

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

CHENNAI | WEDNESDAY 26 | AUGUST 2020

WEATHER



Max: 34°C
Min: 27°C
Rainfall: 1mm

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Aavani 10
Tithi: Ashtami
Star: Anusham
Rahukalam:
12 noon to 1.30 pm
Yamagandam:
7.30 am to 9 am

PRAYERS

Fajar: 4.45 am
Zohar: 12.17 pm
Asar: 3.19 pm
Maghrib: 6.26 pm
Isha: 7.39 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.35 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.12 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 12.57 PM
MOONSET TOMORROW 1.42 AM

CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+65,556)	(+1,050)
32,30,437	59,596

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+5,951)
TN: 3,91,303 6,721

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

2,39,23,616

DEATHS

8,19,511

COUNTRIES
AREAS WITH
CASES 213

worldometers.info

CISF for Statue of Unity security

New Delhi: The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) on Tuesday took over the security of the Statue of Unity in Gujarat's Narmada district with the induction of over 270 armed personnel. A formal induction ceremony was conducted at the site of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's statue in Sadhu-Bet islet of Narmada river at the Sardar Sarovar Dam front in Kevadia. — PTI

NTA plans for NEET, JEE amid COVID-19

New Delhi: Increasing the number of examination centres, alternate seating plan, fewer candidates per room and staggered entry and exit are among the steps the National Testing Agency will take for safely conducting medical and engineering entrance exams — NEET and JEE — in September. These steps have been introduced to ensure adherence to social distancing norms at the centres in view of the COVID-19 pandemic, even as chorus grew for postponing the crucial exams. — PTI

India deploys troops with missiles in Ladakh

New Delhi: The Indian Army has further bolstered its combat readiness in eastern Ladakh by deploying troops with shoulder-fired missiles in several sensitive areas in the backdrop of increasing activities by Chinese helicopters in the region, official sources said on Tuesday. These missiles have a range of two to five km and they are capable of bringing down low flying helicopters and aircraft, they added.

COUNTER

POINT



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DMDK wants Vijayakanth to be king in 2021 polls



NATION | 4

Lalu is anti-Dalit, alleges Manjhi



SPORT | 7

Anderson takes 600th Test wicket



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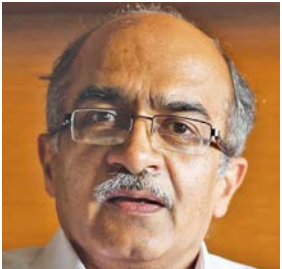
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SC reserves verdict on Prashant sentencing

■ **Lawyer refused to budge on not tendering apology**

New Delhi, Aug 25: Seeking 'judicial statesmanship', senior advocate Rajeev Dhavan on Tuesday urged the Supreme Court not to make Prashant Bhushan a 'martyr' by punishing him for contempt over his tweets criticising the judiciary after the activist-lawyer rejected fresh suggestions from the court for an apology.

As the top court reserved its verdict on the sentence to be awarded to Bhushan, Justice Arun Mishra, who presided over a three-judge bench, at the fag end of the nearly three hour-long hearing also asked why he cannot seek an apology and what was wrong in using this word. Justice Mishra is demitting office on September 2. Dhavan, representing Bhushan, suggested that the top court recall the August 14 verdict convicting him for contempt of court and not impose any sentence and urged it to not only close the case but also to bring an end to the



The SC gives 30 minutes to Prashant Bhushan to 'think over' his stand of not expressing regret over his contemptuous tweets against judiciary. The Attorney General tells the Supreme Court that Bhushan will express regret.



A person should realise his mistake; we gave Bhushan time but he says he will not apologise," the SC said.

controversy. He said it is the duty of all of us to make responsible criticism and this court can only survive on responsible criticism.

Attorney General K K Venugopal requested the court to forgive Bhushan with a message that he should not repeat this act. The bench that included Justices B R Gavi and Krishna Murari, which in the forenoon also gave 30 minutes to Bhushan to "think over" on withdrawing his statements made

in the court, said he made "disparaging remarks against the institution and the judges".

"AG has suggested reprimand but that would be extreme. My humble and most respectful submission is that do not make Prashant Bhushan a martyr. The effect of the punishment could be that he will become a martyr. Please do not do that. He has not committed murder or theft. Don't make him a martyr," Dhavan said.

2009 CONTEMPT CASE SENT TO OTHER BENCH

New Delhi, Aug 25: The Supreme Court Tuesday decided to refer to another bench the 2009 contempt case against activist-lawyer Prashant Bhushan and journalist Tarun Tejpal to deal with certain larger questions related to freedom of speech and levelling of corruption charges against the judiciary. The apex court in November 2009, had issued contempt notice to Bhushan and Tejpal for allegedly casting aspersions on some sitting and former top court judges in an interview to a news magazine. Tejpal was the editor of the magazine. The court did not agree to the submissions of Dhavan that it should issue notice to the Attorney Gen. K K Venugopal seeking his assistance.

TN CASELOAD CONTINUES TO REMAIN HIGH

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG 25

The spread of Coronavirus continued with 5,951 persons getting infected on Tuesday when the fatalities too went up to 107. Chennai had 1,270 cases and 20 deaths while the districts that reported high number of new infections were Chengalpattu 321, Coimbatore 322, Cuddalore 370, Kanchipuram 214, Salem 297, Theni 226, Thiruvallur 305 and Tirunelveli 204.

Meanwhile, the trial for the Oxford vaccine had been approved by the ICMR and is likely to be tested in 17 cities. In Chennai it would be tested in Sri Ramachandra Medical College and the Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital.

To take a decision on totally lifting the e-pass system and relaxing the lockdown norms, Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami would be meeting the district collectors on August 29.

● **The CM calls for a meeting on August 29 to decide on abolishing epass system**

Covid bolt hits Usain, partying Gayle moves on to Dubai IPL

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG. 25

IPL franchise Kings XI Punjab heaved a sigh of relief on Tuesday when Chis Gayle announced that he returned two negative Covid-19 tests. According to reports from Jamaica, the swashbuckling batsman had attended the birthday celebrations of eight-time Olympic gold medallist Usain Bolt who is currently in home quarantine following a positive Covid-19 test.

Videos posted on social media suggested that Bolt as well as guests partied without masks. A host of local and international

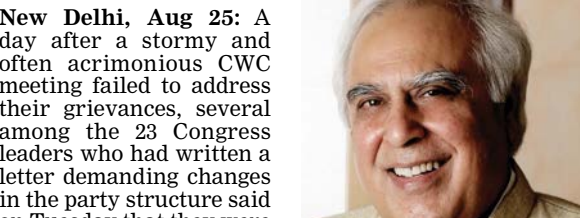
celebrities, including Manchester City winger Raheem Sterling and Bayer Leverkusen star Leon Bailey reportedly attended the controversial party. Jamaican Gleaner reported that the country's Prime Minister Andrew Holness has confirmed that the police are investigating the circumstances surrounding a birthday party in St Andrew for Bolt last week. Holness also said Bolt would not benefit from any special treatment in the process.

Gayle landed in the UAE on Tuesday for the 13th edition of the IP starting on September 19. Gayle,

the highest run-scorer in T20s, posted videos of his swab testing, prior to his flight to the UAE. "Couple days ago. 1st Covid-19 test.. Before travel I need 2 negative test," Gayle's Instagram story said.

In another post, Gayle wrote, "The last one went a bit too far in my nose. Phew. Result was negative."

Upon arrival in the UAE, he was again tested at the airport. He will have to undergo a six-day quarantine with further testing on alternate days. As per the BCCI's protocols, only those are cleared can start training in the biosecure bubble.



New Delhi, Aug 25: A day after a stormy and often acrimonious CWC meeting failed to address their grievances, several among the 23 Congress leaders who had written a letter demanding changes in the party structure said on Tuesday that they were not "dissenters" but wanted a revival of the party. Most of them also said that they favoured Mrs Gandhi remaining the party chief.

Among the first to speak out was senior Congress leader and Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal. In a cryptic tweet, Mr Sibal said: "It's not about a post. It's about my country which

matters most".

In a similar vein, another senior leader and lawyer Vivek Tankha said the letter was not a challenge to the leadership but a parchment of action to strengthen the party.

Anand Sharma said: "The letter was written with the best interest of the party in our hearts.

Interpol red alert on Mrs Nirav Modi

New Delhi, Aug 25: An Interpol global arrest warrant has been issued against Ami Modi, wife of Nirav Modi, prime accused in the over USD 2 billion PNB bank fraud case, on charges of money laundering, officials said on Tuesday. The 'red notice' has been issued on the request of the Enforcement Directorate

(ED). Once such a notice is issued against a fugitive, the Interpol asks its 192-member countries to arrest or detain the person if spotted in their countries after which extradition or deportation proceedings can begin. Ami Modi is stated to have left country soon after the alleged bank fraud case came to light.

Sibal had hit out at Rahul Gandhi on Twitter on Monday for a purported remark slamming the letter writers. Sibal, who is not a part of the CWC, withdrew his tweet a little later after being "informed by Rahul Gandhi personally that he never said what was attributed to him".

The Congress also officially denied that Rahul Gandhi had accused any party leader of "colluding with the BJP". Former president Rahul Gandhi, it is learnt, launched a sharp attack against the signatories of the letter.

— PTI

Ex-cop 'Singham' Annamalai joins BJP

New Delhi, Aug 25: Former IPS officer 'Singham' Kuppusamy Annamalai joined the BJP on Tuesday, asserting that he will work to bring the "nationalist spirit" to Tamil Nadu. Joining the BJP at its national headquarters here, Annamalai described himself as a "fan and admirer" of Narendra Modi, and quoted from ancient Tamil text Thirukkural to say that the prime minister embodies a leader's qualities of fearlessness, courage, knowledge and

giving spirit.

"I will work to strengthen what the BJP stands for and to bring that nationalist spirit to the state of Tamil Nadu," the 36-year-old former police officer, who has been involved in social work since quitting the IPS last year, told reporters.

The BJP in a statement noted that the former Karnataka cadre officer was known as "Singham" Kuppusamy Annamalai, apparently a reference to his image of a tough and dashing cop. — PTI

SURVIVORS FOUND IN RUBBLE



Rescue personnel sift through the rubble in search of survivors at the site where a five-storey apartment building collapsed, in Mahad in Raigad district, Tuesday. — PTI

Privilege notices against MLAs set aside

Chennai, Aug 25: The Madras high court on Tuesday set aside the breach of privilege notices against 19 DMK MLAs, including party president M. K. Stalin, saying it suffered a "foundational error" in assuming their action of displaying gutka in the Tamil Nadu assembly in 2017 to be prohibited in law and also violated Constitutional rights.

The first bench of Chief Justice A P Sahi and Justice Senthil Kumar Ramamoorthy, passing final orders on a batch of petitions from Stalin and others however, granted liberty to authorities for initiation of the privilege proceedings afresh.

On July 19, 2017, DMK members, led by Stalin, had displayed sachets of 'gutka' a banned product, which is a mixture of chewing tobacco and betel nut, in the House and Speaker P. Dhanapal referred it to the Privileges Committee.

The Opposition party MLAs, held gutka packs while seeking to raise an

issue of the "availability," of banned products.

Twentyone MLAs, who were issued notice for alleged breach of privilege on August 28, 2017, challenged it by filing writ petitions in the High Court, while two of them, J. Anbazhagan and K. P. P. Samy died this year.

The court, noting that exhibiting gutka was not disputed, said the only question was as to whether gutka could be treated as a prohibited item in law for the purpose of display inside the

assembly.

"The issuance of the impugned notice of breach of privilege based on the incident suffers from a foundational error of assuming the conduct of the petitioners to be prohibited by the notification dated 23.5.2017, and we hold accordingly," the bench said.

