," Kang added.

Swarms can include billions of locusts and span hundreds of square miles (km) as the insects voraciously consume crops, imperiling food security. Migratory locusts inhabit Asia, Africa, Australia and New Zealand, attacking pastures and critical crops such as wheat, rice, corn, millet, barley, oats, sugarcane and sorghum.

Kang said further research is needed on whether 4VA exists in other locust species such as the desert locust, called *Schistocerca gregaria*, that currently is ravaging parts of Africa and the Middle East.

The chemical insecticides currently used to suppress locust outbreaks raise concerns about human health and safety. The identification of 4VA could inspire new methods. — Agencies

NATURE | WISE

Short film calls for urgent action to slow global warming, support to civil disobedience campaign

Naomie Harris backs latest climate change video

London, Aug. 13: British actress Naomie Harris and musician Brian Eno have teamed up to produce a short film backing calls for urgent action to slow climate change, in support of civil disobedience campaign Extinction Rebellion.

Harris, who plays Eve Moneypenny in the James Bond movies *Skyfall*, *Spectre* and the forthcoming *No Time To Die*, provides the voice-over for the animation, which also explores the threat posed by the accelerating loss of species.



Naomie Harris



Brian Eno

offer themselves for arrest at climate protests last year. The director was Israeli animator Miriote

I'M PROUD to be able to lend my voice to this project, which I hope will inspire viewers to get behind the ambitions of Extinction Rebellion with a great deal of urgency," Harris said in a statement ahead of the film's release on Thursday.

THE MOVEMENT has attracted a string of celebrity backers, includ-

ing actress Keira Knightley, and argues for emergency action on global warming. Hundreds of scientists

to force governments to embrace the scale of action needed to prevent millions of deaths due to climate change.

Critics say the movement's disruptive protests, which shut down parts of London last year, have stretched police resources and caused unnecessary inconvenience to commuters.

Nevertheless, the movement has attracted a string of celebrity backers, including Eno, who composed the animation's soundtrack.

and academics have backed Extinction Rebellion, saying that civil disobedience is the only option left

— Agencies

VENEZUELA OPP LEADERS OPEN OIL SPILL PROBE

Caracas, Aug. 13: Venezuela's opposition-run congress has opened an investigation into an oil spill that continues to pollute palm-lined beaches along the South American nation's Caribbean coast, legislator Maria Gabriela Hernandez said on Wednesday.

Authorities said last week they were cleaning up the oil slick that washed up on the coast of Falcon state, known for wetlands and nature preserves, but did not provide an estimate of how much had spilled or the cause of the incident.

The legislature's environment commission is now asking government institutions, including state oil company PDVSA, for details on what maintenance was carried out at the 1,460 barrel-per-day El Palito refinery, where the oil is believed to have originated.

"We want to know the maintenance schedule, so that we can determine responsibilities," said Hernandez, head of the environment commission, in a virtual press conference.

She said legislators are also asking "which international insurance, which companies do they have, that can compensate for the damages that the oil industry has caused."

The spill was the result of an overflow in late July at El Palito's oxidation ponds, Hernandez said, citing research by environmental experts who have tracked satellite images. A heavy storm contributed to the overflow, she said.

Oxidation ponds typically store refinery waste water. — Agencies



Firefighters work at the lake fire on Wednesday in Lake Hughes, California. — AFP

Wildfire explodes near LA, prompts evacuations

 RAPIDLY-SPREADING flames had scorched some 10,000 acres (4,050 hectares) within a little more than three hours, according to the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

More than 300 firefighters backed by helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft were deployed to fight the blaze.

"LASD deputies currently evacuating residents in the area," the fire department said in another tweet, referring to the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department. "Please help us help you & our loved ones get out safely." Wildfires have become more frequent and bigger in California in recent years, in part driven by climate change.

The deadliest fire in the state's history — the Camp Fire — took place in northern California in November 2018 and killed 86 people. — AFP

Chemical signal for locusts found

Washington, Aug. 13: Scientists have identified a chemical compound released by locusts that causes them to swarm, opening the door to possible new ways to prevent these insects from devouring crops vital to human sustenance as they have for millennia.

Researchers said on Wednesday they identified the pheromone — a chemical produced by an animal that affects the behavior of others of its own species in the world's most widespread locust species, the migratory locust, or *Locusta migratoria*.

Called 4-vinylanisole (4VA), it is primarily released from the hind legs and is detected by the antennae of other locusts and sensed by odorant receptors, the researchers said.