The notification in 2017 was made by the Tamil Nadu government prohibiting the manufacture, storage, transport, distribution and sale of gutka.

■ PG3

"A well-planned criminal conspiracy hatched by Pakistan-based leadership of JeM which has been sending their cadres to the militant training camps of Al-Qaida-Taliban-JeM and Haqqani-JeM in Afghanistan for receiving training in explosives and other militant tactics", NIA said



13,800-PAGE CHARGE-SHEET filed along with photographs and digital proof in a special NIA court in Jammu

nership with the CRPF, the Army and other security forces and intelligence agencies. However, the case was soon handed over to the NIA for investigation by the Union Home Ministry.

The NIA claimed that it has in its 13,800-page charge-sheet filed along with photographs and digital proof in a special NIA court in Jammu provided "irrefutable evidence", including their chats and call details against the 19 accused and also to highlight the role of Pakistan in the deadly attack.

The charge-sheet has been filed after the case was registered against the accused under various sections of J&K's (now defunct) Ranbir Penal Code, Arms Act, Explosive Substances Act, Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, Foreigners Act and J&K Public Property

(Prevention of Damages) Act.

The accused are JeM chief Masood Azhar, his two brothers Rouf Asgar and Ammar Alvi, all absconding, local Kashmiris Shakir Bashir, Insha Jan, Peer Tariq Ahmed Shah, Waiz-ul-Islam, Muhammad Abbas Rather, Bilal Ahmed Kuchay and Muhammad Iqbal Rather (all of them already arrested) and absconders- Pakistani national Muhammad Ismail and locals Sameer Ahmad Dar and Ashaq Ahmed Nengroo. The other accused in the case who have, however, been killed since are besides suicide bomber Adil Dar, Pakistani nationals Muhammad Umar Farooq, Muhammad Kamran Ali and Qari Yasir and locals Sajjad Ahmed Bhat and Mudassir Ahmad Khan.

■ PG4

JOURNALIST MURDER: OPPN SLAMS GOVT

Lucknow, Aug 25: A day after a journalist was shot dead in Uttar Pradesh's Ballia, the Opposition on Tuesday lashed out the government, expressing concern over mediapersons' security and the law and order situation.

Ratan Singh (45), who worked with a Hindi news channel, was murdered on Monday night in the Phephana police station area of the district. A police officer was suspended while six people were arrested in connection with the murder on Tuesday.

Reacting to the incident, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said in a tweet that the UP government's attitude towards the "security and freedom of journalists" is condemnable. Tagging a graph showing incidents of crime in the past two days, she alleged that the Yogi Adityanath government "tries to cover up" crime but it has now spilled on to the roads. "The evident does not need any proof. This is the crime metre of two days," she said tagging the graph showing criminal acts. In a separate tweet, she said in the past three months, three journalists -- Shubham Mani Tripathi, Vikram Joshi and Ratan Singh-- have been killed and FIRs lodged against 11.

SHORT TAKES

Corona: IUML leader leaves hosp

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUCHY, AUG. 25

National president, Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), Prof K M Kader Mohideen, who was infected by Corona virus and admitted to a private hospital here on August 3, was on Monday night discharged from hospital after he fully recovered from the infection, said IUML state general secretary MLA K A M Mohamed Abubucker. In a release here on Tuesday, Abubucker on behalf of the IUML headquarters, thanked everyone including various political leaders who often enquired about the health of Kader Mohideen, and others who made special prayers for his speedy recovery.

Kudimaramathu work in progress

DC CORRESPONDENT
PERAMBALUR, AUG. 25

The PWD water resources department has under the Kudimaramathu scheme taken up renovation and repair works of 14 projects involving various water bodies across the district, at an estimated cost of Rs 3.48 crore, with active participation of the respective ayacutdars, said Collector V Shantha. She told newsmen after inspecting Rs 50 lakh on-going work at Chinna Aeri at Ladapuram and Kalarampatti Aeri on Tuesday, that the main objective of implementing the Kudimaramathu scheme is to protect the water resources in the region, to increase the ground water level and to save rain water which would improve the livelihood of farmers.

Plea to drop bypass project

DC CORRESPONDENT
THANJAVUR, AUG. 25

Farmers in the district have appealed to the RDO here to drop the bypass road project for Thiruvaiyaru, and instead expand the Manamadurai - Perambalur road by removing encroachments on the road-sides to ease traffic congestion. Farmers led by P Sukumaran, Cauvery Vivasayigalin Padukappu Sangam, gave a petition to the RDO, on Tuesday. They said that farmers of M a n a k a r a m b a i, Kalyanapuram, Kandiyur, Thiruppunthuruthi and Perumbuliur villages have been asked to raise their objections for acquisition of lands for the project, for which fertile lands would be acquired. Instead, the Perambalur - Manamadurai highway that passes through Thiruvaiyaru could be expanded by removing encroachments on either side, they added.

Nilgiris witnesses rapid corona spread

DC CORRESPONDENT
OOTY, AUG. 25

The spread of Covid-19 across rural Nilgiris in the past few days has been alarming, as 414 persons had tested positive in the past one week alone making things corona prevention a challenging for the district administration here.

Reasons for the hike in cases remain unknown, but for the past three days, the Nilgiris has been witnessing an average of 80 positive cases a day. More rural belts like Kokalthorai, Kannerimukku, Kappachi, Dimpatti, Aravenu and Kairben in Kotagiri rural limits, are affected. Official sources said that village residents do not adhere to curfew norms and social distancing norms. Their free mingling with other infected persons, is now costing them dearly.

Meanwhile, Collector of the Nilgiris, J Innocent Divya, said that official teams at the panchayat levels are monitoring whether tourists are staying in the cottages and resorts in remote areas. She also warned of action against those who try to cross borders in the hills without valid e-passes.

MODEL SCHOOL



Collector K.S. Kandasamy on Tuesday inspected the refurbishing work at the Adaiyur grama panchayat union school in Tiruvannamalai panchayat union, which is being converted into a 'Model school', at a cost of ₹36.26 lakh. Project executive P. Jeyasudha, assistant collector (Training) Amit Kumar and deputy collector (Training) Ajitha Begum, and others accompanied the collector.

— K. Senthil Nathan

Stalin welcomes HC verdict

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG. 25

The Madras high court setting aside on Tuesday a breach of privilege motion moved against DMK president M. K. Stalin and 20 other party MLAs for displaying sachets of Gutkha in the Assembly floor in 2017 was warmly welcomed by the DMK.

In the history of the legislature, it was a celebration of democracy, Stalin said in a statement adding that no action had, however, been taken to curb gutka sales or against the minister who allegedly collected kickbacks from gutka traders and the Chief Minister.

Though the Assembly Speaker failed to safeguard the freedom of expression of the MLAs and their right to raise issues that concerned the people in the Assembly, the high court had legally protected it, Stalin said.

The gutka sachets were displayed as evidence to prove that the carcinogenic substance was freely available in the market, he said, congratulating his lawyers, senior advocate R. Shanmugha Sundaram and N.R. Elango, who appeared in the case.

Stalin also urged the state government to call for a special session of the Assembly and pass a resolution, rejecting Neet and proclaiming that medical college admissions would be made on the basis of marks scored in class 12 examinations.



HC: We leave it open to Privileges Committee

From P1

The law relating to prohibition of a gutka sachet being possessed by an individual, which as per the "peculiar facts" is not alleged to be for consumption, nor was it meant to be storage, transportation or possession for sale resulting in consumption, cannot be construed as an act prohibited under the notification, the court said.

"There is no law, nor was any shown to us that a mere display of a gutka sachet which was with the clear intention of drawing the attention of the entire assembly towards an alleged apathy of the government in not tackling the menace of free sale of Gutkha in Tamil Nadu was a conduct prohibited under the notification."

The court said, argument, on behalf of the petitioners that the foundational facts of treating the petitioners conduct as prohibited in law suffered from a totally erroneous approach and lead to a jurisdictional fault to that extent has to be accepted.

"The action of the Committee of Privileges in issuing the impugned notices treating the conduct of the petitioners to be one that is prohibited by law, in the present case by the notification is erroneous and violates the constitutional rights of the petitioners under Article 194 of the Constitution," the judge said.

The wordings in the impugned notices suffered from gross illegality of a fundamental error and therefore a step in that context in furtherance of the show cause for a breach of privilege is unwarranted.

On judicial review, the court said it was not supposed to be viewed as policing, but rather conserving and preserving

the rule of law so as to ensure that all authorities act within the confines of their power in an accountable way.

Citing various verdicts, the judges said they were convinced that in the present case "we are called upon to determine a pure question of law on the admitted facts relating to the ramifications of the notification."

The court said the petitioners cannot be proceeded against on the strength of the impugned notices by treating their conduct of displaying gutka sachets and photographs as being violative of any prohibitory law, particularly the notification of 2017.

The bench made it clear that its conclusion was confined only to the interpretation of the notification vis-a-vis the specific conduct of the MLAs inside the House that was made the basis for the issuance of notice of breach of privilege.

It should not be construed as an interpretation regarding a prosecution or trial of an offence before a competent forum arising out of the notification of 2017, it said.

Whether there was a breach of privilege or not is a matter within the realm of the House for which the Privileges Committee can proceed to answer the same, the judges said.

"We leave it open to the Committee of Privileges, if it so chooses, to deliberate upon the issue further in case it still is of the opinion that any breach has been committed of the privileges of the House by the petitioners," they said.

In such an event, the petitioners would be at liberty to raise all objections that they raised before the court or otherwise available in law, the court said.

— PTI

HELPING HAND



Minister for co-operation Sellur K. Raju distributes welfare measures to 4,694 beneficiaries to the tune ₹57.49 crore in Tiruvallur district. P. Benjamin., minister of rural industries K. Pandiarajan, minister for Tamil official language and Tamil culture, and Mageswari Ravikumar, district collector, also present.

— DC

19 injured as lorry overturns

DC CORRESPONDENT
JAYANKONDAM, AUG. 25

As many as 19 persons including 18 women were injured when a mini lorry in which they were traveling, capsize in Okkanatham village under Udayarpalayam police

station near here on Tuesday. Police said the occupants of the lorry hailed from Nayaganaprioyal village, and were on their way home after attending a condolence at Kangeyamkurichi village, when the mishap occurred.



DMDK wants Vijayakanth to be king in 2021 polls

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG. 25

DMDK founder and actor Vijayakanth celebrated his 68th birthday with his family in Chennai on Tuesday, evoking speculations on the future course of action that he might take in politics, particularly since the state is due for Assembly elections in another eight months.

While birthday wishes poured in through social media and otherwise from his fans, well-wishers and others, politicians started greeting him from Monday evening itself. Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami and Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam were among the first to wish a long life and go-good health to the DMDK leader.

Among the others who greeted him on Tuesday was DMK president M. K. Stalin, who described Vijayakanth as one whom M. Karunanidhi loved. BJP state president L. Murugan greeted him and the founder of Makkal Needhi Maiyam Kamal Haasan said that Tamil Nadu politics was waiting to see him in full action in the arena.



Premalatha Vijayakanth distributing sweets to party men on the occasion of her husband and DMDK chief's birthday on Tuesday.

— DC

Vijayakanth, who was not active during the campaign for the 2019 Lok Sabha elections due to health issues, is reportedly back after treatment and ready for action in the 2021 Assembly elections.

His wife and DMDK treasurer Premalatha Vijayakanth told newsmen that he regained his usual vigour and the party was prepared to even fight the elections alone.

Followers and fans of Vijayakanth wanted to see him as the king, she said.

Yet, the party would like to continue in the alliance with the AIADMK as of now and take a decision on facing the Assembly polls by December-January.

When asked about Premalatha's statement, fisheries minister D. Jayakumar said the AIADMK was confident that none of the partners

would leave the alliance. The DMDK being ready to contest the elections alone could be Premalatha's view, Jayakumar said.

Meanwhile, it is rumoured that some family members of Stalin had called on Vijayakanth a fortnight ago to enquire about the actor's health and had even asked them to join the DMK-led alliance for the Assembly elections.

Man serves poison-laced cool drink to 2 sons, dies

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG. 25

In a suspected suicide pact, a 58-year-old man has served cool drinks laced with poison to his sons before consuming the same drink at Karanai Pudukcherry in Guduvancheri in Chengalpattu district on Monday night. While the man died at the hospital, his two sons are battling for life at the institute of child health and hospital in Egmore.

According to police, the deceased has been identified as Santhosh Kumar (58), a coolie and a native of Kerala. He lived in

Guduvancheri with his wife Sumathy, 40, and two sons Sivanithi, 12 and Sarandoss, 8. Sivanithi has mental disability, police added.

The incident happened on Monday night when Santhosh laced cool drinks with poison and served it to his family members. The two sons and Santhosh had the drink, while Sumathy saved it for later.

Within a few minutes, the trio developed stomach pain and Santhosh confessed to have mixed pesticide in the cool drinks. Sumathy alerted the ambulance. They were rushed to a private hospi-

tal in Potheri, where Santhosh passed away. The sons were shifted to Egmore children's hospital, where they are said to be in a critical condition.

According to sources, Santhosh was under depression during the pandemic lockdown. Police said that lack of income and depression might be the reason behind the suicide pact.

The body of the deceased has been shifted to Chengalpattu hospital for post-mortem. Guduvancheri police registered a case.

Recently, a debt-ridden vendor died by hanging himself inside his grocery store due to poverty.

Satellite data imagery to help bank disburse farm loans

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUCHY, AUG. 25

The ICICI Bank on Tuesday announced the use of satellite data imagery - earth observation satellites - to assess credit worthiness of its customers in the farm sector.

Bank's executive director, Anup Bagchi, in a release here, claimed that they are the first in India and one among a few globally, to use satellite data to measure an array of parameters related to land, irrigation and crop patterns, and use it in combination with demographic and financial parameters, to make expeditious lending decisions for farmers.

830 kg of gutka seized, four arrested

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUCHY, AUG. 25

Police in the wee hours of Tuesday seized 743 kgs of gutka from a private godown at suburb Ariyamangalam, Gandhi market area and arrested four persons in this connection. On an alert, a police team raided a private godown at Ariyamangalam and made the seizure. Those arrested were identified

as Siva alias Mohankumar, a wholesale dealer of Big Bazaar street and his assistant, Manikandan. In another similar operation, police seized 87 kgs of gutka along with an auto-rickshaw from a private building on the Thanjavur road near Gandhi market, and arrested Subramaniyan and Chandrasekar. All the four were remanded to judicial custody, police added.



A scene from Tambaram when it drizzled on Tuesday.

— DC

SHRC seeks report on bias against Dalit civic chief

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, AUG. 25

The State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) has directed the Coimbatore district collector to file a report in connection with alleged

discrimination faced by a Dalit panchayat chief in the district.

SHRC member A. Chittaranjan Mohandoss initiated suo motu proceedings based on newspaper reports and directed the collector to file

a report in three weeks.

V. Saridha, president of J Krishnapuram panchayat in Coimbatore, alleged that she faced caste-based discrimination in the village.

She was facing problems due to her caste since she

was elected the panchayat chief. She alleged that one P. Balasubramaniam had been making casteist slurs whenever she passed by their localities.

He and his followers had prevented her from dis-

charging her duties, she alleged. The complaint comes a week after a Dalit woman panchayat president in Tiruvallur district was stopped from hoisting the national flag on the Independence Day.

SHORT TAKES

OPEN ALL PLACES
OF WORSHIP, SAYS
ATHAWALEGILVESTER ASSARY | DC
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
AUG. 25

The Kerala High Court on Tuesday refused to stay the Union cabinet's decision to lease out the Thiruvananthapuram airport to Adani Enterprises. The court said the petition cannot be taken up immediately and postponed the matter to September 15 for detailed hearing.

The court, however, made it clear that the state government will be allowed to produce documents to prove its right to the airport. Both Centre and state governments have been asked to give detailed arguments in writing.

Earlier, in the petition, the government pointed out that the decision to lease out the airport under the PPP model for 50 years came at a time when a petition against it was pending in the high court.

Kerala Assembly on Monday had passed a resolution against the handover of the airport to Adani group.

Earlier, an all-party meeting had passed a resolution opposing the Centre's decision following which Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan wrote a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi urging him to reconsider the move. The ruling CPM and Opposition Congress have announced that they would mobilise people against the Centre's decision.

AZHAR, BROTHERS
IN PULWAMA
CHARGESHEET

From Pg 1

The NIA said that the investigation has revealed that Pulwama attack was a result of "a well-planned criminal conspiracy hatched by Pakistan-based leadership of JeM which has been sending their cadres to the militant training camps of Al-Qaida-Taliban-JeM and Haqqani-JeM in Afghanistan for receiving training in explosives and other militant tactics".

It said that the main accused Muhammad Umar Farooq also visited Afghanistan for explosives training in 2016-17. "He infiltrated into India through the International Border in Jammu-Samba sector in April 2018 and then took over as JeM commander for Pulwama," it claimed.

The charge-sheet said that Farooq along with his Pakistani compatriots Kamran, Ismail alias Saifullah and Qari Yasir and local associates Sameer Dar and Adil Dar planned and prepared for the attack on security forces using IEDs.

It said that the accused Shakir Bashir, Insha Jan, Peer Tariq and Kuchay provided all logistics and harboured the JeM militants in their houses. "From December 2018 onwards, Shakir Bashir started doing reconnaissance of the movement and deployment of security forces along the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway whereas Mudassar arranged gelatin sticks and handed them over to Shakir. RDX was brought by the Pakistani militants who infiltrated into India. Shakir collected the explosive material i.e. RDX, gelatin sticks, aluminum powder and calcium-ammonium nitrate and stocked these at his house for making the IED".

The charge-sheet further said that in January last year Sajjad Bhat purchased a Maruti Eeco car for the purpose of carrying out the IED attack. "The car was kept in the front-yard of Shakir Bashir's house. Waiz-ul-Islam ordered 4 kgs of aluminum powder from his Amazon account on the directions of accused Ismail alias Saifullah and gave the same to him", it said. "In the first week of February, Farooq, Sameer, Adil and Shakir made the IED using RDX, calcium-ammonium nitrate, gelatin sticks and aluminum powder and assembled it in two containers, one weighing around 160 Kgs and the other one around 40 Kgs. The two IED containers were then fitted in Maruti Eeco and were ready to use these by the morning of the 6th February. However, because of heavy snowfall, the National Highway got closed for the vehicular movement".

The charge-sheet said that on the fateful day (February 14), as the highway had opened for vehicular traffic, Shakir drove Adil on to it after which the latter took charge of Maruti Eeco and drove it on to the highway and carried out the suicide attack by ramming the vehicle laden with 200 Kgs of high-grade explosives into a bus of the CRPF convoy, resulting into the death of 40 jawans and causing damage of Rs.32,90,719 to the public property.

Lalu is anti-Dalit,
alleges ManjhiNAYAR AZAD | DC
PATNA, AUG. 25

With Assembly elections slated to be held in October-November, political rumblings have started in Bihar. Former chief minister Jitan Ram Manjhi who recently created a flutter by announcing his departure from the Mahagathbandhan, on Tuesday, termed RJD Chief Lalu Yadav "anti-Dalit".

"It is a fact that he (Lalu Yadav) is a real villain as he cannot see any Dalit leader growing. He played a key role in my removal as Chief Minister in 2015. He is anti-Dalit", Manjhi said.

Manjhi who is considered a strong Mahadalit leader in Bihar is the only MLA from his party. He had floated Hindustani Awam Morcha (HAM) in 2015 and became part of the NDA after he was ousted from the JD(U) for rebelling against Nitish Kumar who had installed him as the Chief Minister. In March 2018, he joined the grand alliance led by RJD.

However, after his differences with RJD on the issue of coordination committee last week he walked out of the opposition coalition in Bihar.

The grand alliance comprises RJD, Congress, Upendra Kushwaha's RLSP and Mukesh Sahani's Vikasheel Insaan Party.

When asked about party's plans, HAM leaders in Patna said that Manjhi has been authorised to decisions on the issue. "His decision will be acceptable to everyone in the party. All these issues will be finalised by the end of this month", HAM spokesperson Danish Rizwan told this newspaper.

Reports suggest that after quitting the grand alliance, he is in touch with other political parties and also exploring the possibility to become a part of the NDA in Bihar. Sources said that he has also discussed the issue with Jan Adhikar Party leader Pappu Yadav.

"Being a strong Dalit leader, he has always been an important factor in Bihar politics. He has been in touch with several parties which include Asaduddin Owaisi's AIMIM and JAP led by Pappu Yadav. Veteran leader Yashwant Sinha who is trying to form a Third Front ahead of polls has also approached him", a HAM insider told this newspaper.

Drive against disease



Delhi BJP President Adesh Gupta and SDMC mayor Anamika Singh at an exhibition during the launch of a campaign against Dengue, Malaria and Chikungunya, in New Delhi on Tuesday. Power spray tankers, fogging machines and 3-wheelers mounted with PA system were also launched. The campaign is likely to continue till September end.

-PTI

India reports 60K new cases,
recovery rate inches up too

Total Covid-19 caseload set to cross 32 lakh today; Big spike in K'taka

DC CORRESPONDENTS
WITH AGENCY INPUTS
AUG. 25

New Delhi: India's Covid-19 tally rose to 31,67,323 on Tuesday with with 60,975 more people testing positive for coronavirus infection in a day, while recoveries surged to 24,04,585 pushing the recovery rate over 75.92 per cent.

The Union health ministry said the death toll climbed to 58,390 with 848 fatalities being reported in a span of 24-hours, the data updated at 8 am showed.

The Covid-19 case fatality rate has declined to 1.84 per cent.

There are 7,04,348 active cases of coronavirus infection in the country which comprises 22.24 per cent of the total caseload, the data stated.

TS daily tally crosses
2,500-mark

Hyderabad: New Covid-19 cases for the first time breached the 2,500-mark in Telanagana with the government reporting that 2,579 persons had tested positive in 24 hours. The day also marked the first time that the state carried out more than 50,000 tests, with the tally reaching 52,933 between Sunday and Monday.

As per the Covid-19 bulletin issued by the health department on Tuesday, the total number of Covid-

19 cases rose to 1,08,670 while the number of deaths increased by seven to 770. On a day that also saw Director of Health Services Dr G. Srinivasa Rao say that Covid-19 was now "under control" in Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation, the GHMC area, as per the bulletin, recorded 295 new cases, down from 373 on Sunday and 472 on Saturday.

9,927 new cases, 92
deaths in AP

Vijayawada: Andhra Pradesh on Tuesday registered 9,927 new Covid-19 cases taking tally to 3,71,639. A health department bulletin here said 92

deaths were reported in the state in the preceding 24 hours taking the toll to 3,460.

Among new Coronavirus confirmed infections, East Godavari has topped with 1,353 followed by 967 in Chittoor, 949 in Nellore, and 917 in Guntur.

Big surge of 8,161
cases in Karnataka

Bengaluru: Karnataka on Tuesday reported a sharp spike of 8,161 new Covid-19 cases and 148 related fatalities, taking the total number of infections to 2,91,826 and the death toll to 4,958, the Health department said.

The day also saw 6,814 patients getting dis-

charged after recovery, taking the total number of discharges so far past the two lakh mark.