4VA powerfully attracted locusts regardless of age or sex, the research published in the journal *Nature* showed. Its production was triggered in the insects when as few as four to five solitary locusts came together, precipitating swarming behavior.

In human history, locust plagues, drought and flood were considered as three major natural disasters which caused serious agricultural and economic losses all over the world," said research leader Le Kang, a professor of entomology and ecology at the Chinese Academy of Sciences' Institute of Zoology.

Kang said further research is needed on whether 4VA exists in other locust species such as the desert locust, called *Schistocerca gregaria*, that currently is ravaging parts of Africa and the Middle East.

The chemical insecticides currently used to suppress locust outbreaks raise concerns about human health and safety. The identification of 4VA could inspire new methods. — Agencies

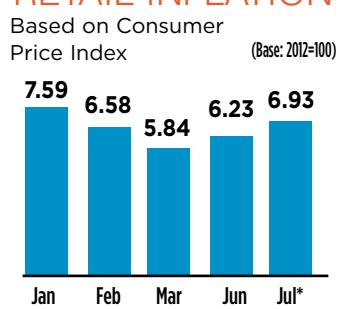


quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	38,310.49
Nifty 50	11,300.45
S&P 500*	3,385.05
Dollar (\$)	74.84
Pound Sterling (£)	97.87
Euro (€)	88.52
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	53,132.41
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	45.02
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.895
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.685
	-0.001

* As of 9:30 PM IST

RETAIL INFLATION



Figures for April and May 2020 were not released due to lockdown | Provisional Figures in per cent

Source: Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation KBR Infographics

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



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

Cadila launches remdesivir at \$37 per vial

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

Mi India pledges 2,500 phones to support students

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

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

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, AUG. 13

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

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

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

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

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

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

Johnson & Johnson chief scientific officer Paul

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

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



— Mahima Datla
MD, Biological E Limited

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

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

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

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

■ Investigation wing, TDS directorate to decide on surveys Curtains on I-T raids at will

PM UNVEILS INCOME-TAX REFORMS

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 13

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday unveiled a "faceless" tax scrutiny and appeal system and urged people to pay their due taxes and contribute to nation-building.

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

— PTI

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

This shows the govern-

ment intention to ensure only genuinely deserving cases would go through this procedure."

In an IT survey, tax officers visit business premises of the taxpayer to gather information by way of examination of books of accounts, data stored electronically and also access email communication.

Srivatsan said it can be inferred from the order that the faceless assessment scheme could subject the taxpayer to more rigorous audit based on his profiling and industry situation and requires a careful maintenance of supporting documentation with regard to significant tax positions.

AKM Global's tax partner Amit Maheshwari said it will increase accountability in conducting surveys.

"Surveys by nature are very intrusive and sensitive. Now, only a selected division of the tax department can conduct a survey," he said.

— PTI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Castor seeds case: Sebi lifts trading ban on 5 companies

New Delhi, Aug. 13: Markets regulator Sebi has lifted its trading ban on five entities, including Ruchi Global and Ruchi Soya Industries, in a case related to alleged manipulation in castor seeds trading.

National Steel & Agro Industries Ltd, Secunderabad Oils Ltd and UKS Oils Pvt Ltd are the other entities from whom the ban has been lifted.

Through two interim orders passed in March 2016 and May 2016, Sebi had barred the five entities, among others, from the securities markets for alleged fraudulent and manipulative trading in castor seeds on leading commodity bourse NCDEX.

Later in March 2017, the directions issued against them were confirmed.

In an order passed on Wednesday, Sebi revoked the direction issued against the five entities with immediate effect.

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

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

The SCN further said that Ruchi Global and Ruchi Soya Industries and National Steel & Agro Industries belonged to one distinct group, while Secunderabad Oils and UKS Oils belonged to another distinct group. "In the absence of any material to show that these two distinct groups were connected to each other and traded in the castor seeds contracts in a concerted manner to manipulate the market, it is not correct to allege that the five entities together cornered the market at the expense of other clients," Sebi said.

— PTI

PAYOUT STARTS TRADING PLATFORM

FC BUREAU
MUMBAI, AUG. 13

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

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Cash delivery trades are free and intraday trades are charged at Rs 10 only, the firm said.

— PTI

MARUTI ALTO CROSSES 40 LAKH SALES

MICHAEL GONSALVES
PUNE, AUG. 13

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

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

"Alto is the preferred

Eicher Motors to buy Volvo's bus business here for ₹100 cr

MICHAEL GONSALVES
PUNE, AUG. 13



VOLVO

Volvo World Bus

Volvo Commercial Vehicles

Volvo Bus India

Volvo