Of the 8,161 fresh cases reported today, 2,294 cases were from Bengaluru Urban alone.

Kerala Covid-19
tally crosses 60,000

Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala's Covid-19 count crossed the 60,000 mark on Tuesday as 2,375 fresh cases were reported, while 10 more fatalities took the toll to 244. Of the infected, 2,141 were through contact, including 174 whose source of infection is not known. While 61 had come from abroad, 118 were from other states.

India has 25,000 more
daily cases than BrazilKANIZA GARARI | DC
HYDERABAD, AUG 25

India is recording about 25,000 more Covid-19 cases than Brazil, and will have the second highest number of cases in the world if the daily growth rate of 1.85 per cent persists, experts said.

Brazil has a daily average growth rate of 1.03 per cent and the total caseload stood at 36,27,217 cases on Tuesday. In India, the total number of cases at 10.45 pm on Tuesday stood at 32,31,612 India has added about 7 lakh cases in the 10 days since August 15.

The high number of cases is also an indication that more tests being done and more people with symptoms are reporting to hospitals. While the rise is constant in new cases in India, Brazil is noting a bend of its curve as the number of new

cases come down.

For this reason, the gap in the caseload between India and Brazil is closing. Data analysis gives a 20-day time period after which India will have 43,11,646 cases and Brazil 42,96,232.

Dr Kiran Madhala, senior government doctor, explained, "In metros, infection is found in 40 per cent of the population. Metros have shown a daily growth rate in terms of spread of one per cent. The spread is now in semi-rural and rural areas where high numbers are being recorded. This shift shows that one section of the population has developed antibodies."

The antibody test results in 2.7 lakh samples analysed by Thyrocare shows that 26 per cent people have developed immunity to the virus.

Monsoon session with 18
sittings likely from Sept. 14

New Delhi, Aug. 25: The Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs has recommended that the Monsoon Session of Parliament be held from September 14 to October 1, sources said on Tuesday.

According to them, there will be in total 18 sittings and its dates will be notified later in the day.

Hectic preparations are underway for the Monsoon Session of Parliament with several first-time measures because of the Covid-19 pandemic such as staggered sitting of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha and use of both chambers and galleries to accommodate members while following physical distancing norms, officials had said.

According to the Rajya Sabha Secretariat, members of the Upper House will be seated in both

chambers and galleries during the session.

This is the first time in the history of Indian Parliament since 1952 that such an arrangement will be in place, where 60 members will be seated in the chamber and 51 in the galleries of Rajya Sabha and the remaining 132 in the chamber of Lok Sabha.

Similar seating arrangements are being worked out by the Lok Sabha Secretariat as well.

For the first time, large display screens and consoles for participation from galleries, ultraviolet germicidal irradiation, special cables between the two Houses and polycarbonate separators will be in place.

Rajya Sabha Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla at a meeting on July 17, after detailed examination of various options for holding the session, decided on using the chambers and galleries of both the Houses.

Naidu has directed officials to complete preparations for the session by the third week of August when testing, rehearsal and final inspection would be carried out. The Rajya Sabha Secretariat has been working overtime to ensure full preparedness, officials said.

While both the Houses usually function simultaneously, this time due to extraordinary circumstances, one House will sit during morning hours and the other in the evening, sources say.

The last Budget Session had to be curtailed because of the Covid-19 pandemic and both Houses were adjourned sine die on March 23.

New Delhi, Aug. 25: Over 100 civil society organisations have urged the government against increasing women's minimum age of marriage, claiming it will do little to improve the health of mothers and infants.

In a joint statement, the rights organisations asked how increasing the minimum age of marriage is a step forward when it denies many more women matrimonial status and rights. They also asked how will it help to criminalise families whose survival needs and insecurity compel them to not just marry early, but to also enter the workforce early.

The government is considering revising the age of marriage of women and for that a task force has been formed. Prime Minister Narendra Modi also touched upon the sub-

● **THE GOVERNMENT** is considering revising the age of marriage of women and for that a task force has been formed. Prime Minister Narendra Modi also touched upon the subject in his 1-Day address.

ject in his Independence Day address.

However, the civil society organisations have urged the government against increasing the age of marriage, claiming "it will not further gender equality, women's rights or empowerment of girls, and will do little to improve the health of mothers and infants".

"It is only in the most superficial sense that having 21 years for both men and women is a sign of gender equality, but somehow this idea has great appeal in liberal circles. If legal equality should be implemented in the letter of law when it comes to age, it may be worth con-

sidering making it 18 years for both men and women, as is the case in most parts of the world," the statement endorsed by 2,500 young voices and over 100 civil society organisations said.

They said raising the age at marriage through law will only criminalise, not prevent, early marriage.

"Over the last few years there have been moves to make laws more and more punitive as if all the answers can be achieved through legal change. Merely having a new minimum age of marriage law for women at 21 years without the presence of enabling opportunities in the form of access to high-

er education and decent job opportunities translates effectively into young women being even more trapped in their natal homes," it said.

Parents in situations of disadvantage will feel constrained to marry them off by any means possible rather than wait till the age of 21 when dowry and marriage expenses would leave them debt ridden, the statement said.

The civil society organisations recommended that instead of raising the age of marriage, the government must strengthen schooling from pre-school to higher secondary as a bridge to higher education is absolutely vital, along with job guarantees and learn while you earn opportunities for adolescents, especially for those from marginalised sections.

—PTI

COVID-19 | VACCINES India in talks with Russia on the possible use of its Sputnik V vaccine to boost vaccination

Chances of reinfection rare: ICMR

VINEETA PANDEY | DC
with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, AUG. 25

Even though the trials for the Covid-19 vaccines are on track in India, the government is simultaneously engaging with Russia on the possible use of its Sputnik V vaccine.

"India and Russia are in communication on Sputnik V. Some initial information has been shared. Some detailed information is awaited,"

said union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan on Tuesday.

The government may not be in a real hurry to import the Russian vaccines given the fact that three vaccine candidates are already in the advanced stages of clinical trials in India. However, since the two countries are also strategic partners, the possibility of having Sputnik V vaccine to boost the vaccination drive for the huge Indian popula-

tion cannot be ruled out.

"The Serum Institute of India (Oxford University trials) vaccine studies consisting of 1,700 persons are in phase 2 and 3, the one by Biotech has completed phase 1 with 375 persons while that of Zydus Cadilla has entered Phase 2 with about 50 persons being tested. These are two dose vaccines and antibody response is checked after two to four weeks," said Dr Balram Bhargava, chief of ICMR.

As per Union health ministry, the total number of cases of Coronavirus in India so far reached 31,67,323 till Tuesday morning with nearly 61,000 fresh cases being detected. The toll was 58,390 out of which 848 fatalities were recorded in the last 24 hours.

Bhushan said that for the first time, active cases have reduced in the last 24 hours. "Active cases are only 22 per cent of the total cases we have had so far.

There is also a steady decline in positivity rate despite very high increase in testing," Bhushan said.

He added that in the first week of August, the positivity percentage on a seven day rolling average was 11% which came down to 8% on Tuesday.

The ICMR chief said the report of the second national level sero survey is expected soon that will give an idea about the prevalence of the virus in the population.

NORTHERN RAILWAY

Invitation of Tenders through E-Procurement system

Principal Chief Materials Manager, Northern Railway, New Delhi-110001, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites e-tenders through e-procurement system for supply of the following items:-

S NO.	Tender No.	Brief Description	Qty.	Closing Date
01	09202376	M-24X75MM FIT BOLT WITH CASTLE NUT,WASHER	53757 NOS	19-09-20
02	09202330	TOP SIDE BEARER LINER	13395 NOS	21-09-20
03	09193039	KIT OF PU PAINTS	322 SET	21-09-20
04	09203054	READY MIXED PAINT, BRUSHING, BITUMINOUS, BLACK,	31220 LTR	22-09-20

NOTE -1. Vendors may visit the IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in for details.

2. No Manual offer will be entertained.

Tender Notice No. 19/2020-2021 Dated : 25.08.2020

1842/2020

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

IN BRIEF

Pakistan arrests two militants

Lahore: Pakistan's counter-terrorism officials have arrested two militants of the banned Jamaat-ul-Ahrar (JuA), a splinter terrorist group of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, in the country's Punjab province, the police said on Tuesday. According to the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) of Punjab Police, an intelligence-based operation was conducted in Sahiwal city, some 175 kms from here, on Monday. The terrorists were carrying weapons and explosive material as they had planned to attack the personnel of the law enforcement agencies in the city. The CTD team raided and arrested them, the police said.

Philippines ultra leader 'killed'

Manila: Abu Sayyaf militants may have staged suicide bombings that killed 14 people to avenge the death of a Filipino leader of the Islamic State group in the southern Philippines following a clash with troops last month, the army chief said Tuesday. Army commanding general Cirilto Sobejana said Hatib Hajan Sawadjaan was wounded in a July 6 gunbattle in a jungle near Patikul town in Sulu province and most likely died a few days later. Troops have been searching for his buried remains, he said. Two Islamic militants blew themselves up in suicide attacks Monday that killed at least 14 people, including soldiers.

\$424 mn surplus in July: Pak

Islamabad: Cash-strapped Pakistan has shown a surplus of \$424 million in July after posting a deficit of \$100 million in June, the country's central bank has said. The State Bank of Pakistan said "this is the fourth monthly surplus since last October". The SBP said that the strong turnaround in the remittances and exports is achieved "with support from several policy and administrative initiatives taken by the bank and the federal government, the *Express Tribune* reported. The export of goods increased to \$1.89 billion in July compared to \$1.58 billion in June. It was, however, 14 per cent lower than \$2.22 billion export in July 2019.

FB blocks group on Thai monarchy

Bangkok: Facebook has blocked in Thailand a group with more than a million members that engages in open discussion about the Thai monarchy, an institution that is staunchly protected from criticism by strict laws. The Facebook group, "Royalist Marketplace", was blocked late Monday after the social media giant bowed to pressure from the Thai government. Facebook said that it is still available in other places, adding that the company plans to "legally challenge" the government's request. "After careful review, Facebook has determined that we are compelled to restrict access to content which the Thai government deemed to be illegal," the company said.

ACTOR SABA SAHER SHOT AT, CRITICAL

Kabul, Aug. 25: A roadside bombing killed a police officer while a policewoman and her driver were wounded when unknown attackers opened fire on them in Kabul, said Ferdaws Faramarz, spokesman for the Kabul police chief. The policewoman, Saba Saher, is also a well-known actress, and she was said to be stable.

A wave of attacks across Afghanistan on Tuesday left at least 17 people dead and scores more wounded, officials said, including a Taliban truck bombing that targeted a commando base for Afghan forces. The bomber struck in Balkh province, killing three people, including two Afghan commandos and a civilian. According to Hanif Rezaie, the spokesman for the Afghan army corps in the north, initial military report said at least six commandos and around 35 civilians were wounded in that explosion, which also destroyed or damaged dozens of nearby houses.

In a separate attack in Balkh, gunmen shot dead five people, including former warlord Abdul Raouf, two of his sons ages 10 and 11 and two other men. Also on Tuesday, an attack on a checkpoint of pro-government forces in western Ghor province killed eight troops and wounded five.

Haley: US not racist, reject Dem's 'fashion' statement

Will speak at GOP meet that will renominate Trump as poll candidate

Washington, Aug. 25: Describing herself as a proud daughter of Indian immigrants who wore a turban and a saree, top Republican politician Nikki Haley has narrated her story to the American voters, urging them to strongly reject the Democratic Party's "fashionable" statement that "America is racist". The 48-year-old former US Ambassador to the United Nations, Haley is the only Indian-American listed so far to be speaking at the Republican National Convention which on Thursday would formally re-nominate President Donald Trump as its candidate for the November 3 presidential election. President Trump and Vice President Mike Pence will be challenged by the Democratic Party's presidential nominee Joe Biden and his Indian-American running mate Senator Kamala Harris.

Twice elected as the Governor of South Carolina, Haley said, "In much of the Democratic Party, it's now fashionable to say that America is racist. That is a lie. America is not a racist country."

"This is personal for me. I am the proud daughter of Indian immigrants. They came to America and settled in a small southern town. My father wore a turban. My mother wore a sari. I was a brown girl in a black and white world," she said on Monday at the mostly-virtual four-day convention during which she fully backed President Trump and his policies.

Born as Nimrata Randhawa in South Carolina, she is the daughter of Ajit



Delegates cheer as US President Donald Trump (L) and Vice President Mike Pence stand on stage during the first day of the Republican National Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina on Monday. — AFP

Singh Randhawa and Raj Kaur Randhawa, who emigrated from Amritsar in Punjab. Haley said her family faced discrimination and hardship but her parents never gave in to grievance and hate.

"My mom built a successful business. My dad taught 30 years at a historically Black college. And the people of South Carolina chose me as their first minority and first female governor," she said. "America is a story that's a work in progress. Now is the time to build on that progress, and make America even freer, fairer, and better for everyone," Haley said.

— PTI

Trump lauds India after American pastor released

Washington, Aug. 25: US President Donald Trump has appreciated India for listening to his request to release an American pastor who was arrested last October on charges of carrying \$40,000 of undeclared currency. Tennessee pastor Bryan Nerven, who was released by India after intervention from Trump this May, attended a round table with the President in the Oval Office of the

White House along with several other American citizens who were released from overseas abductions and detentions.

"India responded very well to my request. Appreciate that," Trump said as he appeared in a taped meeting with a group of US citizens who were abducted or detained overseas and the Trump Administration helped them to return home. The taped round-

table was broadcast during the first night of the four-day Republican National Convention on Monday. In his brief remarks, Nerven explained that he had been arrested by the Indian officials while travelling in the country.

Nerven from the International House of Prayer Ministries was arrested in Bagdogra, West Bengal last October.

— PTI

False plasma data: US health official sorry

Washington, Aug. 25: Dr Stephen Hahn, the commissioner of the US Food and Drug Administration, apologised Monday after misrepresenting a key statistic on how effective blood plasma is for treating Covid-19 when announcing an emergency approval measure. The US on Sunday issued emergency approval for plasma taken from recovered Coronavirus patients, so that more people can get access to the exper-

imental treatment.

But Hahn and other senior health officials came under fire from experts after repeating a claim made by President Donald Trump that blood plasma from recovered Covid-19 patients reduced mortality rates by 35 per cent.

"What that means is — and if the data continue to pan out — 100 people who are sick with Covid-19, 35 would have been saved because of the administra-

tion of plasma," Hahn said Sunday, after Trump had called it "a tremendous number".

Health secretary Alex Azar added: "I just want to emphasise this point, because I don't want you to gloss over this number. We dream in drug development of something like a 35 per cent mortality reduction. This is a major advance in the treatment of patients. This is a major advance." Such a reduction would indeed be a game

changer in the fight against the pandemic — but the statistic is false.

The officials said these results came from a study of 35,000 patients conducted by Mayo Clinic, but Dr Scott Wright, the study's leader, told *AFP* it did not come from his institution's research. He said he believed it might be an "integrated analysis" the FDA had arrived at by looking at both Mayo's work and other studies.

FDA spokeswoman Emily Miller later tweeted that 35 per cent referred to the relative difference in mortality risk between those patients in Mayo's study who received a high level of antibodies against those who received a low level of antibodies.

"I have been criticized for remarks I made Sunday night about the benefits of convalescent plasma," said Hahn in a tweet thread on Monday. — *AFP*

Postpone NEET, JEE exams: Greta

London, Aug. 25: Swedish teen climate change campaigner Greta Thunberg on Tuesday threw her weight behind postponing the NEET and the JEE exams in India in view of the Coronavirus, saying it is "deeply unfair" that students are asked to appear in the tests during the pandemic.

Several students and political leaders across the country, including Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and DMK President M.K. Stalin, have urged the central government to postpone the examination until the spread of the Covid-19 was brought under control.

Voicing her support to the calls for the deferment of the key national examinations, Thunberg took to Twitter, saying it is deeply unfair for the students. "It's deeply unfair that students of India are asked to sit national exams during the Covid-19 pandemic and while millions have also been impacted by the extreme floods. I stand with their call to #PostponeJEE, #NEETinCOVID," she said in a tweet.

Thunberg, 17, has become a leading voice for action on climate change, inspiring millions of students to join protests around the world. She was named *Time* magazine's Person of the Year for 2019. Two years ago, she started missing lessons most Fridays to protest outside the Swedish Parliament building, in what turned out to be the beginning of a huge environmental movement.

● THE JEE (Main) is scheduled to be held between September 1 and 6, while the JEE (Advanced) on September 27. The NEET will be held on September 13.

The chorus for postponing the various examinations, including NEET and JEE, grew louder on Sunday with over 4,000 students observing a day-long hunger strike to press for the demand in view of the rising Covid-19 cases. The protest came on a day Gandhi said the government must listen to the "mann ki baat" of students and arrive at "an acceptable solution" and his party demanded that the NEET and the JEE be deferred. According to the leftist All India Students Association (AISA), over 4,200 students observed the day-long hunger strike at their respective home demanding that CBSE compartment exams of Classes 10 and 12 be cancelled and entrance exams such as the UGC-NET, CLAT, NEET and JEE be postponed. Aspirants appear in the JEE for admission into the premier engineering colleges and the NEET for undergraduate medical courses.

The JEE (Main) is scheduled to be held between September 1 and 6, while the JEE (Advanced) on September 27. The NEET will be held on September 13. With 60,975 people testing positive for the Coronavirus infection in a day, India's Covid-19 tally on Tuesday rose to 31,67,323.

— PTI

Kenosha protesters, cops clash again after man shot

Kenosha, Aug. 25: Anger over the shooting of a PoC by police spilled into the streets of Kenosha for a second night Monday, with police again firing tear gas at hundreds of protesters who defied a curfew, threw bottles and shot fireworks at law enforcement guarding the courthouse. The southeastern Wisconsin city became the nation's latest flashpoint in a summer of racial unrest after cellphone footage of police shooting Jacob Blake — apparently in the back, as he leaned into his SUV while his three children sat in the vehicle — circulated widely on social media Sunday.

The 29-year-old was hospitalised in serious condition. The shooting drew

condemnation from Democratic Gov Tony Evers, who also called out 125 members of the National Guard on Monday after protesters set cars on fire, smashed windows and clashed with officers in riot gear the previous night.

Police first fired tear gas Monday about 30 minutes after the 8 p.m. curfew took effect to disperse protesters who chanted, "No justice, no peace" as they confronted a line of officers who wore protective gear and stood shoulder-to-shoulder in front of the courthouse entrance.

But hundreds of people stuck around, screaming at police and lighting fires, including to a garbage truck near the courthouse. Tensions had flared anew earlier Monday after

a news conference with Kenosha Mayor John Antaramian, originally to be held in a park, was moved inside the city's public safety building.

Hundreds of protesters rushed to the building and a door was snapped off its hinges before police in riot gear pepper-sprayed the crowd, which included a photographer from *The Associated Press*. Police in the former auto manufacturing centre of 100,000 people midway between Milwaukee and Chicago said they were responding to a call about a domestic dispute when they encountered Blake on Sunday. They did not say whether Blake was armed or why police opened fire, they released no details on the dispute. — *AP*

NZ survivor to mosque gunman: 'You are the loser'

Christchurch, Aug 25: A man who was shot and wounded in the New Zealand mosque attacks had a simple message for the mass-murderer responsible: "You are the loser, and we are the winners." Mirwais Waziri was among the survivors and family members who spoke on the second day of a four-day sentencing hearing for white supremacist Brenton Harrison Tarrant, who killed 51 worshippers at two mosques during the March 2019 attacks. Waziri said Tarrant had not shown any remorse during the hearing and so instead of giving a victim's impact statement he wanted to deliver the gunman a message.

Coming from Afghanistan, Waziri said, he was sometimes associated with terrorism but now he'd been freed. "You took that name from me," Waziri said.

"Today, you are the terrorist." His comments elicited spontaneous applause from other victims in the courtroom. Others told Tarrant during their statements that he was a coward, a monster, a rat. Tarrant broke his impassive facade a

couple of times to smirk at survivors when they made fun of him — one told him he should read the Quran during his plentiful free time, another said he was still alive because Tarrant didn't know how to shoot, except from point-blank range. The 29-year-old Australian gunman in March pleaded guilty to murder, attempted murder, and terrorism, reversing an earlier not guilty plea. He could become the first person in New Zealand to be sentenced to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole, the toughest sentence available. Tarrant is noticeably thinner than when he was first arrested.

At the current hearing, he hasn't shown the brazenness he did at his first court appearance the day after the attacks, when he made a hand gesture sometimes adopted by white supremacists. During Tuesday's hearing, relatives and survivors described how more than a year after the attacks, they were still having trouble sleeping, enjoying life and providing for their families.

— AP

Navalny poisoning blame just 'empty noise', says Kremlin

Moscow, Aug. 25: The Kremlin on Tuesday rejected accusations of involvement in an alleged attack on Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny who is in a coma in a German hospital, a day after doctors said tests indicated that he was poisoned. The politician's allies say the Kremlin is behind the illness of its most prominent critic, with some demanding an investigation into whether Russian President Vladimir Putin was involved. "These accusations absolutely cannot be true and are rather an empty noise," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters on Tuesday. "We do not intend to take it seriously."

Peskov saw no grounds for launching a criminal investigation into Navalny's condition, saying that it could have been triggered by a variety of causes, and determining one should come first. "If a substance (that caused

the condition) is found, and if it is determined that it is poisoning, then there will be a reason for an investigation," Peskov said. Navalny, a politician and corruption investigator who is one of Putin's fiercest critics, fell ill on a flight back to Moscow from Siberia on Thursday and was taken to a hospital in the city of Omsk after the plane made an emergency landing.

Over the weekend he was transferred to the Charité hospital in Berlin, where doctors on Monday said they have found indications of "cholinesterase inhibitors" in his system. Cholinesterase inhibitors act by blocking the breakdown of a key chemical in the body, acetylcholine, that transmits signals between nerve cells.

Navalny is being treated with the antidote atropine. Navalny's wife, Yulia Navalnaya, has been visiting her husband daily and made no comment.

— AP

Imran wants Nawaz back immediately

SHAFQAT ALI | DC ISLAMABAD, AUGUST 25

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Tuesday while directing to review the legal aspects said that former prime minister and Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) supreme Nawaz Sharif should be brought back to Pakistan immediately.

The meeting of the federal cabinet was held in Islamabad with Prime Minister Imran Khan in chair. During the meeting, matters pertaining to the country's current political situation came

under discussion. Sources said that the meeting discussed bringing back PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif to Pakistan and the recent political activities of party vice president Maryam Nawaz.

Federal Minister for Water Resources Faisal Wadwa while expressing concern for failing to arrest Maryam Nawaz, said that she should have been arrested for what she did outside the National Accountability Bureau office, adding that no matter what happens, Maryam Nawaz will not be allowed to leave the country.

UNDER | WATER

Officials yet to reveal why vessel came so close to the island

Ship behind Mauritius oil spill sunk

Port Louis, Aug. 25: The broken stem of a Japanese-owned ship which ran aground causing a devastating oil spill in pristine waters off Mauritius, has been successfully sunk in the open ocean.

Nagashiki Shipping, which owns the MV Wakashio, said on Tuesday (Aug 25) it had completed scuttling of the front part of the vessel at sea on Monday as instructed by local authorities.

The bulk carrier ran aground on a coral reef off the Indian Ocean island on Jul 25 and began leaking

oil two weeks later, prompting a race against the clock to pump all the fuel off the bulk carrier before it broke in two.

The operation was successful and two tugboats last week began towing the larger, forward section of the vessel some 15km out into the open ocean, where it has been sunk to a depth of 3,180m.

The smaller section remains wedged on the reef where the shipwreck occurred.

"The planned sinking of the stem (forward) section of the casualty has been

completed and at around 3.30pm was no longer visible on the sea surface," read a statement on Monday from the Mauritius crisis committee.

Greenpeace opposed the plan, warning last week that sinking the vessel would "risk biodiversity and contaminate the ocean with large quantities of heavy metal toxins".

More than 1,000 tonnes of oil spilled into the pristine waters that have long been a major draw for honey-mooners, and contain precious mangroves and coral reefs. Last week a team of

British scientists arrived to co-ordinate an impact assessment on what damage has been done to the island and how to help the eco-system recover.

International experts from Japan and France are also on the ground assisting the archipelago nation in the wake of the spill.

Senior British marine monitoring scientist Dr Sue Ware told AFP the team would help "determine the footprint of the oil both on the shoreline and ... whether it has managed to reach any areas of

the seabed" and how it has impacted mangroves, coral reefs and different marine species.

She said efforts by Mauritius to place booms in the water appeared to have been successful in preventing oil from reaching the protected Blue Bay wetlands area.

The captain of the ship and his second-in-command were arrested last Tuesday. Officials have yet to reveal why the ship, which was making its way from Singapore to Brazil, came so close to the island. — *Agencies*

DECCAN Chronicle

26 AUGUST 2020

Restore democracy to reinvent Congress

The meeting of the Congress Working Committee (CWC) held on Monday evoked only the usual interest among the people, party workers and in political circles. The CWC, once one of the most powerful and representative bodies in the pre- and post-Independent India, has of late ceased to make news when it meets. There are two important reasons for it. One, the body filled with nominated people reflected the loss of democratic moorings in the party and symbolised the sycophancy that runs in the organisation from top to bottom; the last proper election to the CWC was conducted in 1991. Second, the committee with its elected president used to control the affairs of the nation as the ruling or a major Opposition party at the Centre and in most of the states; it no more holds such power strings now. It has been reduced to such a position that its leader in the Lok Sabha cannot legitimately lay claim to the post of the leader of the Opposition for he lacks the support of one tenth of the total members of the house as mandated. The party has only four chief ministers now.

The sudden interest in the CWC meeting has its origin in the letter 23 senior leaders wrote to the party leadership seeking a change at the helm. The letter created heartburn in the circles close to the party high command but the party will do well to seize the opportunity the letter-writers have offered. It is highly unlikely that they will launch an open revolt against Sonia Gandhi who has been retained as president until a new incumbent arrives or former president Rahul Gandhi, though they have succeeded in stopping Mr Gandhi from returning as party chief for now. Ms Gandhi who has said she has no plans to initiate disciplinary action against them must do more and accommodate them in the new committee which will be formed to help her run the party. Ms Gandhi must resist the temptation of the coterie around her which would want every crisis to end with a declaration that the “hands of the leadership must be strengthened”. Such self-serving exercises are unlikely to help the party sustain the interest of the party workers and the people.

An elected leadership is a pre-condition if the party were to regain its legitimacy and popularity and the Congress president must set in motion the process aimed at that; the easy way out of foisting string-pullers under the garb of “consensus” must be jettisoned. The AICC has been talking of making itself an elected body for decades, and this crisis gives it a golden opportunity, what with Ms Gandhi, who commands respect among all sections of the party, at the helm. It is important that the grand old party of Indian politics reinvents and renovates itself and makes itself a worthy Opposition party this nation deserves. Shortcuts and courtroom dramas are not the way to achieve it; returning to basic democratic practices is.

No state for journalists

What was the egregious misdeed of 42-year-old television reporter Ratan Singh for which he was beaten up by villagers at the home of the panchayat head in Ballia, eastern UP, before being shot dead? Why was there no deterrence of note in the face of this flagrant crime? Instead, the police, who should be in the dock for birthing this culture of impunity by repeatedly failing to do their job, are now busy playing down the murder as one that occurred as a result of a property dispute, a conjecture denied by none other than the family of the victim.

Sadly, this is the second murder of a journalist in about a month’s time in the state of Uttar Pradesh. In July, Vikram Joshi was shot in Ghaziabad for reporting the harassment of his niece to police who waited and then effectively watched the crime take place. And in June, Shubham Mani Tripathi, a newspaper reporter from Kanpur, was shot in Unnao at the behest of a local real estate and sand lord after his reports led to the demolition of an illegal structure and he shared it on Facebook.

Tripathi’s killing coincided with the Varanasi police’s hounding of Scroll’s executive editor for reporting that people in Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s constituency had gone hungry during the Covid-19 lockdown. This time, the police acted with alacrity. Indeed, 60 journalists from all over India, including some prominent names, have been arrested in this period, or booked or been confronted with other tactics of intimidation for simply doing something the police aren’t — which is their own job of reporting on the pandemic and how the people have suffered through it.

As the coronavirus lockdown and recession affect millions of jobs nationwide, journalists, too, have come under financial stress and distress. But some of them have continued to face down both the virus and crime, as also an uncooperative and very often vindictive government, in order to report, investigate and be the first to get the news. The government, in its turn, has clanged kitchen utensils in their honour, and then promptly turned a blind eye even as police blithely brushed crimes under the carpet.

The headline, therefore, is an ironic one. As for the police-mafia-state crackdown on news and commentary, it is not completely successful.

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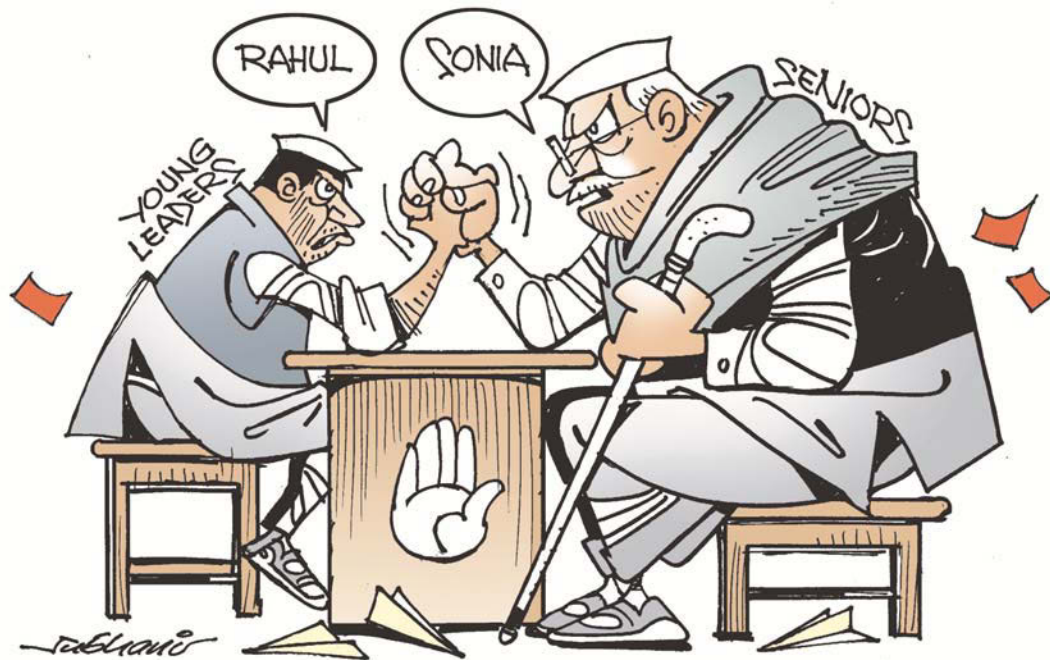
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Subhani



Dawood, D-Company & Pakistan’s terror links



Syed Ata Hasnain

In the early 1970s the name Haji Mastan used to trigger much fear in India. He was among the early smuggler kings who lived by crime and exploited criminal networks — gold, some drugs, electronics and liquor, which mainly formed contraband those days. There were vast smuggling networks to evade the authorities, but their main effect was a marginal negative impact on the economy and a few inter-gang shootouts. These were people who did what they did for self-enrichment, and the power that went with it.

Smuggler kings usually invested in the urban property market. As India progressed, these holdings began to emerge as virtual gold. The Bollywood film *Deewar* captured this very well in 1974. It was n’t until 1993 that crime syndicates involved in running contraband across borders went beyond the ordinary. They got involved with terrorism, as Mumbai saw in the 1993 bombings, when a series of 12 bomb explosions on March 12, 1993 resulted in 257 fatalities and 1,400 injuries. The bombings were ascribed to Dawood Ibrahim, leader of a Mumbai-based international crime syndicate called “D-Company”. Dawood was assisted by subordinates Tiger Memon and Yakub Memon. D-Company became a well-known name across India as it deeply involved itself with Pakistan-sponsored transnational proxy terrorism in India. Dawood Ibrahim, who had lived in the UAE since 1986, found a safe haven in Karachi too. Since then, he has been behind several high-profile terror acts in different parts of India outside Kashmir. He is listed as an “international terrorist” by the UN and the United States and carries a bounty of \$25 million on his head.

The recent Financial Action Task Force (FATF) pressure on Pakistan has led to the partially admitted presence of Dawood in Karachi. However, his networks continue to flourish in India despite the marked success of India’s intelligence agencies.

What is the linkage between crime syndicates and transnational terrorists? To comprehend this, take the example of Pakistan. In 1989 it chose to target India through what is called asymmetric or sub-conventional war. Terrorism forms the core of this, with many other domains forming part of the low-intensity conflict spectrum. Pakistan chose to launch its strategy in Kashmir and over a period of time established an efficient network of local overground workers from different segments of society. The network covered civil society members, lawyers, businessmen, politicians, media persons, members of the clergy, faculty and students of universities, and much more. Due to the prevailing sub-nationalist trends in J&K it was not difficult doing this. However, Pakistan’s strategy desired extension of the hand of proxy conflict to hinterland areas and important cities of India to give substance to its chosen strategy of “war by a thousand cuts”. It was not easy doing this. Finding reliable proxies, creating networks, embedding sleeper agents, transporting warlike material, having access to large-scale finances and creating empathy in some elements of society is never a simple set of tasks. It takes years to build these through networks. In search for the means to take the proxy war into the rest of India, Pakistan got a shot in the arm with the destruction of the Babri Masjid in December 1992 and the communal riots that fol-

lowed; both acting as facilitators for the extension of its strategy. Its target was not difficult to choose, as Mumbai offered itself due to its strategic significance as India’s financial capital. Mayhem by violence would disrupt investments, lead to serious suspicions of the minority community, create cleavages in society and cultivate a resultant trust deficit that would assist Pakistan to exploit at will. However, the other major consideration for the selection of Mumbai as the target was the pre-existence of criminal networks, with the D-Company leading them. A foreign hand could ride on these networks for a cost. With networks on its side, Pakistan thus had available human resources, weapons, finances, communications and local knowledge. With explosives supplanted, it was a ticking bomb. Criminal networks got their first major experience of terror that did not differentiate between targets; every incidental target is justified in the rationale of terrorists, especially those with ideological orientation. People of all faiths died or were maimed in the acts on March 12, 1993 and thereafter.

Dawood Ibrahim, who evaded the hand of Indian law, managed to create a reported network of 5,000 criminal elements with an annual turnover of \$2 billion. The D-Company is suspected of having provided the logistics for the Lashkar-e-Tayyaba’s terror attack on Mumbai on November 26, 2008, besides a host of other attacks in 2002, 2006 and 2011. A total of 600 people died in these various attacks in Mumbai. With each event, Dawood

Ibrahim’s criminal-cum-terrorist profile enhanced a couple of notches and he has been known to keep the company of international terrorist outfits like Al Qaeda and the Taliban. In 2006, India submitted a list of 38 most wanted terrorists, including Dawood Ibrahim, to Pakistan, but the latter continued to play a hedging game knowing that the D-Company and its head was an invaluable asset for it.

With the FATF investigation against Pakistan, India in recent months has mounted pressure at the UN. On August 6, 2020, India highlighted the nexus between international terrorism and organised crime, quoting the case of UN-designated terrorist Dawood Ibrahim, who has been living in Pakistan ever since his involvement in the 1993 Mumbai blasts. India went on to state: “If the international community can successfully defeat the Islamic State, a similar focus on addressing threats posed by proscribed individuals and entities such as Dawood Ibrahim and his D-Company, the Lashkar-e-Tayyaba and Jaish-e-Mohammad will serve humankind well.”

The continuous Indian diplomatic campaign to highlight Pakistan-sponsored criminal and terrorist links which have acted as its proxies in India is apparently bearing fruit, with Pakistan reportedly admitting the existence of Dawood Ibrahim in Karachi. However, Pakistan is a past master at subterfuge and evasion of responsibility. Its admission on one day and denial the next is part of an old strategy which it continues to play with the FATF. With international success against the ISIS and Al Qaeda, a renewed and energetic Indian campaign to nail Dawood Ibrahim is the call of the hour so that the FATF can effectively take note and place Pakistan on notice to deliver or perish on the blacklist. But only time can tell if it will happen this time.

The writer, a retired lieutenant-general, is a former GOC of the Srinagar-based 15 Corps

With international success against the ISIS and Al Qaeda, a renewed and energetic Indian campaign to nail Dawood Ibrahim is the call of the hour so that the FATF can effectively take note and place Pakistan on notice

under then chief minister Narendra Modi.

TELL-ALL TALES

The arrival of “tell-all” books by Viral Acharya and Urjit Patel has whetted the curiosity of many who are looking to find some skeletons tumble out.

Both economists did stints at the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and left in more or less similar circumstances — before the end of their terms. While Mr Patel was RBI Governor, Mr Acharya is a former deputy governor of RBI, who quit six months before his tenure ended in 2019.

According to Mr Acharya, Mr Patel quit because of several attempts to undermine the autonomy of the bank by the government. It was something that was widely discussed in the media at the time. However, Mr Patel had claimed that he had resigned for “personal rea-

LETTERS CONG IN DEPRESSION

In economics, we read the trade cycle which has four phases — Boom, Recession, Depression and Recovery. This is evident in almost all economies that are mixed. Economics was rightly called a political economy by the classical school of thought. If we examine the history and growth of some political parties in India too, we can see these four phases. The BJP at present is in the boom period at the national level. The Congress, which was in the boom period for many years since Independence, is in total disarray, thanks to its continuous failure in the elections to the Parliament and many state Assemblies. In economics parlance, it has embraced depression. That it has no genuine leader to take the party forward in the political landscape is a sad commentary of the party. Whether it will recover and reach the boom level in the future is a big question mark.

S. Ramakrishnasayee
Chennai

A TALL ORDER

IN A MAZE, the INC is finding itself at the very place it started. Staying with Mrs Gandhi as President pro-tem only signals an arduous external political race and not the end of an internal party issue. Regional satraps of Congress had for long come to vest authority on the ‘high command’ to end perennial in fights, to then willingly share mutual denial of the top chair. The tide turned with the loss of the tall Rajasekhara Reddy of AP. Here, by embracing the dynast Jagan Mohan Reddy it could well have retained the state and political clout. But the party came short on foresight and pragmatism. Its task is clear fixation to win assembly elections, sink inner differences, anoint an able captain and be back to winning ways. Congress can only improve its national presence through regional coalitions. For this, Congress needs a persuasive leader statesman who has also to rebuild and reanimate its cadre. A tall order indeed!

R.Narayanan
Chennai

Dilip Cherian
Dilli Ka Babu



Audit service is unhappy over Murmu as CAG

The appointment of former lieutenant governor of Jammu & Kashmir G.C. Murmu as India’s Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has not been welcomed by the Indian Audit & Accounts Service (IA&AS) officers. It is being seen as yet another instance of the dominance of the IAS cadre over other all-India services. Not that it’s been known to make any difference to this Sarkar, once it’s made up its mind!

Sources say that in becoming CAG, Mr Murmu who is from the 1985-batch Gujarat cadre of the IAS, has superseded at least six IA&AS officers. But he is not the first IAS officer to become the nation’s top auditor. Mr Murmu’s immediate predecessor, Rajiv Mehrishi, was from the 1978 IAS cadre, and he too had followed Shashikant Sharma, who belonged to the 1976 batch. Many would also remember CAG

Vinod Rai, a 1972-batch IAS officer. Apparently, the last IA&AS officer to become CAG was A. Bakshi whose tenure ended back in 1978.

Since then, CAGs have been from the tribe of the “heaven-born”, but clearly the IA&AS officers who have lost the race to become CAG are unwilling to accept the IAS “outsiders”. Will the current resentment subside “naturally” or will Mr Murmu face rough weather? We’ll have to wait and see.

ASTHANA IS NEW BSF CHIEF

Two years after his highly publicized ouster from the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), its former special director Rakesh Asthana has been named director general of the Border Security Force (BSF).

Interestingly, he continues to hold additional charge of director general, Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB). Checking narcotics smug-

gling remains a big concern and in the BSF, which patrols the borders, Mr Asthana as DG is back in a position where he can play a more active role.

Mr Asthana has served both in the state government and at the Centre, where he served twice in the CBI. The 1984-batch IPS officer from the Gujarat cadre also did a low-profile stint at the Bureau of Civil Aviation and Security.

At the CBI, he was involved in investigating many high-profile cases. During his first stint in the agency, he investigated the fodder scam, which resulted in the conviction of former Bihar chief minister Lalu Yadav. He also achieved signal success in building a water-tight case for the extradition of escaped liquor baron Vijay Malhiya from the UK. He led CBI’s case in the UK courts. In Gujarat, he served in crucial posts such as Vadodara’s police commissioner

sons”, although it was widely speculated that one reason he disagreed with the government was on the issue of parting with the central bank’s reserves. However, he seems to have mended fences now as he has been appointed as Chairman of the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy.

Mr Acharya, too, quit after a series of spat with government officials. His book was published close on the heels of Mr Patel’s own book which provides a glance into how India’s bankruptcy code was weakened by several stakeholders within the broader banking system. Mr Acharya has argued that numerous policies “regressed” the economic climate in the country while he was deputy governor between early January 2017 and mid-July 2019.

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@Twitter.com. Let’s multiply the effect.

SHORT TAKES

Man U captain to be tried for crime

Thessaloniki, Greece: The trial of Manchester United captain Harry Maguire on charges of “assault”, “bodily harm”, “verbal abuse” and “attempted bribery” opened on Tuesday in the criminal court on the Greek island of Syros, according to a judicial source.

According to some British and Greek media on the spot, Maguire’s lawyers raised procedural issues which could lead to the trial being postponed. The international defender was not present, but was simultaneously named in Gareth Southgate’s England squad for matches against Iceland and Denmark next month. Maguire’s lawyers told local media that he had left the Cyclades last week.

He could face a maximum prison sentence of seven years, Greek radio station *Skai* said.

— AFP

F1 adds four races to calendar

Paris: Four Grand Prix races, in Turkey, Bahrain (two) and Abu Dhabi, have been added to the 2020 F1 calendar, but the postponed Chinese GP has been cancelled, F1 organisers said. The addition of the four races and the elimination of the Chinese Grand Prix in Shanghai bring the race total to 17 for the season. Formula One returns to Turkey for the first time since 2011, with the Turkish Grand Prix to be run at Istanbul Park on November 15. That is followed by a back-to-back double header in Bahrain, with the Bahrain Grand Prix on November 26 and the Sakhr Grand Prix on December 6.

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JIMMY SCALES MT 600

Anderson becomes first fast bowler to take 600 Test wickets

Southampton, Aug. 25: Jimmy Anderson has entered the exclusive “600 Club.”

The England paceman became only the fourth bowler — and the first seamer — to take 600 wickets in test cricket on Tuesday by dismissing Azhar Ali in the third test against Pakistan.

After England captain Joe Root took the high catch at first slip off the Pakistan captain to give Anderson his prized wicket, the 38-year-old fast bowler was mobbed by his teammates.

Then Anderson took the ball in his right hand and — with a cheeky smile — saluted all sides of the Rose Bowl, which is without spectators because of coronavirus restrictions. England coach Chris Silverwood applauded on the boundary edge.

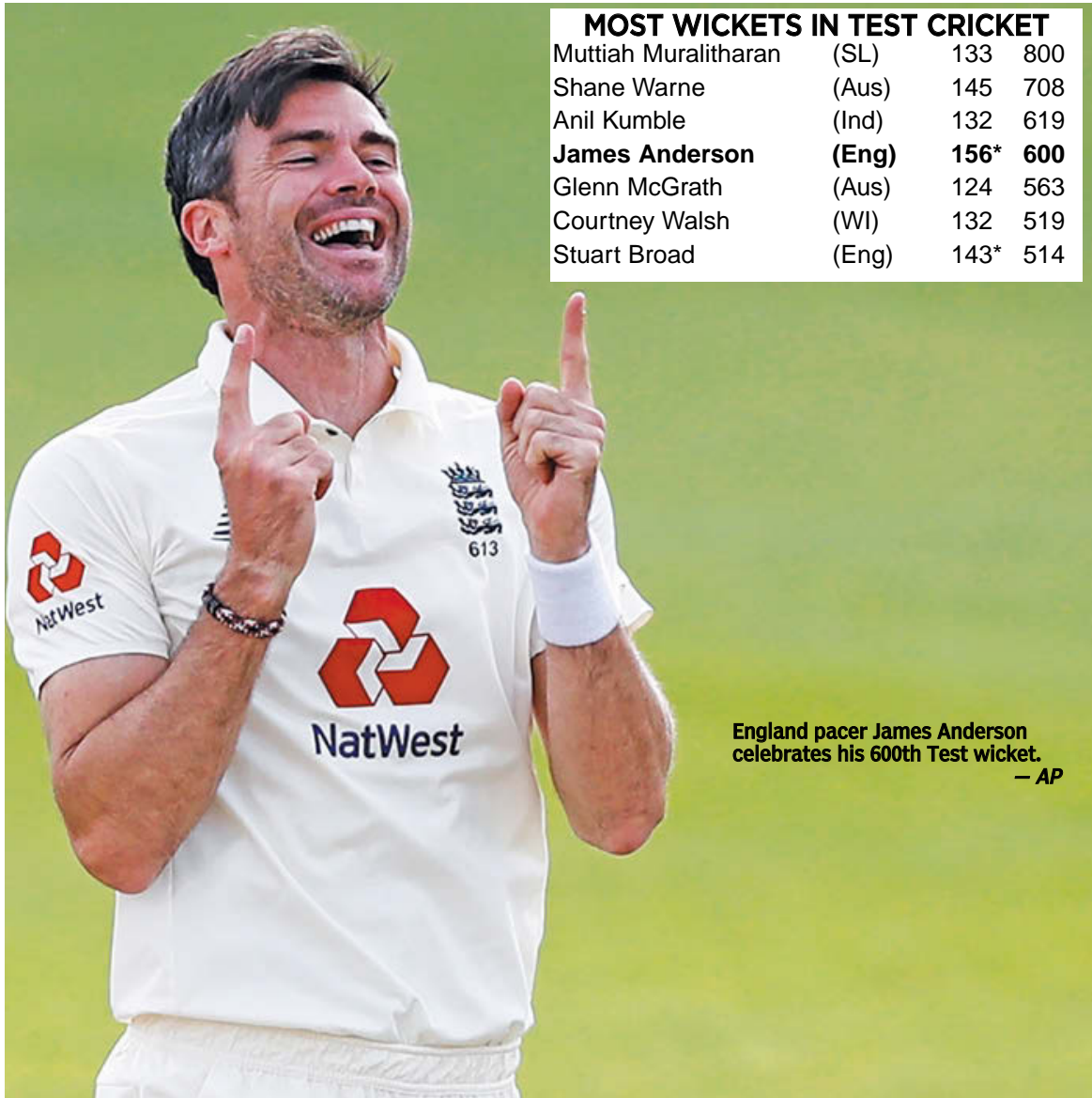
Anderson, who is playing in his 156th test, is fourth on the list of all-time leading wicket-takers in tests. Only retired spinners Muttiah Muralitharan (800), Shane Warne (708) and Anil Kumble (619) are above him.

“Massive effort from a great fast bowler,” Kumble, the former India legspinner, wrote on Twitter. “Welcome to the club.”

Anderson is the second quickest to get to 600 wickets, taking six balls more than Muralitharan, but it could have come much sooner.

He was dropped four times in 37 balls either side of Pakistan’s overnight change of innings between Days 3 and 4 of the final test of the series.

He took his 599th wicket — that of Abid Ali — near the end of Monday’s play, before bad light stopped play.



England pacer James Anderson celebrates his 600th Test wicket.

— AP

MOST WICKETS IN TEST CRICKET			
Muttiah Muralitharan	(SL)	133	800
Shane Warne	(Aus)	145	708
Anil Kumble	(Ind)	132	619
James Anderson	(Eng)	156*	600
Glenn McGrath	(Aus)	124	563
Courtney Walsh	(WI)	132	519
Stuart Broad	(Eng)	143*	514

The first two sessions of Tuesday were washed out, raising doubts about whether Anderson would miss his chance. However, play started late in the afternoon and Anderson took the wicket of Azhar off his 14th delivery.

The enduring Anderson shows no sign of slowing

down, especially when he bowls on home soil where he is so adept at taking advantage of English conditions. He is still widely regarded as the best bowler in the world when the ball is swinging.

On Sunday, he took his 29th five-wicket haul of a test career that began in

2003. His average is 26.82.

Not playing white-ball cricket since 2015 has allowed him to focus his energy and fitness toward the test format. The extended break to the cricket season because of the pandemic gave Anderson more time to rest his aging body after an injury-plagued

period that restricted him to just 74 overs of bowling from the opening Ashes test in August last year until this summer.

Just this month, Anderson said he has no plans to retire and has his sights set on an Ashes series Down Under next year.

— AP



Tamil Nadu athletes train on the platform of Wellington railway station.

Athletes train on railway platform

NEHA SURANA | DC
CHENNAI, AUG. 25

While many elite sports persons from Chennai have resumed their training at the Nehru stadium, a bunch of state and national-level athletes, based in Nilgiris, are making use of the famous Wellington railway station as a training facility. Guided by coach Mohamed Azarudeen, the athletes have been sweating it out at the deserted station since March.

“Before the pandemic, we used to train at the MRC Wellington ground, an army ground. The army officers then told us to avoid coming to the ground since the lockdown was announced. Currently, the army is using the MRC ground as a 15-day quarantine centre. Things are expected to be normal soon,” said Azharudeen on returning to the MRC ground. “I said the 25-year-old coach.

Why did they pick a railway station instead of

open ground? “There are open areas where my athletes could train but most of them are public places. It will be a distraction and curious onlookers will gather. I wanted to avoid all that. One of my trainees is appointed in Railways, so the procedure to get permission from the station became easy,” said Azarudeen.

The athletes train twice a day: from 7 am to 10 am and from 4 pm to 7 pm. “We use the station platforms for basic training and strengthening. They could get injured while training on the hard surface, but this place gives us a lot of satisfaction in training,” he said.

Sreekiran Nandakumar, who won 800m gold at the U-20 Eurasian athletics meet in Kazakhstan last year and Mujamil Ameer, who won 800m bronze at the senior nationals last year, are the two prominent athletes among the 10 athletes who train under the IAAF Level-2 coach Azharudeen.

LIVE RICH

FINANCIAL Chronicle

quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	38,843.88 0.12
Nifty 50	11472.30 0.05
S&P 500*	3,428.93 -0.07
Dollar (₹)	74.33 -0.01
Pound Sterling (₹)	97.27 -0.02
Euro (₹)	87.83 -0.02
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	51,081▼188 0.37
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	45.92 0.79
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.157 -0.065
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.700 0.054

* As of 9:30 PM IST

Flipkart to shift to 100% Electric Vehicles by 2030

Walmart-owned Flipkart on Tuesday said it will transition completely to the usage of electric vehicles (EVs) by 2030 as part of its sustainability efforts, and has joined the Climate Group’s global electric mobility initiative, EV100. EV100 brings together companies committed to accelerating the transition to electric vehicles and making electric transport the new normal by 2030.

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RBI stops printing ₹2,000 notes

■ No ₹2,000 note printed in 2019-20; ₹2,000 notes in circulation are on decline

FALAKNAAZ SYED
MUMBAI, AUG. 25

Without announcing a formal demonetisation, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) appears to be phasing out ₹2,000 currency notes from circulation if one goes by data published in the RBI Annual Report 2019-20, which was released by the central bank on Tuesday.

In its report, the RBI said the ₹2,000 denominated currency note, which was launched after the demonetisation in November 2016, has not been printed in financial

year 2019-2020. The number of ₹2,000 currency notes in circulation is also gradually coming down since 2018.

At the end of March 2018, there were 33,632 lakh pieces of ₹2,000 currency notes in circulation. This number came to 32,910 lakh pieces at end-March 2019 and further down to 27,398 lakh pieces at end-March 2020.

The ₹2,000 denominated notes constituted 2.4 per cent of the total volume of notes at the end of March 2020, down from three per cent at the end of March 2019 and 3.3 per cent at the

VERY CLEARLY without demonetisation, the RBI may be phasing out ₹2,000 currency notes. We are not getting any new supply of ₹2,000 notes.

SENIOR BANKER

end of March 2018.

In value terms also, the share has come down to 22.6 per cent at the end of March 2020, from 31.2 per cent at the end of March 2019 and 37.3 per cent at the end of March 2018. The share of ₹2,000 notes was

50 per cent in 2017, as the major focus was on remonetising the economy.

On the other hand, the circulation of currency notes of denomination of ₹500 and ₹200 has gone up substantially, both in terms of volume and value over the three years beginning 2018.

Bankers believe that the RBI is gradually withdrawing ₹2,000 notes from the circulation by not printing notes afresh.

Unlike demonetisation, the method would gradually withdraw the notes while allowing them to remain a lender tender.

A senior banker told *Deccan Chronicle*, “Very clearly without demonetisation, the RBI may be phasing out ₹2000 currency notes. We are not getting any new supply of ₹2,000 notes.”

A former banker said, “There may be some people who are hoarding ₹2,000 currency notes but the number may not be large. Banks are not reissuing ₹2,000 notes; maybe banks have been told by the RBI not to reissue ₹2,000 notes. It is also easy to calibrate the ATMs with lower currency notes such as ₹500.”

APPLE IN INDIA

● Apple’s first physical store is expected to be opened in Mumbai in 2021. The mobile phone maker is also planning to launch its second Indian store in Bengaluru.



● Apple has already assembling handsets in India through its manufacturing partners Foxconn and Wistron Corp. Its another partner Pegatron Corp. is also planning to set its first plant in India.

Apple to open online store in India in Sept

Bengaluru, Aug. 25: Apple Inc is set to open an online store in India next month, *Bloomberg News* reported on Tuesday, citing a person familiar with the matter.

The iPhone maker currently sells its products in the country through third-party vendors and e-commerce firms such as

Amazon and Flipkart.

The company’s online store will be ready for operation in time for the festive season that culminates in Diwali, the biggest spending season in the country, *Bloomberg* said. Apple did not immediately respond a *Reuters* request for comment.

— Reuters

Pharma sector profits likely to decline soon

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, AUG. 25

Pharma, which has been one of the few sectors that have performed well in the past quarter, may not be able to sustain the performance in the coming quarters. While domestic sales will improve with lifting of the lockdown, moderation in API demand and normalisation of operational expenses will affect profitability.

The healthy performance of Q1 FY21 is attributed to the strong revenue growth in the API business and lower operating expenses. The API business revenue grew 31 per cent year-on-year basis and 18 per cent q-o-q in Q1FY21 as demand from global and Indian formulation players remained

robust, aided by higher pricing opportunities, according to India Ratings and Research.

Indian API players benefited due to the thrust on supply chain continuity from customers and better inventory management in view of supply disruptions from China and the run up in the prices of API. Increased stocking by different channels also supported growth.

However, the growth in the API business will taper off in the near term as companies normalise their buying patterns. Ind-Ra also expects a price correction as the sudden demand normalises.

Further, operating expenses, primarily led by the 19 per cent q-o-q decline in the selling expenses, too would normalise.

The restricted movement of medical representatives and other cost savings like lower promotional expenses due to the lockdown led to the operating expenses declining 8 per cent y-o-y and 19 per cent q-o-q in Q1FY21 and had aided profitability.

According to Fitch Ratings, focusing on optimising direct costs and reducing fixed costs helped many companies report resilient margins in Q1FY21.

Post-lockdown, as competitive pressures rise, companies will eventually revert to in-person engagement with prescribers. Though the companies had cut some expenses with manpower rationalisation, the overall cost reduction is unlikely to exceed 10-20 per cent, finds Ind-Ra.

Jack Ma’s Ant offers world’s biggest IPO

Hong Kong, Aug. 25: Billionaire Jack Ma’s Ant Group filed for an initial public offering (IPO) in Hong Kong and Shanghai to bankroll its expansion in financial services and bolster its lead as China’s largest online payments platform.

The Hangzhou-based company will issue no less than 10 per cent in new shares of its total capital, according to its filing with the Shanghai exchange. Ant generated 72.5 billion yuan (\$10.5 billion) in revenue in the first half, after full-year sales of 120.6 billion yuan in 2019, it said. The firm posted a profit of 21.2 billion yuan in the first half.

The crown jewel of the sprawling Alibaba empire, Ant has been accelerating its evolution into an online mall for everything from loans and travel services to food delivery, in a bid to win back shoppers lost to Tencent Holdings Ltd.

With data from a billion users of its Alipay app at its back, Ant is pushing broadly into financial services, delivering technology such as artificial intelligence, robo investing and lending platforms.

The simultaneous listing could mark one of the biggest debuts in years, and even top Saudi Aramco’s record \$29 billion IPO, a person familiar has said. The firm is targeting a valuation of about \$225 billion, based on an IPO of about \$30 billion if markets are



● **WITH DATA** from a billion users of its Alipay app at its back, Ant is pushing broadly into financial services, delivering technology such as artificial intelligence, robo investing and lending platforms.

favourable, people familiar with the matter have said.

The company will use the proceeds to expand cross-border payments and enhance its research and development capabilities, according to the filing, which didn’t provide a share price range or the amount it intends to raise in the IPO.

Unlike Chinese tech giants such as Alibaba Group Holding Ltd., Ant decided against listing in the US in the backdrop of increased scrutiny.

Ant’s Shanghai listing marks a victory for the city’s exchange, and is part of an effort by China to establish its own capital markets as tensions with the United States escalate.

— Bloomberg

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